

# Dimensions and corollaries of violence in Zimbabwe's protected forests

TafadzwaMushonga<sup>a</sup> and FrankMatose<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria, South Africa

<sup>b</sup>Centre for Environmental Humanities South and Department of Sociology, University of Cape Town, South Africa

## Highlights

- Conservation violence has multiple interconnected dimensions and corollaries.
- A 'dimensions and corollaries' approach examines direct and indirect violence.
- Local people suffer multiple dimensions of conservation violence.
- Any aspect or dimension of militarised conservation has far-reaching effects.

## Abstract

The militarisation of conservation is intensifying with increasing need to protect wildlife from poaching. Conservation violence is concomitantly escalating, so is the impetus to understand it. This article engages with the militarisation of conservation outside the response of rhino and elephant poaching. It uses experiences of people with militarised conservation in Sikumi Forest Reserve, Zimbabwe, to examine conservation violence in terms of its dimensions and corollaries. In doing so, the article places physical violence at the centre of its causes and consequences to emerge with an analytical framework that simultaneously examines the geographies of direct and indirect conservation violence. Ultimately, we suggest that a 'dimensions and corollaries' approach manages the methodological conundrum around examining conservation violence in, and around protected areas. Within the same approach, we demonstrate how different dimensions of conservation violence infiltrate and encompass the control of everyday livelihood activities of local people. In this regard, we suggest that any aspect or dimension of militarised conservation has far-reaching corollary effects.

## Keywords

Conservation violence  
Militarisation  
State forests  
Local people  
Multiple dimensions

## 1. Introduction

On 20 May 2020, we were invited to submit our signatures in solidarity with eight indigenous Batwa community members who had been convicted and sentenced for attempting to access their ancestral land inside the boundary of Kahuzi Biega National Park

in Democratic Republic of Congo. The Batwa people in question had been evicted from Kahuzi National Park in the 1970s, spent over 40 years being treated as ‘poachers’, shot when they entered the park to collect food, and were now dragged to court and sentenced to lengthy prison terms.<sup>1</sup> Events leading to the arrest of the Batwa people illustrate the temporal dimensions of conservation violence against resource-dependent people, dating back to the creation of protected areas (see Peluso and Watts, 2001, Brockington et al., 2008). What has happened to the Batwa people also demonstrates that, despite rising criticism of militarised approaches to conservation, including the recent appeal to conservationists by Duffy et al. (2019), private and public conservation organisations continue to defend professional militarisation as the “only realistic way forward to save” protected areas (Büscher and Fletcher 2018: 106). The result has been a rise in conservation violence and matching interest to characterise its trends and geographies (see, for example, Neumann, 2004, Lunstrum, 2014, Büscher, 2016, Büscher and Ramutsindela, 2016, Duffy, 2016, Verweijen, 2020).

Our experiences in Zimbabwe’s protected forests compel us to contribute to the rapidly growing body of literature on conservation violence. We understand that we are entering an ongoing debate around characterising violence in conservation. Some suggest going beyond physical violence when studying conservation violence (Peluso and Watts, 2001, Büscher and Ramutsindela, 2016, Büscher and Fletcher, 2018), while others propose slowing down for more precise analysis of physical violence. (Verweijen 2020). Our contribution lies in managing the different yet useful analytical directions by examining conservation violence in terms of its dimensions and corollaries. By ‘dimensions’ we study the specific geographies of direct and indirect forms of violence in conservation. We recognise ‘corollaries’ as embodying far more than consequences of violence. Our approach adopts what Verweijen (2020) uses as the microdynamics approach of disaggregating and examining typologies of violence in isolation. We contribute to this by focusing on physical violence, which we place at the centre of manifestations of violence.

We deliberately focus our analysis on resource-dependent communities living adjacent protected areas. Following rising cases of violence against communities around protected areas (Bocarejo and Ojeda, 2016, Massé and Lunstrum, 2016, Lunstrum and Ybarra, 2018, Verweijen, 2020), it is increasingly evident that commercial poachers are not the only category adversely affected by the imposition of militarised conservation practices. The case of the Batwa people of DRC, evictions in Kenya’s Mau forest (Al Jazeera English 2019), together with what we show in this article, further demonstrate that people living adjacent protected areas are also adversely affected. Our position, which we hope to articulate throughout the article is that because of their dependency on natural resources for their well-being, communities around protected areas are seen as ‘enemies of conservation’, hence a targeted category of militarised conservation practices. We begin with a brief methodology and context of communities living adjacent Sikumi Forest. This is followed by a review of extant theses and representations of conservation violence in the age of surging militarised practices. We then describe and analyse the dimensions and corollaries of violence before concluding that beyond physical violence, any dimension of militarised conservation has far-reaching and dovetailed corollaries.

## 2. Examining the dimensions and corollaries of violence

Examining the dimensions and corollaries of violence uses the case of Sikumi Forest Reserve in Zimbabwe. Sikumi Forest is located in Matabeleland North Province and managed by the state through its authority, the Forestry Commission (FC). The reserve shares permeable borders with Hwange National Park (Hwange) and six villages on its north-western and north-eastern sides, respectively. Communities living in the six villages depend on the forest for construction timber, grazing, firewood and several non-timber forest products (NTFPs). For instance, the majority of housing structures are made from pole, mud and thatched roofing, making timber and thatch grass highly valued construction material. Secondly, about 72% of households in Matabeleland north do not have access to electricity (ZimStats 2012), majority of these being in rural locations like Sikumi Forest. Firewood becomes a cheap and main source of energy for these communities. Another important context is that people's livelihoods are predominantly reliant on farming. Animal husbandry relies on the forest for pastures. Crop production is on small scale and restricted to drought-resistant crops due to semi-arid conditions obtaining in the region. NTFPs, thus, supplement household nutrition needs.

Whereas local people need forest resources for their livelihoods, resource access is restricted under the aegis of the Forest Act Chapter 19:05 of 1954, the supreme forest law in Zimbabwe. Resources access has become more difficult with the introduction of militarised conservation practices. When neighbouring Hwange adopted militarised conservation policies in response to surging elephant and rhino poaching during the mid-1980s (Duffy 1999), Sikumi Forest, which also serves as a wildlife corridor and buffer zone, was compelled to follow suit. The turn to militarised practices in Sikumi Forest began in 1991 with the hiring of a former Zimbabwe Republic Police constabulary and liberation war veteran, who introduced military training and re-organised forest guards into a paramilitarised Forest Protection Unit (FPU). The FC views militarisation as an approach that not only responds to the national elephant poaching problem, but one that also enhances control over protected forests against resistant communities. The forest authority has always viewed communities adjacent its forest areas as troublesome illegal 'poachers', blaming people for pilfering resources, vandalising infrastructure and causing fires (Forestry Commission 2015). Against such perceptions, militarised forest policing practices introduced in 1991, consider illegal subsistence activities by communities akin to rhino and elephant poaching. People's relations with resources and how these are in turn perceived by the forest authority, inform the resulting dimensions and corollaries of violence we examine.

