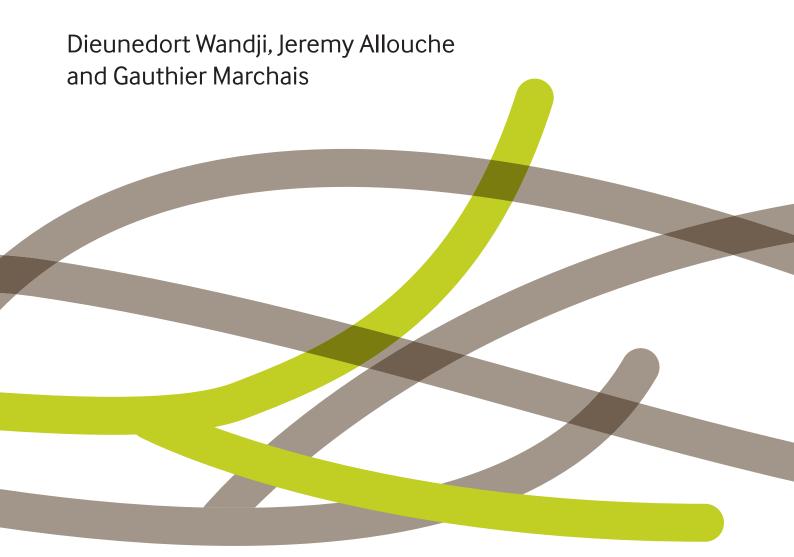# Vernacular Resilience: An Approach to Studying Long-Term Social Practices and Cultural Repertoires of Resilience in Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of Congo

Dieunedort Wandji, Jeremy Allouche and Gauthier Marchais

About the STEPS Centre

The ESRC STEPS (Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability) Centre carries out interdisciplinary global research uniting development studies with science and technology studies.

Our pathways approach links theory, research methods and practice to highlight and open up the politics of sustainability. We focus on complex challenges like climate change, food systems, urbanisation and technology in which society and ecologies are entangled. Our work explores how to better understand these challenges and appreciate the range of potential responses to them.

The STEPS Centre is hosted in the UK by the Institute of Development Studies and the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of Sussex. Our main funding is from the UK's Economic and Social Research Council.

We work as part of a Global Consortium with hubs in Africa, China, Europe, Latin America, North America and South Asia. Our research projects, in many countries, engage with local problems and link them to wider concerns.

Website: **steps-centre.org**

Twitter: **@stepscentre**

For more STEPS publications visit:
steps-centre.org/publications

Vernacular Resilience:

An Approach to Studying Long-Term Social Practices and Cultural Repertoires of Resilience in Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of Congo

Dieunedort Wandji, Jeremy Allouche and Gauthier Marchais

For further information, please contact: STEPS Centre, Institute of Development Studies, Library Road, Brighton BN1 9RE.

Tel: +44 (0) 1273915744; E-mail: steps-centre@ids.ac.uk; web: steps-centre.org

Table of contents

Acronyms

CENCO   *Conference Episcopale Nationale du Congo (National Episcopal Conference of Congo)*

DRC   Democratic Republic of Congo

FESCI   Student and School Federation of Côte d'Ivoire

FPI   *Front Populaire Ivoirien (Ivorian Popular Front)*

LUCHA   *Lutte pour le Changement (Fight for Change)*

PDCI   *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (Democratic Party of Ivory Coast)*

RDR   *Rassemblement des Républicains (Rally of the Republicans)*

SAPE   *Société des Ambianceurs et Personnes Élégantes (he Society of Atmosphere Setters and Elegant People)*

STEPS   Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability

UNICEF   United Nations Children's Fund

Abstract

This working paper aims to situate our research project within the various debates around resilience. It advocates a historical, cultural and plural approach to understanding how communities develop and share resilient practices in contexts of multiple and protracted crises. A focus on 'vernacular' resilience, as embedded in social practices and cultural repertoires, is important since conventional approaches to resilience seem to have overlooked how locally embedded forms of resilience are socially constructed historically. Our approach results from a combination of two observations. Firstly, conventional approaches to resilience in development, humanitarian and peace studies carry the limitations of their own epistemic assumptions – notably the fact that they have generic conceptions of what constitutes resilience. Secondly, these approaches are often ahistorical and neglect the temporal and intergenerational dimensions of repertoires of resilience. In addition to observable social practices, culture and history are crucial in understanding the ways in which vernacular and networked knowledge operates.

Our Global Challenge Research Fund project[1] adopts an interdisciplinary perspective, combining social scientific approaches and cultural and artistic approaches to analyse cultural repertoires, idioms, collective imaginaries, and practices of resilience. The research contexts (Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)) are shaped by long histories of violent conflict, instability and state oppression that have given rise to particular styles of resilience. Vernacular resilience embedded in social practices and cultural repertoires occurs against the backdrop of an equally 'resilient' postcolonial state system that is often manifested socially as ineffective or even oppressive. This working paper reflects on the methodological framework and contextual conditions for examining popular repertoires of resistance through conflicts and extraction, as well as cultures and practices of *débrouillardise*[2] that are rooted in precarious livelihoods.

We lay down the foundations for developing more in-depth and less superficial frameworks for understanding resilient practices in different local contexts, and particularly turbulent contexts. As these vernacular resilient practices are affected by top-down biopolitical dynamics that shape the resilience of the state system as well, the paper provides an overview of the postcolonial historical contexts within which forms of popular culture – songs, poems, dance, art – and embedded social practices are recovered and analysed. This has implications for thinking about resilience and suggests that a novel conceptual and methodological approach is needed to move beyond the instrumental, ecological/engineering focus and its neoliberal developmentalist interpretations. This paper therefore defines the perimeter within which we can investigate the constitutive underpinnings of social disruptions and the plural ramifications of specific shocks or crises within communities that deploy strategies to maintain life, livelihoods and social ties, in line with the STEPS pathways approach to sustainability.

Key words

Vernacular; Resilience; Resistance; Postcolonial; DRC; Côte d'Ivoire

---

[1] www.ids.ac.uk/projects/islands-of-innovation-in-protracted-crises-a-new-approach-to-building-equitable-resilience-from-below/

[2] Getting by, by improvising on the move.

Acknowledgements

1   Introduction

The concept of resilience is considered to have originated in the 'hard' sciences – in particular, physics and mechanical engineering (Holling 1996) – although this has recently been contested by some authors (Bourbeau 2018a; Bourbeau 2018b; Manyena 2006). The concept was originally introduced in the social sciences to help understand ecosystems (Folke *et al*. 2010). Nowadays, resilience is commonly used in disciplines across the social sciences and the arts to describe an extensive range of individual and system attributes (Leach 2008; Olsson *et al*. 2015; Fourie and Follér 2012). There is an important critical stance too, which considers that resilience constitutes a by-product of neoliberal modes of governance masquerading as bottom-up sensitivity (Chandler 2014; Brassett *et al*. 2013; Chandler and Reid 2018). As a concept that is now considered to be 'at large' (Barrios 2016: 35) the expansion of resilience into so many fields of knowledge has underscored the confusion and the limitations of the conventional resilience framework, while at the same time providing an interdisciplinary lens as a boundary object (see Baggio *et al*. 2015). Despite the importance of the various critiques around the epistemic assumptions of the concept of resilience, the focus is now on providing methodological alternatives in order to obtain a more grounded understanding of resilience. Indeed, the resilience literature has reached a consensus that there might exist different forms of resilience in complex human systems; and that attention must be given to the diverse paths through which resilience has 'travelled' into social sciences, and to the different relationships and/or tensions between these various forms of resilience. These epistemological (re) orientations have been highlighted in resilience scholarship by debates around the ontological basis of the concept of resilience (*what is resilience?*) and the question of equitable resilience (*whose resilience?*).

This working paper seeks to engage with the range of attempts at defining and empirically situating the concept of resilience, in relation to the complexity and multiplicity of practices designated by the term. Our project, the [Islands of Innovation project](#), takes as its framework the key hypothesis that communities that have weathered the storm of multiple crises draw on an extensive repertoire of resilient practices. These individual and collective forms of resilience deserve a focused analysis, which can in turn improve the understanding of community-level modes of disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding and response to epidemics. Our project adopts an interdisciplinary perspective, combining social scientific approaches and cultural and artistic approaches to analyse the repertoires, idioms, collective imaginaries, and practices of resilience.

In terms of structure, the remainder of this paper is divided into four further sections. Section 2 introduces the key debates mentioned above regarding the ontological, political and epistemological dimensions of resilience, as well as conceptual alternatives that can produce a more grounded understanding of resilience. In Sections 3 and 4, the working paper explores resilience from a sociohistorical standpoint in Côte d'Ivoire, then in the DRC. It therefore develops entry points to repertoires of resistance, practices of resilience and forms of popular culture. Section 5 elaborates on the epistemological implications of integrating the limits of the existing assumptions in resilience thinking and the interdisciplinary methodological approach, which can provide new insights regarding the way that resilience is studied and understood in such contexts (DRC and Côte d'Ivoire).

2 The ontological, political and epistemological dimensions of resilience

Early scientific conceptualisations of resilience refer to resilience as 'a measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations' (Holling 1973: 14). While the initial scholarship around resilience revolved around the notion of 'bouncing back', current thinking on resilience includes its link with adaptive capacity, but also the ability to achieve long-term transformation (Carpenter and Folke 2006; Pelling 2011). Walker *et al*. (2004: 4) defined resilience as 'the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks'. This conceptual extension of the notion of resilience thus integrates a transformative dimension which has become a key element in various efforts to (re)define resilience, but it has also become a point of contention in critical resilience studies.

Resilience thinkers usually discuss three crucial and interrelated dimensions implied in the notion of resilience: (1) coping capacities, (2) adaptive capacities, and (3) transformative capacities (Folke *et al*. 2010; Maclean *et al*. 2014; Barnes *et al*. 2020). Coping capacities refers to the ways in which people manage and overcome immediate threats by mobilising resources that are readily available. Adaptive capacities address reactive measures to adapt to or take advantage of changes that are occurring along different dimensions (e.g. assets, flexibility, learning, agency, social organisation etc). Finally, transformative capacities relate to the community's ability to actively change when the current ecological, social or economic conditions are considered untenable or undesirable (Olsson *et al*. 2004). Transformation describes a form of change that is more significant than adaptation, one that recombines existing elements of a system in fundamentally novel ways (on these three dimensions, see Moore *et al*. 2014). While there is a wide consensus in the literature regarding these three dimensions of resilience, questions still persist as to how these conceptualisations of resilience account for the fact that the nature of systems may change over time (Scheffer 2009), the validity of various forms of resilience in practices, or indeed the plural meaning of resilience, especially in human systems.

