11-2014

The Political Economy of Ivory as a “Conflict Resource”

Natasha White

Geneva's Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, njwhite100@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs>

Part of the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

White, Natasha (2014) "The Political Economy of Ivory as a “Conflict Resource”," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol. 21 : No. 2 , Article 6.

DOI: 10.46743/1082-7307/2014.1268

Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol21/iss2/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Peace & Conflict Studies at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Peace and Conflict Studies by an authorized editor of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

The Political Economy of Ivory as a “Conflict Resource”

Abstract

The past year has seen attention directed, both in policy discourse and the media, towards the implication of Central African non-state armed groups in poaching and ivory trafficking. Engaging with both mainstream political economy analyses and work on the “geographies of resource wars,” this paper turns to the case of ivory as a “conflict resource,” through the case study of the Lord’s Resistance Army. It begins by outlining the contextual specificities and conditions of access, before assessing the compatibility of the resource’s biophysical, spatial and material characteristics with the needs of regional armed groups and the LRA in particular. Though the direction of causality is difficult to untangle, the paper finds that poaching and the trade in ivory by armed groups in Central Africa appears to incur low opportunity costs for relatively high potential gains. Moreover, that ivory qualifies as a “conflict resource” under Le Billon’s (2008) definition in the extent to which it is likely to be implicated in the duration of conflict in the region, both financing and benefitting from a context of insecurity. Future research would benefit from more accessible and robust data; interesting avenues would include an evaluation of the effects of the increasing militarization of poaching strategies - including shoot-to-kill policies - and the potential of igniting grievance-based conflict.

Keywords: *armed groups, Central Africa, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), conflict resource, elephant poaching, ivory economy, Lord’s Resistance Army, political economy*

Author Bio(s)

Natasha White is a research assistant at the Graduate Institute, Geneva’s Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding. She holds an MA in Development Studies from the Graduate Institute, Geneva and a first class MSc (Honours) from the University of Edinburgh. Previously, she worked at Chatham House and Control Risks, and has undertaken field research in central and east Africa. Her research interests include political ecology, natural resources and conflict, and conservation-related violence. Her latest publications have been in the *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* and the *Journal of Political Ecology* (forthcoming). Contact: njwhite100@gmail.com

The Political Economy of Ivory as a “Conflict Resource”

Natasha White

Abstract

The past year has seen attention directed, both in policy discourse and the media, towards the implication of Central African non-state armed groups in poaching and ivory trafficking. Engaging with both mainstream political economy analyses and work on the “geographies of resource wars,” this paper turns to the case of ivory as a “conflict resource,” through the case study of the Lord’s Resistance Army. It begins by outlining the contextual specificities and conditions of access, before assessing the compatibility of the resource’s biophysical, spatial and material characteristics with the needs of regional armed groups and the LRA in particular. Though the direction of causality is difficult to untangle, the paper finds that poaching and the trade in ivory by armed groups in Central Africa appears to incur low opportunity costs for relatively high potential gains. Moreover, that ivory qualifies as a “conflict resource” under Le Billon’s (2008) definition in the extent to which it is likely to be implicated in the *duration* of conflict in the region, both financing and benefitting from a context of insecurity. Future research would benefit from more accessible and robust data; interesting avenues would include an evaluation of the effects of the increasing militarization of poaching strategies - including shoot-to-kill policies - and the potential of igniting grievance-based conflict.

The Political Economy of Ivory as a “Conflict Resource”

In December 2012, the United Nations (UN) Security Council called for a joint investigation with the African Union into the alleged involvement of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in elephant poaching and the illicit trade of ivory. This both reflected the revelations of an array of media investigations and non-governmental organisations’ (NGOs) reports, and triggered increasing scrutiny of the issue from security institutions, such as the United States’ State Department and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in South Africa. Ivory – once symbolic of colonial trophies, adventure and ‘Wild Africa’ – has become a component of the “strategic narratives” of national security bodies, both in Africa and abroad.

The ivory trade and plight of Africa's elephants have long been the concern of a range of conservation and environmental NGOs, activists and scientists, as well as government bodies anxious to protect an important source of tourism income. Indeed, 2013 is the fortieth anniversary of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the international treaty that was responsible for the ban in international ivory trade in 1989. However, it has only been over the last couple of years that public reports have begun linking the resource with Central African armed groups. Popularized in the media as "blood ivory," tusks have been compared to other conflict resources, including diamonds. Tom Cardamone, Managing Director of Global Financial Integrity, has estimated the global value of illicit wildlife trade in general to be between US\$7.8 and US\$10 billion, and states that ivory, in particular, can "rival cocaine and gold in value by weight" (Cardamone, 2012, p. 2). References abound not only to regional militia groups, including the Janjaweed, LRA and al-Shabab (Gossmann, 2010; Somerville, 2013; UN, 2013), but also to a transnational organised crime (TNOC) network (Scanlon, 2012). Nonetheless, academic research on the political economy of ivory as a 'conflict resource' remains thin on the ground.

