

The Forgotten Coast, New Caledonia, between minescape, fishing practices and terraqueous territoriality

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ESfO Conference
Pacific fisheries in a 'sea of connections'
Coord. Annette Breckwoldt, Gilbert
David, Elodie Fache, Catherine Sabinot
Ajaccio, 2-6 June 2022

Sources

- *Uses inventory study on the Forgotten Coast for the management of the Provincial Parc*, 2020-2021, coord. Catherine Sabinot
- *Negotiating, evaluating, recognizing the value of place*, CNRT 'Nickel and its environment', 2013-2016, coord. Jean-Brice Herrenschmidt and Pierre-Yves Le Meur
- *MPA implementation in Borendy customary district*, MSc, Paul Sauboua, 2009



Paul Sauboua

La mise en place des Aires Marines Protégées du district de Borendy
Acteurs, enjeux et gouvernance
(Tahiti, Nouvelle-Calédonie)



Mission présentée au titre de l'Observatoire du Développement et de la Société de la Nouvelle-Calédonie
Agences régionales, Agence Centrale, Société de l'Etat



Etude d'inventaire des usages pour une gestion dans le parc provincial de la Côte Oubliée : Woen Vùu- Pwa Pereu et sa zone adjacente

réalisée par Antoine Wickel, Lucie Gosset et Catherine Sabinot

province-sud.nc



Original article

Mining and the value of place in New Caledonia: Negotiation, evaluation, recognition

Pierre-Yves Le Meur^{a,c}, Claire Levacher^{b,c}, Séverine Bouard^b, Jean-Brice Herrenschmidt^d, Catherine Sabinot^e

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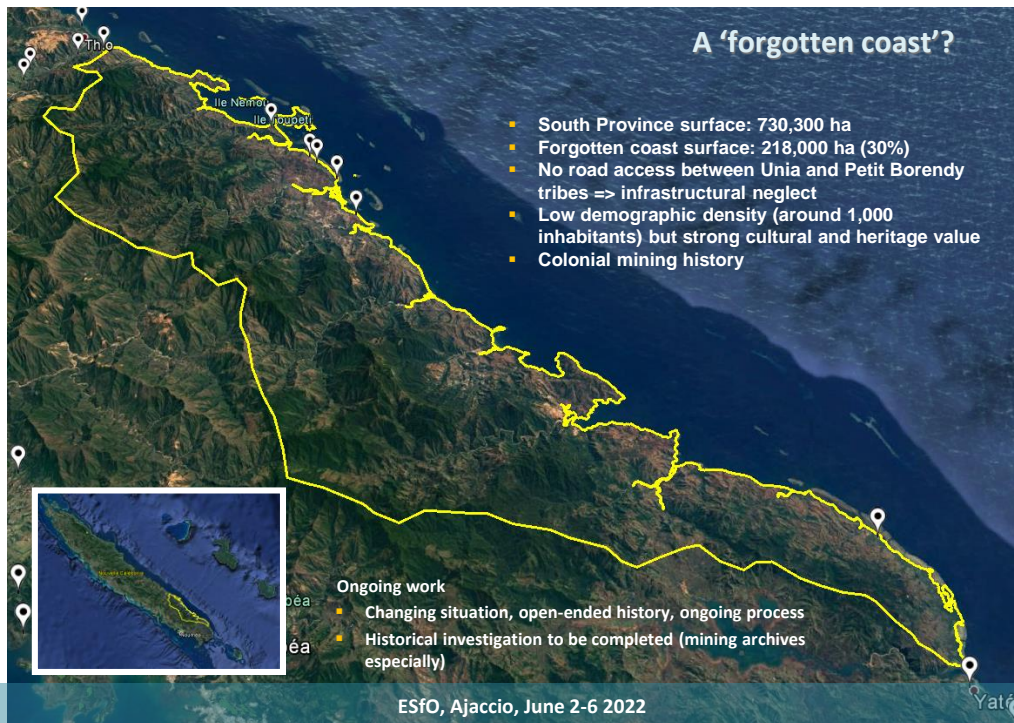
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The Extractive Industries and Society

