Traveling Ideas, Changing Environments, and Global Currents

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I Introduction

One of the most striking trends in scholarship, research and writing from the latter half of the 20th century to the present 21st century has been a turn to ‘environment’. It is doubly noteworthy in being a trend that cross-cuts disciplines and fields -- science, social sciences, and humanities. For the social sciences and humanities, environment may constitute a last frontier, or at least the latest one. Earlier thresholds important to empirical and theoretical work fostered a broadening in scope and deepening of scrutiny. There was a shift from a focus on ‘great men’ or social elites to one on the common people, the subalterns, those normally invisible and unheard in history and social science. Another, related shift was to pay more attention to gender relations in history and society. Each of these moves produced both specific subfields of research (women’s history, the anthropology of gender, subaltern studies), and enrichment of the respective disciplines themselves. The turn to the environment has had similar effects. There are specific products: new subfields of environmental history and environmental anthropology; new bodies of work on the historical and cultural production of landscapes, and on the interaction of ecological processes and human practices in, for example, colonialism as well as in
contemporary society. And there are the broader contributions to the disciplines. For anthropology, these include more systematic incorporation of ecological dimensions of change into social and cultural analysis, and more attention given to the spatial aspects of social identity. Additionally, significant developments in ecological theory, which have questioned the validity of static notions of ‘carrying capacity’ or ‘climax vegetation’, and which have turned to notions of variability, volatility and contingency, are a constant reminder to social scientists of the often hidden interconnections among complex processes (social and ecological), and the often contingent outcomes. Moreover, the turn to environment as a focus or dimension of study both fosters and demands cross-disciplinary conversations. By definition, the inclusion of the environment into research entails boundary-crossing.

Anthropology and history are not strangers to one another -- it is not new for anthropologists to incorporate some historical analysis into their studies though they are usually looking to the past to help them explain the present. Avoiding the sin of ‘presentism’ (reading the present into the past), anthropologists seek to decipher critical events and processes that have produced the present. This rapprochement with history was particularly marked in the anthropology of the 1950s and 1960s when the disciplinary focus moved from structural models to approaches stressing time-related dynamics, and seeing change and transformation as normal rather than a disruption in a stable structure. Similarly, some historians have incorporated cultural dimensions into their analysis (see E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common*) or have used ethnographic styles of writing associated with anthropology (see writing by Natalie Zemon Davis or Megan Vaughan). The boundary-crossing has increased with the turn to the environment. As McNeill notes from the perspective of the historian: “Environmental history is about as interdisciplinary as intellectual pursuits can get. Practitioners find grist for their mills in the harvests of disciplines from anthropology to zoology” (McNeill 2003: 9). This is echoed by historians of Africa, Beinart and McGregor, who state that, “environmental history has a long tradition of interdisciplinary connections [with] geography, anthropology, archaeology and the natural sciences” (2003: 5).

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1 It is now a cliche to note that earlier anthropological monographs regularly reserved the final chapter to ‘social change’.
Within anthropology, the rapprochement with history has been especially noteworthy in the subfields of political economy, political ecology, and international development studies. The increasing salience of environmental dimensions of research among social scientists in the 1970s and 1980s produced the field of political ecology, developed mainly by geographers but now encompassing ecologists, anthropologists, rural sociologists, and others. In the past twenty or so years, writers from a range of disciplines have drawn on political economy, political ecology and development studies to address the political, economic, historical, and socio-cultural dimensions of what has now come to be called globalization. The proliferation of multinational corporations and of outsourcing, the rise of powerful national economies in Asia (the ‘tigers’), the sharply increased movements of capital across national boundaries, and the accelerated movements of information and images via the internet and satellite media, all provide the parameters of a ‘globalized’ world. But other, less celebrated, parameters of this ‘new’ world include a concentration of trade and mobile capital in certain countries and regions, and the concomitant marginalization of others, an increase in disparity of wealth between and within countries, and, critical for our focus here, an intensification of pressure on and scrutiny of the environment as well as of exploitation of natural resources.

This brief setting of the theoretical and political-economic scene now brings me to the specific focus of this paper on the intersections among traveling ideas, environments and global change. The first section discusses an historical case that has significance up to the present. It considers how the enclosure of common lands in England were interpreted in the 18th to 19th centuries as a necessary evolutionary stage in economic progress or, in a later terminology, modernization; how these interpretations influenced thinkers and policy-makers in France and Russia on the question of appropriate land use and land rights; how these ideas were applied by British colonialists to countries across Africa (and elsewhere) with largely negative outcomes that remain today; and how, despite this historical evidence, the ideas have persisted in misleading the analysis of and policy on environments. The second section considers the evidence for the apparent acceleration of exploitation of natural resources in the wake of global change, with most emphasis on Africa. Such cases show that the turn to the environment is a move produced out of key socio-economic and political trends across the world over the past fifty-plus years.

The paper will show the crucial role of history in analyzing what are considered
to be key environmental problems as well as their reigning interpretations; will demonstrate that social and political histories miss an important part of process if they neglect to consider human-environmental interaction; and that situations often labeled environmental degradation or in need of protection are not predetermined by culture or by individual rational self-interest but are produced out of specific historical and social conditions.

II Understanding Common Lands: Enclosure of the Commons in England

The historiography of the English commons and of the 18th century enclosure Acts has been contentious from its beginnings. But the conventional view of enclosure as an inevitable response to the need for greater efficiency in production was well entrenched by the mid 19th century and still dominant in the first half of the twentieth century. According to this view, farmers had seen that “one sheep in an enclosure is worth two on a common” and that the overstocking of the commons was due to the lamentable fact that “that which is everyman’s is no man’s” (Prothero 1917 cited in Liversage 1945). Trevelyan, an influential British historian of the first half of the twentieth century, was one of the popularizers of the view that the expansion of agricultural production that fuelled the industrial revolution could be seen as the result of enclosure, which had “blazed a trail for the whole world” (1944: 381). This “triumphal” view (Thompson 1993) had taken form through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the struggle for ascendancy between the rights of owners of private property and the rights to the commons mounted through the eighteenth century, it involved legislative and administrative changes by the Whig elite and shifts in “definitions at law and in local custom” (Thompson 1976: 337). The proponents of enclosure developed an aggressive ideological attack on the commons. As enclosure proceeded, the remaining open commons were condemned as inherently stagnant — “no improvements can be made in any wastes”, and defined as unregulated — “a dangerous centre of indiscipline” and “the nest and conservatory of sloth, idleness and misery”.  

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2 Much of this section is taken from Peters 1998.