The social-ecological system (SES) has emerged as an approach that goes beyond the 'artificial and arbitrary' demarcation between social and ecological systems (Folke 2006). Within this approach, concepts such as the 'five capitals' adopt a holistic approach that considers both natural capital (air, soil, etc.) and social capital (trust, norms and networks) as important in determining the resilience of a system (Mayunga 2007); similarly, the 'disturbance as opportunity' approach sees the human/social and natural/ecological factors as highly integrated in a systemic 'whole' (Folke 2006). Both are examples of how the notion of interconnectedness has been applied in the context of resilience to natural hazards (Manyena 2006; Mayunga 2007; Cutter *et al*. 2008) and climate change (Adger *et al*. 2002; Rockefeller Foundation 2009; Osbahr 2007; Nelson *et al*. 2007). This leads to a view of societal resilience based on complexity, self-organisation, functional diversity and non-linearity (Gunderson *et al*. 2002: 530), raising questions such as '*resilience to what?'*

Another point that is central to debates around the concept of resilience is that, according to some scholars, there is a distinction between general and specified resilience. The term specified resilience is applied to 'problems relating to particular aspects of a system that might arise from a particular set of sources or shocks' (Folke *et al*. 2010), while the term general resilience describes resilience to all kinds of shocks, including infrequent or new shocks. In helping to provide a concrete and focused answer to the question '*resilience of what, to what?*' (Carpenter *et al*. 2001), specified resilience becomes a valuable conceptual device for navigating the confusion that surrounds the plural meanings of resilience in its diverse contexts. The downside to this however is that specified

resilience cannot be used to ultimately establish or study the overall resilience of a system, since a system's resilience to a specific type of disturbance might actually mean or cause its vulnerability to other forms of disturbance (Carson and Doyle 2000; Cifdaloz *et al*. 2010).

2.1　Resilience, resistance and biopolitics

Resilience differs from everyday resistance. Resilience-building is normally envisaged as threat-dependent (Alexander 2013), whereas resistance, especially as theorised from the bottom up by Scott (1985), supposes a political dimension to the threat. In this sense, resilience seems to be conceived as a depoliticised form of resistance: a concept that conceals (or ignores) the political dimension of the threat. In her study of *Sumud* as a resilient practice of Palestinian political resistance (2015), Ryan in many ways echoes the ideas of Scott's study of peasants in Malaysia (1985) by exploring the possibility of resilience as resistance or *resilient resistance*. Ryan (2015) posits resilience as a means to an end, based on the agency and objectives of the communities engaging in their own resilience-building as part of a larger political resistance movement. While clear-cut answers are difficult to provide in the resilience–resistance debate, what stands out clearly is the non-linearity between resilience and the object of resilience. Put simply, resilience might not always be what it looks like.

Furthermore, there exists a contentious divide among those who apply the resilience normative framework: between those who apply it within a policymaking milieu, and those who recognise the agency of, and take the perspective of, the resilient subject/system, otherwise known as vernacular forms of resilience (Lindbom and Rothstein 2006). In other words, the operationalisation of the concept of resilience through public policies or participative initiatives raises many issues that cannot be addressed through stable definitions only, no matter how exhaustive such definitions strive to be. The issues raised by the operationalisation again revolve mainly around the question of '*whose resilience?*, and these showcase an increasing fracture in the resilience debate, opposing what many scholars view as top-down biopolitical dynamics and bottom-up critical conceptualisations of resilience (Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskanen 2016). In fact, the highlighted danger of resilience becoming a catch-all term actually conceals the deeper question of '*whose resilience?*', '*resilience for whom?*' or '*resilience to what?*'. The debate as to whether there is a difference between resilience and resistance is very illustrative of this question. In any case, the plurality of directions in examining resilience illuminates the contexts of our study, since both national societies and postcolonial states can be viewed distinctly as resilient systems from a historical point of view.

The biopolitical dynamics of resilience have been elaborated upon in critical scholarship, echoing Michel Foucault's governmentality theses, and emphasising the neoliberal orientation of current resilience thinking. This biopolitical outlook on resilience foregrounds the individual ability to make the most of 'situations', without questioning the structural inequalities thereof (Chandler 2012; Chandler 2013; Richmond 2012). This critical scholarship traces how resilience is becoming a mechanism for the preservation and perpetuation of the 'system' that is responsible for creating turbulence within communities through those very paradigms that 'naturalize' and 'reproduce the wider social and spatial relations which generate turbulence and inequality' (MacKinnon and Derickson 2013: 254). However, where resilience discourse is held as a consensual construct, indigenous subjectivity is studied in terms of resistance to biopower (Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskanen 2016) or an addition to the various repertoires of resilience (Chandler and Reid 2018). This has consequently maintained the conceptual criticism confined within a very narrow Western-centric scope, thereby – perhaps inadvertently – consecrating the West with exclusive intellectual jurisdiction over ways of defining or even criticising resilience. This leads to a situation whereby the complexity of resilience is widely acknowledged but rather than upholding the logical conclusion that, as a very complex phenomenon, there should be no pre-conceived restrictions regarding what

resilience is or is not, the literature advocates one thing while seeming to exemplify it with contrary material, by focusing too much on defining and/or criticising resilience (Ryan 2015). Hence, the necessity to contextualise resilience, so as to incorporate a decentring ethos in empirical engagement with it.

2.2   The empirical question in resilience thinking

Research has highlighted the importance of contextualisation and temporality in operationalising the concept of resilience (Linkov and Palma-Oliveira 2017). Assessing resilience is all about considering and situating its practices within the particular social, economic and ecological contexts in which a focal system is embedded. This means taking into account the different needs, interests and beliefs of the different social groups that are invested in or affected by the challenge at hand. In this respect, MacKinnon and Derickson's distinction between 'the system under observation and externally induced disruption, stress, disturbance or crisis' (2013: 253) helps to better articulate the dual dimensions of contextualisation, which in the case of our study consist of various communities and the types of shocks they have faced. In this configuration, bottom-up and non-Western approaches to resilience present us with a valuable opportunity to open up the conceptual framework of resilience to plurality without necessarily dwelling only on the relative differences of resilient practices (Ryan 2015: 300–302). Such an empirical engagement with resilience is likely to address the insufficiency that has been pointed out by many authors, which has continued despite the paradigmatic shift in resilience thinking away from systems and towards social actors and their agency (Berkes and Folke 1998: 12), as well as the shift towards resilience in humanitarianism (Hilhorst 2018). This approach also ensures that the valorisation of non-Western understandings of resilience might not actually be concealing an agenda of extending dominant hegemonic practices (Corry 2014: 271). Hence, applying an empirical examination of resilience in a way that escapes the risk of being manipulated in such a fashion demands that this examination be 'context-informed' (Bourbeau 2013: 11) and, most importantly, that it occur within a non-Western normative framework. In such a context, however, it is important to situate resilience in relation to the individual(s) deploying specific resilient practices.

Overall, it is clear that the ubiquity of the term resilience tends to reinforce its 'imprecise or useless' nature (Bourbeau 2013: 4). The need to clear the conceptual confusion is identified as one of the main conditions if resilience is 'to be valuable' (Gibbons *et al.* 2015: 28–29). However, clearing the confusion through attempts at further tightening the definition of resilience for the sake of consistency is indicative of an underlying normative obsession with *controlling* the concept of resilience. This effort can only result in trapping the thinking around resilience in the despairingly modernist desire to always be exhaustive and to put everything in a box or a category. Meanwhile, resilience, which is deemed to be inherent in human *nature*, would intuitively seem to promote quite the opposite. The complexity and diversity of the resilience phenomenon, as well as the articulations between individual and collective forms of the concept, therefore warrant a more open-minded approach to its definition, namely by looking into those 'islands of innovation' that might have been neglected by practitioners, policymakers and theoreticians alike. So instead of trying to study resilient practices through a definition's 'ring of virtue and unquestioned morality' (Sarason 1993: 260) it is probably better to engage with the limitations of the concept, as embroiled in many knowledge hierarchies, which can be illuminated by novel empirical examination. In the following section we present the broader contexts in which these resilient histories are cast: specifically, the salient aspects of the contexts around repertoires of resistance, practices of resilience and forms of popular culture that are relevant for our study of resilience.

4

3   Paradigms of resilience in Côte d'Ivoire

Despite the several repeated crises, and in particular the military conflict between 2002 and 2010, the institutional and socio-political trajectory of Côte d'Ivoire has been marked by a strong state and a booming economy. The concept of resilience has not been used as a central analytical framework in academic studies on Côte d'Ivoire, but it has been used in various academic angles, from postcolonial and gender studies to agroforestry and public health (Bovcon 2009; Ruf 2014; Bearth and Baya 2010; Bissouma *et al.* 2017). Given the rural nature of the economy, several studies have focused on the resilience of farmers. Some have even followed a cultural understanding. In his analysis of the Malinke Griots in the Dan society in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire, Zemp (1964) shows the power of music in relation to farmers' motivation. Zemp (1964) asks: 'How else to understand the indefatigability of the harvesters cutting the rice ear by ear with small knives on steep slopes from morning to night if the drummers did not strengthen their rhythms with the workers' rhythms? They sing while cutting the rice, but it is indeed the drums that transmit force'.[3] (See also Lemaire (1999) in regard to the relationship between singing, working, and inter-community relations in the Senoufou society.) Overall, however, studies of resilience in Côte d'Ivoire are divided between those that focus on the resilience of the Ivorian state and its political economy, and those that look at popular responses to the crises that can be associated with the trajectory of the postcolonial Ivorian state.

3.1   The postcolonial resilient state and top-down biopolitical dynamics

The theme that is encountered most frequently when studying Ivorian political history is continuity, which in the context of studying resilience presents a certain parallel. A body of literature has emerged to show the historical continuities between the colonial and postcolonial eras, and the 'colonial durabilities' in the contemporary modes of political organisation, in particular the political economic relationship with French businesses and the lasting ideology of Françafrique (see Bovcon 2009). After independence, Houphouët-Boigny led a markedly pro-Western, pro-capitalist, mildly dictatorial state for over three decades. Houphouët-Boigny's vision of Côte d'Ivoire demanded that economic development came first, before political reform (Foster and Zolberg 1971). Côte d'Ivoire's development strategy relied on co-opting regional and social identity groups through the application of related patronage benefits that encouraged loyalty to the president, including through political participation in state institutions, which was formally balanced across ethnic groups (Boone 2007; Bakary 1984). Furthermore, the continued reliance on French military support suppressed the possibility of a coup during this period (Charbonneau 2012). The top-down biopolitical dynamics of the state system also shaped the landscape of the arts. Houphouët-Boigny's efforts to build a narrative of modernisation did not only mean discarding nationalism for the sake of promoting national unity, it also meant looking towards the West in creating some form of cultural hierarchy (Land 1995). Western culture was promoted over local cultural customs, which were seen as backward and thwarting national unity (Dedy 1984). Performers became dependent upon state information apparatuses, and political and socially sensitive content was controlled by the government (Land 1992; Kamate 2006). Press freedom was also very limited (see Gbagbo's 1983 account of the political consolidation of the Ivorian press). Perhaps because its main medium of expression was the French language, one notable exception to this preference for Western culture

---

[3] Authors' own translation. '*Comment comprendre autrement infatigabilité des moissonneurs coupant le riz épi par épi avec des petits couteaux sur des pentes raides du matin au soir si les tambourinaires ne fortifiaient par leurs rythmes entrain des travailleurs ? Ceux-ci chantent en coupant le riz mais ce sont bien les tambours qui transmettent la force*'.

was literature, especially drama, which promoted the socio-cultural values of traditional Africa (Logba 2015).[4] The effects of this cultural hierarchy have been evidenced in various studies focusing on the influence of Western culture on Ivorian urban youth (Ouattara 1985).

