“JE CHERCHE LA VIE!”: WOMEN’S LABOUR POLITICS IN MASISI’S ARTISANAL COLTAN MINES

Allison Furniss, FRNALL003

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

In considering how women navigate the complexity and gendered aspects of the artisanal mining industry, this study seeks to unpack women’s labour at step one of the global supply chain of coltan, in the post-conflict context of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Female miners are largely excluded from mine work by blurry regulatory frameworks, gendered social norms and financial disparities, however they manage to remain active labourers in the artisanal mining industry. Within a broader socio-political context of poverty, political instability and rural livelihoods, women maintain access to mine work through strategies, often premised on a gendered solidarity, such as organizing into collectives, engaging in small group collaborations and employing creative ruses to maintain the secrecy of their labour. This thesis seeks to analyze women’s exclusions from mine work and the subsequent strategies they employ to circumvent those exclusions and maintain work in the mines. Based on three months of ethnographic fieldwork at artisanal coltan mine sites in Masisi Territory in the province of North Kivu, this study employs ethnographic observations, focus group and interview methodologies.

Key words: Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), women, gender, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), gendered labour, infra-politics, exclusion
DEDICATION

Je dédie cette thèse à Mariana Bwema, qui m’a aidé à rendre cette recherche possible. Votre voix féministe forte, votre courage et votre intégrité m’inspirent.

I dedicate this thesis to Mariana Bwema, who helped make this research possible. Your strong feminist voice, your courage and your integrity inspire me.
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ACRONYMS

AEZ  Artisanal Exploitation Zones
ASM  Artisanal and Small Scale Mining
CF   Congolese Francs
COOPERAMMA Coopérative des Exploitants Artisanaux Miniers de Masisi
DRC  Democratic Republic of the Congo
GÉCAMINES Générale des Carrières et des Mines
ICGLR International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IMF  International Monetary Fund
NGO  Non-governmental Organization
OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAEMAE Service d’Assistance et d’Encadrement des Mines Artisanales et à Petite Échelle
SAKIMA Société Aurifère du Kivu et du Maniema
SMB  Société Minière de Bisunzu
SOMINKI Société Minière du Kivu
UN   United Nations
USD  United States Dollar
3 T’s Tin, Tungsten and Tantalum
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Viviane is a 47-year-old miner and mother of eight, married to a farmer. She buys and sells around 0.5-1kg of coltan, and earns a few thousand Congolese Francs (CF) over the course of four to five days. Not a migrant labourer, she lives in a village 500 meters from the chantier (sub-site) where she works.

(Fieldnotes, Masisi, September 7, 2019)

This snapshot of Viviane is similar to many women who work in the artisanal mining industry in Masisi Territory in North Kivu province in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Viviane stated “je cherche la vie,” which translates as “I'm searching for life” when she explained the reason she worked in Masisi’s artisanal coltan mining industry.¹ Artisanal mining is a significant economic driver in the DRC directly employing 2 million people of which 50% are women, who despite the androcentrism of mining are active labourers in and beneficiaries of the industry.² However, the regional work regime is one of exclusion and precarity for women, requiring creative strategies to maintain work in the mines. Women’s labour in this context unfolds in a shifting political landscape and work environment that is highly gendered.

This thesis is about the exclusions female artisanal coltan miners face in mine work and the highly creative and resilient strategies they employ to overcome these exclusions, as labourers at the first step in the global supply chain of coltan in the post-conflict context of eastern DRC. Based on three months of ethnographic fieldwork, focus groups and individual and group interviews at artisanal mine sites in Masisi, a central trend that emerged was the varying and intersectional ways in which female miners were excluded from mine work, manifested through a strong gendered divisions of labour and along legal and extralegal lines. For instance, women frequently lack the capital necessary to engage in more lucrative mine tasks or were blocked from access to the worksite. However, female miners like Viviane, as I observed and seek to show, had various collaborative and individual strategies to overcome these exclusions. This thesis asks: how are women excluded from mine work and what are their responses? My argument is that women’s strategies to overcome exclusions in mine work are both intentional and organized, and implemented in order to maintain work, although remain uncoordinated and fragmented. In contesting dominant narratives in academic literature and public discourse that have largely portrayed women miners and

¹ Pseudonyms are used throughout this dissertation to protect the identity of participants. I will elaborate on this in Chapter Three: Methodology.
women more broadly from eastern DRC as victims, I will demonstrate how female miners are active agents who employ multiple strategies and creative ruses to continue to benefit from mining capitalism. Here, I ask, how are the conditions of this work regime gendered? What exclusions do women face in their work? How do women respond? What can be said about the significance of women’s response? And, how do women’s responses go beyond survival strategies? This thesis attempts to address these questions.

The women in this study are situated in a broader context in the DRC of high rates of national poverty, some of the highest rates of gender inequality in the world and a rural livelihood that is increasingly reliant on mining capitalism. It is also one of historic regional violence and conflict, compounded by ongoing political instability and active armed groups, contributing to a work environment of multifaceted instability. Within this context, it must be acknowledged that many women in this study seek work in mining in order to foster a basic income in the face of significant poverty, from mining waste minerals to trading in the smallest of quantities. It is also the case that some women engage in mine work out of choice in order to foster a dual household income, working at times in collaboration with their husbands and blending work in home spaces.

Despite the varying reasons women engage in mine work – whether to aid in the alleviation of poverty or because they actively want to mine – once in the mines, it is exactly these factors of poverty, precarity and gendered inequality that further perpetuates and entrrenches women’s exclusion from mine work. Socio-economic status and gender both significantly impact women’s reasons for mine work and their experiences in the mines. In light of this, women can frequently be found collaborating in mine work from small groups to large collectives, premised on an explicit gendered solidarity. Individually, women also circumvent illegality and find ways to protect themselves from exploitation. However, within these strategies, hierarchies also emerge amongst women based primarily on socio-economic status and corresponding class, which advantages some women over others. Analyzing the experiences and actions of women in order to conceptualize their labour in this context, I examine all of these strategies, both individual and collective, to understand their shared goal yet uncoordinated manifestation. I will begin by describing the background and contextualization of this study before providing an outline of the thesis in the conclusion of this first chapter.

1.1. The DRC and Natural Resources: Historical Overview and Contextualization

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereafter DRC or Congo) has vast natural resource wealth and a long history of natural resource extraction. The exploitation of natural resources in the DRC has been central to the country’s economy, with significant contributions to industry and income generation. However, this exploitation has also been marked by widespread human rights abuses and environmental degradation. The DRC’s mineral wealth, particularly gold and copper, has been a major driver of conflict in the region.

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resources was at the center of King Leopold II of Belgium’s brutal rule of the Congo from 1885-1908, focusing at that time on rubber and ivory exploitation, which he used for individual enrichment at the cost of millions of Congolese lives.\(^4\) Under Belgian colonial rule the exploitation of Congolese natural resources for foreign gain continued with policies and practices that reinvested little back into the country.\(^5\) Since Congo’s independence in 1960 the extractive industries have been a major national economic driver, however mining has also been linked to conflict and natural resource wealth has fuelled corruption and patronage. Mobutu Sese Seko’s 32 year dictatorship from 1965-1997, which led to economic collapse, oversaw extreme siphoning of state revenue from natural resources wealth to finance political elites.\(^6\) In addition, the two Congo Wars in 1996-97 and 1998-2003, which resulted in five million deaths\(^7\) and occurred in the eastern parts of the country, were widely labelled as ‘resource wars’.\(^8\)

Industrial and artisanal extraction have both played a role in mining in the DRC, equally affected by global commodity prices and market fluctuations as well as national politics.\(^9\) History has revealed fluctuating trends between greater large-scale industrial or small-scale artisanal extraction, with a national trend over the last 50 years towards artisanal extraction. Since the 1970s industrial mineral extraction in DRC has significantly declined, largely due to deteriorating infrastructure and poor economic policies (notably Mobutu’s policy of nationalization beginning in 1973, more commonly known as Zairianization), compounded by global market declines for minerals in two of Congo’s largest industrial producing sectors, copper and tin.\(^10\) The DRC is the largest global producer of tin and the fifth largest global producer of copper, making these industries major national economic drivers.\(^11\) Regional conflict, notably the Congo Wars, have hindered industrial extraction while simultaneously

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\(^8\) Ibid., 8.


providing a conducive environment for artisanal extraction, due to the informal and often illegal nature of artisanal mining.

Subsequently, in 2002 the Joseph Kabila regime enacted the Mining Law (Code Minier) and subsequent Mining Regulations, providing important legislative guidance on mineral extraction in the country. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were heavily involved with drafting these documents, which lend towards industrial and large-scale mining by private corporations. In many ways these regulatory frameworks make room for artisanal mining activity only when it does not inconvenience industrial extraction or in places where industrial extraction does not occur. However, artisanal mining currently remains the most significant means of production for Congolese mineral exports, and despite the turbulent history of natural resource extraction in DRC, mining provides economic prosperity and basic income for millions of Congolese people. Natural resource extraction currently accounts for one third of the government revenue and produces 95% of the national export earnings; 90% of exported minerals are extracted through artisanal means.

DRC’s vast natural resource wealth and revenue has not translated to economic development on a national scale. The DRC ranks amongst the 10 least developed countries in the world based on the 2019 United Nations Human Development Index. With a population of 84 million, an estimated 74% of the population is living in poverty and only 61% are employed. Analysis of gender disparities are equally bleak. The DRC is ranked amongst the 10 most gender unequal countries in the world based on the United Nations Gender Inequality Index. Only 36.7% of women reach “at least some secondary education” in comparison to 65.8% of men and maternal mortality rates are amongst the highest in the world. The paradox highlighted here – between high natural resource abundance but low economic development

16 Ibid., 6.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid. The 2019 UNDP Human Development Report for DRC states that “for every 100,000 live births, 693 women die from pregnancy related causes” (Ibid., 6.). In comparison, South Africa has a maternal mortality rate of 138 per 100,000, one of the lowest in Africa. Norway has the lowest global rate of 5 deaths per 100,000. Countries with higher maternal mortality rates than DRC according to the UN index include nations like South Sudan and Chad. United Nations Development Program, Human Development Reports, Maternal Mortality Ratio, http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/89006 (accessed May 29, 2020).
is a textbook case of what has been labeled as the “resource curse,” also linked to armed conflict (concepts I will explore in Chapter Two).

1.2. Artisanal and Small-Scale Coltan Mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

It is estimated that 10 million people earn a living directly from artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in sub-Saharan Africa. This number increases when dependents and downstream industries are considered in the economic impact of the artisanal mining sector. Artisanal mining is labour intensive and low tech. It uses rudimentary extractive techniques and requires little to no equipment or upfront investment. Artisanal mining facilitates immediate economic gains and usually takes place in rural settings with mineral deposits that are on or near the earth’s surface. Contrary to industrial mineral extraction, artisanal miners are not salaried employees but rather work for themselves in small groups or individually. Profits are based on daily labour outputs and localized taxation structures. Artisanal mining often takes place ‘informally’ (outside state regulatory frameworks).

Women are very active labourers in artisanal mining in the DRC. The World Bank estimates that 40-50% of the two million Congolese people involved directly in artisanal mining are women. When considering the number of dependents and mine-related economic activities, this number rises to 10 million people – approximately 16% of the country’s population. Women actively seek work in artisanal mining and are involved in the direct physical extraction, processing and trade of minerals. Women have also been known to migrate to mine communities in search of mine work, both in the direct extraction of minerals as well as in supporting industries, such as owning and operating restaurants and shops in mine communities.

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22 Ibid.
25 World Bank, Oil/Gas, Mining and Chemicals Department, Democratic Republic of Congo Growth and Governance in the Mining Sector, 2008, report 43402-ZR, Washington DC, 56.
The 2002 Mining Law and subsequent Mining Regulations were both updated in 2018.\textsuperscript{27} This national law and guidance framework outlines specific requirements for artisanal miners to mine legally, including that they must: hold an exploitation permit, be Congolese citizens, work in legal designated mining zones (I will elaborate on this below under traceability), adhere to health and safety measures and be members of a local cooperative (if a cooperative does not exist, miners must form one).\textsuperscript{28} There is no mention of women specifically in the Regulations and women are only mentioned twice, very briefly, in the Mining Law, where it stipulates that pregnant women are prohibited from mining and that the ‘rights of women’ must be upheld when outlining human rights standards in the mines.\textsuperscript{29} A definition of the ‘rights of women’ is not provided. Children are also prohibited from mine sites (age not stipulated), a regulation based on incidents of child labour in DRC’s artisanal mines and so as to maintain human rights standards.\textsuperscript{30}

Coltan is short-form for columbite-tantalite, a mixture of two mineral ores from which tantalum is derived. Coltan is grouped into what is commonly known as the ‘3 T’s’: tin (cassiterite), tungsten (wolframite) and tantalum (coltan).\textsuperscript{31} The most recent US Geological Survey report on tantalum estimates that half of the global consumption of tantalum is used in the electronics industry; tantalum’s properties have facilitated the drive towards smaller electronics.\textsuperscript{32}

The largest global producers of tantalum are Australia and Brazil however, Canada, China, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nigeria, DRC, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda have also contributed to global production;\textsuperscript{33} African countries are the largest combined producers of global tantalum.\textsuperscript{34} Although tantalum is mined through open-pit, under-ground and artisanal methods, it is estimated that 29% of global tantalum supply is acquired through artisanal

\textsuperscript{27} Law no. 007/2002 of 11 July 2002 modified law no. 18/001 of 9 March 2018 for Mining Law. Decree no. 038/2003 modified no.18/24 of 8 June 2018 for Mining Regulations.

\textsuperscript{28} Mining Law, T.1 Ch.1 Art. 19. For further discussion see also: Patient Lwango Mirindi, "La coopérative minière: instrument de l’ingérence étatique dans la liberté d’association des exploitants miniers artisanaux en République Démocratique du Congo?,” KAS African Law Study Library 1, no. 3 (2015): 563-598.

\textsuperscript{29} Mining Law, T. 1, Ch. 1, Art. 5 and T. 8, Ch. 4, Art. 28, sub-article, 299.

\textsuperscript{30} Kevin D’Souza, "Artisanal mining in the DRC: Key issues, challenges and opportunities," Communities and Small-Scale Mining, (Staffordshire, 2007), 12-13.

\textsuperscript{31} All three of these minerals are present and extracted at artisanal mine sites in this study. They are highly mixed together. Miners can distinguish them through the naked eye and all three minerals are transported to Goma for further treatment and eventual export.

\textsuperscript{32} Schulz, Piatak and Papp, "Niobium-Tantalum," 2-3.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 22.

\textsuperscript{34} Raimund Bleischwitz, Monika Dittrich and Chiara Pierdicca, "Coltan from Central Africa, international trade and implications for any certification," Resources Policy 37, no. 1 (2012): 20-21. Michael Nest also notes that African countries produce the largest total contribution of tantalum to global production, see: Nest, Coltan, 24-25.
Since tantalum does not naturally occur alone, like diamonds, but is mixed with other ores, it requires an extensive separation and refinement process which lends the extraction of tantalum-bearing ores, such as coltan, to artisanal means. Tantalum is also found as a by-product from tin extraction, to a small degree through recycling and in stockpiles in the United States.  

Academic literature frequently cites that 80% of global coltan reserves exist in Africa, of which 80% is in the Congo. However, some scholars criticise this estimate, arguing that the academic research is unsupported due to a lack of reliable geological data from the DRC. Conflict since the 1990s in the Great Lakes region has hindered data gathering processes for the past three decades, notably in the eastern provinces where coltan extraction is concentrated. As a result, accurate calculations of DRC coltan in relation to global reserves remain largely unknown.

Equally difficult to estimate is the actual contribution of DRC coltan to global production, despite DRC cited as a major global producer. Under-reporting, on-going looting and illicit trade have all made the reported coltan exports lower than actual values. Studies have traced illicit DRC coltan trade through statistical data in downstream production chains, notably through Rwandan exports and Chinese imports, to estimate more accurate DRC

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35 Schulz, Piatak and Papp, “Niobium-Tantalum,” 22.
36 Nest, Coltan, 16. Although some potential tantalum reserves exist in various US states such as Alaska, Nebraska and Texas, these reserves have remained unstudied and untouched. For a discussion of this see: Schulz, Piatak and Papp, “Niobium-Tantalum,” 21.
38 Nest, Coltan, 16-20. Part of Nest’s argument against this percentage estimate is that when traced back to its origin, it is quoted from questionable news articles that do not cite geological reports. See also: Jeroen Cuvelier, Steven Van Bockstael, Koen Vlassenroot, and C. I guma Wakenge, ”Analyzing the impact of the Dodd-Frank Act on Congolese livelihoods,” SSRC (2014), 6-7. These authors also criticise the 80% estimate as unfounded. For a discussion of a lack of regional geological data see: Bleischwitz, Dittrich and Pierdicca, ”Coltan from Central Africa, international trade and implications for any certification,” 20.
39 Nest, Coltan, 17-18.
40 Nicholas Garrett and Harrison Mitchell, ”Trading conflict for development,” DFID, LSE, CRG (2009), 29; Bleischwitz, Dittrich and Pierdicca, ”Coltan from Central Africa, international trade and implications for any certification,” 23. For more detail on how fraudulent practices affect public administration in addition to a general lack of statistical data from DRC in regards to the mining industry see: Jeroen Cuvelier, ”The complexity of resource governance in a context of state fragility: the case of Eastern DRC,” international Peace Information System (Antwerp: 2010), 11.
production rates.\textsuperscript{41} Consideration for illicit trade reveals how DRC production is much higher than official records show, demonstrating that statistics surrounding DRC coltan production are inaccurate and lower than actual figures.

1.3. Coltan Traceability & Legislative Background

A series of reports published in the early 2000s by the United Nations Panel of Experts on The Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo formally exposed the direct link between natural resource extraction and conflict in the region. These reports named private corporations, foreign governments (notably Rwanda and Uganda) and networks of Congolese elites and armed groups that were all involved with the illegal exploitation and looting of natural resources (primarily gold, diamonds and the 3 T’s) to finance and sustain regional conflict.\textsuperscript{42} These reports coincided with a ‘coltan rush’ in the early 2000s which, for a short time, unearthed a direct link between Western consumer demand for electronics, an increase in coltan market value and increased conflict at artisanal mines in eastern DRC.\textsuperscript{43} This sparked a domino of regulatory mechanisms which emerged from extensive lobbying and advocacy from international NGOs.

Notably, the emergence of the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act in the United States, directly addressed the trade of Congolese ‘conflict minerals’ in section 1502.\textsuperscript{44} The intention behind section 1502 of this federal law is simple: improve transparency and due-diligence for US-regulated manufacturers when sourcing minerals from the DRC and any adjoining country.\textsuperscript{45} The Act requires all US companies and foreign companies trading on the US stock exchanges who manufacture products requiring coltan (and other ‘conflict minerals’) to report annually on due diligence procedures and proven sourcing of conflict-free minerals.\textsuperscript{46} In practice this means that large tech companies like

\begin{footnotes}
\item[41] Bleischwitz, Dittrich and Pierdicca, "Coltan from Central Africa, international trade and implications for any certification," 20. For further discussion on how Rwanda folds coltan from DRC into their own stockpiles see: Garrett and Mitchell, "Trading conflict for development," 39-41.
\item[43] Nest, Coltan, 12-13; and Mantz, "Improvisational economies," 36.
\end{footnotes}
Apple or IBM have to report and demonstrate that the coltan sourced in the fabrication of components of their digital devices was not extracted under conditions of conflict or human rights abuses, nor used to finance conflict.

Simultaneously the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the UN, the European Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) all adopted reform initiatives for sourcing ‘conflict-free’ minerals. Of note amongst these is the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict Affected and High Risk Areas, adopted in 2010 as a voluntary mechanism for companies sourcing minerals or working in mineral trade, which was folded into Congolese national law for responsible mineral sourcing in February of 2012. In order to meet the transparency demands of these regulatory frameworks, enhanced traceability measures have been put into place at the points of extraction at artisanal mines.

The traceability and export certification program used in this study, and which dominates traceability in the region, is the UK-based International Tin Research Initiative (ITRI) tin supply chain initiative (iTSCI) for the 3 T’s. In this ‘bag and tag’ process, inspired by the Kimberley Process, minerals are sealed and tagged at their point of extraction with a unique barcode that records their point of origin and can subsequently be traced through the supply chain to the point of manufacturing.

Moreover, part of the traceability measures and the legal governance framework for mineral extraction in DRC requires a mine site validation process by government using “a traffic-light categorisation of mines, with green representing ‘conflict free’, yellow ‘minor irregularities’ and red ‘major irregularities.’” Validation requirements include assuring that human rights abuses are not taking place (such as child labour), health and safety requirements are upheld, miners are working with the necessary permits and that armed groups are not present. In addition, artisanal mine sites can only legally exist within government allocated Artisanal Exploitation Zones (AEZ) and when miners are organized into mandatory cooperatives. Mine sites are validated on an annual basis by joint assessment teams, composed of Congolese government officials, local and international NGOs, processing and exporting entities and

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48 Radley and Vogel, "Fighting windmills in Eastern Congo?," 407.

49 Claude Iguma Wakenge, "Stadium Coltan: artisanal mining, reforms and social change in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo," unpublished PhD Dissertation, Wageningen University, 2017, 68. iTSCI is also used in neighbouring Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. For more on iTSCI see: www.itsci.org.

50 Wakenge, "Stadium Coltan", 27.

51 Christoph Vogel and Timothy Raeymaekers, "Terr (it) or (ies) of peace? The Congolese mining frontier and the fight against "conflict minerals"," Antipode 48, no. 4 (2016): 1112.
mine companies. In order for minerals to be labelled ‘conflict-free’ they must be identified to originate from validated ‘green’ sites in AEZ’s.

However, scholars have noted an overwhelmingly negative impact of these regulations on the livelihoods of artisanal miners. For example, Claude Wakenge et. al. have shown that traceability mechanisms have actually increased smuggling of minerals and Séverine Autesserre has successfully demonstrated how this has enhanced regional violence. In addition, the Congolese government pronounced an outright year-long ban on all mining activities in the eastern provinces in 2010, a knee-jerk reaction to international shaming of human rights abuses associated with mineral extraction, put in place primarily to appease international pressure to stop the trade of ‘conflict minerals’ and in the wake of Dodd-Frank. Sara Geenen has analyzed and demonstrated how the ban had a devastating effect on artisanal miners and resulted in increased illegal mining. The development and current state of the regulatory framework highlighted here reflects an overall push towards the formalization of artisanal mining in the country. The background to and summary of the regulatory framework highlighted here provides the foundation for understanding points of exclusion of female miners and how they subsequently respond.

