Copper Capitalism Today:
Space, State and Development in North Western Zambia

Dissertation

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Abstract

The days of doom and gloom in descriptions of African social and economic realities seem increasingly passé. After two decades of economic decline, externally imposed austerity, and deprivation, Africa is being widely seen as having turned the corner. Recent investment has produced a boom in extractive industries and relatively high rates of economic growth in the countries where these industries dominate the economy. These changes have fuelled fresh visions of an African ‘renaissance’.

Others see these developments as a new page of an older history of booms and busts in Africa’s extractive industries, and with them, the respective national economies. These patterns coincide to a large degree with the vicissitudes of world commodity markets, and are therefore highly inconstant and unpredictable. Past busts have forced ordinary Africans and social scientists alike to continually reevaluate the continent’s place in the globalized world. A simple question, therefore, underlies this research: Is the new mining boom an African economic revival or a rerun of the previous cycle of growth and eventual decline?

Using Zambia as a window, this dissertation examines the geographies of mining, state, and development in Africa. It draws upon ethnographic fieldwork in Zambia’s North Western Province to illuminate the reconfigurations of people, places, and power set in
motion by a copper mining boom. Two large copper mines have begun operations there in the last three years employing more than 7000 workers, and have led to the rapid transformation of a previously agricultural and supposedly ‘backward’ province.

The dissertation makes four broad arguments. First, it argues that there are both continuities and shifts in the developmental patterns of the new boom. While it is still export-oriented and thus susceptible to global booms and busts, new sites of development are emerging that are outside of the historical capitalist ‘enclaves’. Second, the boom has revived grassroots civil society movements that call for greater national ownership of resources and the benefits accruing from them. These are movements that are critical in terms of the long-term effects of the boom. As for the rural areas, and third, the local structures of authority are being reshaped. Here, capital increasingly articulates with the ‘traditional’ authorities headed by the various tribal chiefs. This adds to the recent resurgence of these institutions, a development of immense potential significance. Finally, rural communities are being closely affected by these changes, but their structural and political marginalization continues.
Dedication

Dedicated to my parents.
Acknowledgments

Though it bears my name, this dissertation is a product of many contributions. It is a result, first and foremost, of the loving support of my parents. Throughout, they have encouraged me to learn and explore, which is a true testimony to their own love of knowledge.

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Most of all, my gratitude to Prof. Kevin Cox for his guidance, advice, and encouragement. It is his unquestioning trust and support that allowed me to explore new creative directions leading to this dissertation.

That said, I alone am responsible for all errors contained in the dissertation.
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

“Zambia is the tip of the tail of the global dog. When the dog is happy we find ourselves merrily flicking from side to side; when the dog is miserable, we find ourselves coiled up in a dark and smelly place.”

*The Post* (Lusaka), Editorial, 1 Feb 2009

1.1 The Problematic

As the ‘winds of change’\(^1\) wafted over Africa in the 1960s and many nations gained political independence from their respective European colonizers, they found themselves inserted into a deeply uneven world. The appropriation of wealth from Africa had been fundamental to the capitalist expansion and industrial revolution in the West, but this process—which had begun with the onset of slave trade—had stunted economic development there (Amin 1972; 2002). In this situation, and above all, the promise of postcolonial African states was to narrow the developmental gap. They embarked on this project through different means. These included African socialism and various

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\(^1\) This is a reference to the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan’s 1960 speech to the South African Parliament. Ironically, South Africa did not heed his advice. Not only did minority-rule continue for another thirty years there, but the apartheid regime notoriously worked to perpetuate colonial rule elsewhere in Africa.
combinations of a mixed-economy approach, but in many instances their actions led to the entrenchment of the undemocratic rule of elites. The problem, as Frederick Cooper describes it, was that the postcolonial state reproduced the 'distant, extractive and imposing' nature of its colonial predecessor (2002: 97).

After two decades of economic stagnation, however, economic growth reappeared in the 2000s in many places in Africa (‘Africa’s Strong Growth 2007). Zambia, for instance, has witnessed successive years of above 5% growth rate of its GDP (Carmody 2009: 1198). This has been largely on account of the rise of Asian economies and the increased demand for raw materials to fuel their industrial development (Carmody 2009; Mawdsley 2007). But in the main, the recent growth and increased flows of capital are unevenly distributed. They follow the historic and fundamentally uneven geography of capitalism in Africa. It is a geography that resembles islands of capitalist production relations within a sea of subsistence agriculture, where these so-called ‘enclaves’ often also are tied to the extraction of one or the other natural resource (Ferguson 2005; 2006).

This does not mean that things are unchanging. The new boom in the extraction of copper in Zambia has spilled over into erstwhile subsistence-based region in the country’s North Western Province. But what is also clear is that this has not lead to any large-scale capitalist development. Instead, a new mining enclave is being created, the first one since the growth of the country’s Copperbelt Province between the 1920s and 40s (Gann 1964; Perrings 1979).
This much is revealed from a cursory look. But we do not quite know what is going on within the enclave. We know that capitalism remains weakly developed across Africa, but not its work where it exists. In other words, the study of African political economy cannot merely be about absences (Mamdani 1996: 8), in this case, of capitalist development. We must understand what exists and how it continues to change. More specific to the matter at hand, the question is how the new boom in extractive industries is reshaping economic forms, identities and politics in Africa. What, in other words, are the geographies of the millennial African mining boom?

The dissertation’s overall goal is to cast a geographical eye on the ongoing mining boom. The issues related to these changes are understood in state discourses as matters simply of capital investment or economic growth and among many materialist analyses in terms of critical absences. The aim of the dissertation is to understand what exists in Africa, and how it is relevant to broader debates on development and the (postcolonial) state. Both of these I take to be crucial concerns in light of continuing global inequality and multiple lines of contestations around it.

Above all, the mining boom which sets the context of the study is a product of the shifting configurations of global capitalism. It is a product of the recent and rapid growth of Asian economies that has inflated world commodity prices in the last decade or so. On the ground, the process has multifarious effects and holds deep meanings for those caught in its wake. This project is an examination of the spaces of the boom, the discursive means through which those concerned understand its effects, and how they demarcate the ‘newness’ of the present from what has gone on before. This work is also curious about
the politics within the evolving enclave: Who have emerged as key gatekeepers of capital? How are dissatisfactions being expressed and to what effect?

1.2 The Vantage Point

I approach the problem through the vantage point of the recent boom in Solwezi District of Zambia’s North Western Province (NWP) (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Two large-scale copper mines—namely, Kansanshi and Lumwana—have begun operations there in the last four years. Thousands of migrants have made their way to the area in search of jobs on the mines or to service the population through a variety of formal and informal practices. Several locals have also placed their lot in the capitalist economy, taking up jobs in the mines or have retooled their farming practices to sell vegetables and other food items to the new population. Migrants and locals alike, then, look to carve a piece—however small—of the capital flowing into the area.

This region is outside of the historical copper producing region in Zambia to the southeast. This though does not mean that it has been outside the productive horizon of capital per se. Solwezi has been incorporated within the uneven geography of the broader economy during British colonial rule through the institution of migrant labor, largely in the copper mines, but also for other parts of the colonial division of labor. Men would work for part of the year on the construction of roads, bridges, etc, and as messengers and carriers recruited in large numbers by the colonial offices (Gann 1958). That said, and compared to several other regions of Zambia—particularly the northern and eastern parts of the territory—North Western Province (NWP) has had considerably less profound
relations with the broader political economy (Crehan 1997; 1981). It is in this context that the region is widely considered to be relatively backward and this finds expression in the Zambian state’s keenness to develop the region. It is thus of considerable importance that the copper reserves in NWP are now being profitably exploited. It is also of significance that the wider mining boom that these changes in NWP are part of, comes after two decades of economic stagnation in Zambia. Together these mean that the ongoing transformations are fundamentally reconfiguring the place, materially and discursively.

Figure 1.1 Provinces of Zambia and Solwezi District
Solwezi town in the NWP has emerged as the center of the regional mining boom. It was assigned as the district headquarters very early during colonial rule (1911), and was nominated as the provincial capital after Zambian Independence in 1964. The town thus evolved as an administrative center, with the *boma* (state offices) at the heart of its spatial layout. With the boom, the population of the town has increased over three-fold between 2000 and 2008 to over 120,000 today (CSO 2001).
Solwezi town’s ongoing transformation presents a case study of the spaces of contemporary capitalism. If the suburbs of American cities were emblematic of that country’s post World War-II expansion and the company towns of Zambia’s Copperbelt Province of the colonial paternalist economy (Powdermaker 1962), then the newly constructed compounds—local term for shanty-towns—of Solwezi represent the place-making of capitalism in the margins today. It is a place where the normal order of urban development stands reversed. New settlements crop up on its edges, people move in, and only then—if at all—do physical and social services follow.

There is another, rural, element to these changes because the mining boom has extended into spaces hitherto outside of capitalism and civil society. This is important because Zambia is an illustration of the continuing legacy of the practice of indirect rule introduced during the colonial period (Mamdani 1996). On the one hand, the cities and (few) places with commercial plantations and agriculture are ruled directly by the central state, as they were by the colonial state. On the other, large parts of the countryside lie under the custodianship of about 270 large and small chieftaincies (Nag 1989). Here, access to land and the resolution of local level disputes are managed by the chiefs, aided by village headmen. Solwezi District is home to ten chieftaincies, which include five Kaonde chiefs, four Lamba chiefs, and one of the Lunda people. In particular, the two new copper mines encompass four Kaonde chieftaincies. Lumwana is located largely in Chief Mukumbi’s area, with some imprint in the areas under the custodianship of Chiefs Matebo and Mumena and Kansanshi lies within Chief Kapijimpanga’s area (Figure 1.2).
The present mining boom represents the first substantial and ‘direct’ relationship with capitalism and large-scale mining for the region. Conversely, for the mining companies, it means that they must negotiate the hitherto subsistence-based economy of the region for, among other things, their labor needs. It also means that in addition to their contract with the central state, which regulates mining activities, they must also develop relationships with the local chiefs in this region. This is in part because of the chiefs’ control over access to land and because companies are eager to be on good terms with them, for the chiefs remain—formally and informally—the representatives of their rural subjects. Chiefs are especially outspoken on matters of development, for their own mandate is strongly tied to the material well-being of their subjects. Zambian newspapers regularly carry reports of one or the other chief complaining against private businesses. Their voices reach the nation-state also through the arena of the ‘House of Chiefs’, which is a state-recognized body that advises the government on rural affairs and matters related to the chieftaincies. They are, in other words, an influential interest group, which mining companies in the new enclave are obliged to negotiate with. Solwezi therefore presents an insightful case study of the emerging links between mining capital and the chiefs.

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2 In Zambia the chiefs are largely left to their own devices with respect to land and governance in their areas. In special cases, where ‘national development’ is concerned, the President can allocate land to private individuals and businesses with or without the chiefs’ permission (Lands Act 1995). But the state is generally hesitant to alienate the chiefs, in part because they command much respect in rural Zambia, and assume importance during elections.
Solwezi’s place at the margins of the Zambian economy is significant for another reason too. This is because it is a relatively homogenous area in terms of the tribes and ethnicities present. The common language of communication in the Kaonde chieftaincies and in Solwezi is Chi-Kaonde. The immigrants who have moved to the region have, however, disturbed this homogeneity. Though there are no hard figures, from my discussions it was apparent that many of the newcomers are from the Copperbelt Province, where a version of Bemba language is the lingua franca (Parpart 1983). For this reason, one finds that in the bus-stands, bars, and other public spaces, the ‘town-Bemba’ of the Copperbelt is slowly replacing Kaonde as the dominant means of communication; something that is viewed with alarm by many long-time residents.

The kernel of politics in this occurrence is the same that lies within the politics of development that has emerged in Solwezi. During the phase of its construction, the Lumwana mine implemented a system of recruitment that reserved jobs for the ‘indigenous’ Kaonde and worked through the three adjoining chieftaincies. In this manner, the consolidation of the Kaonde as a political identity (Mamdani 2001) has taken shape via their privileged access to wage labor. On the other hand, many immigrants unable to find employment are annoyed by this policy, staking their claims through recourse to the equality promised by their national citizenship. What this shows too is

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These terms are, of course, loaded. I use tribe to define the population within the juridical space of the colonial Native Authority (chapters 4 and 5), and ethnicity to denote the group that speaks a common language, which is how these terms have been generally understood in Zambian historiography (Posner 2005).
how the mining boom confronts individuals caught in its wake differentially. Class, of course, is a central line of individuals’ relations to capital; but it intersects with other forms of identification and belonging. In this case, identity based upon historical roots to ‘place’ has emerged as a key determinant of this relationship. That territory overlaps considerably in the bifurcated Zambian state with tribal identification means that tribe itself is politicized. All in all, then, Solwezi District is an ideal vantage point to investigate the problematic outlined above. It is the product of the most recent mining boom of the 2000s and for that reason allows precise insights into its geography; that is, its places, developmental impacts and imaginaries. Additionally, the ongoing negotiations between mining companies and the state—represented here by the chieftaincies—are a case study of the contingencies that the instantiation of accumulation involve, while also showing how it fundamentally reshapes them in its wake.

1.3 Theorizing Capitalism and Social Change

In the historiography of the region, social change corresponding to economic booms has been generally studied within the problematic of the transformation of a ‘traditional’ society to ‘modernity’ at the onset of urbanization and market relations (Gluckman 1945; Wilson and Wilson 1945; Powdermaker 1962; Schumaker 1999: 328; 1996). Within this problematic, a key concern has been the anthropological analysis of the so-called ‘detribalization’ of natives in towns and cities, which administrators considered a social crisis (for an early account see Melland 1923). These anxieties were a result of the view that Africans were essentially tribal beings, a construct that was critiqued by ‘progressive’ anthropologists (Gluckman 1960). The latter in turn generally considered
the process of ‘detribalization’ as a positive change with the belief that a fully modern African was sure to emerge upon its completion (Ferguson 1999). The problem with this framing of social change, however, was that it failed to recognize the dynamics of colonial capitalism, which were fashioning intense inequalities and exploitative regimes of accumulation even as scholars were preoccupied with cultural phenomena (Mafeje 1971: 255-259). In short, social change was understood through a cultural-lens and a kind of ethnographic method was privileged where the anthropologist as expert would go into the field and come to know the ins-and-outs of a particular tribe (Gluckman 1945; Schumaker 2001: 75-116). The strengths of this work are many: from its attention to the changes brought about in colonial Zambia due to the growing incorporation of the people within the broader capitalist economy, though within a cultural framework, to its study of the forms of association in the context of urbanization (Epstein 1953). I believe there are several valuable lessons here for researchers today, the most important being its interest in social change. In addition, close attention to evolving, concrete forms of identity and politics is a methodological lesson that may be drawn from this work.

On the other hand, there is a conceptually powerful notion through which conceptualize processes of social change in the context of incipient capitalism. This is what Karl Marx termed ‘primitive accumulation’ (Marx 1990 [1867]: part 8). This notion of change draws attention to the historical processes through which the creation of private property and capitalist relations of production are instantiated, processes that entail dispossession from the means of production, often through violence. The concept sharpens the political edge of this matter, which has been viewed as cultural and also through the ‘modernization
theoretic’ of economic growth and the supposed ‘take-off’ to development (Rostow 1959).

Two issues present themselves, however, when one deploys the concept in concrete African realities, marked as they are by the uneven development of capitalism. Both point to the need for grounded analysis of materialist categories. Primitive accumulation, it should be recalled, was Marx’s framework for the interpretation of the transition in Europe—more specifically, England—to capitalism. Though it occurred over a long period of time, it was a totalizing process, which tendentially brought territories within the fold of capital, and drove people to wage labor. As noted already, the totalizing tendencies of capital are clearly not the norm in Africa. It remains, for various reasons, confined to enclaves.

The first matter then is precisely about the geographical tendencies of primitive accumulation. There is implicit the idea that it is the process through which an otherwise pre-capitalist mode of production is more or less completely transformed to capitalism. However, one finds in Zambia and Sub-Saharan Africa more generally that primitive accumulation has occurred with considerable patchiness—capitalist development is restricted largely to enclaves, and has proceeded in fits and starts, largely due to the boom and bust economy characteristic of the region. The upshot is that this form of capitalist development does not necessarily or even in most cases imply large-scale dispossession. One may argue then that primitive accumulation is absent from Africa. But this is also an imprecise reading. I contend that the question is not whether it is entirely present or
absent; it is, rather, that this is what primitive accumulation looks like in Africa, and
grounded analysis of its operations therefore is required.

The second issue concerns the relationship between primitive accumulation and popular
understandings of development. The historically truncated nature of the capitalism in
Africa means that there is a wide gap in numbers between those already dispossessed and
the absorption of people into capitalist production as wage workers. Put provocatively,
the reserve army of the unemployed is not a relatively small proportion of wage workers⁴,
but wage workers are a tiny minority of those proletarianized, most of who must engage
in all manners of informal or multiple-strategy labor to subsist. They are joined by those
who at a given moment are engaged in subsistence-farming, but would opt for wage-work
instead. In such a scenario, primitive accumulation may not be considered a violent
imposition, but as my ethnographic work suggests, one welcomed by the state elite and
the collective alike. For the former, it provides room for wealth-creation through taxes
and more corrupt means, while for the latter, there is the opportunity of wage-work and
income-generation due to the ‘multiplier effect’ of industrial production⁵. This points to
the ambiguity that David Harvey noted in his discussion of the related concept of
'accumulation by dispossession' (2005). After laying out his theory, Harvey expressed

⁴ In advanced capitalist economies this number generally hovers around 5% except in periods of crises, a
figure considered to be ‘healthy’ by mainstream economists.

⁵ The local Labor Office in Solwezi was one location where this point was illustrated presciently. There
was a crowd of jobseekers around the bulletin board in the building every day, and outside an informal
mini-mart had come up to sell the crowds snacks and mobile talk-time.
concern about the widespread view that any politics against primitive accumulation is essentially 'progressive' (Ibid: 169). Harvey asks us to take seriously the claims of classical Marxism that considered it to be a necessary step towards the end of scarcity, while also warning against slipping into the teleology it often implies. I wish to add two points here: first, I believe the matter of judging the progressiveness of popular concepts and politics around primitive accumulation is a blind-alley. The point should be to understand the conditions in which they form. Second, there is an assumption that—whether or not it may be progressive in the long-term—in the here-and-now, primitive accumulation is resisted by those who experience it. It seems to me that the element of dispossession highlighted by Marx and placed front-and-center by Harvey leads to this supposition. My reading of the social changes accompanying the creation of the new mining enclave in Solwezi, however, belies this universalism. John Chalcraft’s recent paper (2007) on Syrian migrant workers in Lebanon supports this conclusion, for he shows how people willingly enter wage employment in exchange for access to the new consumption it promises through wages.

To further clarify this point, my argument is not that political activists should champion primitive accumulation. It is, quite simply, that capitalism is a historically-geographically uneven process, and primitive accumulation can neither be considered a necessary ‘stage’ of development nor an unambiguous evil. Given that capitalism has come to be defined

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6 In recent years, and among others, the incumbent Communist parties in India have sought to industrialize through dispossession, basing their argument on a teleological notion of capitalism as a necessary stage of a future socialist society (see Da Costa 2007).
as the means to development in the era of neoliberal hegemony, and that Africa in particular has been ‘unceremoniously redlined’ (Smith 1997: 181) by capital for decades, it is understandable that the recent inflow of capital investment into Sub-Saharan Africa is widely welcomed, even considered the panacea. All of this calls for a grounded analysis of the ongoing changes to examine the analytical grip of our frameworks of interpretation on concrete matters at hand.

1.4 Research Methods

I use a grounded and ethnographic method of study. At the same time, distance is maintained from what may be termed the insular method of ethnography, which treats both the field as self evident and enclosed, and the researcher as the expert who goes into the field and breaks it apart into its key elements, while remaining invisible. I have no such pretense. Neither am I an all-knowing expert of Zambia nor is my account the only way to read the subject-matter at its heart. It is, however, one way of reading it, and a way that privileges materialist understanding of social change, while attending to its political and representational elements.

I suggest bringing materialist categories in conversation with critical ethnography; where the latter is different from its ‘classic’ forms in that it attends to the notion of space as ‘relational’ (Massey 1994; see also Hart 2004). One way such a method has been described is as ‘global ethnography’ (Tsing 2006; Burawoy et al 2000). The key idea here is that neither culture nor political economic forms in any study area comprise closed systems. Even though capitalism itself may be weakly developed; imperial power,
The role of the ethnographer then, is to focus on these relations through which spaces are constantly in the process of production. I maintain such a methodological frame throughout. Throughout, I have also been aware of my own position with respect to the ‘field’, in particular how my being Indian—in a place where that identity has political consequences—affected the research. I present comments on that in the Conclusion.

Solwezi therefore cannot be understood in any meaningful way outside of its historical and ongoing relationships with the colonial and postcolonial state and with the booms and busts that set the terms of Africa’s incorporation within global capitalism. More specifically, it has been the industrial growth of China that explains the present boom to a large extent. The expansion of its economy has resulted in huge demands for various raw materials. Between 1995 and 2005, for instance, China’s imports of iron ore grew from 41 million tons to 275 million tons and copper imports from 484,000 tons to 4 million tons (Holslag et al 2007: 7). Copper, as an essential element in the production of cars, air conditioners, and in the transmission of power—all key ingredients of Chinese growth—has therefore witnessed a tremendous increase in demand and subsequently, a rise in prices. Investment in Zambia’s mining sector in turn rose sharply as various—large and small—copper producers entered the country to service the demand for copper. Some bought older mines, resuscitated and expanded their capacity, while others built entirely new. Solwezi has seen a boom due to both of these forms of mining capital. While the mining boom has been a general phenomenon across Africa and elsewhere (Bridge
2004), its concrete effects are strongly impacted by *national* policies, political context, and legal frameworks.

Nothing illustrated the continued importance of the ‘national’ better to me than a visit across the border to Katanga in April 2008. This is another region fundamentally shaped by a history of copper mining (Perrings 1979). The place-making of the contemporary boom, however, is drastically different in Congo. As I discuss in Part I, mining in Zambia has a considerably weaker relation with society in the recent boom than before, when it was organized around state-control and redistribution of surplus. Yet, Zambians are much better off than their neighbors. Walking in the settlements where mineworkers reside on the outskirts of Lubumbashi is a deeply troubling experience. While Zambian workers, largely on account of their own collective strength, have established a ‘norm’ of wages and benefits that mean that they are relatively better off than most others in Zambia; the situation in which their Congolese counterparts live and work in are pitiful. Of course, this is my notion from a single visit, and is necessarily impressionist. It does, however, frame the question of capitalist accumulation, its place-making and developmental impacts in a manner that considers the nation-state as a key scale of analysis. In sum, the ethnography part of critical ethnography lends a methodological emphasis on weaving together the local, national and global in the study of the concrete.

As must be clear, I critically distance myself from a radical critique of ethnography that has come to disavow it completely, considering the method as one that reproduces colonial power by continuing its epistemologies (cf Ismail 2005). I find this critique inherently valuable, for it asks difficult questions that anthropologists and others have
had to develop responses to. This debate has in turn pushed the method in new and productive directions (Fortun 2001; Hayden 2003; Tsing 2006). For these ‘new wave’ of researchers, critically conceived and performed ethnography remains a productive means to understand societies, there and here.

On the other hand, I find this particular postcolonial critique of method problematic for there is a fundamental binary through which the historical and contemporary world is viewed. It understands the world according to an East-West divide (see Lazarus 2002: 43-64). The idea at its heart is that Western academics going to study the ‘other’ in the East—of more appropriately today, the South—are engaged in ‘taking away’ or appropriation. Two points here: first, the upshot of the critique is that all subjects on the binary are either considered to steal from the other or are the victims of this appropriation. What is missing is a nuanced understanding of the world in terms of class divisions (of various kinds). Not all here are exploiters and not all there, victims. One must, through contact, establish lines of solidarity with the exploited everywhere.

Second, and as I note in the conclusion to the dissertation, I was overwhelmingly welcomed by most in Zambia with the exception of a few influential actors who were suspicious of my motives. So, my question for the radical critic of ethnography who disavows it as a useful method is this: how would you describe Zambians’ overwhelming willingness to share? Is it ‘false-consciousness’, in that they do not realize that I was actually exploiting them and therefore they were, in talking to me, acting against their

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{7}} I realize that I am building a straw-man here; although only barely so.
own interests? In any case, the stance that makes the decision for our potential informants and collaborators from the corridors of western universities is fundamentally undemocratic.

1.5 Research Strategy

In July 2006, a news report on BBC Online piqued my interest. A tragic accident had killed over fifty workers in an explosives-manufacturing plant in Zambia’s Copperbelt Province. There were two details in the report that led me to explore the matter further through ‘Google’, in the first instance. First, the plant was owned by a Chinese company, which was something that back in 2006 had not yet received the kind of attention it would in subsequent years. Second, it mentioned that this was the worst-ever industrial accident in Zambia.

This last detail may not be so startling for many. But for someone who has spent most of his/her life in India, accidents in general and industrial accidents in particular—the coal mines are especially notorious there—are a frequent occurrence, which for me raised the question that why, despite being a fellow Third World country, did Zambia have a remarkably better record of preventing such tragedies? Surely, capitalists there were not any better human beings than those in India (although I realize some may hold that conception). The answer had to lie elsewhere. More research on the matter revealed the strong organization and historical militancy of the labor unions in that country. So, and to begin with, my project concerned the manner in which Zambian unions negotiate difference within their membership. A few grant applications later, I landed in Zambia in
the summer of 2006 for a pre-dissertation visit. It was both to get acquainted with the place, but to gauge if the project I had brought with me was relevant. I still do not know the answer to this last question. What I did realize on my visit was that a mining boom was underway in Zambia and what had been for James Ferguson a period of ‘tragic loss’, was giving way, once again in Ferguson’s words, to renewed ‘expectations of modernity’ (1999). In particular, the North Western Province was being talked about as the key to Zambia’s development.

Armed with these insights, and another round of grant applications later, I was once again in Zambia in the fall of 2007. I remained in the country until early-June 2008. A month was spent in Lusaka, mostly at the National Archives of Zambia accessing well-organized and recently digitized documents dating back to the earliest years of colonialism in this territory. The archival work is represented in the dissertation in my historical discussion of the chieftaincies in the study area, as way of understanding the ‘history of the present’.

Thereafter, I made my way, in October 2007 to Solwezi. There, I sought access to relevant actors by locating and making contacts with key ‘gatekeepers’ and more detached observers who were in the know. To this end, three relationships that I built in Solwezi were particularly helpful: the first was with locally-based reporters for national newspapers and the Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS). They covered all sorts of local happenings—from state meetings to traditional ceremonies—and were glad to keep me informed, and in many instances, I joined them at these various events. The second key relationship was with local Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in
Solwezi, and with two in particular—the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) which was an umbrella group of diverse NGOs that were concerned with poverty, broadly defined; and the Youth Alive Centre (Solwezi), which dealt with matters related to the health, employment and entertainment of young people in the region. Both these groups were locally active, and again, engaging with them on a daily basis took me to many different places, often leading to productive insights. Third, were certain locally ‘influential’ actors who opened many gates for my research: particularly crucial here were the officials at the Solwezi Municipal Council, through whom I made contacts with local level political actors and through them, in turn, several others. But many other, rich insights were accorded from my daily interactions with locals—from diverse sections of the society—as I lived in Solwezi between October 2007 and May 2008 (with a brief break in December for a critical geography conference in India).

