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Can African States Escape Exploitation without Backlash?

Bachelorarbeit, Sommersemester 2021

Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

https://doi.org/10.5282/ubm/epub.77542

LUDWIG-
MAXIMILIANS-
UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN

GESCHWISTER-SCHOLL-INSTITUT
FÜR POLITIKWISSENSCHAFT

Münchener Beiträge
zur Politikwissenschaft

herausgegeben vom
Geschwister-Scholl-Institut
für Politikwissenschaft

2021

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Bachelorarbeit bei
Dr. Sebastian Schindler
2021

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List of abbreviations

AM Artisanal Miner

DRC Democratic Republic of the Congo

GDP Gross domestic product

IM Industrial miners

IR International Relations

WTO World trade organization

IMF International Monetary Fund

FTC Federal trade commission

USD United States Dollar

LDC Least Developed Country

IPST Institutional power shift theory

PTT Power transition theory

UN United Nations

ICA International Coffee Agreement

ICO International Coffee Organization

PPE Personal Protective Equipment

C123 Minimum Age (Underground Work) Convention, 1965;

C124 Medical Examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965;

C148 Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977;

C155 Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981;

C174 Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993;

C176 Safety Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995;

Introduction

Colonialism, dominion, imperialism and expansionist doctrine, are all words and phrases meant to describe the nature of one powerful country taking over or dominating another. While they mainly describe slightly different forms of domination, as well as different eras, they join in the common goal of exploiting the victim country to benefit the aggressor. Observing the past half millennium, one can see that no continent was at the receiving end of such actions more than the African one. While the colonization of non-native territories was common in ancient times, it was focused on the expansion of territory with the general goal of securing borders, thus guaranteeing that no neighboring empire and or kingdom would be able to attack. Conquered nations would not serve as a colony to the main land, but as an extension and now part of the conquering power. These types of invasions, invasions for territory, would carry on for centuries.

The Scramble for Africa would prove to be extremely different. The Berlin conference of 1884 saw seven western European powers divide the African continent amongst each other. The continent which had been left almost untouched by its northern neighbors, would end up being entirely colonized, with the exception of Abyssinia and Liberia. Under the guise of missionary work and the spread of Christianity, European powers began mining the continent for all its natural resources, mainly ones that were not available in their own territories. The degree of exploitation and stealing of minerals and natural resources was on an immense level that it is often referred to as the Rape of Africa. This extraction of resources would take on many faces as it modernized with the times. Countries that were exploited for their cotton and sugar would later be looted of their copper, diamonds, and even uranium.

Today, over 100 years later, we see that while the territorial sovereignty of the continent and its nations is upheld, a great deal of interest still lies in the resource-rich continent. With the advancement of technology, many metals found mainly in Central[1] and West Africa, have become pivotal for the production of parts and manufacturing of tech products. Corrupt governments, war-torn countries, and low levels of worker regulation in some of these countries enables those who control many of the various metal mines to use unethical methods of extraction to save money for themselves, and for the bigger tech companies they supply these metals to.

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[1] Specifically the Copperbelt

In this paper, a light will be cast on the Democratic Republic of Congo and its cobalt industry. Cobalt, one of the most sought after metals for tech production, is overwhelmingly found in that country. More than 70% of the worlds Cobalt is produced[2] in the DRC. One would expect that a country producing an important global resource would perform well economically, especially when that resource is pivotal for the production and advancement of technology. Yet we find that the DRC ranks in the bottom ten among its continental neighbors[3]. Reports from the UN in 2001[4] and the Global Witness in 2009[5] both blame exploitation by foreign powers for the instability and the limited regulation over the resources in the DRC. This should come as no surprise, as the DRC sits on an estimated $24 trillion worth of minerals. It is therefore in the interest of many to uphold the status quo of low development and low regulation to ensure cheap extraction and maximum profit. The cobalt industry is no exception to this predicament. Up to 30% of all cobalt mined in the DRC stems from artisanal miners working in hazardous conditions or employing children to extract the cobalt from the mines as well.

Naturally, if the current DRC government were to intervene directly and unilaterally raise the price of Cobalt, we expect to see backlash from global trade partners, specifically countries whose main industry is the technology sector. This would then usually either lead to trade wars or direct intervention by the WTO to lower the price of cobalt again. As it is in the interest of the DRC to raise the cobalt price, one must ask if there is a way for the DRC to escape the exploitation of its resources without facing backlash from it's trade partners or multinational corporations.

I hypothesize that the escape of exploitation without backlash[6] is based on a handful of reasons and circumstances. Under the conditions that there is no large amount of actors involved in the market, that the generated jobs in importing countries for refining primary products are not replaced nor reduced, and that the DRC adopts global regulations on worker safety and wellbeing, they can escape the exploitation of the cobalt production without backlash. The backlash from other

2 Disclaimer: when referencing the DRC and cobalt the words "produce" and "extract" are used interchangeably to mean the same thing

3 GDP and GDP per capita

4 https://www.un.org/press/en/2001/sc7057.doc.htm

5 https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/democratic-republic-congo/faced-gun-what-can-you-do/

6 "without backlash" being the most critical point

countries will depend entirely on the motive and framing of the DRC for their price increase regarding cobalt. This paper aims to show that normative reasons i.e. values and morals and the way domestic issues are framed, hold large weight in political scenarios and are the difference between an increase in relative capabilities versus a trade war or pushback within the global trade arena. The guiding hypothesis for this paper therefore reads:

> "By framing the rise of product cost as a side effect of adhering to international worker standards[7], which in turn results in high labor cost due to mandatory safeguards, African states can escape exploitation without backlash".

In this paper we will begin with the literature review, reiterating and highlighting the most important literature on the topics pertaining to the hypothesis. It will begin by defining what exploitation is to begin with as it serves as the bedrock for this entire paper. It will assess theory spanning over long periods of time and different regions. Then follows theory on the escape of exploitation. This involves extrapolating the various solutions of authors presented for other cases similar to that of the DRC. In this case, the similarity is based less on the closeness of industry but rather the likeness of situation. Most prominently is the case of coffee pertaining to the establishment and downfall of the International Coffee Agreement. It serves as an important event as many authors have presented different reasons explaining why it occurred. We will look mainly on the work of Daviron and Ponte (2007) as it serves as the most comprehensive and complete literature on the coffee case. Their theory on necessary action deviates from most conventional authors and thus requires additional focus. It also ties straight into the literature on Normative theory. While they are niche fields and are shunned by a multitude of scholars, they deserve more attention and present convincing arguments on the power of normative theory and framing effects. Last is Institutional Power Shift Theory. A competitor for Power Transition Theory, it is more forgiving to work with as it explores everything within the scope of an institution, thus enabling the author to draw out clear lines for the assessment of a certain case such as the one on the Congo. Following the literature review I present the research design and case selection where I explain where the gap in current academia is, as well as why I selected the Democratic Republic of the Congo for this paper. After this come the methodology and data chapters. These chapters expand on

[7] In this thesis, "worker standards", "worker conditions", "work conditions", and "labor standards" all refer to the same thing. This being the various conventions, cited later in this paper, presented by the ILO and ratified by some member states.

the methods that I will be using, either qualitative or quantitative, and highlighting the data I will be using in the penultimate chapter. The empirical analysis will include a breakdown of the main points in parts; each will be analyzed separately. Upon completion they will be looked at and discussed as a whole as my findings are presents. Lastly I conclude the paper with a brief summary of my findings.

