CHAPTER 2

# Concepts: Corporate Decision Spaces and Chains of Command

Until recently, almost all academic studies of the development impact of natural resources focused on the national scale, and were for the most part concerned with the problems and possibilities of resource abundance. The relation between resources and development remains highly disputed, particularly in mainstream economics. After WWII, modernization theorists, drawing upon the notion of comparative advantage, saw mineral endowments as valuable assets for economic take-off, while dependency theorists underlined the structural constraints of mineral production and pointed to declining terms of trade between industrial products and raw materials. The term "resource curse" only became popular in the 1990s (Brunnschweiler and Bulte 2008: 616; Ross 1999: 301) when, for about a decade, the perceptions of most economists seemed to change. This was triggered by the publication of Jeffery Sachs and Andrew Warner's seminal *Natural Resource Abundance and Economic Growth* (1995), which concentrated on the period between 1970 and 1990. The main mechanisms behind what they called a resource "curse" had already been elaborated in the post–war period by the dependency school, whose proponents (1) discovered a long-term fall in prices for raw materials compared to processed goods (the Prebisch–Singer hypothesis), (2) identified high price fluctuations as causes for social and economic instability, and (3) pointed to the emergence of enclave economies and the capabilities of multinationals to repatriate their profits (cf. Ross 1999: 301). These findings became widely accepted in the 1990s and were accompanied by the observation

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that high dependencies on raw material exports spark conflicts and tend to lead to authoritarian regimes (Brunnschweiler and Bulte 2008: 616). To this adds the theorem of the so-called Dutch disease, which suggests that high exports in raw materials lead to stronger currencies and thereby limit the competitiveness of other economic sectors versus foreign firms (Ross 1999: 306).

However, during the commodity boom of the 2000s, even dependency theorists began to question the validity of the theory of declining terms of trade (cf. Jäger and Leubolt 2011: 61). In the same vein, the observation made by Jeffery Sachs and Andrew Warner that extractivist economies perform worse than more diversified economies could hardly be upheld with rocketing resource prices and the relative success of social policies based on resource rents in several "neoextractivist" countries, mainly in Latin America (see Jäger et al. 2014). This change in opinion was also associated with a criticism of the methods that had been employed by the proponents of the resource curse explanation (see Ross 1999: 302–304), which again questioned the causal relationship between resource abundance and poverty. For instance, Brunnschweiler and Bulte point to the fact that resource extraction could be nothing other than a "default sector" in many developing countries, whereby low diversification could simply be induced by weak institutions rather than resource abundance (Brunnschweiler and Bulte 2008: 616). In recent years, with the political consequences of the fall in resource prices—and in particular falling oil prices—in countries, such as Russia, Venezuela, and Brazil, we can finally make out yet another turn in these discussions.

These recurring debates have filled the pages of many a journal and led to the publication of countless policy papers. If anything, it seems to be widely accepted that resource-based development is difficult to achieve in countries with particularly weak political institutions. Yet, even with regard to these special cases, differences of opinion persist over the question of whether these "failures of the state are structural and necessary, or contextual and contingent" (Bridge 2008: 393). Most policy debates tend to depoliticize the discussion by highlighting questions of "state competency and efficiency while obscuring significant divergences of interest between firms, states and consumers that influence the structure of the production network, and its capacity to contribute to the development of regional advantage" (ibid.). This technocratic point of view has been challenged by geopolitical and macro–economic analyses, for instance, under the headline of the "Scramble for

Africa" (see Southall and Melber 2009). However, both the good governance literature and its critics fail to connect their analyses to transnational company strategies as well as to social movements in and around the mines.

## 2.1 Commodity-Based Approaches

To the geographer John Agnew, one research strategy with which to analyze these entanglements of several scales "would involve tracing the flows of commodities from local African sources to destinations elsewhere, reconstructing the institutional channels and barriers en route" (Agnew and Grant 1996: 742). The most popular framework for this purpose is the global commodity chain (GCC) or global value chain (GVC) (see Bair 2010) and—related to these—the concept of global production networks (Fischer et al. 2010: 14). In the case of aluminum production, the term global production network (GPN) seems the most appropriate. In the following section, I will consider these three closely related approaches as commodity-based approaches. The concept of GCCs was coined in the 1990s by Gary Gereffi and was based upon Immanuel Wallerstein's analysis of "commodity chains", which for him referred "to a network of labour and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity" (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1986: 159).

To date, only a few researchers have employed commodity-based approaches to the extractive sector (see Bridge 2008; Smet and Seiwald 2014; Radhuber 2015; Mayes 2015). This has been for two main reasons: First, it is difficult to describe all the processes that occur in the transformation from raw material to consumer product. Second, material network approaches have been criticized for neglecting the role of state regulation, which is particularly important (or at least more apparent) in the extractive sector. In his initial proposition for doing research on "commodity chains" in the 1980s, Wallerstein explicitly suggested that the idea was to "start with the final production operation and move sequentially backward […] until one reaches primarily raw material inputs" (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1986: 159). This makes sense given that production can be linked to consumption and thereby to the uneven spatial distribution of workload and its consequences. However, whereas Wallerstein still tried to focus on raw material production as an important node of commodity chains, this was rather neglected in the flood of publications on GCCs in the 1990s, mainly due to the complexity of

most commodity chains. As the analysis can only focus on certain aspects of the chain, starting at the "end" usually means sacrificing elements of the "beginning". Raw materials, such as aluminum, cannot be linked as extensively to consumption as the products of the consumer goods industry, the preferred study object of the GCC school.