The sites of the ethnographic fieldwork were two-fold, each corresponding to the bifurcated state structures in Zambia and with it, the divided (though often intersecting) political identities. Research on each of the two sites, namely the rural and the urban, contributes to the two parts of the dissertation respectively. Some questions that I posed to them were of a general nature: actors’ perceptions of the recent changes, the manner in which they were confronting them, and the means through which they were engaged in ushering in or resisting the process. But while the rural population was living in areas under the custodianship of the Kaonde chiefs, those in Solwezi township were in a place with a different system of governance and relationship with the mode of production. The former were largely engaged in subsistence agriculture, the latter were dependent on
selling their labor-power or using their labor in exchange for cash through informal trading. Further, the political lines in the town had an organized structure, with various civil society groups and labor unions taking the lead in articulating concerns; politics in the rural part of the enclave was diffuse and found unorganized expressions.

At such a site with multiple sources of authority, diverse experiences of change and a social and political context in flux, ethnographic research had to be extremely flexible. There were, of course, parts of it that were tightly planned and enforced. For instance, I spent time in Lumwana at various sites bordering the newly constructed copper mine and conducted interviews there. I also interviewed residents in four different compounds—the local name for urban settlements—in Solwezi over a three week period. Both were conducted with the help of assistants, who helped me with the interviews (which was necessary since many in these areas were not proficient in English).

Further, each interview, especially with certain ‘key’ actors, pushed the horizons of the research in new directions, which I followed with subsequent interviews. For other parts of the ethnographic work, a daily insertion into the life of the town was the method and I followed ‘leads’—often from the actors identified above—to conduct interviews and participant observation. At the end of my fieldwork, I had interviewed mine managers, workers, government officials, local chiefs, longtime residents, and recent migrants. I used participant observation in state events, protests and marches, ‘traditional’ ceremonies and functions, and public meetings.
Gaining insights into the matters of Part I of the dissertation, which relate to the politics and perceptions of development, continued throughout the period of the fieldwork. But the events and changes that are discussed in Part II came to my attention during my first two months of fieldwork. In November 2007, I came into contact with a group of workers at Lumwana who had been summarily dismissed from the mine on account of their refusal to rejoin work on account of the alleged non-payment of their promised wages. While discussing the matter with them I came to know the precise manner in which recruitment at that copper mine—the largest in Africa—took place. I was told that the local chiefs were placed in a mediating position between capital and labor. Part of my research agenda was already—building from my dissertation proposal—concerned with the examination of the chiefs’ position as far as their control over access to land was concerned. This fortuitous insight turned that research question towards their role in the process of capitalist accumulation. Thereafter, I interviewed those affected in and around the mine, two chiefs, and others with an opinion on the matter.

After the summer off, I returned to Columbus in September 2008 and analyzed the data in the form of interviews, hundreds of images of documents from the archives, and research notes from the field. I identified three themes for the analysis: development and its politics; the politics around the chiefs’ position with respect to capital; and the evolving meaning of tribe.
1.6 Plan of the Dissertation

The dissertation follows these themes. Chapter 2 analyzes and interprets ethnographic material related to the perceptions of development and modernity in the study area. It argues that these imaginaries are deeply geographical and are driven by the transformations in space. Their partial, incomplete and ongoing nature has ignited, what following Walter Benjamin, I term ‘collective wish images’ of development. There is a notion that Solwezi is now on the path to progress and is going to be—if not already—on the map of an imagined community of modern places. At the same time, there is widespread shock at the actual effects of the changes. I use these empirical insights as a point of entry into the debate on development, where a radical anti-development position has advocated its disavowal. I make the ethnographic point that development remains an important matter and its purchase on the ground needs to be taken seriously and analyzed.

Chapter 3 takes up the issue of the developmental impacts of mining on local communities in Zambia. It shows that there has been a shift in the close relationship between the two that was the social contract of the state-led extractive industry in the 1970s and 80s. Since then, and after the privatization of the industry, there has been a shift towards a neoliberal corporatist framework. It is characterized by a weak relationship which pivots around the mechanism of corporate social responsibility (CSR). As far as opposition to this weakening of developmentalism is concerned, and historically speaking, Zambian labor unions have been pivotal. However, they have been considerably weakened due to waves of retrenchment, and have largely receded into workplace-centered demands. This chapter uncovers the subtle political shifts that have
emerged around this process and an increasing radicalization of the civil society around CSR.

Chapter 4 introduces the politics of development in the areas under the custodianship of the chiefs, as it has emerged following the tribal recruitment policies put in place by the Lumwana mine. The question is what makes this politics possible? One part of the analysis is historical, uncovering the tribal logic of colonial and postcolonial epistemologies, state structures and development. I argue that development in Zambia has a tribal inflection because various tribes have been unevenly incorporated within the larger economy. This is responsible for their perception as ‘developed’ or ‘backward’, which then constructs the need for affirmative action on tribal lines. This matter articulates with powerful interests. It is, however, opposed by those from elsewhere who have moved to the region looking for employment. This case illustrates the issues that continue to be faced by postcolonial African nationalism and its attempts to create a secular nation-state and civil society. The problem for this project, however, is that the colonial tribal logics noted above have never really been resolved.

Finally Chapter 5 investigates the position of the tribal chiefs within the recruitment procedure. It builds on the fact that chiefs remain the relevant authority and political structure in areas outside of the civil society in Africa and have gained further impetus since political liberalization, as different parties compete for their support. The chapter contributes to this literature by showing that the chiefs’ place in this process is closely related to their position with respect to the capitalist economy. I detail how the Kaonde chiefs of the study region have been historically weak and largely marginal to the state;
but have been provided new sources of personal enrichment and authority with the mining boom.
PART I: Space, Society and Development in the Mining Boom
CHAPTER 2: Desire, Shock and Development in the New Copperbelt

2.1 Introduction

Development as a concept has been subjected to scathing critiques in the last two or so decades, particularly by the constellation of theorists that are often categorized as ‘post-development’ (cf. Escobar 1992; Illich 1997; see Pieterse 2000 for an overview). Their major contributions are related to the politically-significant critique of the discursive and material practices of development, particularly as part of the grand narrative of modernization. It has been shown, for instance, that despite largely disastrous consequences (Scott 1998), the ‘development industry’ embodied by the international financial institutions and myriad experts remains entrenched and carries on largely unhindered (Mitchell 2002). In his seminal contribution James Ferguson (1990a) has argued in this vein that it is not success or failure, but the technologies of power that development projects engender which are the key to the industry’s reproduction. A consequence of this now-substantial critique has been that alongside the panoply of experts, institutions, and their practices, development itself has entered an existential crisis. Though there is a realization that development may be a point of entry into state-spaces for the marginalized, there are calls for its abandonment as a relevant signifier for progressive politics because development by definition is seen to imply exclusion and
violence, and is therefore an ‘empty dream’ at best (Esteva and Prakash 1998; Rist 1997; Watts 1995: 45-46).

More recently, however, James Ferguson (2006) and Joel Wainwright (2008) have warned against such a disavowal. As Wainwright notes, ‘there can be no simple negation or rejection of development…[It] marks the site of fundamental doubt that must be struggled through in order to produce stronger positions and concepts’ (2008: 11). A postcolonial critique is offered by Wainwright as the means forward (Ibid: 1-38). On the other hand, and shifting from his earlier position, Ferguson now bats for an ethnographic method, which takes seriously the purchase development has on the ground across the Global South, and particularly in Africa. The present chapter advances this position by analyzing the ongoing mining boom in Zambia through the—contradictory—discourses of development that it has enervated. It does so, however, with a materialist analysis, keeping front and center the social relations and the broader context within which the boom is situated.

The wider shift that frames the boom is the object of analysis of Chapter 3. It is a move away from postcolonial developmentalism to neoliberal corporatism that has occurred since the mid-1990s. Initially, there was little to show for these changes. Copper prices remained low, foreign investment was scarce, and Zambia’s macroeconomic indicators displayed a general pessimism. It is only the recent investment, much of it from China and India, which has produced a boom in extractive industries and relatively high rates of
economic growth. Used in power transmission, computer chips and automobiles, copper is a key ingredient of the Asian countries’ ascendancy. In Solwezi District of the North Western Province of the country, two large foreign-owned copper mines have started operation there in the last three years employing more than 7000 workers. Thousands of migrants have arrived in the area seeking jobs and the myriad business opportunities thus created, and the locals’ lives have been fundamentally reconfigured. For its part, the state has connected this erstwhile ‘rural backwater’ of Zambia (Crehan 1997: 82) to the relatively more developed regions around the so-called ‘line of rail’ to the southeast through the rehabilitation of a highway and extension of the electricity grid (see Figure 2.1). Solwezi is now widely believed to be securely on the path to development and was hailed by the then Zambian President as the ‘New Copperbelt’ (Times of Zambia, 2006); a reference to the historical mining areas of Zambia’s Copperbelt Province. This is, moreover, a term which has stuck.

The contradictions brought forth by the arrival of extractive capital in this region are presciently illustrated by an event that I will now briefly describe. In the absence of a railway link between Solwezi and the other trade and population centers in Zambia, the new highway has assumed vital importance. Hundreds of trucks, buses, and private vehicles now pass through every day, and its recent re-tarring and widening have significantly increased vehicular speeds.

8 The Zambian GDP has grown at a rate of over 5% since 2005 and reached 6% in 2008 for the first time in over two decades (http://indexmundi.com/zambia/gdp_real_growth_rate.html)
Figure 2.1. Solwezi in relation to the ‘line of rail’ from Lubumbashi to Livingstone.
At the same time, numerous settlements dot the entire length of the highway, as a sort of ribbon development. In addition to homes, these are sites where public amenities like rural schools, clinics, and churches are located. The highway is therefore used, in addition to ‘modern’ transportation modes, by bicyclists, by students walking to and from schools, and by domestic animals—dogs and goats mostly—that stray onto the road. Given its multifarious uses, it should then be no surprise that accidents have begun to occur at an alarming rate.

One such incident occurred in May 2008, on the day of a ‘traditional’ ceremony about 60 miles from the town of Solwezi, which had drawn hundreds of visitors. Those with the means—or the right connections—arrived in cars at the venue; others hopped on several minibuses that had been diverted from their normal intra-town routes to ply between Solwezi and the site of the ceremony. At dusk, as the revelers were returning to Solwezi, the highway bore witness to a gruesome accident: a car had crashed into a bicycle, which lay completely crushed a few feet away from a bleeding corpse. I arrived at the site barely moments after the event. Already, residents of the nearby village had gathered at the scene—we were told that the car was speeding down the road, the driver was drunk from the traditional-brew on ‘tap’ at the ceremony, and that the deceased lived in the nearby settlement. Thereafter, and in a matter of minutes, the initial shock had turned into anger. Collected villagers started pelting rocks at all passing traffic, damaging many vehicles and injuring a few passengers.

One could consider this an irrational response to the accident. Or, it could be seen as a spontaneous but deeply relevant critique of the materiality of capitalism, which the
villagers are forced to negotiate on a daily basis. The highway, in this reading, sways dialectically from being the conveyor of the concrete materials of modernity on the one hand, and of tragedy on the other. To advance such a reading of the ongoing transformations in the New Copperbelt, I suggest an engagement with the work of Walter Benjamin (1968; 2004). It is because Benjamin brings into focus three simultaneous phenomena in the context of rapid social change associated with incipient capitalism: first, the shift in the mode of production, that is the implantation of capitalism; second, the accompanying transformation of ‘new nature’, which for Benjamin includes both the non-human and the new technological landscape (Buck-Morss 1989: 111); and third, the meanings attached to these processes by those affected. Focusing on these intersections, I argue that the mining boom in Solwezi has ignited ‘collective wish images’ of development (Benjamin 2004). At the same time, these images are accompanied by the experience of shock from certain concrete elements of change. Many find these contradictory experiences altogether difficult to articulate, and they are therefore often expressed in fantastic forms. I discuss this play of desire and shock at length in this chapter. But before doing so, let me first discuss the debate on development that I aim to intervene in.

2.2 A Brief History of Development

A cursory look at global economic indicators reveals the wide—and growing—gulf between the part of the world termed ‘developed’ and that which is widely known as ‘developing’ (Smith 1997; Weeks 2001). Even within the latter, while several countries in East and South East Asia have charted some sort of a route out of absolute poverty,
Africa remains firmly in its grip. Development, therefore, remains a central concern for states and shapes popular desires. The means to it have, however, shifted over the years. After a brief period of state-led developmentalism, neoliberalism has been the means to development and was experienced in Africa through the ubiquitous structural adjustment programs in the 1990s (Carmody 2007; Owusu 2003; Samatar 1993). These led to the large-scale privatization of the economy in the hopes of attracting foreign investment. The logic was that the resultant economic growth would ‘trickle down’ and lead to the end of poverty (Aghion and Bolton 1997). To this, was added the need for political liberalization on the belief that the patrimonial form of ‘parasitic’ state in Africa was obstructing development there (Chabal 2002: 447-448; Sandbrook 2000: 1-21). Through the 1990s, however, there was very little to show for these changes (Saul 2005).

This has been the site of the post-development critique; many pointing out the Eurocentric norms implicit in the definition and practices of development (see Brohman, 1995; Tucker 1999). This point resonates with a strand of postcolonial theory that goes a step further, arguing that even the dominant critique of global inequality is itself Eurocentric, and have to that extent been critical of Marxist theorizations (Chakrabarty, 2000; Mitchell, 2002). Other critics of development point to the destruction of ecology brought forth by development projects (Shiva, 1988), and still others their hierarchical,

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9 ‘Development is the process whereby other peoples are dominated and their destinies are shaped according to an essentially Western way of conceiving and perceiving the world. The development discourse is part of an imperial process whereby other peoples are appropriated and turned into objects’ (Tucker, 1999, p.1).
top-down character (Scott, 1998). There are two broad political expressions of this critique: its radical version speaks of the abandonment of development as a signifier of political import, and is often for that reason anti-development (Corbridge, 1998), while the deconstructionist strand invites critics to investigate the discursive means through which practices of development become hegemonic. It is apparent how development may be instrumentalized to entrench state power and the rule of capital. This is the case, for instance, when a minister in the Zambian government backs the summary firing of workers involved in a wildcat strike, saying that since ‘Zambia was a country in a hurry to develop, such lawlessness would not be tolerated’ (Main News, 2008). But development takes on a somewhat different—and I would argue, progressive—meaning when a rural inhabitant in Solwezi District says that the new mining activity ‘will make Zambia a real Zambia or different… [it] will bring quick development’ (Personal interview 17 March 2008), while another expresses a desire to get a job on the mine because ‘I need to have a standard of living in my future…I don’t want to suffer in the village’ (Personal interview 28 May 2007). Theorists interested in politics of development must therefore take seriously the meanings of and contestations around development on the ground.

Returning to the ‘brief history’, and in part, the failure of postcolonial developmentalism in Africa was scripted by its inextricable links to global capital. This was the case in the mid-1970s when the global commodities’ crash brought down countries dependent on the export of one or the other commodity. The result is that a glance at the global GDP figures shows that the developmental gap between the West and African countries is
growing (Smith 1997). Neither is this completely inexplicable. In the words of John Weeks (2001), there exists ‘primary’ unevenness between places where capitalism is hegemonic and those where it is only weakly developed.

As for capitalism, for Karl Marx there were two elements to its instantiation: the creation of private property through the dispossession of immediate producers; and the resultant division of the population into two classes, those that owned the means of production and the vast majority who were engaged in wage-labor in order to subsist. Marx showed how this class relation was achieved historically through a fundamental transformation of society, one that was imposed by force and was ‘written in fire and blood’ (1990: 8). Dialectically speaking, however, it has been this very process that set in motion the creative energies of capitalism and the subsequent development of the forces of production and a general upliftment in the standard of living (Harvey 2005: 137-182).

South Africa is the exception in Africa that proves this rule; although it is one where this process occurred in a deeply perverted form (cf Wolpe 1972). But what of those (colonized) places where primitive accumulation was never widely undertaken? For obvious reasons, the violence inherent in large-scale dispossession of immediate producers is resisted by those affected. In postcolonial societies, especially those with a semblance of popular accountability, it is therefore a non-starter. Yet, capitalism continues to be seen as the means to development (Wainwright 2008). Consequently, dispossession is often viewed teleologically as leading to capitalism and the consequent end of scarcity, even among those on the Left (Da Costa 2007).
In this light, and in the era of neoliberalism, a key concern of states in the Global South has been to fashion a transition to capitalism. The privatization of industries and the ‘liberalization’ of land tenure—to create private property from the so-called customary tenure—have been two elements of this project (Bernstein 2002), which has often been described in the technical vocabulary of creating economic growth and bringing-in foreign investment. Despite two decades of its operation, however, in most instances capitalism has not made strides into Africa in any significant manner (Saul 2005). Yet, once again, development and its intersections with capitalism continue to be relevant, both to state-elites and the public at large. Neither its disavowal nor an exclusively deconstructive stance, then, are adequate for they fail to engage with the popular meanings of development situated beyond the discourses borne out of globally-influential institutions like the World Bank and IMF (Ferguson 2006: 176-193). This is politically significant because, as Ferguson adds, modernity and development are important concepts through which Africans and those in the Global South debate their place in the world and are therefore sites where issues of global inequality find expression (32). In this chapter I show how the arrival of capitalism is related to notions of development. But first, let me sketch the geographical expression of these changes.

2.3 A Place on the Move

Some time ago, Michael Watts and Alan Pred asked critical theorists to ‘understand the various guises, metamorphoses and reconfigurations’ of capitalism from multiple “vantage points”’ (1992: 1). Solwezi allows us a point of entry from the other end of global capitalism; from the margins that are connected to its vicissitudes through the
export of resources that drive industries elsewhere. In this chapter, I build on eight-
months of sustained ethnographic fieldwork in the area between October 2007 and May
2008, which included open ended and semi-structured interviews and participant
observation. I interviewed mine managers, workers, government officials, local chiefs,
longtime residents, and recent migrants. I used participant observation in state events,
protests and marches, ‘traditional’ ceremonies and functions, and public meetings.

The opening of two new copper mines—namely, Kansanshi and Lumwana—in Solwezi
has reconfigured the regional geography. The promise of jobs and other opportunities has
attracted thousands from across Zambia to the region. According to estimates, the
population of Solwezi town is estimated to be anywhere between 120,000 and 150,000
today\(^\text{10}\); up more than three times from the year 2000 (CSO 2001). The boom has led to
an influx of allied activities—like engineering and transportation—and supporting
services both formal (banks, cellphone and internet companies, retail etc) and informal
(taxicabs, street vendors, and sex workers), making Solwezi a modern-day African ‘Wild
West’. Kansanshi is one of the oldest mines in Zambia, dating back to 1898, but had been
the only one in the region until Lumwana began construction in 2004. Kansanshi though
has been sporadically mined, with major suspensions corresponding to the First World
War, the 1930s Depression, and in the mid-1980s as part of the closure of non-
performing state-enterprises\(^\text{11}\). In addition, being an underground shaft-mine the high

\(^\text{10}\) The national census is carried out every ten years in Zambia. The next one will take place in 2011. For
the time being, therefore, this range supplied by the local statistical office must suffice.

\(^\text{11}\) The information until 1964 is from: National Archives of Zambia, District Notebooks, Solwezi District,
water table in the region would often flood the mine, which made operations a continuous challenge. It is only recently that Kansanshi was redeveloped as an open-pit mine with the help of new technology. Lumwana is a similarly large open-pit mine, but for somewhat different reasons. Being low-grade, large quantities of ore must be excavated and processed to make the Lumwana mine profitable. As a result, heavy mining machinery, a huge processing plant, and a relatively large number of workers are required. The mines’ enormity translates into labor requirements and the substantial numbers of jobs on offer attract an even larger number of supplicants. The reasons for moving to Solwezi are diverse, having to do with the promise of jobs and opportunities to make money from trading various commodities. Many that I spoke to were from the Copperbelt. That province has a large proletarianized population and a high unemployment rate of over 30 per cent (CSO 2006). A number of these people have some experience of working on the copper mines—in various capacities—and thus consider themselves qualified for similar jobs in the New Copperbelt.\(^\text{12}\)

Due to the absence of other major industries and the checkered history of Kansanshi, the region has a largely rural and subsistence oriented economy, and Solwezi town itself was a relatively small administrative center or Boma until very recently. This is the blank-

\(^{12}\) I conducted in-depth interviews with four former mineworkers from the Copperbelt. While they did have experience, they considered their chances of landing a job slim because ‘tribalism’ was a major factor in finding employment in Solwezi (Chapter 4).
slate of sorts upon which the recent inflow of population and economic activity is
discursively situated. There is now a general perception of the area as a place on the
move, which is ‘finally waking up from deep sleep’ (Personal interview 12 March 2008)
[see Figure 2.2]. For its part, the government is keen to focus on the positive facets of the
boom like increased employment and business opportunities. The Permanent Secretary
for the Province stated that ‘[Solwezi] which was once a Cinderella town…now is a hive
of activity’ (Mulando 2007), all thanks to the government.

Despite these celebratory narratives, on observation, the place reveals a different story. In
the absence of any significant social reinvestment of profits and uninhibited influx of
populations, there is haphazard expansion and the infrastructure is hugely overstretched.
According to the Municipal Council, services in Solwezi town were planned for a
population of 20,000. It seems that no one foresaw the economic boom currently
underway there. The state, which is responsible for service delivery in Zambia, has been
playing catch up. Entire new housing colonies, locally known as ‘compounds’, exist
without any basic services. Residents pay for water by the bucket at kiosks set up either
by the state or as is more common, by certain local entrepreneurs; and these areas plunge
into darkness after sunset.
Figure 2.2. Sign on Entry to Solwezi Town [University of Leiden 2008]

Only three roads in Solwezi are tarred, and all but the main road connecting the town to the Copperbelt have been tarred in the last two years. The rest of the network comprises drainage channels and is therefore impassable during the rainy season. One of the recurrent complaints of taxi-cab drivers in Solwezi therefore concerns the extraordinary battering that their cars must go through on an average day. The public transportation is composed of minibuses that serve a few compounds—negotiating these poor roads—but residents of many areas must walk up to three to four kilometers to get into town, or to schools and clinics. On the other hand, the private spaces of the mine-managers are radically different. Expatriate and Zambian executives can enjoy a round of golf at the new course overlooking the bustling township; and the green roofs of their large
bungalows are clearly visible from the town. Millennial Solwezi, in sum, provides a glimpse into the spaces of contemporary extractive capitalism—mining is now only about extraction, and is no longer, as was the case during its colonial and postcolonial avatars, a wide-ranging social exercise. Despite this, however, the recent changes in Solwezi have led to collective wish images, to which I turn next.

2.5 Images of Development

‘To the form of the new means of production that in the beginning is still dominated by the old one (Marx), there correspond in the societal superstructure wish images in which the new is intermingled with the old in fantastic ways…[the new] striving to set itself apart from the recently outmoded, renews archaic, ur-temporal elements.’ (Benjamin 2004: 893)

In interview questions asking informants to express their thoughts on the ongoing transformation, many would immediately draw comparisons with the era of postcolonial developmentalism (lasting roughly from the mid-1960s to early 1980s). It was when the newly independent state assumed control of the economy. Extraction of copper was soon carried out by the vertically integrated public sector giant Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) and was characterized by the channeling of surpluses from mining to other sectors, and its geographical effects included the expansion of social services across Zambia. Informants often reminisced about the ZCCM-era, when workers were provided proper housing, children received good education, electricity was free, and Zambian football teams regularly competed for continental championships. Here Walter Benjamin’s above quote is remarkably insightful. It builds on Marx’s elaboration that
individuals learning a new language initially translate all fresh material into their mother-tongue. Applied to a social context, the promises of the nascent, partial, and ongoing transformations of Solwezi are articulated through the vocabulary of the supposed golden times of the past (see also Watts 1999). To be sure, there was significant unevenness in the social and spatial effects of the redistribution of the ZCCM-era; corruption was endemic, and most Zambians even back then lived in poverty. But herein lays the mythic element of popular imaginaries: the problems of the ur-past are removed and its ‘unfulfilled desires’ (Buck-Morss 1989: 99) isolated and reconvened to express the new.

Moreover, as the final part of Benjamin’s quote asserts, the ur-past and the ongoing changes are connected also in their contrast with the most recent past. The mining boom in Zambia comes after more than two decades of economic decline. Many who have made their way to Solwezi have done so from the Copperbelt Province, the historical center of copper mining in Zambia and the site of the most intense decline in the two decades prior to the recent boom. That was the period when popular imaginaries were composed of an overwhelming feeling of ‘tragic loss’ after an altogether brief experience of modernity after independence in 1964 until the effects of the global economic crisis in the 1970s hit with their full fury (Ferguson 1999). The 1990s were in turn a period of profound ‘impotence and inevitability’ (Larmer and Fraser 2007), as the country was forced to privatize its all-important copper mining industry as part of a wide ranging structural adjustment program. As a result, many thousands lost their jobs, and others lucky enough to be employed were handed much less amenable conditions of work.
marked by the precariousness that accompanies casualization. It is this context of loss, poverty, and decline that lends promise to the most recent mining boom.

Millennial Solwezi—as a product of the mining boom—allows us an entry into popular imaginaries during the incipient stages of social transformations. It is this incompleteness and the simultaneous thrill of the new that produce ‘wish images’. It is not an easy idea to explain in words; but it signifies the images, for instance, that are ignited by such things as the news of the discovery of oil, especially in the Global South. One may recollect how such news produces fantastic ideas of a future prosperity, even though in many instances, the actual production of oil never takes place. Consider here the words of the then Zambian president, who explained the coming development of Solwezi and the state’s role in the process, “My government is determined to open this area to economic development in all major areas, tourism, food processing, copper production, oil and bees. I am also told there are diamonds in this area” (quoted in Malama 2004). It shows how the partialness of the new—at the time of this statement Kansanshi had just been opened—triggers fantastic ideas of the coming prosperity. As a final illustration, consider the following excerpt from a report published in a national daily. It is about the progress in the construction of the Lumwana-Solwezi highway. But it is, simultaneously, about much more: the road brings forth images of development:

Incidentally, North Western Province has been in the news recently also because certain oil reserves have supposedly been found there. (‘Oil and Gas Discovered in Zambia’, BBC Online, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6076636.stm, 26 November 2006)
“The Lumwana-Solwezi road is significant to the development of North-Western Province. It touches on the economic activities of the province, and leads to Lumwana Mine, which is set to become the largest single copper-producing mine in Africa. Lumwana Mine chief executive officer, Harry Michael, said the construction of the road would provide a facilitating environment for the growth of businesses in the area. It could stir the growth of industries in Solwezi particularly and North-Western Province as a whole. “We are supporters of infrastructure development projects. It (the new road) will provide a conduit for business facilities and opportunities not only for Lumwana but also other businesses,” Mr Michael said.”

I suggest that in Solwezi there are two elements that co-constitute these wish images of development. First, the recent proliferation of certain concrete symbols of modernity, which signal the place’s arrival within the imagined community of the developed world; and second, the appearance of modern high-tech machinery at the copper mines.

