February 2015

Dear Agrarian Studies Colloquium,

A bit of context to situate the paper I've shared with you. The paper, which I'm currently revising for resubmission to *American Ethnologist*, is part of a larger project focusing on the northeastern borderlands of the Central African Republic (CAR). This is an area long marked by plural authorities, a militarized regional political economy, and an absence of bureaucratic state institutions. My interest in this space is twofold. First, I seek to understand what *kind of a space* this is: on maps allocated to a bounded entity called CAR, and yet in important ways ignored by any centralized state. And second, I am interested the ways that people in such a space work across scales and gain the authority of a livelihood, if not the authority of control over other people. In the book manuscript I'm preparing, I combine historical and ethnographic methods to track these problematics over the last 150 years, from the trans-Saharan sultans through the colonial period's mixture of violence and neglect, and into the contemporary politics of armed conservation and rebellion.

In the book, I argue that the politics of this space are characterized by big game hunting. That is, I use a game hunting analytic to draw out the kinds of encounters and arenas, as well as the ways people here orient themselves, through which they operate on the "scale of the world" (Simone 2001). This is not just about game hunting as conventionally defined, though there has been plenty of that as well. It is about a certain pragmatics of action in a hard-to-police, mostly neglected space where no one is assured of dominance, such that the categorizations of people and other animals as hunters or (potential) game are unstable.

In drawing out game hunting as a mode of authority and work, I am building on a recent wave of anthropological attention to the transformations of hunting in Africa. But while this work has mostly focused on the contemporary mobilizations of "traditional" hunting societies, I focus on big game hunting in order to highlight the co-production both of hunting (broadly conceived) and spaces like this one by people from the area and those from further afield. Game hunting became possible through a confluence of factors (e.g., imperialism, technology, natural/social sciences) related to the intensification of far-flung processes of circulation over the 19th century.

Today, this thoroughly modern remote place occupies a peculiar position in the world. The absence of the capital-government from the domains that international legal/diplomatic architectures assign to it leaves people in the area with leeway to develop camouflage – to hide in plain sight, across landscapes that may be geographic, bureaucratic, or inter-personal. Camouflage is a central element of the game hunting analytic I'm developing, and it is the focus of the paper I've shared with you.

It has been a difficult paper to write because I'm trying to simultaneously connect and juxtapose a variety of elements. I see striking similarities between the practices of Brussels bureaucrats and Central African park guards and rebels, and because of this it's important to me to bring them into the same frame, rather than crafting a narrative about some kind of distinctively "African" tricksterdom. In a similar vein, I want to draw together armed conservation and rebellion and explore the politics of visibility around these phenomena; rebellion is a form of violence that is

more visible to humanitarians, but that visibility does not give rise to recognition, in the political sense, but rather to the opening of a collaborative landscape in which people can camouflage themselves. Taken together, however, this becomes quite a lot for one article. And so comments as to how to juggle all of this while also sharpening the argument are much appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your curiosity, questions, and suggestions!

Louisa

Camouflage:

Armed Conservation, Rebellion, and the Connections Between Bureaucracy and Bush

Louisa Lombard, Yale University

Abstract

In the northeastern borderlands of the Central African Republic (CAR) the state exists more as a legal-fictive form than as a set of actors or institutions. People living or operating in such areas are often assumed to have sought exit from the state and/or far-flung capitalist processes. Through a study of the area's history of armed conservation and rebellion, I argue that the bush can also be a site from which to generate profitable livelihoods and multi-scalar collaboration. The process of doing so requires engaging with visibility, violence, and the form of the state. That is, accessing these possibilities requires cultivating camouflage – ways to hide in plain sight – across geographic, bureaucratic, and inter-personal landscapes. These dynamics depend less on any "traditional" African political-economic repertoire or tactics for navigating uncertainty and more on the possibilities for blending into the legal-bureaucratic state form and using that landscape to pursue one's own ends. As such camouflage shows the co-production of and connections between bureaucracy and bush.

[Keywords: Central African Republic, violence, visibility, camouflage, conservation, rebellion, the state, bureaucracy.]

Years before he took up arms as a rebel, the new military chief of the Seleka rebel alliance,

Joseph Zindeko, was shot in the knee. The bullet exited through his thigh – he pulled up the leg of his track pants to show me the raised pink knob of a scar. Another time, he was shot in the stomach. And yet another time, a bullet had grazed just behind his ear. He sustained these wounds while working as an armed anti-poaching guard in his home region of northeastern Central African Republic (CAR). First he worked for a European Union-funded parastatal militia and then for a private association organized by safari hunting guides. In 2006, he took a job as a rebel. Rebellion is a form of violence that aligns with the interests of journalists, diplomats, and humanitarians, and in this way it opens up these institutional and inter-personal landscapes to people in northeastern CAR in new ways. But, as his gunshot wounds attest, Zindeko has a long career of making a living by carrying a gun, work that – far from some kind of "traditional" lifeway – entails cultivating multi-scalar collaborations. In this article, I explore the dynamics of violence (or the threat of violence) and visibility (or hiding) that are central to the ways in which people with interests in remote African spaces pursue profitable collaborations, both with people located in the geographic terrains in question and others much further afield. Focusing on armed conservation and rebellion in northeastern CAR, I develop an analytic[1] for understanding how people working in "the bush"[2] (who may or may not be physically located there, as I will explain below) act upon dynamics of violence and visibility in order to operate "on the scale of the world" (Simone 2001). Remote spaces are frequently imagined as sites of lack and constraint, but, as I will elaborate below, they are also sites of opportunity for those who know how to skillfully navigate between camouflage and shows of force.

At first glance, bush spaces seem to be defined by their disconnectedness. Few roads traverse them and, except in the larger towns with mobile phone towers, telecommunications options are limited to satellite connections (phones or, for humanitarians, Internet). From an academic

perspective, these areas have often been seen as being home to people who seek exit or escape from the state and its strictures (Clastres 1987; Azarya and Chazan 1987; Scott 2009). But rather than seeking disconnection, many people in northeastern CAR actively develop multi-scalar connections, yet retain substantial room to maneuver. From the perspective of international policy-makers and geopolitical analysts, these areas are ignorable except when violence there takes a form that specifically targets the state, as rebellion does, in the process calling attention to the ludicrousness of assigning responsibility for the area's security to a state with such little capacity and interest in the area. People in the area are able to capitalize on these modes of interest in order to create and maintain opportunities to operate on the scale of the world. That is, people like Zindeko have developed skills to capitalize on opportunities afforded by the primacy of the state as a legal-bureaucratic form while simultaneously pursuing projects that run counter to the prerogatives of what could be called a state mode of power (unitary, territorialized control) (Deleuze and Guattari 1986). Violence, or the fear of violence, is an important element of why the United Nations and other international organizations pay attention to areas like northeastern CAR. But that is just an entry point, opening up new geographic, bureaucratic, and inter-personal landscapes that people like Zindeko can then insinuate themselves into, hiding in plain sight.

Hiding in plain sight – camouflage – is not just about making oneself invisible in a physical landscape. For hiding to be camouflage, someone or something has to be looking. As I conceive it, camouflage is thus a mode of engagement and collaboration not predicated on recognition, but rather predicated on blending in with the prerogatives of political-economic networks that are, to whatever degree, expected to be able to "see" (Scott 1998) what happens in the area. It is a mode of hiding that does not entail covering one's "true" identity (for instance, putting on a mask), but

rather on changing the facets one shows in order to work within a variety of institutional or inter-personal frameworks.

