

## Chapter 22

# When Boom Goes Bust: Ruins, Crisis and Security in Megaengineering Diamond Mining in Angola

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*The concept of progress must be grounded in the idea of catastrophe.*

*That things are 'status quo' is the catastrophe.*

—Walter Benjamin

### 22.1 Introduction

This chapter takes on diamond mining projects in the Angolan diamond-producing region of Lunda to consider how megaengineering spaces of extraction mediate the social significance of a commodity, in complex relations with state agents, security forces, diggers, miners, local dealers, and global corporations. Under what conditions does a megaengineering project, its technological features and residential architecture, influence the broader meaning of diamonds as extracted commodities? How do recent projects resonate with pre-existing built environments, such as local villages and aging colonial neighborhoods? More broadly, in the shared economy of a global diamond market, how do mining sites stand in relation to postcolonial subjects, the state and corporations at large? To answer these questions, I will consider how socially ambitious and technologically savvy Angolan corporate mines impact, and are in turn shaped by, emerging understandings of value creation and expenditure. Amidst talk of global market disaster, the social, legal, and cultural relevance of diamond mining sites is examined against a genealogy of political, economic and violent conflicts over sovereignty in the region.

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## 22.2 Contextualizing Mining

Conflicting dynamics of continuity and rupture make up the space of corporate governance in the region as mines are confronted daily with the challenges of engineering new meaning onto historical ruins and of transforming seemingly immutable landscapes. In many ways, this challenge intertwines different realms of mining activity: the geological template of diamond extraction works as a heuristic for the social economy of this commodity. Rough stones, as is well-known, are produced over millions of years of underground combustion. In the long-durée of mineral formation, massive volcanoes catapult the diamonds-in-formation towards the earth's surface, as the explosive heat transforms the mineral into its above ground incarnation. Along with a larger assortment of industrial grade stones, a finite supply of rare gemstone diamonds ventures from its underground deposits. Rivers and streams, working their powers of erosion, beckon the stones, polish them and perfect them, becoming diamond hotbeds for diggers and alluvial mines. Suspended halfway in this journey, diamonds are also found in underground chimneys, a natural formation known as the kimberlite pipe, carved by the ascending lava.

Despite extensive electro-magnetic surveys and thorough topographic mappings, kimberlite pipes are still black holes when it comes to predicting the quality and quantity of diamonds found therein. In an uncertain ration, diamonds are mixed in the tons of ore and gravel which are extracted daily from mining pits. This geological uncertainty is only resolved years after the start of production, when the hopes pinned to an initial sampling proved themselves felicitous. As such, it finds a parallel tendency in the historical ethos of diamond digging, contradictorily populated by hopes of instant gratification and compromised aspirations, and the certainty of wealth and the troubles to obtain it. The geological labor of diamond mining replicates, to a degree, the very sociality of mineral extraction and capitalist speculation.

Potential corporate foreclosures, miners' lay-offs, and the unheard-of commodity value depreciation add to the industry's inherent uncertainty. Prior to late 2008, diamond extraction could hardly keep pace with an all-time high in world demand, but only a few months later the turmoil in financial markets spelled doubts over the economic solvency and prospects of diamond mining corporations in Angola, much like in the rest of the world. This chapter begins by questioning the contemporary significance of Lunda's industrial-mining complex and examining the historical relics of its colonial landscape and diamonds' trajectory. Much like the patronizing role assumed by colonial era companies, today's mining corporations take on a state-like presence in Lunda. Catering towards populations that work for, surrounded by, or were simply engulfed by mining concessions, corporate authorities become a primary institutional interface through which one accesses consumer goods and services, as well as education and medical care. How do megaengineering sites, their workforces, and the populations they attend to, grapple with uncertainty and potential foreclosure?

