

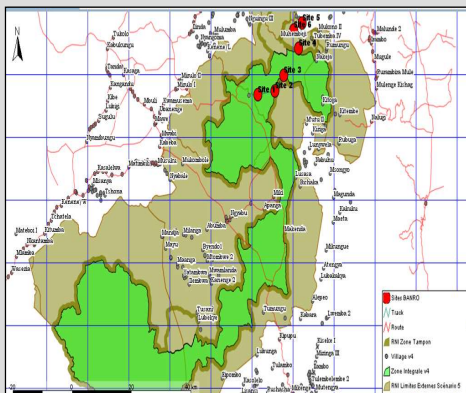
Territorialisation, resistance and acquiescence at the 'extraction-conservation nexus': the case of Itombwe Nature Reserve

Fergus Oleary Simpson, Institute of Development Policy, University of Antwerp

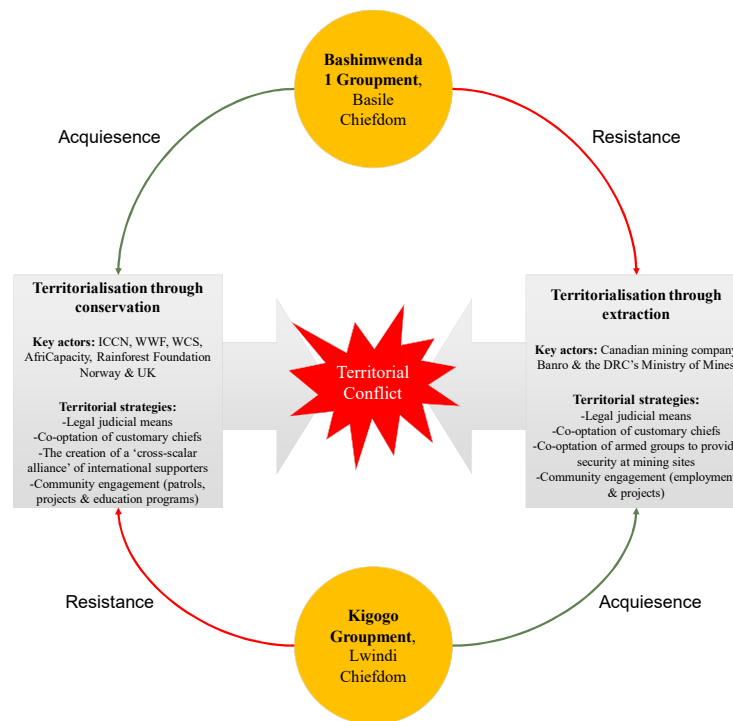
Fikiri Zirhumana Jacques, University of Kisangani

Introduction

Political ecologists have considered the social and economic impacts of industrial mining (Geenen and Verweijen, 2017) and protected areas on neighboring communities (Holmes, 2007), and how this can generate conflicts at the local-level. This poster analyses such conflicts through the lens of territorialisation (Vandergaest and Peluso, 1995), framing both extraction and conservation as rival territorial projects within countries – attempts to define how land is used, who it should belong to, and what purpose it should serve. Focusing on responses at the community-level, we illustrate these processes with the case study of Itombwe Nature Reserve (INR): one of the latest community conservation areas to be established during eastern DRC's protracted conflict, as well as the site of mineral prospection by the Canadian mining company Banro.



Results:



Key Findings

1. Territorialisation through conservation and territorialisation through extraction can be considered rival territorial projects in INR. Though there were some differences, we were surprised to find that actors driving each of these processes drew upon similar discursive and material strategies to achieve their goals. Both the Canadian mining company Banro and conservation organisations couched their territorial claims within the context of the DRC's legal framework, arguing that the law and state were on their side. They both also attempted to financially co-opt customary chiefs and gain the approval of local populations through community engagement – all with the aim minimising resistance (and maximising acquiescence) toward their territorial ambitions.
2. At the community-level, we uncovered diverse responses to territorialisation through conservation and extraction, including cases of both resistance and acquiescence. In Bashimwenda 1 Group, we found local communities generally supported conservation and resisted extraction, whereas in Kigogo Group, we found local communities strongly resisted conservation and supported extraction. We found instances of everyday, public and rightful resistance (Scott, 1985; O'Brien, 1996) in both Groups; however, we also uncovered a third form of resistance that we believe makes an original contribution to the literature on community responses to extraction and conservation.
3. Our research suggests that processes of territorialisation through conservation and extraction were not only the subjects of resistance in INR, but in certain circumstances, instrumentalised by local communities as channels of resistance in and of themselves. As such, support for extraction in Kigogo can be viewed as a way to resist conservation, and support for conservation in Bashimwenda 1 can be viewed as a way to resist extraction.

Methods

We carried out qualitative fieldwork from January to July 2019. During this period, we reviewed legal documents which govern mining and conservation in DRC, and carried out 35 interviews with members of South Kivu's environmental civil society, conservation NGOs, ICCN and key stakeholders in South Kivu's mining sector. Unfortunately, Banro did not grant us an interview. We also conducted seventeen days of fieldwork in Basile and Lwindi chiefdoms where we conducted interviews with local communities and customary chiefs.

Literature cited

- Geenen, S., Verweijen, J., 2017. Explaining fragmented and fluid mobilization in gold mining concessions in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. *The extractive industries and society*, 4(4), 758–756.
- Holmes, G., 2007. Protection, Politics and Protest: Understanding Resistance to Conservation. *Conservation and Society* 5, 184–201.
- O'Brien, K.J., 1996. Rightful Resistance. *World Politics* 49, 31–55.
- Scott, J.C., 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale University Press.
- Vandergaest, P., Peluso, N. 1995. Territorialization and state power in Thailand. *Theory and Society*, 21(3), 385 – 426.

Further information

Please email us at Fergus.Simpson@uantwerpen.be or jafik2111@gmail.com with any questions, suggestions or comments.