Moreover, commodity-based approaches tend to over-emphasize the agency of public and private actors in the "Global South" regarding the "up-grading" of commodity or value chains and often leave aside discussions of geopolitical interests and structural considerations (cf. Bair 2010: 24). GVC research, which gained attention a few years after the success of GCC theory, was notorious in this regard as it tended to neglect the questions of power in favor of more policy-oriented aims of inducing growth in Southern economies by linking them up with globalized networks of production. GVC thereby has even made it into policy papers of the World Bank (e.g., Cattaneo et al. 2010; for more information, see Bair 2010: 24, 32–34). This lack of attention to geopolitics and questions of power, as well as a rather technocratic view of the state (as an executor of policies), renders the application of commodity-based approaches on the extractive sector and especially bauxite mining, rather problematic.

Due to the critical importance of bauxite mining and refining for global industries and for the governmental revenues of several producer countries, and due to the oligopolistic structure of the global bauxite/aluminum industry, it is difficult to clearly differentiate between public and private actors, both in terms of organizational structure and in terms of rationalities of firms and governments. Global players in the aluminum sector, such as Alcoa, Rusal, or Rio Tinto, often operate beyond the conditions of free-market competition and are in many instances too "big to fail" (cf. Taylor 2000: 7f). At the same time, the governments of resource-rich countries periodically act like private shareholders (cf. Shafer 1986: 925). Most major companies are strongly connected and supported by their states of origin (see American postwar production, Pechiney in the 1980s or Rusal in the 2000s). The governments of the African bauxite producer countries are shareholders in mining joint ventures, providing large parts of government revenues. From independence until the recent resource boom that led to a rise of gold exports, bauxite has been responsible for 80–90% of exports of Guinea and thereby for most government revenue (cf. EITI 2015). The exports of Sierra Leone consist mostly of iron ore and Ghana mainly exports gold, cocoa beans,

and lately also crude oil. Historical price fluctuations of these and other minerals led to periodical budget crises, forcing the governments to cut public employment and social spending and leading to dependence on aid and foreign loans.

In politically unstable regions, the few globally dominating aluminum companies (the "majors") rarely own one mine alone. They share these mines with their 'competitors' and the involved states, in order to reduce the risks of these huge and long-term investments. These risks include expropriation, price fluctuations, social upheavals, war, etc. In addition, the aluminum sector is very capital-intensive and highly concentrated (cf. Campbell 1986: 2, 5). As subsidiaries of vertically integrated corporations, bauxite mining joint ventures function very differently from normal firms, given that they are not independent profit-maximizing entities. Their role is to produce raw materials at a low cost, although very often not in competition with other subsidiaries in the same country or mine. The so-called efficiency of the market only comes into play at much higher tiers when the mother companies sell their aluminum ingots or even semi-processed goods, such as parts of airplanes. The small share of the value added at the bauxite mining stage thus rather leads to rationalities of centrally planned economies: The mines primarily have to reach certain output goals and serve as a link between the parent group and the government (cf. Habig 1983: 247–251; 262–263). Prices are mostly set by pre-arranged formulas (Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée 1983: 14). In times of price declines—for instance, in the early-1990s and again after 2007—the dominating companies coordinated their reduction of output (see Larrue 1997: 300; Deripaska 2014). Consequently, bauxite prices are only weakly correlated with world aluminum prices. For instance, while aluminum prices doubled at the end of the 1980s, the bauxite price of the *Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée*—the largest Guinean producer—fell from 35 to 25 USD (cf. International Monetary Fund 2008: 7). The resulting chains of command are thereby a mixture of public and private structures, with the latter being much more interrelated and much less exposed to competition than capital in most other sectors. A meaningful analysis of African bauxite production thus has to address (1) the interests of producer countries, receiver countries, and international institutions, (2) risk management and profit-maximizing strategies (in other words, chain governance) of TNCs, and (3) the renegotiation and the effects of this global production network at the local level.

## 2.2 GCC, GVC, or GPN?

Due to this need for a broad analytical framework and due to the methodological challenge of effectively connecting raw material production with consumption, only a few studies on raw materials have used these network approaches to date. Interestingly, all of these studies use the concept of global production network, even though the differences of the three presented concepts—GCC, GVC and GPN—are rather negligible.[1] Whereas GPN theorists have reacted to the criticism of neglecting regulation by underlining the importance of the "embeddedness" of production networks, the sociologist Jennifer Bair proposes a "second generation" of GCC research, focusing more on political economy and returning to the analysis of power relations that has been neglected with the advent of GVC analysis. Bair criticizes neoliberal applications of the theory (under the title "up-grading"; see Bair 2010: 30), pleads for a stronger consideration of working conditions and reproduction, and suggests linking the GCC concepts with structural analysis of capitalist production (Bair 2010). My choice to use the label of global production networks has, therefore, rather pragmatic reasons beneath it: Connections between GPN and the extractive sector have already been established by several studies, and GPN is the last offspring and thereby the most topical label of commodity-based approaches.

