

THE 'EXTRACTION-CONSERVATION NEXUS' IN EASTERN DRC: CASES OF RESISTANCE AND ACQUIESCENCE IN ITOMBWE NATURE RESERVE

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Introduction

In this chapter we explore tensions between two processes currently underway in many parts of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): a) efforts to extract non-renewable resources below ground and b) attempts to rehabilitate, conserve and preserve renewable resources above ground. Extensive research has sought to understand how people respond to either processes of extraction or conservation in eastern DRC (Geenen & Verweijen 2017; Verweijen & Marijnen 2016). Less work has examined how people respond in landscapes affected by these two processes simultaneously. This oversight is surprising given the impacts of the 'extraction-conservation nexus' on the dynamics of violent conflict and the livelihoods of many Congolese. We begin by providing a general discussion of extraction and conservation, then narrow our focus on the theoretical literature covering resistance to these two processes. Next we describe our qualitative research approach and provide an overview of the laws which govern processes of extraction and conservation in DRC. Then we introduce our case study, Itombwe Nature Reserve (INR): one of the latest protected areas to be established during Congo's protracted conflict and the site of twelve industrial and artisanal mining permits. Drawing on the resistance literature we ask, how do different stakeholders position themselves in relation to processes of extraction and conservation? Do they choose to resist or acquiesce, and if so why? In addition, is there a relationship between how people respond to extraction and how they respond to conservation? Our results show a campaign of 'rightful resistance' (O'Brien 1996) waged against the industrial mining company Banro by a 'cross-scalar alliance' (Conde 2017) of environmental activists. Interestingly, one of the campaign's core arguments was that conservation (and *not* industrial mineral extraction) is fundamentally in the interests of the local population. However, at the level of artisanal miners

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and customary chiefs living in and around the Reserve, we uncovered heterogeneous responses to extraction and conservation, including cases of both resistance and acquiescence to both processes. We conclude that extraction and conservation 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 can be viewed as a way to resist conservation, and support for conservation can be viewed as a way to resist extraction. We encourage future research to interrogate these possibilities in other landscapes positioned at the 'extraction-conservation nexus'.

1. Extraction and conservation: the state of the debates

The notion of extraction usually refers to non-renewable mineral and hydrocarbon resources; however, it is also used in the context of agricultural, forest and water resources. It is closely related to the concept of extractivism, which refers to 'those activities which remove large quantities of natural resources that are not processed, or processed only to a limited degree, especially for export' (Acosta 2013: 62). In this text we specifically use the concept to refer to the extraction of mineral resources.

In resource-rich countries, governments, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and an increasing number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) promote the extractive sector as *the* most expedient route to economic development and poverty reduction. Both right and left-leaning governments have adopted non-renewable resource extraction as a central feature of their policy agendas. In Latin America, the 'Left-Turn' or pink tide of progressive governments in the 1990s and 2000s saw extraction as a means of expanding the public purse and enhancing economic diversification in the future (Svampa 2013). Although the African continent has not undergone a progressive shift of this sort, the unwavering commitment to extractivism among many institutions is comparable. There is therefore 'a sense in which the new extractivism in Latin America is also alive and kicking in Sub-Saharan Africa' (Ayelazuno 2014: 295). For example, the African Union's (2009: v) *African Mining Vision* is 'Transparent, equitable and optimal exploitation of mineral resources to underpin broad-based sustainable growth and socio-economic development.' The high-profile Africa Progress Panel (2013: 8) argues that 'Africa's petroleum, gas and mineral resources have become a powerful magnet for foreign investment. With new exploration revealing much larger reserves than were previously known, Africa stands to reap a natural resource windfall.' Moreover, the number of NGO initiatives that support extractives-led growth through good governance is growing every day; these range from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Publish What You Pay (PWYP) and the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (KPCS).

Whether we look at the policy discourses of governments on either side of the political spectrum, global IFIs, and an increasing number of NGOs, in countries with abundant non-renewable resource wealth one thing is clear: extraction is the only game in town. Arsel *et al.* (2016) describe this move toward extraction as a policy objective to trump all others as an 'extractive imperative'. However, the drive toward extractivism has not escaped criticism. Indeed, to many commentators extractivism has irrefutably (perhaps unavoidably) pejorative connotations. Many political ecologists see it as a hallmark of the injustices of colonialism and neo-colonialism; as the means through which *rich* countries in the Global North have historically exploited *poor* countries in the Global South for their resource wealth; as an inherent part of the dependency relationship between the developed and the undeveloped (see Acosta 2013; Ayelalzano 2014; Bush 2008; Gudynas 2013; Svampa 2013). In turn, there is a substantial body of empirical evidence on the social, environmental and economic discontents of non-renewable resource extraction, perhaps the most famous being that which covers the 'resource curse' or 'paradox of plenty'. According to this thesis, countries that are abundant in natural resources grow slower, perform worse across a variety of development indicators, are more authoritarian, and experience greater frequency and intensity of violent conflict than countries with fewer natural resources (see Auty 1994; Collier & Hoeffler 2004; Gylfason 2001; Sachs & Warner, 2001). Other commentators have focussed on the socio-environmental impacts of extraction at the local-level, on ecosystems, indigenous communities and artisanal miners (Acuña 2015; Hope 2016; Holterman 2014; Radley 2019). At this scale, the evidence that extraction provides tangible benefits to people living in the vicinity of extractive projects is weak.

At the same time as the rise of extractivism, another movement has gained momentum to conserve environmental systems, landscapes, and biodiversity through the establishment of protected areas (Roe 2008). Traditionally, protected areas have both been designed and implemented according to what has been described as the paradigm of 'fortress conservation' (Igoe 2002). At the core of this paradigm is the idea – a relatively contemporary one – that human beings are separate from natural systems (West *et al.* 2006). This notion can be traced back to the European settlers who first emigrated to America from the 1400s onward, and back to European aristocracy and the lifestyle that went with it (Anderson & Grove 1988; Neumann 1998). In Africa, the establishment of protected areas was a way of maintaining an aristocratic way of life that had declined in Britain and other nations (Adams 2013). Conservation policies were consequently designed to preserve the species of most interest to Europeans in terms of sporting thrills and aesthetic pleasures (Quinn & Ockwell, 2010). With such motives at the vanguard of decision-making, scant attention was paid to the needs of indigenous populations; needs these people had met for hundreds if not thousands

of years through their surrounding environments. The fortress paradigm has thus resulted in top-down approaches to conservation that prioritise safari hunting and tourism over local resource and land uses. As a result, countless people have been dispossessed of their lands and resources, causing significant conflict between conservation authorities and local communities (Brockington *et al.* 2006; Holmes 2007; West *et al.* 2006).