52 Jorden de Haan and Sara Geenen, "Mining cooperatives in Eastern DRC The interplay between historical power relations and formal institutions," The Extractive Industries and Society 3, no. 3 (2016): 823.
57 Ibid.
1.4. Artisanal Mining in Masisi

Masisi territory, situated in the Kivu highlands, is a rural regional district comprising small towns and villages, located in the south eastern corner of North Kivu Province of eastern DRC. In this thesis, ‘eastern DRC’ refers to the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and what was until recently Katanga, which was divided in 2015 into four provinces, Haut-Katanga, Lomami, Lualaba and Tanganyika. Masisi is amongst the most densely populated areas in the country and is historically agrarian and pastoralist. The Kivu provinces (North and South) are a vital agricultural and watershed area that “supplies water, energy and food to surrounding areas, with most farmers able to gather three harvests per year.” The Kivu’s are also the most ethnically diverse regions in the DRC. Masisi is historically the homelands of Hutu, Tutsi, Hunde, Nyanga and Nande peoples. Mining, pastoralism and agriculture production are the primary economic activities in Masisi; more recently a thriving dairy industry has emerged.

60 Vlassenroot and Huggins, "Land, migration and conflict in eastern DRC," 153.
61 Vlassenroot and Huggins, "Land, migration and conflict in eastern DRC," 152.
Masisi and North Kivu province more broadly have a significant history of conflict relating to various factors including: access to land, land rights, ethnic tensions, cross-border regional conflict, active non-state armed groups and mineral extraction. Conflict intensified during the Congo Wars in the late 1990s and early 2000s as well as during and in the immediate aftermath of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, due to the large influx of refugees and génocidaires (perpetrators of genocide). However, ongoing and intermittent armed conflict before that, including the Masisi war of 1993, and beyond these conflicts has resulted in 20-30 years of active conflict in the region with devastating economic and humanitarian consequences.

Within this context of conflict are artisanal mine sites in Masisi which produce coltan and cassiterite. The mineral exploitation rights in Masisi have been allocated to two Congolese owned companies, Société Minière de Bisunzu (SMB) and Société Aurifère du Kivu et du Maniema (Sakima), each with separate exploitation perimeters. Within each perimeter are multiple artisanal mine sites. Although there is no physical barrier that separates their perimeters (such as fencing or buildings), the boundaries of exploitation perimeters are clearly known by residents, miners, government officials and all stakeholders. Both companies buy minerals from artisanal miners who are all members (by law) of the local cooperative COOPERAMMA, Coopérative des Exploitants Artisanaux Miniers de Masisi. The annual membership fee for COOPERAMMA varies but is $5 USD for diggers. All participants in the present study who mined legally were members of COOPERAMMA. Within the mining perimeter of SMB are the more productive artisanal mine sites, for example the sites of Luwowo and Bibatama, while the mining perimeter of Sakima has smaller sites including more sub-sites which have lower production rates and are less accessible.

SMB was founded in 2006 and is owned by Congolese born Edouard Mwangachuchu, a former senator in North Kivu province. Mwangachuchu himself was named in a 2012 UN Group of Experts report as having paid armed groups in Masisi in relation to his political campaign and has known dealings with local army personnel and political elites in Rwanda and North Kivu. Sakima is a state-owned company that emerged in the late 1990s out of partially state-owned Société Minière du Kivu (SOMINKI). After a brief period of privatization in 1995 to Canadian

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65 Ibid., 90-92.
66 See: https://www.smb-sarl.com/
67 Sakima does not have a website.
68 COOPERAMMA does not have a website.
69 This is based on responses from participants and NGO contacts.
company Banro, Sakima cassiterite concessions were transferred back to the state while gold concessions remained the private concessions of Banro. Unlike Sakima, there are considerable tensions between SMB and COOPERAMMA over the right to mineral exploitation in SMB perimeters. A series of mutually negotiated and signed Protocole D’Accords (terms of agreement) have guided the relationship between the two parties, stipulating that all minerals exploited by artisanal miners within SMB’s perimeters must be sold exclusively to SMB. See Appendix One and Two for the most recent Protocole D’accords and the most recent 6 month bridge agreement, as new terms are negotiated during 2020. During the course of fieldwork for this study there were repeated allegations from artisanal miners that SMB was not paying miners for minerals handed over to the company. See Appendix Three for a letter written from artisanal miners through COOPERAMMA following up with the Provincial Ministry of Mines, Provincial Governor and other authorities on the issue of non-payment; they stipulate the last payment occurred in February 2019. There are currently no industrial mine operations in Masisi and extraction is conducted through agreements with artisanal miners.

Contrary to the iconic image of an underground miner in full protective equipment working in strict and regimented work environments, female artisanal miners are frequently found in plain clothes seated next to a creek refining coltan in a basin of water. Mine sites are generally quiet and throughout the day miners come and go as they please, working alone or in small

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71 Sakima operates in North and South Kivu. Nicholas Garrett, "Artisanal Cassiterite Mining and Trade in North Kivu Implications for Poverty Reduction and Security," Communities and small-scale Mining (2008), 12-14.
groups of two or six or ten. Artisanal miners are not salaried employees in a corporate mining environment but rather work independently. Both men and women work at the sites and often engage in work and trade together as colleagues. As coltan is mined from the larger and more productive artisanal sites, debris and waste minerals wash downstream with the natural water flow. As a result, miners work all along the creek beds, mining and reworking the debris from the upstream sites. In addition, they extract the naturally-occurring coltan along these creek beds (albeit in smaller quantities and of lower quality). This naturally occurring coltan and the coltan waste is also mixed with coltan that has been smuggled between sites. Since water is an essential part of early extractive techniques, water sources are a defining feature of artisanal coltan mine sites.

1.5. “Les mines se trouvent dans nos champs”- Driving Factors to the Mines

Émilie, a 35-year-old miner and mother of five, said she got into mining because “the mines are in our fields.” Émilie is married to a creuseur and has mined for eight years. Her reason for seeking mine work is ecologically-determined: she stated that mine encroachment on farmland pushed her into mine work. The reasons for women’s participation in mining vary, manifesting through a combination of “distress-push” and “demand-pull” factors. Women I interviewed stated that they entered mine work to escape poverty and/or have a second household income. However, a secondary factor was agricultural failure due to mine encroachment and environmental degradation, which has taken away women’s incomes in agriculture, as Émilie stated. Throughout this thesis I will return to both Émilie’s experiences and those of other women as a means of analysing three primary reasons that contribute to women’s work in the mines.

Literature has explored two primary categorizations that drive work in artisanal mines across rural African communities, bifurcated into “distress-push” and “demand-pull” factors. “Distress-push” factors are largely attributed to overarching poverty, where a lack of financial means pushes laborers to the mines in search of any form of income. This frequently occurs when communities shift from historic agrarian societies to non-agrarian societies, whether due to climate change, land reforms, decreased farm productivity, structural adjustment programs or conflict. “Demand-pull” factors encompass the mineral ‘rush’ phenomenon,

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73 Moving minerals between sites is technically illegal because it affects the traceability of coltan as well as breaks the agreement between SMB and COOPERAMMA, however I saw this occur regularly.
74 Interview with miner September 8, 2019.
where laborers are lured to work in the mines with a hope of ‘striking it rich’. This is frequently associated with migrant labour and motivated by an aspiration for significant financial profit. A third category has observed communities that have a generational tradition of engaging in mine work. In addition, artisanal mining has low-barrier entry -- it requires little capital, experience or educational background, making it a widely accessible industry.

Judith, in her thirties, started mining waste minerals because it was a “quick and easy” way to acquire immediate economic gain to support her children. She will profit 3000-5000 CF, approximately $2-3 USD, after several days of mine work. She had no other form of income or income earning potential. Her income frequently provided the only source of revenue for the household. She stated that “my husband often spends his income before putting food on the table at home.” She told me that if she was not working in the mines, she would just be “sitting at home.” Her story demonstrates that their entrance to the mine industry was driven out of necessity, primarily for economic gain in the face of limited or no economic prospects and a lack of household income. She was ‘pushed’ into mine work due to poverty. In addition, the low-barrier nature of artisanal mine work fostered her involvement.

Kathleen, a 37-year-old miner and mother of nine, lives 500 meters from the chantier and is married to a creuseur. Like many women in the area, she cultivated a small family plot to provide food for the household and sold excess harvests at the local market for income. She started working in the mines when her fields stopped yielding, which she attributed to the expansion of mines in the area, stating “after the mineral boom, nothing was growing anymore.” A friend encouraged her to come work in the mines, saying “come with your 30,000 CF and I will show you how to make money.” In need of income, she took the 30,000 CF capital she had at the time to the mine site, where her friend taught her how to work and trade in the mines. In Kathleen’s case, environmental degradation caused by mining negatively affected local agricultural production, which pushed her into mine work. The mines took away her livelihood, while simultaneously providing the only alternative form of income accessible to her.

77 Ibid.
80 Interview with miner at mine site on August 29, 2019.
81 Interview with miner at mine site on September 5, 2019.
The negative environmental impact of artisanal mining has been analyzed in literature and contributes towards ‘push’ factors in mine work.\(^{82}\) In the case of the eastern DRC, a push towards mine work has been further compounded by regional conflict and political instability, making farm work less viable and appealing than mine work, especially for women.\(^{83}\) However, mine work and farm work are not mutually exclusive. Studies have also shown that small-holder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa frequently seek mine work in order to supplement annual farm income and diversify their livelihood strategies.\(^{84}\) This highlights that while artisanal mining has an antagonistic history with agricultural production, especially in the case of the eastern DRC, both livelihood strategies in rural communities are highly interconnected and largely operate side-by-side. Although failing crops pushed Kathleen and Émilie out of an agrarian livelihood to mine work, they also chose mining as an alternative form of income generation because it had low-barrier entry, was situated very close to her home and was appealing in the face of limited economic prospects elsewhere. While their work in the mines also emerged out of necessity, the reasons were different from those of Judith. Regardless of the various the push factors for these women, mining becomes what Sara Geenen describes as “the only viable activity in the wake of structural adjustment, deteriorating employment opportunities and increasing pressure on land.”\(^{85}\)

Mackenzie is a 24-year-old miner and mother of three. She quit high school around grade 10 to get married and start a family. She buys and sells 8-10kgs of coltan weekly, which she refines and resells. She and her husband often work together. They each bring minerals home from different mine sites to dry, refine and combine, accumulating coltan stockpiles of up to 20kgs, which they then sell at a depot. Their combined profit from the sale of the 20kgs will be between $20-$50 USD after one week of work. Mackenzie’s friend invited her to work in the mine a few years ago while her husband was out of town. She showed her how to refine minerals and determine quality by color. After being introduced to the work, she wanted to keep working in the mines, so she asked her husband for a loan of $300 USD for initial capital to enter the business. She gained enough profits to pay him back and continues to work in the mines with her own capital. They not only have a dual household income but work in collaboration. Mackenzie’s motivation to work in the mines is financial but is also largely her


\(^{83}\) Jocelyn TD Kelly, “This mine has become our farmland”: Critical perspectives on the coevolution of artisanal mining and conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” *Resources Policy* 40 (2014): 100-108. Kelly states that female farmers in South Kivu reported heightened fear of experiencing sexual violence while conducting farm work due to on-going conflict in the region. Kelly argues this has contributed towards women taking up ASM work, acting as a ‘push’ factor from farm work to mine work.

\(^{84}\) Banchirigah and Hilson, “De-agrarianization, re-agrarianization and local economic development,” 157-180.

\(^{85}\) Geenen, “Dispossession, displacement and resistance,” 90.
choice in an effort to foster a dual household income: she was ‘pulled’ towards mine work. However, she did not do so under the more common rush-type pretences, but rather to contribute to the household income and because she enjoyed the work.

Additionally, women were frequently invited by friends who taught them on the job. This is what Deborah Bryceson and Jesper Jønsson have described as an earn-as-you-learn model frequently observed in artisanal mining, where “a miner’s first work site is an apprenticeship.” As a result, women enter artisanal mine work in Masisi as a blend of push and pull factors, and with little or no capital nor prior mining experience.

1.6. Conclusion and Thesis Outline

This chapter has provided a historical, contextual and legislative background to the artisanal mining sector in Masisi and North Kivu more broadly as it pertains to women, as a starting point for this study. The history of mineral extraction in the DRC, which is an especially complex and violent one, has informed the current legislative framework and has direct implications for female miners. Together, this context and legal framework foster many of the exclusions women face, which teeter on legal and extra-legal lines. This introduction has also drawn connections to the broader supply chain. From there, by zooming in on the specifics of artisanal mine sites in Masisi we can better unpack women’s roles, how exclusions manifest and what women’s responses to those exclusions are. Lastly, although women are ‘pushed’ into mine work due to ecological factors and poverty, women also actively seek work in the mines. As outlined above, this raises several questions: How is the work regime gendered? What exclusions do women face in their work? How do women respond? And what is the significance of those responses? This thesis will examine these and other questions. My analysis will unpack women’s labour at step one of the global supply chain of coltan, within a broader analysis of gendered navigation of mining.

In Chapter Two of this thesis I will provide a literature review and theoretical point of departure. This will situate the study within the broad themes of women in mining and regional literature, with a focus on dominant narratives that this thesis seeks to counter. Rather than give a unidimensional portrayal of women as victims, and mineral extraction as solely associated with conflict, this thesis will highlight alternative, nuanced perspectives on the post-conflict context of Masisi. I will further introduce the conceptual orientations of intersectionality and infra-politics that guide my subsequent argument and analysis. Chapter Three will discuss the methodological tools used for this study, as well as research limitations and ethics.

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86 Bryceson and Jønsson, "Gold digging careers in rural East Africa," 380.
Chapter Four will begin by describing the extraction process with a focus on women. I will then explore the primary forms of exclusion women face. This will include four primary areas of focus: social norms surrounding masculinity and femininity, gendered physical spaces within the mine sites themselves, gendered mine tasks and women’s ‘in-between’ status in mine work and finally, the legislative impact on women miners. By describing and analyzing women’s exclusions, it will set the foundation for a discussion of the creative and resilient strategies women employ to overcome these exclusions, discussed in Chapter Five. These strategies manifest individually and collectively, employed uniquely by women to maintain mine work. I will then analyze these strategies and the implications of their cumulative effects.
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL POINT OF DEPARTURE & LITERATURE REVIEW

As highlighted in the introduction, my argument is that women’s strategies to overcome exclusions in mine work are intentional and organized, implemented in order to maintain work, and yet remain uncoordinated and fragmented. This section aims to situate that argument within the pre-existing academic literature on which it draws and to which it contributes. First, this consists of literature relating to women in mining, and regional- and industry-specific literature that adopts a gendered perspective. Next, I will examine literature on intersectionality and infra-politics. My argument draws inspiration from these two concepts, but also seeks to critically evaluate and transcend them. This chapter thus provides an intellectual genealogy of my own critical and committed intervention within those debates. Rather than exhaustively review all that has been written on these vast topics, this genealogy focuses on presenting the authors and concepts that were most useful for analyzing the specific historical and social setting in which I worked, as well as approaches that my research invites us to criticize and reconsider.

2.1. Situating This Study

2.1.1. Women in Mining

If as a general matter “labour is not gender neutral, but at its very heart is a masculine structure, shaped around and engineered along gender lines,” then this seems particularly true of ‘mining,’ a word that immediately evokes an androcentric image. The quintessential ‘miner’ has historically been depicted as the physically strong man working in dangerous and dirty conditions, a hero of the proletariat. Women’s history in mining has been obscured by the dominant narrative of mining as ‘men’s work’; sidelined by a strong gendered division of labour, this is further enforced by a strong masculine mine culture. Gender binaries based on a construct of masculinity versus femininity heighten and enforce women’s exclusion from mine work.

However, research shows that women have a long history and strong presence in both industrial and artisanal mining, despite this historic invisibilization. Feminist labour historians Laurie Mercier and Jaclyn Gier have documented the presence of women in mining

both above and underground in pre-colonial Africa. Jennifer Hinton et. al., who conducted an in-depth cross-sectional historical overview of women’s presence in artisanal mining in Africa, Asia and Latin America, have documented women’s historic and contemporary roles in mining. Sociological and anthropological research from various African countries has further documented women’s experiences as miners, highlighting challenges and opportunities for women in mining communities. In addition, a body of scholarly work that calls attention to women’s agency within mining has provided feminist critiques, showing the socially-constructed nature of masculine representations of mining, which largely serve to exclude women. The present study contributes to this expanding body of literature on female miners.

2.1.2. Regional Literature and Dominant Narratives

Literature on mining in DRC is divided by focus on either industrial or artisanal extraction and, with the exception of diamond mining, focuses geographically on eastern and south-central DRC, where mineral deposits are concentrated. A handful of industrial gold, cobalt and copper mines, notably the state-owned GÉCAMINES and SOMINKI as well as the privately owned Banro, have provided case studies for scholars exploring a variety of topics including: migrant labour and mining camps, collective action, global supply chains, colonial influence on mineral extraction and gender in industrial mine settings. A smaller body of literature

94 D'Souza, "Artisanal mining in the DRC," 1-5.
has explored the interplay and often tense relationship between artisanal and industrial mining in eastern DRC.\textsuperscript{96}

As discussed in the introduction, DRC’s industrial mine outputs have declined since the 1970s and the majority of DRC’s mineral extraction occurs through artisanal means, sustaining the livelihoods of millions of Congolese people. This has fostered a significant body of literature pertaining to artisanal extraction in the eastern DRC, which has centered around gold, coltan and cassiterite (the main minerals mined through artisanal means in the eastern provinces). Women are very active labourers in artisanal mining, making these spaces particularly productive sites to analyze female miners. While some of the literature has explored similar themes to those studied in the industrial mining context, such as migrant labour, cooperatives and global supply chains, for the past 20-30 years two themes have dominated discourse surrounding artisanal mining in the region: the so-called ‘conflict minerals’ approach and, specifically pertaining to women, the issue of sexual violence. By foregrounding violence and conflict, both currents of research contribute to the pathological representation of mining and the region more broadly; this dissertation aspires to a different and more fine-grained understanding of female miners’ experiences.

This lopsidedness in the literature does not simply result in an incomplete scholarly grasp of the challenges and significance of female mine work. It has also directly affected female miners in problematic ways that I will be exploring. Notably, the legal framework that guides artisanal mining today and the policy response (nationally and internationally) to mineral governance and traceability is largely a response to the scholarly understanding of mining as mainly a matter of violence. As highlighted in the introduction, the Dodd-Frank Act, which is amongst the many other guidelines that have directly informed the current Mining Code, was birthed from NGO lobbying against ‘conflict minerals’ and sexual violence. It is therefore important to critically review this literature, even if my goal is to criticize it and justify why this dissertation does not perpetuate the debates in which it engages, but rather seeks to move our understanding of mineral extraction in new directions.

The so-called ‘conflict minerals’ literature studies “the extraction and trade of minerals from conflict-affected areas where human rights abuses take place,”\textsuperscript{97} and generally tries to test or argue that mineral extraction is connected to conflict, a hypothesis that has been widely analyzed and debated amongst scholars.\textsuperscript{98} This debate has centered around an effort by


\textsuperscript{97} Wakenge, Dijkzeul and Vlassenroot, "Regulating the old game of smuggling?," 499.

economists and political scientists to understand the causes of armed conflict and civil war, which they connect to natural resource extraction, including multiple elements relating to what they call the ‘resource curse’: natural resource abundance, war economies, rebel greed and other factors.\textsuperscript{99} Often, this research relies on the notion that the risk of and vulnerability to armed conflict increases when natural resource wealth is high, specifically when minerals can be easily looted or when national export revenues are dependent on natural resources.\textsuperscript{100} It has dominantly and simple-mindedly attributed conflict primarily to ‘rebel greed.’\textsuperscript{101}

Some scholars have criticised this framing of the causes of conflict in the eastern DRC, arguing that conflict is better understood in relation to multiple and varying historic and contemporary factors, amplified by economic crises.\textsuperscript{102} Others have further criticized the unidimensional and over-dramatic portrayal of all conflict in eastern DRC as related to mineral extraction rather than “understood as the result of a complex interplay between deeply rooted local issues, national factors and regional dynamics.”\textsuperscript{103} Although this body of literature includes case studies of different natural resources from different countries including the DRC, Angola, Sudan and others,\textsuperscript{104} no case has become more emblematic of the ‘conflict minerals’ literature than DRC\textsuperscript{105} – to the extent that ‘conflict minerals’ and ‘mining in DRC’ have become practically synonymous.

This thesis is not a ‘conflict minerals’ thesis. As Ben Radley and Christoph Vogel argue, this unidimensional portrayal of mineral extraction, which has directly affected regional policy on mineral governance, is “reproducing quasi-’Orientalist’ mind-sets that imagine Congolese as


\textsuperscript{100} Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and grievance in civil war," 563-595; Humphreys, "Natural resources, conflict, and conflict resolution," 508-537.

\textsuperscript{101} Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and grievance in civil war," 563-595.


\textsuperscript{105} Peter Eichstaedt, \textit{Consuming the Congo: War and conflict minerals in the world’s deadliest place}, Chicago Review Press, 2011.
either barbaric and greedy or disenfranchised and helpless.”

In my view, economic analysis of conflict causes and literature that emphasises ‘rebel greed’ in discourse surrounding mineral extraction lacks ethnographic insight and is based on a policy approach that oversimplifies conflict.

The same is true of the second dominant narrative, of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas. Rates of sexual violence in eastern DRC are exceptionally high, however the emphasis in research literature, mainstream media and NGO advocacy work on widespread sexual violence has fostered a unidimensional understanding and misrepresentation of women miners as victims. This has centered around discussion of rape and sexual violence in and around mine communities, instances of transactional sex and cases where female miners are forced to engage in sexual relationships for access to mine concessions. In this respect, I align myself with the few scholars who, like Marie-Rose Bashwira et al., have argued that this results in “obscuring the complexity of gender dynamics in the artisanal mining areas in eastern DRC.” However I will not be following Séverine Autesserre, who has gone so far as to suggest that these dominant narratives and the subsequent response, although well-intended, have resulted in increased violence in the region. Rather, my goal is to pose a different set of questions, which include, what else can be said about female miners than that they are victims? And what do we know about their work lives other than that they involve violence? How do women advocate for themselves? The prevalence of violence in general and sexual violence against women in particular significantly informs the working context in

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109 For example see: John Prendergast, "Can you hear Congo now? Cell phones, conflict minerals and the worst sexual violence in the world" Enough Project 1 (2009).
which female miners find themselves and thus must be acknowledged, but this thesis aims to escape the all-pervasiveness of that fact in representations of the theme and region.

In that sense, this thesis is a contribution to a very limited literature that focuses on gender and artisanal mining in eastern DRC in order to argue about something other than its connection to conflict or to discuss the issue of sexual violence. In addition, this dissertation’s focus on North Kivu province is extremely rare, in a literature which relies heavily on South Kivu and (what was previously) Katanga in order to discuss ‘Eastern DRC.’ Some scholars have included North Kivu in analysis of sexual violence in conflict, however these studies tend to present a blend of data from North and South Kivu and, again, the questions they pose are different. While there is literature on armed groups, conflict, land rights, historic migration and the politics surrounding indigeneity in Masisi (highlighted in Chapter One), there is almost none on female miners. A recent study conducted by Gabriel Kamundala Byemba that analyzes the impact of formalization and traceability measures on female miners does include interview and focus group data from North Kivu blended with data from South Kivu, however the regional specificities of data from North Kivu are not stipulated. To the best of my knowledge, every study exploring gender in artisanal mines in Masisi has focused on sexual violence or conflict; none includes extended ethnographic methodologies, despite these being essential to the ‘richness’ of our understanding of any topic.