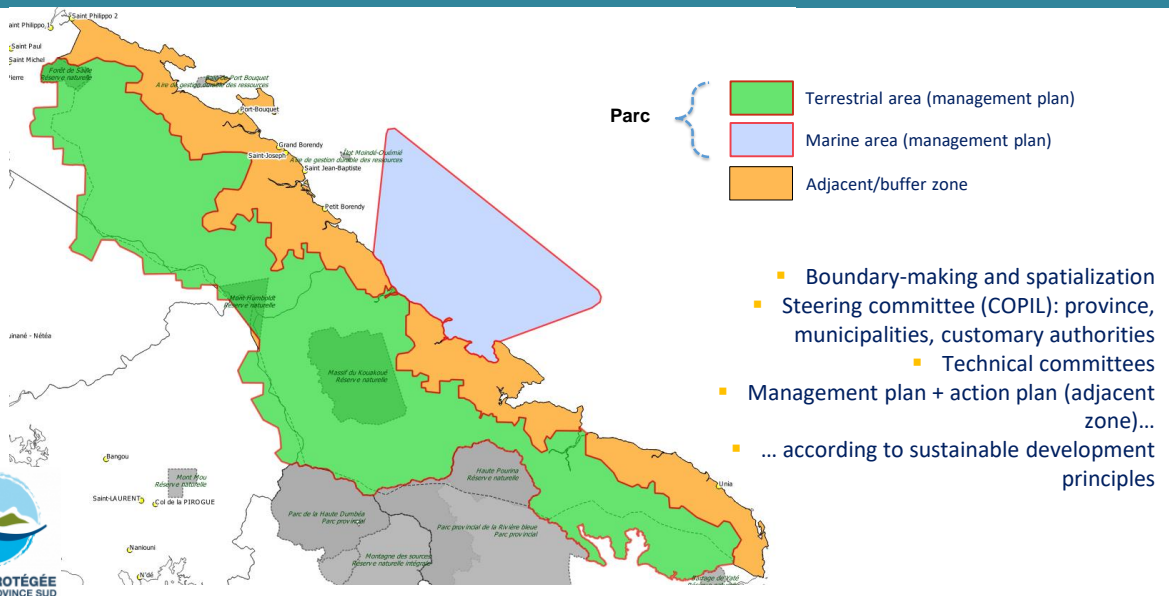
journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/eis



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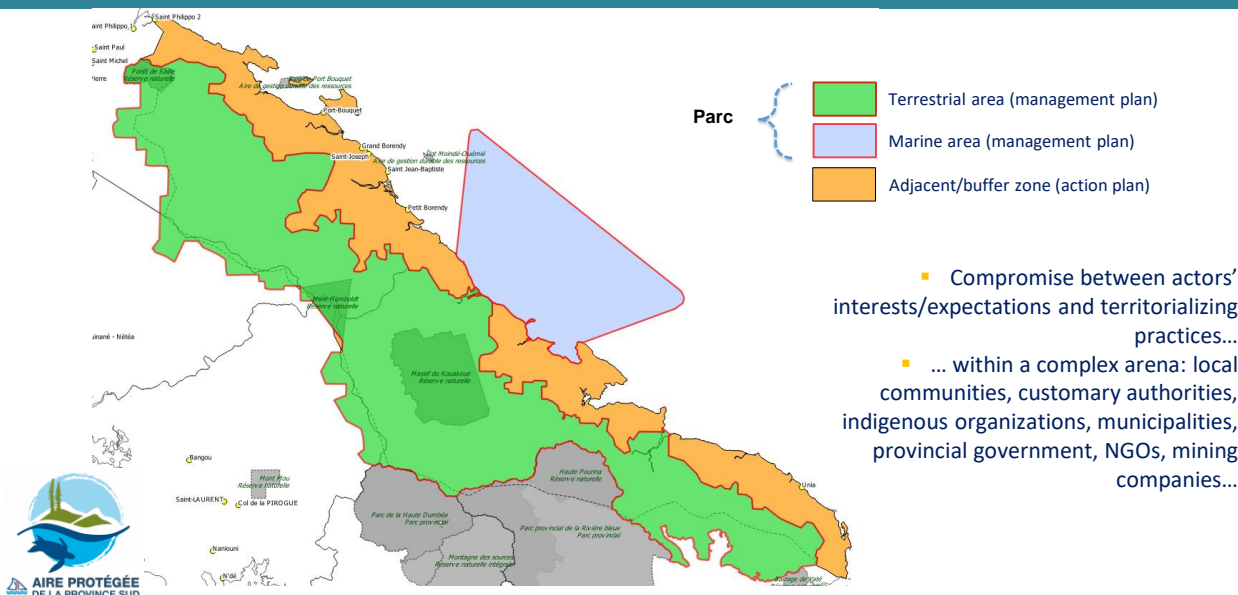