Opponents of the positive view of enclosure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries included David Davies who said enclosure “has beggared multitudes”; William Cobbett who indignantly stated that: “Those who are so eager for new inclosure seem to argue as if the wasteland in its present state produced nothing at all ... [But, in fact it] goes to the feeding of sheep, of cows ... and ... helps to rear, in health and vigour, the children of the labourers”; and the poignant laments of the laborer-poet, John Clare. The Hammonds, probably the best known critics of the early twentieth century, concluded that enclosure was “fatal to ... the small farmer, the cottager, and the squatter” (1911). Although these writers revealed the dark side of enclosure, they did not displace the dominant view. As we shall see, it was views like those of Prothero and Trevelyan that predominated overwhelmingly in colonial perspectives.

In the nineteen-sixties, a new generation of economic historians reiterated the triumphal view. They concluded that enclosure increased the demand for labor and provided “more regular and seasonally secure employment”, “it alleviated pauperism”, “it did not adversely affect the small landowner and tenant farmer”, “it did not cause out-migration ... and it was conducive to rapid rural population growth” in response to the increased demand for labor (Snell 1985:139). In turn, these assertions were challenged by a number of historians, including Snell, from the early 1970s on. Their conclusions are summarized next. As will be obvious, I rely greatly on the synthesis and commentary by E. P. Thompson (1993).

4 Cited in The Ecologist, 22, 4, 1992, from J. Collings 1908.
5 Some illustrative lines are: “Inclosure like a Buonaparte let not a thing remain It levelled every bush and tree and levelled every hill ... Inclosure came and trampled on the grave Of labours rights and left the poor a slave. ... Moors ... Where swopt the plover in its pleasure free Are vanished now with commons wild and gay ... ”. (Cited in John Clare and the Bounds of Circumstance by Johanne Clare, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987).
6 As will be obvious, I rely greatly on the synthesis and commentary by E. P. Thompson (1993).
from the commons and in relative power to obtain them. The landed aristocracy was fencing in forests for their leisure pursuits in hunting and for monetary gain from selling off timber and other products. The growing urban demand for wood, turf, small game, sand, stone and similar products of the open lands and woods produced substantial income for merchants and artisans and promoted escalating levels of exploitation and collusive agreements between “forest officers and under-keepers” and local inn-keepers, butchers and tanners (Thompson 1993:103). In addition, the increasingly large-scale, commercial production of grain and other crops demanded more land that was under exclusive control of the farmers. In these ways, threats to the sustainability of common use were coming as much from the big farmers, merchants and traders as from the many small producers and collectors of common land resources.

Resistance to private appropriation of commons and to the curtailment of common rights was pervasive and constant. Records for the environs of Coventry describe “riotous resistance ... to attempts to limit ... rights or to enclose lands” from 1421 on, right up through the eighteenth century (Thompson 1993:122-3). Less violent forms of resistance included the dramatization of old rights that were being questioned. “The regular perambulation of ... the parish ... to make clayme of the Lands thereto belonging and to set forth their bounds” came, by the eighteenth century, to entail participants’ carrying implements “for the purpose of demolishing any building or fence which had been raised without permission” in the commons (cited in Thompson 1993:119). Even more numerous were objections made through lobbying, letters, petitions, destruction of records, and other tactics, all of which served to delay some enclosures for many years and even “had some say in the terms of surrender” of the commons (Neeson 1984, in Thompson 1993:120).

This historiography of enclosure points not only to the ability of the holders of private property rights to encroach on commons because of superior political power, but also to a cultural process entailed in the displacement of the commoners and in the parallel rise of the legal, political and ideological support for enclosure. Centrally involved was the rise of the very notion of property rights in land and the growing hegemony of property rights over common usages. The gradual erosion of common rights and the enclosure of the commons did not just displace particular uses and users of commons but displaced an entire complex of language, ideas and practices engendering legitimate and authorized rights to common usage. A central
motif of this displacement was a distinction made between proper or legally upheld
rights of “property” over land and “mere” usage. The shift was from recognized and
authorized “coincident” use rights of various sorts to a priority given to the property
rights of “owners” over “users”. How did this occur?

A key dimension of the exclusion of poorer, less influential categories of
commoners was a gradual narrowing in the definition of rights-holders and the
scope of these rights. This appears to have picked up pace in the eighteenth century.
Members of the gentry or other highly placed persons tightened the restrictions on
what people could do in the commons. Around 1720, the lord and lady of a manor in
Essex informed the poor in their vicinity that, henceforth, they would be allowed to
lop the trees in Waltham wood for firewood only on Mondays. The poor complained
that Monday was when they sought to hire themselves out for the week to the big
farmers, leaving the collection of wood to wet days when there was no work. They
complained, too, that the lord was trying to reduce their use because he was felling
timber for sale, using the woods to graze cattle, to plough up new land, and to set
rabbit warrens (Thompson 1993: 102).

More significan1y, the definition of a rightful commoner was increasingly
narrowed from the mid 1600s through the 1700s. Courts found that broad descriptive
categories such as “populacy”, “inhabitants”, “parishioners”, “all within this
manor” were too indefinite, and they limited the rights to use common resources to
owners or fee-tenants of houses and lands on the grounds that “there is no limitatìon
... the description of poor householder ... or occupant ... or inhabitant ... is too vague
and uncertain” (Thompson 1993:132 quoting eighteenth century judgments). Thus,
through centuries of disputes and struggles over land and its resources, users of the
commons who did not have any other property rights were relegated to “vague”
categories and their rights reduced to favors or custom that bordered on the illegal.
Thompson concludes that, “the right of use had been transferred from the user to the
house ... It became not a use but a property” (1993:135).

A major rationale constantly put forward for such narrowed definition of rightful
users was the need for “improvements” in the lands. In barring mere inhabitants
rather than owners of houses, in the famous Gateward case of 1607, the court also
noted that, “no improvements can be made in any wastes” (Thompson 1993:130).
The rationale of making “improvements”, that is akin to the call of “progress” on the
lips of later modernizers, was increasingly used to justify the claims of greater rights
by lords and others eager to increase their exploitation of the commons. 7

Precisely as many rural families became more dependent on the common resources to cobble together a living in the face of declining levels of support from modernizing agriculture and small-scale manufacturing, so their customary rights were being redefined as “mere” custom as opposed to property rights (Neeson 1989, Snell 1985, Thompson 1993). Historians like Chambers and Mingay, who state (1966:97) that, “The occupiers of common right cottages ... who enjoyed common right by virtue of their tenancy of the cottage, received no compensation because they were not, of course, the owners of those rights”, are therefore accepting “the priority of ‘the theory of the law’ over usages” which was precisely the rationale of the proponents and supporters of enclosure (Thompson 1993:128). In summary, what was taking place was “a wholesale transformation of agrarian practices, in which rights are assigned away from users” to those whose “ancient feudal title” was translated “into capitalist property-right” (Thompson 1993:137).