This paper attempts to begin to address this gap in a body of literature that has predominantly focussed on diamonds, oil, timber and narcotics (Fearon, 2004; Le Billon, 2008; Nordstrom, 2004; Ross, 2003, 2006). Engaging with both mainstream political economy analyses and "geographies of resource wars," it will attempt to employ a nuanced approach with the goal of evaluating recent claims on ivory as a conflict resource, a part from essentialist conservation and media discourses. Through an analysis of the resource's specificity, spatiality and trans-border dynamics, it will aim to move away from state-centric approaches and focus on the micro-dimensions of the regional conflict.

I will begin by briefly reviewing existing literature on natural resources and conflict, before outlining the analytical framework that will be employed. Section three will turn to the specific case of ivory as a conflict resource, analysing the contextual specificities and conditions of access, as well as the resource's biophysical, spatial and material characteristics. Section four will provide a series of concluding remarks.

Two groups in particular have been reportedly implicated in elephant poaching in Central Africa – the LRA and the Darfurian militia group, the Janjaweed (UN, 2013); this paper will focus predominantly on the former, however, due to the relative availability of information on their whereabouts and activities. Moreover, its focus is on regional, not intra- or inter-state conflict. This is due both to the lack of country-specific data, and the mobile

nature of the armed groups implicated and the trans-border conflict dynamics. It will draw on media accounts, policy reports and data, obtained online and via email communications with a range of policy professionals. However, it is nonetheless limited by the minimal and anecdotal nature of evidence at the time of writing, and lack of robust data on both the illicit ivory trade and transnational (criminal) networks in Central Africa.

Background Literature on Natural Resources and Armed Conflict

Over the past decade or so, scholarly debate on the relationship between natural resources and conflict onset has been largely polarised in the greed versus grievance debate (Berdal & Malone, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 1998, 2004). Broad consensus has settled, however, on a three-factor model of the occurrence of rebellion, largely inspired by Gurr (1970) – motivation, opportunity and identity (Arnson & Zartman, 2006; Ellingsen, 2000; Le Billon, 2012; Lujala, Gleditsch, & Gilmore, 2005). Rebels need a motive (e.g. economically-motivated greed or politically-motivated grievances); the possibility to achieve their goal; and a common identity for group formation (Lujala et al., 2005). Predation models have examined the extraction and taxation basis of insurgency; a relationship based around a deal balancing rent extraction versus protection (Snyder, 2006). Some have also employed Mancur Olson's (1993) differentiation of "roving" and "stationary" bandits, an early model of the spatiality of rule, to understand the balance between extraction and protection (Beardsley, Gleditsch, & Lo, 2013; Thies, 2010; Weinstein, 2007). Natural resources are relevant to all of the above factors (Korf, 2011). However, for the purpose of this paper, I will focus on the opportunity and feasibility aspects.

Fearon and Laitin (2003), for example, look at factors that make insurgency feasible and attractive, but found that financing and opportunity to loot are not the only influential factors. Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore (2005, p. 540) also show how "the looting of natural resources (or extortion in connection with extraction activities) provides economic activity for rebel movements". These authors build on Collier and Hoeffler's (1998) proposition that the opportunity to loot or exploit resources was instrumental in the onset of violent conflict and have stimulated a body of literature on conflict resources. This literature shows how, "with the end of the Cold War, more belligerents have come to rely on revenues from commodities such as timber, oil, narcotics or precious minerals" (Le Billon, 2008, p. 345). Precious gems, for example, are portrayed as the primary motive in the onset of warlord-led, greed-driven conflicts (Campbell, 2002; Le Billon, 2006; Lujala et al., 2005).

However, less research has focussed on resource endowments and conflict duration with reference to the micro-foundations of conflict, rather than large-N (cross-country) statistical analysis (Korf, 2011; Lujala et al., 2005). This is of relevance to this paper, as I will not argue that ivory has been an underlying cause in the onset of conflict and violence in Central Africa. Instead, I suggest that through providing a source of finance for armed groups, such as the LRA, ivory is one factor (amongst others, including group organisation, military tactics, international response etc.) in its duration. An early proponent of this argument was Keen (1998), who argued that increased access to and trade in resources within war economies makes ending civil wars difficult. Later, Fearon (2004) has shown that conflicts with rebel groups that have access to contraband goods tend to last longer than other conflicts, as they provide a dependable source of finance. Others have focussed on diamonds and oil (Humphreys, 2005; Lujala et al., 2005; Ross, 2004), but there is little consensus on whether they prolong or shorten civil wars.

