

(US, UK, France, Japan) and the emerging/new economic powers (China, India, Brazil, Russia, Malaysia and Turkey) enables the author to demonstrate how the new scramble by old and emerging powers fuels authoritarianism and underdevelopment in Africa.

The book brings in fresh conceptual insights based on ‘flexigemony’ (rule from the distance) to describe China’s ‘peaceful’ rise (and adaptability to change) in Africa. It also explains the economic underpinnings of the competition between the United States and China in Africa, and between China and other emerging and European powers. Yet Carmody emphasises the transnational alliance involving elites from both Western and Eastern powers and Africa in exploiting the continent’s resources, often at the expense of the poor majority on the continent.

The book provides ample empirical evidence of the plunder of Africa’s natural resources and the exploitation of its markets, showing that while the West is still the dominant economic and military force in Africa, China wields at best a small and indirect – albeit rapidly growing – amount of influence. Exploring both resource diplomacy and securitisation of trade, the book focuses on the victims of the new scramble for Africa, underscoring the point that although the new scramble is different from the earlier one, it does replicate the same pattern of underdevelopment and reinforces authoritarian rule on the continent. Some issues in the book could be further developed, such as bio-piracy in Africa, the role of civil society and informal actors, and the roles of Western, Asian and African institutions in the new scramble. Moreover, it is perhaps useful to mention that Ghana may not have been the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to become independent (1957) (3), inasmuch as Liberia became independent in 1847 and Sudan in 1956. However, on the balance this book is a well-researched, welcome and insightful addition to the debates on the ramifications of the global competition for resources and markets, and the prospects for Africa’s development in a post-Cold War and rapidly globalising world.

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Zambia, Mining, and Neoliberalism: boom and bust on the globalised Copperbelt edited by A. FRASER and M. LARMER.

New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2010. Pp. xxi + 298, £60.00 (hbk).

doi:10.1017/S0022278X12000444

Deposits of significant mineral wealth have not generally correlated with democratic government, distributive justice and ecological health in post-colonial Africa. The spillover effects of the extractive industries are often negative, fuelling the ‘Dutch disease’ of overrated local currencies and domestic inflation. Local political elites are easily seduced, however, by the fast rents provided by investor kick-backs and mineral royalties. The ubiquity of such tendencies across Africa has led some analysts to speak cynically of the ‘resource curse’ associated with mineral endowments in Africa. At the same time, the potential blessing of mineral revenues for national development is a key feature of political rhetoric in every country with a substantial extractive industry.

This thought-provoking collection of essays on the political economy of Zambian copper seeks to unpack the stereotypical generalities in which the 'curse/blessing' paradox is entrenched. For the most part, the book is successful in this pursuit. The volume's nine taut essays reward the reader with a rich understanding of how Zambia's valuable deposits of copper have spawned a complex range of social, economic and political institutions and relations over the past century. Rather than attempt an overview of the Zambian copper industry in general, individual essays home in on the effects of one specific historical contingency: the local effects of the early 21st-century boom and bust in copper prices on the world economy. Between 2002, when the world price of copper hit an all-time low, and April 2008, when the price peaked, the value of copper increased six-fold. This was not Zambia's first copper boom, and it is not likely to be her last. The 2003–8 boom was followed, typically, by a bust, as prices fell by 70% over a period of several months following the global financial meltdown of 2008. By situating the recent boom and bust in its socio-political and economic context, and by drawing comparisons with earlier price cycles in Zambian copper history, *Zambia, Mining and Neoliberalism* provides an unusually provocative portrayal of the complex interactions of mineral deposits with (post-colonial African) society.

Since colonial times the risks and benefits of the volatile copper economy have been shared between the public sector and private foreign mining companies. Most chapters shed light on the vagaries of state attempts to manage the unwieldy and unpredictable extractive sector. Alastair Fraser's introduction provides a succinct overview of state–business relations in the extractive sector. A clearly written chapter by Chris Adam and Anthony Simpasa explains the economics of copper mining, and discusses the policy options available to public authorities within prevailing neo-liberal parameters. Dan Haglund's contribution highlights the chequered history of the state regulatory regime in relationship to labour and environmental standards. Jan-Bart Gewald and Sebastiaan Soeters seek to expose the restless and irresponsible manoeuvres of what James Ferguson (whose influence weighs heavily in many chapters) has termed the 'globe-hopping' agents of speculative capital.

Ching Kwan Lee's exemplary essay is a balanced and empirically grounded discussion of the role of Chinese capital in the privatised copper sector. Unlike other chapters, Lee's chapter has a comparative frame which contrasts the experiences of a national Chinese mining company in Zambia with a provincial Chinese textile firm in Tanzania. This comparative analysis allows for a detailed and differentiated portrayal of the wide range of factors which contribute to the economic and political outcomes of China's global quest for natural resources.

A second major theme cutting through many of the contributions concerns the political institutions and relations that copper has engendered in Zambian society. The strongest thread in this analysis relates to the political dynamics of the trade union movement, portrayed in richest detail by Miles Larmer. Historically, Zambian miners have had a great deal of success in defending their interests vis-à-vis the mining companies, both public and private. Since 1991, in contrast, the unions have lost much of their membership as well as their political leverage. This implies that there is virtually no popular force

which might effectively challenge the sinister alliance of international capital and rent-seeking politicians.

This is as far as the present volume takes us. A concluding essay by Ray Bush situates the Zambian case succinctly in the global political economy, but somewhat surprisingly grasps at a romantic vision of ‘community-based’ mining for its strategic blueprint. One should certainly not dismiss radical political innovations out of hand. Still, the two anthropologically slanted case studies in this volume – Patience Mususa’s ethnographic sketch of the everyday travails of women mining the mineral waste heaps, and Rohit Negi’s discussion of how chiefs have responded to the challenges and opportunities of privatised mining investment within their traditional territories – provide little support to Bush’s populist scenario.

One hopes that this excellent volume will stimulate further debate and research. Political ecologists in particular have been left a very fruitful lacuna to fill with a complementary analysis of the spatial and environmental dimensions of the copper economy.

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The War Machines: young men and violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia by
D. HOFFMAN

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. Pp. 295, £16.99 (pbk).

doi:10.1017/S0022278X12000456

Danny Hoffman’s *The War Machines* is an ambitious monograph that presents an ethnographic account of the kamajor militia of the Sierra Leone civil war, within a larger theoretical framework that addresses some of the most prolific and contested discourses in contemporary research about Africa – armed conflict, youth, informal economies, globalisation, patronage and the state, to name a few. From extensive fieldwork that began as photo-journalism during the war, Hoffman presents an anthropological study grounded in political philosophy. Using Deleuze and Guattari’s *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, the book oscillates between high theoretical interpretation of the ‘war machine’ and its plateaus, and micro-level narratives of the ‘Big Men, Small Boys’ who are its subjects and with whom he spent much time smoking cigarettes, eating rice and listening to music. It is to Hoffman’s great credit as a scholar and author that his writing in both registers is equally compelling, deftly articulating political philosophical concepts (no small feat with the repertoire he has selected) and evocatively rendering dynamic social environments.

Hoffman accomplishes this through a two-part text that, although largely drawn from previously published articles, presents a cohesive whole, framed loosely around war and post-war, whilst explicating the continuities therein. Part One – ‘Histories’ – is presented as ‘background and context’, indicating the author’s emphasis less on war as such and more on the liminal, highly militarised environment in which he carried out fieldwork, and which, he argues, continues to describe socio-political and economic dynamics. The first chapter presents a concise but wide-ranging chronology in which Hoffman argues that the Sierra Leone civil war can only be understood as a regional