As Solwezi started attracting people with ‘spending-power’, that is, contractors, managers, state officials, and civil society representatives; so appeared services that vied for a share of their Kwachas. To be sure, all manner of informal activities have emerged, including those that service the subalterns, like cheap restaurants, bars, and stores. The claims on modernity of these establishments, however, are radically different and less potent than those that cater to the elite. Even though most people may never actually experience the latter as consumers, their presence has placed ‘Solwezi on the map’, as an

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informant expressed it (Personal interview 29 October 2007). The map here represents the community of modern places, which Solwezi has never been part of but the images of which people have access to through various media. Hence, the opening of the Royal Solwezi Hotel in 2007 marked an important milestone in Solwezi’s transformation to modernity. Solwezi was now part of a select list of Zambian cities with a proper hotel. The place was also added to an even smaller list of cities with an air connection and daily flights to the capital Lusaka with the rehabilitation of its long-dead airstrip. Then, it was announced that a rail link would be extended from the Copperbelt to Solwezi at the cost over $250 million (Mupuchi 2007). Together, the hotel, airport, and the announcement of the railway-link were a sure sign that Solwezi had arrived, and belonged in the world of developed and modern world.

The second constituent element is related to the materiality and promises of the mining companies. According to Anna Tsing (2000), the act of ‘conjuring’ is essential to the working of speculative branches of capital such as mineral extraction. Storytelling is necessary to raise capital, an activity that requires that the potential of distant returns are sold in the present to investors. Similarly, to acquire land, licenses, and favorable development agreements with particular nation-states within whose territory resources may be located, stories promising the capital’s developmental impacts must be conjured.

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15 One may—correctly—argue that all capital is speculative. Certainly, the lag between investment and the realization of profit necessarily makes it so. One can though also speak of relatively more or less speculative enterprises. Mining is one of these because of the huge investment it requires much before the production of output.
A critical reading of the mines’ texts and performances in public forums in Solwezi reveals their acts of conjuring, especially the articulation of their role as the drivers of development.

As Tsing writes, investments are drawn ‘through drama’, where “spectacle and mystery, playing equally across the line of the real and the fake, establish the winning reality of performance” (2000: 127). As a relatively minor player in the copper mining industry, Equinox Minerals—the owner of Lumwana Copper Mine—initially had trouble securing funds for the project, and in the words of the Chief Executive Craig Williams, ‘it took persistence and a good story’ to make plans concrete, to build “a giant mine in an obscure corner of the world that almost no one believed in until [the CEO] convinced them otherwise” (Koven 2008). Equinox’s construction of Solwezi and its own presence there is summarized nicely in this statement: ‘In Central Africa, [a] big problem is the unskilled workforce. About 80% of workers in rural Zambia have never even driven a car, much less a giant truck. Equinox brought in four simulators, at a cost of US $400,000 a piece to give each employee at least 40 hours of training before they start working in the open pits’ (Koven 2008). Hailed as the largest single foreign direct investment in Zambia, Lumwana from its inception has been much more than a purely capitalist enterprise. As early as 2006, two years before it started operations, the CEO called Lumwana a ‘driving force of a new copper province’, and as ‘holding the key to Zambia’s future as a major copper-producing nation’ (Tassell 2006). According to the Managing Director, “Lumwana had a dream that it has slowly brought to life…It is not only bringing massive investment, but jobs, expertise, and opportunities for Zambia”, and
that the mine will “transform the economy of North-Western Province [and will] kick
start growth and bring a measure of prosperity to areas which would otherwise have little
prospect of ever escaping from poverty” (Harry Michael quoted in Tassell 2008).

These stories are related dialectically with and provided weight by the mines’ physical
presence; in particular, by huge pieces of technology that are employed to extract and
process ore. At the Lumwana mine, visitors are shown—and only pre-arranged and
escorted visits are allowed—the single ball mill that consumes 18 MW of electricity, and
are told that the entire town of Solwezi uses merely 6MW. One understands that once
operational, the mine will require ten per cent of the national diesel consumption. Then
there is the 5 km long conveyor belt extending from the crusher atop the open pit to the
centrally located—and appropriately huge—processing plant. But most of all, for the
copper mine the performance (Aitken 2007) is provided the greatest effect by its fleet of
giant trucks that carry the ore out of the pit. One must look skywards, as if at the mid-day
sun, to view their decks from the ground. The tires measure 5 meters in diameter.
Constructed, understandably, with total disregard for the human scale, the tires dwarf one
completely; each is worth more than $100,000. For a first-time observer it is hard not to
be awed by these trucks.

I toured Lumwana alongside a small group of civil society activists in February 2008. As
we drove past the compound where the trucks were lined, a fellow visitor could not help
but exclaim, ‘wow!’ Similarly, in Zambian newspaper features on the copper mines in
Solwezi, VIPs and reporters are often photographed posing next to the trucks [Figure
2.3]. It is as if the contrast between the enormity of the trucks and the dwarfed Zambians
signifies the mines’ equally significant importance for the country’s—otherwise miniscule—prospects of development. Alongside the recent proliferation of symbols of modernity, these are the kinds of daily interactions with the ‘new nature’ of extractive capitalism which produce wish images of development in Solwezi. The promise of these images, however, is accompanied by the shock of the concrete.

Figure 2.3. Zambian VIPs being shown a truck during their tour of Lumwana [Source: Zambia News and Information Services].
2.6 The Shock of Modernity

Thus far I have argued that the ongoing transformations have ignited wish images of modernity in Solwezi. They have also, however, produced two related and problematic offshoots: first, and what Michael Watts following Benjamin terms the ‘shock of modernity’ (1999), that is the reality of change that contrasts with its more abstract desires; and second, the fetishization of new nature as development itself. The incident discussed in the introduction to this chapter showed the manner in which the markers of modernity may produce shock. The same highway which promised to connect the region to the world of development brought misery to those whose lives were disrupted by it. It was thus in a spontaneous burst of emotion that they gave expression to this shock. On a personal scale, consider the words of a forty-year old local male who was in Lumwana in search of work, and while there, had set up a stall to sell various petty commodities:

“I am very interested to work in Lumwana because I don’t have proper living and I need to have a good living”. But he also expressed another side of the changes, saying that ‘because of development more thieves have entered those thieves who were to town are the one who are here now’ (Personal interview, 17 November 2007).

Such intersections of desire and what may be called, shock were common while I conducted my fieldwork there. In this section I present evidence of this shock of modernity by analyzing a rumor that engulfed Solwezi early 2008, for it reveals much about the social space and its interdigitations with the collective psyche.
2.6.1 The Case of the Snake-man

There has been substantial work in African Studies on the social role of rumors and the relationships in society that they disclose. The most famous one in the history of copper mining towns in Zambia—or Northern Rhodesia, as the territory was known—is the rumor of the blood sucking vampires (*banyama*) that targeted Africans working for Europeans. The rumor has been interpreted as showing, among other things, anxieties related to migrant workers’ travel away from home, and the high rate of fatalities in mining (White 1993). Rumors, more generally ‘reveal an intellectual world of fears and fantasies, ideas and claims’ (White 2000: 86). It is with this idea that I discuss here the trajectory of a rumor in Solwezi in February 2008, for it contains subconsciously-held images of the changing social spaces of the town.

It was on a weekday afternoon that a crowd of onlookers gathered outside the police station at Solwezi *Boma* to witness the capture by the police of a ‘half-snake half-man’ or for the purpose of this paper, the ‘snake-man’. Having heard the rumor, tens of locals made their way to the station from different parts of town, though a disproportionate number were from the main market, where hundreds of small stalls and shacks carry groceries and household wares for sale. It was only after multiple announcements by the Police denying the rumor that those gathered lost hopes of a glimpse of the snake-man, and the crowds finally dissipated. Interestingly, almost all onlookers that I talked to insisted that they did not really believe in the existence of such an obviously fantastic creature. They explained their presence by appeal to curiosity but at the same time almost everyone weighed in on their version of the story.
Several theories on this mutated body were in circulation: from it being an alien planted in the town to conjecturing related to witchcraft. It was only in the following days that the rumor became more or less stabilized, and a common thread emerged out of these divergent stories. This explanation proceeded as follows: the snake-man was a recent immigrant to Solwezi from the Copperbelt—it was not clear whether he worked in the mines, but I note this uncertainty because versions of this story did assert that link—who lived in one of the new settlements on the outskirts of the town. As it turned out this man was unfaithful to his wife and was having an affair with another woman. Thus angered and suspecting foul play, the wife sought out a witchdoctor, who gave her a concoction that would treat the husband, which in the context meant making him faithful once again. The wife duly mixed in this medicine with the husband’s food, only to discover that the witchdoctor’s prescription had gone out of hand: instead of a psychological intervention in the man’s behavioral patterns, it started to transform him into a snake. Panicked, the wife went looking for the doctor, who by now had left the place, and the husband was stuck with the predicament. It was at this point that neighbors got wind of the happening, and the husband—now the snake-man—was brought to the police station, which can be read as an act of a distinctive postcolonial sense of duty towards the state and its apparatus.

Incidentally, the lower part of the body was where this metamorphosis occurred; and one suspects that if there was indeed such a person identified as the snake-man, he may have certain skin-related affliction on his feet. But searching for ‘truth’ of the rumor is not as important or revealing as is the narrative stabilized in the course of the rumor’s exchange.
and evolution. It indicates certain fantastical but lucid disclosures related to the ‘shock’ of life in the New Copperbelt. In interview questions—particularly in discussions with women—and in observation of public meetings, a recurrent theme concerned the proliferation of certain undesirable populations in the area, especially the influx of sex workers. The link between mining communities and anxieties related to the policing of sexual activities in domestic life has been previously documented (Ferguson 1999: 166-206; Powdermaker 1962; see also Fassin, 2007). It is generally believed that because they are well paid, male mineworkers are easily lured by sex workers, in part also because many are migrants and are thus away from their wives or partners back home. These anxieties were, for instance, displayed by a news-report in the ‘National Mirror’, which lamented the seasonal migration of sex workers to Solwezi from other parts of Zambia and from as far afield as Zimbabwe, especially at the end of the month when the mineworkers got paid (Mwakasungula 2007). The report was graphic in its description of the ‘vice’:

“Dressed in semi nudity, smoking and drinking, kissing and having sex behind night club buildings are common practices. Most people talked to during a night survey […] attributed the rise in the vice to the mushrooming of mines which indirectly provided a cheap livelihood to sex workers as they simply parade for the miners believed to have fat pockets” (Ibid:4).

A similar report in the state-run ‘Zambia Daily Mail’ quoted the Mayor of Solwezi as saying, “The abrupt development which has come to Solwezi has attracted sex workers whose high seasonal mobility is like that of swallows” (Mubambe 2004). Another report
in the local news-pamphlet ‘Bakwetu’ contended that even the classy Royal Solwezi Hotel was not untouched by this unwelcome occurrence and attracted suitably high-class prostitutes who apparently ‘preyed’ on expatriates and other elite who stayed there (‘Kansanshi Hurting Solwezi’ 2008). This matter has been of significance for the local state as well: at a District Development Committee meeting that I attended, the colonization of certain spaces by sex workers was lamented upon and the District Commissioner (DC) Albert Chifita spoke with disgust about one such place where sex workers ‘openly display themselves’. Neither is the DC all talk, he has been at the forefront of the local state’s response to this perceived menace. Personally ‘flushing out’ sex workers from several guest houses earlier this year, Chifita added that “some women had permanently taken over rooms in some relatively cheap guest houses in the name of doing open and common trade like any other traders yet their motive was after men” (Sex workers...2009).

Others, particularly those in civil society groups, discussed the matter not so much out of disgust but a sense of alarm of a potential health epidemic, foreseeing the rapid growth in the cases of HIV/AIDS in the town as a result of the unwanted invasion of sex-workers. The impending crisis was often linked to the mushrooming of bars across the town, which drew men because there was little to do in Solwezi except drinking beer . In this

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16 This was a clear thread that emerged in a focus-group I conducted with four Solwezi youths in March 2008. They belonged to a local theater group, who had made a short film—that same month—on what they considered to be important issues facing the youth in Solwezi. It ended with an extended scene set in a local bar, and warned viewers against the ills of prostitution and drinking. The film was screened in various high
way, the supposed loss of sexual and familial propriety in Solwezi was related both to the
influx of problem bodies and the proliferation of unwanted spaces. In short, the visions of
progress ignited by things such as the giant ball mills shared conceptual space with the
moral shock of the loosening of social norms, norms that the snake-man had overstepped
and was paying the price for.

I believe further that it was not a coincidence that the metamorphosis of the husband was
mediated by a snake. The haphazard growth of Solwezi has translated into the
mushrooming of numerous new settlements in the outskirts. All sorts of shacks and more
permanent structures are built in the ‘bush’, as any space outside of town is locally
referred to. In many of these townships in the bush one finds—much like in the rural
areas—yards cleared of shrubs and grass. It is for the fear of snakes and indeed to keep
them out of homes that a cleaned yard is maintained by residents. The snake in the rumor
can then be interpreted as an expression of the constant fear of and contact with snakes
that many in Solwezi live with. If the post-War economic boom in the US produced the
suburbs as the emblematic spaces of social reproduction, then these settlements sans
basic services and existing in snake-infested bush characterize the social spaces of the
latest mining boom in Zambia; spaces where desire and anxieties are simultaneous
realities.

schools in the town.
2.6.2 Shoprite and its demise

In her seminal work on Walter Benjamin, Susan Buck-Morss writes: ‘…symbol turns into fetish, and technology, the means for realizing human dreams, is mistaken for their actualization.’ (1989: 118). In other words, when the means of development are given a life-force of their own, they come to stand for development itself. This happened in two forms in Solwezi: through the fetishization of technology, such as the gigantic trucks; and of commodities, which various—big and small—capitalist enterprises brought to Solwezi. I have already discussed how the display of machinery and the performances of conjuring that capital enacted together produced wish images. While this symbolized the desire for the new and modern, it is hard to distinguish desire from fetish at certain moments. As trucks brought disassembled machine parts—most notably, of the giant ball mill—to Lumwana in 2006-2007, their itinerary was broadcast beforehand on public radio stations and fascinated residents lined the streets of Solwezi to catch a glimpse of the procession. Abstracted from its material use and part in the capitalist labor process; the ball mill came to stand for development itself.

Fetish can also be seen in people’s relationship with commodities, and it is illustrated particularly clearly by case of the ‘Shoprite’ store in Solwezi. This South African-owned retail chain opened a store in Solwezi in 2006, one of only a handful outside of the capital Lusaka. It was an event accompanied by much fanfare, and was another sign that Solwezi had arrived. Writing about the Paris Arcades, Benjamin compared the space to a ‘circus’ (2004: 43), noting that for the first time, and through their experience of the Arcades, consumers could conceive of themselves as a collective. In the few cities and towns
across Zambia where it operates, Shoprite can be read as such a space of variegated circus-like interactions. Poor children offer to carry their shopping bags while shoppers peruse the aisles of the supermarket; taxi-drivers offer their services to those carrying heavy loads with a shake of their keys; and various informal petty-entrepreneurs hawk newspapers, magazines, and cellphone talk-time outside the store. In addition, a number of ‘business-women’ also lined up at the bakery section of Shoprite to purchase bread for resale at relatively busy street-corners; many choosing to do so right outside the store. Because Shoprite bread was considered better than the regular sandwich variety, and because these same women crowded the bakery inside the store, many preferred to purchase bread from them outside at a marginally higher price. In short, Shoprite became a central public space in Solwezi, speaking of which a female interviewee commented that it was the ‘most happening place in town’ (Personal interview, 18 October 2007).

That there were only about a dozen such multinational supermarket branches nationwide meant that it was also an important symbol of Solwezi’s progress. One can certainly understand why supermarkets connect with desires and wish images of modernity. In addition to the bright lights, the cleanliness of things, and the aesthetics of the product arrangements, this is also because walking down its aisles one experiences the feeling of plenty, of the riches that the world possesses. This feeling though contains the element of fetish because commodities are nothing but the concrete form of the relations of production (Marx 1990[1867]: Ch.1 Section 4), and the ability to consume them a direct consequence of one’s relationship to the mode of production. Given that most in Solwezi
Moreover, the truly phantasmagoric character of Shoprite and the dialectics of wish images and shock becomes fully visible in the following moment of disruption. In January 2008, residents of Solwezi woke up to find the store on fire—even as fire raged and smoke billowed, hordes of locals gathered around to witness the event. That they continued to congregate over three straight days to view the last rites of Shoprite shows the symbolic excess of the store beyond its material presence. Many spent hours at the site with acquaintances, as if fixated by the ashes of erstwhile commodities. For months the absence at this ‘Ground Zero’ continued to remind passersby of what once was, and recently an expatriate development worker reported that the reconstruction of Shoprite has once more become a ‘great attraction’ for locals (Kahler 2008). This episode shows how wish images are related to fetish, and reveals their precariousness in that they may turn into shock at any moment.

2.7 Conclusion

I now return to the debate on development. The preceding discussion points to rather different contours of praxis than those charted by the body of work that is commonly termed ‘post-development’. My reading of the situation builds on Benjamin to propose that we conceptualize development dialectically, distinguishing the desires from their social context. For such a reading the collective desire for progress and an end to the drudgery of the present is not the problem—in fact, it is a significant political opening—
but it is the social relations within which the wish images are embedded that is the
obstruction.

It is not a pre-given that places like Solwezi typify the place-making effects of
contemporary extractive capitalism. This is a result jointly, among others, of neoliberal
privatization and lop-sided development agreements between the state and capital. The
upshot is that massive profits are being generated from the copper mines in Solwezi, with
at best token reinvestment done through the euphemistic vocabulary of ‘corporate social
responsibility’. With a different, more democratic, ownership of the means of production,
Solwezi could be a drastically different and qualitatively better place. The political
question then relates directly to ownership, and not the claims to development or even the
development industry, which though problematic is ultimately a fetishized entity, in the
sense that it is itself composed by and within capitalist relations of property and power.

Here we can turn to another idea that interested Benjamin—his conception of the ‘ruin’
(Buck-Morss 1989: 159-201). For Benjamin, the same new nature that produces wish
images may turn into ruins if it remains embedded in capitalism. The spaces and symbols
that once instigated wish images may now resemble ruins or debris, reminding the public
of loss through their sheer presence. This is because capital is necessarily prone to crisis
and operates through booms and busts. The geography of these cyclical flows is,
however, varied. Places gain in value during periods of upswing, but are as easily
devalued in crisis. At another scale, as David Harvey states, the geopolitics of the
capitalist crisis often turns around deflecting its worst effects or devaluations on to other
territories (1982). In such a scenario, it is no surprise that generally speaking, African
countries experiences of crisis are qualitatively more poignant than that of the Global North.

Zambians are acutely aware of the precise trajectories of this process. The large mines that promised a postcolonial path to development became transformed into ruins in the aftermath of the economic decline of the 1970s and 80s. Several places dependent on mining and industry became ghost towns, even as the massive processing plants and other infrastructure—now in disuse—continued to exist as ruins reminding everyone of the days past (Figure 2.4). Most mining towns on the Zambian Copperbelt were home to this landscape of decline. While few stuttered back to economic activity, the town of Luanshya did not once the local copper mine closed. As part of the wide-ranging structural adjustment program, the Luanshya mine was the first to be sold amidst much fanfare, but the new owners asset-stripped it and fled Zambia (Larmer 2005). It is only very recently that the mine became operational once again as a result of the latest mining boom and Luanshya slowly hopped back to life. But the mine became the first casualty of the latest global crisis. In December 2008, the owners of the Luanshya Copper Mine decided to cease operations and retrenched all its 1740 employees (Luanshya Copper Mine 2008)17. Once again, the symbols of development threatened to become ruins, symbolizing their false promises.

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17 In Solwezi, the effects of the crisis have been less pronounced but visible nonetheless. Kansanshi recently retrenched over 200 workers, and is said to be abandoning some of its social responsibility commitments.
I believe that the gap between more abstract and often fantastic desires and the concrete has crucial political significance. The wish images enervated by the boom are contrasted against: 1) the continued poverty of most; 2) the haphazard spaces produced by it (what John Lungu recently termed ‘growth without development’ ([Mulaliki 2008b]); and 3) the reconvened and mythologized memories of the former state-developmentalism. The gap, in turn, spurs political demands and the recent assertion of economic nationalism in Zambia may be viewed in this context. For its part, the Zambian government has responded through various means, which includes revisiting the lopsided Development Agreements it had signed with private businesses through the 1990s and beyond. In Luanshya, the abrupt dissolution of the wish images and the impending images of ruin recently spurred intense political activity. The voices of the retrenched workers have been forcefully bolstered by those of the unions, civil society, and the collective at large calling for the state to take over the abandoned mine. They realize that it is only by this shift of the ownership of production that the machineries and structures that promised modernity can be prevented from becoming debris.¹⁸

¹⁸ More recently, the mine has been purchased by a Chinese company. It remains to be seen though how this will affect the town.
In conclusion, and with reference to relevant debates, ethnographic evidence brings into question the supposed redundancy of development in the contemporary world. Its critique has over time taken a highly radical form that favors the abandonment of development as a signifier of political purchase. I have suggested a different way forward: that we differentiate the desire for development from the social relations within which it is embedded. This approach takes development seriously as a relevant and keenly contested
matter, while abiding by the subjects of ethnography whose view of development may be radically different from critics. It thus opens the space for empathy related to their desire for modernity, and solidarity in opposition to the capitalist social relations that constrain the real fulfillment of these desires.
CHAPTER 3: The Shifting Relations of Mining and Society in Zambia: A Grounded View

3.1 Introduction

The creation of Zambia’s New Copperbelt in its North Western Province and the accompanying discourses of development and modernity are occurring within the broader context of a shift from a developmentalist to a corporatist frame of accumulation and state. This is the shift from state-led mining with a direct and ‘thick’ association with the wider society (Ferguson 2006; Lungu and Mulenga 2006) to one where the now privatized industry has a much weaker relationship, while the state has retreated from the sphere of production. There is a fairly sizeable literature detailing the contours of a similar process in South Africa (Catchpowle and Cooper 2003; Pretorius 1996; Schreiner 1994; Shaw 1994). As regards Zambia, though there are accounts of structural adjustment (Craig 2001; Rakner 2003; Simutanyi 1995) and the politics around it (Larmer 2007; Larmer and Fraser 2006; Lungu 2008), a grounded narrative of this incipient shift remains to be written. The present chapter is an attempt to connect these dots. It brings into view the contested and often contradictory ways in which the new relations favoring capital play out on the ground, even as developmentalism continues to haunt the discourse and politics surrounding the process.
It can be argued that this transformation was actually complete once Zambia went through the near-complete privatization of state-owned companies in the mid to late 1990s, especially in the country's all-important copper mining sector. Contrarily, I believe that the shape of this change is only visible now. This is because while privatization did take place at that time, low copper prices did not allow the mining industry to rejuvenate until the mid-2000s. It is only now that production has rebounded that a fully-privatized copper mining sector is in action. Hence, the mining industry's return to profitability and the subsequent boom allow for an evaluation of the emerging relations between mining, state and society in the new era.

Many believe they stand to lose from these changes and are engaged in opposing the process. Capital stands to gain. The state is caught in between and shifts its weight from one to the other side at various moments, but finds itself presiding nonetheless over the creation of a corporatist society. In the state-developmentalist paradigm copper mining had multifarious imbrications. Today what links it to society is the mechanism of ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ (CSR). Where it exists it is largely in an emaciated form, but one that has widespread currency as being the way to practice ‘responsible’ capitalism today (Kapelus 2002). Redistribution of surplus value from the extraction of copper occurs now in the form of unreasonably low taxes, deliberately kept so to make the country ‘attractive’ to investors¹⁹, and through well-publicized instances of charity

¹⁹ Frederick Chiluba, the Zambian president between 1991 and 2001, and the orchestrator of the country’s privatization program had this to say on the matter: “A new mining policy and the new Mines and Minerals Act (1995) have been put in place. The Act has incorporated basic international assurances and tax
work in the form of CSR. Elsewhere, CSR is designed to ensure ethical and environmental standards of private businesses. In Zambia, it is a significantly broadened concept, associated with charity, donations, and capital’s contribution towards the creation of physical and social infrastructure. In short, CSR in contemporary Zambia stands for capital’s role in development.

Absent sufficient revenues, the state is left without the necessary means to lead that project. As workers—especially mineworkers—have declined numerically and politically, the critique of the new paradigm of mining and society has emerged around the perceived inadequacy of capital’s developmental activities and at the sites where they touch the ground. Consequently, political forces pushing for development increasingly find themselves coalescing around CSR. In a way, then, and contrary to Shamir’s (2004) argument about the ‘deradicalization’ of CSR, there has been a grassroots radicalization around it in Zambia in the 2000s. As a new mining enclave, one moreover that is the product of this new political economy, Solwezi allows us to see precisely how these changes occur on the ground. I draw upon my ethnographic work to chart it through its three elemental relationships, namely, between mining capital and labor, mining and the state, and mining and the wider society. But before that I sketch out the two different frameworks under investigation.

incentives, making it competitive and attractive to...investments.” [emphasis added] (Chiluba 1998: 78).
3.2 Postcolonial Developmentalism

To begin with, the new leaders of independent Zambia were keen to allay fears of capitalists and settlers related to a slide to some sort of state-capitalism in keeping with the Soviet model. The country’s first president Kenneth Kaunda insisted that his political philosophy of ‘humanism’ did not include any kind of radical state-led appropriation of capital or private property (1966). Instead, political energies after independence were to be directed at ensuring that the state and its machinery were Zambianized—that is, towards the replacement of British and other expatriates by native Zambians. It is thus of some interest and certainly must have been a surprise when industries, particularly the key mining industry, was nationalized between 1968 and 1971 as part of the so-called ‘Mulungushi Reforms’ (Rakner 2003: 45).

In the words of a commentator, Kaunda turned from being “the favourite with the West…into self-styled ‘humanitarian socialist’” (Cohn 1968: 341). The reasons for this shift were both internal and external. The frontier of the war between Black Africa and settlers in Southern Africa had moved all the way up to the Zambian borders with the proclamation of independence by Southern Rhodesian settlers. Given that a substantial chunk of capital in Zambia was in the hands of the whites—including the largest copper mining company, Anglo American Corporation—Zambian leaders were anxious about the gap between their rhetoric of Pan-Africanism and this embarrassing reality.

Internally, and faced with growing challenges to the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP), the nationalization of the economy promised a party-led access to resources that could be channeled to fashion a strong one-party state, something that was
subsequently undertaken with its declaration and the outlawing of opposition parties in December 1972 (Gertzel, Baylies and Szeftel 1984: 1-28). In addition, the country’s strong labor unions had demanded greater material rewards of political independence than those they perceived were being handed to them by the state (Larmer 2005). What followed, as a result, was an expansion in state employment from 22,500 in 1964 to over 51,000 in 1969 (Rakner 2003: 46).

Most significantly, as world prices of copper soared through the 1960s (Figure 3.1), the Zambian state nationalized copper mining in the name of Africanization and development, and thus was born the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM). ZCCM was a vertically integrated firm run by state bureaucrats and technocrats and was responsible for all operations: from mining to smelting, refining to transportation. Crucially, it internalized the reproduction of the workforce as well—roads and highways, schools and colleges, and clinics and hospitals were all organized under the umbrella of the mining parastatal. All in all, ZCCM followed a 'cradle to grave' policy of social welfare (Lungu and Mulenga 2006: 37), a model that has been termed ‘socially thick’ (Ferguson 2006: 35). It is in this context that ‘expectations of modernity’ (Ferguson 1999) were resplendent in discourses and imaginaries when urban Zambians, especially those employed on the copper mines, contemplated their future. It is for this reason that the ZCCM era is fondly remembered by workers and urban residents at large in Zambia.

Increasingly then, Zambia began to resemble the African ‘postcolonial historic-bloc’ identified by J-F Bayart (1993), where the distribution of wealth was tied to a privileged access to the state, and by extension, the party. This system though depended heavily on
the export of copper, which was the country’s only significant source of surplus, and for that reason, its health was contingent on the performance of Zambian copper on the world market. Copper price were high at the time that the one-party state was created in Zambia but fell sharply in the mid-1970s. This was the result, among other things, of the oil shock and a generalized downswing in the world economy, and brought down the Zambian economy like a ‘house of cards’ (Burdette 1988: 95).