What follows is part of on-going ethnographic research conducted in mines and trading centers representative of Angola's social economy of diamonds.<sup>1</sup> Early in

2009, the price of rough diamonds plunged around 60% in world markets, with a similar, though not as sharp, decline in consumption. With the first cases of corporate bankruptcy being reported in smaller mining projects at early stages of exploration, multinational capital investments threaten to pull out from Angola. Clouds of uncertainty linger over larger mines on the threshold of profitability, and questions arise as to what could occupy their space, much like the ephemeral landscapes of mining pits or deviated river courses. How much of this global downturn actually adds a new practical lexicon to the region's economy and, if so, what can it tell us about mining corporations more generally? And how is meaning engineered in mining projects, including the more daring ventures of kimberlite exploration, when the calculated ground of endless conspicuous consumption suddenly retreats?

In regards to the concerns of this paper, the social history of Angolan diamonds in the Lunda region coalesces into three geographical imaginings – the colonial-corporate regime, the lawless spaces of fortune seekers, and a quasi-sovereign state of corporate mining. Though linked to the historical ruptures of colonialism, civil war, and neoliberal economics, these three spatial imaginings share a common thread of uncertainty and crisis. In time and space, they emphasize a dialectic of law and disorder, the making of the frontier and the implication that it is made to be transgressed. This dialectic is further complicated by the fact that the mining compound itself and the mega-industrial extractive structures, rather than its surroundings, have become the site of economic and, consequently, social instability.

The corporate mine, in any event, remains attentive to illicit circuits of commodity extraction and circulation inasmuch as it regulates social interactions between miners and local populations. The role of security writ large is a fundamental feature in diamond mining, and Angola is no exception. If the control over means of coercion is taken to define the value of mineral resources in Angola as elsewhere (Ferguson, 2006; Mbembe, 2001), the privatized exercise of security and enclave regimes of extraction substantiate the violent status of resource extraction in Africa and augur new forms of political organization and social control (Welker, 2009). In other words, the consolidation of diamond mining along corporate-concession lines does not seem to assuage the violence that accompanied this industry throughout colonial rule. Nor does it mitigate the infamous diamonds-for-arms exchanges that took place throughout the civil war. Rather, mining corporations may be seen as reinscribing this tradition of violence of mineral extraction by way of (i) rigorous security and surveillance regimes, (ii) disruptive transformations of small scale, local diamond based economies, and (iii) its unprecedented capacity to reshape the physical landscape. To be sure, mining companies' unequal investment in such acts of physical and symbolic violence does not derive exclusively from the need to patrol massive land concessions and scour for illegal diggers along mine borders. Rather, it is possible that we view security regimes as another stage in the production of diamonds, complementing and further embedding the processes of extraction and selection in that they enhance the value of the commodity.

The corporate concession and a new wave of kimberlite mines have remained committed to this security regime. Although a recent presence in the region, this mining complex has reshuffled an earlier arrangement of diamond digging and small scale diamond dealers, the region's trademark since the first window of peace and multiparty elections in Angola in the 1990s, with disrupting effects in terms of existing political and social allegiances. The broader impact of corporate mines, and how they affected the social relations that get inscribed through the spatial ordering of diamonds' extraction, was only recently put to its final test when larger mines were forced to halt production in the wake of the current crisis.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, throughout the history of alluvial mining in Angola, diamond production was never threatened with such an extreme breakdown. Not even during the most violent episodes of war in Lunda, where governmental forces clashed with rebel-UNITA during the 1980s and 1990s, did artisanal diamond production decline. Indeed, this period was marked by a finely tuned *détente*, enabling the conflicting parties' to maintain autonomous diamond fields. The profit march was so blatant, in fact, that new capital-intensive mining projects surfaced in the area during the course of the military conflict and the Angolan state subcontracted security companies held legal jurisdiction over private militarized mining enclaves (Dietrich & Cillieres, 2000; Hodges, 2001). This explosive combination of violence, militarized presence, and occluded exploration contributed to an ill-defined "neoliberal" model of governance. Moreover, it served as the cultural diacritic of diamond mining in Angola as well as in other extractive spaces of capitalism at the margins of economic centers (Apter, 2005; Ferguson, 2006; Mbembe, 2006; Reno, 1999; Smillie, 2005; Watts, 2001).<sup>3</sup> But the swiftness with which most mines executed lay-off plans and outsourcing strategies threatens the temporality and descriptive power of such categories as "post-war" or "neo-liberal" mining.