Lastly, I would like to raise the question of why so few female scholars have conducted research on mining, or for that matter broader topics in Masisi. As this reveals, pervasive gender inequalities exist not just ‘out there’ in the sites we study as academics, but also in the

very institutions where we work and study. What institutional cultures and inequalities exist that inhibit or discourage female academics from conducting this type of research? Are we to remain ‘protected’ from such projects? Or do dominant narratives reinforce our exclusion? While I can only speculate on the answers to those questions, the lack of academic work by female researchers in the region can be attributed precisely to the context, or at least the perception of its violence and instability. It is true that the on-going presence of armed groups in North Kivu and specifically in Masisi and surrounding territories has genuinely inhibited and deterred research in the area, even if the narrative is one I seek to contest and transcend through my own work.\textsuperscript{119} In fact, I argue that it is exactly this post-conflict context and ongoing presence of armed groups that provides a unique dimension to the experiences of female artisanal coltan miners in the region, and that this is not represented in the current academic literature. This thesis also defends the view that research done by female researchers is critical to an accurate understanding of female experiences. The kinds of access, the degree of inhibition with which certain topics could be discussed, and the opportunities for participating in work and domestic activities that were offered to me are inseparable from my own gendered positionality.

2.2. Conceptual Orientation

2.2.1. Intersectionality and Exclusions

A core problem for female mine workers in Masisi was how to access work despite multiple exclusions. Exclusions manifest through childcare obligations, a lack of access to credit, legislative and legal restrictions, gendered social norms and the abuse of power within mine hierarchies, all of which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Four. As such, women’s exclusion from mine work is the result of multiple and intersecting factors and must be understood in intersectional terms. In this thesis I approach the notion of gender through Judith Butler’s framework, treating it as a fluid social construct that shifts with temporality and context, and which is influenced by attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and values.\textsuperscript{120}

Critical feminist theorists introduced the notion of intersectionality, which seeks to conceptualize and analyze how multiple and varying factors, including race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, age, ability, nationality, social status and other factors, intersect and overlap affecting lived experience.\textsuperscript{121} Much of this scholarship analyzes intersectionality in


\textsuperscript{121} Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and feminist politics," \textit{European journal of women’s studies} 13, no. 3 (2006): 193-209; Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics," \textit{University of Chicago Legal
terms of power structures, identifying these factors as intersecting sites of oppression and subjectivity for women. Influential critical feminist theorist Nira Yuval-Davis calls for a broad conceptualization of intersectionality “to analyse the differential ways in which different social divisions are concretely enmeshed and constructed by each other and how they relate to political and subjective constructions of identities.”

Consideration for intersectionality further challenges historic depictions of ‘African women’ as a homogenous and largely powerless group – a critical objective for this dissertation’s approach to miners, as explained above. Feminist theorists and decolonial scholars have discussed the problematic result of this depiction. Chandra Mohanty’s influential critique of Western feminist scholarship depicting the singular “third world woman,” challenges this depicted “one-ness” as simplistic and reductive which ultimately oversimplifies oppression and perpetuates the victim – perpetrator binary. In more recent scholarship, Amina Mama has built on this, calling attention to the heterogeneous form feminism in Africa takes. This body of scholarship reiterates the necessity for understanding how various forms of oppression and subjugation intersect and impact women’s experiences. In this study, the multiple and intersecting factors that exclude female miners manifest along gendered, social, financial and legal lines. However, these factors are also political. For example, when women are systematically excluded from mine work because they lack the financial capital to enter the industry, while on the other hand their male counterparts systematically have access to capital and easily enter the mine industry – this is a political issue. By approaching exclusions from that analytic angle, women’s responses can be conceptualized beyond survival strategies. In conceptualizing female miner’s work exclusions in this way, I turn to an analysis of the significance of women’s responses.

2.2.2. Infra-politics: The Significance of Manoeuvring Through Exclusions

Women have multiple individual and collective systems to overcome these intersecting exclusions. In the present study this includes the formation of a micro-finance group, working in small collaborative groups, fostering secret alert systems between women, engaging in bribery and building conflict resolution mechanisms. Drawing on a wide body of literature exploring what could be called “infrapolitics,” this thesis argues that women’s responses

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Yuval-Davis, “Intersectionality and feminist politics,” 205.


Mohanty, "What does it mean to do feminist research in African contexts?", e4-e20.
aimed at overcoming exclusions are a form of politics insofar as they are “a language that articulates the aspirations for another political order.” Before summarizing the literature on which I draw in developing this argument, a brief reflexive detour may help to introduce the argument I wish to make. It was a trajectory of workplace activism and labour politics in my own life that led me to this project, but in a setting where politics most readily calls to mind parties, unions, elections and so forth. The women I met in Masisi experienced forms of exclusion that were both familiar and strange, to which they responded in highly creative, resilient and inspiring ways, despite the way their extreme precarity kept them dancing on the edge of survival. What can be said of their “politics” if they never voted in a governmental election (though did so in associations they created themselves), belonged to no union or national political party (though organized into small collectives), worked seemingly as capitalistic entrepreneur-traders rather than wage labourers and had no employer they could target with strike-action (which would harm only themselves)?

Clearly the setting in which I conducted fieldwork was not one of outright protest or mass movements nor conventional politics. The substantial scholarly analysis of the politics of protest in the Africa context therefore seemed inapplicable. To answer the questions just posed requires drawing on a literature that provides us with an expansive notion of politics, developed in empirical settings that involve significant exclusion, and that adopts a bottom-up rather than top-down view. This can be found in the scholarship on infra-politics or what scholars have termed the ‘politics of the everyday,’ and through which scholars have explored politics beyond partisanship and the ballot box. The key insight I take from this scholarship is that small, often covert and seemingly banal actions can be cast, on closer inspection, as political acts for their significance in challenging hierarchies and systems of power. For instance, James Scott famously drew attention to how things like foot dragging, pilfering and sabotage are vehicles for class struggle. He argued that “these activities should most definitely be considered political, that they do constitute a form of collective action, and that any account which ignores them is often ignoring the most vital means by

which lower classes manifest their political interests.”

Similarly, Michel de Certeau’s study of ‘everyday life’ emphasized the broader significance of the way workers rely on tactics such as clever usage of time when the boss is out in order to escape the discipline of institutions. While both De Certeau and Scott’s work lacked a gendered perspective and the latter has especially been widely critiqued (primarily for being too dualistic), more nuanced recent scholarship has nevertheless been able to put these concepts to productive use in order to analyze women’s experiences and specifically women’s labour in varying contexts and industries.

In addition, scholars have extended this line of thought to argue that seemingly non-political actions of marginalized groups, like stealing electricity and water or expanding informal settlements, can be understood as political, including when the actors do not intend for their acts to be seen as a form of “politics.” At times these efforts can be coordinated; other times they are a result of “collective action of noncollective actors.” One of the important points from this literature for my argument concerns how engaging in ostensibly “illegal” activities is in fact often a form of politics, precisely because of the politics implicated in demarcating legal and illegal, and the way the law is a tool for power and interests. Partha Chatterjee terms this “the politics of the governed,” highlighting the complex nature politics takes when it is expressed by those “on the other side of legality.” This is certainly the case for many female miners who work in between the ‘legal’ and ‘illegal,’ and whose transgressions of the law are not a sign that they have no concept of or respect for the law, but rather of the way the law works to exclude and dispossess them.

Despite its centrality in grounding and informing the arguments made below, the research conducted for this thesis also underscored limitations of this literature. Much of the scholarship that seeks to analyze infrapolitics uses a binary hierarchical lens, for instance

138 Bayat, Life as politics, 14.
139 Chatterjee, The politics of the governed, 56.
setting up the ‘oppressed’ proletariat against the oppressive bourgeoisie. The hierarchical structures with which female miners in this study are confronted, and the manners in which they are excluded, are much more complex and multi-dimensional. Rather than an over-dramatic image of an exploitative employer or ‘mine boss’ that uses violence and intimidation to abuse labourers, artisanal miners in Masisi work for themselves in their own time and rhythm. There is no one person that embodies power or any one identified source of abusive power that leads to women’s exclusion. On the contrary, “power is plural” and in DRC’s artisanal mines power is not primarily manifested in hierarchical terms. As a result, women’s responses take different forms than in the empirical settings that gave rise to much of the earlier literature. Something like foot dragging would only result in a negative economic impact for the female miner herself, rather than materially or ideologically harming the illusive oppressor. Allowing the specificities of the empirical setting of my research to give rise to the questions, I ask what forms politics take in cases where exclusions go beyond hierarchies and the political agent is the independent and the sole beneficiary of her labour?

The scholarship highlighted here transforms our understanding of “politics.” I use this as a starting point, to unpack the significance of women’s responses to exclusions in subsequent chapters. This will frame analysis of, for example, women who formed a finance and conflict resolution group but are not a formalized labour union despite holding similar functions. By conceptualizing politics as infrapolitics, what emerges are multiple modes of unpacking and analyzing women’s responses to exclusions. Having presented the contextual and historical background in Chapter One, and having situated it within a theoretical framing, in the next chapter I will discuss the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This research is based on three months of ethnographic fieldwork in North Kivu province in the eastern DRC from mid-July to mid-October 2019. The primary research methodologies used include participant observation, focus groups and individual and group interviews. During the three-month fieldwork period, I spent a total of six weeks in Goma, the provincial capital and six weeks at artisanal mine sites in and around the town of Rubaya in Masisi Territory. A lengthy process of negotiating access to the field site and time spent at artisanal mine sites and in mine communities make up this research.

This chapter will explore the methodological tools of this study. First, I will briefly present the field site and how it emerged, followed by an outline of how I acquired access to conduct this research at artisanal mine sites in Masisi. I will then reflect on my positionality as a researcher and research limitations. This will be followed by an overview of the primary methodological tools used in the study, that of participant observation, informal interviews, focus groups and in-depth individual and group interviews. Lastly, I will discuss how participants were selected for this study and the ethical principles and process that guide the work.

3.1. The Field Site

This research took place at artisanal coltan and cassiterite mine sites surrounding the town of Rubaya in Masisi Territory, a region in North Kivu province, approximately 65kms north-west of Goma, the provincial capital, as shown in Image Two, Chapter One. There I conducted research at three large artisanal mine sites (Nyakisenyi, Bunjari and Gikombe) and two chantiers or sub-sites (Giporo and Karinzi), as outlined below in Image Four. Demarcated in red are the towns and artisanal mine sites in Masisi where this research took place. Blue dots represent larger coltan mine sites in the area, most of which I did not have access to. In addition, I conducted focus groups, group interviews and in-depth interviews with female miners in the nearby villages of Mumba and Kibabi. From here onward, my use of the term ‘mine site’ in this dissertation will refer to all large artisanal sites and smaller artisanal sub-sites or chantiers.

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141 As highlighted in Chapter One these two minerals are naturally found together and often mined from the same source, comprising two of the 3 T’s.
The choice of mine sites was determined by the research permissions I was granted by the private companies working in the area. Since I was only granted access by the private company Sakima, I only conducted research at sites situated within their exploitation perimeters, representing half of the artisanal sites in the area.

3.2. Access

The University of Cape Town Department of Politics required me to conduct this research through an NGO. As a result, I worked primarily through IFEDD: Initiative des Femmes Entrepreneurs Démunies pour le Développement, a Congolese NGO that focuses on women’s empowerment and autonomy in Masisi. IFEDD staff and volunteers assisted me with the administrative aspects of accessing the mine sites and introductions to local contacts, facilitating introductions with government officials before and during my time in Goma. Additionally, in preparation for this research I was in touch with more than a dozen researchers and various NGOs, including in-person meetings in Kigali, who provided much-needed advice, guidance and introductions to local contacts.

In order to physically set foot on artisanal mine sites in Masisi I was required to have authorization from five different entities in Goma. This included: the Minister of Mines for North Kivu Province, the Head of the provincial Mining Branch, the Director of SAEMAPE (Service d’Assistance et d’Encadrement des Mines Artisanales et à Petite Échelle), the Vice-President of COOPERAMMA (Coopérative des Exploitants Artisanaux Miniers de Masisi) and the Director of the private company Sakima (Société Aurifère du Kivu et du Maniema). See Appendix Four for a table detailing these permissions. The process of acquiring these

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permissions took place over five weeks, often including repeat meetings where I was frequently instructed to return due to technical issues in my request letters, causing significant delays. The coordinator of IFEDD and a government official accompanied me to all of these meetings.

In addition to these formal authorizations, I conducted courtesy visits with important stakeholders prior to conducting research at artisanal mine sites. This included the lead geologist within the Provincial Governor’s office and with the Congolese National Police offices in the town of Saké (en route to Rubaya). A contact in Goma also notified the Agence Nationale de Renseignement (the national Congolese intelligence agency), of my presence in Rubaya. I also met at the head offices in Goma of five different NGOs who work on various aspects of mineral traceability and human rights protection at mine sites in Masisi.

Upon arrival in Rubaya, I further had to acquire authorization from several of the same entities’ official representatives in Masisi territory. This included meeting with the Head of SAEMAPE for Masisi, the Minister’s representative in Masisi, the Governor’s representative in Masisi and the COOPERAMMA representatives in Masisi. Appendix Five and Six show the final letters with all stamped permissions I acquired before visiting the sites. I was routinely asked to present these letters to various authorities at the mine sites throughout fieldwork at the mine sites.

The most significant setback in this process occurred when the private company Société Minière de Bisunzu (SMB) would not grant me permission to conduct research within their mine perimeters. Despite a lengthy meeting with the company’s Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Mineral Traceability and follow-up communications, they denied my request for access. Their formal written response highlights that the political climate in Masisi was unconducive to the timing of my research. See Appendix Seven for official communication from SMB denying my access to conduct research at their sites. This factor impacted the context and subsequent data of this study, since SMB sites are higher producing and as a result have different dynamics for miners. For example, underground mine tunnels are used in SMB sites but not at Sakima sites.

At the beginning of fieldwork I was accompanied by a male research assistant, a native to Masisi. Similar to the experiences of other female researchers who have conducted fieldwork at artisanal mine sites in eastern DRC, there were significant benefits in having a research assistant, in adding a differing perspective to the mining community and interpretation of the data collected, as well as acting as a form of “bodyguard,” dissolving negative stereotypes and assumptions about single female researchers.143

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143 Marie-Rose Bashwira Nyenyezi, “Navigating obstacles, opportunities and reforms: Women’s lives and livelihoods in artisanal mining communities in eastern DRC,” (PhD Dissertation, Wageningen University, 2017), 54.
Positionality reflects where one stands in correlation to the subject of study in terms of race, gender, nationality, language, sexuality, social and economic status, urban–rural backgrounds and education. Feminist epistemologies, which guide this research, call for deep reflexivity on positionality throughout the research process, analyzing how research is done and by whom, in order to understand the politics of knowledge production. This approach emphasises that “knowledge as a process is a crucial part of knowledge as a product,” in turn facilitating further analysis of the resultant impact of positionality on the methods of the study and on broader research outcomes. The manner in which I conducted and recorded research, my access to the field site, how I interacted with participants and how they interacted with me, as well as the resultant data I collected, is contingent on my positionality as a white, Anglophone, Canadian, woman. These categorizations of my positionality impacted the research in distinct and differing ways and significantly contributed to many of the challenges and benefits I faced in the field. The specifics of who I am inform this research and situate it specifically based on those considerations.

At the core of interrogating positionality is the question of power imbalances in research. Feminist scholars have analyzed power imbalances in research and the resultant effects on the research outcomes, at great length. Central to this debate is acknowledgement that power hierarchies are always present between the researcher and participants, privileging the researcher. While this can never be eliminated it must be discussed, contributing to

144 Muzungu is the Swahili word for foreigner commonly used to describe Europeans.
understanding how knowledge production is limited and specific. To address power imbalances in research I applied a “reflexive model of science,” rooted in evolving and reciprocal dialogue between the observer and participants, grounded in local context. To achieve this I focused on building strong relationships with participants over time as best as possible within the scope of the project, enhancing trust to avoid silencing and to facilitate more honest dialogue, as well as continuing with my individual reflexivity through a diary and fieldnotes. Throughout the research process different aspects of my positionality were weighed with greater emphasis than other aspects, interchangeably. At certain times, societal expectations surrounding my gender took precedence over my race or educational status and vice versa, reflecting the continuum of positionality. For example, my imperfect French often invoked intersubjective openness with participants who also spoke French as a second language.

There were significant logistical limitations in this study, intertwined with my positionality. The most significant of which was access to the field site as described above, which took up half of the overall fieldwork period, significantly decreased the amount of time with participants themselves. While that was not time wasted and aspects of access provided valuable data in this study, it did hinder data collection in other regards. Also, several layers of translation, usually from Swahili to French and then again to English must be acknowledged in this study. I speak fluent French and have conducted all the translation from French to English in this study including interviews and legal text. However, I required translation from Swahili and Kinyarwanda to French while conducting fieldwork for this study, which was primarily done by a research assistant.

3.4. Participant Observation: “The Art of Ethnography”

Participant observation, distinguished by the researcher’s participation in the world they seek to study in order to conduct research with people “in their own time and space, in their own everyday lives,” was a methodological tool in this research. In order to realise this, I spent varying amounts of time with different participants at mine sites on a regular basis over the course of the six weeks.

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155 Ibid.
During an initial phase of three weeks at artisanal mine sites, I worked with a research assistant, as mentioned above. While working together, a typical day involved walking (a distance up to 3kms one way) to two or three sites in a day from mid-morning until dark, spending half a day at one site and half a day at another. At mine sites I was introduced to women associated with IFEDD, the NGO that assisted with this research, many of whom wanted to participate in this study. Other female miners and non-members of IFEDD, were also interested in my presence and approached me while I was at the mine sites seeking participation. I would speak directly with women who spoke French or through translation by a research assistant for Swahili and Kinyarwanda. We would then return to sites on a rotational basis and based on the previous day’s interactions with participants and their invitations. This facilitated many of the informal interviews and periods of observation in this study. Informal interviews were frequently conducted while women worked.

During a second phase of three weeks at artisanal mine sites I worked directly one-on-one with female miners. During the previous phase of working with a research assistant, I used the opportunity to meet female miners who spoke French but who were not affiliated to IFEDD, who became accustomed to my presence and expressed interest in participating. This was determined by participants’ comfort levels and based on their invitations, which eventually led to being invited to women’s homes and spending the day at mine sites with women as they mined. During this second phase a typical day involved meeting a participant at her house mid-day, then going to the mine site together until dark. In this study women were more active in mine work in the afternoons after finishing familial obligations, such as getting children to school and cooking. While at the sites I would sit with women as they worked, speak to other miners and observe as traders came and went. Spending extended time with participants in this way facilitated opportunities for informal interviews and in-depth observation “of how people act but also how they understand and experience those acts.”

Although I had hoped to conduct mine work regularly alongside women to add ethnographic ‘richness’ to this study, conducting this work as a white foreign researcher, and above all as unexperienced miner, was difficult in this context. Since each miner works with her own stockpiles of coltan which she refines to increase the value and resell, if you have not mastered the work of refinement it results in a loss of profits. I faced reluctance from participants when I expressed interest in wanting to mine with women, who (understandably) worried my inexperience in separation techniques would cost them profits. However, at the very end of the fieldwork period one participant, whom I became particularly close with, permitted me to mine with her over the course of one day, conducting the work of washing and wet and dry separation. This invoked tremendous laughter and intrigue amongst the miners (men and women) at the site and in passers-by. My engagement in separation work

156 Ibid.
then led male diggers at the site to invite me to conduct the digging work with a shovel (a largely male task) with them, perhaps mostly for comedic value.

After every day ‘in the field’ I wrote fieldnotes in private on my laptop or notebook. As a researcher, I was driven by the precept, as DeWalt et. al. state, “[if] you didn’t write it down in your fieldnotes, then it didn’t happen.” Furthermore, I kept a separate personal journal that I regularly wrote in, a common ritual amongst ethnographers to ‘leave the field’ intellectually.

Lastly, conducting participant observation meant that I, as the researcher, had an impact on the research process and interactions with participants. Throughout this research, whether at the mine sites or in participants homes, I had an “observers effect” where my presence in-and-of-itself, changed and altered the field site and interactions with participants. I was never simply observing and my presence and eventual extended time in the field had a direct impact on the research; this can arguably lead to a “loss of objectivity [by the researcher] or to contamination of the situation.” My presence at artisanal mine sites brought attention. Often participants assumed I was a humanitarian aid or NGO worker which at times invoked speculation, impacting early conversations and introductions. On occasion women would discuss mine site ‘safety standards’ with me in very legalistic terms as we discussed the presence of children and other issues. This invoked a form of performativity where participants ‘told me what they thought I wanted to hear,’ in fear of reprimand. This diminished as I built trust and relationships with participants, as well as by presenting documentation (university letters and participant information sheets) of my status as a researcher. Lastly, and common in ethnographies, my individual “stance” and “point of view” affected my observations and written accounts in fieldnotes, impacting the analytic gaze

157 Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw, “Participant observation and fieldnotes” in Handbook of Ethnography, ed. P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland and L. Lofland (Sage Publications: 2001), 352-368; Jan Blommaert and Dong Jie, Ethnographic fieldwork: A beginner’s guide (Multilingual Matters, 2010), 29-42. I put quotations around ‘in the field’ because what constitutes ‘the field’ and what does not is often blurred and not distinct for ethnographers, as many scholars have discussed. I had distinct boundaries in Rubaya between the mine sites and being what I considered ‘out of the field’ at the guesthouse where I stayed and felt a strong degree of separation between those physical spaces. However, I was also distinctly still ‘in the field’ for the entirety of my time in DRC, compared to when I was ‘out of the field’ at the University in Cape Town.


160 Blommaert and Jie, Ethnographic fieldwork,” 27.

161 Burawoy, Ethnography Unbound, 2.
through which I conducted and recorded this research. I also took pictures and gathered supporting documentation, such as letters and legal documents.

3.5. In-Depth Interviews & Focus Groups

In this research, I conducted semi-structured in-depth individual interviews, as well as group interviews and focus groups. In-depth interviews are often described as a “form of conversation,” that is interactive, combining structure and flexibility. Applying a feminist approach to the interview process, I chose to emphasise reciprocity and reflexivity during the interview process, in order to diminish hierarchies and foster a collaboration between the interviewer and interviewee during in-depth interviews. Equally, silences and non-verbal cues are an important part of the interview, which I noted and reflected on. Moreover, just as the researcher engaged in participant observation has an ‘observers effect’ on the research, the interviewer is an active participant in the interview process, affecting various dimensions of the interview itself, the respondents’ responses and the resultant data. The interviewer “co-constructs” the interview and as such co-constructs the data and resultant knowledge production.

I conducted 10 semi-structured in-depth individual interviews. Three in-depth interviews were recorded on a recording device, the others were recorded through handwritten notes. These interviews took place at different locations in Goma, Rubaya, Kibabi and Mumba. These in-depth interviews were all conducted on a one-to-one basis in French. Formal interviews primarily occurred with government officials and NGO workers. All except two of these interviews were with men, reflecting the gender disparities in positions of leadership and management. These interviews primarily informed the political context, governance and history of artisanal mining in Masisi, and as a result feature less prominently in this project. Only the two individual in-depth interviews with women are more prominently included in this thesis. On average each of these interviews lasted one hour.