During the 1980s, the Ivorian state experienced a deep and protracted crisis notably as a result of the collapse of the price of cocoa (one of the main exports of the country), which lasted through the 'lost decade' of the 1980s and 1990s. Structural adjustment and heavy aid conditionality by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund drastically reduced the government's policy space, and consequently its ability to proactively address rising poverty levels, disaffection, as well as land-related social crises. The consequences of this included high economic instability, increased agricultural poverty, a decline in the quality of education and the health system, and decreasing standards of living and purchasing power for the poor due to currency devaluation (Kingston 2011). The changing economic context intersected with elite power struggles and dramatically heightened the stakes in the country's 1995 elections. Although the regime in Côte d'Ivoire had initially sought to moderate underlying identity group interests through a wide-reaching political settlement and process of patronage-linked buy-in, tensions ultimately erupted in the absence of extensive patronage resources. As huge debt levels and large-scale privatisation vastly reduced the resources available to the state, competition for shrinking resources intensified and their potential to assuage competitive and violent contestation declined. This changing context dramatically heightened the stakes of elections, which in turn destabilised the country's nascent democratic system, leading to large-scale violence. Despite the continuity of the state in the post-independence years, the inability of the powers that be to fully control the socio-political space was obvious. This inability also resulted in areas of vulnerability, which at the same time provided a stage on which one could observe non-state forms of adapting to the various crises.

Côte d'Ivoire thus entered a long period of socio-political turbulence, which reached its climax with the post-election crisis from November 2010 to April 2011. This long period was punctuated by numerous episodes of crises. Socio-political issues compounded the negative effects of the economic crisis that had raged since the 1980s (the succession of the head of state on the death of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny in December 1993, active boycott in the 1995 presidential elections, the military coup of December 1999, the armed rebellion of September 2002, general elections not being held from 2005 to 2010) (Huff *et al*. 2016). The top-down biopolitical dynamics of the state system took on a different shape after Houphouët-Boigny's death, moving towards ultra-nationalism in the 1990s, with the concept of 'ivoirité'. In fact, this had started already before Houphouët-Boigny's death, with the end of the vote for foreigners and the introduction of residence permits, which led to regular raids by the police, whose identity checks were sometimes associated with ill-treatment and racketeering (Dembele 2003). Ultra-nationalism was further fuelled by the electoral reform in 1994 that restricted voting rights and candidacy claims for the position of president – on grounds related to Alassane Dramane Ouattara's identity (Ouattara was the prime minister at the time of Houphouët-Boigny's death) as a northerner and a Muslim, which was perceived as a threat to the state's hegemony – and that in turn threatened to disenfranchise an important part of the northern population (Langer *et al.* 2007). This was followed by the 1998 Land Law, which declared that only Ivorian citizens could own land.

Contentious land claims mounted between those who made the land productive through agriculture (e.g. Malians, Burkinabes, northern Ivorians) and indigenous southern Ivorian citizens (Klaus and

---

[4] However, although theatre occupies a special place in the Ivorian literary universe, as it was through theatre that Ivorian literature was born, the specific history of this literary form has remained in the shadow of others (Kouassi Akissi 2019).

Mitchell 2015). This amplification of intercommunal tensions interplayed with the elite power struggle, which led to the further scapegoating of migrant communities from the north and neighbouring countries in an effort to divert tensions around the economic crisis away from the government. As the accumulated and unaddressed tensions ultimately played out in disasters, crises and even violent political upheavals, underlying popular forms of resilience started to emerge. This watershed moment in Ivorian history also marks an interesting point for shifting the focus from the state to populations, and for observing how popular forms of living morphed into prevalent individual and collective strategies for addressing crises.

3.2   Repertoires of resistance

This post-1990 turbulent period that shaped state oppressive practices was also met with different repertoires of resistance. In response to the deterioration of their living and studying conditions, students collectively organised, with the advent of the Student and School Federation of Côte d'Ivoire (FESCI), a left-leaning student movement that was radically opposed to the former single party system (*Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* – PDCI) (Democratic Party of Ivory Coast). With the birth of FESCI, the university became a highly politicised site. This resulted in numerous interventions by the police on Ivorian university campuses (Théodore 2012). Student unions also had direct relations with trade unions and political parties, namely the *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) (Ivorian Popular Front) and the *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR) (Rally of the Republicans). This strong political intrusion into the student community generated new forms of violent confrontations on campuses. Pitched battles between various rival groups broke out and university campuses then became the site of machete combat, leading to mutilations and even death. The repertoires of resistance to state oppression shifted from strikes and negotiations to embarking on violence as the ultimate weapon of struggle. Many student leaders, such as Guillaume Soro and Charles Blé Goudé, went on to play key roles in post-2000 Ivorian national politics, including holding government positions (Banégas 2010).

3.3   Cultures and practices of *débrouillardise*

Another manifestation that characterised the 1990–2011 period was *débrouillardise*. Increased poverty, high unemployment (especially among young people) and the erosion of national social cohesion led to the development of a number of mostly informal livelihood strategies. Current scholarship has mostly focused on the practices deployed by migrant or children to cope with this new precarity. Dacher (2003) for instance traces the journey of a young Burkinabe peasant immigrating to Côte d'Ivoire in the early 1990s. She shows how, after travelling through many cities, Seydou reached Ouangolodougou, where a distant paternal relative lived. There he met customs officers who entrusted him with small jobs: washing their clothes, doing their errands, maintaining their fields; gradually Seydou became embedded in the customs profession. He obtained permission to block the interstate road with a bamboo barrier, which he made himself and which he lifted when trucks passed. Whenever the customs official in charge changed, he was chased away, but he came back, and people got used to him doing the work instead of the attendants. He even managed to receive a modest salary in exchange for his services. In addition, the customs officers, who appreciated his kindness and his resourcefulness, asked him to strike multiple small deals for their benefit, and rewarded him for this work.

One can find many more examples of *débrouillardise* during this crisis period (see also Monique (1990) on Malian migrants; or more generally on the informal economy see Loukou (2003) on the informal telephone sector and new forms of livelihoods). Many studies on street children in Côte d'Ivoire are very revealing. Hérault and Adesanmi (1997: 7) relay how street children define *débrouillardise*.

(...) it is jostling to do all the trades that allow us to live in the street. It is everything that can provide us with tokens, that is to say money. Débrouiller means to free oneself from parents; it is to have independence on the streets and to define your future there by your own means.[5]

To get by is to do odd jobs, it is to steal to get food, to attack people to take their chain and their wallet, it is to beg (...) the one who does not know all that, he can't get by. The odd jobs we do don't allow us to meet our needs. In the street, we have to fight for money, that's what allows us to make do without parents.[6]

These street children set up a whole culture of survival that the popular language of Abidjan qualifies as 'resourcefulness' (*débrouillardise*). And 'to get by' or 'to find oneself' (*se chercher*) in Abidjan means putting in place strategies that can ensure one's daily survival in the face of economic difficulties, unemployment and the erosion of the values of traditional solidarity which allowed the individual, even if poor, not to be abandoned, or to give in to despair and misery. The carrying out of odd jobs in the street therefore expresses above all the capacity of these young children to adapt to a social evolution which disrupts the general social structure (Pira 2006).

3.4   Forms of popular culture

In Côte d'Ivoire, popular music genres such as reggae and Zouglou have played a critical role at significant turning points, and have served as a domain for articulating ideas and sharing information about politicians, corruption, citizenship, national history and identity. Ivorian popular music partially broke its link in the late 80s with and its dependence on the patronage of the government with the liberalisation of the music industry, with FM radios and tape players. Through popular music, the youth of Abidjan express their desire for political agency. Zouglou emerged in the 1990s in the context of student demonstrations for political liberalisation and, along with reggae, came to serve as a platform for criticism of prevailing social and political conditions. Ivorian popular music was consequently associated with the return to multi-party politics under Félix Houphouët-Boigny in 1990 and the overthrow of Henri Konan Bédié by General Robert Gueï in 1999 (Schumann 2009). The 'Zouglou generation' is precisely the generation that had borne the brunt of the economic crisis. Zouglou was initially linked to the student movement, in particular the campus in Youpougon, but soon came to be appropriated by marginalised youth in the peri-urban areas of Abidjan. Zouglou music involves poetic songs sung predominantly by relatively young men – such as Didier Bilé – who came of age in the context of declining employment possibilities in the formal sector (Konaté 2002; Blé 2006). Through Zouglou music, marginalised youths assert themselves as a group, and thus create a discursive space in which to voice their demands for social inclusion and intergenerational justice to the older generation and to politicians, in a context in which the postcolonial compromise has been broken (Mbembe 2000).

As expressed in the symbolism of the lyrics of Zouglou songs, this generation of Ivorian youth bore the brunt of the economic crisis and became metaphorical orphans (Schumann 2012). The songs are

---

[5] Authors' own translation: '(...) c'est grouiller pour faire tous les métiers qui pennettent de vivre dans la rue. C'est tout ce qui peut nous donner des jetons, c'est à dire l'argent. Se débrouiller, c'est se libérer des parents; c'est avoir une indépendance dans la rue et y chercher son avenir par ses propres moyens'.

[6] Authors' own translation : 'Se débrouiller, c'est faire de petits boulots, c'est voler pour avoir sa nourriture, agresser les gens pour leur prendre leur chaîne et leur portefeuille, c'est mendier (...) celui qui ne connaît pas tout ça, il ne peut s'en sortir. Les petits boulots que nous faisons, ça ne nous permet pas de faire face à nos besoins. Dans la rue, il faut se battre pour avoir de l'argent, c'est ça qui fait qu'on peut se passer des parents'.

in Nouchi, a popular emergent language whose lexical base is French (regional popular French), to which are added elements of various indigenous languages (mainly Agni-Baoulé, Bété, and Dioula), moving away from the forms of cultural hierarchy described above. Through Zouglou music, Ivorian youths assert themselves as a group and demand an active involvement in Ivorian socio-political life, rather than being the passive victims of its upheaval. This may seem to contrast with the student movement of the early 1990s, which presented a challenge to the prevailing political system itself (Schumann 2012). This is the difference between resilience and resistance. As put by Bahi (2011): 'popular music is a form of a release: if not a way of adjudicating the evils it condemns, then of warding off the disastrous fate of the world as it is. But, by letting steam escape from the cauldron, catharsis can have a conservative function, amounting to a moment of transgression that is aimed at maintaining order' (authors' English translation).[7] Zouglou was initially very outspoken against divisive political rhetoric, such as the increasing use of the term 'Ivoirité' (as with reggae artists such as Tiken Jah Fakoly). Les Potes de la Rue tackled the theme of tribalism and xenophobia, for example, in their song 'Zio Pin'. In a humorous tone, 'Zio Pin' sketches ethnic prejudices while also establishing their reversibility. In fact, the identification of Zouglou with a non-ethnic Ivorian identity goes beyond apparent song texts. Konaté (2002) notes that, as urban music, Zouglou is not referable to a particular portion of the national space, and is not associated with any particular region or ethnic group. It is a national music in the sense that this music was born in Côte d'Ivoire and is internationally recognised as Ivorian.