1.0 Literature review

This thesis occupies itself with the concepts of escaping exploitation without backlash. Thus, it must first explore the core of the concept; exploitation. In the first paragraph, I explore various literature on exploitation, its definition and application, both modern and historical. Then follows the exploration of different solutions to the question of escaping exploitation, focusing on the most common narratives as well as the critique of those narratives and their counteroffers. Thereupon follows the probing of framing and normative theory concerning the guiding hypothesis of this thesis. Concluding this chapter will be the analysis of power shift/transition theories on the eponymous event. Testable hypotheses will be presented in the sub-chapters on the escape of exploitation, normative theory and framing effects, and power transition/shift theory.

1.1 Exploitation

Exploitation can be defined in different ways as its definition depends on what it is that is being exploited. There is for example the exploitation of children to serve as child soldiers in war torn countries or the financial exploitation of migrants fleeing their country[8]. This paper focuses however on the exploitation of labor and resources as they go hand in hand.

Labor exploitation, according to Karl Marx, is the forced selling of one's labor power for less than the value of what it is that individual produces through their labor[9]. When speaking on state-level exploitation, one can invoke the definition of Marx provided that a significant amount of workers fall under his definition of exploitation. Alternately when assessing a state vs. state situation, it is often described as neocolonialism. The term refers to the modern method of exploiting countries; "the use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies" (Oxford English Dictionary).

Current literature presents the matter of neocolonialism and exploitation as a commodity problem; nation x extracts or cultivates a raw material and then sells it as is. Later it buys the refined product back.

In this light, they treat any nation in question in an ahistorical manner, addressing their current poverty rates and looking only at their current position in the global market. Almost routinely, the same conclusion is reached everywhere; developing countries must stop exporting primary

[8] https://www.unhcr.org/desperatejourneys/

[9] Zwolinski and Wertheimer 2017

products[10] and create a refined manufactured end product instead. Yet this ignores the various hurdles and blockades placed in front of these developing countries.

Goncharov (1963) describes the issue not as one of underdevelopment nor a lack of willingness or lack of expertise to develop a nation, but instead speaks on what they call the new forms of colonialism in Africa. In their paper published in The Journal of Modern African Studies, they highlight how the colonial and imperial powers reacted to the loss of their colonies. Their direct power and influence had to be redirected in another form; they had to find new ways to exploit their former colonies. This would later manifest itself in the form of "friendship, co-operation, and 'free association' with the young sovereign states of Africa" (Goncharov 1963). It would serve as a mere disguise for the actual intentions of the former colonial/imperial powers: the maintenance of their privileges to the best of their abilities. In practice this would appear in seven different ways:

> "(a) maintaining the domination of foreign capital in the economy of the new states, and preventing the break-up of the colonial structure of their economy;
> (b) maintaining strong political ties with the countries which have succeeded in liquidating their colonial status, either by involving them in political communities headed by former metropolitan countries, or by preserving such communities created earlier[11];
> (c) imposing co-operation agreements upon the young states to undermine their national sovereignty and independence;
> (d) maintaining strategic positions by means of troops and military bases in these countries;
> (e) using the administrative machinery inherited from the colonial regime as an instrument for implementing their policy;
> (f) maintaining ideological influences in the former colonies; and
> (g) using outdated legislation which hinders the development of political democracy in the struggle against progressive forces in African States." (Goncharov 1963).

It is essentially this power dynamic between the former colonies and their former colonizers that would later on influence the terms of trade between them. The poorer and younger developing

[10] referring to raw unprocessed materials

[11] An example would be the Francophone countries and or the British commonwealth

nations were resource rich but had no ways of properly refining the raw materials or converting them to goods.

Goncharov highlights the extent of this meddling when discussing Belgian attempts at maintaining control over the mining companies in the Congo. Shortly before Congolese independence, Belgian authorities dissolved the *Comité special du Katanga*, an important semi-state organization[12]. This enabled the Belgian authorities to shift the votes on the matter of mining companies towards private shareholders instead of state-owned[13,14]. When the Congo later tried to nationalize and seize control of the mining companies, European and American copper companies retaliated by blocking the sale of Congolese copper in Europe (Seidman 1971).

The topic of primary products is also addressed in the same paper, where Goncharov states that financial and infrastructure support from former colonial/imperialist powers is geared not towards advancing their former colonies and aiding their development, but solely for the expansion of their primary commodity production and or extraction[15]. While they provide an older example, the claim still holds true today. The Kingdom of Belgium specifically states that it “supports agricultural development in the DRC, working at two levels in particular: firstly, it helps to provide high-quality agricultural seed, and secondly, it contributes to opening up production zones by repairing rural roads and river ferries. This facilitates the transportation of products to consumption centres and boosts production, trade and small-scale rural industry”[16,17].

But even if not through dummy programs, meddling, and colonial aftermath, the modern market itself is geared towards upholding all benefits by the global north. In their book “The Coffee Paradox: Global Markets, Commodity Trade and the Elusive Promise of Development” Benoit Daviron and Stefano Ponte dissect the ongoing coffee crisis. Both discuss the history of and the maintenance of the commodity market structure as well as the methods by which developing nations are kept from developing. They state that the “promise of development is an elusive one

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12 See Goncharov 1963, 468-469

13 Private shareholders continue to own a majority of the mines with the state-run company holding only a 20% stake in these companies

14 This is also an example for point (a) mentioned in the paragraph above

15 See Goncharov 1963, 470-474 in general and specifically for 472 for a bespoke example

16 Quoted from Kingdom of Belgium Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation website, https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/policy/development_cooperation/where_we_work/partner_countries/democratic_republic_of_congo

17 While this paper discusses the mining sector of the DRC, it is worth mentioning that agriculture accounts for half of the GDP of the DRC, hence the example

partly because global value chains are increasingly driven by large actors based in the North, and partly because low-income countries are stuck in producing and exporting goods that are valued only for their material quality attributes" (Daviron and Ponte 30). It becomes therefore a natural conclusion, when a market is controlled by the value set on products, and that value is being determined by the consumers, that said consumers would place value on specific products in a manner most beneficial to themselves. In the case of coffee, higher value is placed on the brewed serviced cup over the coffee bean itself. The Prebisch-Singer hypothesis assists this claim[18,19]. The quote above also confirms the statements made by Goncharov regarding the unchanging position of primary commodity-producing countries despite there being a sixty year difference in the publishing of both statements. This time period is in itself is testament for the stagnant position developing nations find themselves in.