The data we present was collected through interviews between August and November 2016—phase II of a much longer fieldwork period whose phase I (April to July 2016) focused on studying the practice of militarised anti-poaching. Unlike phase I, phase II examined community experiences with militarised anti-poaching. It was conducted outside Sikumi Forest in the absence of forest guards. Unstructured interviews were conducted in Shona and Ndebele, in six villages around the Sikumi Forest.<sup>2</sup> Research participants across the six villages were selected according to their availability and willingness to participate, but effort was made to obtain a balance across villages, age and gender. The research benefited from a referral process through which community members suggested key informants. Forest guards<sup>3</sup> provided a record of arrest from which those willing to share their experiences were

identified and located through a snowballing process. The same guards were also interviewed to verify allegations levelled against them. Additional data was collected during a community meeting to which the first author was invited by traditional leaders to introduce herself and study to community members. Excluding the number of people at the community meeting, 52 community members and 13 forest guards were interviewed.<sup>4</sup>

At the time of study, the first author was employed by the FC, but on approved doctoral study leave. She used experiences with state forest conservation models and how the FC operates to make sense of stories told by local communities. The second author previously worked for the FC in a research capacity for over 15 years. His work is used as secondary data. All research activities were undertaken with the permission of the FC. Preliminary findings of violence perpetrated by and against forest guards were discussed with executive officials as a way of bringing issues of violence to their attention.<sup>5</sup> The first author gained the trust of local people a result of her FC identity. In her, people saw an opportunity to articulate their experiences with FC's conservation models, an opportunity many attested to have never been afforded.

### **3. Theses and representations of conservation violence in the context of a surge in militarised conservation**

The last three decades have seen conservation areas experiencing a kind of violence “far more lethal than other forms of conservation-related violence” (Lunstrum 2017:136), owing to the introduction of militarised conservation policies in response to rising rhino and elephant poaching (Duffy, 2000, Lunstrum, 2014, Smith and Humphreys, 2015, Buscher and Fletcher, 2020). Quantifying and qualifying the resultant violence has consecutively turned to the emerging new trends of violence. We connect with extant representations of such violence by reviewing three theses.

The ‘war’ thesis is, perhaps, the most widely articulated representation of conservation violence in literature. Its central tenet revolves around physical violence related to death targeting “poachers as wildlife destroyers” (Duffy 1999:107). The very act of killing as violence is further demonstrated through how proponents of the war thesis treat “biodiversity conservation as [a] conduct of war” (Neumann 2004:816), and poaching itself “as an act of war” (Mogomotsi and Madigele 2017:54). In her articulation of green militarisation, Lunstrum (2014: 817) illustrates how this kind of war unfolds as “an arms race between poachers and anti-poaching forces” resulting in the death of several suspected poachers. Demonstrated in the war thesis is also how violence represented by act of killing is connected to broader structures of biopower, for example, structural processes of coercive power embodied in shoot-to-kill policies and orders to end human lives (Duffy, 2000, Neumann, 2004, Fletcher, 2018), including the power enabling paramilitary personnel to take over bodies and space (Massé 2020). What is then quantified or qualified as death is a result of much broader political and structural processes of conservation violence, indeed echoing submissions that physical and other emergent forms of violence cannot be studied in isolation of such structural issues, and of one another (Galtung, 1990, Böscher and Ramutsindela, 2016).

The 'securitisation' thesis brings out other underlying forces of conservation violence. Importantly, it shows the effect of language and discourse in reinforcing structural processes of violence. Through the securitisation thesis poachers are represented as illegitimate killers of wildlife (Neumann, 2004, McCann, 2017). Their activities are juxtaposed with organised crime and terrorism to justify militarised responses for national, regional, global and biodiversity security (Smith and Humphreys, 2015, Duffy, 2016, Kalron and Crosta, 2016, Ramutsindela, 2016). The terms 'poacher' and 'poaching', which are central in both the war and securitisation theses, are largely inclined to referring to high-end commercial poaching activities targeting high value biodiversity. However, due to the hybridisation of subsistence and commercial poaching, also the complicity of local communities in commercial poaching (Duffy and St John, 2013, Muntifering et al., 2017, Lombard and Tubiana, 2020), implementation of militarised conservation often does not make the scholarly distinction between subsistence and commercial poachers (Duffy 2016). Everyone trespassing into protected areas is treated as a dangerous poacher regardless of their motivation, including, as we shall show, local people accessing resources purely for their daily livelihood and economic subsistence. Discussions in support of biodiversity securitisation, which are increasingly also taking place online, are an example of how distinctions between subsistence and commercial poaching tend to be restricted to scholarly use. Otherwise, such discussions also demonstrate the power of discourse in authorising physical violence. On web 2.0 platforms such as Facebook, cyber communities advocate for the killing, maiming and life long incarcerations of everyone destroying nature (Büscher and Ramutsindela, 2016, Lunstrum, 2017). Such discussions have, in addition, seen cyber spaces becoming platforms for fundraising towards indiscriminate violent conservation practices (Büscher, 2017, Massé, 2019). The securitisation thesis, hence, illustrates acts of physical violence as not only systematically enabled by policy and law, but also reinforced by discursive constructions around illegal resource harvesting and threats to biodiversity.

Beyond securitisation of resources and national borders, different studies have shown an apparent close relationship between securitisation of resources and capitalism (Ojeda, 2012, Bocarejo and Ojeda, 2016, Massé and Lunstrum, 2016, Buscher and Fletcher, 2020). Such a relationship has seen the resurfacing of evictions, this time more violent and perpetrated by paramilitary conservation personnel and national security apparatuses. To that end, Büscher and Fletcher (2018) highlight the convergence of neoliberal conservation, green militarisation and biopower in producing violent neoliberal environments, not only pointing to the structural, symbolic, material or discursive dimensions of conservation violence but also to the interconnectedness of these forms of emerging violence.

Green violence complements illustrations of violence embodied in the war and securitisation theses, emphasising on understanding conservation violence against broader social, political, economic and historical conditions, as well as on how such violence is sustained (Büscher and Ramutsindela 2016). What we find useful is how the green violence thesis frames broader social, material and discursive corollaries of militarised responses in the context of violence, the examination of which is critical for extending our understanding of conservation violence beyond self-evident physical acts (Peluso and Watts 2001), to include slower injustices linked to militarised practices (Duffy et al. 2019). The downside of the green violence thesis is that while it demonstrates indirect consequences of militarised

of conservation, it completely ignores physical violence (Verweijen 2020). For this reason Verweijen takes a microdynamics approach, delineating physical violence in order to expansively analyse it. We, however, observe that her examination connects the productive process of physical violence with structural, discursive and symbolic dynamics, suggesting the impossibility of studying violence as isolated events. The war, securitisation and green violence theses, together also demonstrate that conservation violence is multidimensional. It has several enablers and consequences. Our proposed analytical direction of studying conservation violence in terms of its dimensions and corollaries connects physical violence with not only its enablers, but also its consequences, all which we examine in the context of violence. Our approach, therefore, values the disaggregated approach argued by Verweijen (2020) for its ability to bring out geographies of violence, while not overlooking how different dimensions of violence are constitutive even in their differences. We believe such an approach manages the conundrum around how we examine direct and indirect forms of conservation violence.