Through popular music, the youth desire for political agency reflects an intergenerational conflict, rather than just a north–south division, as has often been depicted. The word '*Ndégocratie*' is interesting in this respect: '*N'dé*' in *malinke* means 'child' or 'young'. The democracy advocated by the FPI was nothing other than the dictatorship of the '*N'dé*': of young people and children over the old. In fact, an incongruity of the Ivorian crisis is the reception of 'patriotic' music in areas that were then occupied by the armed rebels (who sought to overthrow the Gbagbo regime). Patriotic music has had the same success in the north as in the south of Côte d'Ivoire (Konaté 2002: 791–2). The rebels sang and danced to this music because the texts were also, according to them, what they were defending: their country. In truth, this ability to come together across political divides reflects one of the fundamental elements of the culture of sociability of young people. One of the possible explanations for the importance of music in the Ivorian war is that it was a war of generations. The crisis further accentuated a sense of disillusion with the official system and resulted in *débrouillardise*.

One strand of literature on Côte d'Ivoire has focused on popular practices and idioms, and the 'popular imagination', usually conceived as forms of collective resilience developed by populations in a context of institutionalised neglect by public authorities, and state-sponsored ideologies of 'fending for oneself'. This is especially represented in the *coupé décalé* music, which is seen as an expression of 'hope for new routes to success and possible access to the world of consumption' (Kohlhagen 2005: 104). *Le coupeur décaleur* has a specificity that sets him (or her in some cases) apart from the zouglouman and the reggaeman. It is part of the rejection of the political discourse of the elders. What interests *le coupeur décaleur* is to leave the country, to come back rich (a sort of revenge on fate) and to let the whole of society know this by engaging in an outrageous redistribution of the loot brought back. Thus, he abandons local responses to difficulties for an

---

[7] 'la musique populaire serait un défoulement, si ce n'est une manière d'adjurer les maux qu'elle condamne, de conjurer le sort funeste du monde tel qu'il va. Mais, en laissant de la vapeur s'échapper du chaudron, la catharsis peut avoir une fonctionnalité conservatrice, et n'être qu'un moment de transgression visant à maintenir l'ordre du monde'.

elsewhere that he believes is better (Kamate 2006). The initiators of this movement are young Ivorians living in Paris.

According to Flore Biet, the *coupé décalé* does not talk about a crisis but feeds on it in order to overcome it. The song *'Cabri Mort'* by Serges Kassy is interesting in this respect. In Ivorian jargon the 'dead goat' is someone who has nothing more to lose. In other words, according to our artist, the Ivorian has endured so many difficulties that nothing can reach him. Doing your '*atalaku*' means, for example, to brag about someone, as griots do so well in the African tradition. On the occasion of shows in night clubs or other venues, the DJs or the hosts make '*atalakus*' to certain people who, moved, spill banknotes on them. Before each title, the host or '*atalaku*' attempts to name the names of prominent people in all areas of society. The background music is thus consecrated by the god of money.

For some time now, and given the failure of the democratisation processes, the growth of social inequalities, the difficult economic situation, but also the acceleration of flows linked to globalisation (circulation of goods, images and styles of life coming from elsewhere), traditional strategies for social advancement (diplomas, civil servants, etc.) have become obsolete in many African countries. This has led to a change in imaginaries and modes of political subjectivation, especially among young people. This modification is accentuated in certain countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, by the state's descent into criminality, the civil war, and its corollary of violence. The modifications of the imagination materialise, as Banégas and Warnier (2001) advance, in what they call 'a moral economy of cunning and resourcefulness'. In fact, what the organisers of the *coupé décalé* – who moreover call themselves 'presidents', 'governors' or 'lieutenants' – claim to be is indeed a new model of social advancement.

The image of success associated with the social figure of the graduate disappears in favour of one who can make criminal use of cunning and resourcefulness, or even the exemplification of his talent through sport and music and new technologies. This metamorphosis, far from breaking with conventional political logics, is rather indicative of the corrupt practices that take place at the top of the Ivorian state apparatus (Gawa 2014). This brings with it a paradigmatic shift by bringing out the ethos of the individual, which implies the material capacity to be able to break free from community belonging. This musical style also reinforces a culture of mobility. Indeed, young Africans are motivated to migrate to Europe due to the institutional weakness of the state in Africa, which is compounded by the multiplicity of crises that punctuate the daily lives of these young people (Gawa 2014).

4 Paradigms of resilience in the DRC

A recurring trope in the literature on resilience in the DRC has been the opposition between a weak but extractive and oppressive state on one side, and a resilient population and civil society on the other. Although the history of the DRC provides extensive empirical evidence for both sides of this proposition, their binary opposition often clouds a more complex interdependence between the state, the institutions that organise social life and the population.

4.1 The Congolese state: extractive, violent and weak, yet resilient?

The Congolese state occupies an ambiguous position in the literature on resilience in the DRC. On the one hand, it has overwhelmingly been conceived as oppressive, extractive, violent, and the very source of the vulnerability of the population. This conception has often overlapped with the idea of the Congolese state as a weak state, which has little control over its territory and population, with

inefficient public services and institutions. Conversely, studies and academics have noted a somewhat paradoxical resilience of the Congolese state (Englebert and Tull 2013).

The history of the DRC has been marked by large-scale violence, extraction and exploitation, in which the Congolese state has played a central role. Large-scale violent exploitation in the territory that is now the DRC dates back to the penetration of the Atlantic slave trade in the western parts of the DRC, which started with the Kongo Kingdom's trade within the Portuguese Empire in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which caused profound and deep-ranging changes in the Bantu and Batwa societies of Central Africa, reinforcing social hierarchies and violent forms of rule and resource accumulation (Vansina 1990; Klieman 2003). From the nineteenth century, the expansion of the East African slave trade and the so-called 'Zanzibari colonisation' in the eastern parts of the current territory similarly introduced violent and extractive forms of resource accumulation and labour mobilisation (Newbury 2009; Northrup 1988). Both of these macro-historical processes had severely detrimental effects on Congolese societies, depleting human resources and livelihood bases, as well as coping mechanisms.

The colonial era further reinforced large-scale, institutionalised forms of violent accumulation across the country. The brutality and exploitative nature of the Congo Free State and the Belgian colonial state have been extensively documented and commented upon (Van Reybrouck 2010; Hochschild 1998; Hunt 2014; Ndaywel è Nziem 1998). A body of literature has emerged to show the historical continuities between the colonial and postcolonial eras, and the 'colonial durabilities' in the contemporary modes of political organisation: in particular, the 'ethnoterritorialization' of the state (Hoffmann 2019), the modes of taxation (Hoffmann *et al.* 2016), and the 'politics of exclusion' which characterise contemporary Congolese politics (Kisangani 2012). To this day, large-scale exploitation of populations by elite networks imbricated into the state apparatus remains a hallmark of the DRC, notably in the conflict-affected eastern provinces of the country (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004), as well as in the mineral-rich southern provinces.

In the postcolonial era, the Congolese state has been profoundly shaped by the authoritarian rule of Mobutu Sese Seko, who held power from 1965 to 1997 and whose rule came to symbolise African post-independence dictatorships. Although in the early years of Mobutu's rule vast infrastructure, public services and redistribution policies were launched, the Congolese state experienced a deep and protracted crisis during the 1970s, notably as a result of the collapse of the price of copper – one of the main exports of the DRC – which lasted through the 'lost decades' of the 1980s and 1990s. The crisis hollowed out the public sector, and was coupled with personalised control by the authoritarian regime over the state apparatus. The famous joke about a (non-existing) 'article 15' of the constitution, '*debrouillez-vous*' (fend for yourselves) crystallises the sense of abandonment of public duty by the state, and a form of state-sponsored 'laissez-faire' individualism. The political liberalisation of the early 1990s heightened political competition between elite networks of 'power, protection and plunder', stoking political conflicts along ethno-territorial lines, which would become violent with the eastern Congolese conflicts of the 1990s, in particular the First (1997—8) and Second Congo (1998—2003) Wars.

The characteristic weakness of the Congolese state and its use by elite networks as a vehicle for extractive practices have persevered to this day, and have been documented by a body of empirical literature. Empirical studies of the security sector in the DRC have revealed continued and widespread practices of extortion and rackets, particularly in the eastern provinces, where the national army has been shown to be involved in multiple forms of coercive extortion and illicit revenue accumulation (Verweijen 2013; Baaz and Verweijen 2013). Similarly, recent studies of the Congolese National Police have analysed the systematic and organised revenue generation within the sector (de la Sierra *et al*. 2020). Despite its characteristic weakness, these studies have also noted a surprising and somewhat paradoxical resilience of the Congolese state as a mode of

organisation of political, social and economic life in the DRC. This resilience is partially a tribute to the 'real governance' that characterises public sectors such as education, which have displayed enduring resilience despite the collapse of the formal institutional framework (Titeca and De Herdt 2011; Brandt 2017). It is also tied to the way populations have enduringly upheld the state as an idea and template for political organisation, despite its widespread absence and characteristic weakness (Stearns *et al*. 2017; Englebert and Tull 2013).

4.2   Resilience and resistance

Resistance and resilience are particularly difficult to discern through cursory observation in the context of the DRC, where the popular practices that the terms refer to empirically are often closely related, and at times diffusely embedded in cultural expressions – or even indistinguishable. In a participatory exercise organised by UNICEF on resilience, the word most chosen by participants to designate what resilience meant to them was resistance (UNICEF and OECD 2014: 5). Given the DRC's history of coercive extraction and exploitation, and the fact that this was usually orchestrated by the state – as most extensively documented in regard to the period under Mobutu's rule – the resistance framework has provided a fitting heuristic for understanding a large number of practices deployed by the Congolese population. Violent forms of contention and resistance have received considerable attention (Kisangani 2012), from the rebellions of the 1960s (Verhaegen 1969) to the wars of 1990s (see notably the Usalama Project by the Rift Valley Institute). Throughout this body of literature, the theme of resistance to exploitative practices, marginalisation from decision-making instances, and deprivation of rights – in particular land rights – appears as a common theme to explain movements of violent resistance. Resistance to dispossession and exploitation often has historical roots, dating back to the penetration of exploitative and extractive circuits in the country, and has often set durable templates of collective violent resistance that have persevered to this day.

Violent forms of resistance, however, are only one among a constellation of forms of resistance. These encompass peaceful resistance movements, a recent example being the *Lutte pour le Changement* (LUCHA) (Fight for Change) movement (active since 2016), or the peaceful mobilisation against the prorogation of elections in 2018, led by the *Conference Episcopale Nationale du Congo* (CENCO) (National Episcopal Conference of Congo). Using the work developed most notably by James C. Scott, authors have also analysed the 'everyday forms of resistance' which populations manifest against the generally oppressive political and economic order in the DRC (Iñiguez de Heredia 2013). These forms of peaceful resistance also have a long history, often having their origins in anti-colonial movements, in particular religious and millenarist movements such as Kimbanguism (MacGaffey 1982).