1.2 Theory on the escape of exploitation and the commodity problem

There are few solutions to this "commodity problem", in fact, the majority of encountered literature believes that the only way African states can solve this commodity problem, and thus become developed and escape its exploitation, is by industrializing. Multiple authors believe that through the halting of raw materials export, or rather reduction, and the subsequent manufacturing of products, i.e. taking primary sector material into the secondary sector, African states will no longer be underdeveloped. This view was shared by Singer and Prebisch, who thought that the main reason for this underdevelopment is the "inability of exporting countries (the periphery) to benefit from their productivity gains – contrary to what happened in countries that exported manufactured goods (the centre)" (Daviron and Ponte 2007)[20]. Their theory has been the main established answer to this predicament since its inception, with most literature arguing for or against it. In their paper "Prospects for Africa's Exports" (1971) Ann Seidman reiterates those same findings but emphasizes that reducing and reshaping the African dependency on exports alone will not solve the problem. For them, the matter is one of internal economic affairs before an external one, stating that it would need "a development strategy directed to achieving an internally integrated, balanced, national

[18] The Prebisch-Singer hypothesis was developed in the 1940 stating that primary product prices decline long term relative to the manufactured goods. This leads to unfavorable terms of trade for the countries producing the primary products. Harvey *et al.* 2010 provided empirical evidence to support the hypothesis.

[19] Singer and Prebisch also believed that industrialization is the only solution to the commodity problem

[20] The "centre" refers her to the developed countries of the North

economy, in which increased productivity in every sector is matched by expanding internal demand" (Seidman 1971). To them, the solution lies mainly in generating enough products to reflect the demands of the internal citizens rather than those of the external markets, generating wealth through local trade. Yet they secede that while this is optimal, complete independence from the export of primary goods cannot be achieved stating that "any single producing country, if it becomes 'too' independent, may discover that it has lost the traditional market for its major mineral export" (Seidman 1971).

Daviron and Ponte (2007) however stray from the conventional "produce manufactured goods to solve the issue" road and offer different an alternative method to the exploitation problem. Researching the coffee crisis allowed them to view the issue of primary production from a different lens. For them the issue with exploitation and lack of development is directly tied to the global value chains. Yet unlike the former authors, Daviron and Ponte do not view the material value as the key to solving the commodity problem, but rather the symbolic value[21]. For them, the establishment of quality linked to the name brand[22], as is the case with most companies in North America and Europe, as well as transparency over the production process and quality of the final product, is pivotal in pushing consumers towards the farmers product. This would mean that farmers would in some way not have to completely step back from their dependency on exporting their coffee beans, but rather that they create a brand for their own coffee that would thus increase it's value in the market. Currently, to cut prices, harvested coffee beans are separated based mainly on quality, meaning that most coffee beans are mixed source. While their analysis is mainly on agro-food, a generalized deduction can be made. Transparency about origin and process as well as the association of quality belonging to a local producer brand can help solve the commodity problem.

Collectively what these views have in common, regardless of their different means, is the generating of local labor and cash flow internally. While it was their intention to focus mainly on the nature of the exported product, Singer and Prebisch's hypothesis that LDC's must export manufactured goods over primary commodity focuses on the wrong thing. While it is true that an exported manufactured good will cost more than a primary product, the focus should not be on the ends but the means. The enlargement of a secondary sector results in more jobs, more money flowing within the local economy, and thus a bottom up improvement of economic condition. This was highlighted well in Seidman (1971). Daviron and Ponte's plan does not stray far from this

[21] See Daviron and Ponte chapter six specifically

[22] Similar to Starbucks or Nestlé coffee brand

either. The issue, however, of escaping exploitation without backlash remains. Singer and Prebisch do not explore what the response to a shift in production and step away from primary commodity exports would do, i.e. what the response of importer would be. Seidman states, based on evidence from previous attempts at shifting the market position in favor of the LDC's, that any step out of line with what large global market players see as favorable for them would result in immediate pushback and a possible product boycott. They further suggest the establishment of international agreements to safeguard prices, thus not jeopardizing LDC industry due to price volatility in global markets:

> "International agreements to stabilise the agricultural prices of developing countries' exports may be a partial solution to these problems. Although they may secure a degree of stability of returns, however, they cannot significantly change the world patterns of demand for African agricultural exports, and hence cannot alter the fact that such continued dependence on the export of primary products is unlikely to attain adequate rates of development. International efforts to attain and maintain such agreements, furthermore, have confronted continued opposition by the multi-national buying firms" (Seidman 1971).

Thus it seems that even the attempted establishment of safeguarding treaties will result in pushback from other actors.

Daviron and Ponte's theory on the symbolic value chains seems to be the most reasonable, yet it too has its limitations. They view the consumer as the necessary actor in instigating change but that very same consumer is also susceptible to influence by the very corporations they could be fighting. Citing Callon, Méadel and Rabeharisoa (2002), they find that retailers are concerned with the identities and preferences of their consumers, "thus, they try to steer spontaneous and gradual processes of qualification and requalification of products to their advantage" (Daviron and Ponte 2007). In other words, even when the battle is one of symbolism values, companies will still find a way to fight back. Citing Hartwick (1998) Crewe (2000) and Freiberg (2003c), they gather that one can confirm that retailers and brands are susceptible to social pressure, PR issues, and consumer backlash. The possibility of instigating change is thus possible yet complex.