12. April 2019: Woen Vùù Pwa Pereù (Forgotten Coast) Provincial Parc



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Territorializing practices

- ✓ Historical layers of precolonial and colonial territorializing practices
- ✓ Matter of:
 - Sovereignty and property
 - Place-making, livelihood and dwelling (Ingold 2000)
 - Infrastructural violence/neglect (Anand, Gupta & Appel 2018): the 'Forgotten Coast'
- ✓ Producing different 'governable spaces' as 'configurations of resources, territories, identities and authorities' (Rose 1999, Watts 2004, Allen 2018)

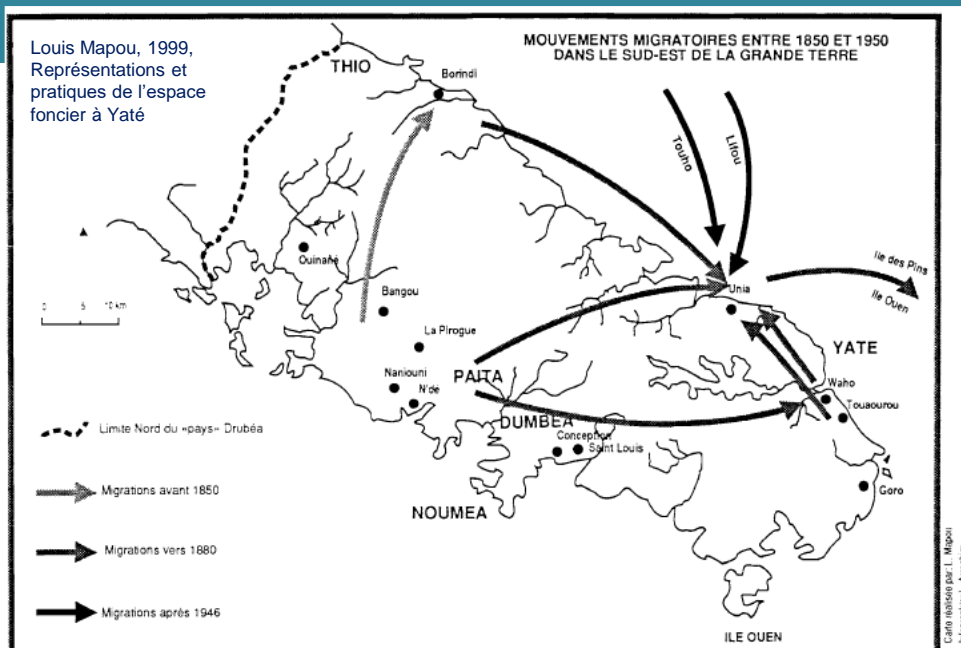


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Precolonial/colonial mobilities/territorializing practices