Overall, resources, as the unit of analysis, have come to be understood in terms of financing hostilities, as well as shaping motives of violence, the behaviour of armed groups and the duration of conflict, not just its onset (Wennmann, 2008). More recently, research has reengaged with the post-Cold War geographical dimensions of conflict, paying greater attention to specific resource characteristics, including distribution and concentration, rather than focusing solely on political boundaries as the defining feature (Klare, 2001; Korf, 2011; Le Billon, 2001, 2008). Auty (2001) and Mac Ginty (2004) demonstrate how some resources are more accessible, or “lootable,” to rebels than others, offering them the ability to scale-up and profit from hostilities. According to Auty (2001), geographically concentrated (“point”) resources and geographically spread (“diffuse”) resources will lead to different conflict dynamics. Le Billon (2004, p. 15) expands on the above, adding a second geographical criterion – the location of the resource site from the centre of state power. Cross-tabulating these, he presents a typology of conflicts associated with different “resource spatialities” (p. 16). Finally, Ross (2003) includes the dimension “obstructability” (value-to-weight ratio and ease of transportation). Research findings in general argue in favour of a relationship between conflict and loutable resources, such as alluvial diamonds and narcotics (Lujala et al, 2005; Olsson, 2006; Snyder & Bhavnani, 2005). This literature has made an important contribution in clarifying some of the rather broad claims in Collier’s original propositions (Ron, 2005).

The paper will proceed to evaluate the evidence for ivory as a conflict resource, according to Le Billon’s (2008) definition encompassing: “the control, exploitation, trade,

taxation or protection of natural resources, which contributes to, or benefits from, the context of armed conflict” (p. 349). With reference to Le Billon’s analytical framework (2008, p. 348), the next section will explore the compatibility of the resource’s biophysical, spatial and material characteristics with the needs of regional armed groups and the LRA in particular. However, first it will turn to contextual specificities and conditions of resource access.

Ivory and Conflict in Central Africa

Context and Vulnerability

Central Africa has a long history of political violence and brutality, the causes of which are complex and deep-rooted. Political and economic marginalization, weak institutions, an abundance of natural resources, a climate conducive to the spread of tropical diseases, the ubiquity of small arms and uncontrollable borders are factors in the persistence of conflict and insecurity to this day (Flint, 2009; ICG, 2010; Taylor, 2003). While each country has experienced conflict in its own right, together the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Chad, Central African Republic (CAR), Sudan and South Sudan compose a patchwork of regional instability (ICG, 2010), or a “regional conflict complex” (Pugh & Cooper, 2004, p. 2). These are typically characterised by the “cross-border spillover of violence and borderlands as sanctuaries for combatants, nurseries for recruits and centres for shadow economic activities” (Pugh & Cooper, 2004, p. 2) and, according to Taylor (2003), are characteristic of the globalisation of Africa’s conflicts and their progressive insertion into the international political economy. Interregional connections make for prolonged and intractable conflicts, involving actors as diverse as TNOCs, private military companies and multinational companies (Pugh & Cooper, 2004).

Latham, Kassimir, and Callaghy (2001) argue that the regional and transnational forces that traverse Central Africa are important factors to help make sense of the region’s conflicts today. These networks exist in a causal relationship with conflict. On the one hand, they are facilitated by the “region-wide state of disorder and the modus operandi this offers a variety of actors operating within areas where the formal state is in process of eclipse” (Taylor, 2003, p. 51). On the other hand, these regional networks have facilitated the emergence of “spaces of opportunity” (Le Billon, 2008, p. 361) in what is essentially “a kleptocratic political economy” (Taylor, 2003, p. 45). They offer the conditions of access to markets that bring together a constellation of predatory actors, each seeking to exploit and extract rents from Central Africa’s resources and/or construct chains of influence and control in the region (Le Billon, 2008). These spatial interconnections between actors at local,

regional and transnational scales enable the circulation of commodities and increase the “exploitability” of the resource (Silberberg & Ellis, 2007). In the case of ivory, TNOCs and “shadow networks – “a combination of political, economic and sociocultural forces linked to the international sphere and transactional in nature” (Nordstrom, 2004, p. 218) – have come to support armed militia by easing the conversion of ivory into cash and weapons. In conjunction with the increasing Chinese investment and human presence on the continent (CITES, 2013), they have served to decrease the distance between spaces of supply and demand, increasing price elasticity and providing poachers – including armed groups – with a reliable source of revenue in exchange for their prizes.

Resource Characteristics and Opportunity

Access to and control over natural resources are highly dependent on the mode of exploitation facilitated by this system of regional and transnational networks (Le Billon, 2008; Titeca, 2011). But these “spaces of opportunity” also reflect the material specificities of the resource in question, including its biophysical and spatial characteristics (Le Billon, 2008). Before exploring these elements, this section will examine the territoriality of one particular armed group – the LRA – and elephant range sites.