4.3   Collective and popular forms of resilience

Another stream of literature has focused on the popular practices and forms of organisation that populations in the DRC have deployed in the face of repeated crises. These are not necessarily conceived as political resistance to the Congolese state and political regime, but rather as forms of collective organisation in the face of its absence or its oppressive presence. One strand of this literature has focused on economic activity, private enterprise, and markets. Building notably on the work of Janet MacGaffey, it has sought to identify and document the perseverance and resilience of private enterprise in the face of state predation and interference, uncovering forms of 'indigenous capitalism' (MacGaffey 1987) and the 'real economy' which have demonstrated exceptional resilience in the DRC (MacGaffey 1991). Looking at the popular side of resilience, popular practices, idioms and the 'popular imagination' are usually conceived as forms of collective resilience developed by communities in a context of institutionalised neglect by public authorities, and state-sponsored ideologies of 'fending for oneself'. Often elaborate combinations of traditions and *ad hoc* practices emerging to respond to particularly difficult contexts, they are construed as a typically Congolese form of creative adaptation to adversity, or *débrouillardise*. This popular creative

imagination ranges from the art forms that have emerged in the streets of Kinshasa (White and Yoka 2010), with emblematic instruments such as the *Sanza*, which have acquired global notoriety, to *ad hoc* forms of dealing with everyday life and organising economic activity (Ayimpam 2014) from the streets of Kinshasa to those of Goma (Trefon and Kabuyaya 2018). While these forms of practical, organisational and social bricolage are not necessarily conceived as political, they often overlap with the 'everyday forms of resistance' referred to in the literature on resistance. These strands of literature, and the processes and practices they point to, allow us to understand the context in which the literature on resilience in the DRC has emerged, and the opposition between a weak or extractive state and a resilient population which has generally characterised it.

An important segment of specialist literature on the DRC has also focused on how various forms of artistic expression, especially in music, serve both as tools for addressing the psychological dimension of many social challenges, and as lenses for capturing the human condition in the Congolese context (Mukuna 2020). Emerging in the 1950s and woven into nationalist political activism for independence, the Congolese Rumba, shepherded by iconic figures such as Tabu Ley Rochereau, Franco Luambo and Le Grand Kallé, gained international recognition. Given the political context within which Congolese Rumba came to prominence, the lack of overt political content is a paradoxical and intriguing feature of this music, which Joseph Trapido still maintains should be 'viewed in its social context, [as it] does not merely reflect, but actively reproduces a set of affective and political economic relationships' (Trapido 2010: 121). Trapido's remarks seem to be contradicted by the lack of objective alignment of popular Congolese musical production with specific socio-political demands. Even the iconic song 'Indépendance Cha Cha', performed in the 1960s by Joseph Kabasele (stage name Le Grand Kallé) to celebrate Congolese independence from Belgian colonial rule, is an example of how the Congolese Rumba can engage with events of its time without openly 'taking sides' in a context of popular resistance. Far from reflecting artistic cowardice, there are at least two explanations for this apparently apolitical character of the Congolese Rumba. In the first explanation, Bob White (2008) suggests that, under the more than 30 years of Mobutu's authoritarian rule, artists in general, and musicians in particular, were forced into a situation where they had to flaunt their loyalty to the regime, yet were expected to self-censor in terms political views, or face severe consequences. The rewards for loyalty came in the form of access to the powers that be and to the regime's financial powerhouses. Conversely, punishment for disloyalty could go as far physical disappearance. One could, however, argue that, long before Mobutu came to power, there were no Congolese hits linked to the major issues of socio-political change of the 1950s and 1960s (Botombele 1976). Further, in a second explanation of the apparently apolitical character of the Congolese Rumba, a deeper analysis of the 'architecture' of most Congolese Rumba songs reveals a subtle and contrastive structure that mixes meaningful lyrical messages with entertainment and distraction in the same song (Martin 2009: 264–65). This structure is dominated by the most flamboyant part (distraction and entertainment), which is usually not performed by the main singer but rather by an *atalaku* (entertainer), who literally irrupts on stage and shouts praise to important figures (*libanga*). This part, known as *seben*, is the longer part of the song, and the one to which spectators respond the most during live performances. Such an arrangement occludes the shorter, lyrical part of the song, which bears the original stamp of artistic creation and key messages. The shorter part features as a hidden transcript, concealed under the flamboyance of the *seben*. This somehow misleading character of the Congolese Rumba contrasts with the ideological plainness of Congolese cinema in (post-)conflict DRC, for instance, which Ndaliko (2012: 2) sees as featuring many 'instances of aesthetic and ideological practices […] that are emerging as central to larger projects of social transformation'.

However, instead of comparing the Congolese Rumba to the current Congolese cinema, a more useful parallel can instead be drawn between the Rumba and the culture of SAPE. A Sapeur is someone who subscribes to the tenets of the SAPE (*Société des Ambianceurs et Personnes Élégantes*[8]). An important reference point in efforts to understand the social history of the DRC, the Sapeur movement is usually perceived by some (perhaps on the surface level) as involving the exuberant display of colourful fashion mimicry that arose out of colonial circumstances. Yet a Sapeur lifestyle revolves around more than just clothing and colonialism. It is not simply, as Brodin *et al*. (2016) suggest, 'ostensive luxury as a creative and mimetic process'. The spirit and set of values embodied in the SAPE are older than the name SAPE itself, which is representative of a longer cultural history, including traditions and beliefs that predated colonialism (Allman 2004; Balandier 1968). Marking the continuity of this cultural history through the symbolism of fashionable outward appearance is primarily an expression of the resilient spirit that has carried these traditions and beliefs in the face of such challenges as the terrors of colonialism and postcolonial state oppression (Porter 2010). Hence, dressing elegantly is not just a matter of appearance. Like the *Seben* in the Congolese Rumba, the flamboyant appearance of the Sapeur can rightly be seen as a subterfuge that conceals an expression of disguised agency, focused on the key message of symbolic defiance vis-à-vis the current socio-temporal constraints. Both the lyrism of the Congolese Rumba and the exhibiting of agency in the Sapeur movement are examples of how resilience can simultaneously be concealed, expressed and deployed through cultural practices and artistic creation.

There is, however, a noticeable shift in the 'ideological and aesthetical practices' (Ndaliko 2012: 2) of artistic forms and genres that emerged in, or that have mainly been shaped by, the post-Mobutu era. Unlike the Rumba, with its methodology of concealment, the lyrics of hip-hop songs from the east of the DRC, and the costumes and choreographies that appear in performances of them, overtly depict war and displacement, and convey political views about these (Ndaliko 2014). Hip-hop artists of the Yole group use their songs to openly criticise the government's corruption and inability to deliver on its promises (Lamb 2015). Through these artistic expressions the youth develop a political voice which can be seen as a coping strategy for navigating the difficulties of living in deprived and war-torn regions like the Kivus in the DRC. There is also space for analysing their political activism through artistic creativity as conscious actions focused on achieving a change in their socio-political environment. Whether implicitly shaping the resilience of communities or explicitly investing in social change, these vernacular forms of expressing and practising resilience are located at the heart of the human condition and can only be recovered through a close analysis of how culture, history and social practices come together in the face of multiple disruptions to social trajectories.

5 Vernacular resilience as a methodological approach to studying the long-term repertoires of resilient practices in Côte d'Ivoire and DRC

The section above highlights how an empirical engagement with 'vernacular' resilience, emergent through embedded socio-cultural practices, is articulated within these national contexts. Based on an examination of the limitations of the epistemic assumptions in conventional approaches to resilience, as discussed in the first section, this empirical engagement is grounded in the historicised relationship between resilience, resistance and biopolitics. This relationship seems central to the

---

[8] Society of Happy and Elegant People (rough translation from French).

understanding of how communities deal with multiple crises over the long term, and is useful for tracing the tensions within which vernacular resilience forms and practices are developed. In this section, we therefore propose a methodological way forward for considering these aspects.

Our methodological approach to studying the long-term repertoires of resilient practices in Côte d'Ivoire and DRC involves looking beyond the immediate object or subject of resilience. It seeks to trace the resilience of communities as constructed across the overlap between: 1) the historicity of adverse environmental, economic and socio-political conditions; 2) the cultural repertoires and social practices passed down from generation to generation; and 3) the variety of contextual responses to multiple crises. This approach draws on the broad-based mix of ethnographic, emancipatory, cosmopolitan and constructivist perspectives on human experiences. As such, it is also grounded in an understanding of the conditions of epistemic oppression that disempower both 'the oppressor and the oppressed' (Byrd and Rothberg 2011; Guha and Spivak 1988), and that obscure the hermeneutical realms of vernacular knowledge (Santos 2014). Hence, a vernacular approach to resilience can help us to glean an *a priori* understanding of, and indeed responses to, adversities that are otherwise not accessible through applying the conventional framework of resilience. This approach is also firmly grounded in a view of resilience as not just a description of a system or a person, but rather as a metaphorical quality that emerges through cultural memory and social practices deployed to tackle intersecting difficulties (Atallah 2016; Kirmayer *et al*. 2009; Shapiro 2013). We therefore refer to this resilience as vernacular resilience because the term vernacular resilience sketches the diversity of ways in which different communities respond to multiple crises, while at the same time centralising the embedded cultural and social practices across historical time. This notion of vernacular resilience also fits well within the heuristic of the resistance framework as developed by James C. Scott through his idea of 'everyday forms of resistance' (1985).

Such an outlook on resilience investigates both the constitutive underpinnings of social disruptions over time and the plural ramifications of specific shocks or crises, which can be traced through individual and collective resilient practices. It follows from this that in the postcolonial context of the DRC and Côte d'Ivoire, resilience and resistance cannot be divorced from an understanding of individual and collective social practices as closely inter-related. A holistic approach to resilience cannot be linear or sectoral in its thinking about the community, the sociohistorical context, the socio-cultural practices or even resilience itself. This approach integrates the fact that a given factor may enhance resilience in one situation and yet manufacture vulnerability in another. Like in the case of the Congolese Rumba and hip-hop songs, resilience itself may be expressed in almost paradoxical terms within the same human geographical context, depending on inequities in different time periods (Kirmayer *et al*. 2009; Ungar 2010; Wilkinson and Kleinman 2016). This is indicative of the fact that tracing the conditions of human suffering, and vernacular responses thereto, escapes the practice of 'snapshooting' human societies; the interconnected relations between current social practices are entrenched in both long-lasting cultural norms and complex responses to problems that intersect across diverse domains of society. Considering these intersecting material and social realities, including the prevalence of complex power relations in contexts of equally resilient postcolonial states (Atallah 2016; Fernando 2012; MacKinnon and Derickson 2013), interdisciplinary critical analysis is necessary to account for the variety of embedded resilient social practices in the face of multiple crises.