The next phase of the hegemonic claim of property over former commons was a relative shift in emphasis from casting common usage as an obstacle to “improvement” towards presenting the commons as encouraging idleness, vagrancy and criminality. The former commoners were recast as a class of inveterate idlers who had to be disciplined into a proper work force for the development of industry. In 1769, a writer of “Reflections on the various Advantages resulting from the Draining, Inclosing and Allotting of Large Commons and Common Fields”, referred to the users of commons as “buccaneers” who “live at large, and prey, like pikes, upon one another” (Pennington, in Thompson 1993: 163). Similarly, in 1810, a survey called for the further “appropriation of the forests” of Hampshire as “the means of producing a number of additional useful hands for agricultural employment, by gradually cutting up and annihilating that nest and conservatory of sloth, idleness

7 Apart from the works by historians cited in the text, see also the evocative story of the English village of Ulverton told by Adam Thorpe (1992) as a “fictional history” from 1650 to the present. The chapter on 1712 is titled “Improvements” and charts the thoughts and actions of a farmer experimenting with the new improved ways of agriculture. His diary begins: “My great-grandfather enclosed [this sixty acres] to sheep some hundred years ago but I till the greater part of it now, with no recourse to the Manor Court. Commoners are the harrow-rest to improved husbandry, is my opinion.” This nicely shows the nibbling away of the commons by an inventive group of farmers that was far less visible than the grand appropriations of the Whig elite but, in total, probably as devastating to the open commons. Note, too, how “commoners” are being recast as a hindrance.
and misery, which is uniformly to be witnessed in the vicinity of all commons, waste lands and forests” (Thompson 1993:163).

Here is one reflection of the view that later was to cast the demise of the commons as due to the reckless overuse by the commoners and its reclamation due to the innovative energy of the improvers. It also reveals how preventing commoners from using the commons served to turn them into a subordinate class of workers. In one case where the court ruled against the plaintiffs’ claim to a right to glean the harvested fields, the judge argued not only that such a practice was “inconsistent with the nature of property, which imports exclusive enjoyment”, but that to establish “such a custom as a right would be injurious to the poor themselves” since “their sustenance can only arise from the surplus of productive industry”. The logic was that, because their gleaning would reduce the farmer’s gain, he would then have to reduce his contribution to “the rates of the parish”, so, in turn, rendering their potential claim for parish relief less secure.

In sum, the proper aspiration for the poor was in charity rather than common rights. As “the high tide of enclosure coincided with the political polarisation of the 1790s, so arguments of property and improvement are joined to arguments of class discipline” (Thompson 1993:163). Whereas open commons were said to encourage “habits of idleness and dissipation and a dislike to honest labour”, enclosure ensured that the poor take “an honest employment, instead of losing time in idleness and waste”, and produced a more “respectable class looking up to the wealthier classes for labour”. Precisely the same ideas were expressed in the antagonism towards the Poor Laws that had begun to provide ever more relief to the many displaced commoners. Opponents like Reverend Townsend argued in A Dissertation on the Poor Laws (1786) that: “The poor know nothing of the motives which stimulate the higher ranks to action -- pride, honour, and ambition. In general it is only hunger which can spur and goad them on to labour”. For this reason, he saw “nothing ... more disgusting than a parish pay-table” where the poor came for relief (cited in Snell 1985:123). He concluded that hunger is the most effective guarantee of labor because it is “peaceful, silent and continuous”. This is the silent partner,

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8 These are commentaries by authors writing from the end of the eighteenth into the mid nineteenth centuries, cited by Snell 1985:170-1.

9 This last statement is cited by Polanyi 1944:113-4 and quoted by Platteau (1991).
presumably, of the supposed invisible hand of the market (see Lubasz 1992).

At the heart of these long-drawn out historical processes of exclusion is the conversion of common lands to private property. This, in turn, was based on a social theory that assumes the idea of private property is universal and even ‘natural’. Hoskins, for example, stated in The Common Lands of England and Wales (1963) that, “contrary to widespread belief ... all common land is private property. It belongs to someone, whether an individual or a corporation, and has done so from time immemorial”. Thompson illustrates the doubt to be cast on Hoskins’ claim that common land had to “belong” to someone by quoting the Russian serfs who told their lord: “We are yours, but the land is ours”. This statement can be linked with other references made by English commoners to “our” commons, and to cases that show the deep feelings of attachment to a locality and the profound sense of dislocation caused by enclosure. What these imply is a very different sense of “belonging”: not of a property belonging to someone but of people belonging to a place. It is only when the notion of property as entailing rights to things (or places) gains priority that the older sense is turned on its head. From people belonging to a place and hence, having every right to benefit from the place’s bounties, they become people who have no property which belongs to them and, hence, have no intrinsic right to the place’s resources.

It is from this historical and ideological move that comes the notion that land held in common “belonged”, in Sir William Blackstone’s words, “generally to everybody, but particularly to nobody” (cited in Thompson 1993: 161). Blackstone, the most famous eighteenth century writer on law, did recognize the rights of custom but, according to Thompson, “considered [them] less as usages than as properties annexed to things” in ways that confounded, in Blackstone’s own words, “that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe”. Here, the final phase in the transformation of the concept of property to an exclusive and alienable right to a thing (including land, which is what Blackstone was addressing) is patent (Macpherson 1987).

In summary, the erosion of common rights and the drive to enclosure may be seen as the erasure of rights based in customary use of belonging and their replacement by claims based on property rights, and to have taken place through socio-political, legal and ideological means.
III Traveling Ideas about Common Lands

Enclosure was linked inescapably in the eighteenth century with the "magic of property" and with a celebration of English progress — "O Property! O goddess, English-born", as Ambrose Phillips rhapsodized (Kingston-Mann 1998: 12). The political philosopher Adam Ferguson "contrasted civilized peoples with the inhabitants of barbarous nations that paid 'little attention to property'" (Kingston-Mann 2003: 10). These ideas were picked up in other countries seeking economic 'development'. In Russia, which in the late nineteenth into the twentieth centuries was "engaged in a life and death struggle to catch up with the west", influential people looked to England as the model (Kingston-Mann 2003, quoting Shanin). The apologists for the English enclosures such as William Blackstone and Arthur Young were invoked by the likes of the Tsarist Finance Minister Witte in attempts to rid the rural areas of the communes. Just as the mythology around the English commons as inherently doomed to inefficient and unproductive use fed into misdirected colonial land policies (see below), so it supported fundamental misinterpretation of the Russian communes. The policies implemented at the beginning of the twentieth century to privatize communes failed to achieve an agricultural revolution and failed to demonstrate that private farms were any more "innovative, productive or profitable" than the commune farms (ibid.). Esther Kingston-Mann (2003) also shows that these old debates have been resurrected in the post-soviet era where debates about the superiority of private ownership of land echo those so common in colonial and post-colonial Africa (see below).