In addition, the current narrative of "crisis" may explain the status of these mines not only in light of international financial downturn and speculation, but also from the perspective of those who have been socially and economically marginalized by the advent of massive corporate mining complexes. In the region's social economy of diamonds, "crisis" is nothing new. The downturn of global capital has affixed the terms of crisis to an already tenuous balance of economies, for which mining corporations are often held responsible.<sup>4</sup> In any case, individuals associated with mines and mining communities deploy the authorized vocabulary of international financial crisis to make sense of the political and economic restructuring of social life wrought by the current restraints. In teasing out the moral and practical motivations that animate the actors in these diamond communities, one can unveil the ideological ground on which mining corporations operate. All in all, a metapragmatic account of the current era is inextricably tied to the expanding dynamics of megaengineering mines and its security regimes. But these days, a depressed mining environment and folk theories of the workings of capitalism have come to disrupt the foundations of mining – at a time when kimberlite projects have replaced colonial regimes in terms of being the dominant engineer of space and place in the Lunda region. The current crisis, in fact, has come to dislodge the symbolic and historical foothold of the corporation in the area, a theme to which I move next.

### 22.3 Ghosts of Mining Towns: A Genealogy of Angolan Diamond Corporate Extraction

A “diamond mining frontier,” as it has been called (de Boeck, 2000, 2001), accurately depicts the historical status of the Lunda region in Angola. Early in the 20th century, colonial authorities placed most of the territory under concession of a prospective diamond company.<sup>5</sup> The colony’s diamantiferous production, however, was confined to the mineral-rich northeastern Lunda region (Fig. 22.1). As the predecessor to the contemporary megamining sites, extractive industries soon became integrated onto the colonial landscape, part and parcel of intercolonial cooperation. In 1917, with the formal constitution of *Diamang*, a colonial company of mixed



**Fig. 22.1** Location map of Angola with map of major cities and mining centers in northeastern Lunda region. (Cartography by Dick Gilbreath)

Portuguese and Belgian capital, the colonial authorities engaged the exercise of territorial sovereignty in order to further diamond extraction projects. The military expeditions of the 1920s to Lunda (Pélissier, 1986: 388–397) granted the means for stable production sites: colonial rule and territorial sovereignty were intertwined around diamond's extraction. They constituted, as it were, two faces of the same coin. As early as the 1930s approximately 6,000 men, recruited locally, were necessary to guarantee diamond extraction levels. These figures grew later in the colonial period, reaching more than 25,000 direct workers in the 1950s (Cunha, 1959; Sá, 1996).

From 1926 until independence, Diamang's diamond monopoly was formally extricated from the colonial project by means of a "unique protection-zone" (*ZUP* in the Portuguese acronym). Diamang filled in for the colonial mission; it was responsible for extracting diamonds, and administering the populations inhabiting this territory. For example, the company organized medical campaigns in the region and provided the only health care system available (Varanda, 2007), as well as sponsored decades of intense ethnological surveys of "*Lunda-Chokwe* culture" (Porto, 1999). Diamang's security forces worked with and in support of the colonial regime; when Angolan anti-colonial movements were eyeing Lunda as their eastern front in the 1960s, colonial police did not hesitate in reaching out for the services of diamond security.<sup>6</sup> Despite Diamang's social prominence, dissenting corporate managers complained that colonial mining was, for the most part, handed over to the neighboring Belgian corporation, Forminière (Leal, 1959: 52–54). Also later in the 1940s diamond exportation was processed through the neighboring colonial power. The colonial company *Diamang*, it would seem, was a state within the state, endangering sovereignty despite colonial rule.