Concluding, the following hypothesis can be formed based on the above literature:

H1: Economic restructuring focused on a local level is most beneficial to LDC's

1.3 Normative theory on political in/action

Many authors who penned papers on either of these two points join in their complaints that literature on both of these points is few and generally shunned within the scientific community. The reason, as Thompson (1967) states, is that normative thinking is viewed as a step away from fact-based research. Whether this is indeed a generalized rule or not plays no role in this paragraph, as it aims to simply highlight that normative thinking and framing do govern the various global systems and affect political outcomes. Manners 2009[23] establishes and expands on five main points that define normative power in world politics: ideational; principles; actions; impact; consequences. All five points are directly connected and build upon each other. Ideational normative power refers to normative justification behind actions. This manifests itself in the example of the Cold War (the split between capitalism and communism and the subsequent actions). Principles are what give normative justification its normative legitimacy. Many foreign military interventions in the name of a humanitarian cause would not be justified if these principles were not enshrined in UN documents or other global coalition treaties. The crucial point here is that these principles must be coherent[24]. Building on these two points, one can then begin to take action, with the emphasis here being that it must be persuasive. If they fail to be so they risk the conferral of shame onto the actor. The impact stemming from that action must also be in line with the set principles, meaning that any action undertaken must be with the goal of fulfilling and expanding those principles[25]. Three consequences take place as a result of this normative thinking. The author believes this should lead to more holistic thinking in terms of world politics, taking in the bigger picture rather than looking at each thing separately. It should also lead to actions such as foreign interventions or dealings of sort to become more justified and take place in a justifiable way. As actors expand their normative power and back it by principles such as those written in the UN Charter or the Declaration of Human Rights, actions stemming from normative reasons will become more accepted. Lastly the author believes this would lead to more sustainable world politics in which normative power holds larger weight. While their paper leaves much to be desired in terms of empirical evidence, the more established framing effects lends a helping hand.

H2: Normative theory has a direct influence on political decisions and outcomes

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[23] His 2009 paper “The concept of normative power in world politics” serves as a summary of his main findings throughout a series of books he also authored

[24] It would for example be unsettling to see Iran boycott or condemn another nation on the basis of their violations of women’s rights

[25] Manners refers to it as “socializing”

1.4 Power shift/transition theories

Stepping away from theories and explanations on commodity problems, present literature on political institutions can offer insights on the matter if we regard global trade markets as a form of institution. Since the increase or decrease of money directly influences the rise or fall of a country's position in terms of global economic ranking, i.e. an increase or decrease of capabilities, power transition theories must be inspected. The increase of a nation's capabilities increases its bargaining chips, it enables it to debate or some cases even dictate how other nations must act[26]. In this scenario, Institutional Power Shift Theory (IPST) offers an interesting outlook on the possibility of shifting power dynamics. IPST is chose over Power Transition Theory (PTT) for a few reasons. While the latter is a more established theory, its spectrum falls in general into two categories, optimist and pessimist PTT. The issue with both is a lack of balance. Optimist PTT theory believes that institutional adaptation will always be possible regardless of the conditions actors will always act in a cooperative manner and move towards adapting to power shift. On the other hand pessimist PTT theory believes that regardless of the situation and conditions, adaptation is impossible. For them any attempt at an institutional shift of power dynamics will only result in noncompliance and non-cooperation as well as an eventual stalemate. IPST attempts to bridge this gap and is thus seen as the better, more realistic solution theory in the case. While there is no mention of exploitation in IPST, it is important to note that an escape of exploitation, or lack thereof, is equivalent to gaining or losing some type of power[27]. This is deduced from the mere fact that a state's capabilities affect its power in the global trade system. It is therefore relevant and necessary to regard this matter as one of power as well. Zangl *et al.* (2016) use two cases to present their theory. Through these cases they present a series of potential outcomes to a power shift within an institution. For a power shift or transition to take place, the authors determine the need for certain conditions to be prevalent, primarily the credibility of an emerging powers' threat to undermine the current system and their ability to do so. The former without the latter and vice versa is not possible. The reason being that if a country is able to provide one of the two conditions, but not the other, then it does not possess sufficient power to instigate the necessary steps to cause a shift. These steps, referred to in the paper as the "mechanism of institutional adaptation" (Zangl et al. 2016), are the trigger, modus, coalition, and outcome for and of negotiations. Since this paper is focused on a single country case, the third mechanism will be omitted from the analysis later on. The authors state that effectively any

[26] An example of this would be the Quad within the WTO

[27] In this case economic power

outcome from any dealings will never result in a full institutional change. At best it may improve its position in the system and during the shift it will definitely face pushback from other nations[28].

[28] See WTO and IMF cases in cited paper as empirical examples

2.0 Research Design

The gap in this field of research is focused mainly on two things. The first being a comprehensive academic case study on an African country with regards to escaping exploitation that does not simply render it an issue of industrialization (or rather lack thereof). The second breaks new ground in IR theory, suggesting that not only is an escape from exploitation possible, but it is also doable without any global pushback in the form of trade wars, WTO complaints or any similar reactions. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and it's cobalt production is selected for this case. Data and methodology are discussed further in the next paragraphs.

2.1 Case selection: Democratic Republic of the Congo

While the African continent has no shortage of exploited states that could take the place of the DRC within this thesis, it was selected for a specific set of reasons. For an analysis of whether an escape of exploitation without backlash is possible, we need a country that fulfills the primary criteria and that is being exploited[29]. Yet it still is not that simple. For an industry within a country to be described as exploited, it must correspond to a set of criteria as well. While many definitions of exploitation exist, I chose the definition by Karl Marx to serve as the backbone for my choice of country. For Marx, workers are insofar exploited "as they are forced to sell their labor power to capitalists for less than the full value of the commodities they produce with their labor" (Zwolinski and Wertheimer 2017). Further, to properly exclude any possible factors that could influence this project, the industry chosen had to be of current importance and possess high relevance for the coming years[30]. This criterium cannot be left standing alone, as one could then analyze any country's industry irrespective of its size. This then leads to the prerequisite that whatever country is chosen for this case must hold a significant monopoly power over the entire market. The American Federal Trade commission (FTC) categorizes market power[31] as "the long term ability to ability to raise price or exclude competitors"[32]. While no source sets a specific percentage figure for when

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[29] It does not have to be the entire country; on or two significant industries suffice

[30] While all crops are evidently pivotal for humans, they will not be used as research on the commodity problems concerning crops is extensive.

[31] They use the term market power to describe a monopolies ability to maintain or advance it's position

[32] https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/competition-guidance/guide-antitrust-laws/single-firm-conduct/monopolization-defined

something is considered a monopoly, most agree that it must be significantly more than the nearest producer of the same product or extractor of the same minerals.

Bearing these conditions in mind, and assessing them one by one, I find that no country fulfills these criteria as accurately as the DRC. Assessing the first point on exploitation, bearing in mind the Marxian definition, we find that while the production of cobalt generates billions of USD's annually, that most artisanal miners generate only around $3USD per day[33]. This comes despite the fact that Congolese AM's extract more cobalt ore annually than any other producing country's entire output. To put that into perspective, there are around 200000 AM's in the DRC producing 30% of the country's cobalt[34]. Taking the produced mass from 2019 (100000t) and the lowest price per ton for cobalt that year (30000USD), one AM should have made on average around 12USD per day[35], quadruple the amount they currently make. One can therefore characterize the average artisanal worker as exploited.

