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Mapping and Typology of Stakeholders of Social Enterprises in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba: A Territorialized Analysis of Influence, Power and Dependency Relationships

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Abstract

This article examines the relationships between stakeholders in social enterprises in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba and their effects on governance, strategic autonomy, and social value creation. The study adopts an interpretative paradigm and a qualitative, inductive, comparative, and phenomenological approach. The empirical design focuses on 21 social enterprises and 79 participants. Data, collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory mapping, observations, and document analysis, were processed using thematic coding and case comparisons. The results distinguish four categories of stakeholders: holders of economic resources, public institutions, community networks, and beneficiaries. Mining companies and donors wield significant power when they control resources with few substitutes. Public authorities provide regulatory legitimacy, while churches, NGOs, and community groups strengthen social acceptability. Despite their legitimacy and the urgency of their needs, beneficiaries remain only weakly involved in strategic decisions. This asymmetry limits strategic autonomy of social enterprises, thereby constraining the fulfillment of their social mission. The territorial comparison reveals a stronger integration of mining value chains in Lualaba, while Haut-Katanga presents a more pluralistic configuration. Four patterns emerge: domination by resource owners, institutional dependence, community legitimation, and partnership interdependence. The study recommends resource diversification, balanced partnerships, territorial coalitions, and the effective participation of beneficiaries.

Keywords: *Social Entrepreneurship, Social Enterprises, Stakeholders; Salience, Resource Dependence, Governance, Territorial Embeddedness.*

1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship in the Democratic Republic of Congo is situated within a context of institutional transformation characterized by the simultaneous pursuit of economic activity creation, the formalization of entrepreneurial initiatives, and sustainable responses to social needs. Social enterprises occupy a unique position within this environment, as they pursue a social or environmental mission while simultaneously mobilizing entrepreneurial methods, market resources, philanthropic funding, and community solidarity mechanisms. They must therefore reconcile the imperatives of economic viability, social legitimacy, and mission continuity, which exposes them to tensions between various organizational logics (Mair & Martí, 2006; Battilana & Lee, 2014).

In the DRC, social entrepreneurship benefits from explicit legal recognition through Ordinance-Law No. 22/030 of September 8, 2022, concerning the promotion of entrepreneurship and startups. This text establishes the rules applicable to the creation, operation, promotion, and development of entrepreneurship, startups, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Article 3 distinguishes between economic entrepreneurship, which pursues a profit-making objective, and social entrepreneurship, which is oriented towards a social and non-profit objective. Social entrepreneurship is defined as a private organization using entrepreneurial methods to sustainably pursue a social or environmental mission and reinvesting the majority of its profits in this mission. Articles 74 and 75 specifically provide for access to financing, the granting of subsidies, the adoption of an appropriate tax regime, capacity building, and preferential treatment in access to public procurement (Democratic Republic of Congo, 2022).

This legal recognition, however, does not in itself guarantee effective access to resources, markets, and public programs. Social enterprises must contend with a multitude of public, private, community, and international stakeholders whose expectations, interests,

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and influence are not always aligned. Their trajectory therefore depends not only on their business model and internal capacities, but also on the relationships they maintain with funders, authorities, businesses, communities, and beneficiaries. This issue is particularly important in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba, where the economic and territorial environment is heavily structured by copper and cobalt value chains. Extractive activity there influences employment, subcontracting, migration, urbanization, livelihoods, and the relationships between businesses, public authorities, and communities. These two provinces are among the main copper and cobalt production areas in the DRC and are the focus of numerous interactions between industrial mining, artisanal activities, and community development. In this space, social enterprises operate within a dense network that includes mining companies, subcontractors, cooperatives, government bodies, chiefdoms, NGOs, churches, international donors, and community groups.

The presence of these actors creates opportunities for financing, training, access to equipment, and integration into supply chains. It also produces asymmetries when essential resources are concentrated in the hands of a few partners. Social enterprises can then maintain their identity and formal mission while adapting their priorities to the conditions of funders, authorities, or clients. The mining territory thus constitutes simultaneously a structure of opportunity and a space of dependence.

The literature on social entrepreneurship has primarily focused on social value creation, innovation, hybrid organizational models, and the tensions between social mission and financial viability (Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Battilana & Lee, 2014). Research on hybridity shows that social enterprises must articulate social, market, administrative, and community logics that are sometimes incompatible (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2013). However, this research still insufficiently analyzes the territorialized power relations specific to African extractive economies. Stakeholder theory provides a relevant framework for examining this issue. Freeman (1984) defines a stakeholder as any individual or group likely to affect the objectives of an organization or be affected by their achievement. Donaldson and Preston (1995) demonstrate that this approach allows for the study of interests, participation, and responsibilities associated with governance. Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) propose measuring stakeholder salience based on power, legitimacy, and urgency, while Rowley (1997) emphasizes that their influence also depends on their position within the relational network. Resource dependence theory complements this interpretation: an organization becomes dependent when an actor controls an essential and difficult-to-substitute resource (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Power thus constitutes a relational property, proportional to the other party's dependence (Emerson, 1962).

The central question of this study is therefore: how are stakeholders in social enterprises formed in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba, and how do their relationships of influence, power, and dependence structure governance and the capacity to create social value? The study aims to map the actors, develop a typology based on their roles and salience, and then analyze the relational configurations that shape the strategic autonomy and sustainability of social action. It employs a qualitative, inductive, comprehensive, comparative, and phenomenological approach, adapted to the study of situated organizational phenomena (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The article successively presents the literature and theoretical framework, the methodology, the results, their discussion, and then the contributions, implications, limitations, and future research perspectives.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The social enterprise as a hybrid and territorialized organization

A social enterprise is an organization that primarily pursues a social purpose while mobilizing economic, market, philanthropic, or public resources to ensure the continuity of its activities. Defourny and Nyssens (2010) demonstrate that this organizational form lies at the intersection of several traditions, notably the social economy, social entrepreneurship, and community-based enterprises. It cannot therefore be defined solely by its legal status or by the pursuit of commercial activities, but rather by the interplay between its social mission, economic activity, governance, and stakeholder participation.

This structure places the social enterprise in a situation of institutional hybridity. Battilana and Dorado (2010) explain that hybrid organizations combine potentially conflicting logics, such as social, market, administrative, and community logics. Pache and Santos (2013) show that these organizations do not respond uniformly to institutional pressures: they may combine, negotiate, or selectively integrate them. In Haut-Katanga and Lualaba, this hybridity notably involves a social mission, religious support, public regulation, international funding, and relationships with mining companies.

Social enterprises must also be understood as territorially embedded organizations. Granovetter (1985) emphasizes that economic activities are embedded in social networks, relationships of trust, and reciprocal obligations. Boschma (2005) expands on this perspective by distinguishing between geographical, social, institutional, organizational, and cognitive proximity. Thus, the physical proximity of a social enterprise to a mining site is not enough to guarantee its access to resources. Access also depends on its reputation, its formalization, its administrative capacities, and its integration into decision-making networks. The results clearly show that the mining territory constitutes less a space of automatically accessible resources than a system of relationally distributed resources.