Camouflage is a form of "tactic agency" (Honwana 2000; Utas 2005) or "social navigation" (Vigh 2006, 2009). Tactic agency and social navigation are theories of agency in the midst of uncertainty, particularly wartime uncertainty. It is praxis set in proverbial stormy seas. My aim here is to build on that body of scholarship by shifting the emphasis away from uncertainty as such and onto material-structural features of bush spaces, and specifically the political purgatory created when landscapes are de-populated and a political-territorial status of being formally inside yet effectively outside a state is instantiated. In such contexts, how do people navigate in order to pursue multi-scalar collaborations? I argue that they do so through camouflage – that is, blending in, hiding in plain sight, amid the assumptions and dictates of a range of geographical, bureaucratic-institutional, and interpersonal terrains in which fear of violence, or violence, organize the fitful interest of international elites in the area.

Bush spaces like northeastern CAR are a particularly literal case of "state margins" (Das and Poole 2004). In focusing on state margins, anthropologists have drawn attention to the leeway that remains within the apparent strictures of laws and bureaucratic procedures. Veena Das (2006) has argued that state laws and procedures are fundamentally illegible, both for people tasked with carrying them out and those who come to "the state" as supplicants for particular services. As a result, the state is imbued with magical, unpredictable capabilities alongside its rational-bureaucratic ones, and, in fact, the two modes are intertwined. Similarly, Ilana Feldman (2008) has argued that it is possible not only to have government without a state, but that governing proceeds not necessarily through law but through the bureaucratic practice of civil

servants themselves. Both of these ethnographies recognize the productive synthesis of talented civil servants and bureaucracy such that unexpected outcomes can occur and individuals can pursue multi-scalar collaborations. But, where Das is primarily interested in the power of the state to make visible and recognize, and where Feldman is primarily interested in the reproductive capacities of leaderless bureaucracies, armed conservation and rebellion in northeastern CAR draw out a different aspect, namely actors' ability to strategically use the legal-bureaucratic state form as a landscape in which they can blend in and pursue their own ends. This blending in does not entail breaking the law or failing egregiously to follow procedure, nor does it arise because people are unsure what the proper bureaucratic response should be. In other words, it is not so much that the laws and bureaucratic procedures are illegible – people "reading" them in order to verify that protocol has been followed understand what they have read. And yet there may have been a lot going on that was not reflected in those words.

As rebellion has become a steady feature of life in the zone over the past decade, modes and venues for camouflage have transformed, but camouflage remains an important skill for those who wish to collaborate across scales. In sum, I argue that the bush is not just a site to "exit" from the state but can be a site from which to world oneself, and that the process of doing so requires engaging with visibility, violence, and the form of the state. It is the skill involved in this engagement that I refer to as camouflage.

I began tracking armed conservation and violence in CAR on my first visit to the country, in 2003. Over breakfast one day I met a young Wyoman working for an American NGO, Africa Rainforest and Rivers Conservation (ARRC), which sought to create a militia to patrol CAR

parklands.[3] However, ARRC hired a South African of questionable repute to lead the anti-poaching work, and, after attempts to get into diamond-dealing and a range of scandals, he absconded with the organization's money. The group never conducted any patrols. As the ARRC example and Zindeko's resumé suggest, a number of actors have had interests in armed conservation in CAR.[4] EU-funded conservation endeavors have been the largest among the various armed anti-poaching initiatives in CAR over the past thirty years, and it is those I focus on in this article. Over the course of my research (my main stint of fieldwork was from September 2009 to June 2010, but I have made research trips almost every year since 2003, and sometimes multiple trips in one year), I've become acquainted with eight technical assistants/mercenaries who worked in northeastern CAR between the mid-1980s and 2010. I interviewed their scientific colleagues and the program officers who oversaw funding in Brussels and Bangui. I spent a week on an anti-poaching base near Ndele, and also stayed at two other anti-poaching bases, interviewed the *pisteurs* (as the anti-poaching guards are known), sweated through training exercises with them, and hung out with them and their families during idle afternoons. In total, I got to know about twenty-five *pisteurs*. Later, I interviewed them when we crossed paths in Ndele and Tiringoulou, two towns lying in/near the conservation zone, where I spoke with people about the workings of conservation and attended conservation-related meetings and discussions. I also interviewed and got to know people whose livelihoods entailed entering parklands. Finally, I gained access to the European Union's voluminous archives on the anti-poaching programs it has funded since the mid-1980s, which complemented my archival research in the French colonial and military archives, which included a focus on the development of hunting regulation. On a recent return to Bangui (December 2014), I met again with armed conservation officials and anti-poaching guards who were present in Bangui to further pursue the shifting terrains of camouflage in CAR.

In the first section I explain how northeastern CAR *became* a bush through the interplay of geography and colonial/state attempts to govern the space, which centered on the management of hunting and conservation, and how, in the process, the space became a prime site for the development of camouflage. From this history of hunting and its often-unsuccessful regulation, I turn to the armed conservation initiatives that have been the main endeavor undertaken in the area in the name of the state over the past several decades. I show how despite high death tolls, skilled engagement with bureaucratic accounting and reporting practices have made it possible to keep armed conservation's human cost effectively hidden from potential overseers. At the same time, people have developed capacities to blend in with a range of institutional and interpersonal expectations, the better to pursue multiple and/or conflicting projects during multi-faceted careers. The skills of camouflage and showing force have served people well during the shift toward rebellion and humanitarianism, the new major sources of multi-scalar collaborations. The flexibility in self-styling that camouflage entails (being able to blend in with the expectations of a range of potential collaborators, from anti-poaching mercenaries to humanitarians) has helped people now re-invent themselves in order to blend in with the conflict-recognition interests of the international community, which entail explicit challenges to the central state.

Hunting and conservation in the creation of a legal-fictive state

Today, northeastern CAR's forested savannah borderlands (an area about 105,000 sq km [Delvingt and Lobao Tello 2004: 7]) seem the very definition of remoteness. Depending on where you stand in this zone Bangui lies some 600 to 1,000 kilometers away, distances that must be traveled slowly, on rutted, potholed, dirt roads. During the rainy season, from about May to

November, the area becomes a marsh unto itself. The area is home to Lord Derby elands, the largest of the continent's many antelope species (found only here and in Benin), and once had so many black rhinos, elephants, lions, giraffes, and other "charismatic megafauna" that no one counted them. Very few humans live here, in contrast. CAR's three northeastern prefectures make up more than a third of the country's territory (a space larger than Portugal) but are home to only three percent of its human population.

But if northeastern CAR is "bush" today, it was not always. The area became de-populated as a result of a few inter-related processes. At the turn of the 20th century, the area was a meeting point for trans-Saharan and European imperial endeavors. Between 1890 and 1910, the outpost of Ndele grew from a few scattered residents to a metropolis of some 25,000, the largest city between the coast and Abeche, in eastern Chad (Cordell 1985). It was a tumultuous time, with tens of thousands of people on the move, whether because they were forced to or because they desired the new ways of life these imperialist processes entailed. At least tens of thousands died from new diseases and war. By the turn of the twentieth century, French colonists sought to put an end to trans-Saharan political imperial networks and killed the key sultans. Cities like Ndele became ghost towns overnight, and a region that had been the site for frontier-as-process (Kopytoff 1988) became ossified into a frontier-as-place (author in preparation). The population plummeted yet further still as a result of disastrous French colonial policy in the area. Colonial officials had no money and so relied heavily on backbreaking (or head-breaking – people were expected to carry up to 65kg on their heads [Mollion 1992]) forced labor, causing many to flee and/or die (Cordell 1994).