Figure 3.1. Ebbs and flows in world copper prices (yellow line represents ten-year moving average) [Source: www.icf.at, date accessed 21 May 2009]

A complex relationship between state-capital and workers evolved during this era (Larmer 2007; 2005). Larmer (2005) shows that during the first few years after
independence in 1964 union militancy virtually exploded; the workers pushing to gain materially from the change in guard. In part, the state had little interest in the matter because it viewed it as one between mining capital and labor. It was only after nationalization that it came into direct confrontation with workers, whose surplus the state—as the employer—now sought to appropriate. It was in this context of the need to ‘tame’ the energies of the union movement that the state formed a single umbrella trade union organization. Each trade union was required to affiliate with the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) whose leadership was closely aligned to the ruling party. This was intended to ensure a strict state control over the direction of the union movement. But despite calls from Kaunda and others to accept exploitation for the purpose of national development and to thereby acquiesce within the developmentalist state, the rank and file continued to organize independently and remain militant (Larmer 2006). Indeed, the state could never meaningfully subordinate workers, who were later to play a key role in the movement to end the UNIP rule in Zambia. The developmentalist state, therefore, was in constant anxiety with respect to workers. It was mindful of their potential for opposition even as it sought to create its relationship with them within a paternalistic framework (Ibid.).

3.3 Neoliberal Corporatism and Corporate Social Responsibility

The notion of corporatism came into vogue at the time when neoliberal consolidation was underway globally. Its common definitions involve some kind of a wide-ranging social contract between state, capital and labor where these parties agree to co-operate in the overall interest of the political economy (Panitch 1977). The particular impetus in Africa
and elsewhere that this model received during the period of neoliberal ascendance was related in a two-pronged manner to the general agreement that countries were going through economic crisis—corresponding to the so-called ‘long downturn’—and the perception that absent a co-operative framework, they were doomed for economic collapse. This relationship with a real and/or perceived crisis is crucial. In Zambia it articulated a sense of ‘impotence’ due to the country’s economic decline with the feeling of ‘inevitability’ in that there seemed little that workers in Zambia could do in the light of the worldwide crisis and the neoliberal turn (Larmer and Fraser 2007). The last point was provided further cogency by the widespread notion of a ‘footloose’ capital. This was the idea that globalization had led to the so-called hypermobility of capital and that less-mobile entities like state and labor had no option but to compromise for the sake of continued flow of capital through their territories and workplaces (Cox 1993). Further, and for Africa, the way out of the ‘debt crisis’ meant implementing numerous political and economic ‘conditionalities’ proposed by Western countries and international financial institutions (Abrahamsen 2000). The result was that workers and unions were faced with an impossible choice. They were asked to choose between an impending economic collapse on the one hand and a negotiated corporatist framework where they would have to willingly accept precarious work conditions and relaxed labor laws and contain militancy among the rank and file in the interest of macroeconomic survival (Catchpowle and Cooper 2003:13). In sum, the period from the beginning of the privatization process in the mid-1990s to the more recent reassertions of economic nationalism and militancy in the mid 2000s (below) can be understood as a period of corporatist consolidation.
As such, even the developmentalist state, as defined above, can be considered a form of corporatism since there was a social contract between the ruling party on one hand, and workers and society on the other, though of course with uneven effects. Indeed, this is the model that this concept initially explained in the European context (Hyman 1986; Panitch 1977). But if we were to assume so, it must be realized that the previous social contract between the state-led industries—particularly the ZCCM—, workers, and society at large has been abandoned. Contemporary neoliberal corporatism defines a vastly different framework for these associations. Relations between the state and mining companies are regulated through negotiated documents that are known as ‘Development Agreements’ (DAs), and between capital and society through the mechanism of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The Mines and Minerals Act of 1995 was the principle mechanism that paved the way for the dismantling of ZCCM and the sale of individual mining companies. In the place of a uniform tax regime and code of conditions within which private mining companies were to operate, the Act provided for the negotiation of unique DAs with each company (Kaunda 2002). The initial DAs were a result of secret talks between state representatives and company executives that are widely believed to be loaded in the latter’s favor (Dymond and Lambrechts 2007: 6-8; Fraser and Lungu 2007). In fact, several state officials who represented the Zambian people behind these closed doors have since then been the subject of corruption charges. The companies that they negotiated the DAs with, however, have not been held similarly accountable. In their landmark study on the trajectory of this give-and-take, Fraser and Lungu (2007) have shown that the DAs
provided extremely favorable conditions to capital, including low regimes of taxation, tax breaks and ‘relaxed’ labor laws. They have also convincingly argued that throughout the process, representatives of the international financial institutions, namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) constantly pressured the Zambian state into expediting the sale of mines. For its part, the World Bank has recently conceded that their insistence on privatization was ‘mistaken’ on account of its failure to foresee a rise in world commodity prices (Silwamba 2007). One does not know whether to characterize this rather frank admission as comedy or farce, but it did mark a significant moment of departure: it was an admission of the weakening grip of neoliberal orthodoxy. Together with the more recent upturn in the economy due to the mining boom, these DAs have recently emerged as a key site of contestation. I discuss the implications of this politics in the final section below.

On the other hand, the institution of Corporate Social Responsibility has come a long way from the early admonition it received from the ‘father of neoclassical economics’, Milton Friedman. But before he outlined his critique he did give a good working definition of the philosophy behind CSR: “that business has a "social conscience" and takes seriously its responsibilities for providing employment, eliminating discrimination, avoiding pollution and whatever else may be the catchwords of the contemporary crop of reformers” (1970). To Friedman, not only was this ‘unadulterated socialism’, but in neoclassical terms, it compromised the true ‘welfare’ to society that would ensue if all enterprises were engaged in making as much profit as possible. Interestingly however, as Friedman’s free-market ideology has been universalized in the last three decades, his views on CSR are
largely defeated. CSR is today a key concept within the shifting configurations of capital and society (Carroll 1999). But contra Friedman one could argue that it is precisely the advance of neoliberalism that has led to the rise of CSR as a sort of Polanyian ‘double movement’ (1944: 136-228) in the era of privatization. The African state has retooled (Carmody 2007), of which the retreat from social spending has been a key component. Consequently, capital is petitioned to contribute towards the provision of social services over and above the payment of taxes. This is a further result of pressure from civil society groups in the West, who monitor the social effects of multinational capital in African and other Third World countries, considered too weak or corrupt to be able to do so on their own (Kapelus 2002: 277-278). Additionally, it has been argued that responsible corporations are likely to do better in the stock market (Drucker 1984), although there is no consensus on the universality of this correlation (Cochran and Wood 1984). What is clearer is that in the way mining capital operates in Zambia today, CSR is an important facet of its ‘social license’ (Lungu 2008) to operate in the country. To that extent individual companies have to engage with it, though there is substantial unevenness in its actual practice corresponding to the size of the companies and their national origins (Haglund 2008).

As CSR is widely understood today, there is a sense that private firms should “run their affairs, in close conjunction with an array of different ‘stakeholders’, so as to promote the goal of ‘sustainable development’. This goal has…three dimensions, ‘economic’, ‘environmental’ and ‘social’ (Henderson 2001: 15). I believe that this definition is apt, for these terms have become common currency today both in corporate presentations and
in the vocabulary used by civil society groups in places like Zambia to pressure capital to act more responsibly. A survey of the various mining companies in Zambia reveals that most have a social responsibility (or community development) department, have set up a stakeholder forum that meets regularly, and are legally obliged to undertake environmental assessments on an ongoing basis. An expatriate critic described these practices as amounting to little more than ‘window dressing’. It remains a fact though that the discursive horizon of mining-society relations is today defined through CSR, and it has therefore become a key site at which these relations are negotiated. Accordingly, it must be taken seriously. In sum, postcolonial developmentalism has given way to a corporatist framework as far as the relations between mining and the wider society are concerned. As stated above, this is a process that involves contestations and contradictions, but is a general shift nonetheless. In the next section I detail what these practices entail on the ground.

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20 This is the picture one gets from the survey of the various—large—mining companies in Zambia: Equinox; First Quantum Minerals; Konkola Copper Mines; and Mopani Copper Mines. KCM succinctly summarizes its notion of CSR by saying that it ‘is committed to the principles of sustainable development—which it takes to mean “development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” because it believes it is fundamental to its long-term success.’ (http://www.kcm.co.zm/sheq.php).
3.4 Corporatism on the Ground

3.4.1 Mining and Labor

The first component of the mining-society relationship that I focus on is the position of workers and unions in the different frameworks. From very early on, mineworkers have been—by and large—the most radical element of the Zambian working class. This was on account of “a consciousness of their unwarranted exploitation, the inequitable distribution of the revenue generated by their hazardous labour, and the importance of this labour in the strategically important copper mining industry and, through it, national development” (Larmer 2006: 295). The African Mineworkers’ Union had been in place since 1949 and had already shown itself to be a force to be reckoned with (Perrings 1979; Vickery 1998), although some saw it as cut-off from wider politics as a result of an exclusive focus on workplace issues (Henderson 1973). But it has been shown by others (Larmer 2005; Parpart 1983) that their organization was strong, membership militant, and the Union was a major contributor to the struggle for independence. The stakes of their participation in it were driven in part by the fact that their members were the direct losers of the various color bars that were in place during colonial rule. Later in the state-led mining era, though unions were formally incorporated, their collective strength and continued militancy ensured that despite the parasitic (Bayart 1993) nature of the one-party state, a considerable proportion of the surplus was redistributed to the workers, and through them their extended families (Cliggett 2003). With respect to the latter, there was substantial expansion of social infrastructure like education and health, in addition to state support for sports and creative enterprises (Lungu and Mulenga 2006).
Speaking of the contours of the union movement in the period of transition, numerous blows throughout the 1990s have meant that it has declined significantly in numerical and political terms. Ironically enough, workers are themselves implicated in this process, having supported the economic liberalization of the economy under the structural adjustment program in the 1990s (Simutanyi 1995: 825). This support was owing to the fact that the various backers of the program mandated political liberalization, or the opening of the democratic space beyond the one-party state (Rakner 2003). This is the sleight of hand that Ferguson (2006) has talked about, in that Africans now had a greater say in their politics even as the horizon of their sovereign control of the political economy was being severely compromised by conditionalities and waves of privatization.

In the late 1980s, a coalition comprised of “trade unions, students, academics, the business community and parliamentary back-benchers” (Rakner 2003: 63) came together under the banner of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), and called for the establishment of multiparty democracy. Faced from external pressures for economic and political liberalization and internally by the growing MMD-led opposition to the one-party state, UNIP had to accede to these demands. Multiparty elections were held in 1991 and Frederick Chiluba, labor leader and ex-president of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) was installed as the President of the Republic.

Despite these heady changes, between 1986 and 2001, the umbrella organization of trade unions, the ‘Zambian Congress of Trade Unions’ (ZCTU) declined in membership from close to 350,000 to 250,000 (Rakner 2003: 98 and Larmer 2002: 117). In more recent years, there has been an expansion of mining activities, resulting from record prices for
copper driven in large part by the industrialization of China and India, and the regional emergence of South African capital. But the latest round of investment bears little resemblance to the permanence of mining employment of previous times. It is contractual, unorganized, and low paid; reflecting in part, the movement towards such labor practices occurring more generally, i.e. the “shift from an economy characterized by the stable long-term employment typical of factory workers to one marked by flexible, mobile, and precarious labor relations” (Hardt and Negri 2004:112). According to Ian Mkandawire, the Vice President of the MUZ, more than half of the close to 70,000 mineworkers in Zambia now are nonunion and contractually employed (Personal interview, 18 July 2006).

It is within this context that the new boom is situated. Mining has been privatized and unions are at their historically-weakest. The conditions of the private mining companies’ operation are governed by the so-called Development Agreements (DA) that each company negotiates and signs as a contract of operation with the state of Zambia. Moreover, the shift from the vertically-integrated parastatal to several private companies linked to a plethora of smaller contractors has changed the concrete conditions under which workers must organize. The case of the copper mines in Solwezi reveals these challenges: at Lumwana ethnicized recruitment practices place a constraint on organizing (Part II) while at the Kansanshi mine the organization of the company's technical division of labor fulfills the same purpose.

The operations at Kansanshi are divided into three distinct parts, each of which is carried out by different limited companies. All of these are owned completely or in large part by
the Canada-based First Quantum Mining Limited (FQML) (Figure 3.2 below). The three main components of the mining operation are thus divided into mining operations—that is, getting the ore out of the pit and into the crusher; processing, which involves the conversion of ore into copper concentrate; and finally, at Kansanshi there is a separate acid plant division, which produces sulphuric acid for use at the mine and for sale regionally. The mining division is incorporated under First Quantum Mining and Operations (FQMO), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the parent company; the acid plant under FQM Zambia’s (also 100% owned by FQML) Bwana-Lonshi Division; and processing at the mine is undertaken by Kansanshi Mining Plc, which is 80% owned by FQML.

From the company’s perspective, this overlap between the division of labor and its corporate expression takes full advantage of its regional operations. These include several mines in Zambia and Katanga (Democratic Republic of Congo) (see Figure 3.3), where it operates the Frontier and Lonshi copper mines. Lonshi is barely 3km from the Zambian border and 36km from Bwana, and high-grade ore skimmed from the surface there is transported across the border into Zambia—via company owned and operated service road—for processing. Similarly, ore from the upcoming Kolwezi mine in DRC is also

21 The rest of Kansanshi Mining Plc is shared between a group of international investors and ZCCM Holdings, which is owned by the government of Zambia.

planned to be brought into Zambia for processing. It is to this end that the company is building a new highway that would significantly reduce travel time between Kolwezi and Kansanshi, where large-scale facilities exist for processing. FQML can therefore move workers, managers and machinery between these various mines as and when needed, thus taking care of regional expansions and contractions in operations, while benefiting from the specialization within each unit. Moreover, FQMO and FQM Zambia, being wholly owned by the parent company allow for complete flexibility over operations, which it does not completely possess in Kansanshi Mining Plc.

Figure 3.2. Corporate structure of the Kansanshi copper mine [Based on FQML reports and personal interviews]
The meaning of this arrangement is altogether different for the workers. To begin with, the employers of the three sets of workers are different, which is crucially important because wages and conditions of work must be negotiated with the respective company. While those employed directly by Kansanshi have company officials at hand, the Bwana Mkubwa Division—which employs acid plant employees—is headquartered near Ndola in the Copperbelt Province. The Mineworkers Union of Zambia (MUZ), which is the largest
of the mineworkers’ unions\textsuperscript{23}, has a similarly organized structure with different units representing workers in the mining, acid plant and processing division respectively. In terms of the conditions of service, the former are on 2 year contracts while FQMO and Bwana employees are hired on a permanent basis, though are paid less as a trade-off for greater job security. The contracts for both sets of workers are separately negotiated, which is important when these matters come up for actual debate. This is so because a smaller number of workers enter into each of the three negotiations than would under a single company. A union leader put it this way: “when it comes to the miners, we are divided because we have different contracts; but the managers, they are meeting together” (Personal interview 18 May 2008). His point was that even though the employers are different, owned by the same parent company they strategize on contracts collectively, while the workers must bargain separately with each.

Those involved in processing are especially insecure and the more militant of them work with the constant fear of not having their 2-year contracts renewed by the company (Personal interview 21 February 2008). But others are less insecure and have shown greater militancy. The workers in the mining division have the most generalizable set of skills—many can work as machine and truck operators at other mines and even other industries; but those engaged in work on the acid plant or in the processing division are less mobile because there are only a handful of large copper mining companies like

\textsuperscript{23} In recent years, several workers have broken from the MUZ and formed the ‘National Union of Miners and Allied Workers’ (NUMAW), which has a significant strength on the Copperbelt.
Kansanshi that contain these facilities. Many smaller mines simply extract ore—where again they require operators—and transport it elsewhere for processing and smelting. It is for this reason that the mining division employees are considered the most radical, who are much more likely to go on strike given a serious provocation (Ibid. 2008). When they do so, however, they are not necessarily joined by workers in other branches of production, even as the state quickly intervenes on behalf of the company as part of its own corporatist contract with mining capital. In 2007 workers in the mining division went on strike for better wages; were not joined by others, got isolated and invited the wrath of the company and the Zambian state. Federal president Levy Mwanawasa had planned to visit Kansanshi that month but refused to go to the mine until the striking workers went back to work; strongly ‘denouncing’ their action (‘Levy Denounces…’ 2007). The isolation faced by each unit is further illustrated by the fact that when the processing plant employees carried out a protracted struggle for a new contract in early 2008, others did not join them because they had already secured a contract. Once again, the state did not waste time in intervening—the Deputy Minister for Labor camped in Solwezi and ordered the parties to keep matters solely on the negotiating table (‘More Riots…’ 2008), a thinly veiled attempt to desist the unions from mobilizing workers on the matter, which must necessarily happen ‘off the table’.

Finally, the origins of the workers in the different plants are also a matter of importance. My discussion with union leaders and members suggests that workers in the branches owned by the Copperbelt-based units are mostly based in that province and are brought to Kansanshi on a temporary basis. Contrarily, those employed in the processing plant are
permanent employees of Kansanshi Mining Plc and live in Solwezi; many are also long-
time residents of the area. According to a union organizer, “when the mine opened they
said local people should benefit…the indigenous should have an upper hand. We don’t
have enough copper in Bwana, so they’re sending [workers] to Kansanshi. People from
Copperbelt are replacing us from North Western Province….In the end people from here
will find themselves out of the gate.” (Personal interview, 14 April 2008) That this
statement comes from a union organizer gives it added import. At the Lumwana mine
similar issues have been more prominent in the context of the affirmative action program
there that reserves jobs for the local Kaonde tribe. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.
Such insights show how unions must negotiate different place-based identities and claims
with the need to organize workers from different backgrounds. But it also reveals real
challenges that mineworkers face in the privatized mining set-up. Instead of a single
vertically-integrated mining company, as in the halcyon days of state ownership, they are
employed by a number of private firms. As in the case of Kansanshi, these companies
may be organized as separate corporate divisions. This adds another layer to the
negotiations workers must undertake; balancing their differential skills, origins, and
material stakes in place.

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24 In this regard, the PR manager of Kansanshi had to make this statement: "We have a very strict corporate
governance policy at Kansanshi and would not entertain any discrimination by managers in our human
resources department based on tribe, colour, origin or any other criterion which is not aligned with our
employment policy" (Kansanshi, Unions Reach Agreement 2009).
Despite these constraints and challenges, the *objective* position of the workers within the capitalist extraction process ensures that they are always potentially a headache for managers. Like it has been argued for the ‘Just in Time’ (JIT) work processes, unrest at one part of the decentralized technical division of labor threatens to disrupt the entire chain (Herod 2002: 352). At Kansanshi, however, management is somewhat insulated from this threat by the high levels of stockpiles it has had to maintain, though not for reasons of its own choosing. At the same time, labor unrest at Kansanshi emanates from the knowledge workers possess about the gap between the company’s soaring profitability since 2005 and their own continued struggle for decent wages and conditions. Unrest while common is constrained by the factors already mentioned. But it must negotiate the national-level unions’ contract within corporatism that compels them to pacify workers and by the state’s interventions in favor of large mining.

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25 FQML maintains large stockpiles of copper concentrate because of a shortfall in smelting capacity in Zambia. While the mine processes a large proportion of its output in-house, it also depends on other smelters on the Copperbelt, and has a contract with Mopani smelter at Mufulira. However, Mopani also operates mines and gives first preference to its own concentrate. Kansanshi has the option of directly exporting the concentrate, but a 15% state tax on the export of unprocessed copper means—particularly during periods of low price—that Kansanshi has little option but to maintain large stockpiles (FQML First Quarter Conference Call 2009).

26 In May 2008, for instance, and during the unrest at the processing plant, workers got hold of Kansanshi’s first quarter results and argued that despite the fact that output, revenues, and profits were all above prior projections, the company had taken a hard-line as far as granting workers the desired wage increases.
companies that account for a significant portion of its revenues. Moreover, and on the
ground, workers’ actions in the workplace have not travelled out to community-level
organizing. What has been termed ‘social movement unionism’ (Moody 1997) is thus
absent from Solwezi. In this situation, a vibrant critique of corporatism has emerged
outside the unions, and in which they play only a marginal role. My analysis of the daily
negotiations between mining and civil society reveals a rich and diverse set of
dissatisfactions and antagonisms that I now turn to.

3.4.2 Doing CSR

While in theory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has some general principles—as
noted above—it its practice varies across contexts. In advanced capitalist countries it
generally signifies capital’s commitments related to the ethical character of its core
practices; i.e. taking care of the environment, not discriminating in employment and in
the workplace and so on. In Zambia, the concept encompasses much more in addition. It
includes nothing less than capital’s contribution towards local development. In this way,
CSR is now the mechanism that mediates the relationship between mining and civil
society in Zambia in the era of privatization. The reason that it is such an important site
of politics and development is that copper mining has been and remains Zambia’s all-
important industry. It regularly contributed over half of the country’s GDP through the
1960s; and even today accounts for over three-fourths of its export earnings. Revenues
from mining in turn have been the means by which Zambian developmental goals have
historically been financed. The relationship between copper and development has
therefore been a central discursive element in postcolonial Zambia (Kaunda 1966). While
the revenues were almost wholly appropriated by the developmentalist one-party state through the 1970s and 1980s, today the state has a largely diminished stake, given its retreat from ownership and because Zambia has one of the ‘most attractive’ tax regimes in the world. Further, the tax accrues to the central government of Zambia, and filters down to particular localities only through the national budget. Hence, the areas where mining is concentrated do not necessarily get a higher share of the revenues than the rest of the country. This fact has spawned some interesting politics of regionalism in the Copperbelt in the past (Chapter 4), where many have bemoaned their disproportionate contribution to the national treasury without adequate compensation in the form of development. The upshot is that for local level developmental projects—and because the central state in possession of tax revenues is concerned with the nation as a whole—demands for local development are directed at the mining companies themselves, whose response in keeping with global practices has been the adoption of CSR (Kapelus 2002: 278-280).

A simple story of progression from developmentalism to neoliberal corporatism in Zambia, however, cannot be charted. It is instead an uneven process; one that is contested at the sites of its everyday negotiation. To begin with, there is considerable variation in the practice of CSR between different companies, which is in turn closely tied to how they are perceived in the wider society. Furthermore, I contend that these uneven perceptions are set against the popular comparisons of the various companies’ performance to the ‘ZCCM era’. Zambians continue to evaluate the changing mining-society relations through the template of the developmentalism past. Moreover, the
intersections of the expectations from capital and their practice of CSR results in a gap, which breeds dissatisfaction, and CSR has thus become a key site from where a critique of the shift towards neoliberal corporatism has emerged.

Viewing the question of CSR from the vantage point of Solwezi, both Kansanshi and Lumwana have a department that is responsible for undertaking CSR activities. The former in fact set up the Kansanshi Foundation in 2006 with a mandate to co-ordinate developmental activities with the relevant state departments and the community. Lumwana on the other hand has a separate department for corporate responsibility headed by the social sustainability manager. In sharp contrast to the composition of the management of both mines, these CSR departments have a strong Zambian presence.

Furthermore, the two large mines have similar CSR frameworks but the perception of their developmental effects and efforts are divergent: Lumwana is widely considered to be much greater contributor to Solwezi’s development than Kansanshi. This is a result of both the material practices of the respective companies and the discursive strategies through which they articulate them. I further contend that this public ordering of the two mines is indicative of the continued hold of the developmentalist state--Lumwana is believed to be better because it is closer to the ZCCM-model. What this shows too is that while materially the country has moved away from developmentalism, public discourses are relatively laggard.

In part, the difference in the perceptions of the two mines is a result of Lumwana’s repeated attempts to distance itself from the others. As the company’s Managing Director
expressed this point: “We did not just take over ZCCM mines like others, but Lumwana had a dream that it has slowly brought to life…It is not only bringing massive investment, but jobs, expertise, and opportunities for Zambia. Others are merely plundering what Zambians built…other investors rape and pillage and sell what’s left over…We took risks, others just bought mines for cheap.” [emphasis added] (Personal communication, 28 February 2008). The MD here implicitly draws upon the wounds of structural adjustment and privatization that are still fresh in the minds of ordinary Zambians. The hurried sale of mines, mediated by corrupt officials, left thousands of workers unemployed while money for social services dried up. Zambians therefore hold deeply disturbing memories of the 1990s (Ferguson 1999), and the—mostly foreign—companies that bought the public mines are widely disliked (Larmer 2006). Lumwana, however, is portrayed as different: it is a greenfield investment; a new beginning, which fuels fresh expectations of Zambia’s development and modernity (Chapter 2). The contrasting identity is, moreover, not merely expressed by the spokespersons of the mine. Ordinary residents of Solwezi constantly make the comparison between Lumwana and Kansanshi, and in most cases, the former comes up tops. Kansanshi on the other hand is in perfect contradistinction. Bought from the state by Phelps Dodge, the mine passed ownership until finally being sold to FQML for a pittance ($27.5 million). FQML has realized over $3 billion in revenues from Kansanshi in the period 2006-2008, amounting to almost $2 billion in operating profits (Annual Report 2008: 17). On the other hand, its CSR activities carried out by the Kansanshi Foundation—which generally comprise of digging 27 Kansanshi Fact Sheet: http://www.first-quantum.com/i/pdf/Kansanshi_Fact.pdf
bore wells, refurbishing and building school blocks, and the construction of a market in Solwezi—total less than $1 million a year (Status Report 2007). The gap between the unprecedented windfall and concrete development in Solwezi is widely resonant (see Kalaluka 2007).

There is then widespread local dissatisfaction with Kansanshi’s relatively poor CSR record. This is because its expenditure represents a miniscule fraction of the profits, a fact of which locals are well aware. Second, the Foundation’s work is essentially piecemeal in nature, without any substantial contribution like a hospital, school or stadium. Third, some of the Foundation’s work—cloaked as CSR—is really for its own benefit. For instance, boreholes have been dug ostensibly to provide water to surrounding villages. But I was told by an official in the local water supply agency that these have been strategically placed by the mine to monitor groundwater levels at the mine, which has a long history of flooding. Similarly the local police have been equipped by the Kansanshi Foundation through its CSR funds, but these investments are really directed towards keeping the growing headache of ore and concentrate theft from the mine in check.28 Kansanshi also attracts brickbats because of the class-character of its developmental practices. The company has built homes, pools, a gymnasium, and a complete golf course, but to the annoyance of workers and Solwezi residents, these are for the exclusive use of the mine managers and their families, while entry without appointment is

28 I was told by a local police official that thefts from the mine—actual and attempted—accounted for a high proportion of all illegal activities in the area. He said that before the arrival of the mines his department brought to court less than twenty charges a month; now the number is over five a day.
prohibited for all else. Given that there is a high degree of overlap between race and the division of labor at the mine, this statement by a Kansanshi worker is perfectly understandable: “This is apartheid…Kansanshi has created a new Cape Town” (Personal interview, 17 March 2008). This parallel has the added effectiveness of drawing upon the fact that many expatriate managers at Kansanshi are from South Africa. All of this is in sharp contrast to the fresh paint on the new houses—for all categories of workers—being built by Lumwana at its company town. Being a greenfield project, Lumwana had little option but to construct the new town. Moreover, it hopes to attract industries to the Multi-Facility Economic Zone for which it has recently received government approval, and which would help offset some of the construction costs (AGM call, 5 June 2009). The upshot is that Lumwana is perceived as being closer to the ZCCM model than Kansanshi, and for that reason is considered better. In short, in Solwezi District we see the two ends of the scale of capital, from the perspective of the local community: Kansanshi, the vulture-like mine, and Lumwana, the more ‘socially-thick’ (Ferguson 2006) kind.