2.2. Stakeholder Theory and Relational Salience

Stakeholder theory forms the first cornerstone of the theoretical framework. Freeman (1984) defines a stakeholder as any group or individual likely to influence the objectives of an organization or be affected by their achievement. This concept allows for the integration of mining companies, donors, government agencies, NGOs, churches, communities, and beneficiaries into a single analytical framework.

Clarkson (1995) distinguishes between primary stakeholders, essential to the organization's continuity, and secondary stakeholders, whose influence is less directly linked to its survival. However, this distinction becomes relative in social enterprises. Donors and mining companies are primary stakeholders when they control critical resources; authorities become primary stakeholders when they condition approval; and beneficiaries are primary stakeholders in terms of their mission, even when they have little decision-making power.

Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) propose assessing stakeholder salience based on three attributes: power, legitimacy, and urgency. Their model explains why international donors appear as definitive stakeholders, while mining companies are dominant or definitive depending on the perceived urgency of their expectations. Beneficiaries present the opposite configuration: their legitimacy and the urgency of their needs are high, but their power remains low. They thus become central to the mission and peripheral to governance, which constitutes one of the main paradoxes observed.

2.3. Dependence on resources and influence strategies

Resource dependence theory explains the observed asymmetries. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) argue that an organization depends on the actors who control the resources necessary for its survival, particularly when these resources are concentrated and difficult to substitute. Emerson (1962) also defines power as a property of the relationship: one actor's power over another increases with the latter's dependence.

This perspective allows us to distinguish several forms of dependency. A subsidy produces philanthropic dependency; equipment or training generates productive dependency; a supply contract can create commercial dependency on a dominant client. The shift from donation to market does not necessarily eliminate asymmetry, but rather transforms its basis. The results confirm that the central issue is not only the mining or non-mining origin of the resource, but also its degree of concentration and its substitutability.

Frooman (1999) distinguishes between resource use and resource retention strategies. A funder exerts influence through resource use when they condition their support on certain priorities, procedures, or reporting requirements. They resort to resource retention when they suspend a grant, contract, equipment, or authorization. These mechanisms explain the residual strategic autonomy of social enterprises: they retain their identity and management bodies, but their choices remain constrained by available resources.

2.4. Legitimacy, governance and risk of mission drift

The theory of legitimacy complements this analysis. Suchman (1995) notably distinguishes between pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy. In the ecosystem studied, legitimacy is also institutional when it is based on public approval, community-based when it results from local trust, and mission-based when it stems from the needs of the beneficiaries. However, these forms are not equally convertible into resources or power.

Finally, social enterprises are exposed to the risk of mission drift. Ebrahim, Battilana, and Mair (2014) show that the plurality of objectives and stakeholders can gradually shift the focus from the social mission to the demands of funders or clients. It is therefore important to distinguish between perceived drift, explicitly acknowledged by managers, and structural drift, observable in the evolution of activities, targeted beneficiaries, and resource allocation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Epistemological positioning and research orientation

This research adopts a constructivist-oriented interpretive paradigm. From this perspective, organizational reality is not understood as a completely objective given, independent of the actors, but rather as a construct resulting from their experiences, interactions, representations, and interpretations of lived situations (Schwandt, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This approach is well-suited to the study of stakeholders in social enterprises, since power, legitimacy, urgency, influence, and dependence do not stem solely from formal positions. They also depend on the resources controlled, the relationships maintained, and the actors' territorial embeddedness.

This research adopts a qualitative, exploratory, comprehensive, interpretive, and comparative approach. It is exploratory due to the limited documentation of relational configurations within social enterprises in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba. It is comprehensive because it seeks to understand the meanings that managers, workers, beneficiaries, authorities, partners, and community representatives attribute to their relationships. It is interpretive because it aims to explain the mechanisms by which certain stakeholders become priorities or dominant. It is comparative because it examines the observed configurations between organizations and between the two provinces.

The research logic is informed inductive and abductive. Codes and categories emerge progressively from the data, while theories are used as sensitizing concepts rather than as a closed framework (Charmaz, 2014). Abduction relies on iterative movements between data, provisional interpretations, and theoretical frameworks to identify the most plausible explanation (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). The presentation of the results is inspired by Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013), distinguishing between first-order concepts, second-order themes, and aggregated theoretical dimensions.

3.2. Design, context and units of analysis

The chosen approach is a multi-site, multi-case qualitative study with nested units. Haut-Katanga and Lualaba constitute the territorial sites, while the selected social enterprises represent the organizational cases. The case study is well-suited to analyzing a phenomenon inseparable from its institutional, economic, and social context (Yin, 2018). Using multiple cases allows for analytical replication and the comparison of regularities and differences (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The primary unit of analysis is the relationship between a social enterprise and a stakeholder. Managers, workers, beneficiaries, authorities, mining companies, funders, and community representatives constitute the units of observation. The analysis articulates the individual, organizational, inter-organizational, institutional, and territorial levels. The study is cross-cutting, while also incorporating retrospective narratives on the origin of the relationships, critical events, and transformations in power dynamics. It also exhibits an interpretative phenomenological sensitivity, centered on the experience of dependency, negotiation, institutional pressure, and the search for legitimacy (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; van Manen, 2016).

3.3. Population and sampling

The empirical scope includes social enterprises operating in both provinces. An organization is considered included if it pursues an explicit social or environmental mission, engages in regular economic activity, has an identifiable structure, a local presence, and observable relationships with multiple categories of stakeholders. One-off initiatives, inactive initiatives, or those lacking minimal autonomy are excluded.

The population includes internal and external stakeholders: founders, managers, workers, beneficiaries, communities, authorities, mining companies, funders, customers, suppliers, NGOs, incubators, cooperation bodies, universities, media and socio-professional organizations, in accordance with Freeman's definition (1984).

The selection was based on purposive sampling with maximum variation, covering the diversity of provinces, sectors, sizes, seniority, legal statuses, financing methods, and mining relationships (Patton, 2015). This was complemented by criteria sampling, key stakeholder selection, chain sampling, and progressive sampling. Size was determined according to the informational power of Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2016). The final sample comprised 21 social enterprises and 79 participants.

3.4. Data Collection

Data are collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory mapping, document analysis, and non-participant observation. This triangulation compares discourse, practices, and organizational traces to strengthen the credibility of the results (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 2015). The interviews focus on the mission, business model, governance, resources, power relations, dependencies, and their effects on strategic autonomy. They are recorded with consent and fully transcribed.

The critical incident technique allows for the collection of specific situations in which a stakeholder facilitated or blocked a resource, influenced a decision, or altered organizational priorities (Flanagan, 1954). Document analysis includes statutes, reports, contracts, agreements, minutes, strategic plans, and correspondence, in accordance with Bowen (2009).