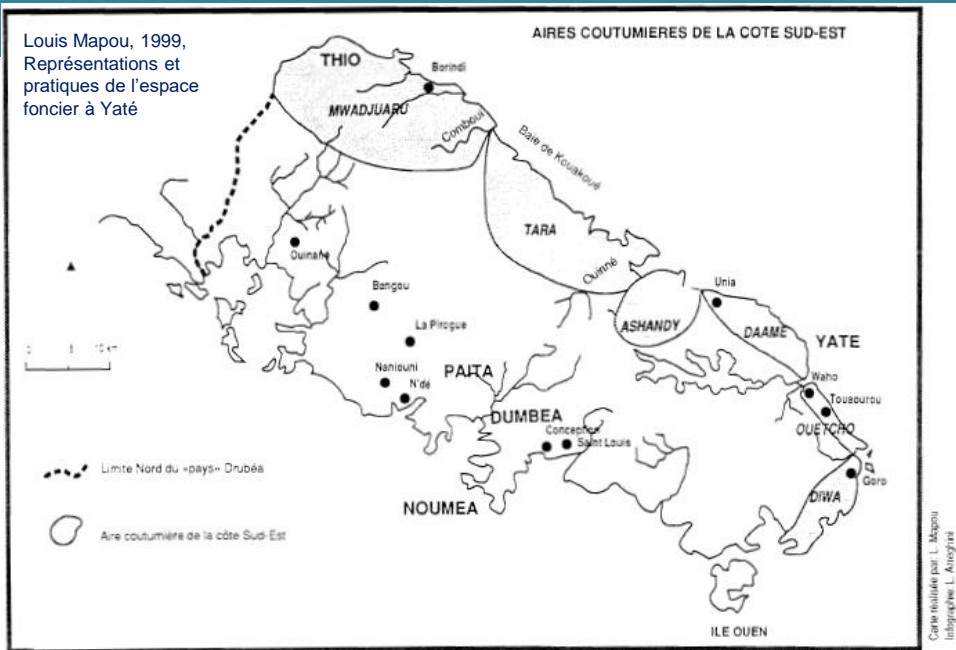
- ✓ Area of **pre-colonial circulation**: an inhabited coastal area, population movements along the coast and across the mountain ridge (alliance, segmentary logic, war, conquest and withdrawal)
- ✓ **Colonial intrusions and circulations**
 - Sandalwood and missionary colonization (from the 1840s in Yaté)
 - Cycles of revolt/repression, 'cantonnement' (confinement in land reserves + *Indigénat* disciplinary regime) and displacements post-1878
 - The Forgotten Coast as a mining frontier : prospectors, entrepreneurs, adventurers, 'colbaleur' (cobalt miners)
- ✓ **Colonial (infrastructural) violence**: land dispossession; reserves/missions/villagization, livestock, mining, railways...
- ✓ And **first environmental conflicts** (alliance Kanak chieftaincies/catholic mission vs mining corporation/SLN)

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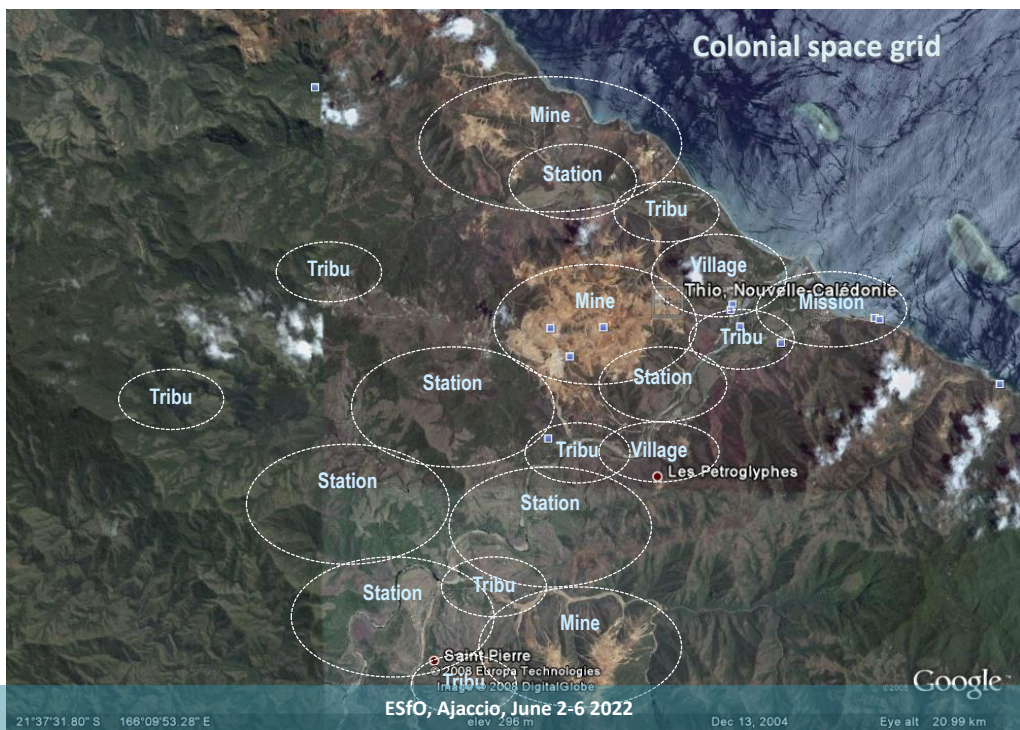