This difference in perception is apparent in the ‘stakeholder’ meetings conducted by the two companies. I present evidence from one such forum organized by the newly constituted North Western Chamber of Commerce. This is a collective of several local businesses and contractors who, in the main, seek business from the two large mines of the region. This meeting was termed ‘Doing Business with Lumwana and Kansanshi’, and drew over a hundred people. Three expatriate Kansanshi managers and one from Lumwana gave presentations at the meeting, each stressing how they are ‘empowering’ local people by giving contracts though each acknowledged that there were economic
limitations to this goal, because the companies are, in the final analysis, looking for the cheapest possible goods and services. During the event, the bulk of Kansanshi’s time was taken by a manager responsible for procurement, and he started with an emphatic appeal in a thick Afrikaner accent: ‘Be proud! Be proud and sell your company to me.’ [emphasis added]. Thereafter, his intervention was directed mostly at explaining why exactly Kansanshi does not purchase more of its materials from local contractors.

Figure 3.4. Kansanshi’s poor image is reflected on the cover of Bakwetu magazine.
On the other hand, Lumwana’s representative repeated his company’s resolve to develop the region, placing emphasis on the construction of the town and the fact that the mine was some distance from ‘civilization’, so to speak, which meant that its contributions were genuinely developmental. “We are in the bush…we are not five minutes from Solwezi or in Kitwe or Ndola [towns on the Copperbelt]”, he averred. In the discussion that ensued, speakers made this same distinction between the two mines: one observer said, “Kansanshi, they’re useless”, adding “my hat off to Lumwana for building a proper town”. This feeling, particularly related to Kansanshi’s image is also seen on the cover of the only local news-pamphlet (Figure 3.4).

To be sure, Kansanshi's place in the pecking order is not helped by the conduct of its expatriate employees. The president of the Kansanshi Foundation, for instance, was briefly in prison on charges of assaulting a local worker on his farm ²⁹, nor by a South African employee who decided to uproot an electric pole to get hold of wires to pull his vehicle out of a ditch (Mulaliki 2008b). But these are merely some particularly embarrassing occurrences for Kansanshi; the point is that the practice of CSR is a much narrower definition of the copper mines' place in the wider society than Zambians have been accustomed to.

What all of this shows is that the institutionalization of a strictly corporatist framework for the mining-civil society relationship is a process in progress. It is for this reason that

²⁹ He was subsequently released upon the payment of settlement to the worker.
the public relations manager of Kansanshi has to consistently step-in to defuse fiery confrontations between the public and the company. At a much publicized CSR event in March 2008, Kansanshi donated a refurbished SUV to the police in Solwezi. The event threatened to take an ugly turn, however, after a local journalist, armed with insider information, revealed that the company had buried tens of disused vehicles on its property. Several participants thereafter questioned Kansanshi’s representatives on the issue by making two criticisms. The first, and this was raised by the union representative, was related to the fact that this practice caused an 'environmental hazard' for workers and nearby residents. The other criticism was that the incident revealed Kansanshi's careless attitude towards locals. This was because the company chose to bury the vehicles instead of donating them, thereby showing disregard for the uniquely Zambian skill of the creative reuse of junk. At this event, the PR manager had to step in and clarify, but his arguments failed to gain purchase with the crowd and the matter dominated the media coverage of what was otherwise supposed to be a picture-perfect CSR event (FQMO Buries Junk Vehicles 2008). It is at such moments that the inadequacy of CSR as the dominant link between mining and society is most clearly visible, while also showing that there are in Zambia considerable—organized and more spontaneous—demands for greater developmental effects from copper mining.

3.4.3 The Zambian State and the Tax Debate

As for the relationship of the state and mining capital, in accordance with the corporatist framework the state broadly proceeds from the acceptance of the need of private investment and its role pivots around making the country attractive to capital. For this
reason, it enters into agreements with capital that on the one hand promise a lean regulatory framework and low taxes, while on the other a generally compliant labor-force. This process, however, is anything but smooth, and the state—qua political party in a democratic polity—has to stay attuned to popular sentiments, which in the last few years have shown a clear push for greater national control over resources and their benefits accruing from their extraction (Larmer and Fraser 2007; Negi 2008). The recent politics around a new tax regime for the copper mines reveals how this process is unfolding in Zambia. Much like the wider society—as shown in the previous section—the state too is pulled towards its erstwhile developmentalism, while being overtly committed to a corporatist avatar. It seems that despite being the model student of the World Bank and IMF-led privatization, its promised benefits are not apparent to the state even though the mining sector has undergone a substantial boom in the 2000s and copper production is back to its pre-crisis levels. This is a result of the fact that the Development Agreements with mining companies were signed from a position of weakness. Copper prices were at historic lows, the state was under huge foreign debt, and the consensus was that prices would remain low for the foreseen future (Scott 2009). The upshot was that the agreements were loaded in favor of private companies. But with prices rebounding, Zambia's attainment of the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) status and subsequent debt-forgiveness, and increasing popular demands, the state took up the matter of the DAs in its 2008 budget. Sweeping changes to the country's tax

30 As an instance, consider that the mining companies contributed merely $71 million in taxes to the Zambian state between 2002-2006 when they made over $650 million in profits (Times of Zambia 2007).
structure were announced, which by extension made individual DAs with companies redundant as far as the tax-regime contained within them was concerned. A new windfall tax tied to global copper prices was set-up, mining royalties were increased to 3% from the hitherto 0.6%, and a tax on capital allowance was introduced along with another one on the export of ore (to make sure that ore processing was carried out in Zambia) (Lungu 2008). Anticipating opposition from capital, the government made it clear that it was committed to enforcing these changes come what may.

The state's actions can be traced back to the wider rejuvenation of developmentalist demands, seen most clearly in the increasing base of the opposition party Patriotic Front (PF). The PF enjoys overwhelming support on the Copperbelt Province, where it has won a large majority in the last two national elections (2006 and a mid-term election in 2008 due to the erstwhile President's death), in addition to every single parliamentary seat. It has done so by articulating a strong nationalism, tied very closely to the control of the country's resources and benefits from their exploitation (Larmer and Fraser 2007). It has also channeled the rising anti-neoliberal and anti-China sentiments to further strengthen its position in Lusaka, the other urban center in the country. It is believed that the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) government had to respond to its growing irrelevance in urban Zambia, and this is what was behind the announcement of the new taxes and with it, the reexamination of the corporatist consensus.

The mining companies reacted guardedly to this new development. While the Chamber of Mines expressed disappointment (Mulowa 2008) and warned of impending layoffs, the various companies could not present a united face, in part because each was confident of
individually negotiating with the state, without alienating the party in power or making it look bad in public. Some mines—most notably the Indian-owned Konkola Copper Mines (KCM)—decided in due course to comply with the reconfigured tax regime but others refused to accept the new taxes on account of the fact that the DAs were legally-enforceable and overriding contracts. The most vocal among the latter group was First Quantum Minerals, which repeatedly insisted on the sanctity of the DAs and threatened to take the Zambian state to (international) court. But backed by opposition parties and an organized civil society, the government mostly stood firm on the matter (Lungu 2008), though wavering at a few moments 31.

FQM paid windfall taxes after much prodding. And though it did pay other variable taxes too, the company's annual report for 2008 shows a credit for these payments on the assumption that the government will be forced to pay it back the tax-money. Interestingly, Lumwana attempted to build on its discursive difference from other mines to insist on the unfairness of the taxes, and the need for the state to respect the DA. The Managing Director insisted that if Lumwana was “put in the same basket as other investors” (Michael 2008) its promises to develop the North Western Province and the country would be compromised. He believed that the new windfall taxes were justified for the mines that took over existing ones and made a windfall; but were unjust for

31 The announcement of the taxes took place without any negotiations. But the state had to offer an ear later. In September, six-months after the budget, the minister responsible for mining made this statement: “We are ready to dialogue to keep mining viable so that they (mining companies) keep expanding and remain profitable.” (quoted on Reuters, www.minewatchzambia.com).
Lumwana because it was a newly constructed project. He added that Lumwana spent a million and a half dollars a day, employed thousands of Zambians, and renovated many schools and clinics in the neighboring rural communities. All of this was before a single pound of copper had been mined, which meant that it was a serious investor that needed to be treated with special concern. In contrast to Kansanshi that had better ore grade, at Lumwana the concentration of the copper was very low--less than a fourth of the Kansanshi ore. Changes in tax regime would in this scenario push costs up, shift the bottom-line, and make it more and more uneconomic to operate the mine. The mine life, put another way, would shrink by as many as 15 years from the estimated 37, *ceteris paribus*. This careful rhetoric proved effective. So while other mines were directed to pay the new taxes, uncertainty prevailed over Lumwana's position.

The tax-episode shows the confusion within the state regarding its developmental role and relationship with capital. Its resolve to implement the new tax regime was in part an attempt to fashion a more developmentalist framework—that is, expanding its revenue base for the program of national development—*within* a privatized mining set-up. But it at best led to mixed results, with the state having to ultimately concede defeat at the hands of the world commodity markets. Following the housing meltdown in the US, and with the global economy collapsing into a recession, copper prices tumbled in late 2008 (Figure 3.5). As companies began to cut hours (Kansanshi), lay-off workers (KCM), or shut-down completely (Luanshya); the government had to backtrack on the taxes. It did retain the windfall tax, but this tax is effectively redundant for it kicks in only at high copper prices. In the main though, the state acted too late to make any substantial
recovery from the profits made from copper extraction. One does not know what the future holds for copper or for the recent nationalist revival; what is clearer is that the country’s inextricable links to global capitalism have scripted this latest defeat.

Figure 3.5. Copper prices June 2008-June 2009 (US$/lb) [www.infomine.com, date accessed 19 June 2009]

3.5 Conclusion

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a shift away from the developmentalist framework presided over by a one-party state in Zambia. Its replacement conforms broadly to what has been identified in South Africa and elsewhere as neoliberal corporatism. These
changes consolidated in the context of the near-complete privatization of the Zambian economy. In so doing, the relations between state, capital, labor and society were substantially reshaped in favor of capital. The regulatory and tax framework was separately and secretly negotiated between the state and capital and Zambia implemented one of the lowest—attractive, in corporate parlance—tax rates in the world. In the same period, the number of formally-employed workers and their organizational strength has been significantly reduced, while the hitherto deep link between mining and civil society is now weakly tied via the institution of CSR. Yet, this process is neither smooth nor complete, and the lingering memory developmentalism continues to frame politics around mining and development. My ethnographic work in Solwezi shows the extent to which Zambians evaluate the place of mining in society through recourse to their expectations based on the previous, socially-thick era.

To begin with, workers, unions and the wider public accepted the corporatist turn; but this framework has come into question with the revival of the economy in the 2000s. As the mining boom has consolidated, demands aimed at greater control of the country’s resources have emerged across the country, but particularly at the sites where copper is extracted. Here, mining capital faces daily critique that increasingly finds articulation around the concrete practice of CSR. Companies are often on the defensive and forced to respond through more or less meaningful means. At the national scale, the central government responded to these politics by announcing significant changes to the tax regime, but its measures were stunted by the unfortunate alliance of oppositional mining companies and the collapsing world price of copper. In sum, despite the numerous
punches they have received and the constraints they face in the privatized industry, workers remain important to political opposition today. But at the same time, the challenge to mining capital at the grassroots increasingly pivots around civil society-led politics around CSR and the pressure it exerts on the state to make the mining boom count for the population at large.
PART II: Capitalism, State and Identity
CHAPTER 4: Tribe, Tribalism and the Politics of Development in Solwezi

“*The Kaonde, they are not very developed*”

“*You cannot employ people from one family to such a big company like Lumwana. I mean Kaonde people; they are more like one family. As a family, a company does not last long.*”
-M. Musonda, Immigrant from Copperbelt, Solwezi 29 April 2008.

“*Like the walls of the Biblical Jericho, tribalism [is] falling down before the forces of nationalism and industrialization*”

4.1 Introduction

The mining boom was well and truly underway at the time of my fieldwork in Zambia. Despite being situated within a corporatist framework with weak developmental links to society, the boom had ignited strong popular expectations and desires for development. Two questions arise at this conjuncture: Development for whom? And who is left out? It is here that the first two quotes above presciently lay out the stakes in the debate that forms the object of this chapter. They are framed around the emergent politics in Solwezi that turns around competing claims to the material benefits of development. Calls to make the development in the region uplift the hitherto 'backward' and indigenous Kaonde people have come into conflict with the expectations of more recent immigrants. The latter have moved in numbers to the area to chart an escape from poverty and unemployment while also being pulled-in by the lure of modernity (Chapter 2).
The stakes are made concrete and propelled further by the ethnic-logic of labor recruitment at the newly-opened Lumwana copper mine. It has put in place a system that works through three local chiefs and reserves close to 1500 jobs for local Kaonde people. This was a victory for the claims of influential local actors to ensure that the benefits of the new development in the region accrue to the indigenous population. In doing so, they produced a politics of locality that defined as its ‘other’ migrants from elsewhere in Zambia, particularly those from the Copperbelt.

A recent upsurge of autochthonism—related closely to tribal and ethnic identification—is evident in Africa, especially since the 1990s’ political decentralization (Boone 2007; Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000). In many instances, this politics has taken a ‘tribal’ form, but has not received adequate attention, very likely on account of the political discomfiture that may arise from the acknowledgement of the persistence of the tribe because that concept has been historically equated with ‘primitive’ or barbarian social configurations (Ekeh 1990; Mafeje 1972; Southall 1970). A way out of this predicament—for scholars and states alike—has been to think about tribalism as a ‘cultural’ matter (Mitchell 1970: 84). But the method I have used in this dissertation opens up space for debate by engaging, as opposed to disavowing, categories that find popular purchase. No doubt, like nationalism, tribe is a synthetic concept, one in the 'creation' (Ranger and Hobsbawm 1983) or 'invention' (Vail 1989) of which colonialism is fundamentally implicated. But this critique alone does not explain its continued usage on the continent, nor its political significance. These matters must therefore be theoretically and empirically understood.
In their discussion on the politics of autochthony in Cameroon, Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000) argue that capitalism is “about the ‘freeing’ of labor as a necessary condition for creating a mobile mass of wage-laborers; yet in many instances it has also brought with it determined efforts to compartmentalize labor, imposing classifications—ever changing, but all the more powerful—in order to facilitate control over the labor market” (426). Though the context and motivations of capital are different in Solwezi, these words are remarkably prescient there. At a lower level of abstraction, workers and those who seek work at Lumwana are also Kaonde workers or Bemba-speaking workers from the Copperbelt. This is not necessarily politically relevant, but a politics of identity does lie dormant. The issue at hand is under what circumstances does it erupt?

My claim is that the conditions of emergence of this politics in Solwezi are tied to the continuing relevance of the colonial bifurcated state. As in other parts of Africa, the so-called ‘natives’ were not only considered a subject race of colonial rule but were also divided into multiple tribal groupings through the practice of indirect rule. Each tribe thus conceived existed under the custodianship of the chief, aided by a group of village-level headmen. That Lumwana’s recruitment system incorporates the chiefs as key gatekeepers is an evidence of the cogency of what has been termed the ‘colonial present’ (Fraser 2007). By continuing the legacy of indirect rule, the postcolonial state recognizes two legitimate avenues of claim-making: a secular arena for politics that operates in the civil society, and a tribal one, which works through the customary authorities. Theoretically the system works as long as these two spaces remain separate. But the spillover of capitalism into areas hitherto outside of the enclaves where the civil society prevails
collapses the neat bifurcation and throws together subjects belonging to these distinct spheres. It is in this context that the tribe-based claims of the Kaonde are pitted against the more secular ones of the recent immigrants.

A discursive tool migrants in turn use to delegitimize the Kaonde claims is the use of the term ‘tribalism’. This corresponds to the second of two meanings of tribalism in modern Africa noted by Peter Ekeh (1990) following Aidan Southall (1970). The first sense is to denote one’s affiliation to and identification with a tribe-based mode of living, where the tribe is considered to have a “high degree of self-sufficiency at a near subsistence level, based on a relatively simple technology without writing or literature, politically autonomous and with its own distinctive language, culture and sense of identity, tribal religion being also coterminous with tribal society” (Southall 1970: 28). The second use of tribalism is as a political invective signifying one's preference for the tribe at the cost of the nation. In the politics I am investigating, this term is appropriated to describe the uneven access to wage labor along tribal lines.

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32 This is not to dispute the fact that many urban Zambians continue to maintain intimate links with their kin in rural areas. But they remain spatially distinct from the latter. Further, outside of the urban areas—the secular spaces, that is—tribes for the most part do not intermix.

33 “Tribalism is usually regarded in pejorative light and the rational basis for this is that to carry over elements specific to one system into another is inappropriate. It is in the political context that tribalism is regarded with particular disfavor, and in a number of social and economic contexts also. But those who rightly stigmatise the carryover which is tribalism in these contexts would in others often favor it,
As far as its first meaning is concerned the study of colonial Zambia was saturated with work on tribalism, and some more recent literature has continued that interest. Related to this, voluntarist explanations are prevalent. In his study of ethnicity and political behavior in Zambia, for instance, Posner (2005) links tribalism to strategic choices by individuals seeking to profit from patronage networks. Ferguson’s (1999) more sophisticated analysis of the selective performances of tradition or ‘cosmopolitanism’ in urban Zambia by actors seeking to retain or cut their ties to their rural homes, also problematically revolves around a model of individual decision-making. To be sure, both Posner and Ferguson are correct as far as interpreting concrete actions of specific individuals (and it must be noted, in an urban setting where such choice may exist). But one must also approach the issue at a higher level of abstraction and ask the following questions: How is tribalism reproduced? And why does the political use of tribalism as an invective continue, despite Kenneth Kaunda’s prediction quoted above?

This chapter builds the historical and theoretical case for such an analysis. I contend that there are three elements to the ‘history of the present’ of tribalism and its reproduction: the hegemonic persistence of a tribal framework for the study of natives (the epistemological moment); the tribal logic of governance (the political moment); and the uneven development of capitalism (the political economic moment). With this interpretive framework in hand, I then discuss the politics emergent in Solwezi.

especially with respect to certain family values and to aesthetic modes of expression, as for example in music, dancing and plastic arts.” (Southall 1970: 30).
4.2 The Tribal Logic of State and Economy in Zambia

4.2.1 Tribal Framework for the Study of Africa

The tribe has long been considered the scale of social reproduction in Africa (Crehan 1997; Schumaker 2001). As the object of anthropology and of governance, the tribe—whether or not it was so in precolonial times—came to be viewed as the basic unit around which native life was supposedly organized. Moreover, each tribe was considered to be the African parallel of eurocentrically conceived 'nations', that is, each had its respective fixed territory (Figure 4.1).

The problem is that this was not a prior fact but an outcome of colonial administration and epistemologies. A key part here was played by anthropologists at work in the region, who burnt the midnight oil in their many studies of the structures of the various tribes in Zambia (as elsewhere). In particular, the Rhodes Livingstone Institute (RLI) based in Northern Rhodesia was a regional center for the study of natives, and made a profound impact on the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. In keeping with the vision of its second and most influential director Max Gluckman, RLI viewed Northern Rhodesia as a 'laboratory' (Schumaker 2001) for the study of tribe. Moreover, the tribe was a good fit with the anthropological methodology in vogue at that time. It’s supposed self-sufficiency could be understood inside-out through the classical ethnographic method (Werbner 1984). The problem was that the very moment when these studies of tribes were being carried out, there already was no ‘autonomous’ and isolated community that could be termed a tribe in that sense. First the slave trade and then incipient colonial capitalism
was reshaping native societies in Africa in myriad ways (Southall 1970). That said, the study of Africa through the lens of the tribe, and the view of Africans as tribesmen remained the norm for much time to come.

At the same time, and because of the rapid expansion of the post-war mining economy in Zambia, RLI researchers increasingly turned their attention to the study of African urban subjects. In doing so, they confronted the prevalent view of Africans as essentially tribal—and by association, primitive—that was dominant in the colonial administration. Here it is worth quoting the words of an influential colonial official Frank Melland, whose work I discuss in greater detail below:

“…natives who have worked for long at secular industrial centres…have become detribalised. Tribalism is part of their religion, so in losing that they…have become heathens. I believe that we will find in this class—the natives heathenised by contact with us—a most valuable finger post, and a most salutary warning if we will but take it. Let us beware that we do not turn the devoutly religious natives of Africa into heathens. There is a risk of this. Every centre of European employment provides this risk: every Mission centre also provides it. (1923: 297).

See an interesting discussion on H-Net on this matter, particularly Brian Siegel’s intervention. Siegel says, ""tribe" smacks of ethno-/Eurocentrism. Use of the term is usually restricted to Africa. Only African people are repeatedly identified as "tribesmen". 20th century Africa has a sad history of "tribal" rivalries, wars, and conflicts. And the media coverage of these conflicts, by repeatedly using the "t"word, seem to suggest that some sort of tribal mentality is responsible for them.” (http://h-net.msu.edu, accessed 19 May 2009).
Figure 4.1. Tribal and Linguistic Map of Zambia.

This was printed in Richards (1939), but found continuity into postcolonial Zambia: The price quoted at the bottom right is in Kwacha, independent Zambia’s currency [Source: Manchester School Photo Essay

Such notions of the natives resonated with those held by the European settlers, who favored the radical segregation of natives and influx control mechanisms, arguing that urbanization was alienating Africans from their culture. Such policies and the ideological case for their establishment owed a lot to the fact that many settlers in the territory had moved there from Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, where detribalization formed the basis of accepted thinking (Beinart 1994; Legassick 1974). In Northern Rhodesia, however, these ideas ran into worthy opponents in the RLI. While they were interested in the shifting forms of associations in urban settings—and to that extent considered the reformulation of tribe in the city an important problem (Epstein 1958)—these researchers reviled the settlers’ definition of these processes as detribalization, and therefore ultimately one to be countered. Annoyed by the view of Africans as everywhere and always tribal, Gluckman made the famous statement that 'an African tribesman is a tribesman, a miner is a miner' (1960: 57). In other words, Gluckman’s argument was that the study of natives in the city must use different theoretical tools than those employed to study Africans in the villages. Politically, this translated into the treatment of urbanization as a progressive process, and RLI researchers considered Africans fully capable of becoming modern urban subjects. In his critique of RLI, however, James Ferguson (1999) points out that though progressive, Gluckman and others were, in the end, part of the colonial apparatus that they seemed opposed to. They were still, in other words, settlers; albeit on the left wing of that population. The irony was that even though they distanced themselves from the settler community, from the perspective of African colonial subjects, they were emphatically part of it. More recently, the interpretations of the RLI’s insistence on the progressive—almost natural—process of urbanization, and
their political stance related to it has taken a somewhat acrimonious turn amongst scholars in Zambia (Ferguson 1990; 1994; Macmillan 1993; 1996). I do not wish to arbitrate that debate. My point is that, and paradoxically, by disputing the saliency of 'pure' tribalism in the urban areas, progressive researchers in fact entrenched the idea that rural Africans were by nature tribal.

This was not self-evident, however, to early colonial officials and others who set out to classify and administer natives. In many cases, the stabilization of the tribe as the primal notion through which to categorize and understand natives took considerable effort. This is so in the case of the Kaonde people in the northwestern part of the country. Overall, the Kaonde have been of significantly less ethnographic interest than their Bemba, Lozi, or Tonga counterparts with notable exceptions (Crehan 1983, 1997; Melland 1919, 1923). The few available texts therefore have disproportionately informed the wider view of the area and its population. A key player in making the Kaonde ‘legible’ was an early colonial official Frank Melland, who during the 1910s enthusiastically took up the mantle of not only administering, but also describing the Kaonde in ways that would fit the ‘tribal’ frame that was by then already the norm. He served at the Solwezi Boma during the initial stages of the establishment of rule there, a period when colonial knowledge of its subjects was far from settled. His meticulously detailed notes on the Kaonde in the District Notebook of Solwezi were meant as a guide for subsequent officials at that Boma. Moreover, his elaboration of those notes resulted in a book entitled ‘In Witch-
Bound Africa: An Account of the Primitive Kaonde Tribe and their Beliefs’ (1923), which made him fairly well-known amongst those interested in the region. 

Melland’s ethnographic work during his eleven years in the area, then, formed the basis of the colonial comprehension of ‘the Kaonde’. Certainly there are people who speak a dialect, the Ki-Kaonde, which differs from others spoken by those around them. For Melland, in addition to their ‘geographic propinquity’, the commonality of a spoken language was all the evidence that was needed to claim the Kaonde as a ‘tribe’, with its implicit characteristics of cohesion, self-conscious understanding of its members as qualitatively different from others, and the potential for collective action based on belonging. However, he did not consider that migration was a common fact and clans and groups moved on a regular basis. Neither were the linguistic differences between different so-called tribes self-evident—when do quantitative differences in various versions of a dialect transform into qualitative differences between different ones? Both of these classifications therefore required some sort of a boundary-making exercise on the part of Melland and others.

More importantly, the Kaonde did not conform to the prevalent definitions of what tribes were. A close reading of Melland shows that first, the people he encountered in this region and termed the Kaonde tribe were organized as clans, often warring, and without a

35 The Royal Anthropological Institute’s journal Man devoted a page-long obituary to Melland on his death in 1939 due to an accident while trying to board a train ‘in a fog’ in South Croydon. Melland was at that time the Secretary of the Royal African Society (1939: 112).
larger notion of common—tribal—unity. Second, the clans were in a process of constant
splintering and reuniting, thereby giving them a fluid nature. Third, there was
considerable movement of people between clans, often those that in fact spoke different
dialects. Many times, this movement would be the result of battles, whence individuals
from losing clans would become the subjects of the winner. In Melland one finds several
moments of self-doubt, but which are summarily brushed aside without convincing
counter-arguments. In a section on wars, Melland writes: “As a rule, wars were not tribal.
The Kaonde tribe, if it is to be so called, never appears to have fought as a tribe” (271).
At another point, he adds scare-quotes to the term, saying that their history “shows the
extraordinarily broken nature of this ‘tribe’ from its beginning until to-day” (1923: 44).

Despite these concerns, Melland termed the people who inhabited the region a tribe,
which was inscribed onto colonial classifications. Later, these were taken as factual by
the postcolonial state, and Kaonde thus ‘became’ a tribe. The result is, and as Crehan
notes, there is a way in which a “distinct Kaonde identity undoubtedly exists’ today
(1983: 52). This loose sense of being a Kaonde, however, cannot be unproblematically
equated with a Kaonde political identity. That is a further step, and to this end, attention
must be paid to the tribal logic of the state in colonial and postcolonial Zambia, and the
place of the Kaonde within it.