The second and third criteria should be paired together as discussed above. Cobalt is seen as one of the most important minerals for the production of smartphones, laptops, tablets and lithium-ion batteries in electric cars. It possesses therefore a great deal of technological applications thus designating it as an important mineral for the coming decades and relevant to current academic studies. The DRC also produces 70% of the global output of cobalt with its AM sector alone producing more cobalt in 2019 than the next eight countries combined. It is therefore a logical conclusion that the DRC does in some form hold a monopoly over the cobalt industry.

Despite the DRC being a geo-economic place of interest and its crisis gaining more media attention, it continues to be ignored in the academic field, with most literature on exploitation escape focused more on agro-food products rather than minerals. While some academic research has been conducted on the cobalt mines in the Congo, non have looked at the humanitarian ties nor have they presented solutions outside of the recurring ones.

[33] https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/batteries/congo-cobalt-mining-for-lithium-ion-battery/

[34] https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/cobalt-congo-mass-artisanal-mining-experiment-andy-home-2021-05-13/

[35] The numbers were calculated by talking 30% of the annual production for the year 2019 and multiplying it with the lowest registered price for cobalt during that same year, then divided by the amount of AM's to generate an annual income from cobalt amounting to 4500USD

3.0 Data and methodology

The research design of this paper is a qualitative theoretical empirical x-centric single case study, with any statistics and or figures serving only as a way of strengthening an argument or providing empirical proof. Three main points must be analyzed. First, an analysis of the effects of improved working conditions, concerning work safety, on site healthcare, and state cooperation will take place. The mining status of the Congo will be assessed against multiple ILO conventions and highlight the difference between current mining and mining with these conventions in place. For this process a comprehensive analysis of the Trafigura Mutoshi Pilot Project must happen. It is important to note that most ILO conventions on mining, and conventions on the safety of mine workers as well as their conditions, such as but not limited to

C123 - Minimum Age (Underground Work) Convention, 1965;

C124 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965;

C148 - Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977;

C155 - Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981;

C174 - Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993;

C176 - Safety Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995;

have not been ratified by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or any of it's previous names and governments[36].

Second, I will present empirical examples for the power and effect of normative theory and framing effects on global in/action. This will highlight the impact of normative justifications for action/ inaction in the global system.

Last, I will present the effectiveness of the previous two points via institutional power shift theory. While the points will analyzed separately at first, they all belong within one closed system. Whether the or not the improvement of working conditions has a positive effect on the local economy is tied directly to the DRC's ability to frame any subsequent price increases as a humanitarian cause. If it is shown to be successful, then they have a better chance at framing, and convincingly so, their economic improvement not as the main goal but as a side product of improving the working conditions. If the results show the contrary, it will be expected that such framing effects fail as they

[36] There is no one specific reason as to why none of these treaties have been ratified. One could cite political instability in general, but a more accurate reason would be the various coup d'états and wars fought during the periods of the passing of these conventions. It is noteworthy that ILO conventions can be adopted at any time

cannot be backed up by any data adequately, resulting in some form of backlash. Both of these points play directly into the increase of the Congo's relative capabilities, resulting directly in a power shift within the global trade system. If points one and two or either one or two fail to produce the stated results, point three will not take place, meaning that the Congo's cobalt industry will remain complacent, in its exploited state.

4.0 Empirical analysis

4.1 The effects of improved work and worker conditions

In previous chapters and in the guiding hypothesis of this paper, I claim that an improved worker and work conditions in general have a positive effect on the local economy. Yet I am to still explain and expand on what I mean by that exactly. Improved worker and improved work conditions refers to the tools, attire, conditions, form, and type of labor workers must use and undertake. Without adhering to the ILO conventions mentioned in the previous chapter, and through images obtained by the media of artisanal miners working without regulation, we can see clearly that there is no form of personal protection equipment whatsoever[37]. Workers are not equipped with proper hard hats, construction boots, or high-vis vests. These are all considered essential equipment when working in mines as stated in Section III Article 6 sub-article (d):

> "In taking preventive and protective measures under this Part of the Convention the employer shall assess the risk and deal with it in the following order of priority:
>
> > […] (d) in so far as the risk remains, provide for the use of personal protective equipment"

And in Section III Article 9 sub-article (c):

> "Where workers are exposed to physical, chemical or biological hazards the employer shall:
>
> > […] (c) where adequate protection against risk of accident or injury to health including exposure to adverse conditions cannot be ensured by other means, provide and maintain at no cost to the worker suitable protective equipment, clothing as necessary and other facilities defined by national laws or regulations; […]" (C176 1995)

Most notably in these articles is not the emphasis on the necessity of the equipment, but rather that the cost of this equipment must be borne by the employer not the employee. This will prove pivotal in the coming sections.

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[37] See Figures 1-3 in the Appendix

This need for protection and safety extends beyond the person and mandates that the work environment and condition itself must be safe. This begins with the construction of mines in a safe manner[38]. The conditions and prerequisites for safe mining are also highlighted in the same convention under Section III Article 7 which explicitly states that:

> "Employers shall take all necessary measures to eliminate or minimize the risks to safety and health in mines under their control, and in particular:
>
> > (a) ensure that the mine is designed, constructed and provided with electrical, mechanical and other equipment, including a communication system, to provide conditions for safe operation and a healthy working environment;
> > (b) ensure that the mine is commissioned, operated, maintained and decommissioned in such a way that workers can perform the work assigned to them without endangering their safety and health or that of other persons;
> > (c) take steps to maintain the stability of the ground in areas to which persons have access in the context of their work;
> > (d) whenever practicable, provide, from every underground workplace, two exits, each of which is connected to separate means of egress to the surface;
> > (e) ensure the monitoring, assessment and regular inspection of the working environment to identify the various hazards to which the workers may be exposed and to assess their level of exposure;
> > (f) ensure adequate ventilation for all underground workings to which access is permitted;
> > (g) in respect of zones susceptible to particular hazards, draw up and implement an operating plan and procedures to ensure a safe system of work and the protection of workers;
> > (h) take measures and precautions appropriate to the nature of a mine operation to prevent, detect and combat the start and spread of fires and explosions; and

[38] See Figures 4 and 5 in the Appendix

> (i) ensure that when there is serious danger to the safety and health of workers, operations are stopped and workers are evacuated to a safe location" (C176 1995).