162 Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, "Participant observation and fieldnotes," 360-361.
164 Ibid., 141.
165 Blommaert and Jie, Ethnographic fieldwork, 44-49.
167 Blommaert and Jie, Ethnographic fieldwork, 49.
168 Here I distinguish semi-structured in-depth interviews as formal interviews, different from the informal interviews that occurred in an unplanned manner throughout periods of participant observation. These formal interviews were planned in advanced and significantly more structured then informal interviews. For more on the distinction between formal and informal interviews see: Charlotte Aull Davies, Reflexive ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others (Routledge, 2012), 94-116.
In addition, I conducted three group interviews and two focus groups with female miners themselves which took place at mine sites, in the town of Rubaya and the village of Mumba. I conducted two group interviews with the same group of women in Mumba over the course of three weeks. All group interviews and focus groups were conducted in Swahili with simultaneous translation to French. The total number of participants across the five sessions was 25 women. One group interview was recorded on a recording device, while the remaining were recorded through handwritten notes. The longest group interview was three hours; the other two group interviews and focus groups lasted one and a half hours each. These conversations were structured around women’s experiences as labourers in the mines.

The majority of the focus groups and the group interview were not recorded on a recording device. This is primarily due to technological problems I experienced while in the field. I had planned to use my cellphone to record all interviews, however unfortunately my phone battery stopped working while I was in Rubaya. Due to Rubaya’s rural and isolated geographic location, iPhone batteries are not available there. This inhibited my ability to record interviews conducted during a first phase of fieldwork in Rubaya, which was also when most group interviews took place. In a significant moment of irony, it was extraordinarily difficult to find a replacement iPhone battery in the region, even in the provincial capital Goma. Despite the fact that the coltan mined in this region is needed specifically for devices like smartphone batteries, it was near impossible to find the finalized consumer product in the region. Once the technological problems I encountered were resolved, recording of interviews was based on participants’ comfort levels.

3.6. Participant Selection

Access to participants in this research emerged through several different avenues. Initially participants emerged through NGOs or were recommended to me through concurrent participants. Then, access came organically after having spent significant time at mine sites gaining women’s trust.

As briefly highlighted under Participant Observation above, IFEDD introduced me to female miners who were also beneficiaries of the organizations’ programs, many of whom expressed interest in participating in the research. Several women were eager to bring their members together for a focus group, as well as to show and explain their work to me. Other NGOs I had connected with, notably PACT and Assiodip, also connected me with their primary contacts and female miners who subsequently became participants.¹⁶⁹

Secondly, participation of female miners occurred organically through my presence at mine sites. As mentioned, women intrigued by my presence at mine sites approached me to participate, while other times my presence at the mine sites was met with skepticism amongst women, usually with the assumption that I was a humanitarian or government worker there to report on women who might be working illegally. However, over time miners grew accustomed to my presence at sites, as I sat awkwardly on the narrow wooden benches where women washed, separated and sold coltan; as I garnered trust, women expressed interest in participation. I found that participants emerged in ways I had not expected. For example, on several occasions women (both IFEDD members and non-members) requested to do group interviews or focus groups, preferring to participate in groups. These were often held immediately or coordinated a few days after the request, contributing to the formation of several of the group interviews in this study.

3.7. Ethics

This research was approved by the Department of Political Studies Ethics Committee within the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Cape Town. This research has followed the UCT Research Ethics Code for Research with Human Subjects and the UCT Humanities Faculty Guide to Research Ethics.170

Throughout the research process I acquired a combination of verbal and written consent from participants. All participants were above the age of 18. Before interviews took place I obtained written consent from all participants with whom I conducted recorded in-depth individual interviews and from NGO staff and other key contact people in Rubaya and Goma. I obtained verbal consent from all female miners who participated in group interviews, focus groups and informal interviews and with whom I spent significant time. I did not acquire written consent from female miners since the formality of consent forms made participants uncomfortable.

I translated the consent form and participant information sheet into French, Swahili and Kinyarwanda (see Appendix Eight) and allowed participants to choose which language they wanted to read and sign in, always carrying multiple copies of each.171 In the case of group and individual interviews, before the interview began, I would reintroduce myself and the research topic formally while circulating the participant information sheet, even though respondents were already familiar with me and the research topic. I explained that


171 While I personally translated the original consent form and participant information sheet from English to French, colleagues at IFEDD assisted with translation from French to Kinyarwanda and Swahili.
participation was voluntary, could be withdrawn at any moment during or after the interview and that there was no form of compensation for participation in this research project. Lastly, I have used pseudonyms for all participants in this thesis in order to protect the identity of all participants. I also used pseudonyms when recording fieldnotes and during interviews, unless the participant was comfortable stating their name.

Having outlined where and how this research took place, I will now turn to an analysis of the exclusion of female miners from mine work.
CHAPTER 4: FEMALE MINERS IN MASISI: A WEB OF EXCLUSIONS

Female miners face varying forms of exclusion in mine work which manifested in four primary ways however, I will begin this chapter by describing and outlining the mineral extraction process with a focus on women, highlighting the gendered dynamics along the production continuum. This will set the foundation for understanding how female miners are excluded. I will then analyze how and why a vivid gendered division of labour manifests in Masisi’s artisanal mines, rooted in social norms surrounding constructs of femininity and masculinity. This is strongly linked to a spatial segregation between men and women at artisanal mine sites based on tasks and mine equipment, which I explore based on my own experiences and observations in the second section. I will then investigate how the rigid legal binaries within mine legislation, linked to women’s in-access to credit, invisibilizes women’s labour and compounds women’s ‘in-between’ status in the sector. Lastly, I turn to how the legislative exclusion of pregnant women and children (misinterpreted by mine site authorities to include breastfeeding babies) manifests to further compound women’s exclusion with significant negative economic impacts.

4.1. The Extractive Process Through a Gendered Lens

There are at least five to six steps and varying roles involved with getting coltan out of a creek bed and to export companies in Goma. Figure Five below depicts a flow chart of the supply chain of coltan from artisanal mine sites in Masisi to export hubs in Kenya and Tanzania.

![Flow chart overview of the supply chain of coltan from artisanal mine sites in Masisi. Diagram by author.](image-url)
In the course of fieldwork, I met with, interviewed and conducted participant observation with women who were engaged in mine work in the roles of creuseur (digger) and négociant (trader), which are blurred and overlapping tasks and categorizations.

The first step in coltan extraction is to physically dig up coltan, however this step is rarely conducted by women. At the mine sites in this study digging was done primarily with a shovel along shallow creek beds, where minerals are shovelled into a kinamba, a small semi-permanent sorting area made from large rocks or wooden planks. The physical extraction of coltan is classified as the work of a creuseur (digger) and requires a government Carte de Creuseur (digging permit).

After this, coltan undergoes wet separation at a laverie (washing station). The water used for wet separation flows from natural springs found along creeks which is siphoned into a pool of water built with sandbags, forming small tanks to hold water for mining purposes. Each tank of water has a metal washing station built onto it called a porosoma, which is shared by all miners. Miners use their hands to move the stones up and down the porosoma to expedite this process, often in pairs. These washing stations are sprinkled along sites always near a kinamba, since these steps operate in tandem.

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172 Kinamba is a local word used in the region to describe this shovelling station.
173 Porosoma is a local word for the specific metal washing basin used at the sites.
Wet separation is further done in a plastic basin of water by rotating a large magnet by hand in a circular motion in a mixture of water and coltan, resembling a black sand and containing stones. Waste minerals, such as iron, stick to the magnet and are discarded beside the miner. Miners wash raw minerals between the porosoma and basins in parallel, back and forth as necessary, in order to refine coltan and remove waste material.
In dry separation women sit on a mat or *pagne* with dried coltan, a black-grey sand spread thinly across the mat, which is separated by hand with a magnetic baton. Similar to wet separation, waste minerals stick to the magnet which are wiped off and discarded beside the miner. Dry separation occurs along the embankments beside creeks where mine sites are located, and frequently in miners’ homes, since miners work with individual stockpiles and easily transport them between sites and their homes. Both wet and dry separation comprise the bulk of the labour conducted by women who buy, refine and resell small quantities of coltan (25kgs or less) and who mine waste minerals.

Refined coltan is then measured with a *robo*, a standardized measuring tool used at the mine site to measure ⅓ kg of coltan. Similar to a small plastic cup, it is used to determine the coltan value to quantity ratio for trade between miners. The price of one robo of coltan is based on the daily market value and as such is constantly fluctuating. On average during the fieldwork conducted for this thesis, ⅓ kg of coltan would sell for $12 USD but could be less for lower quality coltan, selling for $8-$9 USD. The quality of coltan is gauged by its colour determined by the naked eye. Women working in the processing tasks worked with different amounts of coltan based on individual capital. Rose, a *négociant*, buys, refines and resells coltan in lots of 25kgs, the equivalent to about 100 *robo*’s, for a value of $800-$900 USD. After refinement she will profit $200 USD from the sale after one to two weeks. Rose had the highest individual capital amount amongst small traders that I encountered. Mackenzie, another trader, buys, refines and resells coltan in the range of $300-$400 USD or about 8-10kgs. However, the majority of miners I met in the course of fieldwork worked with much smaller quantities of coltan in the range of 1-3kgs at a total value of $20-$100 USD. In this case separation and refinement process needed to accumulate this amount of coltan will take three to five days, however it could be longer due to unpredictable environmental factors, such as heavy rains, which make extraction and processing slower and more difficult. As a result, women who work with very small quantities of 1-3kgs would profit approximately $6 USD in three to five days for a monthly income between $36-$60 USD.

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174 *Pagne* is a French word for traditional bright-colored and printed fabrics worn by women in the region and used for various purposes.
175 *Robo* is the local term used by miners to describe the measuring tool and ⅓ kg of coltan.
After coltan is dug up and undergoes initial refinement, négociants (traders) who have the capital to accumulate larger amounts of coltan around the quantity of 50kgs or more, take purchased coltan to depots, located near the sites, where traceability formally begins. All minerals that are brought through depots must be recorded in a government logbook and an iTSCI logbook, both of which record the quantity of coltan, the trader’s name, the mine site, the depot station, the destination of trade, the date and the traceability tag number. An official iTSCI traceability tag is used to seal the bag. A négociant (trader) in Rubaya will then stockpile of 50-100kgs, which they sell to traders with even larger capital and resources to transport hundreds of kilos to Goma for further sale to un comptoir (export companies).

The point of sale between traders and export companies at warehouses in Goma is highly formalized and extensively recorded. Each sale between a trader and an export company includes an individual purchasing contract and extensive documentation for each sale. Contracts are legal documents that stipulate the value of the sale, the minerals in exchange, the agreed price, and includes mutually agreed terms and conditions. Contracts also require a copy of the trader’s government trading permit, individual ID, individual tax return, traceability documentation (tag and carbon copy of logbook record) and a copy of coltan purity test results conducted at the warehouses. Both parties are given a copy of this contract and supporting documentation at which time the export company issues a cheque to the trader.

Export companies in Goma then conduct further mineral refinement through additional hand separation and mechanical separation. Once ready for export, coltan (now in the form of a fine sand or powder) is placed in large drums that are legally required to be painted in the colours of the DRC flag, sealed and transported overland by truck to shipping ports in Mombasa, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Coltan is then shipped primarily to Malaysia, Thailand and China where large companies buy coltan for smelting and eventual fabrication of goods and products that require tantalum. These manufacturing companies then sell the fabricated parts to technology giants and multinationals who fabricate various consumer products.

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176 Purity tests prove that enough iron has been removed from coltan.
177 Interview with an export company staff member in Goma, September 25, 2019.
178 For a more detailed overview of the organization of markets after the point of export from DRC, see: Nest, Coltan, 31-65.
The majority of traders who sell large quantities of coltan to export companies in Goma are male, however women are also present in this role. In an individual interview, Nicole, who worked at an export company in Goma, explained that her company buys from only ten female traders, noting this was lower than the number of male traders they work with; she was unaware of any other women involved with coltan trade (of that scale) aside from those ten. The women working as traders in this capacity have very high levels of capital to buy and trade large quantities of coltan, as well as access to additional resources necessary to overcome logistical considerations of coltan sale between mine sites and Goma. For instance, traders would require ownership of a 4X4 vehicle to transport minerals the two- to four-hour drive from Rubaya to Goma, as well as storage space in Goma. The gradual decrease of women’s participation in mine activities as the need for capital increases reflects how women tend to have less access to capital and less financial independence than men. A large amount of upfront capital and investment is required to be a trader. This exploration has illustrated that although women are present in almost all extractive steps, as financial hierarchies (and increased income earning potential) increase, women’s presence decreases.

4.2. “Les Femmes N’ont Pas Le Droit”: Social Limitations On Women’s Work

When I asked Rose why she worked as a négociant and not as a creuseur conducting digging work like many male miners, she told me, “les femmes n’ont pas le droit,” while rolling her eyes and cracking a smile, meaning women do not have the “right.” Rose’s statement infers a social barrier, not a legal right. Judith (introduced in Chapter One) who mines waste minerals told me she did not do the digging work because it was “a man’s job” and was “too physical and too hard.” Through follow-up questions she shared that she had never tried it and “felt an outside pressure not to.” A male NGO worker once told me “you’ll never find a woman digging!” Many participants shared this view when discussing women’s non-involvement in digging – that it was men’s work.

Legally women have the right to conduct all mine tasks when in possession of the required mine permit, except pregnant women, as stipulated in the 2018 Mining Law under Title 1, Chapter 1, Article 5 under the right to mine, written as follows: “[a]ll physically able people of Congolese nationality, except pregnant women, who wish to engage in artisanal extraction of mineral substances...” However, women rarely conduct the task of mineral extraction with a shovel (digging) from creek beds; over the course of fieldwork I never once saw a woman do this. Although there are no physical barriers restraining women miners from picking up a shovel and digging, the statements from Rose and Judith that digging is “a man’s job” and women “do not have the right” imply a social barrier towards conducting certain mine tasks.

The notion that social norms foster a gendered division of labour is not new and has been widely analyzed by scholars. A tangible gendered division of labour is common in both...
industrial and artisanal and small-scale mining across continents, cultures and contexts, strongly linked to the historic characterization of mine work as inherently masculine.\textsuperscript{183} This has been known to push female miners into less lucrative mine work.\textsuperscript{184} Although not unique to the African context,\textsuperscript{185} scholarly literature surrounding gendered divisions of labour have emphasised regional social norms, cultural taboos and traditional beliefs that excluded women from certain mine tasks and perpetuated gender inequalities in artisanal and small-scale mines.\textsuperscript{186} For example, in Orientale Province in DRC, it has been documented that women’s presence in gold mines is believed to make minerals disappear, resulting in women’s exclusion from high income-earning tasks associated with gold extraction.\textsuperscript{187}

However, this was not a shared perception with miners and négociants in Masisi. While discussing this with a female négociant in an individual interview she said, “in Katanga there is the perception that if women enter [mining pits] the minerals will disappear, but…but that is not the case in Masisi.”\textsuperscript{188} She went on to speak of cultural taboos or traditional beliefs affecting women’s involvement in mining as ‘foreign’ to her local context. Her statement counters previous scholarly analysis of women’s exclusion from mine work in eastern DRC, which has centered around cultural taboos and traditional beliefs that justified women’s exclusion from certain mine work.

Rather, Judith’s statement that digging work is “a man’s job”, reveals that the emphasis rests with physical capacity and not traditional beliefs, reflecting exclusion as rooted in social constructs of masculinity and femininity. Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt critiques this narrative that justifies contemporary and historic gender divisions of labour in the mining industry as somehow ‘natural’ to biological differences between sexes. She argues that “seeing certain jobs as more suitable for women’s nimble fingers or more docile nature or lesser risk-taking propensities even while incorporating women into the workforce tends to push women into the lower status and more insecure forms of jobs in mining.”\textsuperscript{189} Jennifer Hinton et al. further point out the irony that digging work in mines is comparable to “equally laborious activities


\textsuperscript{184} Danielsen and Hinton, “A social relations of gender analysis of artisanal and small-scale mining in Africa’s Great Lakes Region,” 22.

\textsuperscript{185} Academic literature has explored similar occurrences and various other forms of exclusion in Asia, North and South America, Europe and the Pacific. For a comprehensive overview see: Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, \textit{Gendering the field: towards sustainable livelihoods for mining in mining communities}, The Australian National University, E Press, 2011.

\textsuperscript{186} Hinton, Veiga and Beinhoff, "Women and artisanal mining: gender roles and the road ahead," 13-16. The prevailing belief that women represent bad luck in mines has been traced back through oral historiography as early as 1881 in Brazil. Mercier and Gier, “Reconsidering women and gender in mining,” 997.


\textsuperscript{188} Interview on October 7, 2020.

\textsuperscript{189} Lahiri-Dutt, “The Megaproject of Mining: A Feminist Critique,” 332.
for agricultural purposes or in the extraction of high volume, low value commodities (e.g. clay, limestone, dimension stones)”, labour that typically engages a high number of women. In this regard, the statements of Rose and Judith can be understood as a reflection of social constructs that do not correlate to physical capacity.

While conducting participant observation, I engaged in the extractive tasks of digging, washing, separating and refining minerals. I was permitted to engage in digging despite being a woman because of my positionality as a white researcher and foreigner. Although the period during which I conducted these activities was short, I found that the physical extraction of coltan conducted with a shovel is no more technical or arduous than washing and separating tasks. On the contrary, I found that the separation work that required extensive periods of bending over for washing or the difficult handling of minerals in dry separation was much more physically uncomfortable than digging. This was primarily due to the significantly longer periods of time in awkward and physically uncomfortable positions as well as through the direct contact with the minerals. Despite the comparability of the physical demands of digging versus washing, separating and refining (which aligns with Jennifer Hinton’s analysis of comparable physical work), the latter tasks have a higher concentration of female labourers. While not rationally correlated with physical strength, as my experience confirms, women’s absence from digging work reflects Rose’s statement that women do not have the social “right” to do so.

The exclusion of women from digging work has a negative economic impact, despite the fact that at this point in coltan extraction profit margins between male diggers and women who refine small quantities of minerals is comparable. During an informal interview with male creuseurs they shared that under good extractive conditions (meaning no rain) they could individually profit approximately $22 USD after one day of work. Women who work buying, refining and reselling these minerals at the same site could profit $20-$50 USD over the course of five to seven days. Even when estimating within the higher income bracket and over the shortest time estimate for women working in this capacity, with an estimated $50 USD in five days, the individual profit for a woman will be equivalent to $10 USD per day and lower than the profits of male creuseurs. This demonstrates that although the physical labour and profits are comparable (i.e. neither miner in this case is making significant profits), women have to work more days in order to gain close to the same or less profit when working in separation and refinement.

As a result in Masisi, social norms that project women as physically incapable of conducting digging work based on social constructs of masculinity and femininity push women miners into separation and processing work that is slightly less lucrative. The gendered division of labour at the mine sites that separates men and women between different tasks further contributes to women and men occupying different physical spaces at the mine site.

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191 Interview at mine site with a group of male creuseurs on September 30, 2019.
4.3. Exclusion through Gendered Spaces

A striking physical separation of men and women at artisanal mine sites is highly visible, frequently manifesting with women and men working on opposite sides of creeks, physically and socially separated. The social restrictions on women’s work that foster women’s concentration in tasks associated with washing, separating and trading from the “work of men” in digging is intertwined with spatial separations. As a result, women’s labour is bifurcated into intersecting forms of exclusion (tasks and spaces), that mutually reinforce each other and reduce income earning potential. This section will explore the spatial segregation of women’s labour that contributes to financial limitations, despite women’s high presence in the labour force. It builds on the manifestation of social divisions of labour as evidenced in participant interviews, however this section is based primarily on my observations, reflexive ethnographic exercises and recorded statistical data during fieldwork.

As highlighted in the section on the extractive process and women’s roles within that process, the digging and separation work is conducted with separate equipment in separate physical spaces at the mine site. As Figures Six and Seven showed, there are distinct tools and equipment used for extracting coltan with a shovel in a *kinamba*, in comparison to initial washing that occurs in *porosoma* and then a basin along creek embankments. As a result, male and female miners can be found occupying different physical spaces at artisanal mine sites, where men will be more numerous in and on the edge of creek beds doing digging work, while women will be more numerous around washing stations.

This spatial segregation also reflects a proportionality of laborers in different tasks, with mostly men in digging roles and mostly women in processing roles. Figure Eleven shows a mine site, while Figure Twelve shows the same mine site through a mapping exercise I conducted on September 3, 2019, demonstrating the gender breakdown and documenting the physical spaces women occupied in relation to men, along with the differing tasks associated with those spaces. The drawing shows how female miners are more present in small groups around washing stations and men are more present in creek beds conducting digging work.
Figure 11: Overview of mine site. Photo by author.

Figure 12: Researcher’s mapping identifying the spaces and roles of miners based on gender. September 3, 2019.
However, despite the segregated work environment, women comprise a high percentage of the labour force throughout the day. Although the labour force fluctuates significantly depending on the time of day, women comprise close to 50% of the labour force consistently throughout the day, while men’s presence is concentrated in the evenings. In the course of fieldwork I conducted a “head-count” poll in three different mine sites on four different days. These counts occurred during both busy evening periods and calm afternoon periods. Table One below, shows a numerical breakdown of the labour force based on gender at various mine sites, as a sample to demonstrate the high percentage of women in mining.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>SITE OR SUB-SITE</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER OF LABOURERS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF FEMALE LABOURERS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF MALE LABOURERS</th>
<th>FEMALE PERCENTAGE OF WORKFORCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 28, 2019</td>
<td>Bunjari</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 29, 2019</td>
<td>Nyakisenyi</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 4, 2019</td>
<td>Nyakisenyi</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 3, 2019</td>
<td>Giporo</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: A sample of labour force breakdown based on gender at various mine sites.

Moreover, although men primarily work in digging, they can also be found conducting separation work, meaning men move freely between all spaces and work stations within a mine site, engaged in all tasks of mineral extraction and separation. In contrast, women miners are limited in mine work to certain physical spaces and income earning potential. This notion, that a gendered division of labour contributes to the restriction of women’s mobility between spaces and corresponding income, has been observed in other industries in the African context and in African industrial mine settings. That research has highlighted how women are blocked from accessing certain physical spaces within the supply chain, reducing income earning potential.

192 This phenomenon was largely informed by the issue of non-payment between SMB and diggers, highlighted in Chapter One. Due to tensions between these two parties many miners were smuggling minerals between sites (which is illegal) and Sakima sites saw an increase in miners and trade. Not only was the increase in laborers from SMB sites to Sakima sites visible at the end of each day, it also provided the opportunity for me to conduct informal interviews with male diggers to confirm how and why this was occurring.