## 2.3 Possible Contributions of the Extractive Sector to GPN Research

Working with GPN allows overcoming the trap of "methodological nationalism" (Brenner 1999; Jessop et al. 2008), which has largely contributed to an "analytical stalemate" concerning the resource curse thesis in the last few years (Bridge 2008: 390). Moreover, several discussions around GPN can be enriched with empirical findings from mines and drilling fields. For instance, in most of the described cases of commodity-based research, power is exercised against the flow of commodity production. The higher the value added of a product in a certain chain, the more power its holder can exercise throughout the chain. Many IT and apparel branded companies have outsourced almost all of their production capacities in the last 30 years, albeit retaining quite a firm control over the whole commodity chain (Plank and Staritz 2010). However, in the case of metal commodity chains—and especially in the case of the

aluminum commodity chain—large parts of the downstream sectors are actually controlled by the mining companies. This was the case in the USA until the 1960s and can still be seen for Russian and Chinese aluminum companies. In Germany, the dominant industrial companies recently formed an alliance in an attempt to regain control over raw material producers (Allianz zur Rohstoffsicherung; cf. Heß 2012). The result of these permanent tensions over chain governance is a multipolar value chain, something that has not been theoretically considered to date (Raikes et al. 2000: 7). This is particularly interesting if combined with the long-term development of raw material prices: In the 1970s, when raw material prices were almost as high as they are nowadays, raw material producers (countries, regions, companies, etc.) gained as much bargaining power as they did recently during the resource boom in 2004–2008.

Second, through its connections to Wallerstein's world system theory, the categories of the GPN school can easily be related to dependency theory which had largely been neglected in the last 30 years and has recently received renewed interest (Pimmer and Schmidt 2015). GPN concepts are well-suited tools with which to analyze power differentials between decision spaces. They enable "zooming" into concrete power relations without losing the overall politico-economic context and thus are part of the exclusive club of sociological middle-range theories that can connect micro- and macro-analysis. As I will show based upon the concrete example of Guinean mining towns, GPN concepts also allow for a sociological reformulation of Wallerstein's idea of a zero-sum game of development. By introducing the term "global chains of command", I would like to show that control over people can be described as a zero-sum game; however, contrary to Wallerstein's concept, this control does not automatically imply a zero-sum game of development.

During my stays in Guinea, I was confronted with a very practice-oriented version of GVC that had been tailored to the analysis of mining enterprises by public administrators and politicians. This was particularly astonishing as GVC theory has rarely focused on mining to date. This theory was presented during a workshop for "civil society activists" on the new mining code in Kindia, which was organized and sponsored by the Revenue Watch Institute (Revenue Watch Institute 2014: 2; Legal expert 13/03/2014). The RWI recently changed its name to Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) and is mainly financed by George Soros' Open Society Foundations (see below). On its homepage,

the institute provides an account of this extractive industry value chain approach:

"In his book The Bottom Billion, Paul Collier popularized this approach to stress the key steps in ensuring that natural resource wealth transforms into citizen wellbeing. This framework has since become a reference for other organizations working on natural resource governance, such as Revenue Watch Institute, the World Bank, and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)" (Revenue Watch Resource Center 2015).

On the same page, the NRGI concedes that there are other forms of value chain analysis that more strongly focus on the private sector. By contrast, the approach presented by the NRGI "takes a government perspective to optimize value for a country and its citizens" (ibid). Paul Collier divides the extractives value chain into five steps: "Deciding to Extract", "Getting a Good Deal", "Ensuring Revenue Transparency", "Managing Volatile Resources", and "Investing for Sustainable Development" (ibid). Therefore, Collier's "approach"—as presented on this homepage—does not have much in common with GVC theory: if anything, it could be called a policy application of the concept. Nonetheless, its focus on governmental revenues makes sense given the low labor intensity of the mining industry. Contrary to the processing industry, tax revenues are considered among the most important contributions of the mining industry to economic development (cf. UNCTAD 2007: XXIV; see also Open Society Institute of Southern Africa et al. 2009: 2). During the workshop in Kindia, the instructors also presented a "Chain of Change" (*Chaîne de changement*) with some more steps to follow that has been applied since 2012 (Interview with Legal expert 11/03/2014). According to several interview partners in Kindia, Paul Collier is a close advisor to Alpha Condé, the current president of Guinea (Interview with Legal expert 11/03/2014; see also Collier 2007; Taylor 2011).