4.2.2 The Bifurcated State

In this section, I draw upon Mahmood Mamdani (1996; 2001; 2002) to delineate the
work of indirect rule as it relates to the issue at hand. Mamdani abstracts, out of varied
contexts in sub-Saharan Africa, what he argues to be the defining feature of its state-form: its bifurcated nature. This bifurcation, mostly but not exclusively, overlapped with urban and rural areas in the colonies. For various historical reasons, colonial states—whether French or British or later on the Portuguese—converged on the policy of indirect rule to govern their territories in Africa. In brief, while the colonial state ruled the cities and areas dominated by white settlement directly, imposed civil law and created a bureaucracy; in the areas where indigenous peoples were largely left to their own devices, it ruled through ‘traditional’ authorities. The former was the sphere of the so-called civil society, which however was differentiated on a racial basis. A class of Africans—workers in capitalist enterprises or civil servants—with modern education developed in these areas and grew increasingly dissatisfied with the color bar at work, residence, education or in politics. In many contexts, this class of African elite was the driving force behind anticolonial movements, which were pivoted around African claims to social and political rights, and demanded an end to racial disenfranchisement (Cooper 2002).

Upon the achievement of political independence, postcolonial African states were faced with the task of redressing the violence and oppression of colonialism. Mamdani notes two responses. On the one hand, there were the ‘radical’ states like Senegal, Mozambique, and particularly, Julius Nyerere’s Tanzania, which embarked on a process of ‘detribalization’ and thereby altered the structure of the customary authorities. But the problem, as it emerged, was that the decentralized form of despotism soon turned into a centralized despotism where chiefs were replaced by party functionaries, and demands for forced labor or cropping were imposed not for colonial appropriation but in the name
of modernization or national development (Ibid. 103). Consider here Samora Machel’s insistence that ‘for the nation to live the tribe must die’ (135), which, however, led to a centralized despotism. What Mamdani is less concerned with are the causes for the continued relevance of tribalism despite the rhetoric of nationalist African leaders. A major factor here is the patchy geography of capitalism in Africa, such that the majority of the population remains tied to subsistence agriculture. It is on land under customary tenure, access to which is more or less guaranteed with the membership of a tribe and the acceptance of the chiefs’ authority. Moreover a moral economy prevails where the insecurities of subsistence farming are mediated by ties of kinship (Chanock 1985).

In most places, however, the postcolonial state let the structures of indirect rule remain while trying to incorporate them through various means (van Binsbergen 1987). In these contexts, postcolonial reforms were largely restricted to urban areas, and the countryside continued to be ruled by ‘traditional authorities’ with customary law, and the population at large remained tied to their ‘ethnic homelands’. Civil rights were deracialized in urban areas, but remained tribalized in the latter. This meant that all Africans were now equal citizens of the postcolonial state, but also that the logic of indigeniety continued in the countryside (Mamdani 2001: 238). Thus, continues Mamdani, “…in privileging the indigenous over the nonindigenous, we turned the colonial world upside down, but we did not change it. As a result...Indigeneity remained the test for rights.” (ibid: 658). In particularly poignant contexts those groups that were identified as the inauthentic Other, Indians in Idi Amin’s Uganda or Tutsis in Rwanda or Congolese Tutsis (Banyamulenge) in Congo, were targeted by those who claimed territory and resources based on their
indigeneity (Mamdani 2001: 262; Vlassenroot 2002). The key point then relates to the categories of indirect rule, their continued relevance, and the possibilities dormant in them for divisive politics around the notion of indigeneity, articulated particularly through tribal belonging.

4.2.3 The Geography of Uneven Development

Indirect rule froze tribes in space, thus creating the territorial form of ethnicity as we know it. Each tribe was to have its territory under the custodianship of the particular traditional chief. But as capitalist production expanded, this neatly compartmentalized and precisely mapped tribal geography was made messy by agents who moved away from their supposed homeland. The colonial economy in Northern Rhodesia came to be centered on the extraction of copper and mining areas came to be concentrated in the Copperbelt Province. This was the tribal homeland of the Lamba, who were dispossessed and moved into reserves, becoming in the words of Senior Chief Mushili of the Lamba, ‘the first victims of colonialism in Zambia’ (Personal interview, 13 September 2007).

Geology, however, does not entirely explain the selective incorporation of populations within the colonial economy. As it developed—centered as it was, around copper extraction—there was an uneven insertion of places, and with them, ethnicities within its logics. The relative ease or difficulty in bringing various areas within the fold of colonialism played a part in this process, as did the related cataloging of African subjects that drew upon stereotypes of different tribes’ supposedly inherent physical and mental characteristics. Particular tribes’ physical and intellectual characteristics were detailed—
though often with contradictory claims—as distinct from others, which in turn led to their categorization as more or less suited to particular aspects of the colonial division of labor (Luchembe 1992). At the Roan mine in Luanshya, for instance, it was claimed that only people belonging to one particular tribe would take up the work of collecting and disposing of waste (Spearpoint 1937: 25). This tribe was handed that lowly place in the division of labor. These are distinctions that take on a life of their own, are internalized by subjects, and continue to find widespread purchase.

As early as 1910, a British South Africa Company official wrote about the Kaonde in Solwezi District that they “are of exceptionally fine physique and are said by those who employ them to be most satisfactory mining natives [sic] of which the province can boast” (Luchembe 1992: 38). It was also thought that they were essentially a docile tribe. As the District Commissioner wrote of the Kaonde: “I do not think that there is any sign of disloyalty amongst the native nor any disaffection…They certainly look up with respect to the officers who are put to look after them…and few travellers go far into the country without noticing the general good understanding as a striking fact”\(^{36}\). But if one looks closer, it is clear that these early colonial representations of the Kaonde were far from consistent. In 1912 an official complained about natives’ resistance, saying that the Kaonde were “of a more restless and lawless disposition than those tribes to the east and south of them…the numerous cases of murder on very slight provocation show that very little value is placed on human life”. Of course, very little value was placed on natives’

\(^{36}\) NAZ, BS2 A 2/4/1, Administrator to High Commissioner Pretoria, 20 December 1910.
life by the colonialists themselves; the same officer goes on to add nonchalantly that “to signify disapproval of the lawlessness displayed, their villages…were destroyed by my order”\(^\text{37}\). Kate Crehan has noted similar inconsistencies in colonial accounts of the Kaonde. For instance, descriptions of their physique differed wildly from describing it as ‘fine’ to calling the Kaonde ‘under nourished, morose, and diseased’ (Crehan 1997: 66). Despite these variations and vagaries, however, the point is that the colonial state viewed natives through the prism of the tribe with each possessing certain traits; even though these definitions were dynamic and open to negotiation. As it emerged, while Kaonde men were involved in periodic wage labor, their links to their rural home remained strong and they were never proletarianized to quite the same degree as other tribes.

Colonial ethnography—its practitioners being the early officials—described the Bembas as a generally ‘healthy and hard-working tribe’ (Luchembe 1992:39), especially suitable for tough mining work, and in part this is why recruitment for the mines was carried out most vigorously in Bemba territories (Perrings 1979). Moreover, there was also a preference for native workers from farther away than those considered close to the mines. It was believed that the former, having travelled long distances in harsh conditions to reach the mines, were more willing to undertake longer spells of work and less likely to leave employment on what were considered flimsy grounds\(^\text{38}\) (Spearpoint 1937).

\(^{37}\) NAZ, BS3 A 2/2/2, DC Kasempa to Administrator, 25 March 1912.

\(^{38}\) In Spearpoint’s words, “Natives who…come from long distances for work are, as a rule, more amenable to discipline…Labour from the near districts has another outlook on certain of the conditions peculiar to
Aggressive recruiting in turn articulated with ongoing shifts in the economy of Bemba-land. Unlike others inhabiting south-central Africa, the Bemba people were less dependent on agriculture or cattle, their subsistence was based instead on fishing and on commerce with Swahili and Arab traders. As a means to monopolize commerce and to manage the labor and bodies of natives, however, one of the first and successful missions of British officials was to prohibit this very trade (Gann 1958: 9-14). Further, I found in my archival research that the scare of an impending sleeping sickness outbreak between 1905-1912 was used by colonial officials to remove Bemba settlements from the banks of the river Luapula. The scare was also mobilized to impose a ban on fishing in the waters of Luapula and on other smaller rivers and lakes on the grounds that the disease-carrying tsetse fly trawled these spaces. At the same time, by 1910 a tax regime was also firmly in place in the territory that required payment in cash. The disruption in their productive livelihoods and the need to secure tax-money forced many from this region to look for alternate means of securing livelihood, and they followed recruiters in large numbers to the copper mines. The upshot was that there was a predominance of Bemba workers on the Copperbelt, and in due course, a variant of Chi-Bemba, the so-called ‘town Bemba’ became the lingua franca of the area (Parpart 1983: 62). Moreover, their dominant position in the colonial economy translated—particularly after Independence—onto the mining life. The home village is not far away, and always before them is the knowledge that if they are displeased at something…they can very easily roll up their blankets and stroll back to the village.” (1937:2).

39 BSAC III, National Archives of Zambia.
political sphere, where Bembas are widely considered to enjoy a disproportionate access to the state and bureaucracy (Posner 2005: 97-101).

4.3 Development via Recruitment

Copper has been central to the definition of Zambian nationalism and the developmental tinge of the state. It is through the rapid exploitation of resources considered national that postcolonial development was considered to proceed (Kaunda, 1966: 60; 98). The geography of the resources themselves was secondary to the logic—once the resources were adequately tapped, the state would mediate developmental efforts drawing on the revenues. Consequently, this discourse leaves little room for local mediation of the resources. In other words, because the ownership of resources and the benefits from their exploitation is national, then those who are local to the specific sites of extraction do not have a necessary claim to development. They must therefore create alternate means of access.

One should recall the fact that the Lamba people of the Copperbelt Province have been the historic losers from mining in their tribal territory. Dispossessed of their lands by the colonial state for the creation of mining infrastructure and the construction of a string of towns, many of the Lamba were confined to the ‘native reserves’ (Siegel, 1988). For various reasons, they never became part of the labor force on the mines. Some preferred to sell surplus products from their farms to the increasing populations in the towns and others became prostitutes, but most of those in the reserves subsisted in poverty. As a result, the Lambas, as Siegel says, came to be considered ‘wild and lazy’ within colonial,
and more importantly from the present standpoint, native discursive cartographies. The widespread currency of this view of the Lambas in Zambia is striking, and it is in this context that I interpret the anxieties in Solwezi that if nothing is done to include the Kaonde within the new developments in their homeland, they run the risk of going the way of the Lamba.\footnote{This specific point was made to me by Chief Mushili of the Lamba people (personal interview, 13 September 2007), who believed that the Lamba were the ‘first victims’ of colonialism in Northern Rhodesia.}

The locals, moreover, are considered lagging in the national developmental scale. A recent migrant to Lumwana says in this regard, ‘The Kaonde, they are not very developed. You see their houses they are not good, many people sleeping in the same room. Only now they are getting developed’ (personal interview, Solwezi 7 November 2007). Such a view of the Kaonde is very common in contemporary Zambia, and their historical inability to come to terms with modernity is frequently pointed out. They are further seen to inhabit a place that is commonly perceived as ‘backward’, only now being ‘woken from its sleep’, which, ‘although endowed with rich natural resources […] has continually lagged behind in development’ (Mulenga, 2002). For their part, locals widely reflect on the matter with a certain ‘expectation of modernity’ (Ferguson, 1999) as is seen in the words of an informant: ‘I am interested to work there in Lumwana mine because I need to have a standard of living in my future […] I don’t want to suffer in the village’ (personal interview, Mukumbi 18 May 2008). This points to the fact that in places like
North Western Province, large capital investment is not only expected to make profits, but also directly contribute to the development of the places where it is located. At a ‘development review forum’ in 2005, a grouping of local chiefs and civil society organizations put forward their demands through the following argument:

“[This area] has suffered some economic malaise from independence, it was in order that people within the community should take up jobs so that development benefits the local residents […] Many participants agreed that locals should be given priority on unskilled and semi-skilled labour before looking elsewhere […] the Mukumbi royal establishment would be given an opportunity to intervene in labour recruitment as a control measure to avert public out-cry” (Mubambe 2005).

The localist position is strengthened by a collective of private firms—the North Western Chamber of Commerce and Industry—that seek to benefit from the increased business brought in by the copper mines. To this end, they aim to disqualify competition with roots elsewhere. The Chamber advocates and lobbies for the reservation of mining contracts for ‘local contractors’. The President of the Chamber explained the logic of this position hence:

‘If I’m from Lusaka and I get a contract the money won’t stay here, consumption will also be in Lusaka. Instead I do business with the locals here. I’ve built structures here and given business to many locals, including the hospitality industry. When you empower a local you can empower others. What can that guy from Lusaka do for [Solwezi]? Nothing. (Personal interview, 2 April 2008)
The Chamber’s main job then is to construct a community of ‘local’ businesses, and try to channel capital through this group, and not ‘outsiders’. Since they are an influential lobby—with some funds at their disposal and the ability to enroll the media in their projects—this aspect of the production of the local articulates well with the localism for development discussed earlier.

It is thus to make sure that that this supposedly ‘backward’ tribe (see below) can finally develop that there has been pressure from the local community on the Lumwana mine to employ only local people. Accordingly, the company put in place a system of labor recruitment that works through the local customary authorities, the Kaonde chiefs, to employ more than 1500 unskilled and general workers on the mine during its construction. Those who wished to be employed at Lumwana, which is the largest open pit mine in Africa, had to first pass what was commonly referred to as the ‘NRC test’. Applicants were asked to produce their National Registration Card (NRC), the Zambian national ID. Residents of Solwezi District have a code on their NRC that starts with 24; those with a different code were immediately excluded. However, even those who passed the ‘test’ could belong to other tribes while residing in the district, and so, at best it identified the applicants’ localness. As a further filter job seekers had to register with one of the three local Kaonde chiefs, who then screened the applicants and forwarded a shortlist of names to the mining company, ensuring that the local Kaonde population received a privileged access to employment. This system was specifically for the construction-phase; but the company has re-hired many with the formal beginning of operations in April 2009 and trained others locally. Some made redundant by the
transition are provided support for the cultivation of vegetables, poultry and honey for sale to the increased population around the mine (‘New Mine to Employ…2005), although several others have had to return to their rural homes upon completion of construction.

For its part, the LMC is keen to agree to these demands for various reasons. First, the company, owned by Australian firm Equinox, has until now been a mineral exploration firm, and aims to emerge as a copper producer through Lumwana. The project is pivotal for Equinox’s reinvention within the world of copper mining, and a lot is riding therefore on its success. Alongside the satisfaction of its shareholders, it is keen to project itself as sensitive to its ‘stakeholders’, that is, various agents within the community where it extracts copper. The program of local recruitment, and partnerships with the national and the local-level authorities are convened by Equinox as evidence of this commitment. In its corporate presentations, Equinox proudly displays the fact that it has created avenues to specifically help develop the locals:

“Equinox has already had a direct positive impact on the local community at Lumwana, and will continue to do so as it builds a sustainable community to grow and develop for many years, long after the mine is exhausted after 50 years or more. Equinox has developed a strong bond with the three local chiefs and their chiefdoms, primarily through offering them employment on a priority basis. This has had a dramatic impact in this very poor area that in the past has been dependent on subsistence agriculture….Equinox and Lumwana will play an important role in the development of the local community as well as the broader impact
The policy of recruiting locals through the chiefs is situated within the long-term social license that Equinox seeks in the region, in part because of the time-frame of the project, which is currently pegged at thirty seven years. Lumwana has sought maximum mileage out of their ‘socially responsible’ practices (Tassell 2008). A different reading is that the policy of favoring Kaonde workers may be a labor management tactic. Workers from the traditional copper mining areas in the Copperbelt Province bring with them mining experience, but they also bring a long history of union membership and activism.

Certainly, in their negotiations with the Zambian government, Lumwana managed to get its three-year construction phase classified in state terminology as an ‘essential service’. Under Zambia’s ‘Industrial and Labour Relations Act’, such a classification prohibits any work stoppage—such as strike and lockout—and allows the summary dismissal of any worker deemed to engage in such acts (Equinox Copper Ventures 2006). They could do so without any organized opposition because the unions were not allowed in before the

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42 In November 2007, I came into contact with a group of Lumwana workers (employed by a sub-contractor) totaling close to two hundred, who were fired because they protested the alleged non-payment of full wages and pension contribution. Even after three months of complaints—to all levels of the state from the labor office to the District Commissioner—many workers were unable to either get their full compensation, or to rejoin employment.
actual operations began in April 2009. Unions must now negotiate their role within a workforce that the mine has clearly employed through a tribal logic. How this process will play out is as yet unclear.

4.4 Lines of Contestation

Zambia suffered major economic crises through the 1980s, and was forced to implement one of the most wide ranging structural adjustment programs in Africa. More than 200 state enterprises were sold, and others abandoned because of lack of buyers. Several mines were closed during this period and it is estimated that about half of the 70,000 mineworkers lost their jobs (Mkandawire 2006). In terms of the geography of decline, and in keeping with the geography of copper mining, the effects of the decline were most poignant in the Copperbelt Province. From a net in-migration of over 20% in the period 1960-1980, Copperbelt Province witnessed net out-migration rate of 6.1% in 1990-2000, while its share of the Zambian population declined from 22% in 1980 to 16% in 2000 (Central Statistical Office 2005; Potts 2005). Centers like Luanshya and Ndola, wholly dependent on mining, were reduced to ghost towns during this period as mines closed, businesses bolted, and residents saw their properties massively devalued. As also discussed, the Bemba-speaking people from the Northern and Luapula Provinces of Zambia have been a majority of workers and residents on the Copperbelt.

With the decline of the Copperbelt, and the rise of the ‘New Copperbelt’, many of these former mineworkers have moved to Solwezi to find employment there, and are followed by others who hope to make a living by providing services to the mine and the workers.
A result of this migration is that chi-Bemba is increasingly replacing the native chi-Kaonde as the medium of communication at the local bus station, markets and other public spaces. It is thus in the context of the decline of the Copperbelt and increasing opportunities in the North Western Province that Equinox’s recruitment policy is situated. Expectations of long-overdue ‘development’ of the Kaonde have collided with the hopes of many Bemba-speakers from the Copperbelt who have come looking for employment. As early as 2003, there were protests in Solwezi on the matter. According to a news report, “Residents of Solwezi […] protested against alleged marginalization by owners of Kansanshi mine in preference of people from the Copperbelt to work on the mine” (Banda 2003). As it has turned out, and with the Lumwana mine having opened since then, the result is increasing differentiation and friction along tribal and regional lines, spurred by competing claims to the economic opportunities provided by the mines.

The claims of indigenous Kaonde to benefits from ‘their’ resources are then pitted against those of the urbanized Bemba-speakers from the Copperbelt, who otherwise are without a proper ethnic homeland. Of course, I do not mean to assert that those on the Copperbelt are without links with rural areas. Certainly, ‘transfer’ of resources (Mbembe 2001) from urban to rural areas in the form of gifts, participation in ceremonies and so on, may very well be part of their lives, but after two to three generations of proletarianization and lives spent on the mining towns of the Copperbelt, many do not have a clearly defined ethnic homeland, nor the accompanying claim to land and resources. In part this is a result of a failure to cultivate relationships with their rural kin over the years (Ferguson 1999), but
for many, especially the younger generation, village-life does not present itself as a viable option. In any case, their tribal claims do not lie within the Kaonde territory.

In this situation, their framing of the recruitment policy operates through two means: first, as a critique of the Kaonde as capable wage workers, particularly mineworkers; and second, as an appeal to their citizenship of Zambia and the related accusations directed at the Kaonde for engaging in the popularly reviled practice of ‘tribalism’. With regards to the former, consider the words of a recent migrant:

“You want production, hence you need people who are educated and have experience…Kaonde people are not…You cannot force a Camel to drink water” (Personal interview 29 March 2008).

Another informant believed that a typical Kaonde is simply not interested in working on the mines and that he likes to drink. So when “you want to subject him to shifts of 0600 hours to 1800 hours, he feels his freedom has been taken away” (Personal interview, 12 November 2007). He further added that the Kaonde work a month or two until they have enough money to buy a bicycle and fertilizer before they run back to their villages. On the material level, this narrative shows that many local Kaonde prefer farming for the new market instead of working full time on the mines. What makes this situation seem unjust to outsiders like those from the Copperbelt is that the Kaonde indulge in this luxury—having access to land in their homeland—when they are the reason that many others are unable to get a job at the mines.
In a particularly insightful statement, another migrant from the Copperbelt joined the two aspects of the oppositional discourse. He said that despite ‘loafing’ around for over three months, he still did not have a job, while local Kaonde people find employment easily, even though “they don’t know anything about the job…they are not like us from the Copperbelt”. He went on:

“You are a Zambian, you have a green registration card [foreigners in Zambia have a pink card], how can you segregate? We are Zambians, ‘One Zambia, One Nation’. This mine is for all Zambians. You think there are no Kaonde in Lusaka? Go to Chingola [a town in the Copperbelt Province], there are Kaonde at the mines…but here if you are from Copperbelt, different story” (Personal interview 11 March 2008).

The difference between Kaonde and outsiders’ claims is that of the scale at which they are framed: the former draw upon their position as backward locals in need of development, while the latter point to the promise of equality latent in their national citizenship (see Figure 4.2). Any system that subverts this notion of equality then has to be tainted by tribalism. This particular allegation, given also its gravely pejorative connotations in postcolonial Zambia, is provided teeth because of the central place of the Kaonde chiefs as tribal leaders par excellence in the institution of the system.
It is instructive here to recall a strand of Zambian politics that has asserted itself at various moments in history. It is what Miles Larmer (2008; 2007) calls 'Copperbelt populism', with roots in Bemba regionalism. Very briefly, the Copperbelt has disproportionate numbers—particularly among mineworkers—from the Bemba regions of Zambia's northern areas, and copper mining has been the backbone of the economy. As a result, there is a feeling that Bemba have historically driven the national economy, even though the corridors of power centered in Lusaka are not proportionately reflective of this contribution. During periods of thriving economic activity in the Copperbelt that
have accompanied past mining booms, this argument assumes added force. Its emotive kernel is that the surplus generated there is viewed as disappearing into the coffers of the Lusaka-based state elite, who use it to grease their respective patronage links in various rural regions of Zambia. In another context, there was the secessionist movement in Katanga Province in Congo, where a similar argument about the unfair appropriation of Katangan surplus by Kinshasa took a divisive form in the early 1960s. In Zambia, the most influential articulation of this belief was in the late 1960s, when Kenneth Kaunda faced a Bemba-led challenge to his leadership of the ruling UNIP. His erstwhile colleague Simon Kapwepwe was the leader of this tendency, and later broke away from UNIP, forming the United Progressive Party (UPP) with a Bemba stronghold, especially in the Copperbelt Province. The UPP was in favor of less state-intervention in the economy, arguing that those who produce value must directly benefit from it (see also Lungu 2008). Kaunda, however, countered this movement through two moves: by nationalizing the economy, including copper mines; and by imposing a one-party state, in effect banning all other parties, including UPP. More recently, Michael Sata's Patriotic Front has tapped into and fueled Copperbelt populism; rallying the Province's population around a platform that speaks of a greater regionalism. In an important way, then, the definition of the migrants from Copperbelt as outsiders and the assertion of Kaonde indigeneity may also be interpreted as a response to the perceived Copperbelt regionalism. This also begs the question as to when demands for the flow of resources to particular territories become regional (as opposed to tribal). It seems that this matter is related to the relative degrees of proletarianization—those without a ‘tribal home’ are seen to engage in regionalist politics when demanding access to state and economy.
4.5 Discussion: The Politics of Tribalism in Postcolonial Zambia

It is to be recalled that the two meanings of tribalism relate to the persistence of tribal affiliation, and as a pejorative to define the traces of the rural in the urban (Mamdani 1996). The first tension between these two meanings is that, and even though the postcolonial rural African continues to be considered an essentially tribal being, the articulation of claims on the basis of tribe runs the constant risk of implying tribalism in its negative performative usage. In other words, any politics around tradition or indigeneity—which is how tribal Africans must make claims—is also at the same time, tribalist and therefore opposed to the nation. As Posner (2005) writes, one finds repeated “pronouncements of the country's public officials, newspaper editors, and civil society leaders, who regularly denounce 'tribalism' as retrogressive and incompatible with national development” (Posner 2005: 93). But the question is this: what other forms of claim-making can rural (tribal) subjects in places like the Solwezi engage in? To be sure, they have available the apparatus of the national state, through its local level representatives like the members of parliament (MPs). But their everyday reach in these places is extremely weak (Crehan 1997), and moreover, the state is largely regarded to be parasitic and corrupt (Brown 2005; Szeftel 2000).

The assumption in the use of tribalism as a pejorative is that politics around the tribe is necessarily in opposition to the secular nature of the modern postcolonial nation state. This may very well be the case when the demands are of a centrifugal kind, that is, if they seek to break away from the nation. Another argument against tribal claim-making is that it seeks to disenfranchise those belonging to other groups. But one can argue here that
this is true of any group-based claim (place-based or class-based), which means that divisiveness with respect to the national is not an exclusive consequence of the tribal political identity. Why then the use of tribalism to disqualify claims? I believe it is related to the existing balance of state and economy in relation to the various tribal and regional groupings. This in turn, as I showed in the previous section, is a historical consequence of the country’s uneven capitalist development, a process that has its genealogy in the specific ways in which the colonial economy shaped the region. Those already entrenched with respect to ‘development’ are keen to maintain their privileged access; it is the challenge to their position that invites the allegations of tribalism. Of course, this matter must be seen dialectically. The migrants to Solwezi who opposed Equinox’s affirmative action program clearly are not privileged by any means. In some ways it has been a means to further the interests of the elite of the local population—the chiefs who are incorporated (chapter 5) and local businesses—at the cost of the migrants from elsewhere. On the other hand, it is also the case that those set to lose in the supposedly secular world of state and economy often cling to tradition as a rallying cry (Chanock 1985). Our analysis must be able suitably contextualized to attend to these dynamics.
CHAPTER 5: ‘We are the implementers of development’: The Mining Boom, Capital and Chiefs

“Lumwana is a company which will make Zambia a real Zambia... [It] will bring quick development”
-Mr. Kisonge, resident of Chief Mukumbi’s area

“I can’t allow anyone to loot my minerals without ploughing back to my community”
-Chief Chizela

5.1 Introduction

Observers agree on ‘the remarkable dynamism, staying power, and even resurgence of chiefship’ (Friedman 2005: 24) across Africa. As an intermediary between state and rural society, chiefs remain crucial to the implementation of postcolonial agendas, which typically require a ‘groundedness’ beyond the everyday purview of the modern state apparatus in Sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter examines how the extension of the latest copper mining boom into areas hitherto peripheral to the historical centers of Zambia works through these ‘traditional’ structures of authority; while also reconfiguring them in

43 Personal Interview, 17 March 2008.

the process. It looks specifically at the so-called New Copperbelt in the Solwezi District of Zambia’s North Western Province. Here, two large-scale copper mines—Lumwana and Kansanshi—have recently opened and have led to a rapid influx of migrants. The place, in short, is a new ‘frontier’ (Tsing 2005: 27-54) of resource extraction.

Capitalist accumulation entails the production of space in the form of factories and offices, physical infrastructure such as roads and highways, and services like healthcare and education (Clark and Dear 1984: 2-6). In other words, capital must necessarily be fixed in place to realize surplus value (Harvey 1982). There must also be attendant governmentalities that guarantee, for instance, property rights, contracts, law and order, and enforce mechanisms of adjudication and arbitration. Capital is, then, dependent on localities for profit-making and reproduction, though this dependence is uneven (Cox and Mair: 1988). To this end, capital articulates with structures of territorial authority at various scales. Specific forms of this relationship may achieve degrees of permanence, depending on the continued realization of surplus value.