Our interdisciplinary perspective, combining social scientific approaches and cultural and artistic approaches to analysing idioms, collective imaginaries, and practices of resilience, can be categorised along three axes:

- repertoires of resistance, that allow people to respond to instability, conflict, extraction and violence in the context of ineffective, and sometimes oppressive, states;

- practices of getting by, improvising on the move;
- cultures and practices of *débrouillardise*, embedded in precarious urban and rural livelihoods; and
- forms of popular culture – songs, poems, dance, art – that reflect the above, and that give hope, provide relief and offer solidarity to those responding to turbulent settings.

When considered outside the conventional resilience paradigm, an interdisciplinary approach to analysing these three axes shifts the analytical cursor to the fact that threats, crises or disruptions can also be embedded within the discursive transformation of environments. As such, the pertinence of vernacular practices of resilience signifies more than mere illustrative representations of the varieties of resilience. This framing shows how everyday actions can be regarded not just as exotic resilient practices, demanding legitimate entry into resilience axiology, but rather as fundamental questions regarding the definition of resilience itself, and as a challenge to the a-historical character of conventional frameworks.

The bottom-up 'turn' in resilience thinking, and its policy implications, has often sought to emphasise the participation, recognition and integration of targeted communities. However, by failing to deepen the local frameworks for participation, these bottom-up approaches tend to be a-historical, overlooking the temporality and intergenerational character of resilience. The interdisciplinary study of resilience needs to focus more on oral history and remembered resilience, to use Osterhoudt's 2018 title. Osterhoudt (2018) recalls how the process of sharing oral history accounts can contribute to community resilience, with resilience here encompassing not only technical or ecological factors but also the more affective realms of shared legacies, hope and belonging. Garde-Hansen *et al*. (2017) have developed the idea of sustainable flood memory as a critical and agentic form of social and cultural remembering of learning to live with floods (Garde-Hansen *et al*. 2017). They propose to approach (disruptions from) 'flooding', for instance, in a way that is critical to understanding how communities engage in memory practices (remembering and strategically forgetting) in order to cope with environmental changes (Garde-Hansen *et al*. 2017). Both approaches emphasise the importance of vernacular knowledge, from local modes of storytelling to national news and social media networking, but also the historicity of vernacular knowledge. The multiple shocks Garde-Hansent *et al*. propose to study across six different communities will be iterative and relational. This proposed approach will also provide insights into change as well as continuities through communities' experience.

We therefore contend that this vernacular knowledge and these forms of long-term repertoires need to be situated through a contextual engagement with cultural and social practices at individual and collective levels as they relate to relevant crises. Although the concept of culture is being increasingly recognised in the fields of Disaster Risk Reduction, peacebuilding and pandemic studies, with a focus on indigenous knowledge and the so-called cultural turn (see Kulatunga 2010; Mercer *et al*. 2012; Benadusi 2014; Richmond 2009; Finuras 2020), the focus on culture is nevertheless related to coping mechanisms and is mostly instrumental. Finally, these bottom-up forms of coping, adaptation and resistance that emerge through popular strategies and culture need to be understood as in tension with the top-down biopolitical dynamics that manufacture the resilience of the state system as well.

The postcolonial state in Africa can be seen from a resilience perspective as both a resilient system in and of itself (Lonsdale 1981), and as creating a structural context within which popular resilience is organised as a response to the state's oppressive absence or repressive presence – 'engines of oppression' (Soyinka 1967). On the one hand, one must acknowledge that the African states that took shape through independence in the 1960s were emerging political systems facing various socio-political and economic disruptions both internally and externally. This questioned their very existence and resulted in various top-down dynamics to maintain control over national populations

using very limited or poorly distributed resources, and a policy discourse of self-reliance that was destined to frame the state's inability to discharge its duties as a matter of individual responsibility at the citizen level. On the other hand, the social processes that derived from fragile authoritarian state formalities and functions (dis)organising local socio-economic spaces also prompted bottom-up practices. These social processes will be studied as resilient engagement to the continuity of the postcolonial state.

6   Conclusion

This working paper pertaining to our research on building resilience in protracted crises has made a point of exploring the main current debates and controversies regarding the concept of resilience. We have highlighted the difficulty of pinning down the concept through a universal definition, the dangers of both neoliberal and subversive exploitations of resilience, and the as yet unfulfilled promise of empirical contextualisation, which tends to essentialise non-Western forms of resilience. These gaps have allowed our research to situate its bottom-up and multidisciplinary approach within a framework that takes into account the tendency to naturalise resilience instead of questioning its constitution through crises and vernacular agency. Our hypothesis about the emergence of islands of innovation is thus located within the wider sociohistorical context of postcolonial states in Africa, of which we provide an overview in order to open the way for more focused empirical analyses of specific communities.

Our historical overview, which has traced resilience from both directions (bottom-up and top-down) in the two countries (Côte d'Ivoire and the DRC), illustrates the resilience of both the states and their respective populations in the general acceptance of the concept as the ability to plough through crises and maintain a relative stability. However, a closer look at the context of each country through fieldwork that will be carried out as part of this project will zoom in on distinct communities, to yield a richer tapestry of how resilience interacts with historical change and socio-political dynamics in unexpectedly varying forms. As such, either of the two countries can provide an apposite contextual background for delving into an analysis of resilience, which will range from studying the validity of forms of resilience to looking at the tension between collective and individual forms of resilience. Cutting across the individual themes, however, is the tension between top-down biopolitical dynamics as shaping the resilience of the state system, and bottom-up forms of coping and adaptation that emerge through popular strategies and culture. This is definitely a meaningful pattern across both countries, albeit with specific nuances that can enrich the analysis. Nevertheless, far from being a binary conceptualisation of resilience that puts the state and national communities on an equal level, contrasting both directions of resilience from a historical perspective offers an entry point for a more detailed empirical engagement. The longitudinal studies on specific locations will enable us to understand more specifically how long-term repertoires of resilient practices are used throughout successive crises. That is the next phase of this project.

References

Adger, W. N., Kelly, P. M., Winkels, A., Huy L. Q. and Locke, C. (2002) 'Migration, Remittances, Livelihood Trajectories, and Social Resilience', *Ambio* 31.4

Alexander, E. (2013) 'Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction: An Etymological Journey', *Nat. Hazards Earth Syst. Sci.* 13*: 2708–2718.

Allman, J. (2004) *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Atallah, D. G. (2016) 'Toward a Decolonial Turn in Resilience Thinking in Multifaceted Disasters: Example of the Mapuche from Southern Chile on the Frontlines and Faultlines', *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 19: 92–100. doi:10.1016/j.ijdrr.2016.08.027.

Ayimpam, S. (2014) *2014. Économie de La Débrouille à Kinshasa: Informalité, Commerce et Réseaux Sociaux*, Paris: Karthala.

Baaz, M. E. and Verweijen, J. (2013) 'The Volatility of a Half-Cooked Bouillabaisse: Rebel-Military Integration and Conflict Dynamics in the Eastern DRC', *African Affairs* 112.449: 563–582.

Baggio, J. A., Brown, K. and Hellebrandt, D. (2015) 'Boundary Object or Bridging Concept? A Citation Network Analysis of Resilience', *Ecology and Society* 20.2: 2.

Bahi, A. A. (2011) 'Musique Populaire Moderne et Coproduction de l'Imaginaire National en Côte d'Ivoire' chapter 5 in F. Akindès (ed) *Côte d'Ivoire : La réinvention de soi dans la violence,* Dakar: Codesria: 133–166.

Bakary T. (1984) 'Élite Transformation and Political Succession', Chapter 2 in C. L. Delgado and I. W. Zartman *The Political Economy of Ivory Coast*, New York: Praeger: 21–55.

Balandier, G. (1968) *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century,* New York: Pantheon Books.

Banégas, R. (2010) 'La Politique du «Gbonhi». Mobilisations Patriotiques, Violence Milicienne et Carrières Militantes en Côte-d'Ivoire', *Genèses* 4: 25–44.

Banégas, R. and Warnier, J. P. (2001) 'Nouvelles Figures de la Réussite et du Pouvoir', *Politique Africaine* 2: 5–23.

Barnes, M. L., Wang, P., Cinner, J. E. *et al.* (2020) 'Social Determinants of Adaptive and Transformative Responses to Climate Change', *Nature Climate Change* 10: 823–828.

Barrios, R. E. (2016) 'Resilience: A Commentary from the Vantage Point of Anthropology', *Annals of Anthropological Practice*: 40.1: 28–38.

Bearth, T. and Baya, J. (2010) 'Guerre Civile et Résilience Écologique: Le Cas du Parc National du Mont Sangbé à l'Ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire', *Cahiers Agricultures* 19.3: 220–6.

Benadusi, M. (2014) 'Pedagogies of the Unknown: Unpacking "Culture" in Disaster Risk Reduction Education', *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 22.3: 174–183.

Berkes, F. and Folke, C. (1998) 'Linking Social and Ecological Systems' Introduction in F. Berkes and C. Folke (eds) *Linking Social and Ecological Systems. Management Practices and Social Mechanisms for Building Resilience*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1–26.

Bissouma, A. C., Ettie, K. S., Apn, A. M., Soro, J. and Yeo-Tenena, Y. J. M. (2017) 'Violence, Survival and Female Resilience in West Cote d'Ivoire', *J Psychol Clin Psychiatry* 8.2: 00478.

Blé, R. G. (2006) 'Zouglou et Réalités Sociales des Jeunes en Côte d'Ivoire', *Africa Development* 31.1: 168–184.

Boone, C. (2007) 'Africa's New Territorial Politics: Regionalism and the Open Economy in Côte d'Ivoire', *African Studies Review* 50.1: 59–81.

Botombele, B. (1976) *Cultural Policy in the Republic of Zaire*, Paris: UNESCO.

Bourbeau, P. (2013) 'Resiliencism: Premises and Promises in Securitisation Research', *Resilience* 1.1: 3–17.

――――― (2018a) 'A Genealogy of Resilience', *International Political Sociology* 12.1: 19–35.

――――― (2018b) *On Resilience: Genealogy, Logics, and World Politics* [Online] Available at: https://cambridge.org/core/books/on-resilience/ee8ef58f88f3d2970ff1268c8109a56f (26 May 2020).

Bovcon, M. (2009) 'French Repatriates from Côte d'Ivoire and the Resilience of Françafrique', *Modern & Contemporary France* 17.3: 283–299.

Brandt, C. O. (2017) 'Ambivalent Outcomes of Statebuilding: Multiplication of Brokers and Educational Expansion in the DR Congo (2004–2013)', *Review of African Political Economy* 44.154: 624–642.

Brassett, J., Croft, S. and Nick, V.-W. N. (2013) 'Introduction: An Agenda for Resilience Research in Politics and International Relations', *Politics* 33(4): 221–228.

Brodin, O., Coulibaly, D. and Ladwein, R. (2016) 'Subcultural Ostensive Luxury as a Creative and Mimetic Process: The case of the Sapeurs Parisiens', *Recherche et Applications en Marketing (English edition)* 31.1: 43–63.

Byrd, J. A. and Rothberg, M. (2011) 'Between Subalternity and indigeneity', *Interventions* 13(1): 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2011.545574.