### *2.3.1 Corporate Decision Space and Infrastructural Power*

Up to a certain degree, the material flows of aluminum are framed by (classical) state-centered regulation. Bauxite produced in the mines of Guinea transcends borders—to be refined, smelted, processed, and consumed—by moving according to "traffic rules" of national and international regulation. Given that many of these "traffic rules" are not standardized on a global level, this framing of material flows often leads

to conflicts over regulations. One of these conflicts of rules was China's decision to restrict its raw material exports in the early 2000s, which also concerned bauxite, and heavily contributed to the recent price boom in raw materials from 2004 to 2008. The national regulation of China—which has been in conflict with a certain interpretation of the WTO treaties—restrained aluminum atoms from transcending Chinese borders until they had been processed into consumer products. These zones, where legislations overlap or are in conflict with one another, offer particularly ample room for maneuver. Actors have the possibility to juggle with regulations by changing sides or jumping scales (cf. Jessop et al. 2008: 390; Dicken et al. 2001: 95), and they have an increasing influence on the emergence of new orders that could be established within or above the existing ones. If economic actors thereby transcend political regulations or boundaries, they mainly do so by building upon other, conflicting regulations or boundaries often coming from other scales (e.g., national versus international regulations).

West African mining towns are special examples of such zones of superposition, given that they contain a great number of conflicting orders, many of which are marginally formalized. The political structure of the towns already depends on conflicting interpretations of different generations of national law, additionally being in conflict with (neo-) traditional orders and interpretations of the customary law. Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan called this sedimentation of political institutions of several epochs "institutional addition" (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 1999: 52). This leads to a "flexibility and malleability in these institutions […], leaving ample room for negotiation, usually informal, for the different actors who must define required competences and rules of the game" (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 2002: 4; cf. Knierzinger 2011: 33).

This situation is additionally complicated by yet another form of reference that is neither part of the national framework of the formal political system, nor of (neo-)traditional ones. This reference is the transnational decision space[2] of mining companies, which is dependent on international agreements (e.g., the IFC Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability; International Finance Corporation 2012), company codes and standards, national law and governmental decisions of their countries of origin, and—much more than most other spaces—personal decisions of several individuals that can only be culturally and socially defined. In remote places, companies often dispose over an almost physical sort of power based upon infrastructure, which creates considerable room for maneuver that is neither codified

by written texts like national laws nor codified by company regulations, leading to some sort of corporate neopatrimonialism.

Drawing upon Agnew's reflections on power, I would like to call the basis of this special form of control "infrastructural power". Agnew borrows the concept from the sociologist Michael Mann, who differentiates between despotic power—which "denotes power by the state elite over civil society"—and infrastructural power—which "denotes the power of the state to penetrate and centrally co-ordinate the activities of civil society through its own infrastructure"—as the main forms of powers of states (Mann 1984: 188; cf. Agnew 2005: 443). For Agnew, infrastructural power can be derived from roads, electricity and tap water, as well as deterritorialized infrastructure, such as "currencies, systems of measure, trading networks, educational provision [or] welfare services" (ibid).[3] As will be shown in Chap. 3, the Guinean government almost exclusively bases its control over the population on despotic power in the sense of Mann, whereby infrastructure is mostly controlled from the outside. Besides international financial institutions, development agencies and the African diaspora (in the form of remittances and investments) mining companies play a central role in providing this infrastructure.

Having been confronted with a lack of infrastructure, mining companies were forced to build and maintain whole cities and railways in Guinea. Directors of mines thus control most of the city's buildings, its electricity stations, health system, waste management, etc. Similar to the strongly personalized political systems in West Africa and comparable to the position of the colonial governor, the directors of the mining towns are thereby confronted with relatively few checks and balances and exert considerable control over these cities. However, through the corporate chain of command, several other corporate actors also become political entrepreneurs. From a historical perspective, West African trade unions play a particularly important role as links between private governance and formal government. In Guinea, trade unions were central to both the independence movement and subsequent state formation processes and they continue to actively participate in Guinean politics.

## 2.4 Global Chains of Command

As a consequence, the decision space of companies almost entirely replaces the formal political space in remote West African mining towns. Due to their economic position as export enclaves, these cities seem to

be more strongly interlinked with the corporate governance structure of the mine operators than with the concentric political hierarchy of spaces in the area. Democratic participation—which also remains quite a theoretical concept in most other parts of the world—is thereby replaced by the decisions of one or several companies who control the infrastructure, the development of the local economy, and in several instances even possess the monopoly of violence. The already fragile democratic system in numerous African countries thereby overlaps with a system of company rule, which can only be called despotic as it solely relies on a hierarchical chain of command with global investors at the top. Whereas most of the workers and the surrounding population in mining towns of industrialized countries have the option to "exit" (quit the job) or "voice" (protest or appeal), these options exist to a far lesser extent for most Africans.

The term "chain of command" is a concept that enables linking these discussions on governance with GPN theory. Before focusing on "upgrading", Gary Gereffi used the concepts of GCC mainly to explain power relations in global production processes. One of his most important points was the insight that companies originating from the old industrial centers were still in control of global production without actually employing large numbers of workers anymore. Rather than explaining this paradox as a temporal phenomenon, Gereffi introduced the concept of buyer-driven commodity chains. These chains are "steered" by brand companies who mainly profit from their control over consumer markets (Gereffi 1997: 116f).