4.4. Women Working In-between: Les Petit Négociants

As highlighted in chapter one, the DRC Mining Law stipulates that all artisanal miners must hold a *Carte D’exploitant Artisanal* (exploitation permit issued under the name *Carte de Creusuer*) or a *Carte de Négocian* (trading permit). These two categories of permit are defined separately and distinctly under Title 1, Chapter 1, Article 1 of the Mining Law as follows:

**Artisanal Exploitation Card:** title pursuant to which the artisanal miner engages in artisanal exploitation.

**Trader’s Card:** title delivered pursuant to the provisions of this Code, that authorizes the person in whose name it is established to buy mineral substances coming from artisanal exploitation from accredited mining cooperatives and to resell them to accredited outlets and treatment facilities.

What the law states here is that different permits are given depending on which type of work miners conduct, showing a government legal binary of artisanal mine work as either that of ‘exploitation’ (*creuseur*) or ‘buying and reselling’ (*négocian*). Exploitation permits are legally printed under the name *Carte de Creuseur* and it is this terminology that is used by miners, depicted below in Image 13. A similar passport-style permit exists for the role of *négocian*, labelled accordingly.

![Image 13: Example of required government coltan digging permit (*carte de creuseur de coltan*). Photo by author.](image)

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195 Mining Law, T. 1, Ch. 1, Art. 1.
196 Translation from French by author. Mining Law, T. 1, Ch. 1, Art. 1, No. 7.
197 Translation from French by author. Mining Law, T. 1, Ch. 1, Art. 1, No. 8.
However, women most frequently work in buying, refining and selling small quantities of coltan which does not fit in either category and reveals how women’s work is much more opaque than the simplistic legal binaries and broad categorizations of labour that govern the industry. As a result, these categorizations prohibit the detailed delineation and contribution of women’s work in artisanal mining, conflating and reducing the varying roles female labourers take on in coltan extraction. This has fostered a clash between rigid categorizations of women’s work with the actual manifestations of women’s labour, which has resulted in the invisibilization of women’s contribution to the coltan supply chain. Here I put forward a categorization of women’s work as that of a petit négociant (small trader), which I will explore through an analysis of Kathleen’s experience working within this category of a petit négociant (as introduced in Chapter One).

Kathleen, buys, refines and sells 0.5-1kg of coltan on a daily basis. Under good conditions, after two to three days of work her profits would be around 10,000 CF or about $6-7 USD. On a bad day (due to heavy rains), it could take up to five days to profit 10,000 CF. Kathleen sells the small quantity of coltan she refines to négociants on a rolling basis as they come through the site buying coltan from miners like her, who accumulate large stockpiles of 30-50kgs or more.

Kathleen holds a Carte de Creuseur (digging permit) but she does not work as a digger; she buys, refines and resells small quantities of minerals. Since she mines such small quantities she does not sell minerals formally through the depots, which require much larger quantities – 50kgs and above, – thus beyond her purchasing power. Kathleen’s work falls between the formal channels of mine work. She is not physically digging up minerals (the work of a creuseur), nor is she working with enough capital to work as a formal négociant. Her profit margins are closer to that of a digger than a trader, falling within the lowest income bracket amongst artisanal miners. Her work is that of a petit négociant (small trader), a term which the miners do not use themselves, but which I put forward here as a category of women’s work that captures the labour of mineral trade in very small quantities that falls in-between formal channels of mine work. The role of petit négociant is a more accurate representation of the vast majority of women’s labour, whether legal or illegal, and captures the significant contribution of small levels of trade at the mine sites, conducted primarily by women.

Scholars have identified that there is a broad conceptualization of the role of négociant that includes multiple people and levels of trade, based on each trader’s access to capital. Generally this has identified small traders as having limited access to financial capital, while big traders possess more capital, which results in their occupying a more powerful position within the chain of production. Women have also been identified as more heavily involved with various steps of processing before minerals are sold to affluent traders. Both of those observations were also the case in this study, however these analyses have not adequately considered the importance of the petit négociant role when analyzing the gendered aspects

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198 de Haan and Geenen, “Mining cooperatives in Eastern DRC The interplay between historical power relations and formal institutions,” 828; Bashwira Nyenyezi, “Navigating obstacles, opportunities and reforms,” 31; Nest, *Coltan*, 61.
199 de Haan and Geenen, “Mining cooperatives in Eastern DRC,” 828.
200 Bashwira, “Navigating obstacles, opportunities and reforms,” 34.
of the role. In the present study, the role of processing was blurred between the tasks of diggers and traders, since it involved an element of both categorizations when considering the legal permits carried by the miner and the actual task being conducted by the miner.

Although this analysis only draws on Kathleen’s experience, this type of role was common amongst participants in this study, demonstrating a trend and broad misplacement of women’s labour along the coltan supply chain, making women’s labour difficult to categorize. The nuance to women’s work in this study, which blends the processing tasks with the work of a trader, emphasises that the financial limitations placed on female labourers working in this role are so significant that it creates a distinct categorization of women’s work - that of *petit négociant*. By conflating women’s roles and inadequately acknowledging the extent of women’s contribution to the supply chain, women’s labour can and is dismissed as ‘too small to matter’ in the supply chain. This leads to a general discourse in the sector of women’s labour as insignificant, reinforcing a narrative that women’s labour is secondary. Women’s exclusion from work takes on an additional and more explicit form through the mining law, which I turn to now.

4.5. Gendered Governance Of Artisanal Coltan Mining

As highlighted under Title 1, Chapter 1, Article 5 of the Mining Law, pregnant women are prohibited from mining. This includes all roles associated with extraction and trade, including digging, washing, separating and trading. This limitation can easily be interpreted as beneficial, in place to prevent unnecessary and preventable harm. However, in the context of artisanal coltan extraction, and more broadly the 3 T’s, it merits closer examination. Artisanal extraction and processing of certain minerals can be toxic and pose serious health risks to miners and in certain cases specifically harm pregnant women, notably when mercury is used in gold amalgamation. In the context of artisanal gold extraction the legislative ban on pregnant women makes sense, however, the health risks associated with coltan extraction and trade appear benign. The most recent US geological survey report on tantalum notes that “human and ecological health concerns are generally minimal under most natural conditions.” Social scientists who have conducted research with female artisanal coltan miners in other parts of eastern DRC have made similar observations, noting that coltan extraction and especially trade is not known to pose serious health risks.

Over the course of fieldwork I frequently encountered pregnant women who were mining and trading in small amounts of coltan but hiding their pregnancies in fear of this regulation. In a focus group interview a participant said “you can hide when you’re pregnant but you can’t

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201 In a case study of women who work as intermediaries in South Kivu (although in a different role than the one explained here), Marie-Rose Bashwira et. al. note how similarly women are “forced to continue operating in the shadows,” because their role does not fit in rigid legal binaries of mine labour. Bashwira, Cuvelier, Hilhorst and Van der Haar, “Not only a man’s world,” 113.

202 Mining Law, T. 1, Ch. 1, Art. 1.


204 Schulz, Piatak and Papp, “Niobium-Tantalum,” 1.

205 Bashwira, Cuvelier, Hilhorst and Van der Haar, “Not only a man’s world,” 112.
hide when you have a baby!” The group erupted in agreement. Participants further explained how they “hid pregnancy easily through the way they dress.” Their statement revealed how commonplace it is for pregnant women to keep working in mining.

The legal exclusion of pregnant women is widely known and presents specific vulnerabilities for female miners. In an interview with a traceability organization employee, he explained how the organization employs spies in mine communities to trick women into confessing to their pregnancies in order to maintain the mine site validation status as ‘green’. In a recorded individual interview in Goma on August 2nd, 2019 he explained:

**Jérémy:** Within the chain {production chain} where we work there are women...um...these women are present in almost all the steps of the chain...but we are there for upholding...or for getting people to uphold the law. The work of women is not illegal but there are jobs that women should not do. Heavy work {inaudible} and pregnant women who are not eligible to work in the mines. In the chain where we work, there are these challenges because there are moments where we find pregnant women working.

(Interuption)

**Jérémy continues:** There are small tests, small questions, traps that we have developed that our monitors try a bit to implement, and sometimes we discover that women have hidden pregnancies and she is pregnant. You see? For example, there in Rubaya there is a small market in the center..where clothing is sold. And so someone sees a woman who is out and buying clothes there, our monitors will approach them “how are you?” Okay! (laughs) Can I buy (laughs) clothing for the child you will soon give birth to? And the woman says - yes! Are you really pregnant that I can buy this clothing for you? These are simple tricks. ...then we see its a pregnant woman who has been working...or something like that.

This legal mandate is a significant point of exclusion for women that targets women beyond legal parameters, as this moment of coercion shows. Scholars have argued that the general ban on pregnant women from mining activities, especially because it includes a ban on tasks such as trading, has become “a tool to consolidate the male-dominated nature of the ASM industry in eastern DRC.”

However, this was not the only exclusion female miners faced on legal grounds that I encountered. In fact, there appeared to be significant confusion around what is actually ‘legal’ or ‘illegal’ for female miners, and rhetoric surrounding legality was frequently employed in public discourse to exclude female miners in other ways but on legalistic grounds. This was observed in cases where women mined with babies that were still breastfeeding. As highlighted in the introduction, the presence of children at mine sites is illegal and babies are largely included in this categorization, although the intention behind this legislation is to prevent child labour, which of course does not apply to a baby. Over the course of fieldwork I encountered babies as young as one month old with their mothers who were working.

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206 Bashwira, Cuvelier, Hilhorst and Van der Haar, “Not only a man’s world,” 112.
In an informal interview with a male creuseur, while I was probing on why no women were working that particular day at a sub-site where I had seen women working before, he explained that “many women stayed home from mine work today because they had heard that authorities were in the area.” On that particular occasion high level government officials from Goma, including the head of the Government Mining Branch, had been visiting mine sites in the area. He went on to explain “some of the women have babies with them.”

The enforcement of a blanket legalistic approach to ‘children’ including breastfeeding babies, has a negative impact on female miners specifically, who go to great lengths to compensate for their babies (which I will explore in the next chapter). As Marie-Rose Bashwira notes, local public servants find much ambiguity in the law at a localized level, leaving room for self-interpretation alongside local knowledge and practices.207

4.6. Conclusion

What this chapter has shown is that by retracing coltan from the point of extraction to the point of sale at export houses in Goma, I uncovered a diminishing proportion of women as I moved ‘up’ the production chain. Thus as the roles grow less physically demanding, but require more capital, they are increasingly conducted by men. The exclusions from mine work that women face are intricate and overlapping, manifested through multiple avenues and intersections of power, authority, gender, socio-economic status and gendered social norms. They involve explicit exclusion through the law and ‘invisible’ exclusions through social norms that reinforce a stark visual spatial exclusion. Nuance rests within these exclusions that manifest differently than other similar contexts in the region. The social constructions that define ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’, and underlie ‘invisible’ exclusions women face in this study, center around an inaccurate perception of physical demands – not cultural taboos, as argued by much of the previous academic work.

Additionally, each exclusion compounds women’s economic exclusion by negatively impacting women’s direct profits or income earning potential. When Judith and Rose do not conduct digging work because it is the “work of men,” they are blocked from slightly higher profits that digging work would facilitate. When women are chased out of the mines when they have breastfeeding babies with them or are targeted and coerced while pregnant, they lose valuable time ‘on-the-job’ – not in the form of wages but through lost time when they could be adding minerals to their stockpiles and profits in their pagnes. Lastly, women’s mine labour is primarily situated ‘in-between’ the legal binaries of a creuseur or négociant, which I have put forward here as the role of petit négociant. By suggesting this category, I seek to address the invisibilization of women’s work in the national legal framework to mining, and to quantify women’s contribution to the coltan supply chain beyond its current status as ‘too small to matter’ and hidden ‘in-between’ exploitation and trade channels. As shown informally from my head-count poll, women’s presence in the mines and engagement in mine work is high.

207 Bashwira Nyenyezi, “Navigating obstacles, opportunities and reforms,” 183.
With this understanding of women’s exclusions, it raises the question of how women respond. And what, if any, are the implications of those responses? The next chapter will explore exactly that in discussing individual and collaborative strategies women employ to overcome exclusion, and will analyze if or how those strategies hold broader significance.
CHAPTER 5: WOMEN’S COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN WORK

Women, as active labourers in mine work in Masisi, face multiple and intersecting exclusions that are distinct from their male counterparts. Rooted primarily in gender and socio-economic status, these exclusions manifest through gendered social norms, physical space, legal binaries and along extra-legal lines. However, women have various collective and individual strategies to manoeuvre around these exclusions in order to actively continue in mine work.

I argue that these strategies to overcome exclusions in mine work are intentional and organized, although remain fragmented. This chapter will explore the evidence for this argument. Through ethnographic observations, interviews and focus groups, women explained and showed me how they frequently organize into multiple and differing collaborations, from large collectives of 20 members to small two-person collaborations, in order to counter these exclusions and maintain work in mining. I observed four different types of collaboration amongst female miners working with small amounts of minerals of 1-10kgs, whose work primarily involved washing, separating and refining coltan at mine sites. In addition, women who worked legally and illegally in the same roles but also as traders employed individual strategies, such as bribery and subversion, to counter exclusions.

The implications of individual and collective strategies are significant: they allow for the immediate needs of women (financial gain) to be met; they also provide evidence that intentional gendered collaborations foster women’s ongoing participation in mining, and their ability to benefit from mining capitalism. While some of these strategies reveal gendered vulnerabilities and women’s precarity in mine work, they also demonstrate creative and highly resilient methods that foster inclusivity and subsequent financial benefit. This chapter is devoted to describing and analyzing these strategies and their broader implications. While many of the women who participated in this study engage in mine work out of necessity, the strategies explored in this chapter emerge as examples of highly organized collective and individual manifestations of women’s labour, with both tangible implications and evidence of women’s non-victim status.

In this chapter I will first present an overview of these strategies, followed by a detailed discussion of the collective and individual strategies, respectively, which women employ. I will then turn to an analysis of these strategies, their cumulative significance and implications.

5.1. Collective Strategies

Four primary facets of group collaboration, with varying structures and functions, emerged amongst female miners (as summarized in Table Two below). All of these self-formed collaborations are separate and independent from the legislated cooperative (COOPERAMMA) miners are required to be part of in order to mine legally in Masisi, as
stipulated in the Mining Law (see Chapters One and Four). The following sections will describe and analyze each of these collaborations in more detail, demonstrating how they contribute to women’s intentional and organized strategies to overcome exclusions. Note that research limitations in this study hindered certain aspects of data gathering; as a result certain sections provide more detail than others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Structure</th>
<th>Size (number of women)</th>
<th>Primary Function</th>
<th>Group Members Relations</th>
<th>Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Capital for Trade</th>
<th>Capital for Waste Minerals Present</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>● Credit system</td>
<td>Colleagues. Met through mine work.</td>
<td>Elected leadership structure including: President, Vice President and Treasurer.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Conflict resolution mechanism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Collaboration</td>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>● Processing ● Production ● Trade</td>
<td>Colleagues. Met through mine work.</td>
<td>Rotational amongst members on an ad hoc basis.</td>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>Pooled</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>● Production ● Trade ● Child Care</td>
<td>Colleagues. Met through mine work.</td>
<td>Team leader on an ad hoc basis.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pairs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>● Tasks ● Profits ● Efficiency</td>
<td>Colleagues. Met through mine work.</td>
<td>No set leader. Egalitarian.</td>
<td>Individual &amp; Pooled</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Overview of collaborative strategies for inclusion amongst female miners.

5.1.1. Collective Collaboration

The most organized and structured of these collaborations was a group of 20 women who all work in buying, refining and reselling small quantities of 0.5-1kg of coltan. They formed what I am terming a ‘collective,’ and which must remain nameless for reasons of anonymity. Within the collective, group members formally exercised diverse functions, such as president, secretary and treasurer – positions which were elected by secret ballot. The youngest group member was 22 years-old, with members ranging in age up to 47 years-old. All members interviewed were married or widowed, mostly to other miners, had children and were born and raised in Masisi (not migrant labourers). The group’s primary function was to provide a
credit system and for conflict resolution within the group and at the chantier (sub-site), each aspect of which I will explore in more detail below. Each miner worked with her own individual capital and equipment, such as separation magnets and basins. This collective was the only one of its kind I encountered during fieldwork; since I spent the most time with its members, I will provide the most detail on this strategy type.

Group members profit a maximum of 10,000 CF (about $5-6 USD), every three days. This provides each member with a monthly income of approximately $50-60 USD. As discussed in previous chapters, this reflects a low monthly income and would fit into my categorization of the work of a petit négociant, a category of women’s work which I have put forward in this thesis to depict the highly gendered trading role that falls in between legal categories of mine work, and involves small quantities of minerals. Each group member pays 1000 CF, about 50¢ US, every two days to the group treasurer, resulting in a monthly membership fee of approximately $7.50 USD per person. Although the income highlighted here amongst members places women as marginalized labourers, these profits were higher than for many other women in this study.

Kathleen, a founding member, said they started the group to “solve small problems at the chantier,” like when “there are any kinds of fights or arguments at the site.” She described that these conflicts would occur between group members, other miners or authorities at the site, or “when members don’t pay back loans.” All the group members were colleagues from the mine site who did not know each other before working in the mines but, as Viviane told me, “joined together for work and became friends.”

The collective’s credit function allows members to request small loans from 5000-10,000 CF to increase individual capital to purchase minerals. The money contributed through membership fees is used for loans to group members. Kathleen described the format for receiving loans as simply asking the treasurer, “my money is finished. Can you lend me 5000 CF and I’ll pay you back tomorrow?” reflecting a casual approach to the loan system. Since the closest formal bank is in Goma, making it largely inaccessible at 65kms away and a $20 USD return fare (almost half a monthly income), this is their only access to credit. The treasurer manages the funds which she keeps in a box at her house.

In the second function of the group, the President takes a leadership role in conflict resolution internally and externally for the collective members, following up on unpaid loans of group members and assisting in settling disputes between members as they arise. Most frequently she mediates conflict between group members and other miners in the chantier. However, Kathleen said “fights are rare and we have few arguments here.” Kathleen’s description

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208 10,000 CF profits over the course of 3 days was an upper estimate of average profits. Difficult environmental conditions usually made the profit amount lower, so a monthly income of $60 USD is really an upper estimate of monthly profits and much less common.
reflects how the President holds an influential position in not only asserting the presence of women’s labour at the mine site but further fostering accountability in work relations between miners and mine site governance hierarchies.

Lastly, the collective’s composition was distinctly female. When I asked Viviane why there were no men in the group, she said with a distinct pride, “they can’t do what we do!” Here she was referring to the group members’ additional work with waste minerals; this is primarily ‘women’s work’, a commonality amongst group members. While the group members mined legally with small amounts of capital, they also mined waste minerals to enhance profits. None of the members had enough capital to accumulate large enough coltan stockpiles to trade officially at depots. Viviane’s statement reflects that the group’s identity is engineered along gendered lines.

This ‘collective’ is unique in organizational structure and function with a clear leader and elections by secret ballot. It has clear parameters: its mandate is exclusively – and crucially – to assist with finance and conflict resolution. The group’s structure is democratic and transparent, and exists outside of state systems or structures. In addition, the collective’s credit system fills an important and systematic gap in women’s access to credit in the region since there are no formal banking institutions in Masisi nor the infrastructure to support a formal banking system of that nature. The majority of participants in this study also did not have mobile phones, so cannot access mobile banking services, which are popular in the region.

This type of credit system is not new and has been observed in other African contexts. Credit systems have also been observed in other provinces in the DRC, however in those cases have typically been initiated by NGOs. In comparison to credit systems previously examined in the DRC, this collective is distinct, having emerged organically by women themselves to address their specific needs. Notably, they were not facilitated by an NGO or any other top-down intervention which, as Gavin Hilson and Abigail Ackah-Baidoo state, tend to “glamourize its role [microcredit] in development, seemingly overlooking how the problem of persistent

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209 Interview with female miner at mine site, September 5, 2019.
rural poverty necessitates its application in the first place.” It also demonstrates how women circumvent bureaucratic processes and other factors, such as the need for collateral, that render many formal banking services inaccessible to women in particular. This collective provides evidence of how women address economic exclusions collaboratively.

5.1.2. Small Group Collaboration, Teams and Pairs

5.1.2.1. Small Group Collaboration

In a different collaboration, which I term here a ‘small group collaboration,’ seven to ten women work together in buying, refining and reselling a shared coltan stockpile rather than individual reserves. They pool capital to purchase minerals which they rework together, sharing equipment to do so (mainly magnets for the separation process) and subsequently share profits. Claudette explained to me how each group member would take on a different task within the processing and trade, which I captured in my fieldnotes from August 28th, 2019 as follows:

She said some women {group members} would wash and separate coltan, the others separate the dried coltan, and she would act as the négociant and sell on behalf of the group...They pooled their finances to make this collaboration work and to increase their buying potential.

The way I observed this unfold was with three women conducting wet separation in the nearby creek bed, while another four women engaged in dry separation up the embankment. Claudette conducts the trading on behalf of the group, but they all rotate between all tasks. The quantities of coltan this group of women worked with was around 10kgs, which means the labour of each woman falls within the parameters of the petit négociant role. Claudette then distributes profits amongst the group members proportional to the amount of capital they each put forward in the initial purchase. She also explained “that the leader changes from time-to-time,” on a rotational basis (but not through elections).

Within this collaboration women did not pay membership fees nor were bound to the group in any way and as a result its structure and function differs from the collective highlighted in the previous section. The group collaboration described here focuses on processing, production and trade. As explained by Claudette (and as I observed directly), two implications of the communal approach of this group collaboration are: a) an increased profitability by

214 For typical regional constraints of this nature and discussion of this issue see: Danielsen and Hinton, “A social relations of gender analysis of artisanal and small-scale mining in Africa’s Great Lakes Region,” 26.
pooling funds; and b) greater efficiency in work and equipment. Otherwise limited by a lack of capital, the collaboration thus strategically facilitates women’s participation in mine work.

5.1.2.2. Teams

Another manifestation of women’s collaboration was what I am terming ‘teams’ of five to seven. In these groups women also conduct the work of washing, separating and refining minerals, each with their own capital and equipment. What is distinct in these formations is that they trade with each other and assist one another in childcare solutions.

During fieldwork I spent four hours primarily observing a group of six women work together in processing and trade. Initially two women, then four and then six, this team slowly emerged throughout the afternoon. Amélie was the clear leader in the group, directing the trade, distributing minerals and controlling transactions. I captured her distinct leadership and the team trade in my fieldnotes from September 7th, 2019 as follows:

A couple of hours in, Amélie started distributing minerals. What I observed was as follows: Amélie distributed the washed minerals and everyone bought from her. She gave 1 mésurette to 4 women, who each paid her 5000CF and she kept 3 mésurettes for herself...Each woman there (total 6) had their own stock of minerals in a plastic bag.

This transaction involved only women, and in addition to the more obvious economic collaboration, there were also collaborative childcare strategies. Before my informal interviews with members of the group, I first noted this phenomenon in my fieldnotes on September 7th, 2019:

As I moved around I noticed that Annie who had taken 2 mésurette walked up the steep embankment out of the creek bed into the trees and joined Michelle on the hillside. She gave her 1 mésurette, so they both bought 1 mésurette. Annie, who was part of the mineral transaction below but had now joined Michelle in the trees, took one of the babies and started breastfeeding.