The LRA is a non-state armed group originating in northern Ugandan and led by the warlord, Joseph Kony. From 1987 to 2007, the group reportedly abducted around 90,000 children and killed up to 100,000 Ugandan citizens alone, committing indiscriminate violence over civilian populations (“Key Statistics,” 2013). Once supported by Sudan, the group’s financing lines and source of weapons have since been dissipating, particularly given the renewed offensive of the Ugandan army and support from the United States (US) (Titeca, 2013). This has had implications for its mobility – the group is now reported to be in northeast DRC and southern CAR (HSBA, 2013; LRA Crisis Tracker, 2013) – as well as its tactics and motivation to poach (Bevan, 2004; Titeca, 2013). The group is extremely efficient, has few material incentives and requires only enough for subsistence and its operations. Two other important dimensions to note are: a) its reliance on small arms in contrast to larger weapons (due to forced mobility); and b) its extreme adaptability (Bevan, 2004; HSBA, 2013).

Territorialization of the LRA and poaching sites.

A brief look at the recent territoriality of LRA activities shows correlation with elephant range sites and, most strikingly, sites of reported carcasses (CITES, 2011) in northeast DRC and southern CAR, particularly in Garamba and Okapi National Parks. A

series of sources have backed-up the LRA Crisis Tracker system, confirming the group's presence (Gossmann, 2010; HSBA, 2013; United Nations, 2013). Attacks have been launched on ranger facilities, burning equipment and infrastructure, children have been abducted and at least eleven Congolese rangers have been killed since 2008 (Gettleman, 2012). Park rangers from Garamba, traders in Omburman, Sudan and former abductees have also all testified the LRA's direct involvement in the ivory trade. Meanwhile, elephant numbers in the region declined by more than half between 1995 and 2011 (Beyers et al., 2011).

A geography of risk.

An environment of conflict and insecurity has provided a safe haven for the group, facilitated its access to elephant populations and the ease with which it can convert the resource into cash or exchange it for weapons via illicit networks. Weak spatial control and ease of access decrease the transaction costs and make for an attractive cost-benefit ratio – regional vulnerability that Le Billon (2008, p. 349) terms a “geography of risk”. Moreover, the dangers associated with hunting elephants – risk of injury, the possibility of confrontation with other armed groups, and the likelihood of encountering enforcement action by the authorities – are likely to be child's play for combatants that have been engaged in the LRA's reign of terror for any substantial period of time. While the implementation of shoot-to-kill policies in some countries and the recent drive on increasing ranger capacity via training local units or despatching private security companies means they incur an increasingly large risk, combatants are relatively desensitised to the potential of such violence – particularly those from the LRA, where they undergo rituals specifically for this purpose (Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010). The associated threat, therefore, is substantially lower.

The above factors combine to provide for a relatively low opportunity cost and favorable risk-reward calculation. At this point it is unclear, however, whether these events represent “opportunistic looting”, or whether ivory is being strategically sought after to finance the groups' operations as it adapts its survival strategies (HSBA, 2013). In order to evaluate the theoretical potential of ivory as a “conflict resource” – as actively financing hostilities – the next section will turn to the specific characteristics of the resource itself.

Resource type.

According to resource economics, ivory would be classified as an exhaustible, renewable resource (Silberberg & Ellis, 2007) – it is conditionally renewable, but its harvesting involves an inter-temporal trade off. Unless elephants are poached to extinction,

the resource will renew via reproduction; however, the time lag is large due to the years it takes for a young elephant to grow mature tusks. Poachers would thus be expected to have a positive time preference, exploiting the resource today to maximize immediate profit.

Exploitation incentives and resource access are also influenced by ivory's spatial and biophysical characteristics. According to the literature on the geographies of resource wars, ivory would be characterised as a "diffuse" resource (Auty, 2001; Le Billon, 2008). While elephant populations are concentrated at a global scale, originating from Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia, at a regional level, they are relatively dispersed in comparison to "point" resources, such as minerals and oil. Moreover, unlike oil, diamonds and minerals, the source of ivory – elephants – is also mobile (on average a herd will cover up to 80km per day (Bercovitch, 2008), geographically distant from the centre of power and, in the case of Central African elephants, a forest dweller (CITES, 2013). As geographically dispersed, mobile, forest dwellers that do not respect the boundaries of nation states, elephants are difficult to manage and control (Auty, 2001). Yet their spatial habits, such as moving to enclaves to wash and drink, mean they are temporarily and habitually concentrated and hence a relatively easy and low risk target for the informed poacher.