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Louis Mapou, 1999,
Représentations et
pratiques de l'espace
foncier à Yaté



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Rising multilayered conflicts

- ✓ 1967-72 – **nickel boom**, proliferation of small-scale mining companies ('petits mineurs', Montagnat village in Ouinné), **divergent memories**: 'cowboy' behaviors for Kanak communities vs golden age of the mining frontier
- ✓ 1970-80s – **Violent conflicts** with 'petits mineurs' (1970-80s; N'Goye, scieries), extraction stoppage and rising pro-independence movement ('Kanak awakening'), violent 'events' (1984-88)
- ✓ 1993 – Unia-Borendy tribes mobilization against the destruction of the Ny kaori forest
- **Politics of recognition, regaining control over space and resources** (sovereignty), rising **environmental awareness**



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Negotiating mining prospection

- **2013-14 – Negotiation of new mining prospections**
 - Companies with different objectives : keeping mining concessions, opening new ones, increasing production...
 - Beyond legal requirements: social license to operate
 - **Swift organization of local response**
 - Clanship ties and chieftaincy networks (across municipality boundaries)
 - Indigenous associations (Rheebu Nu, CAUGERN)
 - Monitoring committee
 - **Local interpretations and expectations**
 - Positioning and discourse diversity
 - Generational fault lines (also about environment and development)
 - Mobilization the past (conflict and damages), present (economic and political situation) and future (sovereignty)
- Will to regain control over time and space



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Mining ban and justifying discourses

LES DISTRICTS/CHEFFERIES COUTUMIERES DE BORINDY et d'UNIA DECIDENT COUTUMIEREMENT

Article 1 : La mise en place d'un moratoire sur une période minimale de deux années. Durant cette période, aucun travaux de prospection, ni de nouveaux titres miniers ne devrait être autorisé ni accordé sur les zones d'influences coutumières de Borindy et d'Unia.

Article 2 : Durant cette période devra être engagé, une étude complète sur l'état de l'environnement naturel et humain :

- l'Etat des écosystèmes naturels en place en partant du sommet des montagnes au fonds du lagon : terres, végétations, rivières et mer,
- l'histoire des occupations humaines des différents espaces et la reconnaissance des mythes et des lieux tabous ;
- l'Histoire des mines dans la région : données en matière de kms de routes ouverts, de décapage et de minerais extraits, d'emplois créés et cela depuis l'apparition des premières exploitations ;
- la perception par les populations locales des impacts des mines passées ;

- **Regulatory science** (Jasanoff 1990) : natural ecosystem health,, cultural and archaeological heritage, social and economic development, spatial planing
- **Indigenous discourse**: relational land ontology ('customary influence areas'), free prior informed consent
- **Sustainable development rhetoric**: 'sustainable development plan with a vision for 2050'

✓ **'Present absence' of the state** (Bainton and Skrzypek 2021)