#### **4. Dimensions of conservation violence in Sikumi Forest**

Given the context of people's relations with resources, encounters with forest law and the state forest authority, people living adjacent Sikumi Forest begin experiencing violence not at the point of physical interaction with paramilitary forest guards. Violence initially manifests in structural and symbolic forms before developing into physical harm (Galtung, 1969, Galtung, 1990, Galtung and Höivik, 1971, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), or inducing less visible slow paced irreversible corollaries (Carson, 2002, Nixon, 2011). Our articulation of violent experiences presents the different facets of violence and how they manifest in multiple ways. In violence studies, this 'neat' separation is often argued to blur causal relationships (Krause, 2012, Logie and Gibson, 2013, Campbell and Mannell, 2016), and altogether impossible in contexts where one form of violence co-occurs with another (Kelly 1987). We, however, insist on analysing violence in its distinct forms to detail the specific dimensions of individual forms of violence from which we also demonstrate how their co-production processes and dimensions differ yet dovetailed.

##### **4.1. Structural violence**

Our examination of structural violence is informed by the work of Galtung, 1969, Farmer, 1996, whose conceptualisations are developed around the role played by political, economic and social practices in preventing people from fulfilling their basic needs, resulting in different forms of suffering. In Sikumi Forest, these social, political and economic structures are predominantly represented by institutions in the form of conservation policies and practices enforced by paramilitary forest guards. The Forest Act Chapter 19:05 of 1954 (amended 2002) is a structural barrier designed to control resource access on the presumption that local people are destructive (Kwashirai 2009). Despite being widely used across the world, the permit system backed by the Forest Act is particularly illustrative of how structural violence manifests in Sikumi Forest. We use the case of firewood collection to illustrate the dimensions of structural violence embodied in permits.

Without access to electricity, many rural households around Sikumi Forest cannot afford other sources of energy such as solar power and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for cooking.

As a result, they turn to firewood as an alternative accessible source of energy. Unlike in other forest reserves where firewood permits are issued for a nominal fee (see, Mutune et al. 2017), in Sikumi Forest, firewood collection is free but restricted to Thursdays. The Thursday collection practice only permits women and girls, however, prohibiting the use of axes, limiting firewood collection to dead trees, and transportation of firewood through carrying the load over the head. Men and boys are prohibited on the basis that if given the opportunity to enter the forest, they will set animal snares.<sup>6</sup> However, prohibiting men overlooks the involvement of women in illegal hunting (also see, Agu and Gore 2020), since they can be accomplices to illegal hunting when they provide information about the forest and animals or set snares for their male relatives.<sup>7</sup>

Although the amount of firewood a single woman can collect is unlimited, women find the firewood collection practice not only restrictive, but also bodily distressing. Harvesting firewood with bare hands is physically challenging, in addition to that women have to walk long distances in search of dead or drywood. On average, time spent searching for firewood is not less than three hours. The number of trips and amount of firewood stocked for a week's use are, therefore, not adequate to meet household needs. Views such as quoted below were common among female respondents.

On behalf of the women, we are requesting that you review the regulations so that we can have a collecting and transporting day since we are not allowed to go in with carts. We cannot carry more than 100 kg on a single day because we have to walk long distances searching for firewood. So, what we collect is not enough to last us until the next firewood collection day.<sup>8</sup>

They should allow us to use axes so that we do not spend time going far into the forest. We are women; we do not have power like men. Where do we get the strength to give birth to children and fight with firewood? Some of us have no money, no husbands. I do not have electricity here as you can see. Please, can they make our life easier, at least let them allow us to chop with an axe those trees that have been knocked down by elephants so that we do not spend many hours searching for firewood.<sup>9</sup>

In the absence of men, and axes to chop wood with, and having to walk long distances into the forest, women are also concerned about their health and safety. Such concerns grew following an accident during which a woman was knocked down out of consciousness by a log while collecting firewood without the aid of equipment.<sup>10</sup> In light of the imposed regulations, time spent and distance walked searching for firewood, one woman summarised the health and safety concerns of elderly women thus:

We used to be young and strong, but we are getting old and no longer able to collect firewood as we used to. If you go to the clinic, they [doctors] will tell you are working too much. Most of us now survive on medication, and not strong enough to wrestle with firewood. If only they allow us to use axes. One day you shall hear that a woman has died because of this issue. We see a lot of firewood close by, but we leave it going to faraway places because we cannot break it...we are usually alone in the forest and risk being attacked by elephants and lions. Last week we came across lions. If they had attacked us what will we have done?<sup>11</sup>

For men, firewood collection policies are not just discriminatory. They are unwelcome. During a community meeting, a male participant identified the firewood collection practice as unfair for men without female relations.<sup>12</sup> There was consensus amongst men and women as different men took turns to explain how the policy disadvantages men's household energy needs. Other men were, however, more concerned about sexual invasion of the bodies of their wives, daughters, and sisters. One man, who claimed to have previously worked as an anti-poaching scout, explained how negotiations between women and forest guards over unlawful activities often lead to 'consensual' sexual relationships or resource access exemptions in exchange for sexual favours.<sup>13</sup> After the meeting, some women were approached to shed more light on this matter. They did not deny the possibility of truth in these claims. One of the issues that emerged is that women and girls often view forest guards as well to do people in the community, therefore, would prefer to be associated with them (also see, Poppe 2013). Women approached on the matter, however, shied away from discussing the subject further, except one elderly woman who openly complained about seeing young women and girls using axes and collecting firewood during prohibited days without being subjected to fines. She concluded that if the reason these women were not arrested is because they are related to forest guards, they were in sexual relationships with them.<sup>14</sup> While it was not easy to ascertain the truth in these sexual allegations, the distress such suspicion brings upon the minds of men cannot be ignored.

We argue that the permit system, as represented by firewood collection, is an embodiment of structural violence in three ways. First, structural violence is embodied in the regulated permit practice, and the power that regulations have or are used as props to "control and discipline the behaviours and practices" of resource-dependent people (Dressler and Guieb III 2015: 324). Such power is witnessed through how people are compelled to adhere to structurally violent boundaries of resource extraction despite the struggles wreaked by such restrictions. Secondly, the permit system embodies structural violence through its corollaries. Although firewood access is nominally 'free', the ability of people to meet household energy needs is constrained by policy restrictions, the effects of which are articulated through bodily injuries and suffering (Murrey 2015). Further, gendering firewood collection is an additional frontier to resource access, and a demonstration of how struggles of structural violence are dispersed across gendered bodies and minds as physical receptors of suffering and pain. While the FC argues that permitting practices are meant to benefit resource-dependent communities,<sup>15</sup> Matose (2002) further argues that such practices are systematically designed to exploit people's resource needs for fire management purposes, suggesting that regulations accompanying resource access activities are structurally designed to appropriate people's everyday needs into territorial conservation models bent on exploiting and alienating resource-dependent people.

Thirdly, in most African countries, resource access permit systems such as witnessed in Sikumi Forest are scripted from colonial structures of "spatial authority" (Dressler and Guieb III 2015: 321), in which over time, institutions such as the Forest Act have created and become structural boundaries between human and natural bodies, and "authority over forest affairs" (Peluso and Vandergeest 2001: 765). History is an important aspect of time, hence, helps us grasp the temporality of structural violence across decades (Galtung, 1990, Farmer, 2004, Nixon, 2011, Murrey, 2015). Given the chronic pervasiveness of structural violence, it is certainly not a result of the militarisation of conservation. It is rather pervasive



colonial forest laws and policies that provide the structural backbone and legal basis for the use of paramilitary personnel and tactics to enforce conservation. This trend is known as green militarisation (Lunstrum 2014), and extends the temporal scale of structural violence. At the nexus of the structural violence of conservation law and green militarisation, is the legitimisation of other forms of violence, the dimensions and nexuses to which we now turn.