As a result of this "disastrous demography" (Kalck 1971), colonial officials declared the area an

"autonomous district," too far away and too sparsely populated to warrant direct administration. Border formalities for those traversing the territory were carried out some 700 km from the actual border (Boulvert 1985). Around independence, French military strategists wrote that "large spaces escape all control… . …The Oubanguian bush, with its lack of a horizon and absence of any required itinerary is an 'eater of men'" (Oubangui-Chari ND: 9). In important ways, an abandoned, autonomous zone is what the area has remained. Never has the government in Bangui had enough money or interest to justify doing much in a place home to so few people. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, from the perspective of people in the broader southern capital area (where much of CAR's population is concentrated), people in the Northeast are dangerous foreigners undeserving of government largesse. In sum, then, northeastern CAR is subject to what I call a legal-fictive state form: it is legally part of a state, and yet effectively outside of it. The legal-fictive state form carries with it a range of assumptions about what states do, very few of which obtain in this area. That gap creates blindspots and is thus a fertile landscape for camouflage – that is, for people to blend in with the form while, in a hidden way, using this blended-in position as a platform for doing other things.

In most respects, official regulation (even regulation that is in largely fictive) in the area is minimal. There is, however, one domain in which this "autonomous zone" (Lombard 2015) has seen a lot of regulation from the early years of the colonial period onward: hunting and conservation. With the terrain de-populated, French colonists and the CAR government after them saw wildlife as the area's one major source of value.[5] In the 1930s, on the wings of a growing conservation movement in Europe and the United States, a flurry of park creation and hunting regulations left almost all the Northeast set aside for animals and big-game hunting tourists.[6] As a result, the area has long had very strict rules about human entry into protected

areas and exploitation of animals. For instance, in the 1950s administrators raised alarm over the illegal arrival of "Arab" hunters and herders. As a result the colonial government sent military patrols to the area. These troops had the mandate of "marking our sovereignty" in the face of its obvious absence. They found few hunters.

The colonial laws became the scaffolding for the internationally-funded armed conservation initiatives marshaled beginning in the mid-1980s in the wake of a precipitous rise in elephant poaching,[7] cattle-grazing, and bush meat production in CAR's protected areas. The hunting was now done on an "industrial scale," with groups of dozens of men and pack animals (camels and donkeys) showing up in protected areas armed with FAL and G-3 rifles or AK-47s, the better to massacre elephants and any other large game in sight for sale in South Darfur or beyond.[8] Between 1978 and 2010, wild large mammal populations in northeastern CAR decreased by 94% (Bouché et al. 2012).

The militarization of hunting and herding necessitated a particular response, from the perspective of key conservation-focused international donors: a militarized effort to help "the state" "regain" control of territory. Of course, "the state" never had effective control in the first place. But that is the operative legal-fictive set of assumptions that organize outsiders' interest in this space. That form then becomes a landscape that people enter and find ways to hide in plain sight in while also doing other things.

The Flourishing of Camouflage Under Armed Conservation

The first people to conduct armed anti-poaching patrols were safari hunting concession operators. The most vocal about the need to protect the elephants was Matthieu Laboureur, who

had grown up on the safari concession his father had managed almost continuously since the 1960s. Their Manovo A/S reserve was officially about the size of Swaziland.[9] Unofficially they roamed into a larger area as well. In his fanciful memoir[10] *Sans défense*, Matthieu Laboureur described ambushing and killing a handful of people he termed illegal poachers, as well as their donkeys and other pack animals. He justified his shoot-first policy because, he wrote, he could as easily be killed by his adversaries as vice versa.

> At that moment, I felt I had signed a pact with the elephants. I vowed to protect them, whatever price I may have to pay. It would be impossible for me to now stand lazily in line behind the moral arguments about humanity like most people of good conscience who are far from the realities on the ground, like the bureaucrats appointed to defend animals. They are never directly confronted with the horror of the killings. They are content to moan and whine about the fate of the elephants without ever risking engaging in a real fight which could make them lose their jobs. Me, I will keep my promise. I am ready to go to the end… That is to say, to kill if it is necessary (Laboureur 1988: 12; my translation).

Laboureur portrayed the dirty work that was required to wrest CAR's parklands from the increasingly-belligerent hunters and herders with other designs on the space and its resources with the self-assurance of a cowboy and in an imagined contrast to risk-averse bureaucratic modes of thinking and operating. What he did not account for was that skilled bureaucrats can, through camouflage, engage bureaucratic procedure in ways that end up furthering cowboy-like ends. They do not break the rules, which can attract unwanted attention. Rather, they find ways to characterize their undertakings according to the rules' and procedures' own terms, such that they are hidden in plain sight. Being able to hide in plain sight is a skill that can be developed most fully through the confluence of a few factors: the blind spots and ocular capacities of bureaucratic procedure itself, the geographical characteristics of remote spaces in relation to centers assumed to "see" what goes on there, and the personal orientation and adaptability of the people involved.

The largest source of money, jobs, and multi-scalar connections in northeastern CAR over the

past thirty years has been the series of conservation and anti-poaching initiatives funded by the European Union since the late 1980s, and these projects will be my starting point for unpacking the workings of camouflage. A couple of European men – both former agricultural extension officers in CAR – were key to launching and sustaining the projects, an endeavor that required cultivating skills to use bureaucratic monies in non-bureaucratic ways, that is, to blend in with the dictates of bureaucratic procedure while nevertheless doing what one wanted, which might not be wholly in accordance with the spirit of those dictates. One of these men was based at EU headquarters in Brussels, and he knew that the inter-play of bureaucratic procedures, the limits of oversight in particular geographic configurations, and the kinds of things he felt his superiors preferred to turn a blind eye to would combine to let him get his projects funded, to blend into the EU funding landscape, without attracting an unwanted level of scrutiny as to the precise nature of the work to be done. This is a mode of social navigation, but the emphasis is less on the bumpiness and uncertainty of the social conditions (i.e., a capacity to respond to change) as it is on being able to adapt oneself to institutional, geographic, and personal configurations with long histories so as to hide in plain sight and more effectively be able to pursue one's own ends.

EU-funded armed conservation had two main components. One was a system known as Village Hunting Zones, in which safari hunting tax revenue devolved to villages that agreed (at least in theory) to lay off hunting. The other was "*lutte anti-braconnage"* (the anti-poaching struggle, or LAB, pronounced as a word, not an acronym). The EU sees itself as a development funder, and so explicit discussion of LAB would stand out like a blooming flame tree in the Brussels winter. Instead, for the most part, report-writers referred to LAB through pseudonyms like "*cellule de surveillance*" (surveillance cell, PDRN 1986), a name that was a first step toward occluding the nature and extent of conservation violence.

Because of the EU's mandate to bolster state-oriented development, armed projects are difficult to justify funding unless they are in direct support of state forces, such as through security sector reform projects. Armed conservation was a bit of a gray zone in this respect because it created a parastatal militia that, though technically attached to a ministry, operated functionally autonomously from it. The militia's weapons and ammunition were to be supplied by the government, and the EU would fund the rest. However, the *Etat centrafricain* that signed the project accords was perennially absent or slow when it came time for project staff to ask for those contributions. Project report writers lamented the anti-poaching guards' insufficient armament in the face of foes well-supplied as a result of the wars in Chad and Sudan. So they had to get creative. For instance, in the early years it was possible to sneak in ammunition under the general budget line category of "*pièces détachées*" (spare parts). (Safari hunters also sometimes provided matériel, and from time to time the government would disburse munitions.) Hiding in the spare parts budget line did not require transforming the ammunition into something else, or covering it up with a mask. Nor did it require the kind of magic that comes from the state's *imprimateur*. It simply required finding a way to describe it such that it would blend in with the other budget line items and not attract unwanted scrutiny – ammunition is, after all, a kind of "spare part".