The community conservation paradigm emerged around the 1980s as an attempt to mitigate some of the most egregious impacts of protected areas on human rights, particularly as a result of displacement and dispossession (Roe 2008; Balint 2006). Rather than viewing local communities as the fundamental cause of environmental degradation, the community conservation paradigm is grounded on the idea that communities can and should play a role in the management of ecosystems (Blaikie 2006). As such, it poses a challenge to the notion of pristine and untouched 'wilderness' areas devoid of human habitation. By encouraging a policy discussion that recognises the role of traditional knowledge and customary institutions alongside technical-scientific expertise, the community conservation paradigm often results in more 'bottom-up' conservation initiatives (Becker & Ghimire 2003). It also promotes the idea that local communities must derive benefits from protected areas if conservation initiatives are to succeed (Brockington 2004). Thus, community conservation areas 'typically involve sharing park revenue with local residents, promoting opportunities for villagers to earn income from tourism, or offering other social and economic improvements linked to conservation' (Balint 2006: 137).

Although community conservation has no doubt fared better than fortress approaches in terms of human rights, there are numerous cases where it has failed to meet the expectations of both conservationists and local communities (Balint 2006). Blaikie (2006: 1946) describes how community-based conservation can disturb 'existing local relations' and provide 'an opportunity for the powerful to rent-seek, as it can be used to protect or reinforce archaic and regressive forms of governance (e.g., chieftaincy and patriarchy), and its benefits can be captured by elites.' At the same time, there are conservationists who oppose such schemes on the grounds that they put people before nature and therefore undermine the original aims of conservation (*ibid.*). Brockington (2004) takes a more radical approach, challenging the fundamental premise upon which community conservation rests – i.e. that communities must have a stake in conservation for protected areas to succeed in the long-run. Presenting evidence from Mkomazi Game Reserve in Tanzania, he convincingly argues that protected areas simply do not need the support of local communities in order to flourish; rather they can thrive with or without popular consent. Thus, he suggests the community conservation paradigm is founded precariously upon a myth.

Despite the often noble goals of the modern-day conservation movement, it has often proved as contentious an issue as extraction. In fact, there

is an emerging body of literature which argues these ostensibly opposing processes are not as dissimilar as they first appear (see Enns *et al.* 2019). For instance, in the Global South both extraction and conservation have their origins in the Colonial past (Acosta 2013; Neumann 1998). Thus, at least in their initial guises, these practices were conceived of, introduced and managed to serve the needs of populations far from where they were physically located. As a consequence, many extractive and conservation projects could be considered forms of 'land grabbing' (Borras & Franco 2013; Hall *et al.* 2015), resulting in the violent dispossession and expulsion of local populations from their resources and territory. Indeed, there are commentators who argue that fundamentally resource extraction and biodiversity conservation are built on the same logic: that of transforming nature, be that gold or vast tracts of wilderness, into commodities for exchange (Mendoza *et al.* 2017). It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the number of collaborations between the extractive industries and conservation organisations is increasing (Enns *et al.* 2019). In the next section, we review the theoretical literature covering one of the most common responses to processes of both extraction and conservation – that is, resistance.

A theoretical framework: modes of resistance

There is a large body of literature on how individuals, communities, activists, NGOs, and even governments discursively and physically resist processes of extraction and conservation (Arsel *et al.* 2016; Cavanagh & Benjaminsen 2015; Conde 2017; Geenen & Verweijen 2017; Holmes 2007; Verweijen & Marijnen 2016; Verweijen 2017). We begin this section with a brief overview of some of the key 'modes' of resistance identified in the theoretical literature, after which we narrow the focus of our discussion to resistance in the context of extraction and conservation.

One of the most influential works on resistance is James Scott's (1985) seminal 'Weapons of the Weak'. In it he argues that resistance can occur through both 'everyday' and 'public' channels. Everyday or disguised resistance shows up in 'foot-dragging, dissimulations, false compliance, feigned ignorance, desertion, pilfering, smuggling, poaching, arson, slander, sabotage, surreptitious assault and murder, anonymous threats, and so on (Scott 1989: 34).' Acts of public or overt resistance can involve 'violent forms of political action – e.g. riots, rebellion, revolutionary movements' and 'less violent forms – e.g. petitions, rallies, peaceful marches, protest voting, strikes, boycotts (Scott 1989: 33).' According to Scott (1989), one of the main differences between everyday and public resistance is the degree of change that the resister aims to achieve. 'Where institutionalised politics is formal, overt, concerned with systematic, *de jure* change, everyday resistance is informal, often covert, and concerned largely with immediate, *de facto* gains (p. 33).' However, everyday and public forms of resistance are also closely related. Lilja (2017: 44) describes how the two can be linked

in a linear fashion (where everyday resistance leads to public resistance and vice versa) as well as through 'oscillation dynamics' (where disguised resistance and public resistance are utilised intermittently 'in different times and spaces, depending on what is feasible').

A form of resistance closely associated with public resistance is known as 'rightful resistance'. O'Brien (1996: 33) defines rightful resistance as 'a form of popular contention that 1) operates near the boundary of an authorized channel, 2) employs the rhetoric and the commitments of the powerful to curb political and economic power, and 3) hinges on locating and exploiting divisions among the powerful.' Rightful resisters thus often couch their claims within the context of existing laws and policies; by doing so they aim to demonstrate the ways in which politicians and economic elites are not living up to their own, self-professed standards. In contrast to those engaged in everyday resistance, people participating in both rights-based and public struggles aim to capture the attention of elites – and make significant efforts to do so. For this reason, rightful and public resistance are less likely to take place in extreme authoritarian regimes than everyday resistance, which has the benefit of being able to occur under the radar of repressive state authorities (O'Brien 1996). A key difference between public and rightful resistance is that the former tends to characterise the state as unjust and exploitative, whereas the latter is more focussed on highlighting where individuals within the state have failed to properly adhere to their own standards and laws.

The respective literatures covering both extraction and conservation are replete with examples of 'everyday', 'public' and 'rightful' resistance. Notably, these concepts were originally developed to describe resistance directed against state-led projects (see O'Brien 1996; Scott 1985). However, they have now been adapted to apply to the processes of extraction and conservation, which are often driven by private companies or NGOs, rather than central governments. Resistance to extraction has ranged from public-facing, rights-based approaches such as 'legal court cases, activist-scientist collaborations and local referendums or "consultas" at community level (Conde 2017: 80)' to more violent tactics, such as attacking and destroying the property of mining companies and even the kidnapping of their employees (see Geenen & Verweijen 2017; Verweijen 2017). Public and rightful resistance to extraction appears to increasingly take place through what Conde (2017: 80) describes as 'cross scalar alliances'. These alliances combine 'local narratives and alternatives' with 'global discourses (to clean water, to take decisions, indigenous rights) and environmental justice' in order to achieve their goals. Other work has focussed specifically on everyday resistance to extractive projects. For example, Jenkins (2017: 1455) describes how in the Andes, 'anti-mining activist women exemplify the extent to which their resistance forms part of a mostly unspectacular but constant struggle... a continual presence in their lives.'