Mapping is carried out for each social enterprise and then aggregated by province. Actors are identified through interviews, documents, and observations. A relational matrix specifies their category, the resources exchanged, the direction of influence, the strength of the link, its frequency, and the consequences of a rupture (Reed et al., 2009). The maps represent stakeholders as nodes, their salience indicated by their size, the intensity of the relationships by the thickness of the links, and the direction of influence by arrows. This approach takes into account each actor's position within the overall network (Rowley, 1997).

The typology distinguishes between internal and external, primary and secondary actors according to Clarkson (1995), then analyzes their power, legitimacy, and the urgency of their demands according to Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997). It also incorporates the nature, criticality, and substitutability of the controlled resources.

3.5. Territorial analysis and data processing

Territory is considered as a system of resources, institutions, networks, and power relations. This conception draws on Granovetter's (1985) embeddedness theory and Boschma's (2005) different forms of proximity. An influence-dependence matrix is constructed for each province. Power is analyzed as a relationship based on dependence (Emerson, 1962), while this dependence depends on the importance and substitutability of the controlled resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Direct and indirect strategies for resource use or retention are studied following Frooman (1999).

Thematic analysis follows familiarization, coding, categorization, theme construction, intra-case analysis, and inter-case comparison (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Rigor is based on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), reinforced by triangulation, divergent cases, reflective journaling, and maintaining a chain of evidence.

4. Study Results

4.1. Presentation and analytical scope of the results

The analysis highlights a territorial ecosystem composed of stakeholders with differentiated functions, resources, and capacities for influence. The results are based on two complementary sources: interviews conducted with managers of social structures and institutional actors in Haut-Katanga, and a triangulation of documents relating to social enterprises, mining companies, and support organizations operating in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba. The comparison between the two provinces remains analytical rather than statistical, given the uneven density of available primary data.

The data processing follows the approach of Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013), which distinguishes between first-order concepts derived from the participants' language, second-order themes constructed by the researchers, and aggregated theoretical dimensions. This structuring reveals five major findings: the centrality of resource holders, the residual strategic autonomy of social enterprises, the plurality of forms of legitimacy, the paradoxical position of beneficiaries, and the embeddedness of relationships within the mining territory.

Table 1. Summary structure of qualitative data

First-order concepts from the corpus	Second-order themes	Aggregate theoretical dimensions
"The Tumaini orphanage center receives subsidies from the Ruashi Mining company."	Concentration of resources with a mining company	Centrality of critical resource holders
"We are completely dependent on donations."	Low substitutability of resources	Asymmetric financial dependence
"They are forcing us to follow a certain course of action."	External orientation of decisions	Residual strategic autonomy
"They can disrupt and promote our activities."	Power to retain or allocate resources	Utilitarian and coercive power
“We are working in collaboration with the Provincial Division of Social Affairs.”	Administrative recognition and certification	Institutional legitimacy
"The orphanage survives through the help of the Lord."	Mobilization of faith and religious networks	Moral and community legitimacy
"Inadequate food, illness and death of an old man"	Immediate temporality of needs	Social emergency
"A direct relationship with only one mining company, Ruashi Mining"	bilateral concentration of relations	Mining embeddedness and territorial vulnerability
"Local content policies do not influence partnerships."	Poor operational implementation of institutional mechanisms	Discrepancy between regulations and relational practices
“No coalition observed”	Fragmentation of relations between social enterprises	Weak territorial collective power
"We want to formalize our relationships with any company or individual who wishes to help us."	Seeking contractual agreements	Emergence of a partnership-based governance

Source: Developed from the corpus

4.2. Stakeholder Ecosystem Mapping

The mapping identifies four groups: resource-holding economic actors, public institutions, community networks, and beneficiaries. Mining companies, international donors, and certain institutional clients primarily control funding, equipment, technical expertise, and market access. Public institutions, particularly provincial social affairs divisions and provincial governments, provide accreditation, regulation, and official recognition. Churches, NGOs, volunteers, women's groups, and individuals ensure community engagement, mediation, and social mobilization. Finally, beneficiaries define the organizations' mission but generally have little power over resource allocation.

Two relational architectures thus overlap. The material architecture is dominated by those who control funding and markets, while the normative architecture is based on institutions, communities, and beneficiaries. Vulnerability arises when the actors controlling resources are distant from those who address social needs.