A second possibility for camouflaging violence came from the interplay of the legal framework and the geographic terrain in question. The anti-poachers' use of force was supposed to be defensive; they were not to shoot on sight except in "legitimate self defense." This remained the case even though the EU-funded anti-poaching guards found themselves in an increasingly bellicose situation. The 2009 anti-poaching manual states clearly that guards' use of violence

should be defensive, not offensive (ECOFAC 2009). "Legitimate self-defense" is an extremely difficult category to reconstruct and judge after the fact, though, whether in Ferguson, Missouri or in the Central African bush. In many cases, it is impossible to find out what "really" happened, since it depends on one's perspective. As a result, legitimate self-defense is less a "mask" hiding the "real" events than it is a swampy realm in which a whole range of kinds of violence can blend in with the blurry edges of this category, and thereby attract less unwanted attention: we need swamps but most of us do not want to muck around in them too much. The framing of their work as self-defense made the anti-poachers' work seem more akin to simple patrols, rather than an all-out war, which is how some guards described it to me in less-guarded moments: "*C'est une guerre terrible*." Curious as to the extent of this hidden war, I combed archival reports and spoke with guards and others involved with these projects over their thirty-year history, eventually piecing together the fragmentary traces. The reports and the guards pay tribute to the more than thirty from among their ranks who were killed on the job, but there is no comprehensive accounting of how many people they have killed. I found a few instances in which the EU conservation projects' reports refer to hunters killed with euphemisms, such as the number of "neutralized" "foreign poachers." One report had a sub-heading for "*animaux abattus*" (animals slaughtered), under which the author had written two camels, eight donkeys, three men. But mostly this violence is remembered only through the stories of the people involved in it. One person who had led guards on the hunt in the early days, the 1980s, admitted with the mix of reticence and boastfulness I came to associate with mercenary tales that he had found a successful tactic: locate the elephant hunters' camp and then lie in wait until dawn. At five, they will all arise and face to pray toward Mecca, making it easy to ambush them from behind. However fragmentary, these stories and statistics indicate that the anti-poaching endeavor, while not reaching political science thresholds defining war, nevertheless involved

sustained back-and-forth raids in which scores of people died. And for the most part, only the anti-poachers' deaths were ever memorialized by people outside of the zone. "The bush," as Matthieu Laboureur put it, is able to "swallow up" dead bodies; "There won't be so much as a trace left after a few hours" (Laboureur 1988: 91). But in this respect the bush is not so much a geographic space as it is a shorthand for a particular kind of relationship to centralized governance, namely the legal-fictive state purgatory that this "autonomous zone" exists in. Even in the bush, some bodies are not swallowed up; others are.

The fact that some bodies are swallowed up has in part to do with the possibilities of the geographic terrain, but it also stems from reporting practices in international organizations and the legal-fictive state form, which together made it possible for violence to persist without standing out or otherwise attracting undue notice. It is nevertheless striking that the projects continued for as long as they did given their mixed, or even negative, results according to the projects' terms and objectives. In 2003, EU staff in Bangui declared categorically that their conservation endeavors had "failed" (Pampaloni 2003). Donor organizations like the EU like to see results quickly and then pull out. They are not, according to their logics, supposed to "substitute for" the state, but rather to build up capacity that the state can then assume as its own. Decreases in illicit hunting and herding were registered over the course of the conservation projects, but these gains disappeared whenever there was a gap in project funding or other delay. But the teleological stance toward state expansion that undergirds all such development efforts (that is, the idea that states are necessarily working to expand their rational-bureaucratic and territorial capacities) helped to create an opaque terrain in which skilled navigators could position themselves and their projects in ways that prevented them from sticking out. So despite the occasionally-voiced reservations, EU-funded armed conservation in northeastern CAR ran

from 1987 to 2004, and then again from 2007 to 2010, and then in theory started again in 2012.[11] By that point some thirty guards had died while on anti-poaching patrols with these parastatal projects, and people, whether "local" to the area or not, continued to hunt and herd with near-impunity. How did armed conservation's organizers manage to repeatedly breathe new life into it? Here, I will focus on one aspect of these resuscitations: playing with the new regionalization imperatives within the EU.

The EU has been working to change the formerly dyadic relationship between Brussels headquarters and recipient capitals by bolstering regional offices (in this case, that meant Libreville) and developing programs that cover multiple countries so that officials can share experiences and plan transnationally-coherent policies. In theory, regionalization makes projects less top-down and more accountable. In practice, EU staff in Bangui told me, it meant that reports for the projects they were funding would often be sent to Libreville first and then eventually make their way back to Bangui, long after strategic decisions had been taken, making it difficult to keep track of or provide oversight of what was going on. By 2000 the motivation to fund a stand-alone conservation project in northeastern CAR had dwindled. However, there was a multi-country conservation project begun in 1992 called ECOFAC[12] that continued chugging along. It covered the various Equatorial African rainforests.[13] The man in Brussels who organized and oversaw all of these endeavors decided to roll the northeastern CAR conservation project into ECOFAC. A forested savannah, this area was an anomaly among ECOFAC's otherwise all-equatorial rainforest sites. It was also an anomaly in another way: it was the only of ECOFAC's sites to include funding for LAB, which was justified on the grounds that the community hunting revenue-sharing system ECOFAC also supported would be untenable without an anti-poaching presence. But reporting practices changed alongside the shift to a

regional project approach, and so rather than sticking out, Northeast CAR effectively disappeared amid the hundreds of pages of reports about the other ECOFAC sites.

In my perusal of the EU archives on armed conservation in Bangui, I noticed a shift as CAR-focused projects gave way to the regional ECOFAC. Now, in addition to various minor reports that focused on CAR, there were massive tomes with long sections on each of the various participant countries' projects under the ECOFAC umbrella. In a short section at the back, I found the reports from northeastern CAR. Having become used to the detail of the earlier, CAR-only reports, these new dispatches seemed hollow, their words hiding much more strife than they explicitly admitted to. But for someone without that archival perspective, they likely would not raise any alarms. With a couple of rare but notable exceptions, most EU officials working on conservation in CAR cycled out after just a few years, limiting institutional knowledge transfer. One particularly perceptive official evaluating the funding request for ECOFAC IV (2007-2010) wrote that "The general impression given by the ECOFAC funding request is that this is the first project of its kind. No quantification of the gains of the previous phases is given" (EC: NDa; my translation). However, most of the time such elisions of history slid past unnoticed. And despite any misgivings, ECOFAC IV received its funding. Regionalization also created new opportunities for budgetary camouflage. "The monitoring of the budget allocated … has suffered from the distance between the coordination cell and Bangui; this monitoring hurt the project a lot because it cost between 250,000 and 300,000 F CFA to bring the financial records to Libreville where they are verified and where the accounts are controlled and the reimbursements are made"[14] (EC NDb; my translation). Though reports eventually made their way back to the European Commission's Bangui office, the environmental officers there found it difficult to keep up with the stacks of reports that accrued on their desks,[15] and had limited incentive to read them

closely given that important decisions were generally taken elsewhere.

These outcomes were not "magical," like those Veena Das attributed to the civil servants she followed – magic implies the use of metaphysical capacities to create certainty (a clear outcome) from uncertainty. Here, in contrast, the navigation of uncertainty relied on knowing what would be possible to see, by whom, and where: in short, in cultivating opportunities for hiding in plain sight. There is no need to assign sinister motives to these processes. It would be ahistorical to blame EU funders for not foreseeing that their endeavors would eventually feed rebellion, given that they began long before formal rebellion became such an entrenched part of the Central African political repertoire (Lombard 2012; Lombard in preparation). Armed conservation seems to stem from impulses that blend idealism, solidarity, neo-colonialism, and the kinds of choices that one makes given imperfect information. But the experience of armed conservation in northeastern CAR does suggest that agency in the margins of the state can be conceived as the skillful blending in with different regulatory landscapes, knowing what each can and cannot "see," in order to pursue one's own varied projects. If this all sounds instrumental, that, too, must be nuanced. For the point is not that people are fronting "fake" selves or otherwise distorting reality in order to pursue wholly self-interested projects. Rather, the point is that particular geographic-bureaucratic configurations become terrains in which senses of self and associated policy stances are flexible, and the fact that people adapt them to blend in with a variety of different types of surroundings as those surroundings change does not make one sincere and the other insincere, just as a chameleon does not have one true color.