The conservation literature draws heavily upon the concept of everyday resistance. For example, in a review of thirty-four published case studies, Holmes (2007) identifies patterns of everyday resistance to conservation at different temporal and spatial scales. He argues that the continuation of banned livelihood practices inside protected areas, ranging from collecting resources to (re)occupying farmland, can be considered an implicit form of resistance. These illegal activities both enable local communities to gain the material resources necessary for survival, but also to make a political statement about their historical rights to resources and land. Other innovative work has uncovered resistance against conservation that is 'tactically heterogeneous': at once everyday, public, and rightful. For example, Cavanagh and Benjaminsen (2015) show how farmers draw upon a range of resistance tactics to support a strategy of guerrilla agriculture within Uganda's Mount Elgon protected area. Rather than characterising the overall resistance effort as hidden, overt or rights-based, the authors show how the local population simultaneously deploy a range of tactics to achieve their aims, including 'nonviolent, militant, discursive and formal-legal tactics (p. 725).' Together, these tactics form part of a holistic campaign of resistance, an approach that is flexible about the techniques it employs yet still keenly focussed on its overarching goal.

In this text we take inspiration from a combination of the approaches summarised above. In so doing, we conceptualise resistance as inherently multidimensional: something that can be planned and strategic, yet also opportunistic and spontaneous; something that can work (often simultaneously) with and against formal institutions; and something that can occur at times out in the open and at others times hidden in the shadows. Given the numerous tactics and positions available to groups of resisters, we argue that it is important to understand how different resistance efforts intersect, as well as how they can both support and contradict each other. In the next section, we provide an overview of our research methodology, including case study selection, data collection, and analysis.

2. Methodology

We chose Itombwe Nature Reserve as a case study to explore the responses of different stakeholders to the extraction-conservation nexus for several reasons. Firstly, the reserve is the site of twelve industrial and artisanal mining permits, as well as numerous unofficial artisanal mining sites that provide a valuable source of income for local people. Secondly, the reserve is one of the newest and least understood protected areas to be established during eastern DRC's protracted conflict. Finally, the reserve provides an interesting case study in that it was at first established along the lines of the fortress conservation paradigm, but then changed to a community conservation area as a result of a successful campaign of resistance waged by local

communities and NGOs. Data collection took place in four phases, some of which took place concurrently and some of which took place sequentially.

- *Phase one (February 2019)*: an in-depth assessment of the legal documents³ which govern conservation and mining in DRC with the aim of identifying areas of agreement and contradiction.
- *Phase two (February 2019)*: an evaluation of the degree of overlap between the boundaries of the reserve⁴ and industrial and artisanal mining permits.⁵
- *Phase three (February-August 2019)*: 35 semi-structured interviews with members of South Kivu's environmental civil society, local and international conservation NGOs, ICCN and key stakeholders in South Kivu's mining sector.⁶ Interview participants were chosen based on their knowledge of processes of extraction and conservation inside INR. Our (flexible) interview guide included questions on how the reserve was established, how it is governed, and on responses to processes of both extraction and conservation.
- *Phase four (July 2019)*: seventeen days of qualitative fieldwork in Basile and Lwindi Chiefdoms. Basile was chosen because it is where L'Institut congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature's (ICCN) INR head office is located and the site of the majority of community conservation activities. Lwindi was chosen because it is where the Canadian mining company Banro has been conducting mineral prospection inside the reserve. We focussed our research on the Groupment of Kigogo in Lwindi and the Groupment of Bashimwenda 1 in Basile. Here we drew on a variety of qualitative research methods: semi-structured interviews with nine artisanal miners in Lwindi, 14 artisanal miners in Basile and two customary chiefs in both Basile and Lwindi; and a focus group with five artisanal miners in Lwindi. We also sat in on a two-day workshop (from 27-28 June 2019) organised by the NGO Max Impact on the governance of mining cooperatives in Basile Chiefdom. All interviews lasted between 30-45 minutes and the focus group about half an hour. The questions asked throughout all research methods focussed on reactions toward processes

³ We reviewed three legal documents for this research: the DRC's 2018 Mining Code, the 2014 Law relative to the conservation of nature, and the 2011 Law on the fundamental principles relating to the protection of the environment.

⁴ The IPIS map overlaying industrial mining permits, artisanal mining zones, and protected areas can be viewed at this link: <http://ipisresearch.be/mapping/webmapping/drcongo/v6/#-3.068136272675531/28.709976448310726/8.323083015646882/4/1,4/5.ao>

⁵ Details of all mining permits in DRC are shown on the DRC Mining Cadastre Portal: <http://drlicences.cami.cd/en/>

⁶ Unfortunately, the Canadian mining company Banro, which owns several mining permits inside INR, did not grant us an interview.

of extraction and conservation inside INR. Artisanal miners were chosen as local informants based on the initial recommendations of customary chiefs and then through a snowball sampling strategy.

In terms of data analysis, all text data was coded using NVivo software. We generated initial codes based on our interpretation of the literature covering extraction and conservation, in particular regarding resistance to these two processes. We then iteratively honed and adapted these codes based on the key themes that emerged through our initial data analysis. Next, we compared and contrasted the codes generated for different legal documents and stakeholder groups to identify areas of agreement and divergence. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, almost all of our sources have been kept anonymous.

We encountered several challenges throughout data collection. To reach our two main research sites we often had to walk for several hours from where we were staying. This restricted the time we could spend in communities. When we did arrive at these sites, members of the local population often perceived us to be NGOs coming with funds and projects. Some of our respondents, especially artisanal miners, were deeply suspicious of our motives, concerned that our research could restrict their access to mining sites in the future. Finally, when we interviewed miners in the vicinity of mine site managers or customary chiefs, we often found that miners were reluctant to share their true opinions and feelings. This could have created a response bias where the opinions of miners were more similar to those of customary chiefs than would have otherwise been.

3. Extraction and conservation in DRC

About thirteen per cent of the DRC is covered by protected areas.⁷ The country is therefore on track to establish protected areas on at least fifteen per cent of its territory⁸ (351,000 km²), an area roughly equivalent to the size of Germany. There is significant overlap between the existing network of protected areas and the land the government has allocated to mining permits. One study found that 629 mining permits overlap with about 3.5 million hectares of protected areas (Javelle & Veit, 2013: 3). There are also two high-profile cases where oil exploration permits overlap with protected areas, in Virunga and Salonga National Parks (Global Witness 2019; Paravicini 2019). In addition, tens of thousands of artisanal and small-scale

⁷ From interview with Bukavu-based NGO on 22 February 2019.