While Gereffi uses the term "drivenness" to explain this form of control, I would like to formulate this power relation more concretely by talking about global chains of command. In classical management theory, a chain of command is a simple hierarchy of orders from the CEO over various forms of supervisors and foreman to a blue-collar worker, provided that such a worker exists in the company. The term was coined by Henry Fayol (1929), director of the *Société de Commentry, Fourchambault et Decazeville,* a large metallurgical company founded in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, most of these chains of command stretch across the whole globe and can become effective within one single company—this would be a producer-driven commodity chain in Gereffi's terminology—or be split up into several companies, whose only link is the market economy—this would be the buyer-driven commodity chain.

Using the concept of global chains of command, we can also incorporate phenomena such as unpaid (household) labor, changing local power hierarchies, the social situation in African mining towns, and even national political developments, into the analysis of the GPN of aluminum. For instance, when the CEO of Rusal decided to close the factory in Fria in 2012, he thereby stopped cash flows that hierarchically structured a whole region and even threatened the national political establishment. The spreading misery (from workers' families to merchants, artisans, and farmers) thereby went hand in hand with a partial reversal of power relations: now, women increasingly replaced the predominantly male workers as negotiators and demonstrators (cf. Rubbers 2010: 336); relatives from the countryside who had before sent their children to Fria to live with the workers' families now received back both their own and the children of the workers; retailers who had previously lived from the worker's salaries now became donators of rice; and local politicians partly re-established control over the city. Rusal thereby interfered into previously existing hierarchies in Fria that did not seem to be connected to economic control relations, particularly from a Western perspective.

The interaction between unequally powerful and unevenly trained actors can have positive long-term effects, leading to accelerated development through the diffusion and the exchange of knowledge. However, the economic exchange between unequal partners also has an almost inevitable short-term consequence, which can be termed exploitation. The world economy increasingly connects people with very different degrees of social protection and economic capital, leading to an increasingly uneven exchange of working time. For instance, unskilled dock workers in Kamsar only have a fraction of the purchasing power of unskilled dock workers in Hamburg, despite a good number of them doing the same work for the same TNCs. In the case of the relations between capital and labor, this uneven relation of control reaches a level that can clearly be called "political": the major investors of the aluminum companies have incomes that match the aggregated income of tens to hundreds of thousands of Africans. Whereas the current CEO-to-worker compensation ratio in the USA is around 500:1 (compared to 30:1 in the late 1970s; see Mishel and Davis 2014), the income relation between the majority owner of Rusal and the average income of petty traders in Fria probably reaches a rate of 100,000:1 (cf. Knierzinger 2014b). This huge income gap leaves its marks. In Mambia,

for instance (see Sect. 3.1), at the same time when the population had taken to the streets, because Rusal had not paid its taxes, the sub-prefect had his residence refurnished by the same company (Sous-Préfet of Mambia 18/03/2014). The current mayor of Kamsar—who was made responsible for considerable destruction during demonstrations—was sent to Mecca by CBG for more than a month in 2013 despite having already left the company 8 years before. The reason for this present was anything but a secret (cf. Executive CBG 17/02/2014; Vice mayor of Kamsar 19/02/2014). The police commissioner of Kamsar stated that his mission "here is the CBG". He lives in a house built and maintained by CBG, has access to the company's cheap food supplies from abroad and receives 40 L of fuel per month, a practice that has no legal basis and is often denounced as corruption(Interview with Police Commissioner 17/02/2014).

However, it is important to note that most of these practices do not violate any law and thereby cannot be called corruption. They are rather wide-ranging (and yet academically widely unnoticed) political side effects of capitalist "Landnahme" ("taking of the land"; Dörre 2010) in countries like Guinea. The proposed notion of global chains of command aims at these very concrete relations of control, based, on the one hand, upon the transnational company hierarchy and, on the other hand, on the simple fact, that having reached a certain level of income, money is primarily a means of power. Once it cannot be spent to tell others what they should produce or do for us (consumption), it only serves to tell others what they should do for others (investment). Thus, from this sociological point of view, investment is a purely means of command similar to political rule.

## 2.5 Crises of Chain Governance

It is important to note that the power relations within this global network of public and private actors change across time. This historic dimension of (corporate) governance has not received much attention to date (cf. Hönke 2009: 7; Bridge 2008: 411, 414). To capture this dimension, I identified two crises of global raw material governance that held particular importance to the bauxite production network in Africa but could also be applied to various other countries and sectors (Knierzinger 2014a: 21; cf. Southall, Melber 2009: XIX). These two crises happened in the 1970s and in the mid-2000s and were triggered by

raw material and energy shortages in the old industrialized centers. Both led to a steep rise of raw material prices and thereby prompted resource-rich governments to (re-)gain control by forming alliances, introducing new legislations and increasing the mining assets of the state, which again prompted reactions by industrialized states and TNCs. These general similarities between the 1970s and the 2000s can also be found in the global aluminum industry: when resource-rich governments started to nationalize and raise taxes in the 1960s and formed the International Bauxite Association (IBA) in 1974[4]—explicitly modeled on the example of OPEC—both the aluminum oligopoly of that time (the Six Sisters) and the governments of the consumer countries reacted by redeploying production (OCED countries obtained their bauxite increasingly from Australia) and trying to co-opt the "insurgents". For instance, this involved joint ventures with governments in Africa and the Caribbean and new aid agreements (see Table 2.1). In most of the concerned countries, these struggles were additionally accompanied (and triggered) by declarations of independence, the resulting non-aligned movement and the new social and solidarity movements in the consumer countries that were highly entangled with the green movement. I have tried to summarize the successive steps of these crises of raw material governance in Table 2.1.