Finally, ivory can be classified as a moderately "unobstructable resource" (Ross, 2003, p. 62). Although Central African ivory comes from a landlocked, remote location and must be transported overland before it is flown or shipped to Asia, it has a moderate value-to-weight ratio in comparison to diamonds and gemstones (high), and timber (low) (Ross, 2003), for example, and is relatively easy to transport. In 2012, an average tusk of 13.6kg would go for around US\$32,000 on the international market (Saunders, 2012). Unlike oil, which requires significant investment and a vast infrastructure to extract, refine and trade (Ross, 2003), the extraction of ivory is neither capital- nor labour- intensive and can be obtained with a few shots from a small arm, such as an AK47 (CITES, 2013). Furthermore, unlike point resources, such as oil or deep-shaft minerals which "often depend on international political recognition for mobilizing investors and access to markets" (Ross, 2003, p. 63), as discussed in the previous section, ivory can be easily converted into cash and weapons in the largely unregulated domestic markets across Central Africa (Apobo, 2004; Milliken, 2004; Ross, 2003). In sum, it is a resource that is not only easy to extract, but also relatively easy to transport and trade.

Materiality: Relative financial value.

Ivory makes up a small proportion of the illicit trade in a range of commodities (Haken, 2011). If we compare ivory to rough diamonds and gemstones – other commonly conceptualised conflict resources – its monetary value in terms of global illicit trade is also relatively low (US\$180 million and US\$660 million, respectively) (Haken, 2011). However, although there is a substantial difference in the value of global trade, the ICG (2010) highlights how earnings from diamonds in the local context (in CAR) are “limited” – miners may expect on average US\$160 for a one-carat diamond – “primarily because [they] are mostly ignorant of a diamond’s real value” (ICG, 2010, p. 9). In comparison, one kilogram of ivory is sold for at least US\$15-35 in local markets (Apobo, 2004). More recent estimates (Gossmann, 2010) state that ivory is worth around US\$100-150 per kilogram. This is a questionable price difference; nonetheless, according to the 2004 estimates, one tusk could fetch between US\$200 and US\$480, depending on its weight – substantially more than a one-carat rough diamond.

In relative terms, it appears that ivory is a lucrative resource for armed groups. In Mambasa, eastern DRC where ivory is sold for around US\$15-20 per kilogram (both onto international criminal markets and to local traders and artists), an AK47 can be purchased for US\$80-100 and ammunition for US\$0.30-0.35 per cartridge (Apobo, 2004). So, for every 4-7 kilograms of ivory sold – less than the weight of an average tusk – one weapon can be purchased and/or a substantial amount of ammunition. Between 2000 and 2004, 23,687 kilograms of ivory was retrieved from the Okapi reserve in eastern DRC alone (Apobo, 2004), equating to around US\$414,500 on the domestic market, or 4,606 AK-47s.

On the international market, the price of ivory has grown significantly over the past decade and in East Asia, for example, its value has almost tripled since 2001 (Gossmann, 2010). Demand has been stimulated by increasing purchasing power in Asia where ivory is sought after by a burgeoning middle class for its beauty, religious symbolism and alleged medicinal properties (Martin & Vigne, 2011). Top-end price estimates from 2008-2010 averaged around US\$900 per kilogram in China and up to US\$1,800 per kilogram in Vietnam (Begley 2008; Gossmann, 2010; Martin & Vigne, 2011). More recently, one kilogram has been reported to fetch around US\$2,300 in Beijing (Gettleman, 2012; Saunders, 2012), showing significant price inflation. This indicates that today, in absolute terms, assuming one tusk of a mature bull elephant weighs on average 13.6 kilograms, a single dead elephant bull could provide up to US\$62,560 of ivory in the end market. Moreover, the 23,687 kilograms

of ivory that could purchase 4,606 AK-47s in Okapi Reserve, eastern DRC would be worth around US\$54.5m in East Asia. This difference in market price (disregarding transaction costs) suggests that couriers and middlemen are making substantial profits.

Finally, prior research has highlighted how revenues from a single resource, though playing a major role in financing belligerents, are rarely the sole source of income (Le Billon, 2008; Weinstein, 2007). Rather, these groups have multiple sources of financing and shift from one to another as a function of their needs (Wennmann, 2007). As such, the connections opened-up to illicit trading networks through the conversion of the ivory resource into cash are likely to increase the “predictability of economic interactions” (Titeca, 2011, p. 45) and hence the opportunities for trading other illegal goods as and when this becomes an option (Taylor, 2003), acting as a results multiplier.

To conclude, in comparison to other conflict resources such as diamonds and timber, the relative value of global illicit trade in ivory is low. However, at regional and local levels, its relative value suggests it would be an attractive resource for armed groups, such as the LRA, who have little-to-no external funding sources, operate very efficiently and are extremely mobile. Moreover, as highlighted earlier in the paper, the value of a resource is not simply a function of its price, but also the ease of access, the risk associated with its extraction and the ease of conversion into cash and weapons (Le Billon, 2008).