#### **4.2. Symbolic violence**

The firewood collection case demonstrates that forest regulations are already a problem for resource-dependent people. But, the enforcement of these regulations and take over of space by paramilitary forest guards compounds people's struggles through experiences of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is underwritten by symbolic power, which as we shall show, is "inculcated through instruction, habit and routine...that incline people to act and react to policing in certain ways" (Loader 1997: 3). Symbolic violence is imposed on resource-dependent people with their complicity (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), but "without a discursive process" because that which allows domination is "insidious, insistent and insinuating" (Siisiäinen 2008: 1). Before linking the nexus issues of structural and symbolic violence, we first articulate the symbolic power relations between paramilitary forest guards and resource-dependent people to demonstrate how people experience symbolic violence.

In Sikumi Forest, the symbolic violence of paramilitary forest guards is embedded in three factors. The first lies in the uniform worn by forest guards. Before the re-organisation of forest guards into a paramilitary guard force, forest guards, much as civilian forest officers, adorned khaki clothing. With militarisation from 1991, the colour of the uniform changed to green to blend with the environment, as well as camouflage forest guards' anti-poaching tactics (also see, Johnson 2001), and was designed to match that of the military. Verweijen (2020: 5) writes about how people are "often surprised and apprehended" confirming the camouflage effect of uniforms. Like elsewhere, the uniform additionally serves identity purposes, to differentiate the now militarised forest guards from civilian forest officers (Poppe 2013). To people living adjacent Sikumi Forest, the green colour and design of uniforms, coupled with the use of weaponry such as guns and paramilitary tactics, is associated with soldiers and war. This completes a picture of symbolic violence. People often drew similarities between forest guards and soldiers through statements such as:

Forest guards look and operate exactly like soldiers. They easily hide in the forest waiting for us to come in and people will not see them because of their uniform. When we see them in our villages we know there is danger. They use force and are harsh just like what soldiers do.<sup>16</sup>

I am one of the liberators myself. I went to war, and civilians understand the language of a gun. When we see forest guards, we know what it means. When you see those guns, those that went to war know what it means. Those guns forest guards carry mean you cannot go inside the forest.<sup>17</sup>

The second quoted text particularly demonstrates how, secondly, the symbolic violence of forest guards is embodied in the use of weaponry. For context, forest guards use 3-0-3 rifles in their operations. These guns are classified as hunting rifles and not designed to kill people. Views of local people as in the above quoted text, however, show that when people speak about guns they do not distinguish between the different types. Regardless of type, guns have the same symbolic and messaging effect. They are reminiscent of soldiers, war and danger of a magnitude equal to injury or death, particularly because the same guns carried by forest guards for personal protection against wildlife are used in the arrest of offenders (also see, Poppe 2013), and have been used to kill people. For example, on four occasions, community members referred to the killing of a young boy in 2011.<sup>18</sup> The same guns have earned forest guards respect and honour for killing suspected poachers (Mushonga, 2020). But, for a region with a history of extremely violent post-independence massacre of civilians (Alexander and McGregor, 2005, Murambadoro, 2015, Gusha, 2019), it is incidents of killing such as these that often remind people of past violent interactions with soldiers. Lastly, the symbolic violence of forest guards is also represented in their stature. The FC deliberately recruits forest guards with physical appearances that effectively intimidate people and oblige them to comply with forest laws. These include being tall, muscular and tough looking, and having harsh personas.<sup>19</sup> The conjunction of these three factors articulates dispositions of combatant soldierly life of forest guards, communicate power and authority over space (Johnson, 2001, Dressler and Guieb, 2015), and render forest guards as symbols of nonverbal authority. The uniform that forest guards wear (guns being part of that uniform) are “a visible proof that one is entitled to act as a law enforcer” (Poppe 2013: 21), what Massé (2020: 758) refers to as “delegated and performative power over bodies, space and the use of direct violence”. This instrumental and performative power includes communicating fear. The awareness of forest guards’ presence, sight of, or simply the mention of their name or that of the FC, is sufficient to induce fear or coerce compliance among people living around forests (Matose 1994). Such fear was repeatedly expressed each time the first author disclosed her FC identity. The immediate reaction was, “Selibuye ukuzosibopha yini?” (Ndebele language meaning—have you come to arrest us?). The symbolic effect of forest guards was also constantly expressed in what different people perceived would happen to them if found ‘trespassing’ into the forest. Some of these effects were captured in the following thoughts:

We cannot go into the forest because of forest guards. If you chose to go in, do so at your own peril. You need to be prepared to face the consequences, which may mean that you are beaten up, arrested or even shot by those guns they carry around. Because of that people are generally afraid of going inside without a permit.<sup>20</sup>

We are afraid of them. When we see them we run away because we heard they give painful punishments. If you stop you cannot really tell what will happen to you because they will often find fault in what you are doing even though you are only grazing your cattle. So it is better to run away when you see them.<sup>21</sup>

People are generally afraid because they will catch you easily. The green uniform will be close to you but you will not see it. Their uniform is exactly like the trees so you can easily be caught without you even noticing them.<sup>22</sup>

Symbolic power and consequent violence are through these excerpts expressed in how people react or act in response to what the image of forest guards represents. People choose to either desist from visiting the forest or avoid coming into contact with forest guards altogether, out of fear. The fear is not so much about arrest, rather of bodily and mental harm connoted by the fearsome dispositions of forest guards. Forest guards not only represent the spatial control of Sikumi Forest as a structurally reproduced space<sup>23</sup> (Dressler and Guieb, 2015, Murrey, 2015), but as also stated by Massé (2020), control over people's bodies and minds as space from which the fear of harm develops.

It has been shown that people often comply with uniformed personnel out of the belief that they are legitimate symbols of authority (Bickman, 1974, Durkin and Jeffery, 2000). However, views of local people as presented throughout this contribution show that the legitimacy of paramilitary personnel as symbols of authority lies in their coercive power to produce fear-induced compliance in symbolically violent ways. While Norton (2015:3) states that “[fisheries] inspectors are the expression of centralised power, but not the power itself,” we contend that forest guards have, in themselves, the symbolic effect to wield such power. The uniform worn by forest guards for example, may be petty militarism (Skjelsbaek 1979), but when combined with the use of weaponry such as guns, and their fearsome stature, it communicates power, authority and obedience, at the same time commanding fright and aversion (Poppe 2013). In Virunga National Park, people have attested to the superiority that rangers have from possessing arms (Verweijen 2020). The resultant social relationship becomes not simply founded on complicity by consent but by coercion and fear (Loader 1997). Returning to the case of firewood collection regulations, at the nexus of structural and symbolic violence is the symbolic power carried by forest guards, the effect of which extends the temporal scale of struggles inflicted by forest regulations. The symbolic power of forest guards is clearly instrumental in controlling what can be taken out, when, and by whom, hence in them the power to construct or destroy livelihoods (Poppe 2013). And, while symbolic and structural violence reinforce one another, both are invisible to people living around Sikumi Forest (Galtung 1969), until law enforcement gets physical. At this point, the structural violence of access regulations and the message carried in the use of paramilitary forest guards to enforce such regulations translates to a violence people can visibly identify, physical violence.