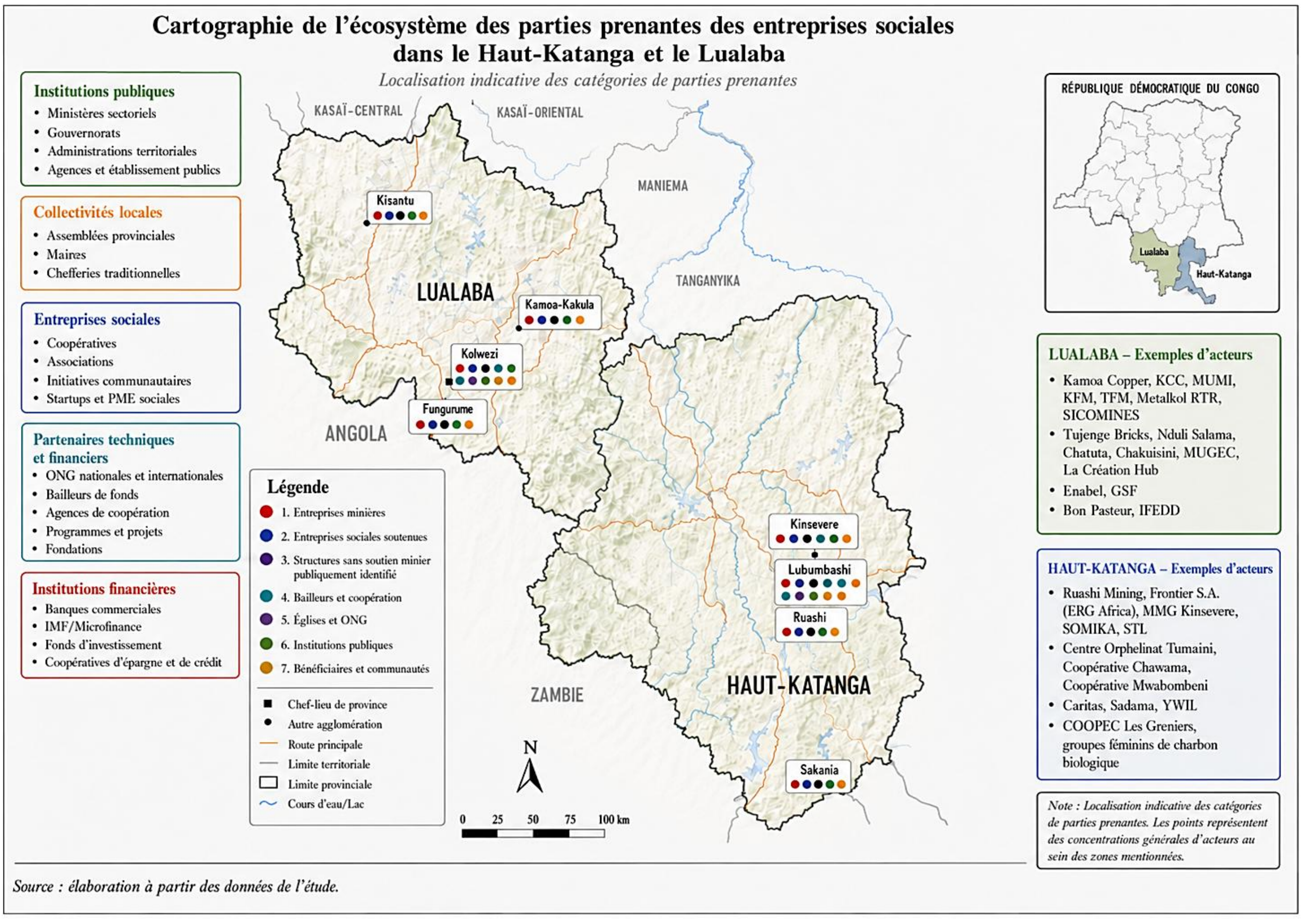


Figure 1. Mapping of the stakeholder ecosystem of social enterprises in Haut Katanga and Lualaba

4.3. Differentiated centrality of mining companies

Mining support takes four main forms: philanthropic support, productive support, commercial integration, and indirect ecosystem support. Ruashi Mining's funding of the Tumaini Orphanage Center is primarily philanthropic. Conversely, Tujenge Bricks, Chatuta, Chawama, and Mwabombeni are more integrated into mining value chains through production, processing, or service provision.

Table 2. Social enterprises and community structures benefiting from identified mining support

Social enterprise or structure	Province and location	Activity and social purpose	Mining company and form of support	Nature of the economic relationship
Tujenge Bricks	Lualaba, Kamoa-Kakula area	Brickmaking, community jobs and redistribution to members	Kamoa Copper: start-up financing, machinery, training and management support	Supply of bricks to Kamoa-Kakula since 2018; 49 community members
Tumaini Orphanage Center	Haut-Katanga	Care and daycare for vulnerable children	Ruashi Mining: financial assistance and subsidies	Primarily a philanthropic relationship, with no documented commercial market
Ndizi Salama	Lualaba, neighboring communities of Kamoa-Kakula	Banana production and women's economic empowerment	Kamoa Copper: creation and support of an 11-hectare plantation	Company operated by 26 women; specific market opportunities not disclosed
Chatuta Sewing Center	Lualaba, Kamoa-Kakula	Uniform making, training and employment for women	Kamoa Copper: two phases of financing and capacity building	Sales of over 1,000 uniforms per month to Kamoa Copper and to mine-related social infrastructure

Chawama Agricultural Cooperative	Haut-Katanga, Kimfumpa, Kabumba and Sakania	Commercial and subsistence agriculture, food security and farm incomes	Frontier, part of the ERG Africa group: land, inputs, equipment, roads and training	Production sold on markets and partially integrated into Frontier's supply chain
Mwabombeni Cooperative	Haut-Katanga, Frontier-Sakania area	Processing of corn into flour and animal feed	Frontier: Installation and support of a processing unit	Sales to the Frontier catering provider and at local markets
Mukanga Car Wash	Lualaba, Kamoa-Kakula area	Car washing and job creation	Kamoa Copper: Supporting the development of a local business	Services related to the Kamoa ecosystem; contractual terms not published
Mwaiseni Restaurant	Lualaba, Kamoa-Kakula truck waiting area	Restoration and creation of community income	Kamoa Copper: support for creation and operation	Selling meals to truck drivers
Eleven agricultural cooperatives from Kamoa	Lualaba, riverside communities	Maize, market gardening, fish farming, arboriculture, beekeeping and poultry farming	Kamoa Copper: tractors, inputs, equipment, training and structuring	Potential for integration into the supply chain; individual names not disclosed.

Source: Compiled from the documentary corpus

These forms of support do not produce the same dependencies. Subsidies create a dependency on the donor, while commercial integration can generate a dependency on a dominant customer. The Tumaini case shows that the mining company's power stems less from the amount of funding than from its irreplaceable nature. When its own resources are limited, the partner can direct activities, impose procedures, or withdraw support. This relationship corresponds to the resource dependency described by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and to the relational conception of power formulated by Emerson (1962).

A sequence of converging extracts illustrates this centrality:

“The Tumaini orphanage regularly receives subsidies from the Ruashi Mining company. This support allows us to cover some of the children's essential needs, including food, school supplies, healthcare, and certain maintenance work at the center. Without this contribution, it would be difficult for us to properly ensure the continuity of our activities, because our own resources remain limited. Ruashi Mining's intervention is therefore important support for the operation of the center and for the care of the children we welcome. However, this aid depends on the company's priorities and decisions, which means that we do not always control the regularity, amount, or duration of the subsidies granted.”

Commercial integration reduces reliance on donations by fostering market revenues, organizational learning, and community employment. However, it remains fragile when the social enterprise depends on a single mining client. Sustainability therefore requires a gradual diversification of markets.

4.4. Social enterprises without identified mining support

The absence of publicly documented mining support does not mean the absence of a relationship with the extractive sector. Some collaborations may be informal, indirect, or undisclosed. Nor does it imply organizational independence.

Table 3. Social enterprises and social economy structures without publicly identified mining support

Structure	Province	Activity and social purpose	Documented non-mining support
ChaKuishi, “Food for Life”	Lualaba, Kolwezi	Market gardening, fruit production, nurseries and fish farming; women's empowerment and food security	Good Shepherd International Foundation and Good Shepherd Kolwezi
MUGEC	Lualaba, Kolwezi, Kapata and Joli Site	Solidarity savings, community loans, micro-insurance and agricultural support	Member savings and community mechanisms
The Creation Hub	Lualaba, Kolwezi	Incubation, coaching, formalization, interest-free loans, and networking	Enabel, ANADEC, SOPA+ and own resources
COOPEC Les Greniers	Haut-Katanga, Lubumbashi	Savings, credit and financial education	Member savings and participation
Enabel-CDR Women's Market Gardening Cooperatives	Haut-Katanga	Community market gardening and agricultural projects	Enabel and Regional Development Centre

Women's groups producing biochar	Haut-Katanga, Lubumbashi	Waste transformation, biochar and improved cookstoves	Caritas-Congo/Katanga and partner organizations
Kisanga Women's Agricultural Cooperative	Haut-Katanga	Agriculture and market gardening	Saidiana
Women's poultry farming groups	Haut-Katanga	Poultry breeding, incubation and sale	Saidiana
Women-owned event equipment rental company	Haut-Katanga, Lubumbashi	Equipment rental for ceremonies	Saidiana
Community lounge for young mothers	Haut-Katanga, Lubumbashi	Hairdressing, training and professional integration	$4,200 micro-grant from Saidiana
Women's pot-making workshop	Haut-Katanga, Lubumbashi	Artisanal production and women's income	Saidiana
Sewing workshop and school	Haut-Katanga, Lubumbashi and Kisanga	Training and production of clothing and uniforms	Saidiana and, for certain activities, Kimbilio

Source: Developed based on the documentary corpus

The organizations in question draw on other sources of funding: international grants, religious philanthropy, membership fees, mutual savings, volunteer work, and technical support. The dependency thus changes hands without disappearing. The determining variable is not only whether the funding originates from mining or non-mining sources, but also its concentration and substitutability.