(Inter-)Personal camouflage

In part, my decision to term to the kind of hiding at work in the multi-scalar collaborations

involving northeastern CAR camouflage relates to the way that violence shadows these processes. Violence is not always present, and when present it frequently transpires unnoticed by people other than those parties to the incident. But across these differences, it remains a specter, and therefore the blending in-hiding that I call camouflage is a capacity developed in relation to the ways that violence does and does not become visible to those outside the zone. The two Russians running the anti-poaching militia that Zindeko had worked for recognized this need to manage blending in and showing force carefully, and yet they slipped up. Doing so helped end their employment in CAR.

When I met them at the end of 2006, the Russians showed me scores of photos of elephants massacred and seemed truly pained by the sight. They also showed me photos of elephants playing in areas they were protecting. (They did not, however, allow me to keep any copies for myself.) At their base, we watched an elephant visit the salt lick outside their front porch. They captured a rebel as part of their patrols, and, rather than let people living in the area kill him, they were careful to follow the Geneva Conventions for his detainment until they could fly him to Bangui and hand him over to the government (a likely death sentence, but at least they had followed legal protocol on their side). The alleged rebel made the journey on the same safari hunting flight I hitched a ride on. The Russians gave him a bottle of Evian water for the journey. Many people warned me that they used "strong" (harsh) tactics, but I saw none.

To have direct proof of their violence, I would had to have visited the sites where it occurred. One safari hunting operator described just such an encounter to me. The guides and the Russians were camping in the same far northeastern town and spent a quiet evening discussing Russian art. The militiamen departed before dawn. A few hours later, the safari operators saw vultures

circling. Thinking it meant that big game was nearby, they got in their Land Cruiser and sped off to investigate. When they neared the vultures they saw not the lions they had hoped for but men killed – dismembered, with body parts strung up in the thorny trees. The guide told this story with a bit of head-shaking incomprehension that people could go from such "civilized" topics of conversation to such a spectacular form of violence (violence meant to be a spectacle of force for any of the poachers or herders who were likely to come into contact with the corpses), in a matter of hours. And yet I saw no evidence that the Russians experienced theirs as a dissonant way of life. Alternately blending in and showing force in different ways in different settings could help them further their work. Their known (rumored) ability to show force given the context of possible violence was an element of how and why they were taken seriously, but it was also dangerous, and to avoid standing out amid the humanitarian/welfare sensibilities of people like me, they showed other sides of themselves.

Later that year, however, their ability to camouflage themselves for different settings was fatally compromised. Photos of a dismemberment incident they or their men had perpetrated were spread to the French press through another safari operator who did not appreciate the Russians' style, and the Russians left the country. When I suggested to another anti-poaching leader that dismemberment tactics might unhelpfully inflame tensions, he replied impatiently that the tactic was in fact quite useful. The Russians' problem was that they had taken photos. In other words, rather than maintaining camouflage in order to be able to represent what they were doing in ways that spoke to a range of audiences, these images created a fixed reference that they would then have to justify themselves in relation to. They lost the ability to play with the visibility of violence, and in so doing they lost too the ability to blend into different affective/personal/legal landscapes, that is, to camouflage themselves.

For people worlding themselves from remote locales, the salient metric of self-styling is not identity, with the singular, contained notion of selfhood it implies, but being able to blend in, chameleon-like, with the world view and procedures of a variety of remunerated forums. In other words, one has to be able to qualify for different kinds of work, to reflect their organizational and interpersonal norms. Camouflaging oneself across different interpersonal environments is frequently a two-part process: hiding by blending in, and then using that status to pursue a range of projects, perhaps contradictory in aims, and frequently entailing an element of showing force/violence that, in certain contexts, is part of how one gets taken seriously. The Caliph Yaya Ramadan was, for a time, eminently successful in this regard.

Renowned as a Muslim cleric and visionary, Ramadan was able to rally his fellow Gula and others in the area around his hometown, Tiringoulou, like no one else. Tiringoulou is a town of a few thousand people in far northeastern CAR that lies beside vast parks and other kinds of spaces where human entry is (in theory) highly regulated. The Caliph had developed a profitable income by taxing herders and other aspiring users of the area and its resources, accumulating sums that no one, not even the man who went on to become head of the UFDR armed group, Damane Zakaria, has been able to match.[16] When conservation project staff approached Caliph Yaya to explain that combating hunters and herders would – indirectly – bring revenue to the area in the form of game hunting taxes, he asked if he could help. Many Tiringoulou residents are armed (mostly with Kalashnikovs), and about twenty men joined the Caliph to scour the parks and other restricted areas for trespassers. The conservation project gave them ammunition and fuel for their pickup truck. Though I could find no one who could or wanted to give a full account of their operations, one anti-poaching report noted that the Caliph's militia had ambushed a group of

Sudanese hunters, with the result that two hunters were "eliminated," five camels slaughtered, and 750kg of smoked meat seized. These collaborations brought substantial personal benefit to the Caliph and angered people in nearby towns, who were losing out, since their ability to tax users of the space was curtailed. The project staff was thrilled to have found such a stalwart ally. Whatever they knew about his past, from the perspective of anyone watching over from Bangui or Brussels, he now appeared, as one report described him, a stand-out friend of the project: "Among managers of biodiversity, he remains a symbol of natural resource conservation and a pacifist" (RCA/ZCV 2002). This description of the Caliph as a "pacifist" came just days after the Caliph was killed, in violent circumstances he was complicit in.

In May 2002, Caliph Ramadan was killed in an ambush while hunting "poachers" (I put this term in quotes because those killed never had a chance to challenge or respond to their characterization as such) with his men and some conservation project guards. Less than two days before, his group had killed two "poachers" and nine donkeys and confiscated 1,500kg of meat – enough to feed his hometown of Tiringoulou for weeks. One of the people killed was found to have possessed a document, a kind of receipt, that should have worked as a right-to-graze permit, delivered by another revenue-hunting local leader in a village near Tiringoulou – exactly the kind of document the Caliph had previously made a living selling. The Caliph's supporters rallied to seek vengeance against the attackers, who they understood to be Hemat/Ta'isha herders who moved between this area and northern pastures between Chad and Sudan. Retaliatory battles over the next three years resulted in hundreds of deaths. While the death toll eventually slowed, the mistrust sowed by these events has only grown. The Caliph may well have had pacifistic inclinations, as the project report memorialized him, and he may well have been a stalwart supporter of biodiversity. Cultivating that posture made it all the easier for him to do other things

as well, a range of projects backed by – taxing herders, removing people from parklands – that all relied on processes of hiding by blending in with a range of landscapes.

The Caliph draws out the fact that though armed conservation in northeastern CAR has been deeply contested, people have not necessarily "resisted" it, nor is their profession of concern for the fate of the wildlife a mere "mask" hiding their "true" sentiments. Many people describe how they used to encounter all kinds of wild animals when out and about and now are lucky if they cross paths with a baboon, and they see this change as a loss. These stories often also index the increasing insecurity they face as residents of a region that has come to be marked by armed conflict. Whereas once the only thing children had to fear on their walk to school was lions or buffalo, now the schools are frequently not open, and, when they are, children are subject to kidnapping for ransom or other violence. The two trends – the decline in wild animals and the rise in armed conflict – are intertwined. Rather than resisting armed conservation, people have taken up the proscriptions associated with armed conservation while making use of the state's absence, and the vastness and low human population of the space, to do other things as well. This is the essence of camouflage, which is less about sincerity/insincerity (real/mask) and more about productively managing apparent contradictions (blending in with a range of landscapes).