### **4.3. Physical violence**

Because people depend on forest resources for their day-to-day lives, they often resist the imposition of forest regulations and disregard the surveillance of paramilitary guards. A common form of resistance around Sikumi Forest is pilfering and disobeying permit conditions. Such forms of resistance are also common in many nature reserves across Africa, but not without ramifications (Massé and Lunstrum, 2016, Verweijen, 2020). In the eyes of forest guards, resistance is transgression and in contempt of their authority over space. It attracts arrest, a process underwritten by physical violence, which is characterised by beating, kicking, shoving, including punishments that exert force and harm on the body (Ellonen and Pösö, 2011, Xing et al., 2015). Our analysis of physical violence includes verbal abuse, that is, language spoken with the intention to offend, threaten, degrade or embarrass its recipient (Kamchuchat et al., 2008, Aytac et al., 2011, Keller et al., 2018). As we show, verbal abuse is often a precursor of, or occurs simultaneously with physical

attacks (Eckstein 2004). There are many examples of physical and verbal violence from Sikumi Forest. We highlight two cases instructive of its geographies.

#### **4.3.1. The old man's ordeal**

A 71-year-old man relied on Sikumi Forest for grazing until a day in 2015 when forest guards violently confronted and arrested him. He was in the company of his neighbour, searching for his cattle that had strayed deep into the forest. Upon the sight of forest guards, his neighbour perceived trouble and ran away. The old man found no reason to run away because, according to him, he had not committed any crime. It is the running away of his neighbour that landed him into trouble. He was also in possession of an axe, a prohibited tool often associated with poaching. Forest guards dragged the old man, showed him wire snares, and forced him to accept responsibility. Denying the evidence angered forest guards who began flogging him. Three guards took turns to beat him with large sticks while he was lying on the ground on his stomach, with his face down. He pleaded his innocence and tried to reason with forest guards asking them to compare his footprints with those around the wire snares. The guards claimed the footprints were similar and continued battering him. The old man did not plead guilty (as he was not a 'poacher'), instead pleaded, "*Bantwabami kungcono ukuthi lingitshaye ngife, kungcono ukufa kulokuhlukumezwa*" (My children, is it not better that you beat and kill me? It is better to die than to suffer in pain). His punishment for uttering those words was standing on his head. He was flogged in that position before being forced to 'rest' on a bed of thorns. It is only after this physical attack that the man was handed over to the police.<sup>24</sup>

#### **4.3.2. Jabulani's arrest**

Jabulani<sup>25</sup> has been arrested more than once, and is well known for his involvement in illegal hunting. He too admits that he is a hunter, an activity he claims to undertake for subsistence. In 2015, he was arrested following a tip-off of bush meat trade in his village. Armed forest guards raided his home shortly after midnight. In their company was Dumisani<sup>26</sup>, Jabulani's alleged accomplice, who they had severely beaten to get information about who he was hunting with. They also brought a Kudu hindquarter from Dumisani's house as proof of the alleged illegal hunting activity. Jabulani was not home during the raid. His wife was verbally abused in an attempt to get to Jabulani. Her harassment began with loud bangs on the couple's bedroom door. Forest guards aggressively demanded them to come out, "Phuma! Phuma!" (Get out! Get out!). As Jabulani's wife opened the door, she was barraged with demands. Forest guards ordered that she brings out her husband, threatening to beat her if she failed to comply. They also threatened her to bring out the bush meat that her husband had illegally hunted together with Dumisani. She maintained that she was unaware of all allegations levelled against them as a couple. At that point, one of the guards pushed her off the door forcing entry into her home. According to Jabulani's wife, forest guards ransacked her home and threatened her, "show us the meat or else we will beat you!" While the search was in progress, Jabulani was heard returning from a nearby tavern. Forest guards ordered Jabulani's wife to shut the door. She stated that one of the forest guards threatened to kill her if she screamed. They intimidated her so that they could ambush her unsuspecting husband. By the time Jabulani approached his home he was already surrounded. Jabulani was confronted with the Kudu hindquarter while at the same

time being verbally attacked with graphic pejoratives, kicked, slapped, pushed around, and coerced to provide information leading to more incriminating evidence. Jabulani's son who was barely three years old at the time of the raid, and just over four years during the field visit confirmed that forest guards beat his father.<sup>27</sup>

These two stories illustrate two characteristics of physical violence. The first is the rootedness of bodily harm in structural and symbolic violence. The argument submitted by Loyd (2009: 865) that, "it is not through the scale of the body that one can understand the social production of bodily harms," illuminates the nexus of structural and physical violence. Jabulani and the old man's stories confirm the tangibility of structural violence through the body (Murrey 2015), which cannot be disconnected from the symbolic effect of using paramilitary personnel to enforce forest regulations. The second rests upon the spatial dimensions of physical violence. It is evident here, like elsewhere (see, Neumann, 2004, Dunlap and Fairhead, 2014, Massé, 2020, Verweijen, 2020), that the spatial dispersion of physical violence targets bodies and minds of suspected offenders. Also evident is that violence is enacted 'inside' and 'outside' the frontiers of Sikumi Forest. Inside the forest is space where the enactment of violence would be argued by forest authorities and forest guards alike, as legitimised by law (Neumann, 2004, Lunstrum, 2014). The old man and his neighbour would, against such logic, be argued as "bodies-out-of-place" (Ojeda 2012: 364), justifying the actions of forest guards. But we also see forest guards carrying their symbolic and performative power to communities, right into households, disrespecting private spaces and bodies-in-their-places. Within these private spaces, invasion of human bodies co-occurs with the invasion of property and privacy. Perhaps the argument of the forest authority would be: if an offense is committed inside the forest and profits of such an offense are brought into communities, such communities arguably become subject to policing by forest guards. In that case, there becomes a false separation, rather interconnectedness between the 'inside' and 'outside' as spaces and places of violence. The spatial scale of physical violence is, thus, not limited to geographical frontiers of protected areas, but includes neighbouring communities' private spaces as extended territories in which paramilitary personnel exercise their authority to enforce bodily harm. Also illustrated is how the frontiers of physical violence go beyond the accused to affect the entire household, as shown in Jabulani's case.

Another important dimension of physical violence is the temporal scale of its manifestation. There was consensus among forest guards that the duration and magnitude of physical interrogations depends on the discretion of who is handling a case, demonstrating the power that forest guards have in determining the temporalities of bodily harm. People living adjacent Sikumi Forest experience physical violence at any time, including during least expected times of the day. For example, the raiding tactics used to apprehend Jabulani are often conducted between midnight and early hours of the morning, a space in time for rest and peace. The unpredictability of operating times or duration of physical interrogation works in favour of the forest guards, and enhances their control over human and natural bodies. Yet another dimension of physical violence worth highlighting from Jabulani's case is its connectedness with gender based violence. Unlike in Virunga National Park, where there is an overlap of physical and gender violence against women (Verweijen 2020), we see in Sikumi Forest, particularly in Jabulani's case, women being harrassed and intimidated as bait for attacking men. Violence against women can, therefore, also often be used as a tactic and

enabler of physical violence against men. Having examined the manifestation and dimensions of physical violence, and connected it with structural and symbolic violence, we now further connect it with its consequences.