The idea behind their implementation is that companies would bear all of the costs, and thus must find a way to offset the new bill. Both Hamermesh (2021) and Fields (1990) present a different outcome than one may think. Hamermesh lays forth that employers will in fact opt for firing a small percentage of the work force to offset this increase in cost, and so does Fields. Both authors however present an alternative second option, and that is nothing. They propose that in certain events a company will bear the cost and in no way attempt to offset it through any immediate action, as they see the benefits through future increased production and an eventual influx of income in the future that is worth the temporary dip in profits. For the former solution, involving the laying off of workers, it is critically important to mention that the discussion was mainly on the raising of minimum wages as well as pay per hour. In other words, the presence of "good" working conditions were already assumed[39]. The comparable point in Hamermesh would be the paragraph on medical insurance where he highlights that an increase in wages per se and a subsequent cut of work hours would not affect how much the employer needs to pay for medical insurance. This is in it's essence the closest example to the case of the DRC. Irrespective of the amount of hours artisanal miners or other temporary miners are employed, as well as the amount of miners employed, they will all require PPE and a safe work environment. This bearing of costs highlighted in the articles above will be the reason for the generation of wealth in the mining community, and local economy surrounding it, in the DRC.

Between 2018 and 2019 Trafigura commissioned the Mutoshi Pilot Project. The idea was to test out a new form of regulation in the artisanal mines and observe their effects on the workers and the surrounding local economy. The project involved hiring a number of artisanal miners to work in a cobalt mine run under global work standards[40]. The report written by De Silva *et al.* (2019) centered around exploring what the result of the implementation of these improved work conditions in accordance with international standards were, and to observe what economic outcome the improvement of work and worker conditions has. During their project, the most notable deviations from regular artisanal mining was that there was always an on site medical facility/clinic, workers

[39] A majority of their research was conducted on workers in the United States of America

[40] In this case the OECD

were given PPE, and the mines were not built on the tunnel system. Primarily this caused a number of things unfold. The structure of the mine itself meant that workers would not be working in an environment as hazardous as the conventional tunnel mines. The open surface tunnel mines involves the digging of layers and extracting the ore off of the surface. Once the ore is extracted another layer is dug, thus constantly keeping the mine an open surface. This already fulfills all applicable conditions of article 7. This safer work environment meant that workers are no longer faced with tunnel collapse risks or any any respiratory illnesses due to poor ventilation[41].

The PPE also meant that injuries were greatly reduced. While they cannot be completely eradicated, basic PPE such as gloves and hard hats prevent routine flesh wounds from working with stones and ores, such as cuts or rashes. In the event that an individual would get injured, the introduction of the on site clinic presented itself as the biggest and most positive change, both for worker safety and economically. Previously workers when injured would have to go to an independent clinic and pay out of their own pockets. Under global work guidelines however, an on site clinic must always be available where workers can get treated for their injuries at no personal financial cost. From their qualitative report in 2019, in which they interviewed their workers, the authors found that the availability of the clinic resulted in workers being able to save their money instead of having to spend it on treating their wounds themselves. This in turn played a positive role in the local economy[42]. Through saving the money that they would have otherwise spent on treatment, workers were able to afford more goods and services. This new disposable income for the miners in that area meant that there was a larger demand for goods and services. This in turn generated more jobs in these sectors meet this increase in demand. The effect of this meant that not only did the miners benefit economically, but so did the community on a local level.

These improved work conditions coupled with machine assistance in moving extracted ores and removing trash[43] would see production rise in the experimental mines. Previously, AM's would have to transport everything by hand and discard any unusable material such as regular stone or mud themselves to be able to continue mining.It should therefore serve as no surprise that during the sudden price drop of cobalt, when the company could not afford to bring in an operate heavy

[41] An interviewee at the mines had explained that workers had to often buy cough medication out fo their own pockets due to the debris and dust breathed in at the conventional artisanal mines (Trafigura 2019)

[42] The report estimates that for every 1000 miners the local economic impact is at 1 million USD per year

[43] referring to the removal of unwanted minerals or stones

machinery, production was cut in half, as the workers had to remove trash manually before being able to continue with ore extraction.

Hamermesh and Fields are not wrong. An increase in labor costs will in fact lead to job loss. During the price drop of cobalt, many AM's left as they were no longer generating sufficient money. Yet what both authors do no take into account is the continued demand for goods and services that opens up more jobs. If we only observe a single job or a single industry, we will see a decline in the number of jobs relative to the increase of labor costs. Yet this is only part of the entire picture. Looking at an increase in labor costs form an absolute point of view, extending beyond the job itself and observing the ramifications on the local economy, it become clear that net jobs do in fact increase (Trafigura 2019). Further the agreement reached between Trafigura and the DRC on implementing this model on the entirety of 100% state-owned mines highlights the positive prospects of this project and the states willingness at cooperation. It is based on these findings and the generated local wealth through the improvement of labor conditions that we can confirm H1.

4.2 Escaping exploitation through normative means

The impact and influence of how one words and or presents certain issues is undeniable. This can be most seen during wars, or rather during moments leading up to wars and conflicts, when countries need to rally support. This effect, dubbed the "rally round the flag effect" (Mintz and Redd 2003), describes framing after the the decision to use force. Differences in framing can also present two sides at odds in different ways. Both countries to their own people would be in the right as governments try to push their narrative and view forward. This case can be seen clearly in the situation between Egypt and Ethiopia concerning the Great Renaissance Dam. The Ethiopian government frames the building of the dam as a necessary move to supply million of Ethiopians with clean energy and expand agriculture. These are two points hard to argue against on an international stage, as opposing development and clean energy would cast a shadow of shame on the opposer. This explains why we see the Egyptian government agreeing rather than opposing Ethiopia, but it does not stop there. From an issue of development and clean energy production, the Egyptian government managed to successfully counterframe the predicament to be one of the survival of Egyptian people or them dying of thirst and hunger due to reduced water levels in the Nile.

The success of a frame can be determined by the type of phrases used in the which global media reports on the matter in question. Most prominently is the example of the framing of Muslims in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and their framing ever since. In a meta-analysis of 345 published studies on the media's role of constructing a Muslim identity for their viewer, Ahmed and Matthes (2016) found since the 9/11 attacks western media had systematically linked reports on Muslims and Muslim-majority countries with acts of violence, terrorism, and orthodox ideals. To the authors, this all can, and in some countries, foster anti-Muslim sentiment. Yet their evidence shows that while it may have increased in some countries, mainly Eastern European countries and the United States, that in other countries with a significant Muslim minority population this sentiment has ultimately failed. This case of both success and failure of framing is a clear example that media does influence and affect narratives and beliefs, all ultimately normative reasons, whether is no counter evidence available.