The ideas about the English enclosure traveled, too, to the colonies. As noted above, the dominant interpretation of the enclosure of the English commons in the first part of the twentieth century was the 'triumphal' one in which the enclosure was an historical necessity for the agricultural 'revolution'. The timing of these shifts in historiographic emphasis and interpretation is important for assessing analyses and policy applied to commons and land in general in Africa. The 'English model' was taken to be universally applicable. Thus, Lord Lugard, a premier architect of the British 'indirect rule' form of colonialism, assumed that African systems had to follow a "process of natural evolution, leading up to individual ownership" (1922: 280). In the 1930s and '40s, the heroic perspective of Trevelyan appears to have been held by colonial officers and others, like Liversage, who helped reconstruct
African systems of landholding into “communal tenure”. Throughout the African territories, colonial administrators tended to define preexisting systems of rights in land and water as “communal”, usually called “tribal” and, later, “native” land. Communal tenure was conceived as static, backward and a drag on progress. This view referred to and repeated the dominant ideology on enclosure.

Expressing the same opinion, but in a new language of enterprise, Liversage (in his book, Land Tenure in the Colonies, published in 1945), invoked Prothero’s views on the English commons to explain the situation in African “communal” lands. He states that, “no regulation whatever is practised. Consequently there is no incentive on the part of any individual to restrict the number of stock turned out by him. It is the desire of every individual to amass wealth in the form of livestock ... No individual has any incentive to reduce his numbers: his own action will be of no avail without corresponding action by others” (1945:13, 49). The apparent prefiguring of Garrett Hardin’s Tragedy of the Commons thesis reflects the deeply-held assumption that “communal” forms of organization smothered individual initiative and prevented “improvement” and “progress”. This assumption emerges in many of the debates, documents and policy approaches of the colonial regimes. At the same time, these imposed ideas did not have effects separate from the politics of colonialism. Thus, over time, Africans also spoke of their systems of landholding as ‘communal’.

In Botswana, the debate formed part of the efforts of the Tswana elite, who were big cattle owners, to convince the colonial administration to promote the drilling of deep wells in the 1930s and 1940s. They used the colonial view of ‘communal’ tenure as inhibiting ‘progress’ to argue for private ownership of wells. After political independence, the government of Botswana retained not only the label of ‘communal’ for the grazing lands but many of the prejudices against it, as well as a strong push

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10 Hardin (1968): “The tragedy of the commons develops in this way. Picture a pasture open to all. It is to be expected that each herdsman will try to keep as many cattle as possible ... As a rational being, each herdsman seeks to maximize his gain. ... [He] concludes that the only sensible course for him to pursue is to add another animal ... and another ... But this is the conclusion reached by each and every rational herdsman sharing a commons. Therein is the tragedy. Each man is locked into a system which compels him to increase his herd without limit ... Ruin is the destination towards which all men rush, each pursuing his own interests... Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all”.
towards privatization. This produced the Tribal Grazing Policy of the mid 1970s that provided for leased ‘ranches’ to be carved out of the communal range. The thinking behind the policy and the actual phrasing of the Government White Paper (that led to the Parliamentary Act) echo Hardin’s thesis on the Tragedy of the Commons and, thereby, all the historical baggage that it carries. Compare Hardin’s formulation: “It is to be expected that each herdsman will try to keep as many cattle as possible on the commons … As a rational being, each herdsman seeks to maximize his gain”, with the words of the White Paper: “Under our communal grazing system, it is in no individual’s interest to limit the number of his animals”. Similar interpretations are found in the World Bank documents supporting the policy. In reality, the situation in the grazing lands required a more historically and socially situated analysis to explain what was going on than a simple case of rational, self-interested herdsmen. This cannot be elaborated here but the story includes a reduction of political authority at sub-district levels, changing patterns of herding consequent on the use of permanent wells, and the contradictions emergent from a combination of private well use and public land (Peters 1994).

A similar misleading use of the enclosure model – particularly the inherent superiority of private over communal ownership of land – is seen in other colonial territories. In Kenya, for example, administrators of the 1920s and 1930s “routinely argued that the economic horizons of the Africans … were limited by their primitive ‘communal’ practices”, a mode of thinking that produced the plan for privatizing large areas of land (Kingston-Mann 2003: 23). The postcolonial governments, however, also made use of similar notions in pursuing newer forms of privatization and appropriation (Shipton 1988).

In sum, we see how ideas about the ‘commons’ were developed in 18th and 19th century England, given considerable legitimacy by many historians and social scientists, and, although also criticized by other historians and social scientists, passed into a realm of conventional wisdoms about the relation between human beings and land. Some of these ideas acquired a technical gloss – as models – and influenced policy and practice in places far removed from Britain.

The similarities may also be due to a more direct invocation of the Hardin thesis according to a paper published in 1993. The author quotes an adviser to the Botswana Government recalling another adviser bringing up “the tragedy of the commons” idea in the early phase of the policy planning (Roe 1993: 364).
The turn to environment by history, anthropology and others, has revealed considerably more “traveling ideas”. The current historiography and ethnography of Southern Africa, for example, have been fundamentally influenced by the analysis of how colonial and postcolonial ideas about soil erosion, land management, deforestation, productive agriculture, and so forth were shaped in great part by ideas, techniques, and bureaucratic organization taken from Britain, the US, and India. In the earlier years of colonialism, these were often clothed in a moralistic garb and/or evolutionary terms, invoking stages of human or social development. Later, mirroring the institutionalization of scientific research and its use in policy, some ideas were framed in technical terms. The approach to soil erosion, for example, drew on the analyses of the US ‘dust-bowl’ phenomenon in the 1930s but by the late 20th century, was more influenced by the newer trends in ecological sciences.

The enormous literature centering on the influential thesis of the “Tragedy of the Commons” is but one example of the ways in which ideas about the environment have been incorporated into social sciences and history - with positive and negative effects. Hardin’s influential thesis, simultaneously apocalyptic and rational, has made the “tragedy of the commons ... part of the conventional wisdom in environmental studies, resource science and policy, economics, ecology, and political science” (Feeny et al. 1990:2), as well as a dominant motif in livestock and range policy in Africa. As argued above, its rootedness in European interpretations of individual self-interest and its close cousinship to a powerful theory about the English enclosures have resulted in serious misapplications in the world of policy, from Russia to Africa. Despite a large literature challenging the thesis on theoretical and empirical grounds, a literature that has led Hardin himself to accede to the criticisms by admitting that, “the title of my 1968 paper should have been ‘The Tragedy of the Unmanaged Commons’ ” (1991: 178), the thesis’ application to communally owned property is still invoked by policy-makers and others around the world.