#### **4.4. Corollaries of violence**

The combined manifestation of structural, symbolic and physical violence often culminates in temporal and place-based slow violence. As we have already highlighted, much of this violence is psychological, linked to constant fear and trauma (Pain 2019) intended to manipulate the behaviour or decision of people (Labronici et al., 2010, Ali et al., 2016). In Sikumi Forest, fear and trauma tend to affect women and children much more than men. Jabulani's wife explained how she has generally lost confidence, often thinking that other women talk about her and her husband. She fetches firewood and water in isolation, activities often done by women in groups. The fact that their son remembers events of physical attack on his father demonstrates the psychological effect of such violence on children. Jabulani's friend, who was physically and verbally tortured, and arrested severally for illegal hunting also has a son whose school grades have deteriorated and now opts living with his grandparents.<sup>28</sup> Such withdrawal and effects on cognitive performance, manifesting here as corollaries of physical attacks on parents, constitutes what is referred to as externalising and internalising behaviour (Singh and Mukhopadhyay, 2007, Capaldi et al., 2020). This behaviour is often an indicator of chronic psychological harm, with ramifications for child development.

Another distinctive corollary outcome of physical attacks linked to raids, is family and community disintegration. Successful raids by forest guards are often aided by informants, community members who either volunteer or are selected by forest guards to secretly provide information on illegal activities in exchange for favours that include contract employment,<sup>29</sup> which is difficult to get in this part of the country. The trauma of a raid often coerces raided households to seek revenge against suspected informants. In such cases, burning of houses and threats of witchcraft<sup>30</sup> are common, leading to community mistrust, divisions and disharmony (also see, Büscher and Ramutsindela, 2016, Duffy et al., 2019). Violent practices leading to community disharmony extend the cycle of physical violence in which violence causes violence, that produces violence (Galtung, 1990, Baldoli, 2020). Community disharmony additionally shows how outcomes of violent experiences reproduce and disperse violence from individuals or households to the wider community, hence, widening the spatial scales of conservation violence.

Beyond psychological violence and community disharmony, we use cases of the old man, firewood collection and Jabulani's arrest to demonstrate the far-reaching consequences of conservation violence on tradition, culture and social cohesion. It is because of fear that the old man stopped grazing his animals in Sikumi Forest. He stated that his cattle have become unhealthy due to the loss of healthier pastures. If livestock eventually die this could mean loss of his cultural symbol of wealth. His family may not effectively take part in rituals such as the paying of bride price, funeral sacrifices and appeasing the ancestors with cattle (Bote et al. 2014). It also implies that his family loses draught power, livelihood security, and a standard of living dependent on livestock (Nyima 2014). Restricted firewood collection has far-reaching consequences on culturally gendered roles of women such as food preparation,

which are linked to broader family health and well-being. Hunting, an old practice of sourcing household protein, is criminalised by colonial law while black African men are stereotyped as 'poachers' (Hübschle, 2014, Büscher and Ramutsindela, 2016). Household economic activities linked to the sale of bush meat are, as shown in Jabulani's case, also criminalised. We reflect on these cultural corollaries as constitutive of what Galtung (1990) defines as cultural violence. According to Galtung, cultural violence refers to the use of cultural aspects to legitimise structural and direct violence. We add that cultural violence deprives people of their ways of living. Given the perpetration of different forms of violence, their interconnected dimensions and corollaries, we, in contrast to Dutton and Archer (2003), do not see protected areas such as Sikumi Forest providing for protection of indigenous practices. Instead, we see a perpetual redefinition of life in violent ways.

## **5. Conclusion**

Using the case of Sikumi Forest, we have documented and examined a diversity of conservation violence experienced by people living adjacent protected areas. We have taken the militarisation of conservation debated outside the response to rhino and elephant poaching, and shown how conservation violence infiltrates and encompasses the control of everyday livelihood activities of local people, thereby becoming indiscriminate in its effect. We have also made the point that while dimensions of conservation violence examined here may not necessarily result in the death of people, the corollary effect of such violence leads to the ultimate demise of different spheres of their livelihoods. Hence, even in the absence of death, any aspect or dimension of militarised conservation has far-reaching consequences beyond immediate loss of lives.

By examining conservation violence experienced by local people in terms of its dimensions and corollaries we have used a delineated analytical approach in combination with the examination of wide ranging forms of violence. Through this approach we have unpacked the geographies of different forms of violence experienced by communities, without overlooking the connected frontiers of such violence. We have particularly connected physical violence to its broader causes and consequences, thereby managing the methodological conundrum around examining the manifestation of direct and indirect violence in, and around, protected areas. We believe this analytical contribution provides for an extended understanding of conservation violence.

## **CRedit authorship contribution statement**

**Tafadzwa Mushonga:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft. **Frank Matose:** Writing - review & editing, Funding acquisition, Supervision.

## **Acknowledgements**

We extend special recognition to the Andrew Mellon Foundation, Canon Collins Educational Trust and Margaret McNamara Education Grants whose funding covered various stages of a doctoral study from which this work emerges. The Andrew Mellon Foundation also provided support to enable the second author to have space for writing. We are grateful to the Forestry Commission of Zimbabwe and the communities living around Sikumi Forest Reserve

for participation in this study, and to four anonymous reviewers for the critical feedback and suggestions to earlier versions of this paper.

## References

Agu, H.U., Gore, M.L., 2020. Women in wildlife trafficking in Africa: A synthesis of literature. *Global Ecol. Conserv* e01166.

Al Jazeera English, 2019. Kenya to evict thousands to protect Mau Forest. YouTube.

Alexander, J., McGregor, J., 2005. Hunger, violence and the moral economy of war in Zimbabwe. *Violence and Belonging: The quest for identity in postcolonial Africa*, Routledge, London, 75–90.

Ali, P.A., Dhingra, K., McGarry, J., 2016. A literature review of intimate partner violence and its classifications. *Aggress. Violent Behav.* 31, 16–25.

Aytac, S., Bozkurt, V., Bayram, N., Yildiz, S., Aytac, M., Sokullu Akinci, F., Bilgel, N., 2011. Workplace violence: a study of Turkish workers. *Int. J. Occup. Saf. Ergonom.* 17 (4), 385–402.

Baldoli, R., 2020. Fighting terrorism with non-violence: an ideological perspective. *Crit. Stud. Terrorism*, 1–21.

Bickman, L., 1974. The social power of a uniform. *J. Appl. Soc. Psychol.* 4 (1), 47–61.

Bocarejo, D., Ojeda, D., 2016. Violence and conservation: Beyond unintended consequences and unfortunate coincidences. *Geoforum* 69 (2016), 176–183.

Bote, D., Mago, S., Hofisi, C., 2014. Innovative rural financing in Zimbabwe: A case of cattle banking. *Int. Bus. Econ. Res. J. (IBER)* 13 (4), 815–822.

Bourdieu, P., Wacquant, L.J., 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. University of Chicago Press.