These two crises of chain governance went along with shifts in the repartition of the command over global working time. The significant rise of living standards in Arab countries, which was similar to the considerable social mobility witnessed in South America and China during the last commodity boom, went along with higher costs of living (and thereby less control over global working time) in the old consumer countries. Similarly, the elite of producer countries took over a significant part of the control over workers of mines, factories and supermarkets from the old industrial centers (cf. Bridge 2008: 402; Bush 2010: 241).

The place of Sub-Saharan Africa in this political process remains contested: it is often considered to have been left out of globalization, simply because its share in world trade has diminished or stagnated since the 1970s while other regions have become increasingly interdependent (e.g., Krause 2002: 24; see also Agnew and Grant 1996: 729–730).[5] However, the figures showing this lack of exchange do not capture the actual number of Africans connected to the world, because they do not capture the development of unequal exchange: If average Africans receive increasingly less for the same amount of work—as was the case from the

**Table 2.1** Two crises of chain governance

| | 1960s/70s: Crisis of decolonization | 2000s: New Scramble for Africa |
|---|---|---|
| **Causes** | **Independences, Yom Kippur war, Europe & Japan↑** | **Financial crisis, BRICS ↑** |
| (Re-)actions of Producer Countries | Political East-West-oscillation | BRICS as new investors/donors |
| | Nationalizations | Public private partnership |
| | Higher royalties, export restrictions, etc. | |
| | Producer organizations[1] | |
| (Re-)actions of civil society | New social movements (Environmentalism, strikes, etc.) | Alter-globalization movement and strikes |
| **Effects** | **Oil prices ↑ raw material prices ↑** | |
| Reactions of TNCs | More exploration & mining in OECD countries | |
| | Joint Ventures, vertical integration | |
| | Deconcentration: Nationalization | Rather Concentration: TNCs and China |
| Reactions of OECD countries | Stabex & Sysmin (Lomé I&II) | Transparency initiatives: EITI, Dodd-Frank, etc. |
| | Pressure for free markets: Treaty of Rome, Yaoundé I-II, Lomé I-IV | Bi– and multilateral trade agreements[2] |
| | Mounting East-West tensions | Increased military presence in Africa |

[1] E.g. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, International Bauxite Association and Intergovernmental Council of Copper Exporting Countries.
[2] Economic Partnership Agreements

1970s until the turn of the millennium—their share in world trade evidently falls. Since the turn of the millennium, with the new price peak in raw materials, a veritable euphoria has taken place as Africans have seemed to increasingly participate in world trade. However, in many raw material sectors, only the yields per unit—as opposed to the number of employees—have significantly increased. With falling raw material prices owing to the cooling of the world economy, African elites are about to lose these windfall profits again.

The recent shift of power in the 2000s led to numerous promises from mining companies to process bauxite in the producer countries, quite similar to promises made in the 1960s and 1970s. In both cases, with falling prices, most of these plans vanished into their computer folders again. In Guinea, as in many other resource-rich countries, this also concerned the legal framework of mining: In 2011, the recent crisis of raw material governance resulted in a new progressive mining code. However, only 2 years later, due to intensified international pressure, the government felt obliged to revise this code again, mainly by reducing taxation and softening regulations concerning state participation (for more theoretical discussion, see Sects. 2.2 and 2.3).[6]

One important feature of both crises is their profoundly political nature. Similar to the rise of oil prices owing to the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the recent fall of oil prices is much more a consequence of political decisions by concrete actors than the expression of a mechanical world economic cycle of boom and bust. One of the most important decisions in this respect was that of the Chinese government to restrict the exports of minerals, such as zinc, bauxite, magnesium, phosphor, silicon carbide, silicon metal (silicon ore), coke, and fluorite through export taxes, quotas, minimum prices, and additional requirements for foreign companies (Kauder et al. 2011: 2). In 2011, as a consequence of a conflict over the Senaku islands, the committee also banned the export of rare earths to Japan (Kauder et al. 2011: 2).

In 2009, the USA requested consultations with China within the conflict resettlement body of the WTO with respect to China's export restrictions. Four years later, on 28 January 2013, the Chinese government finally met the recommendations made by the WTO and lifted the export restrictions. During the process, China had mainly argued that the restrictions were (1) necessary for the protection of the health of its citizens and (2) related to the conservation of exhaustible natural resources. In the case of bauxite, the second argument was used: An export quota on refractory-grade bauxite was "temporarily applied" to either prevent or relieve a "critical shortage". Both arguments were dismissed by the dispute settlement body (WTO 2013). Due to the unclear clauses in the WTO concerning export restrictions, many developing countries used these instruments during this crisis of the 2000s, not least because they were among the last instruments of that sort (cf. Lambert 2012: 132).

