

RESILIENCE OF TROPICAL ECOSYSTEMS – FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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RESILIENCE THINKING CONFRONTED WITH THE GIANTS OF THE ANTHROPOCENE ERA: ARE WE SERIOUS?

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The African continent is now regarded as the extractive industry's new Eldorado where mineral reserves, vital for the industrial sector as a whole, are currently among the world's largest.

Central African forest countries contribute to most mining supplies, 60% of the mineral deposits being located in the heart of the second largest tropical forest block.

The urban sprawl of this huge social and ecological system (SES) by mining has been spread for some decades over all its geographical area. This would imply an ecological, social, economic and cultural restructuring that would a priori reinforce the planet's limits (Rockström, 2009). In this outlook, pathological evolutionary dynamics (Peterson, 2014) of this SES are anticipated. Given the economic power of the mining industry in a weak regional and national context, can we actually mobilise the resilience thinking concepts and, if so, how can this be achieved in a concrete way ?

We argue that the global resilience of SES in relation to those disturbances is no longer relevant. Its transformation can however be discussed and initially addressed in writing. If there is still time, we can test the generic solutions provided by resilience thinking (Biggs, 2012), not to experiment them in this context but to implement them at the very heart of every means (Feyerabend, 1979) that can turn out to be even slightly effective to avoid a sharp deterioration in the Congo basin in all its dimensions and at best permit a virtuous transformation of the SES.

We therefore invite discussion about the issue of the full utilisation of mutually incompatible resources (mines vs forests) by actors with highly differentiated power.