Annie explained that the “Chef du Chantier is the eyes of SAEMAPE, like a spy” and can get them in “trouble” for having babies at the sites with them while they work. As a government branch, SAEMAPE is part of the oversight and validation team responsible for ensuring no children are present in sites in order to maintain traceability standards and counter instances of child labour (see Chapter Four for extralegal exclusions women face in this context). In order to avoid this “trouble” the women explained to me that they take turns between watching the babies beside the site and mining, receiving equal portions of the daily profits of the group. Annie said, “all the women collaborate on this” in reference to the ‘team’
members, emphasising that the group leader, Amélie, “doesn’t want children around the *porosoma* because we can all get in trouble for this.”

What I observed and what was described to me reveals how women engage in trade and transaction together and how they foster their own childcare strategies. These women were not bound to each other through membership fees, nor did this team have an elected leadership structure, however the strategy of ‘team work’ shows a clear, collective approach to mine work that falls along gendered lines and responds to women’s specific exclusions, notably regarding motherhood. Although each woman had their own capital, minerals and equipment, there was a collaborative approach to trade and the inclusion of female miners who were breastfeeding. However, this collaboration also reveals hierarchies in the group. As Annie’s statement reflects and as I observed, Amélie was the clear group leader with slightly more power associated to her higher financial status. My observation (captured above in my fieldnotes) shows that Amélie worked with slightly higher profits and mineral quantities: she led the trade and kept the largest portion of minerals for herself. Annie’s quote also reveals that Amélie ‘called the shots’ amongst the team. What set her apart was not having an accompanying child, and her higher financial status.

### 5.1.2.3. Pairs

Women also frequently work in pairs, typically when collecting, refining and selling waste minerals. In these instances, women had individual equipment but worked together for efficiency and necessity.

Judith worked with Charlotte in dry separation, refinement and sale of waste minerals. During an informal interview Judith explained that they acquired waste minerals by extracting coltan debris from around the *porosoma* (washing station). The debris was either left behind or given to them for free by male *creuseurs*. She went on to explain that they would profit 3000-5000 CF over about five to six days. I pressed them a bit on the minerals being ‘free’, and captured Judith’s explanation in my fieldnotes from September 12, 2019:

> *She said the creuseurs are happy to give them their waste minerals (les déchets) and they never face violence or challenges in taking the waste minerals. Nor do they have to pay for the minerals. It's free and the creuseurs, who are male, would just normally leave those minerals, so it means nothing to them if the women take them.*

When I asked them how they came to work together, Judith explained that they had “found each other at the mines and started collaborating.” So they met at the mines and became colleagues, then “friends through their work,” as she put it.
In a separate instance of women working in pairs at a different site, Clémentine and her work partner Adrianna also worked together as a pair in the separation, refinement and sale of waste minerals. Clémentine (40 years-old) and Adrianna (25 years-old) both live very close to the site where they work, like all participants in this study who are not migrant labourers. Clémentine explained that it would take five to six days to collect enough waste minerals to dry over one to two days, providing enough coltan to sell for a profit of 3000-5000 CF (about $3 USD) in seven to eight days. When I asked how it came that they worked together, Clémentine explained that they had “found each other at the site” and said “hey, will you help me out?” They split the profits of their labour equally and fostered a friendship. What both of these examples reveal is that, similar to other groups and miners, these women met on the job and started collaborating together. This provides evidence of a strategy amongst women to maintain mine work through collaboration, even in small pairs.

Within the context of other participants in this study, those working in pairs are amongst the most marginalized. They lack the capital to purchase minerals and so mine waste minerals to obtain (exceptionally low) profits, earning less than $1 USD per day. As Clémentine stated to me, “I didn’t really choose this work but am doing it for a little money,” showing that their work in this context is to provide basic income. The economic hardship they face is rooted in broad gender inequalities and socio-economic disparities regionally and nationally. However, their engagement in mine work is not ad hoc but organized and intentional, demonstrated through their collaboration which grew out of their environment. Rather than understand their experience as ‘work to survive’, in light of their concerted collaboration and definitive place in the supply chain, they are able to maintain work in mining – together and as a result of each other.

5.2. Individual Strategies

In addition, women also had multiple individual strategies to maintain work. Table Three provides an overview of these strategies and the exclusions to which they respond. In this section I will describe and analyze women’s individual strategies to manoeuvre through and circumvent exclusion due to gender, motherhood and socio-economic status. Women’s individual strategies to maintain work in mining differ primarily based on the legal status of the miner (as either mining legally with a permit or illegally without a permit) and I’ve divided them here based on that status. This division also subjects women to varying levels of vulnerabilities, which will be weaved throughout this section.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Strategy</th>
<th>Function of strategy</th>
<th>In response to an exclusion based on:</th>
<th>Legal or illegal Status of miner</th>
<th>Strategy categorization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bribery                             | ● Outwit authorities  
  ● Safety  
  ● Access                                      | Socio-economic status                | illegal                         | Circumventing legality  |
| Running Away                        | ● Avoid authorities                                        | Extralegal (motherhood) status       | legal                           | Extralegal              |
| Hiring other miners to work on their behalf | ● Maintenance of profits                                  | Physical space                       | legal                           | Spatial                 |
| Secret Alert System                 | ● Hide breastfeeding babies                               | Extralegal (motherhood) status       | legal                           | Extralegal              |
| Selling Minerals from Home          | ● Work outside of formal trade channels  
  ● Processing  
  ● Trade                                             | Socio-economic status                | illegal                         | Circumventing legality  |
| Hiding Pregnancy                    | ● Circumvent the law  
  ● Access                                                 | Extralegal (motherhood) status       | legal                           | Circumventing legality  |

Table 3: Overview of individual strategies for inclusion amongst female miners.

5.2.1 Circumventing Legality

It is common for women to work in the mines without the required mine permit, marking their labour as ‘illegal.’ In one group interview, all 5 participants shared that they did not hold a mining permit because the permit cost was too high.\(^\text{216}\) As a matter a fact, the cost of a mining permit, which must be renewed annually, was completely unclear amongst participants. Some said it was $100 USD, some said $25 USD, while others said $50. While the cost is $25 USD, the price is not set in the Mining Law and exists in a fluctuating pricing context.\(^\text{217}\) Patient Mirindi describes how this permit cost is not consistent and that added

\(^{216}\) Group interview on September 30, 2019.  
\(^{217}\) This is based on responses from participants and NGO contacts.
taxation structures once the permit is issued can in fact triple that cost.\textsuperscript{218} While in theory having a mine permit allows the state to regulate the sector, in practice the cost of the card outweighs the benefit for miners, reflecting the notion highlighted by Siegel and Veiga that the cost to enter the formal economy is prohibitive, strengthening the informal economy.\textsuperscript{219} In addition, this demonstrates the prohibiting factors for female miners in the context of eastern DRC, even though artisanal mining is generally argued to be a low-barrier entry industry.\textsuperscript{220}

In my group interview with women who mined illegally and who each bought, refined and sold small quantities of 1-2kgs of coltan per day and stockpiled 25-50kgs, women highlighted two primary strategies to maintain work in the mines. First, if approached by mine site authorities such as Mine Police or the Military, women reported that they would opt to “run away when they see soldiers” or “deny that minerals belonged to us.” In the latter strategy women described that “male creuseurs” who did hold the required permits, would “lie for us and claim ownership of the minerals.” In return for the protection from the legal miner, women would pay them 6,000 CF about $2 USD or buy them two bottles of beer. Women specifically referred to male miners who helped them in this strategy, reflected by a participant in a group interview who explained, “since it’s mostly men who have cards [mine permits], it’s mostly men who protect us but we have to pay them for that.”

In the same group interview participants also reported bribing the Chef du Chantier (who is male) 10,000 CF or about $5 US on an adhoc basis in return for permission to mine illegally. In this instance authorities turn a blind eye to their presence in the mines; participants describe the bribe as a means to “sell their minerals but also to avoid problems.”\textsuperscript{221} Shaje elaborated on this point, stating that a regular payment to mine site authorities also helped them avoid “troubles,” which were reported as: extortion, exploitation, theft and/or physical beatings by mine site authorities such as Mine Police.\textsuperscript{222} Unlike the first example, the bribe also protects women against vulnerabilities linked to their ‘illegal’ status.

However, mine site authorities are not always employees of the state (as they are supposed to be) and as a result this negotiated safety feature is not a blanket safety measure. In a formal interview with a participant she shared that companies will hire “previous members of M23 [who] will be dressed in police uniforms to ‘guard’ the perimeter.” She continued, “c’est la confusion totale!” (‘it’s complete confusion!’).\textsuperscript{223} Members of armed groups posing as state

\textsuperscript{218} Mirindi, “La coopérative manière,” 567-568.
\textsuperscript{220} Bryceson and Jønsson, “Gold digging careers in rural East Africa,” 379-392.
\textsuperscript{221} Group interview on August 31, 2019.
\textsuperscript{222} Group interview on August 31, 2019.
\textsuperscript{223} Interview in Goma, October 7, 2019. M23 is an armed group in the Province.
authorities regularly occur in Masisi. For women this means that the monthly payment has loopholes due to irregularities in law enforcement; however, the strategy of bribery still evidences women’s skills in navigating the complexity of illegal mining in order to maintain work and protect themselves.

In a different strategy, women reported selling minerals from their homes at reduced prices in order to avoid formal trade channels and maintain financial benefit from mine work. This occurred amongst women who stockpile 25-50kgs of coltan and who, as was explained to me, engage in trade with an individualized network of legal traders, or “clients” with whom they hold rapport (rather than themselves acquiring a permit). By working covertly in this way, women are able to conceal their illegal status as miners and engage in trade outside of formal channels.

In this section on circumventing legality, the evidence reveals three primary aspects of why and how women maintain work in the mines illegally. That 1) the cost of entering the formal economy is prohibitive, 2) women are creative in how they manage to circumvent law enforcement and 3) the home space is part of the production chain. Participants directly stated “mine permits are too expensive” as the reason they do not have them. Mining illegally, although a gamble for female miners (due to the financial burdens of extortion, added tax and other vulnerabilities), still yields higher returns by limiting upfront costs and enhancing profits. In other words, women would rather mine illegally and risk vulnerabilities like bodily harm than buy the permit, because the permit is expensive and they manage to circumvent the legal framework. This further reflects inconsistencies in how the law unfolds in practice versus theory, reflecting Kevin D’Souza’s statement that “[u]nfortunately, the regulations set out in the Code Minier are seldom followed in reality.”

Furthermore, women’s circumvention of the legal framework through bribery and trading from home reflects their ability to continue work despite what is essentially legal dispossession, further manifested through socio-economic exclusion (inability to afford the permit). In Patience Mususa’s study with illegal female artisanal copper miners in Zambia, she argues that women consider their illegal work “as a legitimate economic strategy for survival and small-scale capital accumulation,” due to disenfranchisement by the state and corporations. While I seek to analyze the strategies explored here cumulatively to unpack

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224 For example, it was reported on 24 June 2020 that 3 people were killed by “armed men..dressed in military uniform.” Freddy Ruvunangiza, Insécurité à Masisi: Au moins 3 personnes tuées dans une attaque d’hommes en armes à Rubaya, La Prunelle RDC, June 24 2020, https://laprunellerdc.info/insecurite-a-masisi-au-moins-3 personnes-tuees-dans-une-attaque-d-hommes-en-armes-a-rubaya/ (accessed August 31, 2020).

225 Group interview on August 31, 2019.


their significance beyond survival strategies, Mususa’s analysis provides insight into the complexity of women’s ‘illegal’ work which blurs legal distinctions and challenges “the very notion of legality or illegality.”

She further argues that the structural inequalities women face in the context justify women’s illegal work.

The strategies highlighted here that individual women employ to maintain work and access to mine sites are similar to collective strategies, in the sense that they provide immediate interventions for financial gain, while also reflecting the ways in which women navigate exclusions more broadly. In the next section I will address the exclusions that women who mine legally also face, based on a misinterpretation of the law.

5.2.2. Compensating for Extralegal Exclusions

A significant exclusion for women from mine work is due to a misinterpretation of the law by mine site authorities regarding the legal prohibition on children in the mines. As discussed in Chapter Four, this negatively affects female miners with breastfeeding babies, fostering financial exclusion. However, women had creative strategies to protect each other and overcome this exclusion.

Adaka, a 23-year-old collective member who mined with her one-year-old emphasised fear of law enforcement when mining with her baby. In an interview she explained how she managed to evade being caught while working with her baby through a secret alert system between women. When mine site authorities, such as the Chef du Chantier, come to check up on things at the site, women working 500 meters below her would “call up and signal that the Chef du Chantier was coming”, whereby she would “immediately leave the site.” Often this was as simple as standing off to the side along the embankment, pretending she was not working, stating that she has never been caught. Alternatively, she would “just leave the site for the day”, resulting in the loss of a day’s profits.

In this example Adaka mined legally, but her exclusion based on a misinterpretation of the law results in a significant financial implication due to a loss of time ‘on-the-job’ in order to compensate for childcare obligations. Since artisanal miners are not salaried employees, time lost from work translates to income lost, compounding her financial exclusion. Women compensating for work with babies also reveals how women are excluded based on legal norms that seek to ‘protect’ women surrounding matters of motherhood and broader notions of womanhood. As Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt states “conceptions of femininity and womanhood tend to normalize contested gender roles through protective legislation that operates against

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228 Ibid., 31.
229 Interview with miner at mine site on September 5, 2019.
women’s interests.” Similar to the legislation that excludes pregnant women, the notion that women and children are ‘delicate’ and must stay away from mines, simply compounds their exclusion.

Arguably the most significant factor here is that although the law is manipulated to dispossess female miners through the enforcement of a ban on breastfeeding babies, women have created their own strategies to respond to this exclusion and maintain work in the mines. Adaka’s story shows the women’s organized and gendered modes of collective protection.

5.2.3. Navigating Access to Trade

Tanana, who worked as a négociant between Rubaya and Goma trading in thousands of tons of coltan, faced exclusion by being physically blocked from entering the mine site perimeter. In order to protect her identity, the details of this ban cannot be included here, however was broadly due to a dispute with a local mine company who physically blocked her from entering the site through the use of arms. She explained her tactic to overcome this ban and the subsequent physical exclusion she faced which negatively impacted her ability to trade, as follows:

Tanana: So, when I have minerals, you see, {shows me paper contract and sale receipts} I use the people to bring them. I use les creuseurs.
Allison: So there are creuseurs in the site (interpreted)
Tanana: Yes there are creuseurs who work for me.
Allison: Ah! So you (interrupted)
Tanana: I finance them, they work... and then they sell... and bring the money to me.

She then said with a smile, “I changed my strategy. They [the company] know I’m working. Even though they chased me out, they know that I keep working.” She went on to explain that she has 13 experienced male creuseurs, with whom she established paper contracts, who work for her in this way, and engaged in extraction and initial trade to accumulate larger coltan stockpiles on her behalf.

What her explanation shows is how she works through other people to overcome her exclusion and to maintain work and profits as a trader. Although the pre-finance system is common in DRC’s artisanal mines, this case was different because Tanana was trading there herself prior to the ban and wanted to continue with trade but was physically blocked. Even though Tanana did not face the socio-economic exclusions experienced by the majority of

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230 Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, "Bodies in/out of place: hegemonic masculinity and kamins’ motherhood in Indian coal mines," *South Asian History and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2013): 224.
231 I cannot name which company to protect the identity of the participant.
232 For more on pre-financing see: D’Souza, “Artisanal mining in the DRC,” 18.
participants in this study because she had access to capital, she did face spatial exclusions that impeded her ability to trade. The exclusion of women based on physical space that results in negative financial implication for female miners has been observed in other instances, such as with underground platinum miners in South Africa. This strategy was the only one of its kind I encountered during fieldwork.

5.3. Conceptualizing Women’s Strategies of Inclusion: Discussion and Chapter Concluding Remarks

Based on these findings three primary trends emerge: 1) women intentionally employ varying collaborative and individual strategies to maintain mine work; 2) women’s strategies are premised on a gendered solidarity; and 3) these strategies respond to gendered exclusions. These trends, when analyzed as the cumulative outcome of both individual and collaborative strategies, respond to the immediate needs of the miner (income) but also demonstrates broader evidence of women’s organized and intentional efforts to maintain mine work. This section will discuss these three trends.

This analysis must begin by acknowledging that in the everyday lives of women these strategies respond to the immediate financial needs of women by providing a basic income in the face of poverty. As Clémentine said, “I didn’t really choose this work but am doing it for a little money,” revealing that there is a very real and tangible financial incentive for women to engage in mine work to provide a basic income, whether that income is $1 USD per day, $20 USD per week or $60 USD per month. The economic status of female mine workers, presented through discussions of women’s average earnings throughout this thesis, has demonstrated that these women are amongst the most marginalized labourers in the industry. They live in poverty with few economic alternatives, and are aligned with statistical data that reflects high levels of poverty and immense gender inequalities in DRC. Economic hardship that influences women’s reasons to work in the mines cannot be ignored or denied. However, in tandem with these realities of necessity faced by women, these findings demonstrate a trend of intentional and organized efforts by women, individually and collectively, to maintain mine work and address gender-specific exclusions.

Moreover, the strategies described above reveal various hierarchies within women’s collaborative efforts and amongst women in this study. As pointed out in the case of ‘teams’, hierarchies were identifiable between women within these collaborations. Factors such as economic status and working with a baby created variances in their ability to work and their role within that work. For example, Amélie emerged as a leader because she had slightly higher capital than the other ‘team’ members, and did not have an accompanying baby. The


case of Tanana also reveals how some women in this study have much more capital than others based on economic status. When comparing Tanana to Clémentine for example, stark class divisions are visible. These differences amongst women are what Nira Yuval-Davis calls our attention to in understanding intersectionality and sites of oppression. In the case of eastern DRC, Marie-Rose Bashwira and Jeroen Cuvelier highlight differences amongst female miners, noting that there is the “coexistence of multiple governable orders in artisanal mining areas, as well as the need to distinguish between different governable spaces in these areas.” I now turn to an analysis of women’s strategies.

5.3.1. Fragmented Organization

The fact that these strategies are so numerous provides evidence that these collaborations are not a once-off, nor are they ad hoc but organized and intentional, however fragmented. Although women mostly have and work with individual capital and individual mineral stockpiles, their approach to work and strategy for enhanced profits is a collaborative one -- essentially women work in collaborative groups more than alone. This argument can be made because of the multiple and varying ways in which women collaborate in groups (collective, group collaborations, teams and pairs) and how they assist each other when working individually (secret alert systems and bribery). These strategies occur with women across different sites, tasks (washing, separating, refining and trading) and economic statuses. This reveals a trend of note, without women directly stating that they prefer to work in groups or through collaborations.

My interpretation of women’s strategies as intentional and organized but uncoordinated draws on Asef Bayat’s notion of social “nonmovements,” which he describes as the “collective action by noncollective actors; they embody shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideology or recognizable leaderships and organizations.” Bayat’s framework conceptualizes ‘life as politics’ through the argument that when people engage in the “ordinary practices of everyday life”, of which he gives the example of women doing “men’s work” or youth subverting dress codes amongst others; correlations can be drawn to the broader significance of these acts when analyzed cumulatively rather than as isolated incidences, despite the fact that these occurrences are uncoordinated. He argues that this assists us, as scholars, to broaden our understanding of social movements beyond a Western-driven conceptualization of “highly structured and largely homogenous entities – possibilities that are limited in non-western worlds.” Although his study occurred in a

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235 Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and feminist politics," 193-209.
237 Bayat, Life as politics, 14.
238 Ibid., 20.
239 Ibid., 4.
different context and used more numerous examples analyzed on a larger scale, the theoretical point he makes is transferable.

I cannot connect women’s strategies here to larger matters of social change and do not make that claim. Rather, the notion that uncoordinated but collective actions that lack organized ideological vantage points (such as a single leader or collective revolutionary mandate), can be analyzed cumulatively to challenge space and practices; this applies in my conceptualization of the strategies in this study as beyond ‘survival’, and as intentional and organized.

Women between sites engaged in similar or even the same (in the case of pairs and teams) strategies but did not know each other nor had ever met, and yet took similar steps and strategies towards inclusion. This embodies the notion that despite their fragmented and uncoordinated nature, these strategies point towards a pattern (based on their numerous occurrences and common goal to foster inclusion). In other words, when we look at the ‘collective’ in conjunction with small group collaborations, teams and pairs – which all emerge organically led by different women in different places – these strategies reflect intentional and organized efforts towards inclusion. In fact, together you can note ten different methods women use to foster inclusion and maintain mine work. This is not to over-romanticise women’s actions here as ‘revolutionary’ without consideration for their context as “sites of struggle” as Lila Abu-Lughod would caution, but rather to point out a clear pattern and identify the significance of that pattern to foster inclusion.240

5.3.2. Gendered Solidarity

In all of these collaborative strategies, women came together through their work environments, and not through prior relationships. Participants unanimously explained that they did not know each other prior to working in the mines; as Judith said, “we found each other at the mines and started collaborating,” reflecting an important nuance. Rather than women working in kinship collaborations or through prior friendships, they collaborate based on a gendered allyship that emerges through their similar tasks in processing and trade and shared marginalization. Without exception these groups did not include men. Individual strategies were also engineered along gendered lines. Within the secret alert system, Adaka was alerted to approaching authorities in order to hide her baby specifically by other women – not men. This finding shows that women assist each other based on a perceived solidarity amongst women in the work environment, reflecting that their strategies to maintain mine work and overcome exclusions manifest along gendered lines. This echoes an observation by Michelle Williams, albeit in different contexts, of how “women have created solidaristic and

supportive social relations that are not competitive, and actively seek to minimize the effects of power on their personal lives, but are not trying to overthrow the system of oppression and exploitation.”

5.3.3. Gendered Exclusions

These strategies clearly respond to women’s specific exclusions. In light of misinterpretation of the law that results in women with breastfeeding babies being chased out of the mines by mine site authorities, women alert each other and foster their own childcare strategies. Rather than accept this exclusion, women persist in engaging in work, fostering innovative strategies to do so. Due to embedded gendered inequalities in society and what is often termed the “feminization of poverty,” women generally have less financial independence and security and as a result women come into mine work with a distinct disadvantage compared to their male counterparts. This manifests as a socio-economic exclusion where women have less or no capital to engage in mine work. In response to this exclusion women organically created multiple strategies to address financial disparities, such as by creating their own collective credit system, or pooling funds in group collaborations to enhance buying power or by working in pairs to enhance trade values and profits. In response to physical exclusion from mine sites, the strategy employed by Tanana to hire men to work on her behalf demonstrates a highly innovative and entrepreneurial strategy to continue to benefit from mining capitalism.

Lastly, although there were no overt counters to the social exclusion of women from digging work, unlike the other exclusions highlighted here, indirectly women’s ongoing presence in mine work pushed back on spatial divisions that normally reinforce the androcentrism of mine work. As a result, this evidence shows that women actively and intentionally countered their exclusions through various strategies, without coordinating those strategies across sites or groups. For example, Tanana did not call her strategy to continue trade work as an outright declaration of her feminism or a strategy to address her physical exclusion, but her actions imply exactly that. Rather than understand women’s strategies to maintain mine work and counter exclusions as only survival strategies to foster an income, in light of the multiple examples highlighted here, these strategies can be understood also as concerted efforts to overcome exclusions.