It is also interesting to note that the media coverage of both crises—which in turn potentiated the resource power of resource-rich countries—was mainly driven by mining and processing companies themselves. At the World Economic Forum in 2007, the heads of over a dozen Western mining companies—including Rio Tinto, Anglo American, and Newmont—complained that they were increasingly being cut out of deals by state-owned Chinese companies and appealed to the UN and the World Bank to insist upon higher environmental and safety standards while maintaining "that Africa was being raped and pillaged by China" (Robertson 2007; cf. Southall 2009: 16). The companies' imploring demands for public guarantees, funds, and political support to secure their supply chains also led to the opposite: Reassured of their political gains and resource-rich governments intensified their cooperation.

The spectacular rise of Chinese industrial production obstructs the view on other semi-industrialized countries, such as India, South Africa, and other populous countries that were part of these developments in terms of both economic development and related political decisions. In the case of Indonesia, this "revolt" of the resource rich "Global South" also backfired on China when the Indonesian government quite resolutely changed course, aiming at integrated production, higher taxes, and better social and ecological standards (Nodalis et al. 2013: 14). In June 2012, as a consequence of export restrictions, China's bauxite imports from Indonesia declined from 80% of its overall bauxite imports to almost zero within 1 month. According to media reports, Chinese companies reacted by trying even harder to gain access to Guinea which did not manage to implement such restrictions (Bah 2014; Oumar 2014).

Another important feature of both crises is attempts of the dominant players to co-opt other actors within their global production networks. Similar to the aid agreements of Lomé, the recent raw material boom went along with various attempts to reduce the negative impact of mining in the Global South. This concerns several attempts to regulate the markets for the so-called conflict minerals, such as the Kimberly process starting in 2003, parts of the Dodd-Frank Act (1502) that passed the US parliament in 2010, and a similar initiative of the EU (European Commission 2014). In contrast to the Dodd-Frank Act 1502, the latter only proposes voluntary measures and has been heavily criticized by NGOs (Küblböck 2014; cf. Global Policy Forum Europe 2011: 8).

Apart from that, governments, IFIs, and international NGOs also pushed for more transparency in the whole sector. Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Act would force all companies of the extractive industry listed on stock exchanges in the USA to publish payments to all governments where they do business. However, in October 2012, the American Petroleum Institute, the US Chamber of Commerce, and other institutions successfully appealed against the law. By the time of writing, no amendments had been enacted. With the Accounting and Transparency Directives of 2013, the EU has created similar conditions for companies in Europe, but also in this case, the respective amendments are still to be implemented at the national level at the time of writing.[7]

With the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), launched at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in September 2002 on the initiative of Tony Blair, similar measures have already been taken in over 50 member countries, mostly in the Global South. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is a global Standard that promotes open and accountable management of natural resources, mainly by comparing the declarations of mining companies and producer countries concerning the payment of taxes and royalties. All African bauxite producer countries as well as most of the aluminum majors are part of the EITI (EITI 2015). In Guinea, as in many other institutionally weak countries, it was implemented with the help of the "Revenue Watch Institute" (RWI) and Publish What You Pay (PWYP). RWI is a "non-profit policy institute and grantmaking organization" initially founded "through the generous support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Open Society Institute, along with several other donors" (Natural Resource Governance Institute 2013). PWYP is a "global network of civil society organizations united in their call for an open and accountable extractive sector" and also receives the majority of its funds from the Open Society Foundations (PWYP 2015). The latter is established and financed by George Soros.

In addition, the EITI was heavily supported by the German GIZ under the headline "Good Governance" (Interview with Consultant 10/02/2012). The central tool of the EITI is the annual publication of payments from mining companies to governments. It is not voluntary as it primarily addresses governments and encourages them to force companies to disclose their payments, but the enforcement mechanisms are weak and the publication most of the time takes place only in

an agglomerated version of all disclosed payments in a country, which means one figure for all company payments being compared with the figures of the government (see Moran 2013). Nonetheless, the citizens of these states now not only have the possibility of questioning the use of funds that were previously not even known, but they also gain a clearer picture of the scope of the government's dependency on mineral resources. According to the EITI website, government revenues of Guinea from the six mining companies reporting at present[8] rose from 140 to about 220 million USD from 2005 to 2010 and mining remains responsible for about 95% of exports (EITI 2015).

While about two-thirds of all EITI countries are situated on the African continent, Latin America only counts two (Guatemala and Peru) and the industrialized and industrializing countries are almost completely missing; neither Australia nor any of the BRICS countries have produced EITI reports to date (EITI 2015). Even the countries that have pushed the agenda from the beginning, the USA and the EU have not yet implemented similar legislation. Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Act in the USA and similar legislation in the EU would theoretically go further than the EITI, but none of these provisions has to date been implemented.

## 2.6 The African State as a Victim of Globalization?

The media and academic publications often implicitly depict politics or the state as a victim of corporate globalization, despite the fact that the opposite—namely, a clear primacy of politics over economy—would neither automatically lead to better living conditions nor to less exploitative systems. Fordism has often been described as a positive counterexample in this respect, as capital mobility was relatively low and thus allowed for a series of political concessions toward the working force, especially vis-à-vis its male part (Becker 2003: 71). This perspective is quite useful when applied to the European or North American context, particularly because the call for the democratization of the economic sphere can be derived from this assumption, but it also leads to a simplified understanding of politics, which is particularly problematic in post-colonial contexts.