⁸ As stated in the 2014 Law relative to the conservation of nature.

(ASM) miners are known to operate inside DRC's protected areas.⁹ Most of these miners operate illegally, though some work inside government-certified artisanal mining zones.

The legal context

The laws which govern mining, the environment and conservation in DRC all contain articles that prohibit mineral extraction inside protected areas. Article 6 of the 2018 Mining Code states that 'mining, quarrying rights or artisanal mining zones'¹⁰ must not be granted in protected areas. Article 25 of the 2014 Law Relative to the Conservation of Nature states that all activities incompatible with the objectives of conservation are prohibited in protected areas. In addition, 'subject to exemptions in this law', any mineral exploitation rights granted within the boundaries of protected areas and their buffer zones¹¹ are 'null and void'. Article 74 provides detail on penalties for breaking this law. It states, 'any person who is found to be engaging in mining or quarrying activities inside a protected area is liable to pay a fine of one hundred million to one billion Congolese francs'. On top of this, any public official found responsible for authorising such activities will 'be sentenced to six to twelve months in prison and required to pay a fine of ten to fifty million Congolese francs'. Although Article 33 of the Law on the Fundamental Principles Relating to the Protection of the Environment does not specifically refer to mining in protected areas, it does state that 'Any activity likely to harm the environment is prohibited in protected areas'. Given the negative environmental impacts of extractive projects, this presumably includes mineral and oil extraction. In summary, mining in protected areas is illegal according to all three laws.

However, areas of ambiguity do exist. Article 29 of the 2014 Law Relative to the Conservation of Nature states that mining activities may be permitted in protected area buffer zones as long as those activities do not negatively impact protected areas. A decision to allow extraction to take place in a buffer zone is subject to a preliminary environmental and social impact study. The problems here are twofold: (a) the locations of many buffer zones in DRC are yet to be properly established, and (b) due to both the vested economic interests of Congolese elites and lack of state capacity, it is unlikely that comprehensive environmental and social impact assessments would take place under present conditions. This could easily result in

⁹ Our interviews with conservation NGO's suggest that tens of thousands of miners operate inside Okapi Wildlife Reserve and between 16,000-20,000 in Garamba National Park.

¹⁰ All quotes from these documents are based on the author's own translations.

¹¹ According to Article 2 point 47, a buffer zone is an 'area between the central part of a protected area and the surrounding terrestrial or marine landscape, which protects the network of protected areas of potentially negative external influences, and which is essentially an area of transition.'

destructive mining activities going ahead not only in buffer zones, but also in areas deemed critical for biodiversity conservation. In addition, although it is illegal for the government to allocate mining permits or for mining activities to take place within the boundaries of a protected area, it is possible for the government to declassify a protected area in order to allow mining activities to proceed. According to Article 35 of the Law Relative to the Conservation of Nature, 'where unforeseen and exceptional circumstances seriously affect the natural features of a protected area or for reasons of public interest, the government may decide to partially or totally decommission it'. As to what constitutes 'unforeseen and exceptional circumstances' and 'reasons of public interest', the law is unclear. The problem with grey areas such as these is that they leave the law open to interpretation, a problem exacerbated in places like DRC where rent-seeking and corruption are common-place, particularly in the extractive sector (Trefon 2016).

4. The 'conservation-extraction' nexus in Itombwe Nature Reserve

A transition from fortress- to community-based conservation

Located in the DRC's South Kivu Province, northwest of Lake Tanganyika, the Itombwe Massif is home to the largest, most isolated block of unbroken montane forest on the African continent. The area contains a number of endemic species, including eastern chimpanzees, forest elephants and critically endangered eastern lowland gorillas. However, in recent decades the area's rich biodiversity has come under threat from regional conflict, increased resource pressures from urban areas and both artisanal and industrial mining. On 25 February 1998, in an attempt to preserve the area's unique biodiversity, the Governor of South Kivu Province expressed interest in establishing a reserve in the area through Ministerial Decree no. 01/008/CAB/GP. On 11 October 2016, with the backing of World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the DRC's Minister of Environment unilaterally established INR through Ministerial Decree no. 038/CAB/MIN/ECN-EF/2006 (Lang 2017). This document was signed by the Prime Minister and included a very rough map produced by World Resources Institute (WRI) which indicated where the boundaries of the reserve would be located (see Figure 1). According to Lang (2017), these boundaries covered an area of 15,000 km², had been 'outlined on paper, in an office' and 'had little to do with the realities of the field.'

Communities reacted with both consternation and anger. Many of them were living inside the boundaries of the reserve and had not been consulted before the decree was issued. They justifiably argued that their ancestral rights had been violated in the name of a conservation agenda imposed by outside actors. Kujirakwinja *et al.* (2019: 50) described the initial way in

which the reserve was created as a 'classic case' of fortress conservation. Working together with the local NGO AfriCapacity, some of the affected communities planned to take the issue to court and have the entire reserve degazetted (*ibid.*). Although ICCN and its partners (WWF and WCS) did not necessarily agree with the top-down manner in which the reserve had been created, they did not support total degazettement, as fundamentally they wanted the Itombwe Massif to remain legally protected (*ibid.*). In 2008, using a grant obtained from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), WCS initiated a long participatory process to try and find a different way of approaching the conservation of the area. It aimed to find a means of both respecting the rights of communities and securing the legal protection of the reserve (Kujirakwinja *et al.* 2019). As part of this process, the international NGOs WCS, WWF, Rainforest Foundation UK, Rainforest Foundation Norway, the Congolese NGO Africapacity, and ICCN, came together to try and find a solution that they could agree on alongside communities.

These organisations decided to embark on a large-scale, participatory mapping exercise with 550 villages situated in and around the reserve (Kujirakwinja *et al.* 2019). Their aim was to give local communities the opportunity to contribute to the delineation of the reserve's boundaries and identify zones to accommodate different forms of land use. Based on the data collected during this exercise, provincial decree no. 16/026/GP/SK re-established the boundaries of INR On 20 June 2016 (see Figure 2). The new boundaries covered an area of 5,732 km² which was divided into three zones: an integral zone where no human use would be allowed; a multiple-use zone where limited human activities could be negotiated with ICCN; and an intermediary or buffer zone where no activities would be allowed other than customary rituals. The integral zone comprised 36.3 per cent of the reserve, the buffer zone 18.8 per cent and the multiple use zone 44.9 per cent. The new boundaries and zoned management approach won the support of many people living in and around the reserve,¹² many of whom now participate in community patrols and biomonitoring activities in collaboration with ICCN. In turn, the international conservation community lauded the decree as a tremendous success, particular for the conservation of the eastern lowland gorilla.