The ability of many ideas to become ‘conventional wisdoms’ and seductive ‘narratives’ has been shown in a whole range of interpretations of the environment.

12 For example, Beinart 1984, 1989; Leach et al 1996.
in Africa (Leach and Mearns 1996, Hoben 1995). A recent arena for these debates about appropriate analytical frameworks for human-environment interactions is the burgeoning field of community-based and participatory natural resource development. But the phenomenon of such traveling ideas is not restricted to Africa. McNeill wondered in a recent essay: how did “the soil conservation gospel developed in the U.S. in the 1930s ... fit into new contexts” when it was “fervently exported to Africa, China, and elsewhere”, or “how did Dutch ideas about water management, formed in a very distinctive environment, translate into the Indonesian archipelago?” (McNeill 2003: 8). 

IV Intensified Exploitation of the Environment

I propose that one of the sources of the impetus for social scientists to incorporate environmental analysis more systematically into their studies is the intensification of natural resource exploitation across the world. The significance for social scientists and historians lies in the centrality that resource struggles have in many parts of the world. For many developing and middle income countries, natural resources are of critical importance in their efforts to ratchet up their economies and much of their development policy becomes focused on the resources. Unsurprisingly, this in turn affects many people already living on and from those same resources. A common result is competition and social conflict among groups and between groups and governments. The pronounced turn by development agencies to environmental concerns during the 1980s produced increased pressures on developing and middle income countries, often in the form of ‘conditionalities’, to promote various forms of environmental protection. Also from the 1980s to date, trends in world trade, in global movements of capital and labor, and rising populations have all produced increased income disparities within and between nations, and have resulted in two key results: intensified use of natural resources by poor and middle income people; and intensified large-scale exploitation funded largely by transnational sources.

These converging trends -- national governments depending on natural resource exploitation for economic growth, international and national pressures for

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14 Some answers to such questions can be found in the work of Beinart and Lansing, respectively, one a social historian, one an ecological anthropologist.
environmentally sustainable development, the dependence on natural resources for basic livelihood by millions of poorer people, and globalized patterns of large-scale resource exploitation -- have produced an often explosive situation. In Malaysia, a strongly centralized government and powerful individual and corporate business agents have converted enormous areas of the country's forested lands into logging and mining concessions and tourist centers such as golf courses. In so doing, they have displaced indigenous groups, causing considerable social disruption and generating a counter move by the groups, supported by national and international organizations (Nicholas 2000, Dentan et al 1997), and raised considerable fears about environmental damage. There are similar patterns in Indonesia, where a policy of massive state-sponsored migration from crowded areas like Java to less densely settled areas such as Borneo where culture and production patterns are quite different has exacerbated conflict.

In many countries, the efforts to promote a "conservation and development" approach, designed to provide livelihoods to rural people at the same time as protecting environments, have also generated social conflicts. The kinds of projects promoted under this rubric include community-based forestry or wildlife management, land management schemes, and eco-tourism. All depend on the control of land and landed resources. The conflicts emerge between groups claiming greater authority over the land and its resources targeted for 'development', conflicts that often turn on claims of who is truly local or indigenous contrasted with 'strangers' or 'immigrants' (Moore 1993, Peluso 1995, Amanor 1999, Worby 2001, Nyambara 2001, Hammar 2001). Researchers have identified other social effects of intensified intervention into localized resources by governments or other agencies, whether for demarcating conservation areas, exploitation such as logging, or establishing community projects for sustainable management of environmental resources. One is the implication for governance -- groups of people within a nation see themselves as oppressed by their government and seek ways of resisting. Second is the way in which environmental discourses figure more prominently in socio-political struggles, both at local and national levels. A third is that, all too often, government projects in the name of 'decentralization' or 'participatory development' result in extending rather than diminishing the reach of the state into local systems (Moore 1993, Li 1999, Schroeder 1999).
Competition over land and landed resources in Africa

For elaboration of these points, I turn to research on Africa. The editors of a recent volume on social history and African environments state that, the “rich new literature [on] African environmental history” reflects, in part, “mounting economic, political and moral argument about the fate of the continent’s wildlife, forest, pasture and water resources” (Beinart and McGregor 2003: 1). This resonates with a recent conclusion by J. R. McNeill about environmental history more generally. He says, the “interest in environmental history depends, in large part, on anxiety about contemporary social problems [and] ecological concerns abroad in society” (2003: 43).

The point made about “mounting … argument” about Africa’s resources is echoed forcefully in the following. Besteman and Cassanelli conclude that, “Behind most of the continent’s current political crises lie hidden wars for access to and control of productive resources” (1996: ix); and Buijtenhuijs insists that “civil wars [such as those in Rwanda and Burundi] are as much peasant wars as they are ethnic wars …[t]he age-old peasant concern with land stares social scientists in the face” (2000: 119). Both these statements, which echo the conclusions of many other writers on Africa, remind us that many conflicts labeled ‘political’ or ‘ethnic’ are simultaneously, and sometimes fundamentally, resource struggles. In reverse, however, many conflicts over land and landed resources are as much about legitimate authority as about the resources themselves (cf. Berry 2002).

Research reveals these socio-political struggles over resources to be taking place at several levels – from the most local through sub-national to national and transnational. The challenge for research is to identify these and the cross-level interactions. Only a brief review of some of the main findings is possible here.

Studies from across Africa document rising competition and conflict over land and landed resources over the past couple of decades, due to intensification of cultivation and other uses by people attempting to resist the effects of reduced incomes and higher food prices (the consequences of structural adjustment, market liberalization, and patterns of global trade), as well as reflecting an accelerated commercial use. The competition also derives from movement of groups within countries (Odgaard 2003 for Tanzania, Worby 2001 for Zimbabwe), commodification of agriculture (Bassett 1993, Amanor 1999), and alienation of land for plantations,
parks and reserves. A further set of influences comes from the ability of "economically and politically powerful actors" to take unfair advantage of programs of titling and registering land, as well as to engage in more overtly illegal acts of appropriation. A study in Kenya found that, central to unequal access to land was, “the capacity of the patron-client chains that link the national elite to the local level to gain control over resources that offer opportunities for accumulation” (Southgate and Hulme 2000: 112). This has been demonstrated, too, by Klopp 2000 for Kenya, Besteman 1999 for Somalia, Myers 1994 for Mozambique, Williams 1992 for Nigeria (among others).