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5.3.4. And So?

I further argue that women, as active agents in mine work and determined to benefit from mining capitalism despite exclusions, demonstrate their non-victim status. This pushes back on dominant narratives from eastern DRC from both academic literature and NGO lobbying, highlighted in Chapter Two, that emphasises women and women mine workers as victims. While we must acknowledge the marginalization these women face in the industry, as well as differences amongst them in terms of power and status, it is equally critical to emphasize the multiple strategies and manoeuvres which affirm their active engagement.

The intention of this thesis at the onset, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, was to analyze these strategies through the lens of infra-politics, considering the ideological implication and significance of women’s collective ‘everyday politics’ from the bottom-up. These questions included: what is the broader significance of these strategies? What do they tell us about women’s ‘politics’? And how do they produce or reproduce counter power? However, the research limitations of this study have not permitted that level of analysis, nor has the evidence been conclusive in that regard.

More than research limitations, the fluid and dynamic setting of artisanal mine sites blurs formations of hierarchical power, rendering the context of this study as significantly more multi-dimensional. That is not to say structures of power were not at play; on the contrary, they were very present in this study, as in Tanana’s experience in which corporate power was inhibiting her ability to work. However the everyday experiences of female miners fall within much broader conceptualizations of power that largely render that type of analysis simplistic. Rather, what emerged in this study evolved around the various gendered exclusions and subsequent strategies to navigate these exclusions, as well as the collective implication of those strategies. While the themes and trends that emerge in this study are not completely divorced from the broader notion of infra-politics, these strategies could collectively assert a form of counter-power amongst women. Within the scope of this study that remains inconclusive, and would require further research and fieldwork.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This thesis argues that women’s strategies to overcome exclusions in mine work are intentional and organized in order to maintain mine work, although remain fragmented. This challenges existing narratives by highlighting women’s active (non-victim) status in the face of overwhelming challenges and systemic poverty. Importantly, this study is situated within broader literature on women in mining and regional literature on mining and women in the specific post-conflict context of eastern DRC. It contributes to a very limited body of scholarly work from eastern DRC on women in mining that seeks to transcend dominant narratives from the region that emphasize ‘conflict minerals’ discourse and women as victims of sexual violence. To that end, this thesis has attempted to counter these unidimensional and harmful depictions of women in the region as powerless victims.

This thesis started by contextualizing the work environment for women miners, highlighting the historical background to mineral extraction in DRC, the mineral, the place and the women in this study. As discussed in the introduction section, women are very active labourers in the direct physical extraction of coltan through artisanal means – a low-tech and rudimentary extractive technique. Coltan extraction in eastern DRC is situated within a context of historic conflict and on-going political instability, which has created a guiding legal framework for artisanal mining that largely excludes women, who are involved in every step of the supply chain. This creates a shifting and dynamic work environment for women in Masisi’s artisanal mines. This study found that women are primarily concentrated in the least financially lucrative positions of trading and processing small quantities of minerals. It also found that in an inverse relationship, as economic opportunities in mining increases, women’s participation decreases.

Within this context it must be acknowledged that by all indicators the majority of women in this study represent some of the most marginalized labourers in the artisanal mining section in Masisi and eastern DRC more broadly. These are women who are the primary childcare providers, usually with newborn babies and/or eight to nine children whose sole incomes feed and support their families. Women’s incomes are low, on average from less than $1 USD per day to only $20 per week. They often mine waste minerals because any income is better than no income. In addition, once they step foot in the mines, they face multiple exclusions – from a lack of upfront capital to engage in more substantial mine work, to being blocked from engaging in certain more lucrative mine tasks based on their gender. Women also face specific gendered vulnerabilities such as extortion, added taxation and a loss of ‘time on the job’ due to exploitative mine site authorities, crippling income inequality and motherhood. This pits women on unequal footing in the industry regardless of age, experience or any other factor. However, there are also hierarchies amongst women miners, in this study primarily premised around the intersection of class. Although all women face discrimination, exclusions and
challenges based on their gender, differences in socio-economic status have advantaged some women in the supply chain more than others.

As Marie-Rose Bashwira et. al. state, “it is safe to say that, almost universally, female participants in ASM run a very high risk of being discriminated because of their gender.”\textsuperscript{243} That was certainly the case in this study. Women miners in this context primarily experienced four exclusions, as discussed in Chapter Four. The first is that of local gendered social norms surrounding perceptions of masculinity and femininity, depicting women as physically incapable to conduct the work of digging (perceived by women and men alike as the “work of men”). Rather than hold validity, this notion is used to exclude women from more lucrative mine tasks and consolidate the androcentrism of mine work. Interestingly and in contrast to the majority of regional literature surrounding gendered divisions of labour, women were not excluded on grounds of cultural taboos or traditional beliefs but solely based on perceptions of physicality. Spatial divisions of labour were strikingly visible at mine sites, which further compounded a strong gendered division of labour: this frequently manifested with men on one side of the mine site and women on the other. Spatial divisions reinforced a gendered division of labour.

In addition, the legal mine permit system that requires miners to hold an official digging or trading permit fosters a binary to which women’s labour does not fit. Here I put forward the highly gendered role of \textit{petit négociant} to better capture women’s labour in the supply chain, which largely falls in-between the legal binary. In this position women do the work of a \textit{négociant} (trader) but usually hold the permit of a \textit{creuseur} (digger), misallocating their work and enhancing exclusion by forcing women to work ‘in-between’ formal channels of trade. Women in this position also work with very small quantities of minerals and capital, which results in added restrictions from trading in formal channels. Lastly, women frequently experience what I term extralegal exclusions, based on a misinterpretation of the law. In such instances women with breastfeeding babies are often chased out of the mines as authorities seek to uphold a prohibition on children at mine sites in order to avoid instances of child labour. However, the (mis)inclusion of breastfeeding babies within the ban on ‘children’ has a significant negative impact on women miners as the primary childcare providers, frequently resulting in time lost on the job and lower subsequent profits.

Certainly in this study, as in others, “[d]ue to the existence of oppressive gender ideologies and structural gender inequality in the division of labour and the access to resources, livelihoods, public services and positions of authority, amongst other things, women generally have a much more difficult time keeping afloat.”\textsuperscript{244} However, in response to these divisions and exclusions (and as discussed in Chapter Five), women engage in multiple collective and

\textsuperscript{243} Bashwira, Cuvelier, Hilhorst and Van der Haar, “Not only a man’s world,” 113.

\textsuperscript{244} Bashwira and Cuvelier, “Women, mining and power in southeastern Democratic Republic of Congo,” 962.
individual strategies to manoeuvre through these exclusions in order to maintain work in mining.

Collaborative strategies manifested as a highly organized group collaborations, teams and pairs. Each of these strategies responded to different but similar, and at times overlapping, exclusions amongst women who conducted different tasks with varying levels of capital. They took place at different sites amongst women who did not know each other. Moreover, women employed individual strategies to maintain mine work such as fostering a secret alert system for women mining with babies, subversion in the form of running away, bribery when mining illegally and hiring other miners when blocked from physically going to the sites.

Unanimously, all of these strategies occurred exclusively between women and amongst women who did not know each other before engaging in mine work. This proves that these strategies were engineered along gendered lines and in gendered solidarity. Although women frequently trade with men on amicable terms, that involves a clear transaction of minerals for money, and does not reflect the reciprocal and egalitarian collaborations between women. When analyzed cumulatively in this way, women’s strategies directly push-back on exclusions based on socio-economic status and gender.

By drawing inspiration from Asef Bayat’s notion of “life as politics,” that uncoordinated acts that occur in isolation and can be analyzed cumulatively to hold broader significance, women’s strategies to maintain mine work can be analyzed beyond ad hoc collaborations or survival strategies. While these strategies are fragmented and uncoordinated across sites and amongst different groups of women (i.e. women did not know each other but engaged in the same or similar tactics), their numerous occurrences and shared goals provides a pattern of evidence for an intentional and concerted effort by women to maintain mine work. While an understanding of women’s ‘politics’ in this context requires additional research, the concerted effort by women in this study to engage in various individual and collective strategies does demonstrate the ways in which women navigate the complexity of the mining industry in the face of specific exclusions.

This study builds on previous studies on the experiences of female artisanal coltan miners in the region, highlighting their agency and organized efforts for inclusion. These findings further challenge our understanding of women’s labour within a highly unequal and exclusionary work environment, as skewed against women. In analyzing women’s labour as this study has, several key aspects counter narratives, and allow us to reformulate and reconsider not only the gendered dimensions of artisanal mine work, but female labourers overall within that matrix. The fact that women actively seek mine work not as migrant labourers but because mine sites are two steps out their front door; or that exclusions are gendered and women’s responses fall along gendered lines; or that women prefer to work in groups rather than alone, all help us recalibrate our understanding of female miners in this context and the
contribution they make to mineral extraction. This study also raises new questions for research such as, why do some women succeed in mining more than others? Why do some groups take a more ‘formal’ structure? And why are women absent from government leadership structures in Masisi?

The themes and trends observed in this study can inform a broad range of stakeholders in better understanding how women, as half the artisanal mining work force in DRC, navigate a complex web of exclusions seeking to maintain mine work rather than seek work elsewhere or accept exclusion. Of particular note, the legal and extralegal exclusions women face that have been discussed in this thesis can be used by scholars, policy makers and NGOs to better consider legal frameworks and industry norms within artisanal mining that would inform a more inclusive, equal and rational guiding framework. Lastly, this study calls for additional research that focuses on the lived experiences of female artisanal coltan miners – this would deepen our understanding of the questions posed here which remain unresolved, as well as add nuance to how we, as scholars and policy makers, understand mining capitalism, coltan extraction and women’s labour within this context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Protocole D’accord SMB & COOPERAMMA

PROTOCOLE D’ACCORD DE COLLABORATION ACTUALISE RELATIF A L’EXPOILATION ARTISANALE SUR LE PE 4731

ENTRE LES SOUSSIGNES :


ET


PREAMBULE

Attendu que les deux parties ont signé un Protocole d’Accord de Collaboration en date du 28 novembre 2013 pour régir leur cohabitation sur les sites D2 MATABA, D3 BIBATAMA, D4 GAKOMBE, LUWOWO, KOYI et BUNDJALI localisés à l’intérieur du périmètre minier couvert par le Permis d’Exploitation n° 4731 dont la SMB est titulaire exclusif ;

Considérant la loi N°18/001 du 09 mars 2018 modifiant et complétant lal loi N°007/2002 du 11 juillet 2002 portant Code Minier ;

Signature Removed
Considérant que l’exécution du protocole d’accord du 28 novembre 2013 a révélé des failles ayant eu pour conséquence sa résiliation unilatérale par la SMB sarl le 02 mai 2018, ce qui n’a pas rencontré l’assentiment de la COOPERAMMA ;

Attendu qu’à la suite de différentes correspondances des deux parties, relatives notamment, au récent litige intervenu entre elles au début du mois de mai 2018, Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre des Mines, par sa lettre n° CAB.MIN/MINES/01/0582/2018 du 11 mai 2018, a invité toutes les parties prenantes à une réunion, le lundi 21 mai 2018, en vue d’aplanir les divergences et de créer un cadre de collaboration apaisé, gage de la préservation de la paix et de la sécurité à Rubaya, en Territoire de Masisi ;

Attendu qu’à l’issue de cette réunion, il a été décidé de réviser le Protocole d’Accord de Collaboration du 28 novembre 2013, en respectant les lois, les règlements, les pratiques et les usages de la République Démocratique Congo en la matière.

Attendu qu’il a été tenu à Goma le 4 et le 5 juin 2018 au Cabinet de Son Excellence Monsieur le Gouverneur de Province du Nord-Kivu, des travaux relatifs à la résolution de la crise de cohabitation entre la SMB sarl et la COOPERAMMA ;

Attendu que le 06 juin 2018, Son Excellence Monsieur le Gouverneur de Province du Nord-Kivu a effectué une descente à Rubaya, Territoire de Masisi dans le périmètre couvert par le PE 4731 en vue de se rendre compte de la réalité du terrain et apaiser les esprits des uns et des autres ;

Tenant compte des directives contenues dans la lettre n° CAB.MIN/MINES/01/0611/2018 du 4 juin 2018 du Ministre des Mines ;

Attendu qu’il est impérieux de privilégier la paix sociale et la cohabitation pacifique pour promouvoir le vivre ensemble;

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IL EST CONVENU CE QUI SUIVIT :

Article 1er :

En attendant leur relocalisation vers des Zones d’Exploitation Artisanale viables, à instituer par le Ministre des Mines, la SMB Sarl accepte pour une durée de quinze mois (15 mois) que les exploitants miniers artisanaux, membres de la COOPERAMMA, préalablement identifiés par les services compétents, continuent à travailler dans le respect des dispositions légales, sur les sites miniers visés au préambule du présent Protocole d’Accord, localisés au sein du périmètre minier couvert par le PE 4731.


Article 2 :

La COOPERAMMA accepte pour sa part, de vendre à la SMB Sarl la totalité de la production extraite des sites du PE 4731, au prix convenu entre parties après échantillonnage et analyse en tenant compte du prix de référence sur le marché local.

Le paiement du montant dû au titre du prix de la vente intervient en intégralité dans les dix jours ouvrables après échantillonnage et analyse des minerais.

En cas de désaccord sur la teneur des minerais, les deux parties feront recours aux services établis habilités en l’occurrence le CEEC ; les cas échéant les parties pourront recourir au service d’un laboratoire indépendant aux frais du requérant.

Article 3 :

La SMB SARL s’engage pour sa part à acheter la totalité de la production de la COOPERAMMA extraite du PE 4731 dans les conditions fixées à l’article 2 du présent protocole d’accord.

Article 4 :

Article 5 :

La SMB Sarl s’engage à :
- Approvisionner en eau les sites miniers d’exploitation artisanale contenus dans son périmètre minier ;
- Rendre disponibles les laveries et construire les entrepôts des minerais traités ;
- Apporter aux exploitants miniers artisanaux l’expertise technique nécessaire afin de réduire sensiblement les risques d’accident et de destruction de l’environnement ;

Article 6 :

La COOPERAMMA s’engage à procéder à sa restructuration en excluant toutes les personnes non éligibles aux activités minières d’exploitation artisanale conformément aux dispositions pertinentes du Code Minier tel que modifié et complété en ce jour et transmettre à cette fin à l’Autorité compétente les actes de restructuration.

Article 7 :

La COOPERAMMA s’engage à approvisionner en eau, à partir du dispositif actuel, les sites du PE 4731 exploités par ses membres, et à leur apporter l’expertise nécessaire en collaboration avec le SAEMAPE/ Nord-Kivu, pour améliorer leurs conditions de travail.

Pour cette fin, une commission ad hoc instituée par le Ministère Provincial des Mines fera un état des lieux du dispositif actuel de fourniture d’eau pour faciliter les évaluations ponctuelles des engagements des parties à ce sujet.

Article 8 :

La COOPERAMMA s’engage à prendre en charge tous les matériels nécessaires à la production des minerais.

Toutefois, la SMB SARL peut, sur demande de la COOPERAMMA, fournir aux exploitants artisanaux, des outils efficaces pouvant augmenter leur productivité.

Dans ce cas, les deux parties évalueront le coût de ces outils, et conviendront, le cas échéant, des modalités de leur amortissement.

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Protocole d’accord de collaboration actualisé SMB - COOPERAMMA
Article 9:
La COOPERAMMA s’engage à assurer le respect du code de conduite de l’exploitant minier artisanal de l’annexe 5 du Règlement Minier et doter ses membres des équipements de Protection Individuelle, EPI en sigle.

Article 10 :
La COOPERAMMA s’engage de faire identifier ses membres, détenteurs d’une carte d’exploitant artisanal en cours de validité aux fins qu’ils obtiennent du Ministère Provincial des Mines, des cartes spéciales d’accès au périmètre couvert par le PE 4731.

Article 11 :
Les deux parties s’engagent, chacune en ce qui la concerne, à respecter scrupuleusement les normes de traçabilité ainsi que les règles environnementales.
Elles s’engagent en sus à mettre en place des stratégies en vue de la stabilisation et de la réduction des risques environnementaux dans les sites.
Elles s’engagent à ce titre, pour garantir la provenance des minerais des sites du PE 4731, à se soumettre aux exigences du Manuel des Procédures et au système de traçabilité amélioré mis en place par le Ministère Provincial des Mines du Nord-Kivu.

Article 12:
Les deux parties s’engagent, chacune en ce qui la concerne, la COOPERAMMA en premier lieu, à veiller à ce qu’aucun enfant mineur d’âge ou qu’aucune femme enceinte, ou encore qu’aucun membre des groupes armés, ne se livre à l’exploitation artisanale dans les sites couverts par le PE 4731.

Article 13:
Les deux parties s’engagent à mettre en place un dispositif de sécurité des sites, assuré par la Police des Mines et Hydrocarbures ainsi que la Garde Industrielle de la SMB SARL et les contrôleurs de la COOPERAMMA.
A cet effet, les parties s’engagent à s’abstenir de recourir à des Services autres que ceux habilités par l’Etat dans le secteur des Mines.
Article 14 :
Les deux parties s'engagent à cultiver un climat de bonne et franche collaboration ainsi qu'une coexistence pacifique sur le périmètre couvert par le PE 4731.
A cet effet, elles s'engagent à promouvoir la transparence notamment par le contrôle conjoint de l'exploitation minière artisanale.

Article 15 :
Les parties conviennent de se retrouver, tous les trois mois et toutes les fois que l'urgence l'exige, pour une évaluation de la mise en œuvre du présent Protocole d'Accord.

Article 16 :
Tout litige qui naîtrait de l'exécution ou de l'interprétation du présent Protocole d'Accord sera réglé à l'amiable.
En cas de persistance du litige, il sera soumis par la partie la plus diligente à la médiation du Ministère Provincial des Mines du Nord-Kivu.
A défaut d'une solution trouvée par le Ministère Provincial des Mines, il sera soumis à celle du Gouverneur de Province avant de recourir, les cas échéants, aux Cours et Tribunaux.

Article 17 :
Le présent Protocole d'Accord établi en cinq exemplaires originaux, entre en vigueur à la date de sa signature.

Fait à Goma, le 13/10/2018

Pour la COOPERAMMA

Pour la SMB SARL

Pour la médiation,

COMMUNIQUE FINAL


A l’ordre du jour, l’état des lieux de la situation socio-sécuritaire et des activités minières dans le périmètre couvert par le PE 4731 de la SMB sarl dans le Territoire de Masisi.

Après débat et délibération, de commun accord avec toutes les parties prenantes et pour privilégier le bon climat de cohabitation pacifique ainsi que pour renforcer le dialogue entre la SMB sarl et la COOPERAMMA-CA, les parties conviennent ce qui suit :

1. Étudier et adopter, sous l’encadrement de l’Autorité Provinciale, des mécanismes et modalités de collaboration entre elles, dans un délai de six mois. Pendant cette période, les activités minières se poursuivront dans le respect de la loi ;
2. Renforcer la traçabilité, la lutte contre la fraude et la contre-bande minières sous toutes leurs formes dans le périmètre couvert par le PE 4731 ;
3. Poursuivre le dialogue entre la SMB sarl et la COOPERAMMA-CA afin de promouvoir un climat de paix sociale dans le périmètre couvert par le PE 4731. En l’occurrence, les parties s’engagent à éviter toute communication susceptible de ternir l’image de la chaîne d’approvisionnement ;
4. Reconnaître et rendre opérationnel le Comité de Suivi des activités minières dans le périmètre couvert par le PE 4731.

Fait à Goma, le 14 mai 2020.

Pour le Ministère Provincial en charge des Mines

[Signatures]
APPENDIX 3: Creuseurs Letter of Non-payment
Nous venons auprès de votre haute personnalité avec regret voulant vous relater ce qui est mis en indexe marginal.

En effet, c’est à mainte reprise que nous vous avons écrit en rapport avec le non-paiement de nos minerai jusqu’à ce que nous avons réclamé la non évacuation de nos minerai avant leur paiement. La chose grave et regrettable est de constater qu’en date du 29 et du 30 juin 2019 la SMB s’est permis d’évacuer 21,234,5kgs de coltant et 4,408,8kgs de la cassitérite sans paiement ni promesse de paiement de ces minerai ; ce que nous qualifions de l’acte de vol car vous êtes sans ignorer que depuis le mois de février jusqu’à cette date la SMB continue à garder voire exporter les minerai que nous lui avons fournis sans les payer. Et aux questions suivantes de trouver leurs réponses : « Que pense la SMB pour le paiement de nos dettes qu’elle nous a imposé ? Pense-t-elle que nous vivons de quoi ? A-t-elle prévu les intérêts moratoires dus à ces retards ? ».

Nous vous prions Monsieur le Président du CA de demander à la SMB de payer ces dettes de nos minerai de depuis février 2019 jusqu’à cette date et de lui interdire cette pratique illégitime d’évacuation des minerai impayés car cela constitue pour nous une façon de nous appauvrir de jours en jours mais aussi un vol dont nous sommes victimes.

Espérant une suite favorable à la présente, veuillez agréer Monsieur le Président du Conseil d’Administration, l’expression de nos sentiments les plus distingués.

Pour la Coordination des Antennes

[Signature]

Nshimiyeye Kibogora Justin
 Coordinateur a.i

Vu pour réception
Goma, le 1er juillet 2019

[Signature]

Veu le 11/7/2019

CIRGL
## APPENDIX 4: Summary Table of Mine Site Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOVERNING BODY OR REPRESENTATIVE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF OFFICE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF MEETINGS</th>
<th>PERMISSION GRANTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministre de Mines pour Nord Kivu</td>
<td>Highest office responsible for the government mining branch and general oversight of all mine operations in the province.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef de Division de Mines</td>
<td>The head of the government mining branch.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directeur de Service d’Assistance et d’Encadrement des Mines Artisanales et à Petite Échelle (SAEMAPE)</td>
<td>A technical branch of the mining division, responsible upholding health and safety standards in the mines and in technical support for miners.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COOPERAMMA: Cooperative des exploitants artisanaux miniers de Masisi</td>
<td>A workers cooperative with mandatory membership for artisanal miners.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakima: Société Aurifère du Kivu et du Maniema</td>
<td>Private Company</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMB: Société Minière de Bisunzu</td>
<td>Private Company</td>
<td>2 attempts, 1 meeting</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 5: Final Letter of Approval

Cher Monsieur / Madame,

Je vous écris au sujet de Ms Allison Furniss, une étudiante de Master en Justice et Transformation au Département D'études Politiques à l'Université de Cape Town, en Afrique du Sud. Asanda Senya et moi-même co-supervisons la thèse de master de Ms Furniss sur l'extraction des 3 T's, le rôle des femmes dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement de ces minéraux et les expériences des femmes dans l'industrie minière artisanale. Son sujet de recherche porte principalement sur les formes d'organisation sociale et politique chez les femmes qui travaillent dans les mines artisanales.