Despite this progress, the reserve remains beset by challenges. There are still communities that discursively and physically oppose its presence. Moreover, community conservation activities are restricted by the fact that large parts of the reserve remain under the control of armed groups, while other areas are sites of active conflict between tribes. Our research suggests

¹² For example, communities in Basile and Wamuzimu are working closely with ICCN to establish a Reserve on their lands.

that many smaller armed groups, including fragments of FDLR and Mai Mai, use the deep forests inside the reserve as a place to hide, trade and extract resources. In Itombwe Sector, ongoing violent conflict between a coalition of Banyamulenge Gumino and Twiganeho militias, against an alliance of armed groups from the Babembe, Bafuliru, Banyindu and Bavira tribes, has made it impossible for ecoguards or representatives of ICCN to reach certain parts of the reserve. Several armed groups from Burundi are also known to operate in the Itombwe Sector, including the National Liberation Forces (FNL) and RED-Tabara groups, the latter of which is said to receive support from Rwanda (Kivu Security Tracker 2019). These groups have now joined the campaign against the Banyamulenge, while the Rwandan National Congress (RNC) militia has joined forces with the Banyamulenge's Gumino group, adding further fuel to the fire in this already explosive conflict (*ibid.*). In addition to the challenge of insecurity, twelve artisanal and industrial mining permits overlap with the new boundaries of the reserve. In the next section, we provide an overview of these permits and of mineral prospection activities carried out within INR by the Canadian mining company Banro.

When conservation and extraction meet

Figure 1 shows a map of INR produced by IPIS.² These boundaries reflect the WRI map depicted in the original 2016 gazettelement document.¹³ Table 1 shows details of all twelve mining permits that overlap with the 2006 boundaries of the reserve. All of these permits are currently active: three are industrial exploitation permits, nine are industrial exploration permits¹⁴ and two are artisanal mining zones (ZEAs). The ten industrial mining permits that overlap with the reserve are owned by three different companies. The Canadian mining company Banro fully owns both Banro Congo Mining Sarl and Twangiza Mining as subsidiaries. However, it is in the process of selling Twangiza Mining and its permits to the Chinese state enterprise Baiyin International Investments. Although they only overlap with a small portion of the reserve to the north, the permits listed under Twangiza Mining are exploitation permits (41, 42, and 43) and therefore have the most potential to damage INR's fragile ecosystem. Banro's four exploration permits (1576, 3872, 3873, and 3874) cover a much larger portion of the reserve, including the core conservation zone, but pose a greater risk to conservation. There are

¹³ Unfortunately, a map does not currently exist showing the 2016 boundaries of the Reserve overlaid with the locations of mining permits. We therefore base this part of our analysis on the 2006 boundaries shown in this map produced by IPIS: <http://ipisresearch.be/mapping/webmapping/drcongo/v6/#-3.068136272675531/28.709976448310726/8.323083015646882/4/1,4/5.ao>

¹⁴ An exploration permit allows the permit holder to carry out mineral prospection within the area covered by the permit. An exploitation permit allows the permit holder to conduct mineral extraction from the area covered by the permit.

three other exploration permits entirely within the boundaries of INR: one is owned by Maison de L'Ordinattor and two are owned by Bravura Congo. To our knowledge, neither company is currently carrying out exploration activities in these areas.

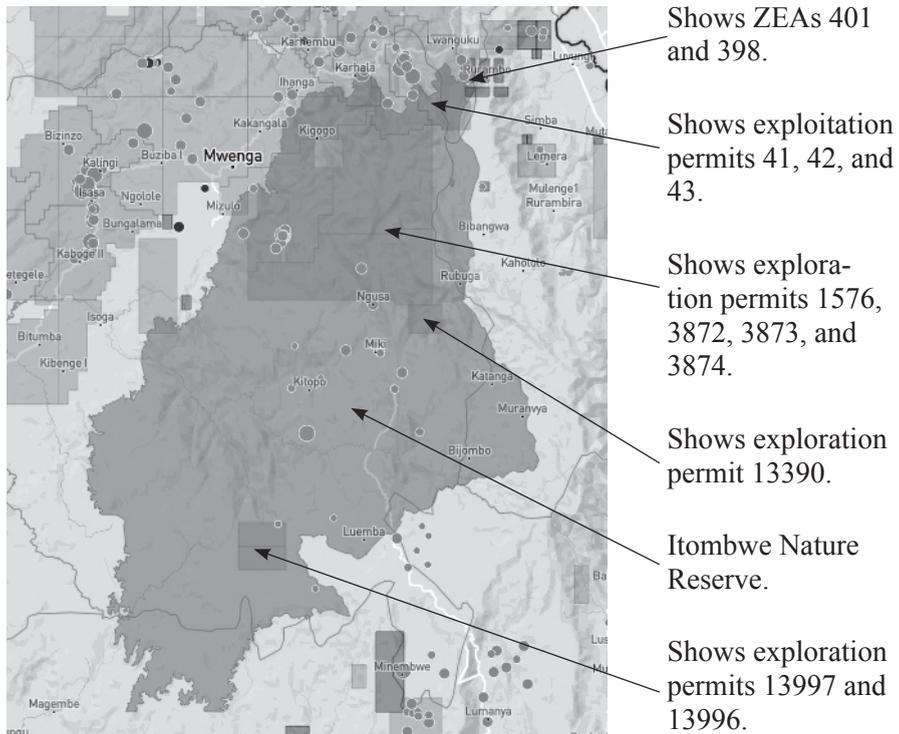
All of the existing mining permits within INR were granted after the reserve was first established in October 2006. According to multiple Congolese laws, the Ministry of Mines has therefore illegally allocated mining permits within the reserve. It is true that if a full environmental and social assessment had been carried out, mining could technically take place on a legal basis inside the reserve's buffer and multiple-use zones.¹⁵ However, according to the regional leader for South Kivu of an international conservation NGO, no such assessment has been conducted. Moreover, the 2006 gazette document did not establish the limits of the multiple-use, buffer or core conservation zones. Therefore, the locations of these zones would not have been known at the time most of the permits were allocated. As discussed previously, this is in clear violation of Congolese law. The only way to allow mining to take place within these areas would therefore be for the government to fully declassify part or whole of INR. To do this it would need to either demonstrate that these areas have been degraded to the point where they no longer warrant protected status, or justify that opening the area to mining activity would be in the public interest. Given that there are critically endangered eastern lowland gorillas in the core conservation zone, it is difficult to see how this case could be made.