Some of the studies echo the history of the appropriation of the English commons. Thus, a series of studies in Kenya shows social struggles over land that is claimed by the state (as ‘public’ land), by politically connected individuals who are able to gain preferential access to government documents and legal process, and by various groups of small farmers and traders who have set up their farms or stores on land they consider ‘theirs’. Many of these social contests are closely connected to political alliances and rivalries at local, district and national levels. The strategies followed by the different actors also echo the stories of the English enclosures: the politically powerful use their access to state bureaucracies and legal process as well as outright violence to appropriate key resources, while the mass of small users turn to public media to alert the public to scandals, send letters and other appeals to government and civil society leaders, organize public protests, and also use sabotage (burning down buildings, tearing down fences), and violence in response to being evicted by the powerful (Klopp 2000, 2002).

Community-based natural resource management

A very different phenomenon that is having effects on how people gain access to land and on broader social and political dynamics is the policy turn towards community-based natural resource management. In principle, this policy turn is a reversal of the kind of conventional wisdom about the inherent inefficiency of collectively or ‘communally’ held resources described above. Community-based management is an explicit rejection of resource control by the central state, which was the norm under colonialism and under most post-colonial states. The new approach is based on ideas of participation by people in their own ‘development’,
and on the proposition that the most local users of resources are likely to be better stewards of them than a distant state. In practice, the ongoing research coming out of Africa reveals that this move is more ambiguous – in some cases, local groups have benefited but in many, the community-based projects have intensified rather than reduced conflict over valuable resources, and have increased rather than diminished dependency.

The main rationale for community-based resource management projects is to protect environmentally valuable resources (species, ecological systems, “biodiversity”) without damaging people’s livelihoods; that is, to combine conservation with development. This paired goal is far from accepted so that there are heated debates about the pros and cons of “buffer zones” around protected areas, the role of community management in enforcing protection as well as limits on community use of certain resources, and there are also deep divisions of opinion within conservation organizations, many of which provide funds and specialist expertise to projects in Africa.

The new orientation towards community-based resource management can be positive for some local groups insofar as it provides a legitimate basis for claiming rights to localized control by groups who have been dispossessed of land or whose systems of use and rights have been displaced, ignored or overlaid by central governments’ systems. Discussions of indigenous knowledge and viable common property regimes have also facilitated arguments about better management by local groups (than by the state or external agencies), and these, in turn, have combined with the discourse and actions related to “democratization” and “civil society” participation as well as to “poverty reduction” and “livelihoods approaches”. Thus, “community” or grass-roots approaches to environmental management, which will combine conservation and development, have found justification in several ways.

On the other hand, the rhetoric of “community participation” too often has been hijacked by governments in projects that shift more costs to the local groups and that extend state reach rather than giving more rights and freedom to them (Schroeder 1999, Ribot 2000, Schafer and Bell 2002). Many authors have pointed to this sad paradox of “participatory resource management” becoming a means to “administer rather than enfranchise” (Ribot 1999:25; cf. Hoben et al 1998). Social analysts have also pointed out the problems of the term “community”: that it is more “an ideological construct” than “a place” (Silverman and Gulliver 1992); and
that specifically designated "communities" as residential groups are not organic wholes but are internally differentiated (Little 1994), so that "participation" often exacerbates inequalities (Mosse 1997). Researchers call for "greater emphasis on power dynamics, negotiation and contestation" and for recognition of the fact that the "histories of 'communities' are embedded in shifting state regimes ... and changing global markets and connections" (Mehta et al. 2001: 7-8). This emphasis on political economy echoes the conclusion in Tania Li's paper on Sulawesi, Indonesia, that, "it is the grab for land ownership propelled by the promise of economic gain through the cocoa boom, rather than the deficiency of institutions, that is shaping the transformation of livelihoods in Southeast Asia's upland populations" (quoted by Mehta et al. 2001: 7).

Research on Africa similarly shows that many projects designed to provide environmentally sustainable use of resources have generated or exacerbated conflicts over resources, and in some cases have undermined the rights of local groups to land. New schemes to promote environmental protection along with benefits to locals have themselves become new resources over which groups compete and conflict. Kepe et al. (2001) describe how a government plan for an ecotourism project on the Wild Coast of the Eastern Cape in South Africa, which was intended to attract foreign investment as well as to benefit locals, led to "major conflicts centred on resource tenure." Reports from Cameroun, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, among other places, all provide similar conclusions (Sharpe 1998, Sheridan 2000, Hammar 2001, Hughes, 2001, Dzingirai 2003).

*Transnational links in resource exploitation in Africa*

The research discussed so far— the mounting competition over resources at local (village, district, etc) level, and around the new policy turn to community-based projects—consists largely of detailed local studies. A newer set of publications focuses on the nexus of large-scale resource exploitation, the political strategies of state leaders and their cliques, the problems of 'shadow' states, and the uses of violence. This body of research, along with reports appearing in various media (newspapers, radio, internet websites), reveals intensifying competition and conflict over resources that link the local with the global. The problems of the postcolonial state in Africa have frequently been attributed to 'rent-seeking' by venal political
elites, producing ‘weak’, ‘soft’ or ‘shadow’ states in which bureaucratic breakdown, elite capture and violence are pervasive.

Newer interpretations of such conditions seek to go beyond explanations in terms of venality, or, in a phrase made famous by Jean-Francois Bayart (1993), the ‘politics of the belly’, to identify alternative forms of governing and state formation. These alternative forms include a long-established dependence on patronage-based control in which leaders make “alliances with local strongmen whom they allow to exploit local economic opportunities”, a type of regime labeled ‘patrimonial’ (Reno 1995: 112). These opportunities may include funds attached to ministries or other bureaucratic entities, private corporations, and cross-border trade. A major source for such patronage is the environment --- forests for logging, and land for mining valuable minerals or drilling for oil/gas, as well as for game hunting and miscellaneous types of tourist business. A critically new element here, facilitated by accelerated ‘global’ mobility of capital, is the “greater reliance [by national political cliques] on foreign firms and intermediaries [which] represents a significant departure from patrimonial dependence on decaying state institutions for political resources” (Reno 1995: 112).

More recently, Reno has repeated this conclusion, showing how “private commercial transactions in Africa … bolster a new internal configuration of power in place of formal state bureaucracies. … Some rulers of weak states recognize that they can manipulate transnational commercial connections and outsiders’ willingness to recognize them as mediators between local and world economies to accumulate wealth and control associates” (2001: 204). He points to a much larger increase in foreign investment in precisely those countries in Africa that are considered ineligible by the World Bank for loans due to their poor fiscal performance and lack of commitment to political-economic reform. The foreign investors “are attracted to compact, valuable and easily transportable natural resources to which the sovereign prerogatives of heads of states can allow them privileged access” (2001: 205). This is reflected by the increased, rather than decreased, presence of mining companies from Canada, Australia and South Africa in Angola, Chad and the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (ibid.). Similarly, oil and mineral companies, logging companies, and ecotourism/safari operations are found across these countries of Western and Central Africa richly endowed with valuable resources. In her analysis of large land concessions granted to private companies for tourism businesses in the
Central African Republic, Rebecca Hardin (2002) explains why such concessions are frequently a source of social conflict. First, the politics of granting and establishing concessions is marked by “forms of patronage that mediate, rival or even replace” the authority of state agencies, and that frequently combine with “identity [or ethnic] politics that align rivalries at local or regional levels with those at national or international levels” so destabilizing already volatile situations. Secondly, politically unstable states enable companies to enjoy “unrivaled dominance” and patron-client connections with persons able to take advantage of the state’s fragmentation.