4.5. Typology and salience of stakeholders

Other stakeholders include donors, government agencies, NGOs, churches, mutual aid societies, community groups, and beneficiaries. Some actors, such as Enabel, Caritas, or incubators, exert influence through intermediation: they translate funders' requirements, select beneficiaries, and facilitate access to institutions or markets.

Table 4. Typology of other ecosystem stakeholders

Category	Identified actors	Main Resources and Functions	Structures or groups concerned	Relational position
Donors and international cooperation	Enabel, European Union, Misereor, Saidiana, GSIF	Funding, training, incubation, equipment, micro-grants and access to networks	Youth, women, incubators, cooperatives, training centers and local NGOs	Holders of financial and methodological resources
Public and semi-public institutions	Provincial Governments, Social Affairs Division, Mines Department, INPP, ANADEC	Approval, regulations, information, training, coordination and recognition	Social enterprises, cooperatives, incubators and beneficiaries	Institutionally empowered stakeholders
Churches and NGOs	Caritas Development Lubumbashi, Caritas-Congo/Katanga, Good Shepherd Kolwezi, Louvain Cooperation, IFEDD, Young Working Ladies	Community engagement, training, advocacy, mediation, support and social protection	Women, young people, artisans, children, producers and vulnerable people	Intermediaries and producers of legitimacy
Mutual and financial structures	MUGEC, COOPEC Les Greniers, SMICO and savings groups	Savings, credit, micro-insurance, financial education and business financing	Shopkeepers, farmers, seamstresses, young entrepreneurs and households	Local financial resource providers
Community groups and "moms"	Market gardeners, farmers, hairdressers, bakers, cookware makers, organic charcoal producers	Work, production, collective mobilization, local knowledge and solidarity	Households, consumers, apprentices and local communities	Hybrid actors, simultaneously producers and beneficiaries
Final beneficiaries	Children, unemployed youth, vulnerable women, people living with disabilities, farmers and poor households	Expression of needs, participation in activities and legitimacy of the mission	All social and economic programs	Mission-central stakeholders, but with limited power

Source: Compiled from documentary research

According to Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997), international donors have the greatest salience because they combine power, legitimacy, and a sense of urgency. Partner mining companies are dominant or definitive when their resources are essential.

Public authorities possess regulatory power and strong institutional legitimacy. Beneficiaries, on the other hand, have high legitimacy and a sense of urgency, but limited decision-making power.

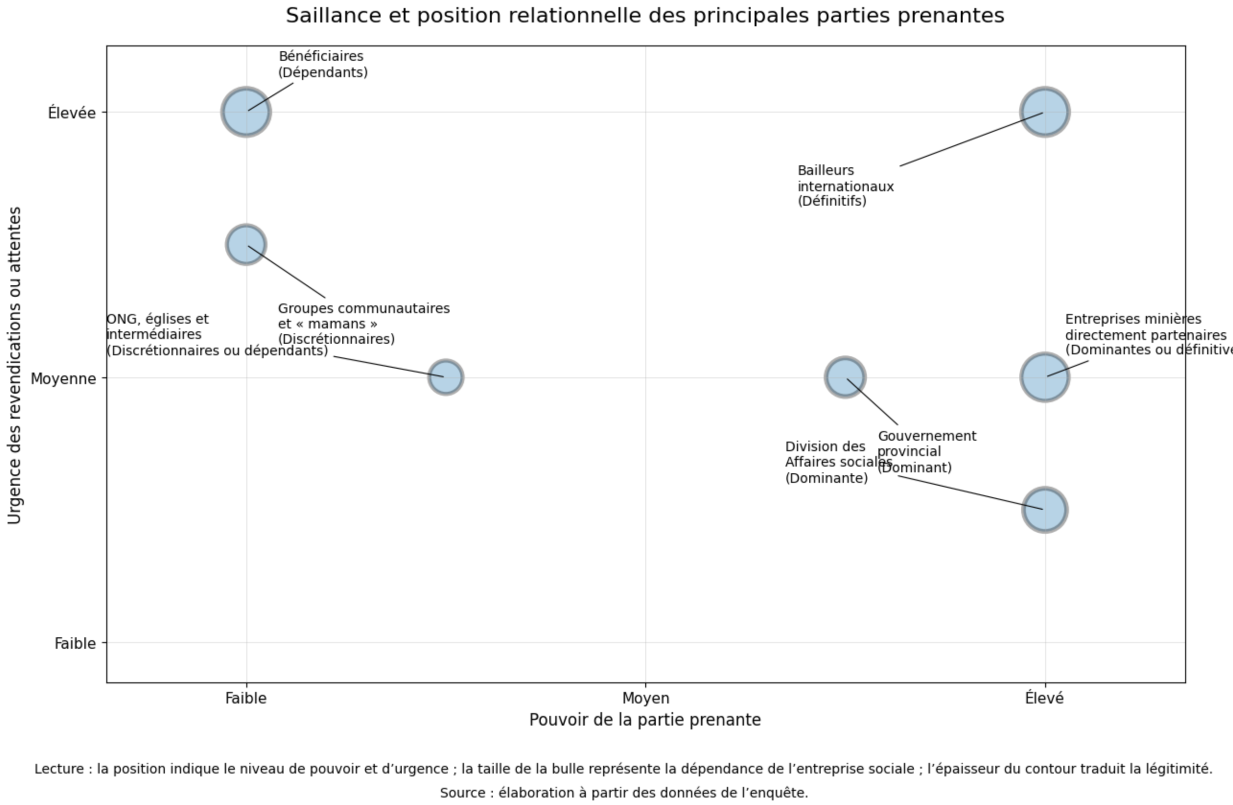


Figure 5. Salience and relational position of the main stakeholders

The graph highlights a highly differentiated relationship structure among the main stakeholders of social enterprises in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba. International donors occupy the highest salience position, as they combine significant power, strong legitimacy, and a high degree of urgency linked to funding deadlines, reporting requirements, and expected results. They thus correspond to definitive stakeholders in the sense of Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997).

Mining companies that are direct partners also wield significant power, particularly when they control financial resources, contracts, or markets that are difficult to replace. However, their perceived urgency is more variable, which explains their dominant or, in some circumstances, definitive position. The Provincial Division of Social Affairs and the Provincial Government are characterized by high institutional legitimacy and significant regulatory or administrative power. Their influence rests primarily on accreditation, oversight, official recognition, and access to public services, even if the urgency of their demands generally remains low to moderate.