Carpenter, S. R. and Folke, C. (2006) 'Ecology for Transformation', *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 21.6: 309–315.

Carpenter, S., Walker, B., Anderies, J. and Abel, N. (2001) 'From Metaphor to Measurement: Resilience of What to What?', *Ecosystems* 4: 765–781.

Carson, J. and Doyle, J. (2000) 'Highly Optimized Tolerance: Robustness and Design in Complex Systems', *Physical Review Letters* 84.11: 2529–2532.

Chandler, D. (2014) *Resilience: The Governance of Complexity*, New York: Routledge.

――――― (2013) 'International Statebuilding and the Ideology of Resilience', *Politics* 33.4: 276–286.

――――― (2012) 'Resilience and Human Security: The Post-interventionist Paradigm', *Security Dialogue* 43.3: 213–229.

Chandler, D. and Reid, J. (2018) '"Being in Being": Contesting the Ontopolitics of Indigeneity', *The European Legacy* 23(3): 251–268.

Charbonneau, B. (2012) 'War and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire: Violence, Agency, and the Local/International Line', *International Peacekeeping* 19.4: 508–524.

Cifdaloz, O., A. Regmi, A., Anderies, J. and Rodriguez, A. (2010) 'Robustness, Vulnerability, and Adaptive Capacity in Small-Scale Social–Ecological Systems: The Pumpa Irrigation System in Nepal', *Ecology and Society* 15.3: 39.

Corry, O. (2014) 'From Dense to Resilience: Environmental Security beyond Neoliberalism', *International Political Sociology* 8.3: 256–274.

Cutter, S. L., Barnes, L., Berry, M., Burton, C., Evans, E., Tate, E., & Webb, J. (2008) 'A place-based model for understanding community resilience to natural disasters', *Global environmental change*, 18(4), 598-606.

Dacher, M. (2003) 'Chroniques des Violences Ordinaires, Parcours d'un Jeune Paysan Burkinabé Immigré en Côte d'Ivoire', *Journal des Africanistes* 73.2 : 137–161.

Dedy, S. (1984) 'Musique Traditionnelle et Développement National en Côte d'Ivoire', *Tiers-Monde* 25.97: 109–124.

de la Sierra, S., Titeca, K., Malukisa, J. A. and Amani Lameke, A. (2020) *Corruption (Within a Hierarchy)*, working paper, https://raulsanchezdelasierra.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/abstract.pdf. (10 January 2020)

Dembele, O. (2003) 'Côte d'Ivoire: La Fracture Communautaire', *Politique Africaine* 1: 34–48.

Englebert, P. and Tull, D. (2013) 'Contestation, Négociation et Résistance: L'État Congolais Au Quotidien', *Politique Africaine* 129.1: 5–22.

Fernando, G. A. (2012) 'Bloodied but Unbowed: Resilience Examined in a South Asian Community', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 82: 367–375.

Finuras, P. (2020) 'Pandemics & Culture: Could Historical Pathogenic Prevalence Reinforce Collectivism?', *Journal of Intercultural Management and Ethics* 3.2: 41–49.

Folke, C. (2006) 'Resilience: The Emergence of a Perspective for Social-Ecological Systems Analyses', *Global Environmental Change* 16: 253–267.

Folke, C., Carpenter, S. R., Walker, B., Scheffer, M., Chapin, T. and Rockström, J. (2010) 'Resilience Thinking: Integrating Resilience, Adaptability and Transformability', *Ecology and Society* 15.4: 20.

Foster, P. and Zolberg, A. R. (eds) (1971) *Ghana and the Ivory Coast: Perspectives on Modernization: (Workshop Conference Held at the Center for Continuing Education of the University of Chicago, 1969),* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fourie, P. and Follér, M.-L. (2012) 'AIDS Hyper-Epidemics and Social Resilience: Theorising the Political', *Contemporary Politics* 18.2: 254–268.

Garde-Hansen, J., McEwen, L., Holmes, A. and Jones, O. (2017) 'Sustainable Flood Memory: Remembering as Resilience', *Memory Studies* 10.4: 384–405.

Gawa, F. (2014) 'Le Coupé Décalé en Côte d'Ivoire: Sens et Enjeux d'un Succès Musical', *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, 18.1: 112–126.

Gbagbo, L. (1983) *Côte d'Ivoire: Pour une Alternative Démocratique*, Paris: L'Harmattan.

Gibbons, P., Milliano, C., Faling, M., Clark-Ginsberg, A. and Crowley, D. (2015) 'Resilience: The Holy Grail or Yet Another Hype', Chapter 2 in P. Gibbons and H.-J. Heintze (eds) *The Humanitarian Challenge: 20 Years European Network on Humanitarian Action*, New York: Springer International Publishing: 17–30.

Guha, R. and Spivak, G. C. (1988) *Selected Subaltern Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gunderson, L., Holling, C. S., Pritchard, L. and Peterson, G. (2002) 'Resilience' in H. Mooney and J. Canadell J (eds) *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Change* 2: 530–531.

Hérault, G. and Adesanmi, P. (1997) 'Jeunes, Culture de la Rue et Violence Urbaine en Afrique/Youth, Street Culture and Urban Violence in Africa', Lagos: IFRA-Nigeria.

Hilhorst, D. (2018) 'Classical Humanitarianism and Resilience Humanitarianism: Making Sense of Two Brands of Humanitarian Action', *Journal of International Humanitarian Action* 3.15, https://jhumanitarianaction.springeropen.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s41018-018-0043-6.pdf. (10 December 2020)

Hochschild, A. (1998) *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, Boston: Mariner Books.

Hoffmann, K. (2019) 'Ethnogovernmentality: The Making of Ethnic Territories and Subjects in Eastern DR Congo', *Geoforum* 119: 251–267.

Hoffmann, K., Vlassenroot, K. and Marchais, G. (2016) 'Taxation, Stateness and Armed Groups: Public Authority and Resource Extraction in Eastern Congo', *Development and Change* 47.6: 1434–1456.

Holling, C. (1996) 'Engineering Resilience Versus Ecological Resilience' in National Academy of Engineering, *Engineering within Ecological Constraints*, Washington DC, USA.: National Academy Press: 31–44.

Holling, C. S. (1973) 'Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems', *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 4: 1–23.

Huff, A., Dowd, C., Okech, A., Muteru, A., Shahrokh, T., Zadi Zadi, P., Alidu, S. M. and Allouche, J. (2016) *Violence and Violence Reduction Efforts in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and Ivory Coast: Insights and Lessons Towards Achieving SDG 16*, Brighton: IDS.

Hunt, N. R. (2014) *A Nervous State: Violence, Remedies, and Reverie in Colonial Congo*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, www.dukeupress.edu/a-nervous-state.

Iñiguez de Heredia, M. (2013) *Everyday Resistance in Post-Conflict Statebuilding: The Case of Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo*, London: London School of Economics and Political Science.

Kamate, A. (2006) *Côte d'Ivoire: Une Guerre des Rythmes: Musique Populaire et Pouvoir de 2000 à 2006*, Master 2 Science Politique – Etudes Africaines, Universite Paris 1 Sorbonne.

Kingston, K. G. (2011) 'The Impacts of the World Bank and IMF Structural Adjustment Programmes on Africa: The Case Study of Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal, Uganda, and Zimbabwe', *Sacha Journal of Policy and Strategic Studies* 1.2: 110–130.

Kirmayer, L., Sehdev, M., Whitley, R., Dandeneau, S., and Isaac, C. (2009) 'Community Resilience: Models, Metaphors and Measures', *Journal of Aboriginal Health* 5: 62–117.

Kisangani, E. F. (2012) *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1960–2010*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Klaus, K. and Mitchell, M. I. (2015) 'Land Grievances and the Mobilization of Electoral Violence: Evidence from Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya', *Journal of Peace Research* 52.5: 622–635.

Klieman, K. A. (2003) *The Pygmies Were Our Compass: Bantu and Batwa in the History of West Central Africa, Early Times to c. 1900 C.E.*, Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Kohlhagen, D. (2005) 'Frime, Escroquerie et Cosmopolitisme', *Politique Africaine* 4 : 92–105.

Konaté, Y. (2002) 'Génération Zouglou', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 42.168 : 777–796.

Kouassi Akissi, F. (2019) 'Aux Sources du Théâtre Ivoirien Moderne: Cas des Premiers Auteurs et Leurs Œuvres, Horizons/Théâtre', *Revue d'Études Théâtrales* 13: 108–117.

Kulatunga, U. (2010) 'Impact of Culture Towards Disaster Risk Reduction', *International Journal of Strategic Property Management* 14.4: 304–313.

Lamb, K. (2015) 'In Congo, Hip-Hop Gives Youth a Political Voice'. [Online] http://america.aljazeera.com/multimedia/2015/10/drc-hip-hop.html (27 March 2021).

Land, M. (1995) 'Reggae, Resistance and the State: Television and Popular Music in the Côte d'Ivoire', *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 12.4: 438–454.

——— (1992) 'Ivoirien Television, Willing Vector of Cultural Imperialism', *Howard Journal of Communications* 4.1–2: 10–27.

Langer, A., Mustapha, R. and Stewart, F. (2007) 'Horizontal Inequalities in Nigeria, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire: Issues and Policies', *CRISE Working Paper* 45.

Leach, M. (2008) *Re-Framing Resilience: Trans-Disciplinarity, Reflexivity and Progressive Sustainability – A Symposium Report.* [Online]
Available at: https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/2315 (26 May 2020).

Lemaire M. (1999) 'Chants de l'Agôn, Chants du Labeur: Travail, Musique et Rivalité en Pays Sénoufo (Côte d'Ivoire)' *Journal des Africanistes* 69.2: 35–66.

Lindbom, A. and Rothstein, B. (2006) 'La Résilience du Modèle Suédois de Welfare dans l'Économie Mondialisée', *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée* 13.3: 429–445.

Lindroth, M. and Sinevaara-Niskanen, H. (2016) 'The Biopolitics of Resilient Indigeneity and the Radical Gamble of Resistance', *Resilience* 4.2: 130–145.

Linkov, I. and Palma-Oliveira, J. (2017) *Resilience and Risk: Methods and Application in Environment, Cyber and Social Domains*, Berlin: Springer.

Logba, K. K. D. (2015) 'Le Théâtre Populaire de Bernard Binlin Dadié: De l'Humanisme du Dramaturge à la Construction d'un Heros Revolutionnaire', *En-Quête* 29: 128–140.

Lonsdale, J. (1981) 'States and Social Processes in Africa: A Historiographical Survey', *African Studies Review* 24.2: 139–225.

Loukou, A. F. (2003) 'Économie Informelle et Télécommunications en Côte d'Ivoire: Le Cas des Cabines Téléphoniques Privées', *NETCOM: Réseaux, communication et territoires/Networks and Communication Studies* 17.1: 99–112.

MacGaffey, J. (1991) *The Real Economy of Zaire: The Contribution of Smuggling and Other Unofficial Activities to National Wealth*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

——— (1987) *Entrepreneurs and Parasites: The Struggle for Indigenous Capitalism in Zaïre*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——— (1982) 'The Implantation of Kimbanguism in Kisangani, Zaire', *The Journal of African History* 23.3: 381–394.