Along with the increasingly important transnational networks linking ruling elites (and their strategically placed allies among local leaders) to foreign companies, other agencies, and governments, comes severe competition that, all too often, escalates into violence (Bayart et al. 1999). The current mayhem in the former Zaire (now DRC) is well known to result from the attempts by groups within and across countries to control the minerals, forests and other resources. David Moore, for example, discusses this in relation to Zimbabwe and the geopolitics of the region and to what he calls the “triple crisis of modernisation”, namely, primitive accumulation, nation state formation, and democratization, as the essential context in which to understand the resource wars (2001; cf. Duffield 2001). Michael Barrett also describes how ruling elites construct relationships with non-African states, transnational corporations and international organizations in order to stabilize or strengthen their weak control over their territories, as well as to acquire resources and wealth putatively for the state but more often for themselves (2001, 52; cf. Cooper 2002, 105). These strategies, following Bayart (1993), are called “extroversion”.

In Angola, the negative political heritage of Portuguese colonialism combined with the refusal of rival nationalist movements to give up their aim of “absolute power” (Hodges 2001: 8) produced a civil war financed by the huge oil and diamond reserves, oil under the control of the government, and diamonds largely under control of the rebel opposition, UNITA. The case of Angola may be extreme but it parallels affairs in other countries such as the internecine conflicts over minerals in DRC by numerous factions within that country and neighboring countries, over diamonds and other minerals in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, over logging in these and other West African countries such as Cameroun, and in Nigeria over oil. In all these cases, the political machinations of ruling elites (some of whom rise and fall in the conflicts) have to be seen not merely as internal to a country or region but as
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closely linked with the global political economy, specifically with companies, foreign governments, and other private agents eager to exploit Africa's resources and to sell arms and various other goods in return. Researchers, other writers, and various internet sources, all emphasize these transnational networks. This is the point that has led to theoretical shifts towards seeing the proliferation of resource exploitation, political appropriation, and diversification of income strategies that range from "informal" to illicit, as not a simple regression or descent into chaotic disorder but as new/renewed accumulation and new forms of governing. Reno goes so far as to claim that 'weak' states persist "because they and their private firm partners continue to benefit from and manipulate their juridical equality with other states, even though [they] lack centralized systems of government and do not provide much in the way of collective goods to citizens" (2001: 214).

It remains to be seen how long such rapacious regimes can be sustained. The more general point to be taken from this literature is the central role played by environmental resources in both 'dirty wars' and transnational business in parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

In conclusion, whether the cases of socio-political competition and conflict over environmental resources concern transnational deals between self-serving African leaders and multinational groups, or communities – however defined – fighting over localized resources, or manoeuvres over decentralized resource management projects … all behoove the analysts to situate social and historical analysis in particular environments and to be wary of interpretations that ‘travel’ too far from their original context.
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概念運行，環境變遷，以及全球趨勢

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I. 導論

20-21世紀的新取向是環境研究，跨越自然科學、社會科學與人文科學構成一個最新的研究領域。過去的歷史與社會科學研究，主要集中於偉人與社會菁英，今日則轉向一般平民。對於女性在歷史與社會關係的研究，例如女性人類學、女性社會學等蔚為風潮，這也實了人文與社會科學的研究領域。

環境研究的新領域包括環境史、環境人類學、歷史與文化的產物與風貌、生態過程與人類食物供給的關係，以及殖民主義對當代社會的影響等。人類學併入生態研究領域，對社會文化的分析，特別對於社會認同以及生態理論上有重大貢獻。由從前的靜態研究到今日的動態研究，對於過去靜態的觀念運行與成長極限提出質疑。環境研究範圍要求不同學科間跨領域的對話，跨領域研究成爲環境研究的基本特質。

將人類學與歷史研究相結合後，可達到以古鑑今及以今鑑古的功效，而人類學家不斷尋求解釋關鍵性事件及其過程。1950-1960年代的人類學，科技整合從結構模型轉而著重動態的時間概念，觀察改變與轉化的過程，將社會變遷視爲一種正常狀態，而非僅僅打破了穩定的結構。歷史學者將文化範圍納入分析對象，將人類學與動物學的研究相結合，這種跨領域研究的趨勢愈加明顯。另一方面，環境史研究有長時間科技整合的傳統，與地理學、人類學、建築學與自然科學相結合。

人類學與歷史相結合，發展出政治經濟學、政治生態學以及國際發展研究。1970-1980年代，社會科學關於環境研究取得顯著成果，例如政治生態學，過去只有地理學家重視，現在包括生態學者、人類學者、社會學者與農業社會學者均重視這方面的研究。

研究政治、經濟、生態的發展，藉以觀察政治社會歷史文化的範圍，這種研究即現在所謂的全球化模式。跨國公司的擴散、亞洲國家經濟力量的提升，這些均促進資金的跨國流動。透過網路與衛星通訊，資訊大量流通，加速全球一體觀

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念的形成。在某些特定國家與區域，全球化主要集中在貿易與資金的流動，但同時造成環境與自然資源開發的加劇，而國家內部或國家間的貧富差距也愈加擴大。

本文第一部份分析英國18-19世紀的圈地問題，對經濟發展與現代化的影響，圈地政策也影響了法國與俄國的思想家與決策者，關於他們對於土地使用的概念。圈地的問題被適用於非洲殖民地，其負面效果至今仍存在，而圈地概念還誤導了環境與政策的分析。

本文在於探討全球變遷，以喚醒對自然資源過度開發的關心，藉由分析全球變遷的浪潮、歷史的決定性角色、分析關鍵性的環境問題以及其目前盛行的解釋，吾人可得知，社會史及政治史若忽略考慮人類與環境間的互動，當無法掌握其過程中的重要部分，而這種情勢經常被解釋為環境惡化才需要環境保護，事實上，環境惡化是特殊歷史與社會條件下的產物。