Conversely, beneficiaries have limited material and decision-making power, despite possessing the highest levels of legitimacy and perceived urgency. This position reflects their dependent nature: they establish the mission and social justification of organizations, but rarely control resources, authorizations, or strategic choices. Community groups, women's groups, NGOs, churches, and intermediaries occupy intermediate positions. Their formal power remains weak, but their social legitimacy, local presence, and mobilization capacity grant them significant operational influence.

Overall, the graph reveals a relational paradox: the most powerful actors are not necessarily those whose needs are most urgent, while the beneficiaries, though central to the mission, remain peripheral in governance. This configuration confirms that the continuity of social enterprises depends primarily on resource holders and recognition authorities, while their substantive legitimacy rests on communities and beneficiaries. It reflects a power asymmetry characteristic of resource dependency relationships, in which the capacity to influence stems from the control of scarce, critical, and difficult-to-replace resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

4.6. Territorialization, fragmentation and strategic autonomy

Haut-Katanga presents a diverse configuration combining mining philanthropy, agricultural integration, and urban initiatives supported by religious or mutualist networks. In Lualaba, the integration of community enterprises into mining value chains appears more visible, particularly around Kamoa-Kakula. This difference, however, must be interpreted with caution due to the uneven availability of data. Geographic proximity to a mining site does not guarantee access to resources. It must be complemented by social, organizational, institutional, and cognitive proximity (Boschma, 2005). Access to support depends on reputation, administrative capacity, formalization, and the existence of intermediaries.

Relations remain primarily bilateral and fragmented. The lack of coalitions among social enterprises limits their bargaining power and reinforces the centrality of mines and donors. Their autonomy is therefore residual: they retain their identity and mission, but adjust their activities to available resources. Formalizing relationships can secure commitments, but does not automatically guarantee contractual balance.

The following verbatim quote illustrates this hybrid nature of religious legitimacy, community support, and institutional relationship:

"The orphanage is a project originally initiated by a religious organization, which provides it with its vision, values, and much of its legitimacy within the community. The religious dimension plays a significant role in its operation, as it fosters trust among the faithful, church leaders, volunteers, and some families who agree to make material, financial, or moral contributions. However, the center does not operate solely on a religious basis. It also works in collaboration with the Provincial Division of Social Affairs, which represents the competent public authority in the area of protection and support for vulnerable children. This collaboration allows the center to be recognized, guided, and monitored administratively. It also facilitates certain procedures related to the identification of children, their care, the compliance of activities, and coordination with other social services."

4.7. Differentiated territorialization between Haut-Katanga and Lualaba

The documented cases in Haut-Katanga reveal three sub-configurations. The first is a philanthropic configuration, illustrated by the relationship between Ruashi Mining and the Tumaini Orphanage Center. The mining resource directly supports a social mission but is not based on integrated commercial activity. The second is a rural production configuration, observed around Frontier in Sakania. Chawama and Mwabombeni combine agricultural production, processing, and commercial outlets. In this configuration, the mining company acts as a financier, trainer, infrastructure facilitator, and indirect customer.

The third is an urban and community-based configuration around Lubumbashi. It includes women's groups supported by Saidiana, Caritas initiatives, biochar production groups, credit unions (COOPECs), sewing workshops, and community halls. These structures depend more on religious, philanthropic, and mutualist networks than on mining companies.

Haut-Katanga cannot therefore be characterized solely by a direct dependence on mines. Its ecosystem is pluralistic, but fragmented. It includes direct mining relationships, interventions from international cooperation, and a network of micro-community initiatives whose coordination capacities remain limited.

In Lualaba, mining companies are increasingly seen as organizers of community economic activities. Kamoa Copper supports brick production, sewing, agriculture, catering, and service-based initiatives. KCC and MUMI support cooperatives and associations developing alternatives to artisanal mining. Kisanfu Mining is involved in creating community savings and microcredit programs. This pattern is linked to the concentration of mining activities around Kolwezi, Kamoa-Kakula, Tenke, Fungurume, and the communities affected by artisanal mining. Social projects are frequently presented as tools for restoring or diversifying livelihoods. They aim to offer economic alternatives to dependence on artisanal copper and cobalt mining.

Lualaba, however, includes social enterprises not funded by mining, notably ChaKuishi, MUGEC, and La Création Hub. These organizations demonstrate that the ecosystem is not limited to extractive company programs. They do, however, address problems caused or exacerbated by the mining context: food insecurity, women's vulnerability, child labor, economic displacement, and difficulties accessing agricultural land.

The results show that a social enterprise's proximity to a mining site does not guarantee its access to resources. Proximity must be understood as a multidimensional construct. Boschma (2005) distinguishes, in particular, between geographical, social, organizational, institutional, and cognitive proximity. An organization can be physically close to a mine but remain distant from its procedures, decision-makers, and information networks. Access to support therefore depends on several conditions: institutional recognition, reputation, administrative capacity, the existence of an intermediary, compliance with the funder's criteria, and the ability to meet supply chain standards. The mining territory is less a space of automatically available resources than a space of relationally accessible resources.

One of the most significant findings is the absence of a structured coalition among social enterprises. The observed relationships are primarily bilateral: social enterprise–mining company, social enterprise–donor, social enterprise–government, or social enterprise–NGO. This fragmentation weakens the bargaining power of social enterprises. An isolated organization negotiates alone with a partner possessing greater resources, information, and legal capacity. It is also less able to share the costs of training, certification, marketing, and administrative support. Rowley (1997) demonstrates that an organization's position within a network affects its ability to respond to stakeholder pressures. A high density of relationships among peripheral actors can reduce dependence on a central actor. In the case studied, the low density of horizontal relationships reinforces the centrality of the mines and donors.

The formation of provincial federations, social enterprise platforms, or supply consortia could transform this situation. A coalition would allow for the pooling of information, the negotiation of group contracts, the establishment of common standards, and dialogue with mining companies and authorities. However, available data shows that this collective governance remains a prospective prospect.

4.8. Relational Configurations and Interpretive Model

Four configurations are emerging: governance dominated by resource holders, institutional dependence, community legitimation, and partnership interdependence. The latter remains prospective and presupposes a diversification of resources, balanced contracts, multiple outlets, and increased beneficiary participation.