Conclusion

The characteristics of the ivory economy outlined in this paper support both the case presented in verbal and media testimonies, and Le Billon’s (2008, p. 349) definition of a conflict resource, in the extent to which ivory is one likely source of revenue among others (via extraction and trade), both financing and benefitting from the context of armed conflict. As is implicit within this definition, it is difficult to untangle the direction of causality in the relationship between ivory and conflict; a difficulty compounded by the lack of robust empirical research and data on the subject at the time of writing. Nonetheless, this paper has attempted to unpack the relationship, drawing comparisons with other conflict resources. It has found that poaching and trade in ivory by armed groups in Central Africa appears to incur low opportunity costs for relatively high potential gains. Booming East Asian demand and ivory’s characteristic as an exhaustible resource provide market incentives to trade, while its spatial and biophysical resource characteristics, embedded in a context of insecurity, weak regulatory institutions and a dense system of illicit networks, provide ease of access and conversion into cash and weapons. Moreover, the low opportunity costs associated with its

extraction and trade are supported by the benefits provided by the likely linkages opened-up with TNOCs and well-connected local tradesmen.

Finally, various sources have pointed to the implication of other actors. Increasing human-elephant conflict, for example, has been levied as a counter-argument, implementing locals in defence of their crops and livelihoods (CITES, 2013; Litoroh, Omondi, Kock, & Amin, 2012). Though this is likely to be the case in certain circumstances – as is the implication of Ugandan, Congolese and Sudanese armies (Apobo, 2004; Gettleman, 2012; Gossmann, 2010) – it does not add up to the current scale of ivory trade. The picture is likely to be much messier; as one interviewee put it, “everyone’s at it”.

References

- Allen, T. & Vlassenroot, K. (2010). *The Lord’s Resistance Army: Myth and reality*, London: Zed Books.
- Apobo, C. (2004). *Rapport sur le braconnage d’éléphant et sur la commerce de l’ivoire dans et a la périphérie de la RFO, Ituri, RDC*, Institut Congolais pour la conservation de la nature (ICCN) & Wildlife Conservation Society.
- Arnson, C. J., & Zartman, I. W. (2006). *Rethinking the economics of war: The intersection of need, creed and greed*. Washington, DC, US: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press
- Auty, R. M., (Ed.). (2001). *Resource abundance and economic development: Wider studies in development economics*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Beardsley, K. C., Gleditsch, K. S., & Lo, N. (2013). *Roving and stationary bandits in African armed conflict*. Working Draft. Retrieved from University of Virginia website: <http://politics.virginia.edu/sites/politics.virginia.edu/files/Beardsley-LLB.pdf>
- Begley, S. (2008). Extinction trade: Endangered animals are the new blood diamonds as militias and warlords use poaching to fund death. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2008/03/01/extinction-trade.html>
- Bercovitch, F. (2008). *How far do elephants walk in a day?* San Diego Zoo Behavioral Biology Division. Retrieved from: <http://blogarchives.sandiegozoo.org/blog/2008/07/14/how-far-do-elephants-walk-in-one-day/>
- Berdal, M. R., & Malone, D. M. (2000). *Greed and grievance: Economic agendas in civil wars*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Bevan, J. (2004). *Fuelling fear: the Lord’s Resistance Army and small arms*. Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland: Small Arms Survey. Available at <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/A-Yearbook/2006/en/Small-Arms-Survey-2006-Chapter-11-EN.pdf>
- Beyers, R. L., Hart, J. A., Sinclair, A. R. E., Grossmann, F., Klinkenberg, B., & Dino, S. (2011). Resource wars and conflict ivory: The impact of civil conflict on elephants in the Democratic Republic of Congo - The case of the Okapi Reserve. *PLoS ONE*, 6(11). Retrieved from: <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0027129>
- Campbell, G. (2002). *Blood diamonds: Tracing the deadly path of the world’s most precious stones*, Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Cardamone, T. (2012). *Ivory and insecurity: The global implications of poaching in Africa*. Written testimony to USA Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 24 May 2012.