Although four different companies own mining permits within INR, to our knowledge only one industrial company has conducted mining activities within the 2016 boundaries. Despite promising not to enter the reserve in 2014, Banro set up six installations to carry out mineral prospecting in the Chiefdom of Lwindi during 2017-2018. Three of these installations overlap with the core conservation zone, two with the buffer zone and one with the multiple-use zone (see Figure 2). Local and international NGOs, customary chiefs and artisanal miners all report having seen Banro's helicopters enter the reserve on multiple occasions. One leader of a local conservation NGO claimed to have recorded seventeen Banro helicopters enter the reserve in a single day. Two other sources showed us pictures of Banro's operatives collecting samples and landing helicopters within the reserve. It should be noted that during the writing of this article, Banro has suspended mining operations in all its sites other than at Twangiza, which it is in the process of selling to Baiyin International Investments. This suspension includes the exploration activities that were taking place in the part of INR that coincides

¹⁵ Here we are assuming that under Congolese law, the multiple-use zone would be included as part of the buffer zone rather than as part of the core conservation zone.

with Lwinda Chiefdom. At present, it is unclear whether the company will resume these activities when (or if) operations continue in other sites.

Figure 1: map of Itombwe Nature Reserve based on the World Resources Institute map shown in the 2006 gazettelement document (map produced by IPIS 2019)



Source: data accessed from DRC Mining Cadastre Portal:
<http://drlicences.cami.cd/en/>

Table 1: details of all the mining permits that overlap with the 2006 boundaries of Itombwe Nature Reserve

Name	Owner	Status	Type	Date applied	Date granted	Expiration date
41	Twangiza Mining (100%)	Actif	Exploitation permit	NA	2016-09-19	2031-09-18
42	Twangiza Mining (100%)	Actif	Exploitation permit	NA	2016-09-19	2031-09-18
43	Twangiza Mining (100%)	Actif	Exploitation permit	NA	2016-09-19	2031-09-18
1576	Banro Congo Mining Sarl (100%)	Actif-En Force Majeure	Exploration permit	2003-09-24	2007-02-05	2021-02-04
3872	Banro Congo Mining Sarl (100%)	Actif-Levée de Force Majeure	Exploration permit	2005-04-18	2007-02-03	2021-02-02
3873	Banro Congo Mining Sarl (100%)	Actif	Exploration permit	2005-04-18	2016-08-10	2021-08-09
3874	Banro Congo Mining Sarl (100%)	Actif-Levée de Force Majeure	Exploration permit	2005-04-18	2007-02-03	2021-02-02
13390	Maison de L'Ordinator	Actif	Exploration permit	2016-12-13	2017-09-16	2021-09-15
13997	Bravura Congo S.A (100%)	Actif	Exploration permit	2017-04-26	2017-09-01	2022-08-31
13996	Bravura Congo S.A (100%)	Actif	Exploration permit	2017-04-26	2017-09-01	2022-09-31
ZEA-401	South Kivu Province	Actif	ZEA	2015-08-06	NA	NA
ZEA-398	South Kivu Province	Actif	ZEA	2015-08-06	NA	NA

Source: data accessed from DRC Mining Cadastre Portal: <http://drclicences.cami.cd/en/>

Rightfully resisting extraction inside Itombwe Nature Reserve

The campaign to resist industrial mining inside INR brought together an assemblage of environmental activists from international and local conservation NGOs, South Kivu's environmental civil society, and ICCN. This campaign shaped and delivered on a strategy with the aim of forcing the Canadian mining company Banro to cease its activities inside the reserve. This strategy was firmly grounded in the tactics of rightful resistance and focussed on building a 'cross scalar alliance' (Conde 2017: 33) of supporters across local, national, and international levels. Below we identify the key characteristics of the campaign.

Firstly, the campaign framed its opposition to industrial extraction inside INR against the backdrop of existing Congolese laws. For example, one environmental activist told us 'We will continue our fight within the legal bedrock. We can only stop the fight if the DRC decides to abolish the law protecting biodiversity in protected areas.' In a memorandum to the Minister of South Kivu, members of South Kivu's environmental civil society wrote 'We discourage any form of industrial exploitation of ores and other exploitation likely to contradict the law on conservation.' Moreover, in our correspondence with people involved in the campaign against Banro, we were frequently quoted articles from the various laws that forbid mining in protected areas in DRC. This indicates that members of the anti-Banro campaign believe that a) current Congolese laws are sufficient for them to achieve their aims, and b) there is a significant chance that the Congolese state will uphold its own laws. Such beliefs can be considered a clear indicator of rights-based resistance.

Secondly, the campaign engaged in public-facing forms of resistance that were specifically oriented to gain the attention and support of state authorities. South Kivu's environmental civil society, in collaboration with local and international conservation NGOs, organised two protests in Bukavu to communicate their opposition to Banro's activities inside INR. The first protest, which was planned to coincide with the United Nations World Environment Day on 05 June 2018, called for an end to the destruction of protected areas in South Kivu. Its organisers demanded that industrial mineral exploitation be immediately stopped inside INR. The second protest took place on 22 August 2018 and focussed specifically on the issue of Banro's prospection activities in the reserve. The protesters held banners that read 'No to the industrial exploitation of ores in protected areas in the DRC!' The protesters marched through Bukavu and delivered a petition and a memorandum to the Governor of South Kivu. In both instances, these protests were designed to win the support of regional authorities. Rather than hiding their resistance from the government, as Scott's (1985) everyday resisters might do, or positioning themselves in direct opposition to the state, as Scott's public

resisters (1985) might do, these activists purposefully sought the favour of government elites: a core tactic of rightful resistance (O'Brien 1996).

Thirdly, the campaign positioned their struggle against Banro as vital to ensuring peace and stability inside INR. On 12 February 2019, the Provincial Director for ICCN in South Kivu filed a letter addressed to the commander of the 33rd Military Region. This letter accused Banro not only of carrying out illegal mining activities inside INR, but also of collaborating with soldiers from the Forces démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) inside the reserve.¹⁶ The FDLR is a predominantly Hutu rebel group that formed in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide with the goal of overthrowing the regime in Kigali. During the two and a half decades that the group has been present in eastern Congo, it has carried out innumerable attacks against Congolese civilians and occupied large swathes of territory in both North and South Kivu. The group is both feared and loathed by many among the local population living in the area surrounding INR, including in Lwindi Chiefdom where Banro was conducting mineral prospectation. Whether the Provincial Director of ICCN's letter is true or false, we argue the way in which his claims were utilised in the campaign against Banro can be viewed as a form of resistance: they were reproduced in online news and social media, shared abundantly via email, discussed at every opportunity, sent to governments in Kinshasa, Canada, France and the United States, and even to the CEO of Banro. In effect, the letter was used to paint Banro as an illegitimate actor in the eyes of the Congolese state.

The campaign against Banro further strengthened its position by building a 'cross-scalar alliance' of international, national, and local partners. To gain the support of international partners, activists used several methods: they distributed their message through online media, they alerted the Canadian, US and French embassies in Kinshasa about their struggle, and they started an online petition to denounce Banro's activities in Itombwe. As of 19 December 2019, this petition had 193,141 signatures.¹⁷ Other informants described attempts to forge alliances with government officials at the provincial and national levels. One leader of a local NGO told us 'We organised a meeting where we invited the provincial minister in charge of the environment in South Kivu along with the people from ICCN. In this meeting, we presented our analysis of the situation in Itombwe including Banro's activities in the zone.' The same informant described how they have been trying to set up a similar meeting with senior government officials in

¹⁶ We have received additional anonymous reports that Banro was paying individual members of FDLR 15 USD per day to protect its installations inside INR.