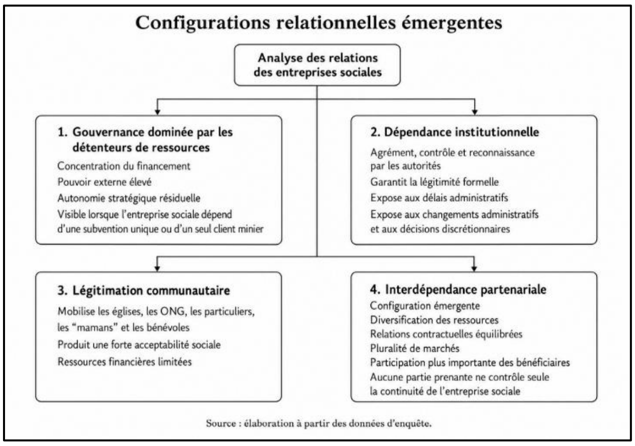


Figure 2. Emergent relational configurations

The first is governance dominated by resource holders. It combines concentrated funding, high external power, and residual strategic autonomy. It is particularly visible when the social enterprise depends on a single grant or a single mining client. The second is institutional dependence. It relies on approval, control, and recognition by the authorities. This configuration guarantees formal legitimacy but can expose the organization to delays, administrative changes, and discretionary decisions. The third is community legitimation. It mobilizes churches, NGOs, individuals, women's mothers, and volunteers. It generates strong social acceptability but limited financial resources. The fourth is partnership interdependence. It remains emerging. It presupposes a diversification of resources, balanced contractual relationships, a plurality of markets, and greater beneficiary participation. In this configuration, no single stakeholder controls the continuity of the social enterprise.

The corpus expresses it in these terms

"Beneficiary children are at the heart of our organization's mission, because all our activities are geared towards meeting their needs. We work primarily with people in highly vulnerable situations, including children without family support, women in difficult circumstances, the elderly, people living with disabilities, unemployed youth, and households without sufficient resources to feed themselves. Their living conditions, their daily struggles, and the urgency of their needs justify the existence of our organization and the continuation of our work."

4.9 Summary of main results

The mapping highlights the centrality of mining companies and donors, whose influence varies according to the nature of the support provided. Philanthropic funding, productive support, the provision of equipment, and commercial integration generate distinct forms of dependency.

The territorial comparison reveals a more visible integration of certain community-based enterprises in Lualaba into mining value chains, particularly around Kamoa-Kakula. Haut-Katanga presents a more diverse configuration, combining philanthropic support, agricultural projects linked to Frontier, and urban community initiatives supported by non-mining actors. This difference must nevertheless be interpreted with caution due to the uneven density of primary data. Social enterprises without publicly identified mining support are not independent. They depend on donors, philanthropic organizations, religious networks, mutual aid societies, or savings communities. The determining factor, therefore, lies in the concentration and substitutability of resources. Legitimacy is also multifaceted: regulatory for government agencies, moral for churches and communities, pragmatic for mines and donors, and missionary for beneficiaries. However, these forms of legitimacy do not necessarily translate into power. The beneficiaries thus occupy a paradoxical position: central to the mission and the social emergency, they remain peripheral in strategic decisions, in accordance with the category of dependent stakeholders of Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997).

Finally, proximity to mining sites presents both an opportunity and a constraint. Fragmented relationships and the absence of coalitions limit bargaining power. Sustainability therefore requires revenue diversification, formalized partnerships, expanded markets, territorial cooperation, and the effective participation of beneficiaries in governance.

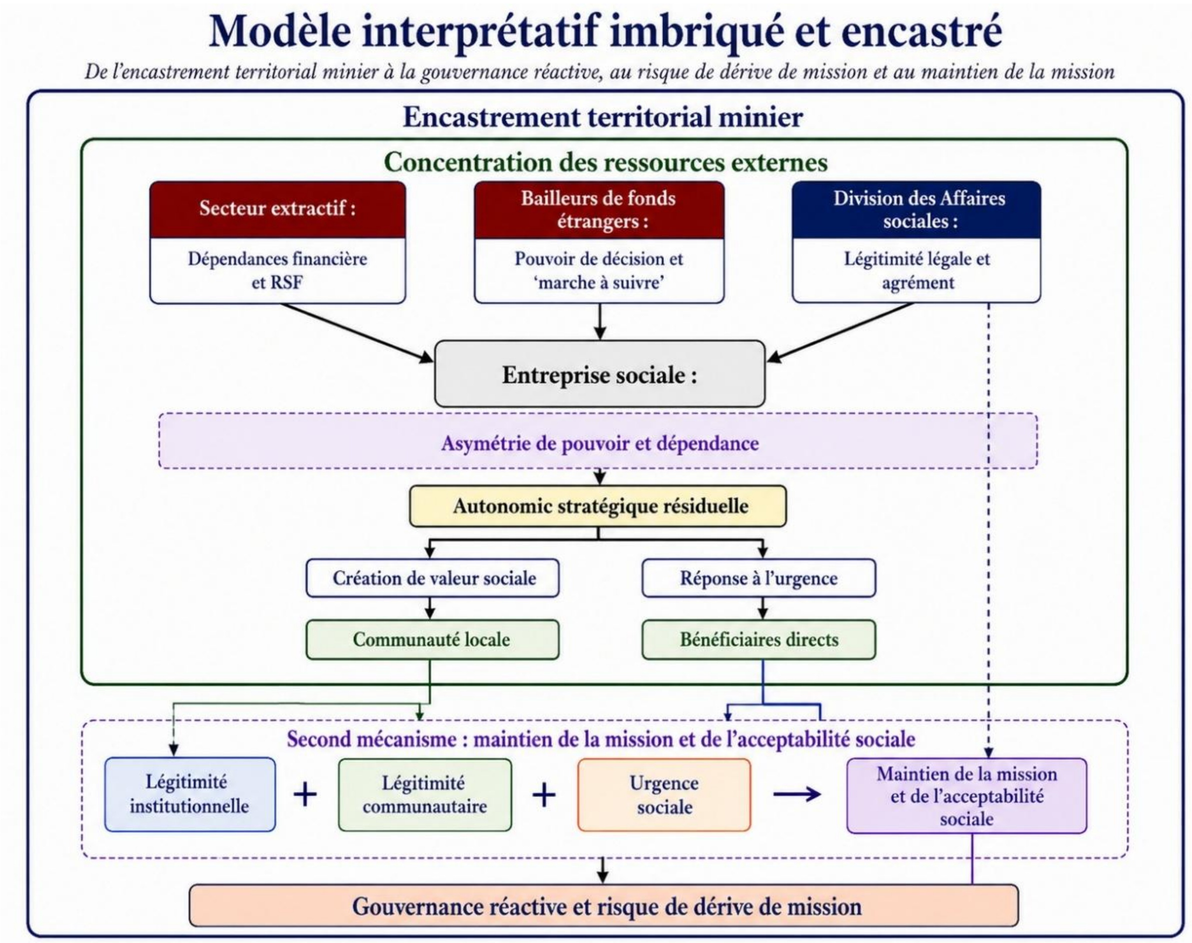
5. Discussion of results

The results show that the stakeholders of social enterprises in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba are not defined solely by their formal status, but also by the meanings that actors attribute to resources, legitimacy, social urgency, and territorial relationships. From an interpretative and phenomenological perspective, power is experienced as a concrete capacity to promote, guide, or disrupt social action. Dependence, on the other hand, is felt as a restriction of autonomy when essential resources come from a limited number of actors. The data thus highlight five dimensions: centrality of resource holders, residual strategic autonomy, plurality of legitimacies, missional centrality but decisional marginality of beneficiaries, and fragmentation of the territorial network.