Thus assessing analyzing the possibility of escaping exploitation through normative reasons, we find that the frameworks are in place for this to happen. Manners' (2009) five points on normative theory can be implemented to the case of the DRC. The possibility of them successfully framing an increase in prices as a byproduct of humanitarian causes, i.e. their normative justification, depends on the availability of agreed upon principles. In this case, principles of worker safety highlighted in conventions C123; C124; C148; C155; C174; C176, can be most successfully used to underscore the need to such action. The impact of the action must, as highlighted in the literature review, be in line with and bearing in my the goals of the principles being followed. The sub-chapter above thus highlights that any increase in prices due to the improvement of work and worker conditions is in line with the principles cited in the ILO articles. This is because the costs of running a safe work environment with respect to the mining industry must be born by the employer. In other words, there is no other incentive or reason to raise prices except for supplying workers with the correct work equipment and guaranteeing their safety.

The conditions for the DRC to be able to successfully use normative arguments are thus present in the form of the ILO conventions and actions based on those conventions would be justified and well backed.

4.3 Shifting power dynamics

For the authors of IPST (Zangl *et al.* 2016), shifting power relations needing institutional adaption does not come easy nor is it perfect. In their empirical cases on the IMF and WTO a somewhat of an acceptable shift took place whereby the established power only seceded some of their power to the emerging powers but not all of it. Yet this is built on the main premise that the emerging powers had to have enough power to be able to credibly undermine the system. This is where the main reason for the lack of backlash comes in. While the DRC possesses the world largest cobalt deposit and produces in any given year a minimum of 50% of the worlds cobalt output, it remains at the mercy of price demands and price volatility. When the price crashed in 2019, the DRC was unable to undertake any effective action. This is in part for two reasons. The first reason is that it does not own the majority of its cobalt mines. 70% of the mines are owned by private mining companies while only 30% are state owned[44]. This means that the DRC has very little say over the affairs of these companies and only receives a percentage of revenues as well as taxes. Thus, with under one third of the cobalt mines in its control, unilateral state action on price stabilization is not an option for the Congo.

Second, the Congo still falls under the list of LDC's, meaning that its economy is suffering greatly. They do not possess the necessary means to be able to undermine the global system of cobalt trade. This is not a matter of credibility anymore but one of ability, as sabotaging the trade system, through unilateral price increases or the withholding of produce translates into lost money. On top of this, the 30% of the cobalt mines that the DRC does own are filled with AM's, meaning that the DRC has little oversight on what and how much is being extracted in reality. This translates into gross inability to mobilize or move miners as they are not state-employed but simply individuals working on extracting cobalt for their personal wealth. If the DRC therefore has no control over the majority of their mines, then how would they be able to sabotage the system until they reach favorable trade terms, such as getting to determine the cobalt price etc.?

Previous literature presented in the literature review also highlights the outcome of such actions, resulting immediately in a form of backlash[45] and shunning from the entire minerals and metals market altogether, not just cobalt.

In this sense however, it is ironically a good thing that the DRC is where it is for where it wants to go. When an underdeveloped nation increases its capabilities this leads to more local good than on the global scale. The DRC would not need to worry about backlash if the price of cobalt increased slightly due to the reasons highlighted in sub-chapter 1 of this chapter, as they present on the global scale a minuscule shift of power. If the Mutoshi Pilot Project is successfully replicated in the remaining artisanal mines, the state still does will not own the majority of the cobalt mines. It would at best enjoy more income and improved local economic conditions. This would therefore be interpreted as an increase in the DRCs capabilities that simultaneously does not pose a threat to competitors, but also enable a drastic improvement of the local economy and work conditions, thus

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[44] The DRC holds a minority stake in all private firms, around 20%

[45] See Seidman (1971)

assisting it in its escape from the exploitation of the cobalt market through big corporations and countries purchasing from AM's at low prices[46]. Further, the improvement of the local economy only without affecting the refining jobs of the importing nations means that companies and countries alike would not need to worry about rising unemployment levels in their states. The adherence to this rule guarantees that benefits of importers and refiners remain untouched while the benefits of miners increase. If it were not the case, one could then in turn characterize a move such as halting exports as a "sabotage" that would face backlash.

[46] Marysse and Genen 2000

5.0 Discussion

The findings show a variety of things in need of a separate breakdown on its own against the backdrop of IPST. First, it shows through the Mutoshi Pilot Project experiment that adhering to global standards on work and worker safety, whether these standards are set by the ILO or in this case the OECD, does indeed have a positive economic effect on the economy. Whether this small scale project can be scaled up to affect the entire Congo is an important question. More recently the DRC has signed a an agreement with Trafigura, deciding to run all government-owned mines with the same standards as that of the Mutoshi Pilot Project. If this is successful and the calculations of the Pilot Project researchers were accurate, this means that at its very least, the work conditions for some 150000-200000 AM's should improve dramatically, generating around 150-200 million USD in the local economy per annum. Generating local wealth through a thriving local economy, according to Seidman (1971), would be the most vital step in escaping exploitation. It is also important to note that in the realm of artisanal mining, workers are not bound by any temporal contract that binds them to the place of their work. The Mutoshi Pilot Project had highlighted clearly how amid declining global prices more AM's opted to leave, knowing that they would be making less, but that even during this period the miners who continued to work in the project still had disposable income and the local economy weathered the storm.

Based on this smaller project, one can conclude that out of the suggested solutions in the literature review Seidman (1971) is the most applicable literature to this case. The DRC does not need to step away from its primary commodity export to improve their economic situation, but rather improve their work conditions at no cost to the employee. This further stands in the line with history-based evidence that the DRC would not experience any backlash for such a move. Their distancing from attempting to unilaterally raise cobalt prices or control production quotas or anything of sorts, insures that they would not face any retaliatory consequences from multinational firms or global metal exchanges[47]. In short H1 can be confirmed as being a true statement backed by significant empirical evidence, with some limitations highlighted in the sub chapter below.

Normative theory and framing results are more complicated to discuss than empirical evidence. There exist entire books on the power of both normative justifications and principles as well framing effects on global action. It is true that branding and framing a product or event or reason for

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[47] See Seidman 1971

action has an effect on consumers, or in any case anyone you're trying to convince of a certain thing. Countries have gone to war and have only later been condemned when the prevalent framing of their era had dissipated and the public was faced with the facts. Such is the case with Iraq and the United States or the United States and their response to 911 declaring the war on terror. The new ground H2 is supposed to break is whether this has a positive effect to the extent that it can be used to justify a potential price increase as byproduct of improving work conditions. The use of Manners' (2009) work worked best to present the possibility of such an outcome through his establishing of a framework that should be followed to enable correct implementation and justification of normative reasons behind actions.