Un aspect critique de la thèse de Ms Furniss consiste à mener des recherches primaires avec des femmes minières artisanales dans la province du Nord-Kivu en République Démocratique du Congo, pendant une période de trois mois. Plus précisément, Ms Furniss a l'intention d'interviewer des femmes qui travaillent dans les mines et qui effectuent des travaux liés à l'extraction de minéraux dans la province de Nord-Kivu. Cela inclut des visites potentielles à des sites de mines de Rubaya, Masisi et Walikale.

Ce domaine de recherche a été approuvé par le Comité D'éthique du Département D'études Politiques et conforme au Code D'éthique de la Recherche de UCT relatif à la recherche avec des sujets humains, ainsi qu'au Guide de L'étudiant en Sciences Humaines à UCT pour l'éthique de la recherche. Toute participation à cette recherche sera volontaire et un consentement écrit sera demandé à chaque participant.

L'Université de Cape Town est extrêmement reconnaissante à toute l'aide que vous pouvez apporter pour faciliter cette recherche importante. Si vous souhaitez des informations complémentaires, n'hésitez pas à me contacter.

Cordialement,

Signature Removed

Dr Helen Scanlon

Directeur du Programme de Justice et Transformation
Vu à l'arrivée au Ministère Provincial en charge des Mines le 31 juillet 2019

Pour passage à la DIVIMINES N/KIN

Ce Vendredi 21/08/2019

Pour contact avec la coopérative du V.P. Zilurnwabo Ngendanzwe le 05/08/2019.

Pour FEDM (Femmes Dynamiques des Mines)

Angélique Nyirasafari Buvugorie
Présidente

Vu à la DIVIMINES N/KIN

PMH avec le 21/08/2019

Vu pour passage à la DIVIMINES N/KIN

1 AOUT 2019

James MAREMO

Vi arriva il 05/08/2019

La DIVIMINES N/KIN

Vi arriva la 21/08/2019

L'État provincial

LE

Bërkali Bihamé
APPENDIX 6: Prise en Charge

ORDRE DE MISSION DE MISSION N°004/COORDO/IFEDD ASBL/2019

Nous, coordination de l’Initiative des Femmes Entrepreneurs pour Développement Durable, émettons l’ordre de mission pour:

Nom, Post-Nom et Fonction : ALLISON FURNISS Chercheur

Objet de la mission : Récolter les données de la recherche portant sur la situation des femmes et les stratégies appliquées face aux différents défis dans le secteur minier Artisanal des sannières à RUBAYA/Masisi

Accompagnée de : 1. Luck Alex KABONA
                     2. Christian RHUIHUNEMUNGU
                     3. Mariana BWEMA

Lieu de la mission : GOMA-RUBAYA-GOMA

Date de départ prévu : 20 Aout 2019

Date de clôture de la mission : 20 Octobre 2019

Moyen de transport : Véhicule-Moto

Prière aux autorités tant civiles que militaires de faciliter et d’assister le porteur de ce document.

Fait à Goma le 13 aout 2019

Pour IFEDD Asbl

Adresse : Ville de Goma, Commune De Goma, Q. KATINDO, Av. ISHASHA N°7
N° Tél. : +243 990 256 555, +243 819 815 555, +243 896 013 290
E-mail: ifeddrc@gmail.com, nchibalonzal@gmail.com, Facebook: IFEDD RDC

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Vu pour passage au SAMAREHAK

Vu pour arrivée au bureau du SAMAREHAK à Rubaya
Ce mercredi, 21 août 2019

Vu pour accord et passage à la DIVIMINES
Ce mercredi, 14 août 2019

Vu de passage à l’ESC
PhNt-Maximilien, 21.10.2019

Vu pour arrivée à Rubaya
de mercredi le 21 août 2019

[Signatures]

Cérkali Bishame Bernard
APPENDIX 7: Official Communication from SMB

Meeting Follow-up

Loi Bonduelle <bonduelle@smb-saf.com>
To: Allison Furniss <allisonfurniss@gmail.com>
Cc: Freddy Nzonga <nzonga@smb-saf.com>, Freddy Nzonga <nzonga@frendy@gmail.com>

2 September 2019

Bonjour Allison,

Tout d’abord, je m’excuse pour notre réponse tardive à votre email.

J’ai pu échanger avec le CEO sur votre demande mais au vu du contexte que nous traversons actuellement et ce que nous vous avions déjà expliqué, nous sommes contraint de ne pas donner une suite favorable à votre demande.

En effet, la fin de notre protocole d’accord avec la coopérative cooperampe est prévue pour le 12 septembre 2019 au soir.

Au-delà d’une activité artisanale en forte baisse ces dernières semaines, les relations avec cette dernière n’est pas non plus au beau fixe.

De plus, à la suite de notre entrevue dans nos locaux, nous avons du faire une nouvelle fois face à un journaliste cinéaste du nom de Mathieu ROY qui s’est permis de prendre des images de notre mine sans en avoir fait la demande au préalable et ce malgré nos recommandations de notre directeur de la communication.

Nous avons donc été amené à porter plainte contre lui et le dossier est en cours d’instruction.

Pour toutes ces raisons, le moment n’est vraiment pas bien choisi pour accorder positivement à votre demande.

Nous espérons que vous pourrez néanmoins effectuer votre travail sur le périmètre de la Salima (PE 76) d’autant plus qu’il semblerait que la présence des artisans-croiseurs sont apparemment nombreux également sur ce périmètre.

Vous souhaitant une bonne continuation dans vos démarches.

Cordialement / Kind Regards

Loi BONDUELLE
Directeur Général Adjoint
SOCIETE MINIERE DE BISINZU (SMIB)
• 243 (0) 841 315 273
• bonduelle@smb-saf.com  www.smb-saf.com
Avenue du Golf 11 G. Kinshasa - Goma, Nord Kivu
APPENDIX 8: Participant Consent Forms & Information Sheets (In the order of: French, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda)

Faculté des Sciences Humaines
Département D'études Politiques

Nom du chercheur: Allison Furniss

Titre du Projet de Recherche:
Le pouvoir: Expressions de résistance parmi les femmes dans les mines artisanales de coltan en RDC

En participant à cette recherche:
• J’accepte de participer dans ce projet de recherche.
• J’ai lu ce formulaire de consentement et les informations qu’il contient et j’ai eu l’occasion de poser des questions à leur sujet.
• J’accepte que mes réponses soient utilisées pour l’éducation et de recherche, à condition que ma vie privée soit respectée, sous réserve de ce qui suit: - (cocher la case correspondante)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon nom peut être utilisé dans la recherche publiée</th>
<th>Oui</th>
<th>Non</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mes données personnelles (par exemple, âge, profession, poste) peuvent être incluses dans la recherche publiée</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mes réponses ne peuvent être utilisées que de manière à ce que je ne puisse pas être personnellement identifiable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Je comprends que je n’ai aucune obligation de participer à ce projet.
• Je comprends que j’ai le droit de me retirer de ce projet à tout moment.
• Je comprends que cette recherche pourrait être publiée dans un journal ou un livre de recherche. Dans le cas d’une recherche de thèse, le document sera disponible pour les lecteurs dans une bibliothèque universitaire sous forme imprimée et également sous forme électronique.

Nom du (de la) Participant(e) :

Signature du (de la) Participant(e) :

Date :

Le chercheur doit vous fournir une fiche d’information décrivant la nature de la recherche, son utilisation, et expliquant en quoi consiste votre participation à la recherche (par exemple, le temps que cela prendra, les rôles des participants) et les droits (compris le droit de sauter des questions ou de se retirer sans pénalité à tout moment), de tout risque/avantage pouvant résulter de la participation, de tout coût ou de tout paiement impliqué (même s’il n’y en a pas, ils devraient être précisés)).

Cela a-t-il été fourni? | Oui | Non |
Avez-vous reçu confirmation verbale/explications au besoin? | Oui | Non
Faculté des Sciences Humaines
Département D'études Politiques

Fiche D'information pour les Participants à la Recherche

Titre du Projet de Recherche:
Le pouvoir: Expressions de résistance parmi les femmes dans les mines artisanales de coltan en RDC

Nature de la recherche:
Cette recherche cherche à examiner l'extraction des 3 T's, le rôle des femmes dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement de ces minéraux et les expériences des femmes dans l'industrie minière artisanale. Pour que Allison puisse mener cette recherche, elle devra mener des entrevue avec les participants et s’engager dans des observation de la vie quotidienne. Dans le cas d’une entrevue, Allison vous posera des questions, relatives à la confidentialité et au respect de votre vie privée, relatives à votre travail et à votre vie quotidienne en tant que femme travaillant dans l'industrie minière artisanale. Elle enregistrera l'interview sur un enregistreur et prendra des notes pendant le processus. En cas d’observation avec des participants, Allison travaillera avec vous pendant plusieurs semaines, en fonction de votre niveau de confort. Elle posera des questions et participera activement à la vie quotidienne à côté de vous, dans le cadre de la recherche. Elle prendra des notes et réfléchira sur ce qui est observé tout au long de ces interactions. Ce sera ensuite l’information utilisé seulement dans son projet de master.

Nom de rechercher:
Allison Furniss
+27 760320549
Email Frnall003@myuct.ac.za

Nom des directeurs de thèse:
Dr. Asanda Benya
Dr. Helen Scanlon
+27 216503504
+27 216505593
Email: Asanda.benya@uct.ac.za
Email: H.scanlon@uct.ac.za

Adresse du département:
Room 5.33, Leslie Social Science Building, Upper Campus, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 7701
(021) 6503381 / 3916

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Quelles sont les implications de votre participation dans ce projet de recherche?
*** Le chercheur peut vous expliquer cela verbalement plus en détail, si nécessaire. ***

Dans le cas de votre participation à une entrevue, ce processus prendra environ une heure. Les données recueillies ne seront utilisées que dans le thèse de master d’Allison. Elle sera la seule à enregistrer, transcrire et analyser cette interview.

Dans le cas de l’observation participante, la période de recherche pourrait s’étendre sur plusieurs semaines. Les données recueillies ne seront utilisées que dans le thèse de master d’Allison. Elle sera la seule à lire ou à enregistrer les informations recueillies au cours de cette période de recherche.

Si tu participer dans ce recherche, vous devez donner votre consentement verbal pour participer volontairement à cette recherche. Vous êtes libre de retirer votre participation à cette recherche à tout moment, même rétrospectivement. Si à tout moment pendant votre participation à la recherche vous vous sentez mal à l’aise, veuillez informer Allison, qui peut adapter ou arrêter le processus pour répondre à vos besoins.

Allison utilisera des pseudonymes lors de l’enregistrement de notes ou d’interviews pour protéger votre identité, à moins que vous préfériez être nommé. Votre confidentialité restera sécurisée tout au long de ce processus. Cela inclura dans la thèse écrite finale.

L'éthique de cette recherche a été approuvée par le département d'études politiques de l'UCT.

En tant que participant à la recherche, vous ne serez pas payé pour participer à cette recherche.

Allison n’est affiliée à aucune organisation, mais est plutôt une chercheuse universitaire indépendante.
Faculté des Sciences Humaines
Département D'études Politiques

Jina ya mwanafunzi: Allison Furniss

Kichwa ya somo/ya utafiti:
Bidii za wanawake wanao fanya kazi ndogo ndogo ndani ya mahali pa uchimbaji wa madini ya Coltan inchini DRC.

Ku uzuriya kwa hiyi uchunguzi na:
• Kubali ku huzuriya kwa utafiti.
• Nime soma haya makubaliano, na nime pata wakati yaku uliza ma ulizo ku husu huu utafiti.
• Mina rususu majibu zangu zitumiki chipo kwa utafiti tu na maisha yangu ya mdani ikuwe wa heshimiwa:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ndio</th>
<th>Apana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jina langu linaweza tumikishwa?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myaka, kazi yangu na poste yangu inaweza julishwa kwa watu wote?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jibu zangu inaweza tumikishwa alakini wasijuwe kama ni mimi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Nina elewa kama si lazimishwe ku jibu kwa huu utafiti.
• Nina haki ya ku kata ma huzurio kwa utafiti huu kwa wakati wowote.
• Nina elewa kama hizi jibu zinaweza wekwa kwenye vitabu ama kwenye journal, katika bibliotheque ama kwenye kompyuta (ama data).

Jina langu:                                                                              :

Signature/Sanii yangu:                                                                  :

Tarehe Fasi:                                                                            :

Mutufiti ata ku onyesha ama atakupatiya mafasirio ku lingana na utafiti wake, uhuru wangu kwa mambo yote, ku husu mazuri ama mabaya inaweza tokeya kama na jabu kwa maswali yake.

| Nimepokeya mafasirio yake kwa maandiko                                                   | Ndio | Apana |
| Nimepokeya mafasiliyo kwa kinywa chake kwa ku jibu kwa maulizo                         | Ndio | Apana |
Faculté des Sciences Humaines
Département D’études Politiques

Mambo ambayo wa huziriaji wana pashwa kuya juwa

Kichwa cha utafiti:
Uwezo: Onesho ya bidii za wanawake wanao fanya kazi ndogo ndogo ndani ya mahali pa uchimbaji wa madini ya Coltan inchini DRC.

Yanayo husu utafiti:
Utafiti huu una fatilia ku chunguza namna zote za bidii zinazo onekana kila siku kwa wanawake wanao fanya kazi ndogo ndogo mahali pa uchimbaji wa ki asili ya madini mashariki mwa DRC. Kwa ajili ya kufikia kwa huzuraji, Allison ana penda ku zungumza na watu na ku ya ona kwa wana hali za maisha yao ya kila siku. Yanayo husu mazungumzo, Allison ata wa uliza ma ulizo fuli fulani, na ana wa aga ku heshimiya siri kuhusu kazi zenu na maisha yenu ya kindani mukiwa wanawake wanao fanya kazi za mikono ndani ya mahali pa uchimbaji wa madini ku pitia desturi za asili.
Atakuwa aki wa ongelesha na kutumikishwa chombo cha ku beba sauti, na kwa ile wakati ata kuwa aki andika mambo atakayo ya ona. Na wakati wa kaa pamoja na watakao huzuria kwa utafiti huu, Allison atumika nani muda wa juma nyingi, ku fatana na hali yenu na usikilivu. Ata wa uliza ma swali na ku ji unga kwa kaa pamoja na fikiria kwa ya kila siku, na hiyo ni kwa kaji akiwa huu utafiti. Atakuwa aki andika na na fikiria kwa ya kila siku ya akamikusaidia na hali yenu na usikilivu. Na yote hayo, ata pata kama vile habari, ata ya tumikishwa ndani ya muradi yake ya Master.

Jina ya mwanafunzi ao mtafiti:
Allison Furniss

+27 760320549  Email Frnall003@myuct.ac.za

Jina za waongozi wa huu utafiti:
Dr. Asanda Benya
Dr. Helen Scanlon

Namba za simu:
+27 216503504  Email Asanda.benya@uct.ac.za
+27 216505593
H.scanlon@uct.ac.za

Yanayo husu mahali pa chuo kikuu:
Room 5.33, Leslie Social Science Building, Upper Campus, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 7701

Téléphone: (021) 6503381 / 3916

Ni nini nafasi yako ndani ya huu mradi wa utafiti?
*** Mwanafunwi anaoweza ku wa fasiria hayo kwa kindani ikiwa ina ombwa hivo ***
Ikiwa muna fikia ku itika kuongea na mwanafinzi, juweni ya kwamba maongezi yanaweza ku kamata muda wa saa moja. Na ma semi yale yata tumikishwa ndani ya kitabu cha mwisho wa masomo ama Master. Ni yeye mwenyewe ndiye atakaye beba sauti, ku andika na ku fanya uchambuzi wa hayo masemi.

Ikiwa ana fikia kujioneya kwa ki pekee, huo muda una weza kuji panuwa mpaka kufikia kwa ma juma; na yote atakayo ya ona, yata tumikishwa ndani ya kitabu cha mwisho wa masomo yaani Master. Atakuwa mwenyewe wa wakati waku soma na ku beba yale yote atakayo ona kwa muda wote wa utafiti.

Ikiwa una huziria kwa utafiti huu, una pashwa pana itikio lako la kuji pendea. Uko huru ku kataa kuji unga kwa utafiti huu kwa wakati wowote. Ikiwa una ona tatizo fulani hata kama una jikuta ulisha anza huzuria kwa huu utafiti, una weza ambia Allison aku fasirie vizuri, ao ku kata maongezi kwa ajili tu yaku ku saidia kujisikia vizuri. Allison atakuwa aki tumikisha jina nyingine wakati waku beba sauti kwa ajili yakulu fulani kwa vema siri kuhusu nyinyi, ila tu kama hamu one shida yoyote, kuhusu yale. Siri zenu zita baki ziki chungwa muda wote ule wa utafiti. Na hayo ni mpaka ku andikwa kwa kitabu kile cha mwisho, ndani mwake, jina za miji na mahali pa uchimbaji wa madini yatakuwa yaki geuzwa.

Kanuni za utu ama heshima za desturi za mila zili itikiwa na uongozi wa masomo ya ki siasa ya UCT. Kwa kuwa una huziria kwa utafiti huu, una itika ku huzuria kwa utashi wako, yaani bila malipo yoyote.

Allison ha ororeshwi ndani ya kikundi fulani, ila tu ni mtafiti (Mwanafunzi) kwenyi kwa wakati wa kuchunguza.
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Faculté des Sciences Humaines
Département D’études Politiques

Izina ry’umushakashatsi: Allison Furniss

Umutwe w’ubushakashatsi bw’umushinga:
Ubushobozi bw’abagore muguhangana n’abacukizi gakondo bama buye ya colta muri DRC

Kugira uruhare muri ubu bushakashatsi:
- Nemeye kugira uruhare muri uyu mushinga w’ubushakashatsi
- Nasomye ibiri muri lyi nyandiko mbona n’umwanya wo kubaza ibibazo bijyanye n’uyu mushinga.
- Nemeye ko ibisubizo byanjye byakoreshwa mu uburezi n’ubushakashatsi igihe cyose ibijyanye nubuzima bwanje bwife bitatangazwa, ibyo ni ibi bikurikira: - (Vivura akazu bijyanye)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yego</th>
<th>Oya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amazina yanjiye ashobora gukoreshwa mu bushakashatsi bwashyizwe hanze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umwirondoro wanjiye bwife (Urugero, imyaka, akazi nkora, umwanya nkoraho) bishobora gukoreshwa mubushakashatsi bwashizwe hanze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibisubizo byanjye byakoreshwa ku buryo ntamenyekana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Ndumva ko nta tegeko rihari mugukira uruhare muri uyu mushinga
- Ndumwa ko mpfite uburenganzira bwo kuva muri uyu mushinga igihe cyose.
- Ndumva ko ubu bushakashatsi shobora gushyirwa hanze binyuze mubinyamakuru cyangwa mu ibitabo by’ubushakashatsi. Mugihe cy’ubushakashatsi(Thèse), inyandiko izaba iboneka kubasomyi mu isomero rya kamoinuza muburyo bw’igitaro n’uburyo bw’ikoranabuhanga.

Amazina
: _________________________________________________________

Umukono
: _________________________________________________________

Itariki
: _________________________________________________________

Umushakashatsi agomba kubaha ninyandiko igaragaza ibijyanye n’ubushakashatsi bwe, icyo azabumaza, ubufasha bwanju mu ubushakashatsi (urugero : Ighe buzamara, icyo muzakora) n’uburenganzira (urugero gutaruka ibibazo cyangwa kuva mu ubushakashatsi igihe cyose wabishakira nta guhanwa, kungaruka, ku inyungu, bya turuka kukubamo, ku igiciro cyangwa kwishyurwa (nubwo ntabyabamo, agomba kubivuga)).

Ibyavuzwe hejuru byose yarabikoze? Yego Oya
Mwabonye amakuru muburyo bw’ibiganiko / Ibisobanuro byari bihagije? Yego Oya
Ifishi y’umwirondoro wabazagira uruhari mu ubushakashatsi

Umutwe w’ubushakashatsi bw’umushinga:

Ubushobozï: bw’abagore muguhangana n’abacukizi gakondo bama buye ya colta muri DRC

Ubwoko bw’ubushakashatsi:


Izina ry’umushakashatsi:

Allison Furniss

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Téléphone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+27 760320549</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Frnall003@myuct.ac.za">Frnall003@myuct.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amazina yaba yobozi b’ubushakashatsi:

Dr. Asanda Benya
Dr. Helen Scanlon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Téléphone:</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+27 216503504</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Asanda.benya@uct.ac.za">Asanda.benya@uct.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+27 216505593</td>
<td><a href="mailto:H.scanlon@uct.ac.za">H.scanlon@uct.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aho ishami y’igamo riherereye:

Room 5.33, Leslie Social Science Building, Upper Campus, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 7701

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Téléphone:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(021) 6503381 / 3916</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ni iki muzakora muri ubu bushakashatsi?
*** Umushakashatsi azabasobanurira numunwa icyo muzakora niba ari ngombwa. ***
Igihe mwemeye kugira uruhare mubushakashatsi ibazwa rizajya rimara isaha imwe. Amakuru azajya akusanywa azakoreshwa mubushakashatsi bwa Allison bw’icyiciro cya gatatu cya kaminuza(These). Azaba arïwe wenyine ukusanya, wandika akanasengengura iryo bazwa.

Igihe muzaba muri kumwe na Allison mubushakashatsi, bishobora kutwara  ibyumweru byinshi. Amakuru azajya akusanywa azakoreshwa mubushakashatsi bwa Allison bw’icyiciro cya gatatu cya kaminuza(These). Azaba arïwe wenyine usoma, wandika amakuru yahawe muricyo gihe cyose.

Nimugira uruhare muri ubu ubushakashatsi, mugomba kwemera mu amagambo ko mubyemeye. Mwemerewe kuva muri uyu mushinga igihe cyose mushakiye no guhagarika ibyo wari wemeye ubwashize mugihe ubonye ko wibeshye. Igihe cyose uzumva ko utisanzuye muri uyu mushinga uza bwïra Allison guhagarika kugira ngo musubire mubuzima busanzwe, cyangwa akemure ikibazo gihari.

Allison azakoresha andi mazina mugihe cyo gufata amakuru, n’ibazwa mu uburyo bwo kubabikira amakuru keretse mwebwe mwemeye ko atangaza amazina yanyu. Umwirondoro wanyu wose uzaba ubitse mu uburyo bw’ibanga, igihe cyose cy’ubushakashatsi. Ibi biza garagarara nyuma mu inyandiko y’ubushakashatsi, y’icyiciro cya gatatu cya kaminuza aho amazina y’imigi, n’amasite bizahindurwa bikitwa ukundi kugira ngo bitamenyekana.

Icyiza muri ubu ubushakashatsi nuko bwemejwe n’ishami ry’ubushakashatsi muri poritiki rya UCT (Département d’études politiques de l’UCT).

Nkabantu nuzagira uruhare muri ubu ubushakashatsi, ntabwo muzishurwa.

Allison nta kigo na kimwe akorera ahubwo ni umunyeshuri w’umushakashatsi migenga muri kaminuza.