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Negotiating minescapes

- **Mining ban extension (2018-28): duration and issues**
 - Preliminary mention of mining (1978) and environmental conflicts (1993)
 - Extension to municipalities (Thio and Yaté) and to 3 customary districts (+ Thio district)
 - Ban enforcement observed (Ouinné mine closure)
 - Justifying discourses: decolonization (Noumea Accord 1998), indigeneity (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007, Kanak People Charter 2014), science (MNHN/Revisited Planet naturalist campaign)
 - Refusal of the Ouinné hydro-electric dam: broadening of the scope of the ban
- **Progressive shifts**
 - Arena broadening : municipalities, OEIL (environment observatory), South Province (environment administration), consultancy offices (environmental studies), AFD RESCCUE program on CC and ES
 - New discourses : sustainable development as translation device between divergent interests (cf. Goro 2005-08), connectivity, 'avoid-reduce-mitigate' sequence and ecological compensation
 - Competing policy narratives (Roe 1994)

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Diverging narratives

I. Rappel de l'historique et fondamentaux du projet

2011 : **Inventaire** du patrimoine biologique des aires protégées

2013 : **Etude pour l'extension** et la mise en cohérence du réseau d'aires protégées

2014 - 2016 : **Premier moratoire coutumier** sur les activités minières

2016 : Etude de synthèse de l'CEil sur le **bilan des connaissances scientifiques** et l'état de l'environnement dans l'espace du moratoire.

2016 – 2018: Inventaires MNHN « **La planète revisitée** »; Projet RESCUE Stratégie AP 2025

2017 - 2018 : **Deuxième moratoire** et proposition d'un périmètre projet aux acteurs

Mise en œuvre de plus d'une vingtaine de rencontres entre juin et octobre 2018 dans un objectif de **présentation, consultation et discussion avec les acteurs** :

- Le gouvernement (DIMENC, DSF),
- Le Sénat coutumier
- Les Aires coutumières Xârâcùù et Drubea-Kapumë
- L'ADCK
- Les sociétés minières (SLN, SMT, SMGM, NMC, Vale NC, SNE, SMSP)
- Scientifiques et experts (IAC, IRD, UNC, CNRT, CEil)
- Les communes (Thio et Yaté)
- Comité de gestion environnemental de Borendy

Provincial greening and
depoliticization of the
narrative

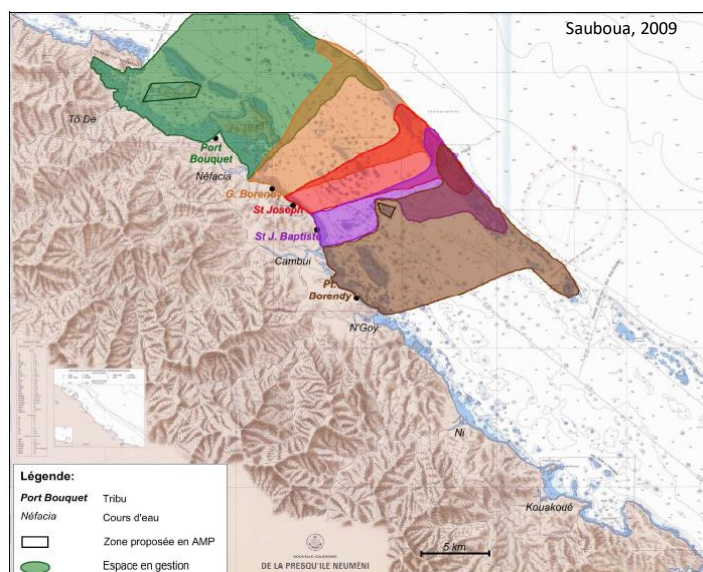
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Negotiation process



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Kanak fishing rights: terraqueous territoriality