As for copper mining, the geography of its extraction follows geology, which means that there is only a limited milieu of locational choices available to firms. Moreover, initial

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45 To be sure, the Kansanshi mine is one of the oldest in the country. But it has only sporadically been mined until its recent expansion.
investment in large-scale mining is substantial and mines typically have a long life. Consequently, copper mines—especially larger ones—are invested in the place of their operation. This explains why the state and workers have significant bargaining power with respect to mining companies, though of course, these relations are shaped by a variety of factors related to the broader political economy. Speaking spatially, in the manner that mining companies are linked to world commodity markets, and the way extractive capitalism has developed in Africa, firms are largely unmoored from their hinterland while staying confined to extractive ‘enclaves’ (Ferguson 2006). Where the tentacles of the nation-state extend for the purpose of reproducing enclaves, a relationship between capital and the state evolves. In areas with weakly developed territorial regimes, as is the case in many parts of Africa, more contingent links are emergent and capital enters into negotiations with so-called ‘extra-legal’ groups (Duffy 2007; Ferguson 2005; Reno 2000; Watts 2004).

In the North Western Province of Zambia, the postcolonial state—following its colonial predecessor—operates ‘indirectly’ through the chieftaincies. In these territories the chiefs retain control over access to land and have a grassroots structure of authority. Chief Mukumbi of Solwezi, for instance, has a system of Group Leaders and more diffuse village headmen that are linked in much more direct way with rural subjects than is the central state. Chiefs are also widely respected among rural subjects, and are thus crucial

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46 In Lumwana’s case, the cost of construction of the mine is close to $800 million and the mine has a projected life of thirty seven years.
for ‘manufacturing consent’ (Williams and Taylor 2000: 29-31) where the ideological apparati (Althusser 1971) of the nation-state have limited reach. The upshot is that while the Lumwana copper mine signed a Development Agreement with the Zambian state to obtain mining licenses and for other concerns; for its more local, everyday operations it has had to negotiate with the local chiefs. The contingencies of this process and its consequences form the object of this paper.

Historically speaking, across Sub-Saharan Africa the labor question or the creation of wage workers was tied to the ‘native question’, that is, the matter of governing vast territories given the short supply of colonial administrators (Mamdani 1996; 2002). The problem, in the words of Sara Berry, was one of achieving ‘hegemony on a shoestring’ (1992). These objectives translated into the establishment of indirect rule, which instituted a legal and administrative dualism related to governance and property relations. On the one hand the state ruled the centers of the colonial economy—e.g. mining or administrative towns, commercial farms and plantations—directly. On the other hand it imposed indirect rule in the rest of the territory and placed ‘traditional authorities’ in charge with the chief as the supreme leader, answerable only to the colonial authorities. There was, however, considerable unevenness in how this process played out on the ground. Despite their efforts to fashion strong chiefs capable of carrying out their orders, administrators posted in and around Solwezi District constantly bemoaned the weakness of the Kaonde chiefs (Crehan 1997; Macola 2004). After 1964, the authority of the chiefs was further challenged by the centralizing strategies of the nationalist postcolonial
regime. In sum, there remained a feeble structure of chieftaincy in Solwezi as Zambia moved through the period of economic emaciation in the 1980s and 90s (Ferguson 1999).

Despite the booms and busts, however, the material and discursive basis for the chiefs’ reproduction remained in place. With the central state never quite achieving complete territoriality\(^{47}\) in the area, the local Kaonde chiefs were entrusted with key gate-keeping positions by the recently-arrived mining capital. For various reasons that are detailed below, the Lumwana copper mine put in place a system of recruitment that granted privileged access to Kaonde applicants who wished to join the ranks of wage laborers in the enterprise. The system placed three Kaonde chiefs, whose land the mine’s license overlaps (Figure 5.1), as the mediators between capital and labor. This case is one of many such intersections of capital and the chieftaincy that have emerged with the recent mining boom. The implications of this process are discussed below. I begin though with a historical background.

5.2 Entrenching Indirect Rule

In Northern Rhodesia, and in line with continental practice, the colonial state ruled the cities and areas dominated by white settlement directly, imposed civil law and created a bureaucracy. In the areas where indigenous peoples were largely left to their own devices, it ruled through ‘traditional’ authorities.

\(^{47}\) By territoriality, I mean the exercise of power—of classification, communication, and enforcement—over space (Sack, 1983, p. 58).
Figure 5.1. Chieftaincies in Solwezi District and the Lumwana mine
While many places did have chiefs during precolonial times, their relationship with the subjects had a dialectical character. There were both ‘peer restraints’—between kings and chiefs—and ‘popular constraints’, which refers to the ability of subjects to depose chiefs in the event that they were widely unpopular (Mamdani 1996: 43). The specifically colonial impetus was related to the undermining of these checks and balances that were characteristic of earlier times (see also Vail 1989). Added to this were the tasks assigned to the chiefs that were euphemistically titled ‘customary’: making available labor for mines or settler farms; soldiers for colonial armies; and forcing peasants to cultivate particular crops. Each of these came to symbolize the extreme violence of the African colonial experience because they were imposed from without and because the chiefs were given almost unbridled authority of enforcement. Mamdani calls this form of rule ‘decentralized despotism’ (1996: 35-137).

On the other hand, and in the half of the bifurcated state where civil law reigned, the colonial state directly ruled over its citizens. This was the sphere of the so-called civil society, which was differentiated on a racial basis and natives were the subject race. A class of Africans with modern education—workers in capitalist enterprises or civil servants—developed in these areas and grew increasingly dissatisfied with the color bar at work, residence, education or in politics. In many contexts, this stratum was the driving force behind anticolonial movements, which pivoted around African claims to social and political rights, and demanded an end to racial disenfranchisement (Cooper 2002). It was this bifurcated structure of colonial rule and indigenous reactions to it that explain the
contests between the nationalists and chiefs that were to emerge later, and which I discuss below in greater detail.

5. 2.1 The Solwezi Chiefs

I now take up the construction of chieftaincies by the colonial state, and the challenges that came its way as a means to evaluating the extent to which Mamdani’s thesis of the bifurcated state fits the case of the Kaonde chiefs in and around Solwezi. Chiefs of the predominantly Kaonde-speaking district moved to the present territory from Congo to the immediate north over a longue durée (Melland 1923: 29-47). The historical trajectory of the various clans’ (mukoka) relative prosperity in material life generally laid the basis for some emerging as royal or ‘chiefly’ clans while others made the ranks of ‘commoner clans’, and until the onset of colonialism this was a continuing process (Crehan 1997: 70). As a result, the precolonial landscape of chieftaincies was extremely unstable. Many chiefs were in conflict and were often engaged in war; others were forced by their subjects to move to areas with better attributes, and in many instances dissatisfied groups of subjects—led sometimes by rebel headmen—formed their own chieftaincies. To a colonial administrator who was a researcher in his own right, the Kaonde ‘tribal tendency to split up [was] visible at all subsequent stages in their history’ (Melland 1919: 283). The Kaonde chieftaincies were consequently relatively smaller and decentralized than those of the other groups that colonists had hitherto encountered, and did not owe allegiance to a paramount chief. This is why, ‘the weakness of Kaonde headmen and chiefs is one of the refrains in the colonial reports right from the beginning of the colonial period’ (Crehan 1997: 109). Later, with the establishment of several posts between 1903
and 1910 in the region, the colonial authorities attempted to strengthen and stabilize the chieftaincies of the region. Initially the region was administered from Kasempa to the south, but a Boma was established at Kansanshi and then moved to Solwezi in 1912. An important part of the Boma’s work was the survey of the local chiefs and establishing links with them for, among other things, the efficient collection of ‘native taxes’, which totaled 10/- a year on each adult male and one wife by 1910.

The extraction of taxes and workers from the district, however, was anything but straightforward and the chiefs were often not in a position to enforce the administrators’ missives. As an official remarked, ‘the chiefs...have almost no control whatever over their people. This renders administration difficult for the official who is compelled to deal with the individual instead of the [tribe]’. For the colonial state this presented huge troubles. To enforce the colonists’ missives, the chief had to be the commander-in-chief of rural subjects, but this was far from the case. In the years that followed, therefore, the state sought to refashion the chiefs in this image. A precondition as well as consequence of this process was that the restraints from below faced by the chiefs were weakened and replaced by accountability to the authority above.

48 District Handbook Solwezi, NAZ.

49 NAZ BS3 A 2/1/4, Letter from Administrator, Livingstone to High Commissioner, Pretoria, December 20, 1910.

50 NAZ BS3 A 2/1/4, Memo from the Secretary of Native Affairs, August 12, 1910.
After the administration of Northern Rhodesia was assumed directly by the Crown in 1924, there was a shift in policy towards the institution of indirect rule, and the state purposely set out to incorporate the chieftaincies. The institutionalization was formalized between 1929 and 1936 with the promulgation of the ‘Native Administration and Courts Ordinances’ that created Native Authorities (N.A.s) across the colony comprising the various chiefs and councilors under the authority of the District Commissioner (Gann, 1964: 285-307). The chiefs were divided into two classes: chiefs and sub-chiefs, supported by paid and unpaid headmen. The state legislated that a chief should command more than 3000 subjects; the sub-chief between 500 and 3000; and headmen less than 500 people. They were each provided with distinctive badges, to indicate that they were ‘men of authority vested with powers not possessed by common people’.

In this way, a fluid system of clans and chiefs that had hitherto existed was formalized by the administration. The Native Authorities (NA) were created, in most cases, in keeping with the ‘tribal’ divisions and were responsible for various administrative and developmental activities in rural areas, including education, health, agriculture, and public works and met regularly to debate matters (Figure 5.2). Many councilors as well as headmen were actually relatives of the chiefs, who got the position not only through their contacts but also because the administration wanted to ‘give them a good grounding [for] the time they may assume office’. Additionally, the state had by now replaced

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51 NAZ NW 1/10, Memo by Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, August 1926.

52 Ibid.
tributes by a system of subsidies for the chiefs, but they were not very substantial, and Kaonde chiefs often bemoaned their supposed impoverishment during Native Authority meetings. In the early 1920s, a chief complained that his ‘people go to work but [he] gets nothing’, and another put it more poignantly, ‘Am I a chief? I have neither a gun nor clothes, nor a bicycle. My children gave me the blanket I am wearing’. Officials, however, were somewhat unwilling to increase subsidies. The District Commissioner justified this reluctance by saying that ‘even with the present rates the chiefs are managing reasonably well and if the rates are doubled they will not know what to do with the money’. To the extent that the colonial state acted on the chiefs’ complaints, the following dilemma ensued: the more the state increased subsidies, the more the chiefs were perceived to be servants of the state both by their subjects and the colonial administration.

This is not to say that the system of tributes was entirely eliminated. Gifts to chiefs continued to be given on various occasions, as were spoils of hunts and part of the harvest. But generally speaking, tributes to chiefs were greatly reduced.

53 NAZ KAS A/3, Indaba with Chiefs held at Kasempa, April 19, 1922.

54 NAZ KAS A/3, Chief Kasonso at Indaba with Chiefs at Kasempa, November 7, 1924.

55 NAZ KAS A/3, Letter from District Commissioner, Kasempa to Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, March 3, 1929.
While the general process identified here corresponds with Mamdani’s observations, there are certain differences in Solwezi chieftaincies. First, it seems that the chiefs’ material well being depended almost entirely on state subsidies, grants, and authorized use of unpaid labor. The result was that they were closely monitored by the administration, which reduced their ability to enjoy a free reign over the subjects. Second, chiefs in Solwezi were relatively less powerful than Mamdani’s ideal type, and so, the possibilities for ‘decentralized despotism’ were more limited than in other contexts.

Figure 5.2. Solwezi Native Authority in session at Solwezi Boma [Source: National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka]

57 NAZ NWP 1/10, Assistant Magistrate to District Commissioner, Kasempa, April 23, 1927.
In a way, their very weakness with respect to their subjects—and the consequent absence of despotic rule—may explain why they still enjoy considerable moral authority. People commonly view them as their communal leaders and as representatives in the messy and inscrutable world of the modern state.

5.3 Chiefs in Postcolonial Zambia

Going back to the 1960s, the chiefs’ position during the nationalist struggle was ambiguous. On the one hand, many chiefs came to see their interests tied to that of the British colonialists. This is because indirect rule had incorporated them through various means, with subsidies being one such material pay-off. By the 1950s, during the post-war ‘developmental colonialism’ (Cooper 2002: ch3), the chiefs were provided further means of enrichment with the consolidation of the Native Authorities (NA). Simon Chipungu (1992) has argued that this period led to the creation of the so-called ‘Boma class’, which managed to transform itself into the ranks of ‘petty bourgeoisie’ through regular salaries, strategic misappropriations from the funds of the NAs, and by imposing unauthorized taxes on their subjects. This, for Chipungu, signaled the beginnings of entrepreneurship in rural Zambia. It is strange to note that Chipungu seems to celebrate this fact, even though the rise of this class made little positive difference to the lives of ordinary rural subjects, and in fact, worsened it because misappropriations would have logically led to a greater burden of taxes. Moreover, he also shows that the Boma class managed to impose its own, illegal taxes to finance its projects. In any case, as far as Solwezi is concerned, and because of their limited size and authority, the chiefs did not emerge as rural entrepreneurs. They did, however, enjoy a better standard of living from their subsidies.
and were often prosperous agriculturalists because of technical support from the Native Authorities' help by unpaid labor from their subjects. All of this meant that their material interests were to some extent tied to the colonial regime. Yet, and to retain respect of their subjects, the chiefs also had to be attuned to the popular sentiment on the ground. As more and more areas came to support the nationalists, several chiefs came to back them too. Leaders of the African National Congress and Kenneth Kaunda’s UNIP would regularly meet with the chiefs to keep them abreast of the evolving situation (Kaunda 1964).

After Independence, the ambiguity was transposed to the postcolonial state. There was a view of the chiefs as having aligned with the colonialists (Kaunda 1966: 35) and as being remnants of a tribal—and hence, primitive—tradition that was incapable of existing with the modern postcolonial nation-state (van Binsbergen 1987: 156-158). But herein lay the hybridity of African nationalists. Their conception of modernity included a creative reframing of tradition to add authenticity to its supposed African form (Korang 2004). It is here that the chiefs were considered a central part of tradition, and called into the nationalist agenda as cultural artifacts. This perception is reflected in the Constitution of Zambia, which explains their position as follows: ‘a traditional leader or culture shall

58 For instance, one of the two ‘exhibition gardens’ in Solwezi in the early 1950s belonged to Chief Kapijimpanga (the other was of Simon Chibanza, a native clerk in the Boma). The state provided new seeds and fertilizers to these farms to showcase the benefits of modern farming for the wider public. (NAZ NWP 1/1/4, Joint Solwezi and Kaonde Native Authority Meeting, Matebo, July 16, 1954.)
enjoy such privileges and benefits as may be conferred by the Government and the local Government or as the leader may be entitled to under culture, custom and tradition. At the same time, the chiefs’ involvement in the sphere of politics was discouraged. It is because they were not considered suitably qualified for the world of the rational state and bureaucracy and because their claims were seen as potentially divisive, for their appeals would be based on their tribal-belonging and leadership. The result is that in Zambia today there remains a distrust of chiefs’ direct participation in state politics and those of their statements, which may be considered overtly political, are decried as tribalism (Posner 1995:93).

That said, postcolonial Zambia broadly retained the structures of indirect rule with a system comprising 4 paramount chiefs, 35 senior chiefs and 234 chiefs (Nag 1990: 27). The incorporation of the chieftaincy within the central state was, however, retooled. The state took away the official judicial powers of the chiefs, and their role in setting the developmental agenda through the Native Authority —in terms of agriculture, education, and infrastructure—was now taken over by various ministries of the central state. The state also set-up a formal system for the chiefs’ incorporation with the creation of the ‘House of Chiefs’ headquartered in Lusaka, which was to meet in an advisory capacity and deliberate on matters of rural development and on issues related to the chiefs (Figure 5.3). Despite this concession, Kenneth Kaunda seemed clear on how he viewed the chiefs’ position in postcolonial Zambia: ‘Chiefs have a major role to play in the future development of Zambia…[their] customary rights and responsibilities in respect of land

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59 Part XII 128 (c), Chiefs and House of Chiefs
will remain unaffected by the new Constitution. Chieftainships will be respected by my Government as part of our inheritance, but narrow, rigid and obstructive tribalism cannot be tolerated’ (1966: 94).

5.3.1 Chiefs and Politics

Though the Constitution bars Chiefs’ direct participation in partisan politics, the reality is far from what is envisioned. In the case of the chieftaincy in Namibia, and building on James Ferguson’s (1990) provocative phrase, John Friedman says, ‘tradition is a kind of ‘anti-politics machine” (2005: 48). In other words, not only is the chiefs’ disavowal of politics itself a political act, but also that politics works away hidden under the cover of ‘tradition’. Indeed, some Zambian chiefs have been politically active in their capacity as local-level kingmakers, while others have gained technically non-partisan but highly political state offices like that of the Provincial Governor. In Zambia, as in other African contexts, the political role of the chiefs has strengthened after the shift to multiparty democracy (van Kessel and Oomen, 1997; Williams, 2004). Given that elections are typically close affairs, political parties frequently jostle for the chiefs’ backing. As Senior Chief Mushili told me, ‘MPs have to be endorsed by the chiefs to be able to win from rural areas…[the politician] swallows his pride and comes back after five years, but I have told the last one that he is a thief’.

60 Constitution of Zambia, Part XII (129).

61 Personal Interview, Lusaka, September 13, 2007.
Chiefs, for the most part, are willing to exchange what are in effect their vote banks for the promise of ‘development’, which means for them schools, clinics, roads etc. This allows them to take credit—according to Chief Mushili, ‘we [chiefs] are the implementers of development’—which in turn is crucial for their continued legitimacy among subjects.

The Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) has been particularly adept at strengthening its rural base by keeping the chiefs mollified. During his seven years in
power Late President Mwanawasa, among other things, reopened the House of Chiefs in 2003, increased subsidies five-fold, and gave away brand new SUVs to over 150 chiefs (‘Levy: true friend…’ 2008). It is because of such careful cultivation of support that the MMD retained its grip on power in 2006 despite losing every single urban parliamentary seat in the Copperbelt and Lusaka Provinces. This pattern was repeated in the 2008 mid-term elections.

The MMD is particularly popular in the North Western Province. In Solwezi District, and backed by local chiefs, it won all three parliamentary seats in 2006. And the chiefs in the broader region often highlight their support publicly. For instance, the Zambia Daily Mail reported in 2005 that Chief Kasempa had ‘cautioned’ the opposition against hurling insults at President Mwanawasa. He is reported to have said that ‘as a traditional leader he had the power to bar political leaders who engaged in insults from entering his chiefdom’, adding in less circuitous language that ‘the ruling MMD should be supported because it was bringing development’ (Nkonde 2005). Other chiefs in the Province followed the lead, and pledged their support to President Mwanawasa and his ‘New Deal’ administration (Kaleyi 2005). In sum, while they remain an important element of the postcolonial state, chiefs have been ascribed a cultural and development-oriented role within it. Paradoxically, because of these reasons, they are considered representatives of rural subjects. This leads to their politicization in the context of multiparty elections, while also underlining the ambiguity their position continues to entail in Zambia.
5.4 Chiefs and the Mining Boom

The mining boom is reconfiguring the chiefs’ position around two significant pivots, though the effects are highly uneven and depend on the respective chieftaincy’s relation to the boom. I discuss these now:

5.4.1 The Land Issue

Under neoliberal definitions, the tendency is to view customary land tenure as a form of ‘market imperfection’. This analysis leads to attempts at expanding the private property regime as a way to court global investment (Bernstein 2004; Peters 2004). In Zambia the vehicle for such a transition is supposed to be the Land Act of 1995, which, among other things, is aimed at undermining the chiefs’ hold on access to land. Customary tenure may be changed into leasehold to make the alienation of land easier. But, and importantly, the Act stopped short of radical change. To obtain leasehold in customary areas, permission of the customary authority—the chief of the area—is required, except in cases where the land is needed for ‘the general benefit of the people of Zambia’. Interested private parties must negotiate with the chiefs, who in turn are supposed to consider the best interests of their subjects before alienating land. Once an agreement has

62 This is the conclusion reached by the CCJP report on the Act (2003).
63 Land Act 1995, Part II, Section 3.4
64 Land Act 1995, Part II, Section 4.2
been reached with the chiefs, the party may approach the Ministry of Land in Lusaka
with the necessary papers and a surveyed map to get approval. Though many have
decried these changes on account of the possibilities of permanent alienation of land from
the chiefs’ custodianship (CCJP 2003), the fact is that the Act also places the chiefs in an
influential position because their approval is necessary for alienation.

The 1995 Land Act was in a sense a compromise between the need to privatize land for
capitalist investment on the one hand, and balancing the chiefs’ dissatisfactions, on the
other. Importantly, there is no a priori certainty about individual chiefs’ reactions to the
Act, privatization of land, and capitalist development in their area. Relatively
impoverished chiefs may be keen to make some money by exchanging land-rights to
outsiders in exchange for ‘gifts’. Others may not want to lose land in their territory to a
mining company or other businesses. Two contrasting cases are present in Solwezi
District itself. Consider this excerpt from a news report:

‘[Chief Mumena] commended President Levy Mwanawasa for opening up the province to
investment which came with the opening of the Kansanshi mines…the traditional ruler said
that opening of the mine would not just benefit the province, but would help the economy of
the whole country to boom and once again put it on the world map for copper production’
(Times of Zambia 2006).

On the other hand, Chief Kapijimpanga had been resistant to the growth of Solwezi
because of Kansanshi’s development, which he viewed as encroaching into his traditional
land. The point is that in much of rural Zambia, capital must necessarily negotiate with the chiefs, because they control access to land.

In many cases, it has been observed that chiefs have been given substantial sums of money or brand-new SUVs as ‘facilitation payments’ in return for land (Brown 2005; Machila 2007). Even the Commissioner of Lands acknowledges that ‘there is no statutory control on how chiefs should administer customary land, and therefore, personal abuses and corrupt practices are not checked under this system’ (Sichone and Soko, 2006, p.12). Chief Puta, for instance, got in trouble recently when he explained that his brand new Toyota 4*4 was a ‘gift’ from a Congolese mining company (Saluseki 2008). But both supporters and detractors of the Land Act agree that chiefs are in a dilemma—the more land they alienate for payments couched as gifts, the more they weaken the material basis of their authority in rural Zambia. As one chief put it, ‘chiefs are not chiefs without land’ [emphasis in original] (Brown 2005: 99). These are the sorts of debates related to land that have emerged at many sites across Zambia in the context of the boom.

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Solwezi MP and MMD spokesperson Benny Tetamashimba commended the chiefs’ orientation towards development while speaking at his funeral (‘Chief Kapijimpanga, a man of vision’, Lusaka Times, 12 December 2008). Interestingly Teta, as he is locally-known, was most outspoken at the Solwezi Municipal Council meetings, stopping short of threatening the chief if he continued to resist calls to give his land to the Council.
5.4.2 Representatives of the Community

More problematic than the land issue—because it works in more subtle ways than overt corruption—is the colonial legacy of viewing rural Africans through a tribal lens. That is the practice of recognizing their rights and claims only as a collective tribal community and not as rights-bearing citizen. Further, the articulation of these collective claims is entrusted to the chiefs as the traditional head of the tribe. To be sure, one of the most common arguments in defense of the chieftaincy today is the chiefs’ ability to raise matters of local concern in broader arena. Indeed, chiefs regularly leverage their influence to seek social infrastructure and emergency help like flood relief from the state, and use the media effectively to this end. During my long interviews with Chief Mushili and Mukumbi, it was apparent that the two saw their role as leaders—as acting as the voice of their subjects. But the fact is that the chiefs’ articulation of the subjects’ concerns takes place precisely because the latter lack the means to make themselves heard directly. Relevant here is the virtual absence of civil society in rural areas in Zambia, compared to the increasingly vibrant scene in the towns and cities. Interestingly, the marginalization of the rural population was ascribed to their sheepish nature by the

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66 Interestingly, however, being too outspoken with their demands can invite the charge of ‘tribalism’ upon the chiefs; but it is merely the flip side to the tribal logic of the state itself that is being discussed here.

67 Though the latter, having been a three-term UNIP Member of Parliament and a former Governor of Solwezi District, imbied certain modern democratic values, it was clear that he still viewed himself as a leader by birth.
two chiefs interviewed and not to a structural silencing that was initiated by the
colonialists and continued under the postcolonial nation-state. According to Chief
Mushili, ‘most people in the village do as they are told…the people are ignorant, leaders
have to have moral obligation towards them’.\(^68\)

That chiefs are considered to represent the interests of the tribe means that they enjoy
certain material benefits that are supposed to belong to the community as a whole. The
new mines opened in Solwezi in the last few years are a case in point. The mining-civil
society relationship after the era of privatization is practiced through the mechanism of
Corporate Social Responsibility. In the towns, CSR is being closely monitored by civil
society groups, and there has been a radicalization around it as well (Chapter 3). In rural
areas, however, its practice turns around the seemingly self-evident but problematic
meaning of community. The way it often works is that the chief is not only the means of
reaching the community but the sink-point of CSR too. For instance, in 2006-07,
Kansanshi’s expenditure on such initiatives was $730,000, only 0.26% of the profits, and
was concentrated mostly in the town of Solwezi. Only a small amount was directed at
rural areas, and within it, $75,000 was Kansanshi’s contribution to Chief Mumena’s
‘home extensions’ (FQML 2006; Kansanshi Foundation 2007). In a similar way, the
Lumwana mine is paying for the construction of a new palace for Chief Mukumbi, all in
the name of local development.

A highly publicized and celebrated case has been the recent announcement that an

\(^68\) Senior Chief Mushili, Personal Interview, Lusaka 13 September 2007.
American company, Mayfair Mining and Minerals, has entered into agreement with the Kaonde Chief Chizela to develop eight mining licenses in the next few years. These licenses are owned by the Chief, who also has a 40% share of the Joint Venture to be set-up by Mayfair. The company paid Chief Chizela $50,000 as a ‘signing amount’ and has promised $500,000 in loans to be paid back from dividends on his share\(^{69}\). True, this initiative and the ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ it shows is in keeping with the late President’s vision\(^{70}\), but that it would also directly benefit the population of the chiefs’ area, in whose name he keeps custodianship of the land, is not given. If the development goes through, it could very well bring unprecedented riches to Chief Chizela, including the obligatory new palace and an SUV; but again, this is what rural development has come to mean in the structural paradigm discussed here.

In sum, and in the specific places into which the mining boom has extended, several issues related to the chiefs have emerged. Avenues for personal enrichment have been opened for chiefs, although they must balance the attractiveness of this course with the imperatives of the institution’s reproduction. The effects are uneven and unpredictable. Whether or not chiefs will recreate themselves as politicians or entrepreneurs of note (see


\(^{70}\) President Mwanawasa repeatedly challenged the chiefs to transform themselves into rural entrepreneurs. In 2006 he said, ‘subsidies should not be the only source of income for our traditional rulers…Chiefs should take the lead in business in their chiefdoms’ (Lombe 2006).
van Binsbergen 1987) is unclear. The issue, however, is of a general nature and requires intellectual and political engagement.