Brockington, D., Duffy, R., Igoe, J., 2008. *Nature unbound: conservation, capitalism and the future of protected areas*: Earthscan.

Büscher, B., 2016. ‘Rhino poaching is out of control!’ Violence, race and the politics of hysteria in online conservation. *Environ. Plann. A* 48 (5), 979–998.

Büscher, B., 2017. Conservation and development 2.0: Intensifications and disjunctures in the politics of online ‘do-good’ platforms. *Geoforum* 79, 163–173.

Büscher, B., Fletcher, R., 2020. *The conservation revolution: radical ideas for saving nature beyond the Anthropocene*: Verso Trade.



Büscher, B., Fletcher, R., 2018. Under pressure: conceptualising political ecologies of green wars. *Conserv. Soc.* 16 (2), 105–113.

Büscher, B., Ramutsindela, M., 2016. Green violence: rhino poaching and the war to save Southern Africa's peace parks. *African Affairs* 115 (458), 1–22.

Campbell, C., Mannell, J., 2016. Conceptualising the agency of highly marginalised women: Intimate partner violence in extreme settings. *Global Public Health* 11 (1–2), 1–16.

Capaldi, D.M., Tiberio, S.S., Shortt, J., Low, S., Owen, L.D., 2020. Associations of exposure to intimate partner violence and parent-to-child aggression with child competence and psychopathology symptoms in two generations. *Child Abuse Negl.* 103, 104434.

Carson, R., 2002. *Silent spring*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Dressler, W.H., Guieb III, E.R., 2015. Violent enclosures, violated livelihoods: environmental and military territoriality in a Philippine frontier. *J. Peasant Stud.* 42 (2), 323–345.

Duffy, R., 1999. The role and limitations of state coercion: anti-poaching policies in Zimbabwe. *J. Contemp. African Stud.* 17 (1), 97–121.

Duffy, R., 2000. *Killing for conservation: wildlife policy in Zimbabwe*. James Currey Ltd.

Duffy, R., 2016. War, by conservation. *Geoforum* 69, 238–248.

Duffy, R., Massé, F., Smidt, E., Marijnen, E., Büscher, B., Verweijen, J., Ramutsindela, M., et al., 2019. Why we must question the militarisation of conservation. *Biol. Conserv.* 232 (2019), 66–73.

Duffy, R., St John, F., 2013. Poverty, poaching and trafficking: what are the links?.

Dunlap, A., Fairhead, J., 2014. The militarisation and marketisation of nature: an alternative lens to 'Climate-Conflict'. *Geopolitics* 19 (4), 937–961.

Durkin, K., Jeffery, L., 2000. The salience of the uniform in young children's perception of police status. *Legal Criminol. Psychol.* 5 (1), 47–55.

Dutton, S., Archer, F., 2003. *The Indigenous Voice on Parks and Conservation in South Africa: Report by the Interim Indigenous Parks and People Working Group: Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee*.

Eckstein, N.J., 2004. Emergent issues in families experiencing adolescent-to-parent abuse. *Western J. Commun. (includes Communication Reports)* 68 (4), 365–388.

Ellonen, N., Pösö, T., 2011. Violence experiences in care: Some methodological remarks based on the Finnish child victim survey. *Child Abuse Rev.* 20 (3), 197–212.

- Farmer, P., 1996. On suffering and structural violence: a view from below. *Daedalus* 125 (1), 261–283.
- Farmer, P., 2004. An anthropology of structural violence. *Curr. Anthropol.* 45 (3), 305–325.
- Fletcher, R., 2018. License to kill: Contesting the legitimacy of green violence. *Conserv. Soc.* 16 (2), 147–156.
- Forestry Commission, 2015. Tracking tool for biodiversity projects in GEF-3, GEF-4, and GEF-5: Management effectiveness tracking tool (METT): Sikumi and Ngamo forests. Harare: Forestry Commission.
- Galtung, J., 1969. Violence, peace, and peace research. *J. Peace Res.* 6 (3), 167–191.
- Galtung, J., 1990. Cultural violence. *J. Peace Res.* 27 (3), 291–305.
- Galtung, J., Höivik, T., 1971. Structural and direct violence: a note on operationalization. *J. Peace Res.* 8 (1), 73–76.
- Gusha, I., 2019. Memories of Gukurahundi massacre and the challenge of reconciliation. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 45 (1), 1–14.
- Hübschle, A., 2014. Of bogus hunters, queenpins and mules: the varied roles of women in transnational organized crime in Southern Africa. *Trends Organized Crime* 17 (1–2), 31–51.
- Johnson, R.R., 2001. The psychological influence of the police uniform. *FBI L. Enforcement Bull.* 70, 27.
- Kalron, N., Crosta, A., 2016. The white gold of jihad: Al-Shabaab and the Illegal Ivory Trade. In: *Elephant Action League Report*.
- Kamchuchat, C., Chongsuvivatwong, V., Oncheunjit, S., Yip, T.W., Sangthong, R., 2008. Workplace violence directed at nursing staff at a general hospital in southern Thailand. *J. Occup. Health* 50 (2), 201–207.
- Keller, R., Krainovich-Miller, B., Budin, W., Djukic, M., 2018. Predictors of nurses' experience of verbal abuse by nurse colleagues. *Nurs. Outlook* 66 (2), 190–203.
- Kelly, L., 1987. The continuum of sexual violence. In: *Women, violence and social control* (eds.), Springer, pp. 46–60.
- Krause, K., 2012. Hybrid violence: Locating the use of force in postconflict settings. *Global Governance: A Rev. Multilateralism Int. Organiz.* 18 (1), 39–56.
- Kwashirai, V., 2009. *Green Colonialism in Zimbabwe, 1890–1980*. Cambria Press, New York.

- Labronici, L.M., Ferraz, M.I.R., Trigueiro, T.H., Fegadoli, D., 2010. Profile of the violence committed against women assisted at Pousada de Maria lodging. *Rev. Esc Enferm USP* 44 (1), 126–133.
- Loader, I., 1997. Policing and the social: Questions of symbolic power. *Br. J. Sociol.* 1–18.
- Logie, C.H., Gibson, M.F., 2013. A mark that is no mark? Queer women and violence in HIV discourse. *Cult., Health Sexuality* 15 (1), 29–43.
- Lombard, L., Tubiana, J., 2020. Bringing the tracker-guards back in: Arms-carrying markets and quests for status in conservation at war. *Polit. Geogr.* 79, 102131.
- Loyd, J.M., 2009. “A microscopic insurgent”: Militarization, health, and critical geographies of violence. *Ann. Assoc. Am. Geogr.* 99 (5), 863–873.
- Lunstrum, E., 2014. Green militarization: anti-poaching efforts and the spatial contours of Kruger National Park. *Ann. Assoc. Am. Geogr.* 104 (4), 816–832.
- Lunstrum, E., 2017. Feed them to the lions: Conservation violence goes online. *Geoforum* 79 (2017), 134–143.
- Lunstrum, E., Ybarra, M., 2018. Deploying difference: security threat narratives and state displacement from protected areas. *Conserv. Soc.* 16 (2), 114–124.
- Massé, F., 2019. Anti-poaching’s politics of (in) visibility: representing nature and conservation amidst a poaching crisis. *Geoforum* 98 (2019), 1–14.
- Massé, F., 2020. Conservation law enforcement: policing protected areas. *Ann. Am. Assoc. Geograph.* 110 (3), 758–773.
- Massé, F., Lunstrum, E., 2016. Accumulation by securitization: Commercial poaching, neoliberal conservation, and the creation of new wildlife frontiers. *Geoforum* 69 (2016), 227–237.
- Matose, F., 2002. Local People and Reserved Forests in Zimbabwe: What Prospects for Co-Management? PhD in Development studies University of Sussex.
- Matose, F.M., 1994. Local people's uses and perceptions of forest resources: an analysis of a state property regime in Zimbabwe.
- McCann, N., 2017. Attacks on ‘militarised conservation’ are naive.
- Mogomotsi, G.E., Madigele, P.K., 2017. Live by the gun, die by the gun. Botswana's 'shoot-to-kill' policy as an anti-poaching strategy. *SA Crime Quart.* 60, 51–59.
- Muntifering, J.R., Linklater, W.L., Clark, S.G., Kasaona, J.K., Du Preez, P., Kasaona, K., Beytell, P., et al., 2017. Harnessing values to save the rhinoceros: insights from