¹⁷ Petition: keep gorillas out of gold country: <https://www.rainforest-rescue.org/petitions/1150/keep-gold-miners-out-of-gorilla-country>

Kinshasa. He said 'This could help to limit the action of politicians at the national level who work with mining companies.'

The campaign also strove to build a network of supporters at the local level, among communities living in and around INR, to further ramp up pressure on the government in Kinshasa. As the quote below demonstrates, one of the key arguments deployed in the local-level campaign was that conservation (and *not* industrial mineral extraction) is what is fundamentally in the interests of the local population. 'Our approach is community-based. We show them the long-term consequences of [industrial mineral] exploitation on the environment, biodiversity, and their health. We show them that in a short time all the hills will be raised. In 25 years, the company will return to Canada and all the ecosystem services will be gone and the cycle of poverty will remain for future generations.' One activist told us how they tried to turn communities against Banro by telling them what happened in other areas where industrial mining had commenced. 'We refer them to other sites where the miners [Banro] exploit without respecting the laws governing mining and conservation'. Despite these efforts, the way in which communities responded to processes of extraction and conservation inside RNI was far from uniform. As we show in the next section, our results show cases where artisanal miners and customary chiefs have come out in favour of conservation and against industrial extraction, but also cases where they have come out strongly in favour of mining and against conservation.

Cases of resistance and acquiescence in Lwindi and Basile Chiefdoms

In Basile Chiefdom, customary chiefs broadly supported the establishment of a reserve on their territory. The head of the chiefdom told us how he had a close working relationship with the Director of INR, and that he had encouraged the population living in Basile to help ICCN install signs to delimit the reserve. An advisor of the chief told us how he believes the model established by ICCN was more effective than traditional approaches to conservation, which he argued had failed to prevent a decline in the populations of several animal species. The chief of Bashimwenda 1 Groupment told us that ICCN had employed several ecoguards from his Groupment, and that he had allowed ICCN to install signs to delimit the boundary of the reserve. Neither the chief of Basile nor the chief of Bashimwenda 1 were supportive of industrial mining inside INR. At one point Banro had attempted to conduct mineral exploration in Basile near the village of Buzinda, which is located in Batumba Groupment at the boundary of INR. However, the chief of Basile refused to allow the company to mine in the vicinity of the reserve. He also insisted that it deliver on a significant memorandum to provide projects for the local population before any extraction could take place. As a consequence, Banro decided to focus its efforts elsewhere.

Artisanal miners in Bashimwenda 1 expressed some support for conservation efforts. One miner described how they had helped set the reserve's boundaries: 'Yes, we were partners in our Basile Chiefdom. We even participated in the delimitation [of the reserve]. We participated in meetings and workshops and then went out into the field to fix the signs [at the reserve's boundaries].' However, other miners expressed concern that INR could affect their ability to practice artisanal mining in the future. A customary chief corroborated this information: 'Their [artisanal miners'] ability to practice artisanal mining has remained the same. Only there is a fear on the part of the miners that the reserve will ask them to leave this area. They are not yet reassured. Everything can change; we are in Congo.' This chief also acknowledged that the reserve had so far failed to have a positive impact on people's lives. 'Currently there is no impact that is either negative or positive. We will say there has been a positive impact once roads, health centres, schools, and micro-dams are constructed.' When asked whether the people had ever protested against the reserve, one miner said, 'There has not been a movement of people on the road to demonstrate against ICCN, but there are whispers.' Upon being asked the same question, another miner responded, 'No! Just grunts.' Support for conservation in Basile was not therefore unequivocal. In turn, artisanal miners in Bashimwenda 1 opposed the arrival of industrial mining in the chiefdom. One miner voiced his opposition on environmental grounds. He said, 'We do not agree with industrial exploitation because it destroys mountains and forests are cut down'. Another was concerned that if industrial mining did come to Bashimwenda 1, artisanal miners would be forced to leave the area without compensation.

Although the Chief of Lwindi was said to be at first willing to participate in the creation of INR, he was less than enthusiastic about conservation efforts at the time of our interview in June 2019. He told us that ICCN and its partners had 'misled' the local population, promising them things that were never delivered. He went on to state that INR was not 'effective in his chiefdom'. The customary chief of Kigogo Groupment expressed similar sentiments: 'INR can only reduce the population's standard of living. Kahuzi-Biega National Park was initially created as a reserve, but then later transformed into a National Park.¹⁸ The population around Kahuzi-Biega now suffers from the Park – that's why we don't want the reserve. The Westerners have destroyed their environment at home and now they want to come and protect our environment. We do not agree!' He went on to say that Kigogo had 'withdrawn from INR because we do not agree with

¹⁸ Kahuzi-Biega National Park is another protected area in South Kivu located to the north-west of Itombwe Nature Reserve. As it is designated a National Park, no resource extraction is allowed within its boundaries. It is considered by many commentators to use a classic 'fortress' conservation approach.

its approaches.’ The chief of Lwindi corroborated this point: ‘the Kigogo Groupment is sulking that before the reserve ever existed the community has always protected their land. So the local population refuses to get involved in the reserve’s program and ICCN’s activities go at a snail’s pace.’ He also described how ‘the day ICCN and its partners [WWF and WCS] came to Kigogo, the population was ready to rebuff them...the population had wanted to demonstrate against ICCN and INR – they were so angry. They [ICCN] wanted to install their signs, but the population is against Itombwe Nature Reserve.’

Both the chief of Lwindi and the chief of Kigogo confirmed that Banro had been conducting mineral exploration in the villages of Kihazi and Muhuzi inside INR. They expressed favourable opinions toward these activities. The chief of Lwindi emphasised that his population were also in favour of Banro coming to his chiefdom. He said, ‘There have been no demonstrations against Banro. On the contrary, the population would like Banro to come.’ The chief of Kigogo groupment said, ‘Between ICCN and Banro, we will choose Banro because at least we have feedback from other places where Banro is located that there is change...There was a positive social impact when Banro did the prospecting because it was recruiting day labourers. More than ten people benefited from this activity.’ Our interviews also found that the tensions at the extraction-conservation nexus in INR overlapped with an existing dispute regarding the succession of the customary chief of Kigogo. At one point there were two customary chiefs in the groupment: two brothers, both of whom claimed to be the rightful heir to their father. Both of these chiefs were said to oppose INR. However, one of the chiefs opposed industrial mining in Kigogo and supported the establishment of a ‘community forest’,¹⁹ whereas the other chief supported the arrival of Banro. The second chief has now come out on top as the only chief of Kigogo. The chief of Lwindi is said to have helped him in the power struggle against his brother in order to facilitate the arrival of Banro in his chiefdom.