- Retrieved from http://www.cites.org/eng/news/sg/2012/20120525_SG_US-Senate_testimony.php
- CITES. (2011). *Monitoring the illegal killing of elephants (MIKE)*. Retrieved from <http://www.cites.org/common/prog/mike/brochure.pdf>
- CITES. (2013). *Elephants in the dust: The African elephant crisis. A rapid response assessment*. Geneva: UNEP. Available at http://cites.org/common/resources/pub/Elephants_in_the_dust.pdf
- Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (1998). On the economic causes of civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 50(1998), 563–573. Available at http://asso-sherpa.org/sherpa-content/docs/programmes/GDH/Campagne_RC/War.pdf
- Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56(4), 563–595. Available at <http://oep.oxfordjournals.org/content/56/4/563.abstract>
- Ellingsen, T. (2000). Colorful community or ethnic witches' brew? Multi-ethnicity and domestic conflict during and after the cold war. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44(2), 228-249. Available at http://www.uky.edu/~clthyn2/PS439G/readings/ellingsen_2000.pdf
- Fearon, J. D. (2004). Why do some civil wars last so much longer than others?. *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(3), 275-301. Available at <http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/41/3/275.abstract>
- Fearon, J., & Laitin, D. (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency and civil war. *American Political Science Review*, 97(1), 75-90. Available at <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?aid=142717>
- Flint, J. (2009). *Beyond 'Janjaweed': Understanding the militias of Darfur*, Switzerland: Small Arms Survey.
- Gettleman, J. (2012, September 3). Elephants dying in epic frenzy as ivory fuels wars and profits. *New York Times*. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/04/world/africa/africas-elephants-are-being-slaughtered-in-poaching-frenzy.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- Gossmann, A. (2010). Tusks and trinkets: An overview of illicit ivory trafficking in Africa. *African Security Review*, 18(4), 50-69. Available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10246029.2009.9627557#.VB4L-ldWSo>
- Gurr, T. (1970). *Why men rebel*. US: Princeton University Press.
- Haken, J. (2011). *Transnational crime in the developing world*. Global Financial Integrity Report, February 2011. Retrieved from: http://www.gfintegrity.org/storage/gfip/documents/reports/transcrime/gfi_transnational_crime_web.pdf
- Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA). (2013, March 8). *Update on the Lord's Resistance Army*, 8 March 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/facts-figures/south-sudan/armed-groups/lra/LRA_8_March.pdf
- Humphreys, M. (2005). Natural resources, conflict, and conflict resolution: Uncovering the mechanisms. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(4), 508–537. Available at <http://jcr.sagepub.com/content/49/4/508.short>
- International Crisis Group (ICG). (2010). *Dangerous little stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic*. Africa Report No. 167, 16 December 2010. Available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/167%20Dangerous%20Little%20Stones%20->

- %20Diamonds%20in%20the%20Central%20African%20Republic.ashx
- Keen, D. (1998). *The economic functions of violence in civil wars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Key Statistics (2013). *The Resolve: LRA Crisis Initiative*. Retrieved from <http://theresolve.org/key-statistics>
- Klare, M. (2001). *Resource wars: The new landscape of global conflict*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Korf, B. (2011). Resources, violence and the telluric geographies of small wars. *Progress in Human Geography*, 35(6), 733-756. doi 10.1177/0309132510394120
- Latham, R., Kassimir, R., & Callaghy, T. M. (2001). Introduction: Trans-boundary formations, intervention, order and authority. In R. Latham, R. Kassimir, & T. M. Callaghy (Eds.), *Intervention and transnationalism in Africa: Global-local networks of power* (pp. 1-20). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Le Billon, P. (2001). The political ecology of war: Natural resources and armed conflicts. *Political Geography*, 20(5), 561-584. Available at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629801000154>
- Le Billon, P. (2004). The geopolitical economy of 'resource wars'. *Geopolitics*, 9(1), 1-28. doi 10.1080/14650040412331307812
- Le Billon, P. (2006). Fatal transactions: Conflict diamonds and the (anti)terrorist consumer. *Antipode*, 38(4), 778-801. doi 10.1111/j.1467-8330.2006.00476.x
- Le Billon, P. (2008). Diamond wars? Conflict diamonds and the geographies of resource wars. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 98(2), 345-372. doi 10.1080/00045600801922422
- Le Billon, P. (2012). *Wars of plunder: Conflicts, profits and the politics of resources*, London: Hurst & Co.
- Litoroh, M., Omondi, P., Kock, R., & Amin, R. (Compilers). (2012). *Conservation and management strategy for the elephant in Kenya: 2012-2021*. Nairobi: Kenya Wildlife Service. Available at http://kws.org/export/sites/kws/info/publications/strategies/Conservation_and_Management_Strategy_for_the_Elephant_in_Kenya_2012-2021.pdf
- LRA Crisis Tracker. (2013). *Resolve & invisible children*. Accessed April, 2013 <http://www.lracrisistracker.com/>
- Lujala, P., Gleditsch, N. P., & Gilmore, E. (2005). A diamond curse? Civil war and a lootable resource. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(4), 538-562. doi: 10.1177/0022002705277548
- Mac Ginty, R. (2004). Looting in the context of violent conflict: A conceptualisation and typology. *Third World Quarterly*, 25(5), 857-870. doi 10.1080/0143659042000231965
- Martin, E., & Vigne, L. (2011). *The ivory dynasty: A report on the soaring demand for elephant and mammoth ivory in southern China*. London: Elephant Family, The Aspinall Foundation, and Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. Available at http://www.elephantfamily.org/uploads/copy/EF_Ivory_Report_2011_web.pdf
- Milliken, T. (2004). *Domestic Ivory Markets: Where they are and how they work*. TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa. Available at http://r.search.yahoo.com/_ylt=AwrBT9BFHh5UIWYAOCNXNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTEzazAwdXV0BHNIYwNzcgRwb3MDMQRjb2xvA2JmMQR2dGlkA1NNRTY1MI8x/RV=2/RE=1411288774/RO=10/RU=http%3a%2f%2fwww.traffic.org%2fcites-cop-papers%2ftraffic_pub_cop13_6.pdf/RK=0/RS=TswO1TDmj0VMRGE4Fels_WORXKs-