Namibia. *Oryx* 51 (1), 98–105.

Murambadoro, R., 2015. 'We cannot reconcile until the past has been acknowledged': Perspectives on Gukurahundi from Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. *African J. Conflict Resolut.* 15 (1), 33–57.

Murrey, A., 2015. Narratives of life and violence along the Chad-Cameroon Oil Pipeline. *Human Geogr.* 8 (1), 15–39.

Mushonga, T., 2020. The militarisation of conservation and occupational violence in Sikumi Forest Reserve, Zimbabwe. *Conserv. Soc.* [https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs\\_20\\_5](https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs_20_5).

Mutune, J.M., Hansen, C.P., Wahome, R.G., Mungai, D.N., 2017. What rights and benefits? The implementation of participatory forest management in Kenya: the case of Eastern Mau Forest Reserve. *J. Sustain. For.* 36 (3), 230–249.

Neumann, R.P., 2004. Moral and discursive geographies in the war for biodiversity in Africa. *Polit. Geogr.* 23 (7), 813–837.

Nixon, R., 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press.

Norton, M., 2015. The militarisation of marine resource conservation and law enforcement in the Western Cape, South Africa. *Marine Policy* 60, 338–344.

Nyima, Y., 2014. A larger herd size as a symbol of wealth? The fallacy of the cattle complex theory in T ibetan pastoralism. *Area* 46 (2), 186–193.

Ojeda, D., 2012. Green pretexts: Ecotourism, neoliberal conservation and land grabbing in Tayrona National Natural Park, Colombia. *J. Peasant Stud.* 39 (2), 357–375.

Pain, R., 2019. Chronic urban trauma: The slow violence of housing dispossession. *Urban Stud.* 56 (2), 385–400.

Peluso, N.L., Vandergeest, P., 2001. Genealogies of the political forest and customary rights in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. *J. Asian Stud.* 60 (03), 761–812.

Peluso, N.L., Watts, M., 2001. *Violent environments*. Cornell University Press, New York.

Poppe, J., 2013. The power of the uniform: Paramilitary foresters and rangers at the W Park, Burkina Faso. *Sociologus* 11–36.

Ramutsindela, M., 2016. Wildlife crime and state security in South (ern) Africa: an overview of developments. *Politikon* 43 (2), 159–171.

Siisiäinen, M., 2008. Symbolic power as a critical concept. *Symbolic power in cultural contexts. Uncovering social reality*. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, 21–30.

Singh, C., Mukhopadhyay, P., 2007. Mothers' self-perception and conduct-disorder—children's perception of their mothers. *Psychol. Matters: Dev., Health Organiz.* 1, 109.

Skjelsbaek, K., 1979. Militarism, its dimensions and corollaries: an attempt at conceptual clarification. *J. Peace Res.* 16 (3), 213–229.

Smith, M., Humphreys, J., 2015. The Poaching Paradox: why South Africa's 'Rhino Wars' Shine a Harsh Spotlight on Security and Conservation. In: Brisman, A., South, N., White, R. (Eds.), *Environmental Crime and Social Conflict: contemporary and emerging issues*. Routledge, London and New York.

Verweijen, J., 2020. A microdynamics approach to geographies of violence: Mapping the kill chain in militarized conservation areas. *Polit. Geogr.* 79 (2020), 102153.

Xing, K., Jiao, M., Ma, H., Qiao, H., Hao, Y., Li, Y., Gao, L., et al., 2015. Physical violence against general practitioners and nurses in Chinese township hospitals: a cross-sectional survey. *PLoS ONE* 10 (11), e0142954.

ZimStats, 2012. *Census 2012: Provincial report, Matabeleland North*. edited by Zimbabwe, N. S. A. Population Census Office, Harare.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>[www.initiativeforequality.org/declaration-solidarity-indigenous-batwa-defendants/](http://www.initiativeforequality.org/declaration-solidarity-indigenous-batwa-defendants/).

<sup>2</sup>We do not disclose village names and date of interviews to protect identities of research participants. Names of participants are also kept anonymous.

<sup>3</sup>Forest guards are not from communities adjacent Sikumi Forest. After training, forest guards are deployed to regions not of their origin. They are redeployed from time to time.

<sup>4</sup>Number at the meeting is excluded in the total number of people interviewed because a head count of people who attended the meeting was not done. However, we approximate that about 35 people attended the community meeting.

<sup>5</sup>Violence against forest guards and entire discussion with FC executive are beyond the scope of this manuscript. We mention this here to show that FC officials were aware of the research findings concerning the perpetration of violence in its jurisdiction, and that these findings would be published.

<sup>6</sup>Confirmed by forest guards and women respondents.

<sup>7</sup>Interview, anonymous women.

<sup>8</sup>Interview, anonymous woman 1.

<sup>9</sup>Interview, anonymous woman 2.

<sup>10</sup>Anonymous woman 3.

<sup>11</sup>Anonymous woman 4.

<sup>12</sup>Anonymous community member at a villagers meeting.

<sup>13</sup>Anonymous man at community meeting.

<sup>14</sup>Anonymous woman 5.

<sup>15</sup>Authors' experiences with working with the FC.

<sup>16</sup>Interview with anonymous man.

<sup>17</sup>Interview with anonymous village head.

<sup>18</sup>Interview with four anonymous community members from different villages.

<sup>19</sup>Our observation having worked with the Forestry Commission, a subject that was also often emphasised in forest regulation meetings.

<sup>20</sup>Interview with anonymous woman 6.

<sup>21</sup>Interview with a group of boys (herders).

<sup>22</sup>Interview with anonymous woman 7.

<sup>23</sup>Sikumi Forest is structurally reproduced in that it was created through the eviction of people. Once evicted these people were subjected to control through the imposition of structurally violent forest laws.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with anonymous man.

<sup>25</sup>Pseudonym.

<sup>26</sup>Pseudonym.

<sup>27</sup>The little boy was asked to comment with permission from the parents.

<sup>28</sup>Anonymous man and wife.

<sup>29</sup>Interview, forest guards.

<sup>30</sup>Community meeting, interview with Jabulani and his friend.