The deeply-held idea that "the state" *should* "see" and organize life in the area, despite its patent inability to do so, coupled with the existence (fear) of armed violence in the area, is part of how opportunities for remunerated work, such as working as a parastatal anti-poaching guard, come to the zone. But the processes of blending in across legal-bureaucratic and inter-personal/affective landscapes that people have developed, in Tiringoulou as in Bangui and Brussels, and the factors constraining ocular capacities in the bush, mean that in the process

people's capacity to do other, perhaps contradictory or unsavory things, is heightened rather than channeled into the unitary, disciplinary mode of State power. "The state," as a unitary, policy-enforcing entity, comes to seem, in fact, an ever-less-likely possibility. It is this mode of inter-scalar navigation – hiding by blending in, and playing with the visibility of violence – that I call camouflage.

Acquiescence to the demands of centralized rulers while ignoring those demands as soon as the infrequently-present emissaries depart is a common peasant strategy (Graeber 2007). However, the tendency among academics has been to see such a strategy as evidence of peasant "exit from" or "resistance to" centralizing forces (Scott 2009; Graeber 2007; Azarya and Chazan 1987; Jones 2009). For instance, Graeber argues that in Madagascar people see the state as a nuisance: "the preferred approach has always been to do whatever it takes to make the annoying outsider happy until he goes away; then, to insist he had never been there to begin with, or if that doesn't work, to simply ignore whatever one has agreed with and see what the consequences might be" (2007: 167). The peasants Graeber describes are apparently incurious about what goes on at other scales; they seek primarily to be left alone. Similarly, Jones (2009) has argued that in rural Uganda most people saw the state as irrelevant to their lives. The people in northeastern CAR I got to know had a far more active relationship with the idea of centralized power, at the same time as they were far more ignored; they sought to participate in it at the same time as they reserved authorities and possibilities for themselves. In fact, their participation in it was a way of *heightening* their capacities to do other things. It is this kind of positioning that I refer to as camouflage.

From time to time, the plural resource use regimes that flourish where people develop

camouflage become visible and cause direct confrontations, but much of the time they do not. Both the armed conservationists' efforts and the mobilization in the wake of Yaya's death gave a range of actors in northeastern CAR new skills and experience in relation to the perpetration of violence. Some of Caliph Yaya's brethren put that expertise to use in a new form: rebellion. Rebellion marks a shift in the use of camouflage in northeastern CAR. With conservation, violence was most productive when it occurred in the bush, where only certain people would see it. It remained a fear or a possibility, but it was mostly unseen by those not participating in the incidents. Rebellion, in contrast, entails out-in-the-open violence (or at least, an overt potential for violence). As rebellion has become formalized and standardized, in part through the involvement of international organizations (Tull and Mehler 2005), it channels the interests and lines of sight of these actors, in the process creating new blind spots and potential for camouflage. A man named Tarzan was among those who added rebellion to his camouflage repertoire, and his career illustrates the shifts in camouflage over the last decade.

Colonel Tarzan was not the name his parents had given him, but it was the name I knew him by. Beginning in 1997, he had worked as an anti-poaching guard for the massive, EU-funded armed conservation projects underway in the area at the time. He was trained by the American and European "technical assistants" whose job was to teach the guards about flora, fauna, and hunting poachers. Those projects hit a funding rupture in 2004. At that point the Russians (paid by an association of safari hunting guides) took on the job of leading patrols in the parklands. The Russians were the ones who dubbed him Tarzan. Tarzan – along with "Zidane," "Terminator," and about twenty other ironically-named elite wildlife guards (Zindeko went by Marconi) – scoured the parklands for unwanted interlopers, especially ivory hunters and cattleherders. Micha, as Tarzan knew his boss,[17] was "very strong" and "hit the poachers very

hard." When EU-funded armed conservation was re-launched in 2007, an event that coincided with the leaking of those bloody photos, Micha's funders shifted their money to it, and he and his partner left the country.

Micha still called on the satellite phone from time to time, Tarzan told me as we rested in the shade outside his house in Tiringoulou in late 2009. Demonstrating this ongoing connection was a point of pride for someone in such an out-of-the-way place. But Tarzan was no longer an anti-poaching guard. In 2006, while on a mission with Micha, Tarzan got word that government soldiers had made a rare appearance in Tiringoulou – for the purposes of attacking the town and its residents, who they were convinced were rebels. Tarzan took to the bush. He walked for two days, navigating by water points, and eventually found a group of his fellow Gula. They organized as a rebel group, and Tarzan gained another name, a title: colonel, a rank bestowed because he could use the skills he had gained from his decade combating people in parklands to train his fellows. They stayed in the bush training for several months and then, as soon as the dry season set in, launched a successful surprise attack on Birao, the northeastern-most town in CAR. The *Union des Forces Democratiques pour le Rassemblement* (UFDR), as Colonel Tarzan and the other fighters called their group, went on to take one town after another, all the while getting closer to Bangui.

Though Tarzan and Zindeko both described their decision to rebel as a home-grown initiative, in fact the UFDR was the product of a collaboration between these dispossessed men-in-arms and political-military entrepreneurs outside the zone, who knew what it took to use violence to blend in productively with national and international diplomatic landscapes. In the case of the UFDR, the two entrepreneurs in question were Abakar Sabone, who had helped CAR's President Bozize

take power in a coup in 2003, and Michel Djotodia, a CAR civil servant intent on a more prominent position. Speaking with journalists from their homes in Cotonou, Benin, they imbued the violence of Tarzan and Zindeko and the other fighters' attacks with meaning that made it a logical element in the framework-landscapes that organize journalistic and humanitarian concern. The UFDR's fighters were pushed back by French and CAR soldiers before they reached the capital. But the form of rebellion, with its patriotic acronyms, list of grievances taken from the international community's "good governance" playbook, and explicit challenge to state authority (that is, rebellion draws attention to the fictiveness of the legal-fictive state form at the same time as it upholds the reification of this form) helped to kick into gear a range of initiatives. There were peace processes, discussion of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) assistance for the fighters, and new titles and salaries for the group's leaders. This largesse was not so much about the fact or extent of rebellion violence; until 2013, rebellion entailed far fewer deaths than anti-poaching work, especially when the hundreds who died in the raids after Caliph Yaya's death are taken into account. Rather, these modes of inter-scalar collaboration were made possible by the ways that people like Tarzan and UFDR leaders shaped the violence and discourses about it such that it would blend in with new humanitarian and national-political landscapes.

When Colonel Tarzan and I met, in 2009, he was waiting for the promised disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program, a part of the traveling postconflict toolkit that would have given him some training and money. He and the other fighters were sure that the terms of the peace agreement stipulated the total "*prise en charge*" of the combatants – that is, the furnishing of a variety of household goods, military jobs for those who wanted them, and other assistance. When I met with him and other fighters, they quickly became restive as a way

of expressing their deep frustration at having being "abandoned" by their government. But Tarzan also had other sides to him, and while he waited he turned to a new source of skills and training: an American NGO called International Medical Corps (IMC). IMC's expatriate staff saw in Tarzan a man who had an especially caring-yet-authoritative way with children and therefore deputized him their local children's rights advocate. They even flew in former semi-professional soccer players who taught him how to coach. For those from this bush, adopting a posture that threatens the state form itself has helped them fit into new landscapes of opportunity at the national and international level. Tarzan's having enacted that particular form of violence helped to bring the humanitarian organization to his town. Now he developed ways of being a useful element of the humanitarian landscape, an element that did not stand out as anomalous: an element that was camouflaged.