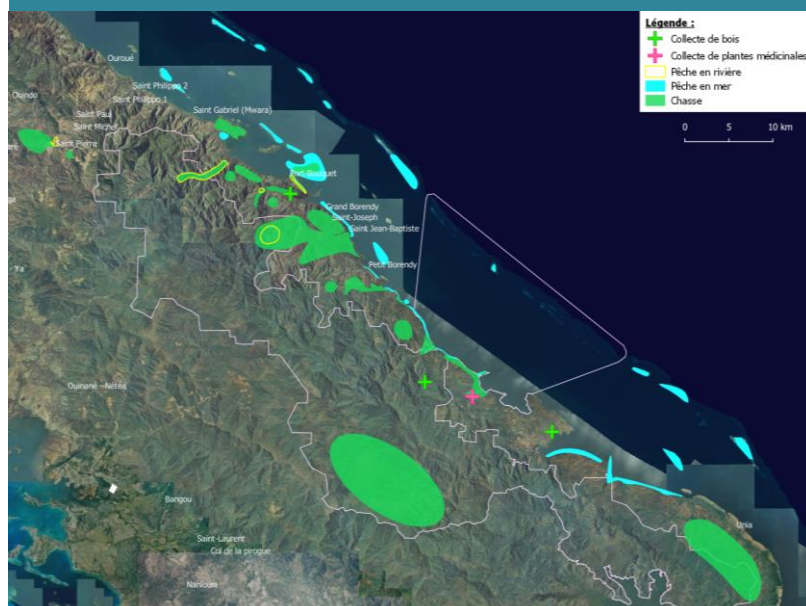


- Adjacency fishing rights (land-sea continuum)
- Diminishing strength with distance from the coast
- Customary rights/logics: Importance of behavioral norms ('good behavior/practices', asking for fishing),
- Evolution: from fisher clan (ritual/decision-making function within chieftaincy) to tribal management/property?



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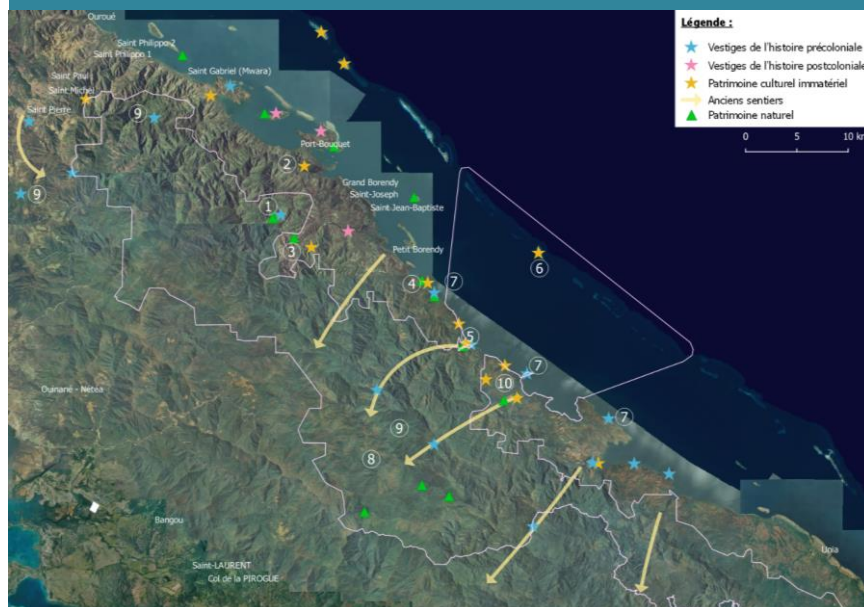
Natural resource uses



- Forgotten Coast as a shared fishing ground for Unia and Borendy
- Importance of fishery: food security and monetary incomes ('the money of the jobless peoples')
- Seasonal, night/day fishery (lobster vs octopus)
- Localized strategic places (fishing grounds, cultural places)
- Non permanent dwelling
- Component of plural livelihood and dwelling strategies