Historians have suggested, and rightly so, that the colonial company should in fact be regarded as a "kind of state within a state" (Clarence-Smith, 1979: 177) in what could be read as a fundamental rupture with the history of mining in southern Africa. Like a state, the colonial company would be a "total institution" where at the heart it exercises dominion over border transgressions and diamond extraction.<sup>7</sup> In line with colonial guidelines, corporate authorities imposed strict restrictions on movement into and within the region; they deployed an unyielding corporate-mining police infrastructure and purged "secret" mining towns from the public eye.<sup>8</sup> These mining towns, where European and migrant workers resided, were, in practical, if not official, terms, closed to the "native population." In this colonial frontier, the creation of enclosed compounds, hostels and mining towns emerged as attempted guarantees of order and security within a mining complex.<sup>9</sup> As small scale alluvial digging gave way to more labor intensive and technologically driven regimes of mining, settlements stood out as the urban and residential counterparts to the forms of social control required in diamond compounds.

In Diamang's laboratory of corporate-colonial rule, techniques of mining surveillance and built environment were assembled and deployed in order to preserve commodity security and the organization and discipline of contracted pools of migrant and local populations. In the protected boundaries of the company, autonomous forms of digging led by small groups of men were strictly forbidden.<sup>10</sup> Despite

this obstacle to labor, mines and their vicinities became focal points of local and regional migration, made more attractive by the corporate policies of food and goods' distribution. Not surprisingly, the balance of power between corporate and colonial authorities was often fraught with discord.<sup>11</sup> But Angolan independence in 1975 further disturbed the existing equilibrium. The post-independence successor to colonial Diamang, soon-to be called Endiama, retained the existing archive of topographic surveys. But was forced to abandon most mining operations outside of Lunda's semi-urban centers. As civil war in the region increased during the 1980s over disputed diamond fields, Endiama was incapable of holding on to Diamang's logistical and mining structure and patrimonial liquidation soon ensued.

In the aftermath of intermittent peace and trading deregulations, Lunda's stones materialized into a conundrum of high security, risky speculation and lurid accounts of blood, violence, and big fortunes (de Boeck, 2000). In the eyes of consumption politics, Angolan diamonds became metonyms of a postcolonial "standardized nightmare," the prop of elegance and binding love gone awry. Despite the war and at the height of "blood" diamonds, about 100,000 diggers jumped the border from neighboring DRC, motivating a United Nations ban on "conflict diamonds" in 1998, and eventually speeding up the formal peace agreements in 2002. In the process, Endiama began granting concessions for alluvial mining and, more vigorously over the last few years, for the more complex, long lasting, and technically intricate kimberlite mines.

Maludi uniquely encapsulates this historical trajectory, from the colonial foundation, the mid-1990s free-for-all profiteering, to the recent corporate resurgence in alluvial mining. This area is situated 20 mi (32.1 km) from the historical heart of colonial mining, near Nzagi. Maludi was, and still is, a significant source of rare and high quality alluvial diamonds. In local discourse, the town retains its status as the fantastical site where fortunes are made. Since diamond operations restarted in its riverbeds in 2007, after years of industrial abandonment, Maludi has demonstrated a steady flow of diamond extraction and production, ostensibly rescuing the mine from the sense of industrial decay that had already enveloped the site. Under license from Endiama, production increased to such an extent and future endeavors appeared so promising that corporate authorities created a new residential camp closer to the mine's rediscovered riverbeds. Literally excavating the ruins of colonial mines, deposits of gravel thought to be depleted and thus abandoned are also now being processed thanks to new treatment techniques in alluvial mining (Fig. 22.2).

Next to the new compound, Maludi's old colonial village sits like a ghostly shadow (Fig. 22.3). Its carefully planned residential settlements, dating back to the 1920s, had previously housed pools of contracted labor. Today, its built environment manifests the archetypal frontier phantom-city of exhausted gold rushes, with vacant warehouses, schools, theaters or sports arenas. Notably, the buildings have not been repurposed or appropriated by residents of the nearby village. This village, also bearing the name Maludi, stands beside the rusting colonial outpost. Starting in 1992 the village's population swelled with the arrival of diggers and fortune seekers, with estimates ranging from 3,000 to 15,000 people. Once official extractive operations resumed, this diamond hub was closed down by the coordinated efforts





Fig. 22.2 Alluvial mining pit in a deviated river course



Fig. 22.3 Maludi's diamond "comptoir," established during the 1950s diamond rush



of state police and the mining company. In this village, vacant houses and closed shops attest to a sudden cut with its recent past.