In the end, the DDR and its *prise en charge* that Tarzan awaited never came, and the humanitarian organization reduced its presence after possible attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army. Djotodia continued to look for opportunities to take power. Toward that end he was a founding member of the heterogeneous Seleka (alliance in Sango) rebel coalition that dislodged President Bozize in March 2013. Though Tarzan and the rest of the UFDR at first refrained from adding their numbers to Seleka, when it became clear that Seleka would succeed in toppling the president they decided to fight as well. In the assault on Bangui Tarzan was shot in the leg and airlifted to Gabon for medical treatment. This time around, rebellion violence was far greater than the small numbers who had died in the 2006 attacks. By late 2013 it had become a war, and the source of thousands of deaths.

Today, Tarzan waits, again, for DDR. Throughout his career, Colonel Tarzan has adroitly

adapted to changing personal and professional circumstances in order to collaborate with a wide range of people, from Fred the anti-poaching trainer to Micha the mercenary to NGO "protection officers" to General Damane Zakaria, his superior in the UFDR. These adaptations frequently consisted of camouflaging himself. He did not change himself (he did not put on a "mask" or otherwise distort his "true" identity) but rather adapted the characteristics he showed in order to blend into the personal and institutional terrains of a range of different kinds of projects, so that he would not stand out when present where the action was. He was both a rebel and a children's rights advocate simultaneously; it was not that one career reflected his "true" identity and the other was merely a put-on, or otherwise incongruous. In this context, questions about one's essential identity are simply beside the point. More important is the ability to learn and blend in with the exigencies of a range of interpersonal environments.

Conclusion

In this article I showed that worlding – the process through which people access multi-scalar networks of money, people, and knowledge – from the bush requires careful, skilled management of visibility and hiding. It entails developing skills for camouflage amid geographic landscapes marked by high levels of physical violence, bureaucratic landscapes marked by the gap between the legal-fictive state form and the capacities of and inclinations of an absent state, and inter-personal landscapes in which people cultivate flexibility. Zindeko and Tarzan draw out the ambivalent position of people in the bush seeking to world themselves. Rebellion has become a new way of accessing and blending into national and international humanitarian landscapes. But while rebellion has caused an explosion in the size of the humanitarian population in CAR, it has also increased the scale and scope of armed violence. Rebellions born in the CAR bush have brought about multiple changes in power in Bangui, and as I write (December 2014) the country

remains at war. The violence-free future that so many Central Africans – members of rebel groups and village residents alike – assured me they sought seems further from reach than ever.

The case of armed conservation and rebellion in northeastern CAR imparts several insights related to remote or "marginal" spaces more broadly. Rather than seeking to avoid multi-scalar collaborations, many people in remote areas cultivate lifestyles that help them find ways to enter and blend in with landscapes beyond their homes – landscapes that might be geographic, bureaucratic/institutional, or inter-personal. These processes of blending in, the mode of social navigation I call camouflage, entail adapting oneself in relation to what different people and structures can and cannot see, that is, what stands out for different people and structures and what appears simply a logical element of the terrain. These processes of camouflaging frequently make productive use of the gap between, on the one hand, the legal-fictive state and reporting procedures and, on the other, the actual capacities of the state in these areas. As a result, camouflage is not confined to remote spaces, or even to spaces marked by uncertainty. It is also developed and deployed by people in bureaucratic hubs, people who are central to creating and manipulating the relationships that constitute certain areas centers and other areas bush. As such, though camouflage has similarities to the African mode of engagement with the world Bayart (2000) has called extraversion, to describe it as distinctively "African" would be misleading.

The result of all this camouflage is not the centralization or regularization or greater welfare largesse that Central Africans and international donors and humanitarians alike all say they desire, but a situation in which people maintain receptivity to different kinds of projects, and rival resource-use regimes coexist. Today, though an EU-funded conservation program remains underway in northeastern CAR, rebellion and war have brought these efforts more or less to a

standstill. Of the 92 anti-poaching guards at work before the crisis, only 28 remain in their posts. The rest joined the rebels. A number of them have now died or been injured, like Tarzan. On my most recent trip to the country, in December 2014, the conservation project's national director said they had come to the conclusion that their hidden war against herders and hunters had failed, both because they had no guards left to fight it and because they had succeeded only in escalating tensions between the would-be users of the space. Now, they would try a more "humanistic" approach. But now that violence has, through the form of rebellion, become a means to camouflage – a means to access and blend in with humanitarian landscapes, and of accessing a national political scene – it seems unlikely it will disappear anytime soon. The only reason international elites pay much attention to a remote space like northeastern CAR is when it awakens fear of and concern about violent, "stateless" spaces marked by the suffering of humans and other charismatic megafauna. But though they have an intermittent interest in acknowledging or engaging with the problems, they have few tools for definitively changing the status quo and removing violence from the field of politics and production. Camouflage is here to stay.

References

Antonetti

1929 Letter (Untitled). Archives nationales de l'outre-mer (ANOM).

Azarya, Victor, and Naomi Chazan

1987 Disengagement from the state in Africa: Reflections on the Experience of Ghana and Guinea. Comparative Studies in History and Society 29(01): 106-131.

Bayart, Jean-François

2000 Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion. African Affairs 99(395): 217-267.

Binot, Aurélie, Vincent Castel, and Alexandre Caron

2006 L'interface faune-bétail en Afrique Subsaharienne. Science et changements planétaires/Sécheresse 17(1): 349-361.

Bouché, Philippe, Roland Nzapa Mbeti Mange, Floride Tankalet, Florent Zowoya, Philippe Lejeune, and Cédric Vermeulen

2012 Game Over! Wildlife Collapse in northern Central African Republic. Environmental Assessment and Monitoring 184(11): 7001-7011.

Boulvert, Yves

1985 Le dernier grand blanc de la carte d'Afrique: premières approaches de l'Oubangui-Chari ou Centrafrique à la fin du XIXe siècle. Terres à dècouvrir, terres à parcourir, 299–312.

Brégeon, Jean-Joël

1998 Un Rêve d'Afrique: Administrateurs en Oubangui-Chari, la Cendrillon de l'Empire. Paris: Denoël.

Clastres, Pierre

1987 Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology. New York: Zone Books.

Cordell, Dennis D.

1985 Dar al-Kuti and the Last Years of the Trans-Saharan Slave Trade. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

1994 [1987] "Extracting people from precapitalist production: French Equatorial Africa from the 1890s to the 1930s." African Population and Capitalism: Historical Perspectives. Dennis D. Cordell and Joel W. Gregory, eds. 137-152. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Das, Veena

2006 Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Das, Veena, and Deborah Poole

2004 State and its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies. In Anthropology in the Margins of the State. Veena Das and Deborah Poole, eds. Santa Fe: School of American Research. 3-33.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari

1986 Nomadology: The War Machine. New York: Semiotext(e).

Delvingt, W., and J. L. P. Lobão Tello

2004 "Découverte du Nord de la Centrafrique." Sur les terres de la grande faune. ECOFAC Programme. EU AGRECO-GEIE.

Djouma, Alfred Zacharie

1990 Compte-rendu. February 26. Bangui: PDRN.

Duffy, Rosaleen

2010 Nature Crime: How We're Getting Conservation Wrong. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

EC (European Commission)

ND (no date)a Note de réflextions sur les modalités de mise en oeuvre du Programme ECOFAC Phase IV.

NDb Commentaires et suggestions pour la PF quatrième phase ECOFAC.

Feldman, Ilana

2008 Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the World of Rule in Gaza, 1917-1967. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Ferguson, James

2006 Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Foucault, Michel

2012 [1978] A History of Sexuality. New York: Random House.

Gauze, René

1958 Oubangui-Chari: Paradis du Tourisme Cynégétique. Caen: Ozanne.

Graeber, David

2007 Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire. Oakland: AK Press.