- Nordstrom, C. (2004). *Shadows of war: Violence, power, and international profiteering in the twenty-first century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Olson, M. (1993). Dictatorship, democracy, and development. *American Political Science Review*, 87(3), 567-576. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2938736?uid=3739600&uid=2&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21104195055771>
- Olsson, O. (2006). Diamonds are a rebel's best friend. *The World Economy*, 29(8), 1133-1150. Available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9701.2006.00809.x/abstract>
- Pugh, M., & Cooper, N. (2004) *War economies in a regional context: Challenges and transformations*. London: Lynne Rienner.
- Ron, J. (2005). Paradigm in distress? Primary commodities and civil war. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(4), 443-450. doi 10.1177/0022002705277519
- Ross, M. (2003). Oil, drugs, and diamonds: How do natural resources vary in their impact on civil war?. In K. Ballentine & J. Sherman (Eds.), *Beyond greed and grievance: The political economy of armed conflict*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Ross, M. (2006). A closer look at oil, diamonds, and civil war. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9(2006), 265-300. doi 10.1146/annurev.polisci.9.081304.161338
- Ross, M. L. (2004). What do we know about natural resources and armed conflicts?. *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(3), 337-356. doi 10.1177/0022343304043773
- Saunders, I. (2012). *The global poaching crisis*. Written testimony to USA Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 15 November 2012. Retrieved from: http://iccfoundation.us/downloads/Hearing_Testimony_Saunders.pdf
- Scanlon, J. (2012). *Ivory and insecurity: The global implication of poaching in Africa*. Written testimony to USA Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 24 May 2012. Retrieved from http://www.cites.org/eng/news/sg/2012/20120525_SG_US-Senate_testimony.php
- Silberberg, E., & Ellis, G. (2007). *Principles of microeconomics*. US: Pearson.
- Snyder, R. (2006). Does lootable wealth breed disorder? A political economy of extraction framework. *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(8), 943-968. doi 10.1177/0010414006288724
- Snyder, R., & Bhavnani, R. (2005). Diamond, blood, and taxes: A revenue-centered framework for explaining political order. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(4), 563-597. doi 10.1177/0022002705277796
- Somerville, K. (2013). The ivory wars: How poaching in Central Africa fuels the LRA and Janjaweed. [Web log post] Retrieved from <http://africanarguments.org/2013/01/14/the-ivory-wars-how-poaching-in-central-africa-fuels-the-lra-and-janjaweed---by-keith-somerville/>
- Taylor, I. (2003). Conflict in Central Africa: Clandestine networks & regional/global configurations. *Review of African Political Economy*, 30(95), 45-55. doi 10.1080/03056240308372
- Thies, C. G. (2010). Of rulers, rebels and revenue: State capacity, civil war onset and primary commodities. *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(3), 321-332. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/20752166?uid=3739600&uid=2134&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21104195055771>
- Titeca, K. (2011). Access to resources and predictability in armed rebellion: The FARC's short-lived "Monaco" in Eastern Congo. *Africa Spectrum*, 46(2), 43-70. Available at http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/6884~v~Access_to_Resources_and_Predictability_in_Armed_Rebellion__The_FAPC_s_Short-

- lived__Monaco__in_Eastern_Congo.pdf
- Titeca, K. (2013, May 17). The (LRA) conflict: Beyond the LRA lobby & the hunt for Kony... and towards civilian protection. [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://africanarguments.org/2013/05/17/the-lra-conflict-beyond-the-lra-lobby-the-hunt-for-kony-and-towards-civilian-protection-by-kristof-titeca/>
- United Nations. (UN). (2013). *Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas*. United Nations Security Council Resolution S/2013/297. Retrieved from: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2013/297
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2013). *LRA Regional update: Central African Republic, DR Congo, and South Sudan (January-March 2013)*. Retrieved from <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/LRA%20Q1%202013%20FINAL.pdf>
- Weinstein, J. (2007). *Inside rebellion: The politics of insurgent violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wennmann, A. (2007). The political economy of armed conflict financing: A comprehensive approach beyond natural resources. *Global Governance*, 13(3), 427-444. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/27800670?uid=3739600&uid=2134&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21104195055771>
- Wennmann, A. (2008). *A political economy of armed conflict?*. Paper presented at the Second Global International Studies Conference, 23-26 July, 2008, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Abstract available at http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/7/8/9/4/pages178943/p178943-1.php