MacKinnon, D. and Derickson, K.D. (2013) 'From Resilience to Resourcefulness: A Critique of Resilience Policy and Activism', *Progress in Human Geography* 37: 253–270. doi:10.1177/0309132512454775

Maclean, K., Cuthill, M. and Ross, H. (2014) 'Six Attributes of Social Resilience', *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 57.1: 144–156.

Manyena, S. (2006) 'The Concept of Resilience Revisited', *Disasters* 30.4: 433–450.

Martin, D.-C. (2009) 'Bob W. White: Rumba Rules. The Politics of Dance Music in Mobutu's Zaire', *Cahiers d'Ethnomusicologie* 22: 263–266.

Mayunga J (2007) *Understanding and Applying the Concept of Community Disaster Resilience: Capital-Based Approach,* Summer Academy for Social Vulnerability and Resilience Building, 22–28 July 2007, Munich, Germany.

Mbembe, A. (2000) *De la Postcolonie*, Paris : Karthala.

Mercer, J., Gaillard, J. C., Crowley, K., Shannon, R., Alexander, B., Day, S. and Becker, J. (2012) 'Culture and Disaster Risk Reduction: Lessons and Opportunities', *Environmental Hazards* 11.2: 74–95.

Monique, B. (1990) 'Migrations Internationales en Côte d'Ivoire et Investissement de Retour au Mali', *Les Annales de la Recherche Urbaine* 49 : 89–98.

Moore, M.-L., Tjornbo, O., Enfors, E., Knapp, C., Hodbod, J., Baggio, J. A., Norström, A., Olsson, P. and Biggs, D. (2014) 'Studying the Complexity of Change: Toward an Analytical Framework for Understanding Deliberate Social-Ecological Transformations', *Ecology and Society* 19.4: 54.

Mukuna, K. W. (2020) 'The Evolution of Popular Music in the Third Republic of the Democratic Republic of Congo [1997–2018] – Years of Artistic Sterility', *Revista Claves* 9.14: 32–42.

Ndaliko, C. (2012) *Beyond Charitable Imperialism: Intersections of Third Cinema, Music, and Social Change in (Post-) Conflict Democratic Republic of the Congo,* doctoral dissertation, Harvard University.

Ndaliko, C. R. (2014) 'Yole!Africa: Negotiating Art and War in the East of Congo', *Critical Interventions* 8.2: pp. 201–220. DOI: 10.1080/19301944.2014.939438.

Ndaywel è Nziem, I. (1998) *Histoire Generale du Congo – De l'héritage Ancien à La République Démocratique*, Brussels: Duculot.

Nelson, D. R., Adger, W. N. and Brown, K. (2007) 'Adaptation to Environmental Change: Contributions of a Resilience Framework', *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 32: 395–419.

Newbury, D.S. (2009) *The Land beyond the Mists: Essays on Identity and Authority in Precolonial Congo and Rwanda*, Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Northrup, D. (1988) *Beyond the Bend in the River: African Labor in Eastern Zaire, 1865–1940. Monographs*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies.

Olsson, L., Jerneck, A., Thoren, H., Persson, J. and O'Byrne, D. (2015) 'Why Resilience is Unappealing to Social Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations of the Scientific Use of Resilience', *Science Advances* 1.4: 1–11.

Olsson, P., Folke, C. and Hahn, T. (2004) 'Social-Ecological Transformation for Ecosystem Management: The Development of Adaptive Co-Management of a Wetland Landscape in Southern Sweden', *Ecology and Society* 9.2. [Online] www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol9/iss4/art2/. (10 November 2020)

Osbahr, H. (2007) 'Building Resilience: Adaptation Mechanisms and Mainstreaming for the Poor', *Human Development Report Occasional Paper*.

Osterhoudt, S. (2018) 'Remembered Resilience: Oral History Narratives and Community Resilience in Agroforestry Systems', *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 33: 252–255.

Ouattara, A. (1985) 'L'Influence des Américains Noirs sur les Ivoiriens dans la Région d'Abidjan', in B. K. Kasa (ed) *Revue Ivoirienne d'Anthropologie et de Sociologie* (July–August–September), Abidjan: Université nationale de Côte d'Ivoire: 72–74.

Pelling, M. (2011) *Adaptation to Climate Change: From Resilience to Transformation*, New York: Routledge.

Pira, K. F. (2006) *Les Organismes d'Intervention Auprès des Enfants de la Rue à Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire): Représentations Sociales et Stratégies d'Intervention'*, Memoire presente comme exigence partielle de la maitrise en intervention sociale, University of Quebec at Montreal, https://archipel.uqam.ca/3051/1/M9442.pdf

Porter, D. (2010) *Fashioning a Discourse of Elegance and Politics: The Historical Roots of the Sapeur Movement, 1884–1980*, Thesis DT3.5 2010 P678, New York: Cornell University.

Richmond, O. (2012) 'A Pedagogy of Peacebuilding: Infrapolitics, Resistance and Liberation', *International Political Sociology* 6.2: 115–131.

Richmond, O.P. (2009) 'The Romanticisation of the Local: Welfare, Culture and Peacebuilding', *The International Spectator* 44.1: 149–169.

Ruf, F. (2014) 'Cocoa Combined with Palm Wine in Côte d'Ivoire: An Unexpected Resilience', *Bois & Forets Des Tropiques* 321.3: 33–44.

Rockefeller Foundation (2009) 'Building Climate Change Resilience', *Rockefeller Foundation White Paper*.

Ryan, C. (2015) 'Everyday Resilience as Resistance: Palestinian Women Practicing Sumud', *International Political Sociology* 9.4: 299–315.

Santos, B. de S. (2014) *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*, New York: Routledge.

Sarason, S. B. (1993) *The Case for Change: Rethinking the Preparation of Educators*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Scheffer, M. (2009) *Critical Transitions in Nature and Society.* Princeton, New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press.

Schumann, A. (2012) 'A Generation of Orphans: The Socio-Economic Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire as Seen Through Popular Music', *Africa*, 82.4: 535–555.

——— (2009) 'Popular Music and Political Change in Cote d'Ivoire: The Divergent Dynamics of Zouglou and Reggae', *Journal of African Media Studies* 1.1: 117–133.

Scott, J.C. (1985) *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of resistance*, London: Yale University Press.

Shapiro, E.R. (2013) 'Nurturing Family Resilience in Response to Chronic Illness: An Integrative Approach to Health and Growth Promotion' in D.S. Becvar (ed.), *Handbook of Family Resilience*, New York, NY: Springer: 385–408.

Soyinka, W. (1967) *Idanre & Other Poems*, first edition, Michigan: Methuen.

Stearns, J., Vlassenroot, K., Hoffmann, K. and Carayannis, T. (2017) 'Congo's Inescapable State: The Trouble with the Local', *Foreign Affairs*, www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/democratic-republic-congo/2017-03-16/congos-inescapable-state. (5 December 2020)

Théodore, G. B. Z. (2012) 'Libertés Académiques, Syndicalisme et Politique en Côte d'Ivoire', *JHEA/RESA* 9.1&2: 133–146.

Titeca, K. and De Herdt, T. (2011) 'Real Governance beyond the "Failed State": Negotiating Education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', *African Affairs* 110.439: 213–231.

Trapido, J. (2010) 'Love and Money in Kinois Popular Music', *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 22.2: 121–144.

Trefon, T. and Kabuyaya, N. (eds) (2018) *Goma: Stories of Strength and Sorrow from Eastern Congo*, London: Zed Books.

Ungar, M. (2010) 'Families as Navigators and Negotiators: Facilitating Culturally and Contextually Specific Expressions of Resilience', *Family Process* 49: 421–435.

UNICEF and OECD (2014) 'Resilience Systems Analysis Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo', Goma: UNICEF/OECD.

Van Reybrouck, D. (2010) *Congo: The Epic History of a People*, New York: Harper Collins.

Vansina, J. (1990) *Paths in the Rainforests Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa.* Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

Verhaegen, B. (1969) *Rebellions Au Congo. Tome I et Tome II*, Brussels: Les Etudes du Centre de Recherche d'Informations Socio-Politiques.

Verweijen, J. (2013) 'Military Business and the Business of the Military in the Kivus', *Review of African Political Economy* 40.135: 67–82.

Vlassenroot, K. and Raeymaekers, T. (2004) *Conflit et Transformation Sociale à l'est de La RDC*, Gent: Academia Press.

Walker, B., Holling, C., Carpenter, S. and Kinzig., A. (2004) 'Resilience, Adaptability and Transformability in Social-Ecological Systems', *Ecology and Society* 9.2: 5 [Online]. www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol9/iss2/art5.

White, B. W. (2008) *Rumba Rules. The Politics of Dance Music in Mobutu's Zaire*, Durham: Duke University Press.

White, B. W. and Yoka, L.M. (2010) *Musique Populaire et Société à Kinshasa: Une Ethnographie de l'écoute (Mémoires Lieux de Savoir)*, Paris: L'Harmattan.

Wilkinson, I., Kleinman, A. (2016) *A Passion for Society: How We Think About Human Suffering*, Oakland: University of California Press.

Zemp H. (1964) 'Musiciens Autochtones et Griots Malinké Chez les Dan de Côte d'Ivoire', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 4.15: 370–382.

About the authors

Dieunedort Wandji is currently a Research Officer on the multi-sited project **Islands of Innovation in Protracted Crises: Building Equitable Resilience from Below**, which covers the Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He did his PhD in Politics and International Development at the University of Portsmouth, focusing on vernacular idioms of security and resilience within border communities in Africa.

Jeremy Allouche is a Professorial Fellow at IDS, and part of the STEPS Centre. He is also a co-director of the **Humanitarian Learning Centre** and principle investigator of the GCRF-funded project **Islands of Innovation in Protracted Crisis** and the AHRC/DFID-funded project **New Community-Informed Approaches to Humanitarian Protection and Restraint**.

Gauthier Marchais is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. He holds a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science and has a background in political science and development studies. His research concentrates on how societies transform in war, with a multi-disciplinary perspective.

Vernacular Resilience:
An Approach to Studying Long-Term Social Practices and Cultural Repertoires of Resilience in Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of Congo

STEPS Working Paper 116

This working paper aims to situate our research project within the various debates around resilience. It advocates a historical, cultural and plural approach to understanding how communities develop and share resilient practices in contexts of multiple and protracted crises. A focus on 'vernacular' resilience, as embedded in social practices and cultural repertoires, is important since conventional approaches to resilience seem to have overlooked how locally embedded forms of resilience are socially constructed historically. Our approach results from a combination of two observations. Firstly, conventional approaches to resilience in development, humanitarian and peace studies carry the limitations of their own epistemic assumptions — notably the fact that they have generic conceptions of what constitutes resilience. Secondly, these approaches are often ahistorical and neglect the temporal and intergenerational dimensions of repertoires of resilience. In addition to observable social practices, culture and history are crucial in understanding the ways in which vernacular and networked knowledge operates.