II. 了解公共土地: 英國的圈地運動

人類初期時代，自然界一切事物，皆屬人類所共有，個人對之僅有使用權利，而無所有權。嗣後，在眾多物品中，有因使用而消滅者，如食物；亦有因使用而需佔有者，如土地；凡諸種種，因一人使用之際，他人即不能或不宜再行使用，財產權之觀念於焉產生。對於財產之主張應以佔有為根據，因而對於動產應該實際佔領，而對於不動產則必須「圈領」起來，是以不能佔有或圈領之物體，即不得為「財產權」（property right）行使的對象。

圈地運動使公共土地變為私有，所謂公共土地由眾人所有即意謂無人所有。支持圈地運動者認爲，此種作法可使農業生產量較有效率，同時有助於農業改良，避免公有化下的浪費。此外，私有土地可以滿足勞工的公共需求與穩定。反對者認為，公共土地應成為畜養家畜與公共使用的場所，土地私有化不公平且不正當，對那些沒有土地的窮人，其權益遭受到損害。透過圈地和暴力取得公共土地，使得土地所有權人與土地使用者分開，有助於增加地主的收入，但土地所有權人與使用者間必須相互協調，而圈地使得地主得以進一步剝削土地上的佃農。綜言之，在公有土地制度下，因使用者的過度濫用，導致公共土地制度消失，經由社會、政治與法律的手段，私人得以取得土地的財產權。

III. 在公共土地上的概念運行

文明人與野蠻部落不同處在於，後者較不重視土地的所有權。
19世紀末期至20世紀，俄國欲迎頭趕上西方國家，採取土地國有化政策，同時成立農民公社。農民公社的點子就是對抗土地私有化，收回私人土地回歸國家所有。公社運動失敗後，改採私有化以促進農業革命，但並無法證明私人農場會比公共農場更為有效率。18-19世紀英國土地私有化的行為，擴散到英國以外的其他地區。早期殖民主義對非洲資源的濫用，就是圈地制度在非洲大陸適用的負面結果，不顧生態環境，使得土地過度損耗，這些均與圈地運動的點子有關。

IV. 環境開發加劇

對於許多發展中與中等收入國家，自然資源是這些國家發展經濟的最重要基礎，所以他們的發展政策均集中在資源開發方面，這種情況影響在地人民及其資源。1980年代，在這些發展中與中等收入國家，因爲環保意識的抬頭，這些國家受到壓力後不得不提出若干環保政策。1980年代到今天，全球貿易、資金與勞務的高度流動，而國家內部或國家間的貧富差距也愈加擴大，究其原因有二：首先，國家內部自然資源使用的加劇；其次，跨國性的大規模資源開發。

綜言之，開發中國家加速自然資源開發的原因有三：首先，有一部份自認被政府所壓迫的人民，藉由自然資源的掌握以反抗執政當局；其次，無論在社會或政治的鬥爭中，自然資源均扮演關鍵角色；最後，國家常藉由地方分權或參與性開發為名，強化對地方資源的掌控，進一步降低地方的權力。

非洲土地及土地資源的競爭

非洲土地資源的爭奪，主要是針對資源生産的管理權，這種爭奪在盧安達與布隆地皆導致部落間的戰爭。對於土地與土地資源的衝突，往往是因爲執政當局欲掌握資源。資源衝突的層次牽涉幾個層面，即在地者、區域、國家以及跨國層次。整個非洲牽涉到上述資源衝突，人民收入減少、食物價格攀高、市場自由化以及全球貿易規則造成結構性的改變。

土地過度商業性使用使得可耕地減少，居民被迫集體遷移至他處，例如2001在辛巴威以及2003年在坦尚尼亞的狀況。全國性的統治菁英與地方集團搶奪自然資源，使得少數人得以累積更多的土地與資源。在肯亞，社會爭奪土地以及國家對公有土地的爭奪，那些有政治背景的人可以優先獲得政府授權的土地，而小農可以成立自己的農場與商店。非洲動亂的本質，就是各方對經濟特權的爭奪所導致，小農亦利用政治力、官僚與法律取得土地資源。另一方面，不滿者藉由
暴力與破壞的手段，挑戰那些既得權利者，造成動盪不安的情勢。

在地自然資源的管理

非洲國家的主要衝突多起因於資源的佔有，例如喀麥隆、坦尚尼亞以及辛巴威等國。在地人民理應享有在地資源的管理權，相較那些遠方的國家，當地人對資源的使用更為關切與重視，這種作法也合乎公民社會的要求，同時能有效降低貧窮並提升生活水準。由當地人從事資源開發與管理，可以有效的調和資源開發與養護工作。在地人民理應享有在地資源的管理權，相較那些遠方的國家，當地人對資源的使用更為關切與重視，這種作法也合乎公民社會的要求，同時能有效降低貧窮並提升生活水準。由當地人從事資源開發與管理，可以有效的調和資源開發與養護工作。在印尼的情況是，當地居民搶奪土地所有權，以種植可可來換取。

永續發展與共同開發成為新的爭端，環境資源的永續使用導致與資源開發的衝突，侵蝕了土地所有人的權利，促進環境保護以及在地人的利益成為衝突的新根源。

非洲資源開發的跨國聯繫

昔日的薩伊，今日剛果民主共和國的內亂，也是由於不同派系爭奪礦物、森林與天然資源所導致，其主因在於爭奪石油與鑽石的利益。政府握有多數的石油資源，反對派安哥拉全面獨立陣線（UNITA）則掌握鑽石的開採。UNITA為該國極左獨立組織，採取馬克斯主義與毛澤東的游擊戰路線。加拿大、澳大利亞與南非的跨國礦業公司，在安哥拉、查德與剛果民主共和國爭取開採礦物的特許權。

賴比瑞亞、獅子山、幾內亞爭奪鑽石及其他礦物資源，其他西非國家如喀麥隆、奈及利亞則爭奪石油資源。辛巴威自脫離白人統治後，以暴力手段攫取原屬於白人的土地與農莊。

透過跨國網絡的連結，非洲國家的統治階層與外國利益集團掛勾，換言之，非洲國家領導人、政府、外國公司私人代表形成一利益共同體，掌握環境資源的開發與利用權。由於許多非洲國家內部政局不穩，許多國家領導人經常以出售天然資源的方式，換取外國的武器與資金，同時強化與外國政府間的關係，藉以鞏固國內政權。國家內部不同的利益團體，經常因為爭奪天然資源而發生衝突，嚴重者導致內戰發生。特別是在那些漢南非洲國家，社會政治競爭與環境資源的衝突，皆因於非洲國家領導人其個人的政治利益，以及跨國公司的商業利益，兩者結合後推行各項計畫以取得地方性的天然資源。對這些國家而言，可以從經濟與天然資源開發的角度，分析其內部社會與歷史的變遷情況。在這些貪婪政權的統治下，國家資源受到了不正常的扭曲。