5.5 Lumwana and the Solwezi Chiefs

5. 5.1 Colonial Capitalism

Historically, the influence and relative weight of the traditional authorities is closely related to their positioning with respect to the larger capitalist economy. This is because their moral authority has been linked to the level of ‘development’ of their area and the relative prosperity of subjects. But the incorporation of their regions within the colonial economy brought with it new challenges for the chiefs. By the 1940s, 40 to 60 per cent of ‘taxable males’ in rural areas of Solwezi District were involved in wage work. Some worked at the Solwezi Boma and others on the construction of roads in the Province, but many were employed at the mines of Kipushi and Elizabethville in the Belgian Congo and on the Copperbelt. In 1951, of a total of 8799 taxable males, 3143 worked within the Province—many, presumably in the Copperbelt, which was part of the North Western Province then—178 in other Provinces within Northern Rhodesia, 591 in the Congo, 27 in Southern Rhodesia, and 11 had migrated to as far as South Africa. While wage labor was encouraged by the colonial officials, as it created labor for the capitalist economy, taxes for the state, and a good moral grounding which the missionaries associated with

71 NAZ NWP 1/2/20, Annual Report on Native Affairs, Solwezi District, 1948.

72 NAZ NWP 1/2/20, Annual Report on Native Affairs, Solwezi District, 1951.
settled work, it left the chiefs in a dilemma. They did generally welcome the flow of money through their territories. However, a recurring theme during Indabas (public meetings) were complaints by the chiefs that migrant workers did not respect them, refused to pay even the smallest tributes, and lo-and-behold, demanded wages in exchange for work on the chiefs’ personal farms.

As long as wives and families remained tied to the land in their rural homes, chiefs could be relatively assured of migrants’ continued links to their territories. For this reason, Piet Konings has shown that in Cameroon there was opposition from the chiefs to the insertion of women in the capitalist economy, as their movement away meant the loss of rootedness, and with it, of subjects (Konings 1996). This anxiety is also seen in Solwezi. Colonial reports show that by the late 1940s more and more wives from Solwezi were joining the men on the Copperbelt towns and this posed a challenge for the chiefs, given that their position within the state depended on the number of subjects under their jurisdiction. Though it was officially required for those interested in taking up wage labor outside the territory to seek the chiefs’ permission, it is evident that many left without it.

It is in this context that Chief Kapijimpanga of Solwezi petitioned the Native Authority to ‘inspect’ all buses leaving the area to prevent what he called, ‘illegal’ emigration of women and youth to the Copperbelt. The Provincial Commissioner’s reply that ‘it was difficult to prevent women going to the Copperbelt’, and that the ‘answer was to make

73 NAZ NWP 1/2/20, Annual Report on Native Affairs, Solwezi District, 1948.
life more attractive for [the emigrants] in the villages’ shows how the colonial state favored continued migration, even at the cost of the chiefs’ anxieties.

The chiefs in the region experienced capitalism through the institution of migrant labor and were forced to evaluate its effects on their reproduction. What this also shows is how the institution has been related very closely with the historical development of capitalism in Zambia, even though the forms of the relationship have shifted. The contemporary situation in Solwezi is novel because the area within which it is located is no longer merely a labor reserve for copper mines elsewhere, but is itself in the thick of capitalist development.

5.5.2 Tribal Recruitment

Copper has been central to the definition of Zambian nationalism and the developmental tinge of the state. It is through the rapid exploitation of resources considered national that postcolonial development was considered to proceed (Kaunda 1966: 60; 98). The geography of the resources themselves was secondary to the logic—once the resources were adequately tapped, the state would mediate developmental efforts drawing on the revenues. Consequently, this discourse leaves little room for local mediation of the resources. In other words, because the ownership of resources and the benefits from their exploitation is national, then those who are local to the specific sites of extraction do not have a necessary claim to development. They must therefore create alternate means of

74 NAZ NWP 1/1/4, Combined Meeting of the Kaonde and Solwezi Native Authorities, Mulopwe, July 28, 1952.
The locals, moreover, are considered lagging in the national developmental scale. A recent migrant to Lumwana says in this regard, ‘The Kaonde, they are not very developed. You see their houses they are not good, many people sleeping in the same room. Only now they are getting developed’ (personal interview, Solwezi 7 November 2007). Such a view of the Kaonde is very common in contemporary Zambia, and their historical inability to come to terms with modernity is frequently pointed out. They are further seen to inhabit a place that is commonly perceived as ‘backward’, only now being ‘woken from its sleep’, which, ‘although endowed with rich natural resources…has continually lagged behind in development’ (Mulenga 2002). For their part, locals widely reflect on the matter with a certain ‘expectation of modernity’ (Ferguson 1999) as is seen in the words of an informant: ‘I am interested to work there in Lumwana mine because I need to have a standard of living in my future…I don’t want to suffer in the village’ (personal interview, Mukumbi 18 May 2008). This points to the fact that in places like North Western Province, large capital investment is not only expected to make profits, but also directly contribute to the development of the places where it is located.

The Kansanshi mine has often been critiqued for its failure to ensure a privileged local access to employment (see ‘Kansanshi Hurting Solwezi’ 2008; Mubambe 2006). Lumwana, on the other hand, is locally considered a ‘better’ company (Chapter 3). This is in part because of its system of labor recruitment that I have already discussed in the previous chapter. Equinox’s mining license encompasses a total area of 1355 sq. km (Equinox 2005:1) (see Figure 5.1), within which it already mines copper and has plans for the extraction of uranium. Given that this area lies outside of the historical mining
enclaves and within customary areas of various chiefs, the company entered into negotiations with them for the smooth takeover of the land. It was not necessarily obliged to do so, because all land in Zambia is vested under the President of the country. But for a large company, which moreover is keen to project a positive image, expressions of dissatisfaction by the chiefs would have brought unnecessarily bad publicity. They thus involved the chiefs from an early stage, and in 2002—seven years before the commissioning of the mine—Chief Mukumbi made the following observation:

“The Chieftainship should get a certain percentage of the mine earnings. Good concession would be an understanding between the mine and the Chieftainship to be endorsed by the government…I would like to thank the Managing Director for the start in terms of relationship between the Company and Chieftainship and for involving the local leadership so it can explain the Project to its people. We have so far enjoyed a good relationship with the Company, which has assisted the Chieftainship.” (Quoted in Equinox 2005, Appendix).

Though there hasn’t been any transfer from earnings, the relationship between Lumwana and the chiefs has been cemented through the recruitment system, and also through other more piecemeal developmental work carried out by Lumwana. This includes the rehabilitation of classrooms and clinics in its vicinity, and the setting-up of a weekly market nearby.

All of this has several spin-offs for the owners of Lumwana. Recently, Equinox has had to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for their planned uranium project. To this end, they were keen to dispel fears related to the potentially environmentally hazardous effects of uranium mining. In November 2007, Equinox conducted a public
meeting on its proposed mining. As the traditional leaders of the area and representatives of the subjects, the local chieftaincies may have been a site from where a critique could have emerged. The chiefs were given special hearing at the event and their queries ranged from the economic benefits of the mine to its potential effects on growing embryos. In response the representatives of the company made many guarantees, but did not quite do so in legible terms. A provincially significant speaker argued that their explanations were too technical, which meant that most locals could not follow the proceedings, nor could they contribute. Despite these valid concerns, and with the chiefs firmly by their side, the EIA sailed through.

As for the recruitment itself, the way the system worked on the ground did not correspond neatly with the initially stated objectives and many issues have emerged. First, I was told by some men who tried to get employment that they were asked by a chief to do odd jobs at his palace for a month or more to prove that they were ‘hard working’. This constitutes another form of tribute, and if quantified there is very little difference between a labor contractor and the chiefs in this instance. Second, on examination it was clear that many of those recommended for the jobs were relatives of the chiefs, or in some way had a privileged access to their offices. The children of a chief—and others maybe in on this too—have received contracts for the supply of

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75 This last point was raised by Chief Mumena, who added that the effects on embryo were especially important, saying, ‘I am the chief because of my mother’s side, we are matrilineal’ (10 November 2007).

76 Focus group, Solwezi, 26 February 2008.
materials; no doubt, an instance of corporate social responsibility on the part of the mine.

These practices led two local observers to question the changes:

‘How can a chief do two things at the same time? He is supposed to be a chief not a broker, maybe he should give up as chief and become a broker.’ (Personal interview, 21 April 2007).

‘You cannot employ people from one family to such a big company like Lumwana. I mean Kaonde people; they are more like one family. As a family, a company does not last long. (Personal interview, 15 March 2007).

One can only conjecture on how things may have proceeded had Lumwana not decided to involve the chiefs from an early stage. We know from frequently reported cases that chiefs can be a source of critique, given that they have access to media and the central state, though it is of course, uneven. We also know that Lumwana could have recruited using private labor contractors as other mines do. But had it done so, the result may very likely have been that most jobs would have been taken by migrants from the Copperbelt who have moved to the area, and many of whom have prior experience. One can foresee in such a situation calls related to local disenfranchisement, as was the case historically with the Lamba people. Instead, Lumwana was presented the opportunity for a different articulation of these forces, one that was much more favorable to the company. Local workers, at least notionally, imply more compliance and their direct involvement gives the chiefs a clear stake in the operations of the mine, and with it an interest in the way it is broadly perceived. In turn, Lumwana is able to present itself as a company that cares
for the local community for the consumption of both its shareholders and the Zambian state, with which it can negotiate favorable terms on important matters.

5.6 Conclusion

The preceding discussion reveals the contingencies part of capitalist accumulation in a place without the requisite national structures of authority. To ensure local level law and order, enforcement of policies, and the ‘manufacturing of consent’, chiefs must here be involved in some capacity. In Lumwana’s case, they are cast as mediators between capital and labor with the goal of supplying ‘tribal’ labor to the mine. During colonial rule, the well documented purpose of such a relationship was to prevent full proletarianization of natives; today, local pressures are salient, as groups seek a privileged access to the capital flowing into the area.

These shifts have created new sources of personal enrichment, and more importantly, of authority for a few Kaonde chiefs, who have been relatively weak historically. Experienced through the institution of migrant labor, their relationship to capital until now has been a losing proposition. Their authority was further undermined after Independence. With the onset of the mining boom, however, their position as the go-between in the recruitment of wage-labor and the increased value of land for which access remains in their control, have stemmed that process. Seen together with the

During the tax-debate in Zambia, for instance, Lumwana repeatedly insisted that being better than other copper mining companies, it should be provided tax relief (Negi, 2009, ch. 3).
multiparty electoral paradigm, these chiefs are today stronger than ever before with respect to the local and regional political economy.

While corruption may be part of the process, what we are witnessing in Zambia is the increasing structural salience of chiefs, which turns on their relative position with respect to mining capital. This may or may not be welcome, depending on one’s perspective; but it is an ongoing dynamic. Where new mining develops, and economically, chiefs are better off; by alienating land in exchange for gifts and in some cases transforming themselves into fledgling capitalists through Joint Ventures. Qua chiefs, if they are seen as bringing development—such as jobs, infrastructural improvements—to their chieftaincies they can command people’s ‘respect’, that is, increase their relative weight as patrons. Politically, the greater respect they have within their chieftaincies, the more important they become to political parties, especially during multiparty elections. In short, Zambia is at a crossroads with respect to chiefs and their political economic significance. The institution may be reinvented in a different form; with chiefs seeking direct and open political roles as has been the case, for instance, in Nigeria (Harneit-Sievers 1998). Or the current ambiguity may continue such that politics remains couched within the cloak of tradition.
CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

6.1 Contributions

This dissertation is situated at a very precise conjuncture: the recent economic boom that is tied to the extraction of resources in various sites across Africa. New practices and sites of capitalist extraction have emerged as various minerals have become highly profitable and sought-after commodities. By looking closely—and geographically—at the intersections of capitalism, state and development, the dissertation contributes to four related debates. The concluding chapter reflects on the contributions, points out certain gaps and themes for future research, and ends with a note on the question of positionality.

6.1.1 Whither Development?

The first matter is related to the conceptualization of development, and here I sought an ethnographic approach. The goal was to move beyond the debates on development that seem to shift as a pendulum between notions such as ‘take-off’—given the conditions—and the disavowal of development itself. I subject the concept, in contrast, to a grounded analyses, paying attention to the—contradictory—ways in which those caught in the wake of the boom understand its work. It was clear, by problematizing development as such, that not only does it have immense popular purchase, but that the ideas that
constitute the meanings of modernity are intensely geographical. They are closely related to space and to its transformations.

These insights led me towards the Marxist critic Walter Benjamin, whose theorization of ‘new nature’ at the moment of spatial transformations became invaluable. The nascent and ongoing character of these changes, Benjamin argued, ignite certain ‘wish images’ of development. These are desires that mark themselves off from the most recent past of immense hardship. But in doing so, they reconvene a mythic ‘paradise’, because, and apart from the images available through the media, their immediate experience of prosperity was the brief period of state-led developmentalism. In any case, this is the case in popular imaginaries. I found that even though little of note had yet been achieved from the mining boom in terms of a general upliftment in standards of life, the wish images had proliferated. But these were also accompanied, because development remained elusive, by the shock of the concrete, including the perceived loosening of social norms and forms of behavior. All of this calls for bringing development back on the agenda. It is crucial but not enough to critique the work of the various agencies and actors promising development and implementing actual practices to that end. It remains a critical issue in public imaginaries and must therefore be so for analysts.

6.1.2 National Development after Privatization

Another reason for taking development seriously is revealed from the political shifts that are taking place in Zambia today. In the 1990s the state-led developmentalist model that linked the country’s all-important copper mining industry with society in a ‘thick’
manner had collapsed. What emerged, and was entrenched through the early 2000s was a neoliberal corporatist model. In this framework, unions were to be part of a social contract that required curbing militancy and opposition, the civil society was linked to mining through the institution of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and the Zambian state retooled towards a more ‘classical’ capitalist state—providing the basic conditions for social reproduction. As for CSR—which is then, the developmental framework today—it is easy to point out its inadequacies, admonish it and move on.

Yet, my ethnography reveals that CSR has quietly become a site of radicalization for diverse groups, who are driven by the memories of and expectations based on the developmentalist era. In particular, the place-making effects of the two periods provide for sharp contrast and are commonly invoked. One finds that civil society groups, unions and more autonomous actors are increasingly coalescing around a politics of development targeted at mining companies. Everyday critiques of CSR have been instrumental in promoting a national level opposition to the privatizing impetus of the Zambian state, which has been backed by international financial institutions. The state in turn has had to respond through various means, including revisiting the lopsided Development Agreements it had previously signed with mining companies.

6.1.3 Capital-Identity-Authority

Turning to the politics and identities in the rural part of the enclave, one must come to grips with the reality of the postcolonial bifurcated state. Chiefs are the custodians of land and people in these areas, and property relations remain non-market with a kinship-based
access to land. Historically, these areas have been incorporated into the broader capitalist economy through the institution of migrant labor. Able-bodied men worked for varying periods of time on the copper mines and other productive enterprises while they also retained a clear link with their rural homes. The new mining boom, however, has led to the extension of capitalist development into these spaces, but again, one is witnessing the creation of an extractive enclave, and not as is presupposed by the literature on primitive accumulation, a large-scale transformation to capitalism. Capitalist accumulation here operates unevenly in space and time as a truncated and patchy process. Further, the gap between the dispossession wrought by capitalism—in addition to the desire for development—and the incorporation of people into the fold of wage labor is immense. One then finds a politics for favorable access to wage labor. The consequences are twofold: first, the tribe-based claims of the Kaonde are set in contrast to those of the immigrants who in turn appeal to national citizenship. The former may be interpreted as divisive—as is the case with the use of the term ‘tribalism’ to signify it—and seemingly in opposition to the ‘national’. But I argue that claim-making around the tribe remains a central and constitutive aspect of the bifurcated postcolonial state. Pace Mamdani, for various reasons, postcolonial nationalism did not quite resolve the tribal orientation of colonial indirect rule, and contestations such as those in Solwezi lie dormant.

The second aspect to this politics concerns the reconfiguration of the role of the so-called ‘traditional leaders’ with the onset of capitalism. To realize surplus value, capital must be fixed in space and develop mechanisms for the reproduction of workers and mechanisms that guarantee production, distribution and consumption. Territorial regimes thus enter
into negotiated contracts with capital for the sake of long term reproduction and growth. The instantiation of capitalism in this new space of accumulation requires the negotiation of a fresh social contract, which moreover, includes the local chiefs. This is because they retain control over access to land and are considered the representatives of the rural society. Further, they have a grassroots system of governance that spreads into rural places that were indirectly ruled by the colonial state and were either continued in that form or were never entirely ‘captured’ by the postcolonial state.

It is in this context that the Lumwana mine’s affirmative action employment program works through three local Kaonde chiefs in whose territories the mine is located. This has created new sources for personal enrichment but also a fundamental change from their historically marginal place in Zambian state and economy. The political consequences are worth examining, since there is considerable ambiguity as to the place of chiefs within the Zambian state. The significance of the chiefs’ reassertion is thus potentially crucial.

6.1.4 African Development in the Asian-led Boom

Finally, the issue is about the developmental impacts of the new wave of investment in Africa. Notwithstanding the fact that patronizing discourses remain deeply entrenched in the West\(^{78}\), the emergent ‘South-South’ economic partnership has fuelled fresh visions of an African ‘renaissance’, one that for the first time in history can be negotiated without

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\(^{78}\) Consider the characterization of Africa as a place ‘without history’ (Mbembe 2007), a ‘scar’ (Duodu 2007), and in need of Western ‘mercy’ (Feller 2008) by the triumvirate of Nicolas Sarkozy, Tony Blair, and George W. Bush respectively.
Western mediation. One effect of these changes is that the orthodoxies of neoliberalism hegemonic in Africa in the 1980s and 90s (Carmody 2007) are being reexamined and increasingly nationalist demands related to control over and access to benefits from natural resources are being voiced (Larmer and Fraser 2007).

Viewed in perspective, however, the boom may be read as a new page of an older history of booms and busts in Africa’s extractive industries, and with them, the respective national economies. These patterns coincide to a large degree with the vicissitudes of world commodity markets, and are therefore highly inconstant and unpredictable. Not only have the busts repeatedly disproved predictions of a more or less clear path to development in a material sense, but they have also forced ordinary Africans and social scientists alike to continually reevaluate the continent’s place in the globalizing world and Africans’ expectations of modernity (Ferguson 1999). In addition, the South-South relations have been critiqued as another round of imperialistic positioning with respect to Africa (Hitchens 2008).

My intervention in this debate is to highlight both the continuities and the shifts in capitalism, state and development in Africa. I argued at the outset that, viewed through a geographic lens, the new boom is not leading to large-scale capitalist development but to the creation of another extractive enclave. In this sense it is a continuation of the historical geography of capitalism on the continent. As for the issue of China in Africa,

79 Already, Africans and those interested in the continent are grappling to understand the implications of the current recession on economies there.
and as I argue elsewhere (Negi 2008), I believe that the South-South relations are not the panacea, but neither are they a new variant of colonialism. The recent Asian investment has enervated African economies after two decades of stagnation. The changed political economic climate has in turn re-energized comatose oppositional movements, especially those that seek a greater share of the benefits from African resources. In a somewhat paradoxical way, by reviving African economies—though, of course, unevenly—Chinese investment has bred an opposition to the perceived foreign control of resources that has turned in many instances like Zambia against China itself.

6.2 Gaps in the Dissertation and Future Research Themes

Many of the propositions put forth in this dissertation must today be reexamined in the light of the global economic crisis. Today, as the crisis unravels and the web of those affected continues to explode, the descriptions of African progress and pace anthropologist James Ferguson, expectations of modernity (1999) that I detailed seem ominously reminiscent of the previous cycle of growth and decline. Yet, the present moment, as we negotiate the cusp between the boom and the impending bust, is profoundly contemporary and reveals the workings of the present-day global economy. It comes after a period of neoliberal ascendency, which had carefully dismantled the nationalist projects of postcolonial Africa. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Africans were told that the world was moving on the ‘train of globalization’ (Friedman 2004) and they had no alternative but to get on board, which in the context, meant they had to turn over the economy to private businesses. The tragic effects of this transformation have been variously documented (cf Mkandawire and Soludo 1998). Suffice is to say that as a
result, ‘structural adjustment’ is no longer a technical term, but has become a collectively reviled signifier across Africa.

The recent economic revival, however, created openings for renewed claims over these resources and a politics of economic nationalism (Larmer and Fraser 2007; Negi 2008). In Zambia, the hitherto unflinchingly neoliberal government attempted to placate the growing opposition by increasing taxes, renegotiating lop-sided development agreements, and reinstating the national planning mechanism. As I noted in Chapter 3, the World Bank was forced recently to concede that its single-minded focus on privatization was ‘mistaken’. One does not know how to characterize this rather frank admission, but it did mark a significant moment of departure: it was an admission of the weakening grip of neoliberal orthodoxy. So the question at this conjuncture is this: through what strategies are international financial institutions articulating their continued relevance to African policy-making despite growing critiques? This research will also fill a gap in the dissertation that relates to the role—in development, capitalism and politics—of these organizations that can be seen to represent in on way the ‘external’ forces of change.

Another element is related to, once again, the discourses and meanings of development in the wake of the crisis. Speaking specifically of Zambia, and with the economic downswing having already brought the price of copper down from almost $4/lb in June 2008 to $1.5 in February 2009, the political shifts towards a greater national stake—noted above—may only succeed in socializing scarcity, not wealth. One does not know exactly what shape this politics will take, and whether the crisis would lead to greater
democratization or to stronger authoritarianism in Zambia. It is certain, however, that it will precipitate new debates related to the direction of the country and the region at large.

A third theme concerns the ongoing changes within the rural communities bordering the new enclave. While I visited and interviewed several people in these areas, I could not—partly for logistical reasons and partly because of the inability to secure additional funds—conduct sustained fieldwork within the rural community. The questions for such a project would turn around the evolution of gender relations in the context of the boom; the shifting patterns of agricultural production (to the extent that people turn to production for the new market); and the changes in local politics because of the boom. For instance, what sorts of dynamics between old and young people are emerging? How are norms related to what is called the ‘moral economy’ undergoing change?

6.3 A Comment on the Researcher

In November 2007, I wrote an article as an overview of the sorts of images of India and Indians that are prevalent in Zambia (as in many other African countries) (Negi 2007). It was published in the country’s independent and most widely read newspaper, ‘The Post’. After describing some of my own experiences I said the following:

“On the one hand, like any other nationality, Indians are internally differentiated, i.e. there are bound to be as many selfish Indians as there are kind-hearted ones. On the other, Indians’ class composition in Zambia determines their relationship with the local people. In other words, most Zambians confront Indians in their daily lives in one of two capacities: as employers or as sellers of various commodities. And we all know that one doesn’t have to be
from India to want to pay his/her workers as little as possible, or to sell things to customers at the highest price possible. It is not rocket science; it is capitalism—production for the sake of profits. And it follows that for this reason Indians are, to put it mildly, not loved by Zambians. As much as I am saddened by it, I have to accept it as a fact, for it is the natural result of Indians’ class position in Zambia in a competitive economy. But I ask Zambians to make a concession in return. Remember that the Indians that you interact with and who seem shrewd and business minded are so not because they are from India, it is because they are capitalists, who want to reduce their costs and increase profits at every opportunity. This is important, because there are about 95 per cent of Indians who are not capitalists, even though there aren’t many of us—students, teachers, peasants etc—in Zambia as I write.

The problem, however, is not only with the Zambians’ perceptions. Indians in this country are also to blame for the often tense relationship. Quite honestly, many Indians here in Zambia are plainly and disgustedly racist. They harbour views of Zambians that belong to a past era: these are a sorry internalization and continuation of colonial construction of Africans as uncouth, lazy people who engage in thoughtless acts of enjoyment at the expense of their future. Nothing has saddened me more than to talk to a long time Indian resident trying to counsel me—a relative newbie in Africa—about how inherently juvenile the locals are. But at the same time, this has hardened me to do my modest bit to bring positive change. This involves, on the one hand, confronting racist Indians, and on the other, sensitizing Zambians about India. Another problem is that like other immigrant communities Indians prefer socializing exclusively with other Indians. This really is a problem, because the more you isolate yourself, the less you know about the perceived ‘other’, while at the same time you become more and more convinced about the validity of your own stereotypes.”
Little did I know when I wrote it that the article would land me in trouble. Many Indians in Zambia were annoyed. Beyond the drama, this episode and the question of ‘positionality’ (Rose 1997; Herod 1999) raise the question about how my being Indian impacted the research and the results. I believe that it certainly had an effect, though not to the extent I had anticipated. I had not given the people of Zambia enough credit when I thought so, for they—for the most part—considered me an ally and someone genuinely interested in learning about and from them. On the other hand, and as the reaction to my article showed, the Indian community perhaps did not make that distinction. Although I was not attached to it in any clear way, even the few Indians I conversed with would take it upon themselves to ‘warn’ me—a newcomer—about how ‘the Africans’ really are. Needless to add, the conversation would devolve very quickly into a regurgitation of stereotypes that are all too familiar (Mbembe 2001: ch.1). Initially, I would intervene with my critical views, but later I avoided that community entirely. Of course, I say this with the knowledge that there are many Indians who do not feel predisposed to these views and are genuine friends of Zambia.

It is impossible to ascertain how my interactions and consequently the results would have been different had I been a Zambian student or one from the North. What I do know is that I found an overwhelming desire on the part of those who may be termed as my ‘informants’ or ‘collaborators’ to share their opinions. There were two notable exceptions. First, there was the Kansanshi mine, where many of my attempts to arrange meetings and visits to the mine were frustrated, and to gather its management’s perception on things, I had to rely on observations of public meetings where Kansanshi
was represented. Second was the local labor office in Solwezi, where I was treated with
some degree of suspicion. But it is important to note that both are sites from where power
emanates. They do not and cannot represent the public at large.

Apart from some that could not work out for logistical reasons, every single person,
worker, union, NGO was welcoming. I was told the reason early on. Apart from the
general and widespread notion of Zambians as being particularly peace-loving and
welcoming (which, of course, they are), according to an organizer involved with informal
sector workers, it was because Zambians had had enough of the self-censorship of the
one-party state. That was when people ‘idling’ on the street after dark would be rounded
up, and outspoken critics would find themselves targeted by the state. Even though
multiparty democracy had accompanied economic hardships, it was a time now where
one could express him or herself freely—though of course, there is unevenness here too
along class, gender and other lines—but it is a general reality. I believe an important
reason for the welcome was how I conducted myself. I was immersed in the life of the
community, developed relationships with locals from various sections of society, and
tried to be a productive member of it while I was one. I worked with the ‘Chamwaza
Theater Group’, a collective of talented youths in Solwezi and helped design and publish
the first ever newsletter in the North Western Province. These efforts bore fruit after I had
left Zambia when the German aid agency decided to fund the newsletter’s expansion. I
was happy to participate in local—religious, cultural, and secular—rituals. These
included traditional ceremonies, the regular ‘standing in the gap’ event of night-long
prayers of the Pentecostals, and the Youth, Women’s and Independence Day celebrations
locally. Thus, I was seen as an ally, which of course, I am. This point was reinforced also when one day the Mayor of the town requested me to interview him, since he’d seen me at various sites, notebook and pen in hand. Additionally, and this brings us back to the issue of race, I stayed exclusively with locals and chose to stay away from expatriates for the most part. It was because the latter’s opinions of the locals are generally problematic—in many cases, clearly racist—and while expatriates may be of ethnographic significance in their own right, they were not my object of analysis. I realize that I leave myself open to criticism, since I was an expatriate too, but there is something to be said about ‘performing’ expatriate life or not doing so.

To conclude, this dissertation is an account of the guises of contemporary capitalism as it works in and through a place at its margins. The actors have little power within the broader geopolitical and economic structures that so closely inform their own lives. Yet, through their actions—organized and more autonomous—they have the power to shape how global capitalism confronts them. They are engaged to this end through a variety of actions. Our job as researchers is to help advance their struggles through honest analysis. This, above all, is what I have attempted in this dissertation.
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