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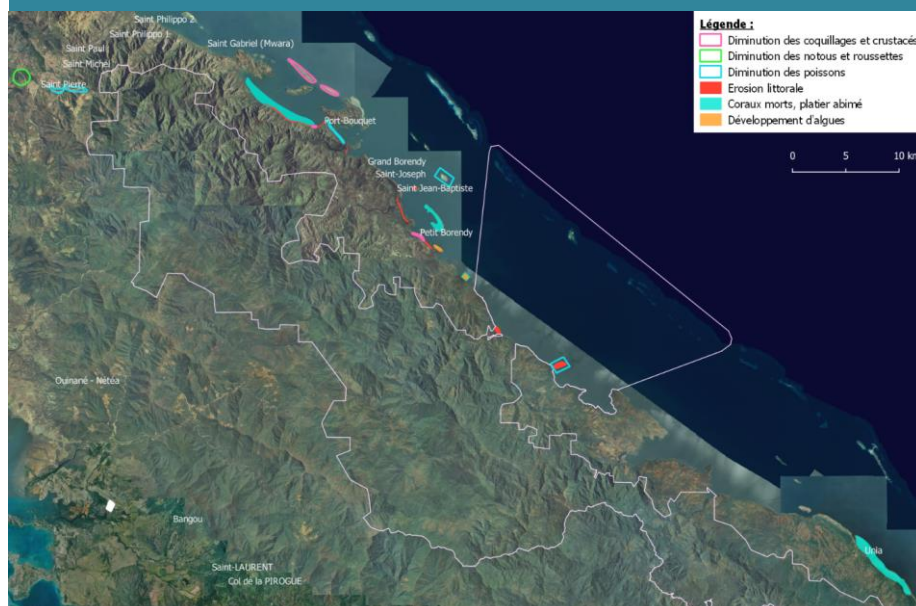
Cultural/heritage topography



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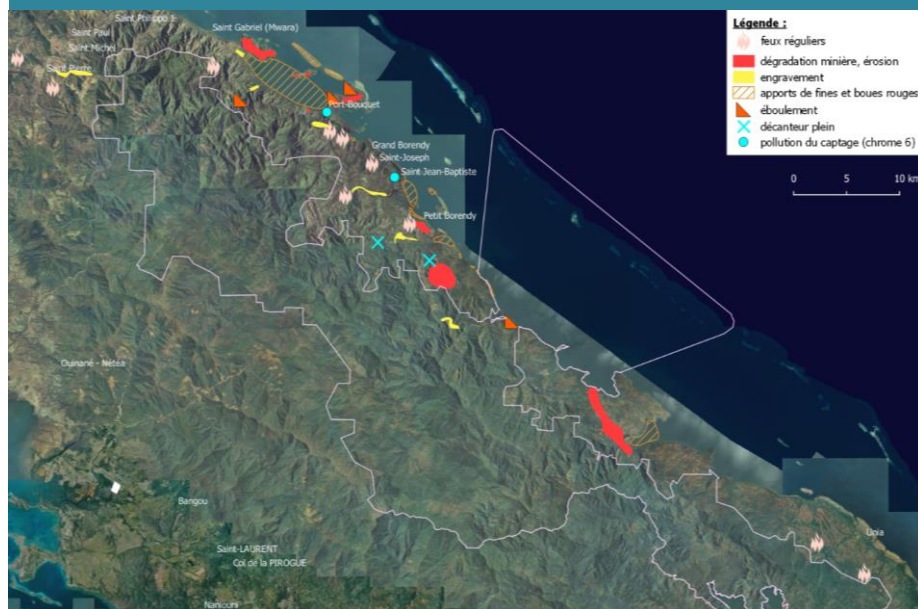
Natural resource degradation



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- Soil erosion, bush fires, invasive species, coastal erosion
- Perceived vulnerability due to dependency to natural resources for livelihood, water pollution, land slides, fragile living environment
- Past and present damages: mining ban but moving landscapes (abandoned mines)

Landscape degradation



- Non-rehabilitated 'orphan mines', erosion
- River massive aggradation
- Increased flooding risk
- Drinking water lower quality
- Soil runoff in the estuaries and lagoon

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Governing the Forgotten Coast

- Regaining control over time and space: **sovereignty, livelihood and dwelling**
 - **Reversing the spatial and political perspective:** starting with the encompassing landscape (minescape/ timescape) and **local territorializing practices** (adjacency rights, terraqueous territoriality, network-like social topography, embodied past)...
 -and not from the enclave/impact/compensation nexus (cf. mining companies asking for compensation)
 - The Provincial Parc provincial as **integrated governable space** (managing/action plan, adjacent/buffer zone, consultation/participation)?
- ✓ **Ongoing process, unexpected (stable?) alliances, competing policy narratives, awaited parc regulation, mining threat: to be continued...**

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