Calonda, built in the late 1950s, shares its colonial origins with Maludi. Calonda was planned to house the qualified workforce and expatriate personnel of the nearby alluvial mining sites along the Tchikapa River. In today's mines, these positions have been inverted; the administrative staff and migrant workers are housed in a secluded compound outside the mining town and the urban core of Calonda was left for former colonial Diamang's employees, local mine workers, and emerging local elites who either benefited from Diamang's patrimonial liquidation or diamond trading revenue. Calonda was designed as part of a corporate-colonial settlement plan meant to be self-sufficient, producing cattle and generating their own electricity, for example, not unlike contemporary kimberlite mines (Fig. 22.4).

Similarly, thousands of diggers (*garimpeiros*) and small scale traders swarmed into Calonda during the 1990s. However, contrary to Maludi's state of explicit ruin, Calonda still stands in neatly organized rows of single family chalets with a spirit of suburbia, albeit a suburb in decay, that is surprising, but not unique on the mining frontier.<sup>12</sup> The town's swimming pool, once the proud symbol of European alterity, lies abandoned on the Lunda plateau, northeast Angola, likely to be engulfed soon by the surrounding ravines, as one day the village will too. Nearby this quiet town, competing mines extract tons of earth every day in their search for rough diamonds.<sup>13</sup> Several times during the day, until not so long ago, an old American school bus transported miners back and forth between Calonda and the mines. The



**Fig. 22.4** Calonda Diamang's model of colonial architecture, common in the region's urban centers for the purpose of housing mining personnel

sleepy town is in for an abrupt awakening, as plans have been recently announced to explore an underground system of kimberlite pipes, spread along the surrounding Tchikapa valley and containing an estimated deposit of 23 million carats.<sup>14</sup>

## 22.4 Kimberlite Projects and the Labor of Extracting Value

As it has become clear, Angolan diamonds sit contentiously between the history of colonial extraction and the ever-shifting division of labor. Historically, diamond mines in Lunda were established around the Cuango river's mineral-rich diamond fields, on the western border of Lunda, along the Tchikapa river, which cuts through the Angolan province and heads north towards the Democratic Republic of Congo, and around the matrix of rivers, streams and water basins between the towns of Lucapa and Nzagi (see Fig. 22.1). Today, kimberlite mines have come to replace the traditional technology of alluvial mining. In non-technical terms, kimberlite mining attempts to retrace the process through which diamonds trickled down into riverbeds, or to be more accurate, through which they exploded to the surface, as detailed earlier.

Once exploratory studies are completed and a mining concession is secured, construction crews set to work, transforming a once covert location amidst tall grasses, hut villages, and countless water streams into the center of an engineering project, vast in terms of physical terrain and its sheer social impact. For the most part, the Angolan "outback" is considered a destitute and isolated region. Established mining projects, however, have private airstrips, fleets of hundreds of trucks, and fully sustained towns within their confines. The existing kimberlite mines in Angola lodge and feed thousands of workers, who, in turn, work in shifts around the clock, in a logistical infrastructure that seems only ripe for looser economic times. At Catoca, the largest kimberlite mine in Angola, upstream of the Tchikapa river near Saurimo, belt conveyors and massive trucks connect the ore extraction sites to the mine's treatment plants. Annually, the built-in ore-treatment capacity can reach 8 million tons per year.

Beyond the corporate figures, a mine's lived environment is vividly permeated by its own version of the workings of capitalist ventures. In it, washing plants, the famously secretive "*lavaría*" or diamond treatment center, features prominently. The *lavaría* is the heart of production in a diamond company, suitably referred to as "The Factory" in some mines. In an alluvial context, the *lavaría* is historically the site where mechanically pumped water, carried from nearby rivers, washes the ore. In kimberlite mines the process is similar, though the machinery is better equipped to grind and disintegrate sedimentary rock, as the apparatus is intended to last many years. According to geological estimates, the underground deposits in kimberlite pipes may withstand decades of extraction. This return, of course, demands enormous investment despite the uncertainty of diamond reservoirs. With megaindustrial treatment plants under construction before there is any guarantee of success, mining authorities seemingly exorcise the risk of a dry mine shaft.