The normative connotation of the need to enclose economic flows changes the meaning of both economic flows and political control.

Economic flows appear as the opposite of political control and thus as irrational, apolitical, and quasi-natural processes, which seem to be located outside of (conscious) social actions. Depicting capitalism as wild and unregulated naturalizes its numerous institutional bases, such as property, the acceptance of currency systems, the pursuit of profit, etc. Many scholars try to evade this normative connotation by explicitly dismissing both the assumption of a complete domination of the state by capital and the idea of the state as an instrument of "the people". Recently, this has often been explained by drawing upon the work of the Greek-French scholar Nicos Poulantzas who warned of "authoritarian statism" as the "new" type of the capitalist state in the 1970s (e.g., Kannankulam 2006). To avoid describing the state as the savior of humanity against unchained economic forces, this academic tradition defines the state as the most important lieu of temporal fixation of antagonist (class) interests (e.g., Brand et al. 2007: 222; Harvey 2006). For me, this is also the only definition of the state that enables a common designation of its quite different formations in (semi-)industrialized countries and non-industrialized countries, such as Guinea. During the twentieth century, a variety of discursive practices led to the impression that the world is made up of a certain number of identically structured and identically functioning nation-states (cf. Agnew 2005: 440). This pitfall can hopefully be avoided by defining states as the most important nodes of global power relations, bearing in mind that the size and the importance of these nodes vary considerably.

With the rising importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in extractive industries in recent years, these discussions about state regulation in a globalized economy were subjected to a qualitative shift. While until recently, social services and the protection of the environment had been to a certain degree a necessary evil to mining companies, the same actors now embrace these measures as means of marketing and generators of legitimacy.[9] This means that while economic space has always simultaneously been political space, since the 1980s, it also seems to have become increasingly discursively constructed and legitimized as such. Under the title of "politics of discharge" (cf. Hibou 1999), several recent studies on mining in Africa nonetheless came to the conclusion that international mining companies do not replace the state but rather enforce it (e.g., Williams 2010: 128; Hönke 2009: 14). I would also challenge the idea that from a global perspective, states and governments have lost power in comparison with transnational corporations

during the last 30 years. However, liberalization nonetheless seems to be an instrument of choice of "chain commanders" (public and private, i.e., Northern governments and transnational investors) to (re-)assert their position in their global chains of command. I, therefore, doubt the underlying assumption of Williams, Hönke, and Hibou that the interests of most multinational corporations and African political elites tend to converge in the long run. It is true that privately-led mining endeavors have filled the state treasuries since independence, thereby laying the basis for a stronger state; however, many African regimes have pursued goals that were incompatible with the profit-maximizing interests of the international mining companies and have only forcibly liberalized during the debt crisis of the 1980s. Chapter 3 will show that these fragmented constellations of the rule also prevented effective state formation in the long run and have, therefore, effectively weakened African governments.

## Notes

1. "Despite the concerted efforts of its proponents to distinguish the GPN framework from the GCC approach, the research carried out under the banner of the former does not differ greatly from studies of global commodity chains, particularly in terms of methodology. […] While the theoretical elaboration of the GPN approach calls attention to aspects of the GCC framework that have been largely neglected in analyses of global commodity chains, the GPN research agenda does not differ substantially from empirical work in the GCC tradition" (Bair 2008: 356). Describing the even less important difference between GCC and GVC, Bair writes of a "mere playing upon words" (Bair 2010: 32).
2. I borrowed the term decision space from Charles Maier's differenciation between decision space and identity space. He connects the increasing separation of these two spaces with the decling importance of "territoriality" (Maier 2006: 49–51).
3. This infrastructural power lays the basis for the ascribed power of what he calls a "sovereignty regime" (see above).
4. See Holloway (1988: 44–55), Forster (1976: 135), Habig (1983: 136, 205), cf. Soumah (2008: 170).
5. Agnew also argues against the thesis of Africa "falling out" of world trade, albeit not on the same basis: he does not criticize the instruments of measure but rather the selection of countries.
6. Cf. Norton Rose Fulbright (2013), République de Guinée (2011, 2013), Revenue Watch Institute (2013), Wann (2014).

7. Küblböck, Pinter (2015), European Commission (2013), see also Global Policy Forum Europe (2011: 9), Jaeger (2012: 2), Kerkow et al. (2012: 21), Legal expert 11/03/2014.
8. In 2010, seven companies reported. For 2011 and 2012, EITI Guinea states that is still in the process of hiring the "reconciler", a professional services firm that compares the declarations of the government with those of the companies. Until now, this was conducted by KPMG, Deloitte and Moore Stephens LLP (EITI 2015).
9. For the aluminum industry, see e.g. Aluminium Stewardship Initiative 2015; cf. Hönke (2009: 2–4), Pezet et al. (2009), Strange (1996: 44).

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