Last and most critically are the findings on the subsequent power shift. The DRC is, and will probably continue to be, the largest cobalt producer in the world as it sits on the largest cobalt deposit in the world. It faces no real threat or challenge from other producers. But does that mean it has a substantive say in the global market on all things cobalt or that it is even considered a formidable threat to it's trade partners? One cannot truly say. While the confirmation of both H1 and H2 and the rise of the DRC's relative capabilities would not be a small occurrence, it is not clear that this would be a large enough gain to be considered a threat either. Because there is no producer of cobalt like the DRC, does it really matter if they're capabilities rise relatively to their neighbors and trade partners? The answer would not be entirely black and white, it depends on the situation. Zangl *et al.* (2016) clearly state that the conditions for a shift in power must be met before it can be even instigated, i.e. before an emerging power will ever perceived as one. In the case of the DRC, one can make the case that they possess no credibility in undermine the current power dynamic over the mines, as the state does not own the majority of the mining operations, nor is it control of the cobalt prices. If it does decide to control cobalt prices on a whim, they will certainly experience some form of backlash either from the private mining companies or their trade partners. Here once more a case can be made that due to the great dependence on cobalt for technology and the fact that no single country can meet the net global demand, the DRC should not really care and simply go with it. While this would be possible, for the purpose of this paper and the concept of escaping your exploited nature without backlash, it is not. A case could also be made that they would have no credibility to undermine the current system, if they would want to maintain the framed image that an increase in product price is simply an organic reaction to an increased cost of labor. Further, questions can be raised on the ability of the DRC to undermine the power dynamics of the global trade system. As a LDC, they would not be able to undermine the system for long, especially when undermining a system in a credible manner involves threatening to sabotage it or to exist. The economic condition of the DRC would not permit it to do either. The response from other nations to any such attempts could also spell catastrophe. At best, the DRC is simply ignored and left until it can no longer hold out, at worst it could result in a trade war, crippling an already crippled economy.

So if the desire of the DRC is solely to improve its economic condition, then all of this unnecessary and it would therefore not matter to other actors because the shift in power dynamics would be minuscule. Should this not be the case, then it similarly would not truly matter to other actors as the DRC does not possess the economic capabilities to undermine the system successfully.

6.0 Limitations

Despite this, no one individual or organizations can definitely determine whether the Mutoshi Pilot Project can be scaled up to include at least 30% of the entire cobalt workforce, i.e. 100% of the artisanal miners. The determining factor here is not whether or not they can set the rules in place and provide the necessary means for ethical production, but rather if the model is sustainable on a large scale. This concern is a valid one due to the following points.

First, the DRC has struggled with political stability and internal security over a very long time. In the same interviews in the Mutoshi Pilot Project, miners spoke candidly about the abuse they would experience at the hands of military men, be it in the forms of forced bribes, physical or sexual abuse. These individuals were not present during the Mutoshi Pilot Project as Trafigura, alongside their partners, secured the site themselves, with nobody entering without having the proper credentials. Yet it is a serious concern that this action of barring corrupt armed men could lead to a rise in tension in and around the mines.

Second, the price volatility of cobalt and its extreme dependence on market demand makes a scaling up of the pilot project a very risky decision, due to the large initial investment in equipment and site securitization. During the sudden drop of cobalt prices, the Mutoshi Pilot Project offset the costs of maintaining this project through the elimination of heavy machinery and relying 100% on the physical labor force. Accounts of mine workers interviewed during this price dip state that production was cut by half[48], while the researchers highlight that this necessary step meant however that the economic situation of their workers and surrounding local economy became stable. How

[48] It is also worth mentioning that part of the drop in production is that many AMs had left the site during these price drop periods, the data during this period stems form a smaller circle of individuals

this is reflected on a large scale as again a different matter. While in this situation some had simply left the Mutoshi mines and went to other artisanal mines to work independently, placing this project on a large scale will mean that there will be no independent artisanal mines to work at. There is therefore a great deal of uncertainty as to what would happen to those who leave[49].

In terms of normative theory and framing, the limitations of this project can be clearly deduced from the empirical analysis chapter. While I used empirical examples, normative theory, and generic framing theories as guidelines, a more comprehensive case analysis is required. Ideally this would involve the codification of media articles and the assessment of sentiments in online media. Through this codification one would be able to see clearly, based on certain key words and phrases, what the view on the cobalt mines in the DRC is truly like. This does not mean that the empirical analysis represents an untrue view of the sentiment towards their predicament of the DRC and its miners or the possibility of framing it to be favorable, but rather that it is vague and somewhat generalized. This would also be beyond the scope of being a mere one of three points analyzed in a paper, it would be an entire paper in of itself, as well as being closer to communication science than political science.

Lastly, the limitations IPST with regards to this case is the fact that the theory itself explores very little the notion of power shift between corporations and states, as well as compliance at no cost nor threat between countries, as is the case with the DRC and most of the cobalt importing countries.

[49] The data suggests that these workers must have found some form of labor as the local economy did not suffer and continued to prosper.

7.0 Conclusion

In summary, the DRC is presented with an opportunity specific to its situation only, whereby they possess the chance to shift the sands of exploitation and go from underdeveloped exploited state, to a thriving local economy at no real cost to their trade partners. Through the improvement of work and working conditions, as highlighted in the Mutoshi Pilot Project, the DRC would be able to generate a great deal of wealth in the local economy; a move determined to be the deciding factor in escaping exploitation. Following Manners' (2009) five step plan on normative justification provided that international conventions are ratified and cited as being the main cause of action, with the aim of expanding it to the the rest of the mining sector, the DRC could successfully frame any rise in prices as a byproduct of improving work and worker conditions. By continuing to export cobalt as a primary product and refraining from using the state power to influence and or change the global cobalt price, the DRC would successfully be able to increase its capabilities and thus its power in the global trade system without facing backlash from its competitors or trade partners.

Appendix

Figure 1: An artisanal miner in one of many hand dug mines in the Congo, Deutsche Welle, 2017 https://www.dw.com/de/der-kobaltbergbau-im-kongo-wirft-schatten-auf-die-träume-von-elektromobilität/a-41369952

Figure 2: A worker using a steel rod to carve out the mine, Deutsche Welle, 2017 https://www.dw.com/de/der-kobaltbergbau-im-kongo-wirft-schatten-auf-die-träume-von-elektromobilität/a-41369952

Figure 3: Artisanal miners work at a cobalt mine-pit in Tulwizembe, Katanga province, Democratic Republic of Congo, November 25, 2015. Picture taken November 25, 2015. REUTERS/Kenny Katombe/File Photo

Figure 4: Inside the Kasulo mine, which is owned by the DRC government and run by China's Congo Dongfang International Mining, or CDM. Image by Sebastian Meyer. Democratic Republic of Congo, 2018.

Figure 5: The Mutanda copper mine in Katanga province, Democratic Republic of Congo, in 2012.
Photographer: Simon Dawson/Bloomberg

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