Artisanal miners operating in the Kigogo Groupment overtly resisted the establishment of a Nature Reserve on their land. They were deeply sceptical about the reserve, some going as far as to deny its very existence. Others voiced trepidation that INR would limit their ability to access resources in the future. For example, one miner told us, ‘We do not want the reserve to come. By creating the reserve, they will set up limits that will prevent us

¹⁹ A ‘community forest’ in DRC gives local communities full rights over the management, control and use of forest resources (Rainforest Foundation UK 2019). This is different from a protected area, the various forms of which – from Nature Reserve’s like INR to National Parks like Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega – are owned and managed by the Congolese state through ICCN.

from having free access to our ancestors' land. This forest is our source of subsistence. We trap animals there; we pick fruit. It is both our pharmacy and nourishing mother!' Another miner expressed his concern in purely economic terms: 'Maybe there [through artisanal mining inside INR] I can find a total of [gold worth] \$500. When can INR give me such value?' The miners also told us how they had outright refused to cooperate with conservationists when they came to Kigogo: 'They [ICCN] had come to install their signs, but we did not allow them to.' In addition, when we asked whether he had ever had any interaction with conservation NGOs, one miner told us, 'We saw WWF come here to talk with us and install their signs, but we did not accept them.'

The artisanal miners in Kigogo expressed discourses strongly in favour of industrial mining. One miner said, 'We want Banro to come and exploit the minerals here because we need it to build us roads that will connect our village with other areas; this will make it easier for us to transport people and goods. When the population hears about Banro, they are delighted because once they [Banro] start exploiting, they will give people jobs and that is beneficial to the population.' In an informal conversation, another miner described how he had not seen a car pass through the village of Kigogo in years due to the poor quality of the roads. As the state had not provided his village with the support, resources, and infrastructure that it requires, this villager saw industrial mining as a last hope for development. Other miners told us how they thought the benefits of industrial mining were worth the damage to the environment that it would cause. 'We hear that industrial activities have a negative impact on the environment, but that doesn't matter. We would like industrial exploitation to come and help us build roads so we can move around easily.' Another miner told us, 'We are told that there may be [environmental] impacts, but we believe that industrial exploitation can bring development here to Lwindi Chiefdom.' In the groupment of Kigogo, we therefore have an interesting case where both artisanal miners and customary chiefs have resisted conservation and acquiesced in the face of extraction.

6. Discussion

Despite the claim of those involved in the rights-based resistance campaign against Banro that conservation and not extraction is what is in the interests of local populations, we uncovered diverse responses to these two territorial processes at the local level around INR. In this discussion section, we consider what caused people to adopt such different positions in relation to extraction and conservation, and the implications of our findings for other landscapes positioned at the extraction-conservation nexus.

In Basile, one reason both customary chiefs and artisanal miners supported conservation was because ICCN's head office is located in Mwenga Centre, the Chiefdom's capital. As a result, several ecoguards have been employed from communities surrounding that part of the reserve, several community patrols have been conducted, and numerous workshops have been held to 'sensitise' communities about the importance of conservation. In addition, WWF and ICCN have installed solar-powered road lights in Mwenga Centre and a patrol post in the village of Kalundu, in Bashimwenga 1 Groupment. An agreement has also been signed between artisanal miners and ICCN in Basile Chiefdom with the aim of protecting the rights of miners operating in the reserve's multiple-use zone. As a result of these (admittedly small) economic opportunities and projects, both customary chiefs and artisanal miners in Basile appear hopeful that conservation will one day improve their lives in a material sense. However, the artisanal miners operating in Bashimwenda also remain fearful that one day the reserve could stop them accessing their mining sites. If such a situation emerged, it is not inconceivable that these miners would change their position and begin to resist conservation efforts. Indeed, one way to achieve this could be to come out in favour of industrial extraction in the same way as the community in Kigogo.

In contrast to in Basile Chiefdom, Lwindi has received far less attention from ICCN and its partners: no ecoguards have been employed from the Chiefdom, no solar-powered lights have been installed in its centre, and community engagement has been limited. In turn, artisanal miners living in the Groupment of Kigogo were concerned that the reserve would stop them from accessing the forest resources upon which they depend. Their resistance to conservation therefore should not come as a surprise. What then explains why both customary chiefs and artisanal miners in Kigogo came out so strongly in favour of extraction? Part of the explanation can no doubt be located in the corrupting influence of Banro, what Geenen & Verweijen (2017) describe as social mobilisation 'from above'. Indeed, we heard several reports that the chief of Lwindi and the population of Kigogo had been financially 'manipulated' by the Canadian company. Banro also employed labourers from Kigogo to conduct prospection in INR. Regardless, we contend that support for extraction in Kigogo reveals something important about their overall attitude toward conservation: i.e. that their backing was contingent on the economic benefits that they received from INR. In short, when the potentially more lucrative option of extraction turned up, they took their chance and shifted position. If conservation efforts do not provide and demonstrate tangible benefits for people living inside protected areas, we argue that this dynamic could be repeated in other landscapes situated at the extraction-conservation nexus. Indeed, given the fear on the part of artisanal miners in Bashimwenda 1 that conservation could one day limit their access

to mining sites, it is not inconceivable that this dynamic could also emerge in Basile Chiefdom at some point in the future.

Conclusion

Through writing this article, our aim has been to make an original contribution to the emerging body of literature on the extraction-conservation nexus (see Enns *et al.* 2019; Mendoza *et al.* 2017). Drawing on the concept of resistance (Scott 1985, 1989; O'Brien 1996), we have explored how different stakeholders position themselves in relation to processes of extraction and conservation in eastern DRC's Itombwe Nature Reserve. Our results describe a campaign of 'rightful resistance' (O'Brien 1996) waged against the industrial mining company Banro by a 'cross-scalar alliance' (Conde, 2017) of environmental activists at provincial, national and international levels. Interestingly, one of the campaign's core arguments was that conservation rather than industrial mineral extraction is what is in the interests of the population living around the reserve. However, among both artisanal miners and customary chiefs in the Chiefdoms of Basile and Lwindi, we uncovered diverse reactions to extraction and conservation, including cases of both resistance and acquiescence to each of these processes. Based on these findings, we conclude that in landscapes positioned at the extraction-conservation nexus, it is important to consider how extraction can be instrumentalised by local communities to resist conservation, as well as how conservation can be instrumentalised to resist extraction. We thus hypothesise that processes of extraction and conservation should be viewed not only as the subjects of resistance, but in certain circumstances, as channels of resistance in and of themselves.

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