First, the ecosystem comprises four main categories: economic actors, public institutions, community networks, and beneficiaries. This mapping confirms Freeman's (1984) conception that a stakeholder either affects the organization or is affected by it. However, it goes beyond a simple classification, as each category fulfills a specific function. Mining companies and donors primarily control funding, equipment, skills, and markets; government agencies produce regulatory recognition; churches, NGOs, and community groups generate social acceptability; and beneficiaries establish the mission. This finding aligns with Reed et al. (2009), who recommend simultaneously analyzing the identity, interests, and relationships among stakeholders. It also shows, in accordance with Rowley (1997), that influence depends on the position occupied within the overall network.

Second, stakeholder salience rests on an unequal distribution of power, legitimacy, and urgency. International donors exhibit high salience because they combine financial power, organizational legitimacy, and the urgency associated with deadlines and reporting requirements. Mining companies become dominant or definitive when they control irreplaceable resources. Beneficiaries present the opposite configuration: their legitimacy and the urgency of their needs are high, but their decision-making power remains low. This finding confirms the model of Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997), while revealing a paradox inherent to social enterprise: the actors who justify the mission are rarely those who control the means of its implementation.

Third, influence relationships are embedded within a mining environment that simultaneously generates opportunities and dependencies. Mining support takes philanthropic, productive, commercial, and ecosystemic forms. This diversity demonstrates that the shift from donation to market forces does not eliminate asymmetry; it transforms financial dependence into commercial dependence. This observation extends the theory of Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), according to which power increases when an actor controls a critical and difficult-to-replace resource. It also aligns with Emerson (1962), for whom power is proportional to the other actor's dependence. The use and retention strategies described by Frooman (1999) are also evident: funders influence priorities, impose conditions, or can suspend a grant, contract, or permit.



Source: Developed based on the results

Figure 2. Nested and embedded interpretive model

Fourth, territory functions as a relational construct. In Haut-Katanga, configurations combine mining philanthropy, agricultural projects, and urban community initiatives. In Lualaba, integration into mining value chains is more visible. This difference supports Granovetter's (1985) notion of embeddedness and Boschma's (2005) approach: geographical proximity only produces effects when reinforced by social, organizational, institutional, and cognitive proximities. Access to resources thus depends on reputation, formalization, compliance with procedures, and intermediaries.

These relationships structure a primarily reactive governance. Social enterprises retain their identity and mission but adapt their activities to available resources. This residual strategic autonomy corresponds to the hybridity studied by Battilana and Dorado (2010): organizations must articulate social, religious, administrative, philanthropic, and commercial logics. Even in the absence of perceived mission drift, structural drift can occur when funders' priorities gradually alter resource allocation or the targeted beneficiaries, as highlighted by Ebrahim, Battilana, and Mair (2014). The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its articulation of salience, resource dependence, legitimacy, and territorial embeddedness. It demonstrates that the creation of social value depends on a balance between a material architecture, controlled by funders, and a normative architecture, driven by communities and beneficiaries. Its empirical contribution consists of proposing a territorialized typology of stakeholders in two African mining provinces.

From a managerial perspective, social enterprises should diversify their funding and clients, formalize partnerships, strengthen their administrative capacity, build territorial coalitions, and integrate beneficiaries into governance. Mining companies and donors should prioritize balanced contracts, the development of local suppliers, and participatory mechanisms. Provincial authorities should make local content schemes more accessible. The results structure allows us to propose the following nested and embedded interpretive model as shown in figure 2.

The interpretative model shows that social enterprises in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba operate within a territorial environment heavily structured by mining activity and the concentration of external resources. Three categories of stakeholders exert a decisive influence: extractive companies, which control financing and social responsibility mechanisms; foreign donors, who guide activities through their criteria, procedures, and financing conditions; and the Provincial Division of Social Affairs, which provides accreditation and institutional legitimacy.

This configuration creates a power asymmetry and a strong dependence on those who hold resources, authorizations, and decision-making power. Social enterprises, however, retain a degree of strategic autonomy, enabling them to transform available resources into social value and responses to the urgent needs of their beneficiaries. The sustainability of their mission then depends on a combination of institutional recognition, community legitimacy, and social urgency.

When resources remain concentrated among a few partners, governance becomes reactive and adjusts to available funding. The continuity of the mission thus relies on a fragile balance between external dependence, community integration, and adaptability, with a risk of drift when funders' priorities diverge from local needs.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how stakeholders in social enterprises are formed in the Haut-Katanga and Lualaba provinces, and how their relationships of influence, power, and dependence structure governance, strategic autonomy, and the capacity to create social value. The analysis shows that these enterprises operate within a differentiated territorial ecosystem dominated by four sets of actors: holders of economic resources, public institutions, community networks, and beneficiaries. These categories do not occupy the same positions or perform the same functions. Mining companies and donors concentrate financial, productive, and commercial resources; authorities ensure regulatory recognition; churches, NGOs, and community groups generate social acceptability; and beneficiaries establish missional legitimacy.

The main finding lies in the existence of a structural asymmetry between the actors who control resources and those who bear the social needs. Donors and mining companies exhibit a high salience due to their power and the criticality of the resources they hold. Beneficiaries, conversely, possess high legitimacy and a strong sense of urgency, but remain poorly represented in strategic decisions. This paradox confirms that mission centrality does not automatically translate into governing centrality. The study also shows that mining support forms a continuum ranging from philanthropy to commercial integration. The shift from donation to market-based support can improve productive capacity and income, but it does not necessarily eliminate dependency; it may simply shift it to a dominant client. The decisive variable, therefore, is not only the origin of the resources, but also their concentration, their substitutability, and the conditions attached to their access. This configuration produces a residual strategic autonomy, in which social enterprises retain their formal identity while adjusting their activities to the priorities of funders, authorities or clients.

The territorial comparison reveals a more visible integration of certain initiatives in Lualaba into mining value chains, while Haut-Katanga presents a more pluralistic configuration combining philanthropy, agricultural projects, and urban community networks. This difference remains analytical and should be interpreted with caution, given the uneven density of available data.

Theoretically, the study articulates stakeholder theory, resource dependence, organizational legitimacy, and territorial embeddedness. It proposes an interpretative framework in which mining embeddedness leads to resource concentration, which in turn produces a power asymmetry, residual strategic autonomy, and a constant balancing act between external demands and social urgency. The empirical contribution lies in highlighting four configurations: governance dominated by resource holders, institutional dependence, community legitimation, and emerging partnership interdependence.

The managerial implications concern the diversification of funding and markets, the balanced formalization of partnerships, the strengthening of administrative capacities, the formation of territorial coalitions, and the integration of beneficiaries into governance. The study's limitations stem primarily from its qualitative nature, the unequal depth of data between the two provinces, and the partial availability of contractual information. Future research could incorporate longitudinal studies, a more formalized network analysis, and a comparison with other African extractive regions.

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