In both alluvial and kimberlite mining, diamonds are stripped off of their impurities and differentiated from dirt in washing and treatment plants, which is then mechanically and chemically sorted, x-ray scanned, and manually separated. According to emic accounts, when detached from nature in the sorting area, diamonds reveal their cached wealth. In this space of “commodity laundering” the diamond is transformed from ore to commodity. Simultaneously the site of petty-theft and the most secured area within a concession, the lavaria houses the diamonds until they are transported from the mine.

Treatment plants set the touchstone for defining diamonds’ value in a larger and local social economy. In ethnographic terms, the lavaria consistently reappears in gossip, hearsay, and rumors as an evocative entryway into the complex relationship between law and the state, corporate governance, and everyday lived experience. First, state forces are frequently denied access to this section of the mine, except in cases of a public crime. In such cases, the status of the rentier state hovers as an ambiguous marker of authority, constricted to the formal limits of concession territory. This becomes relevant at a time when the postcolonial state fetishizes its rule of law and authority (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2006) over the symbolic surplus value of diamonds and the command over its redeployment in different arenas of Angola’s social and political life.<sup>15</sup>

Second, the washing section offers some of the highest-paying and most sought-out positions at a mine, excepting administrative and managerial positions. Local residents, those who are literate and have some degree of technical skill, are usually recruited to operate machinery or manage the plant’s electrical and hydraulic systems. In nearby communities, workers frequently claim to work in this space, hence indexing a particular status within the “wealth-snatching” diamond economy. Conversely, miners use this position as leverage for raising grievances and negotiating with corporate management.

Finally, washing plants feature recurrently in vocal accounts of “feitiço” and “wanga,” metonyms with an “occult economy” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1999) of zombie-miners who transform into snakes in order to “swallow kamanga [diamond], swell and fly away.” If the corporate enclave and associated forms of security have become iconic predicaments of the postcolonial mining frontier, in this part of Angola the mining projects have met unforeseen forces of their own. In telling these stories of secrecy, greed and wealth, workers and residents replicate the very qualities of the mining compound they seek to contest.<sup>16</sup>

Whether reinforcing or at odds with the ideology of security, local cosmologies, and the demands of labor, the lavaria seemingly encapsulates the means of value production while creating meaning in a context of unsettling transformations. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that electronic surveillance systems, designed to control the “near-sacred diamond-sorting chamber” (Carstens, 2001: 11), have become the latest approach to dealing with these objects, easily concealed and literally embodied. It is precisely over the regulation of a surplus value from diamonds, in the symbolic features that affect broader political and economic processes (Munn, 1986; Weiss, 1996) that one can locate the contest over the legitimacy, value, and meaning of these industrial structures. Indeed, the security of the lavaria is an index for the

stability of the mine at large. That was the case at one particular mine, where a group of security and technical personnel celebrated, over champagne, the installation of a new camera surveillance system, joining the high-tech x-ray system already in place.

The celebration was clouded by a number of troubling events. First and foremost, the system would prove rather useless at the moment; the washing plant operated only sporadically due to limited fuel supplies and an austerity budget. The remnants of champagne, moreover, were a living testament to the mine's hardships; they were the last bottles left on commissary shelves after beer supplies ran dry. In turn, this brought out the unscripted movements of the law, particularly legible in moments of uncertainty and debacle. Social networks and heretofore hidden social allegiances surfaced to provide alcohol at the mine, displacing the symbolic relevance of diamonds. Not only that, but in the weeks prior to the final installation of the closed-circuit video system, a number of snakes, featured prominently in local accounts of Tchokwe cosmologies, were spotted in the sorting chamber. Lingering at the celebration, these snakes attend to the unresolved tensions vis-à-vis the ritualized ceremonies that usually take place at these sites, conducted by local figures under request and sponsorship of the corporation. Under different circumstances, a goat would be slaughtered; the spilling of its blood is said to increase production. When such rituals are not fulfilled, a glaring failure in light of past events as noticed by the security personnel at this particular celebration, this lack of attention becomes the catch-all cause for tragedy on the mine: the accidental death of an employee or the inability to reach production quotas.