Honwana, Alcinda

2000 Innocents et coupables: Les Enfants-soldats comme acteurs tactiques. Politique Africaine 80: 58-78.

Jones, Ben

2009 Beyond the State in Rural Uganda. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kalck, Pierre

1971 Central African Republic: A Failure in De-Colonisation. London: Pall Mall.

Kolingba, Andre

1984 Code de la protection de la faune sauvage. Ministère des Eaux, Fôrets, Chasses et Pêches, République Centrafricaine.

Kopytoff, Igor

1987 The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture. In The African Frontier: The Production of Traditional African Societies. Igor Kopytoff, ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Pp. 3-84.

Laboureur, Matthieu

1988 Sans défense. Paris: Lafon.

Lombard, Louisa

2012 Rébellion et limites de la consolidation de la paix en République Centrafricaine. Politique Africaine 125(1): 189-208.

2014 The Central African Republic in a Hot Spot: An Introduction. Fieldsights – Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology Online, 11 June.

2015 (forthcoming) The Autonomous Zone Conundrum. In Making Sense of the Central African Republic. Tatiana Carayannis and Louisa Lombard, eds. London: Zed.

In preparation Hunting Game: Politics in an African Autonomous Zone. (Book manuscript.)

Mbitikon, Raymond

2002 Letter/report: From R. Mbitikon to Son Excellence M. le Ministre Delegué chargé des Eaux, Fôrets, Chasse, Pêche et l'Environnement, Objet: Compte-rendu de l'évènement du 8 mai 2002 de Mossabio (Gordil), Bangui, No. 0094/MEFCPET/CAB/ECOFAC RCA-PDZCV, May 31, 2002.

MIKE (Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants)

2014 Elephant Poaching and Ivory Smuggling Figures Released Today. Geneva: MIKE. Press release <http://www.cites.org/eng/elephant_poaching_and_ivory_smuggling_figures_for_2013_released>

Mollion, Pierre

1992 Sur les Pistes de l'Oubangui-Chari au Tchad, 1890–1930: Le Drame du Portage en Afrique Centrale. Paris: Harmattan.

Mordrelle

1910 Rapport du Commandant Supérieur des Troupes, sur l'occupation militaire de l'Afrique Equatoriale Française. Fait à Brazzaville le 28 Septembre 1910. Service Historique de l'armée de la terre, Vincennes, France, 6H 2.

Naylor, R. T.

2004 The Underworld of Ivory. Crime, Law, and Social Change 42:261–295.

Oubangui-Chari

ND Présentation Sommaire du Territoire de l'Oubangui-Chari. Marked "very secret." SHAT, 6H 127.

Pampaloni, Corrado

2003a Note du Dossier—ECOFAC ZCV. September 12. Bangui: European Commission.

PDRN (Programme de Développement de la Région Nord)

1985 Document de Base, PDRN; Project: Conservation du Patrimoine Naturel en Région Nord. July. Bangui: PDRN.

RCA/ZCV (Republique centrafricaine/zones cynégétiques villageoises)

2002 Rapport d'activités, premier semestre 2002. Libreville: ECOFAC.

Sikainga, Ahmad Alawad

1991 The western Bahr al-Ghazal under British rule: 1898-1956. Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies.

Simone, AbdouMaliq

2001 On the Worlding of African Cities. African Studies Review 44(2):15–41.

Tomety, Simon N.

2009 Analyse de la dimension transfrontalière des conflits ruraux dans l'Est de la République Centrafricaine. Bangui: European Commission.

Tull, Denis M. and Andreas Mehler

2005 The Hidden Costs of Power-Sharing: Reproducing Insurgent Violence in Africa. African Affairs 104(416): 375-398.

Vigh, Henrik

2006 Navigating Terrains of War: Youth and Soldiering in Guinea-Bissau. New York: Berghahn.

2009 Motion Squared: A Second Look at the Concept of Social Navigation. Anthropological Theory 9(4): 419-438.

---

1 Foucault describes an analytic approach as one that edges "toward a definition of the specific domain formed by relations... and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis" (2012 [TK]: 82). In an analytic approach like the one I employ here, the aim is less to erect definitional boundaries around a concept (e.g., camouflage) and more to show the concept's capillary-like functioning.

2 By "bush" I refer to places that lie far from urban centers, are home to vanishingly few people, and have a pronounced dearth of roads and telecommunications options. Moreover, the bush is a place largely officially ignored and/or feared by urbanites, a place of danger and transgression in addition to a geographic locale.

3 ARRC makes a brief appearance in James Ferguson's *Global Shadows* (2006) as an example of enclave governance and the privatization of violence. It also appeared in Rosalind Duffy's *Nature Wars* (2010). Neither author picked up on the fact that ARRC never did what it had proposed to do. The journalistic articles both relied on had hopped onto other topics by the time the operational problems started to arise.

4 Parkland patrols have been carried out by a wide range of actors. Since the 1980s, anti-poaching patrols have been carried out by game lodge operators and the guards in their employ; parastatal militiamen funded by the European Union; former Foreign Legionnaires and the men under them, all paid by a private association and armed by, among others, Russian oligarch game hunters; game hunters themselves; French soldiers operating under the objective of "securing the border"; and people living in the area's villages. Those villagers have also been among the anti-poachers' opponents, as have herders; the organized groups of hunters, many of whom otherwise live in Sudan, whose existence originally justified the militarized response; big game hunters; and Central African wildlife guards.

[5] Though French officials never commented on the beauty of the scenery or the charms of the people in Oubangui-Chari, as CAR was then known, they frequently rhapsodized about the fauna (Brégeon 1998).

[6] Even today, CAR has more space designated (potential) safari hunting lands than any other country in Africa – a full 31% of the country's territory (Binot et al 2006).

[7] The 1970s saw a rise in global prices for ivory, a spike driven first by Western speculators and later by increasing demand from Asia (Naylor 2005). Though there has been some fluctuation, ivory prices remain quite high; elephant poaching peaked in 2011 and has tapered off since then but is still high. 20,000 elephants were illicitly killed in Africa in 2013 (MIKE 2014).

8 The illicit hunters were described as "Sudanese" or "Chadian," which was in many cases true but which also allowed Central African officials to deflect attention from their own involvement (direct or indirect) in hunting in the zone. When I attended the *Journée mondiale de l'alimentation* (a holiday that entails the rare arrival of the president and state functionaries to a benighted corner of CAR) in Obo in December 2009, vendors displayed goods I had never seen openly for sale before – chimpanzees, ivory, leopard skins – and explained that state functionaries were their prime customer base.

9 The official size of their concession was 17,400 sq km.

10 The conventions of the prolific genre of safari hunter memoirs stipulate that they should contain good stories as well as true ones, and thus they should not be read as neatly factual, but rather evocative of a spirit and idealized way of life.

[11] ECOFAUNE began in 2012 but because of the war in CAR its patrollers have not yet conducted any real work. Most former anti-poaching guards joined the rebels, so the force must be built up anew.

12 ECOFAC stands for Conservation et utilisation rationnelle des Ecosystèmes forestiers de l'Afrique Centrale.

13 At different times it has involved the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, and the southwestern tropical forests of CAR.

14 In 2010, fully 85% of the PDZCV's expenditures were "unallowed."By the time this was discovered, however, it was too late to recuperate the improperly spent cash.

15 This was part of how I got access to the archives: after hearing of my interest in armed conservation, one official suggested I read the archived and contemporary reports and summarize them for her, as she would never have time to read them all herself. Indeed, she had nearly a year's backlog of reports to read.

16 Interview with Damane Zakaria, Tiringoulou March 2010.

17 Micha had adopted this name only post-Foreign Legion, name changing being a useful form of personal camouflage.