## 22.5 Conclusion

A boom of mineral resource extraction and the fetishized attributes of diamond and oil added to new corporate-state synergies in the postcolonial nation of Angola. When the first strikes of early 2009 threatened to disrupt the status quo of diamond mining, and despite Endiama's announcement of having "100 mines open to investors," the economy of signs and practices propitiated by diamonds had already dramatically shifted.<sup>17</sup> This chapter proposed to render this shift visible in the social, historical, and material conditions of diamonds' extraction. Diamond mining and trading, wherein one could situate competing narratives over the future of the nation-state and the expectations of its postcolonial subjects, is a dynamic field, not immune to local and global changes. Contributing to a vast literature on mineral resources, corporate responsibility, and the social construction of mining production (Ballard & Banks, 2003; Ferguson, 1999; Moodie & Ndatshe, 1994; Nash, 1979; Taussig, 1980; Welker, 2009), this chapter aimed to reveal how large industrial diamond mines in Angola become complex social worlds that envelop, inasmuch as they counteract notions of culture and social pragmatism, namely in terms of its workforce, the circulation of knowledge, and the way ever-changing landscapes are inhabited. Moreover, it adds to an understanding of contemporary spaces of extraction and global commodity circulation in examining the often-overlooked site of production (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Foster, 2006; Smith & Mantz, 2006).

Here we may tap into an important assumption about contemporary mining in Angola, namely the possibility of dialogical constructions of corporate authority and the social world lying outside the compound. Over a period of fifty years, the colonial diamond company produced and maintained an archive of photographic, sound, ethnological, and geomorphological records of the region. The “museumification” of an indigenous ethno-linguistic identity converged in constituting this corporate archive. In today’s mining communities, a popular version of this archive has disseminated a specific rendering of the culture’s most salient features, including the symbolic violence of its witchcraft idioms. As such, one could approach the exercise of “security” as a corporate narrative within this living archive, in its most crude projections of fear (Taussig, 1987). It remains to be seen in what ways the colonial company’s coding of “tradition” shaped colonial policies for the region, labor recruitment policies, or an emphasis on security and, conversely, the degree to which the reification of local cultures backlash in terms of managing Lunda’s regime of space.

To the extent that this corporate archive has shaped possibilities for understanding native cultures, highlighting some practices and tendencies while erasing others, the realm of possibilities it generates can be seen as an act of social engineering reminiscent of the massive remodeling of local landscapes. Similarly, the apparent burst of occult forces and labor strikes onto the public domain of the private corporation raises the stakes of corporate accountability to a different level, while stating the dialectical character with which the terms of this crisis are affixed to local life. In other words, the productive value of “security,” the practice of law, and corporate techniques of control in diamond mines are cultural constructs of the new rituals of corporate-state ideology, interlocked with local fields of meaning, symbolic and historical. Security and social control are not distinct from geological exploration and the physical aspects of megaengineering. Rather, the security regime is a prime vehicle for imposing social cognition of the transformations enacted upon physical space. Megaengineering mines, therefore, are at a standstill between the living ruins of colonial mining and the future aspirations of the postcolony; at once, these industrial extraction sites open the scars of old mining concessions while setting the conditions for writing Angola’s own rendering of the postcolonial predicament.

## Notes

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2. It should be noted that I do not take the notion of spatial extraction as the analytic object of this article. Instead, I am more interested in how ideologies and practices of the corporation are constituted by, and make sense of, the range of social relations within a diamond community, particularly through the spatial ordering of diamonds’ extraction (Lefebvre, 1991).
3. Although “neoliberalism” gained descriptive value in recent anthropological literature, questions remain to its analytical, conceptual, or empirical purview. Much like the reality it

- purports to reference, the episteme of neoliberalism is a slippery terrain. It can designate a set of techniques of governance, forms of state privatization, speculative capital flows, lawlessness and deregulation. Without fully adhering to its analytical purchase, I take Ferguson's (2006) recent contribution at its political economy face-value: contemporary mineral resource extraction in Africa has become the expression of a diffuse "model" of a type of neoliberalism.
4. In a tentative interpretation of corporate presence in the region I follow here the vocal opposition of local populations to these companies and secondly, the widely circulated reputation of these mining projects as constituting enclave regimes of extraction enforced by a rigid security apparatus.
  5. Keeping only small fringes of the coastal territory under direct colonial rule (Gouveia, Monçada, Monteiro, & Neto, 1993; Sá, 1996). Yonah Seleti (1990) suggests the initial territory attributed to DIAMANG amounted to 81% of the territory (cf Seleti in Konczacki et al., 1990: 46).
  6. Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa, Gabinete de Negócios Políticos: MU/GM/GNP/059/PT 10.
  7. A Goffmanian "total institution" seems unproductive for understanding this regime and is used freely here for the purpose of illustrating the scope of corporate presence in the region. In his seminal work, Moodie and Ndatshe (1994: 16, 27, 88) is explicit in his critique of the Goffmanian theory of self and definition of "total institution." Peter Carstens' study of diamond extraction in the company town of Kleinsee is more ambiguous in his critique (2001: 190). Although titled "A total institution," James (1992: 112) makes the point that compounds could "serve the interests of organized African workers." However, the 1987 western Transvaal strike, his case at hand, does not support his general argument.
  8. I formulate this hypothesis after consulting PIDE/DGS maps in colonial archives. The location of certain mining towns were often not made explicit in cartographic depictions.
  9. Not without reason, historiography of Southern Africa mining has placed a great deal of attention to this topic. There are distinctions to be made between gold and diamond mines (Moodie & Ndatshe, 1994: 23), as well as important regional and national distinctions in regard to diamond mines' policies (see Hart, 2001: 161–164 for a description of the restrictive security measures imposed in the Namibian "diamond coast").
  10. According to former colonial bureaucrats, serving the colonial administration outside the main urban centers in the region, diamond digging was later permitted in parts of Lunda's outback country given the potential backlashes, amidst diggers, of a repressive security presence.
  11. The main colonial outpost in the region, for example, was deliberately placed far from extractive sites in order to avoid the restrictions imposed by the privately run Diamonds Security Services (Sá, 1996: 56). The responsibility over the "pass" system, moreover, ultimately belonged to the company's security service.
  12. From northern Canada to the semidesert region of Namaqualand, in South Africa, the possibility of "utopian oasis" has draped its mining residents in some form of "suburban quality" (Carstens, 2001: 7, 221).
  13. Back in 2000, these were Southern Era's Camafuca, ITM's Calonda and DiamondWorks' Yetwene location (Dietrich, 2000). More recently, the Camuazanza mine began production. The advent of kimberlite mining and changes in corporate management give a provisional character to alluvial mines operating in the area.
  14. The Camafuca mine is on the early stages of exploration. These figures come from Partnership Africa Canada's 2007 *Diamond Industry Annual Review* (Blore, 2007).
  15. Interestingly, this legally framed notion of internal border ends up fetishizing the means put into controlling them (Das & Poole, 2004; Spyer, 1998). National police, for example, routinely announces new campaigns for controlling illegal migration along the borders of Lunda often broadcasted in national television, as in the aptly named 2009 "Operation Crisis," a spectacle of law-making.
  16. In some communities, miners are also said to possess powerful "feitiços," material and semiotic heirs to the world of witchcraft, and a commonly evoked discursive link with the



supernatural world. As part of a larger research project, I attempt to discern the terms under which the template of Wanga (Chokwe referential field of “occult” forces), feitiços and other immaterial forces can be productively mapped onto the space of corporate governance.

17. Henrique Almeida, 28 January 2009, Reuters. ([http://uk.reuters.com/article/UK\\_SMALLCAP\\_SRPT/idUKLS56043320090128?pageNumber=2&virtualBrandChannel=0](http://uk.reuters.com/article/UK_SMALLCAP_SRPT/idUKLS56043320090128?pageNumber=2&virtualBrandChannel=0)). Last accessed 20 July 2009.

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