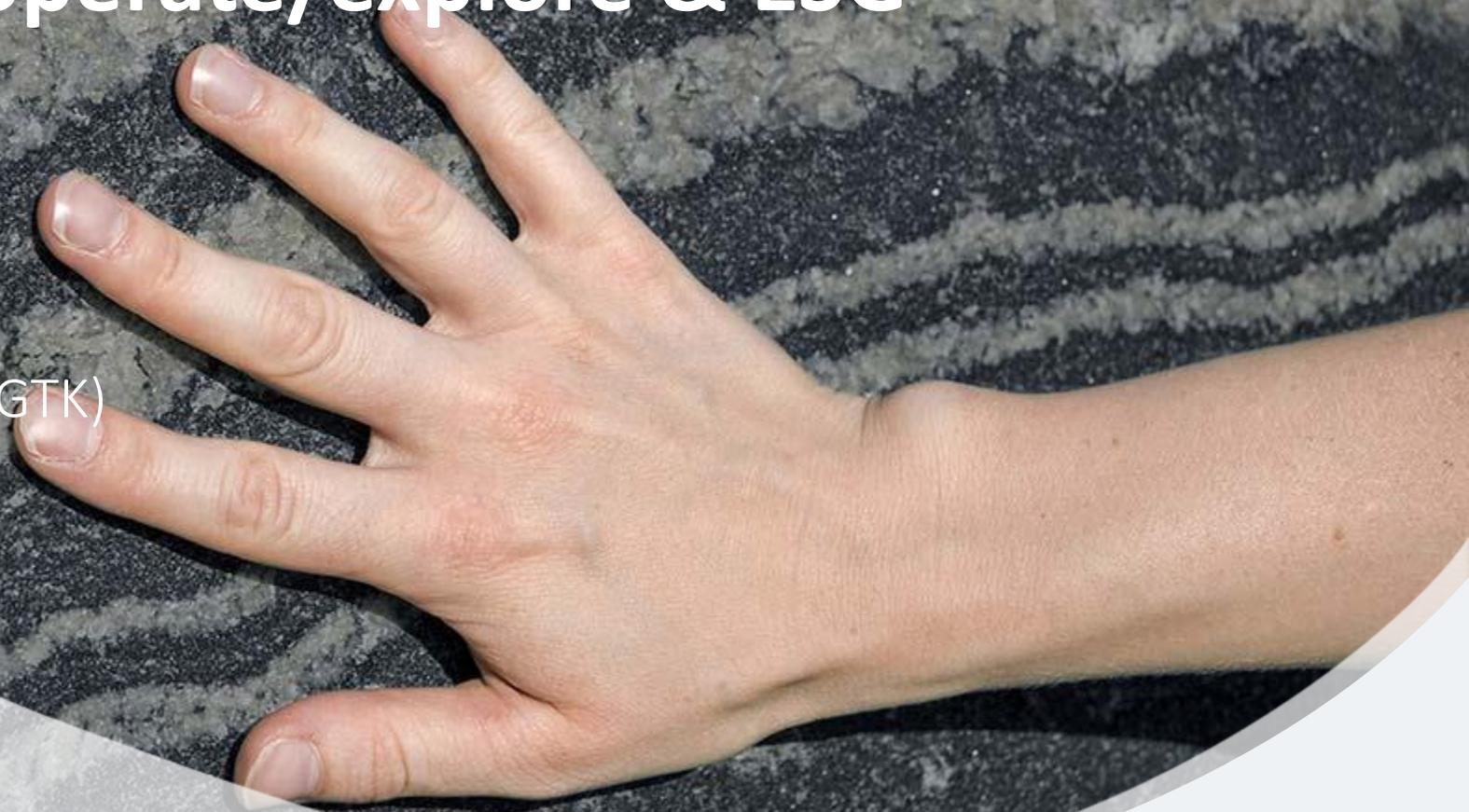


# Session 1 Keynote:

## Social license to operate/explore & ESG - Setting the scene

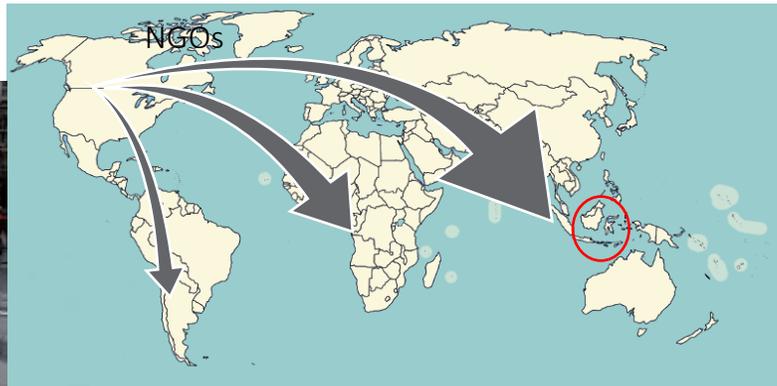
Toni Eerola  
Mineral Intelligence  
Mineral Economic Solutions  
Geological Survey of Finland (GTK)



SLO Conference  
Hotel Hestia Europa  
Tallinn, Estonia  
16th September 2025

# Background

- 1980-1990's: Structural adjustments in developing countries;
- Tightening of environmental legislation in the Global North;
- Mining companies, and NGOs shifted to the Global South;
- Conflicts, and scandals (e.g. Ok Tedi, Porgera, Bre-X);
- Mining industry reaction: associations, codes, programs, guidelines, and reporting;
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR);
- CEO Mr. Cooney (1997): social license to operate (SLO);
- 2000: China's growth – commodity boom;
- Conflicts multiply; need for SLO, and CSR increased.

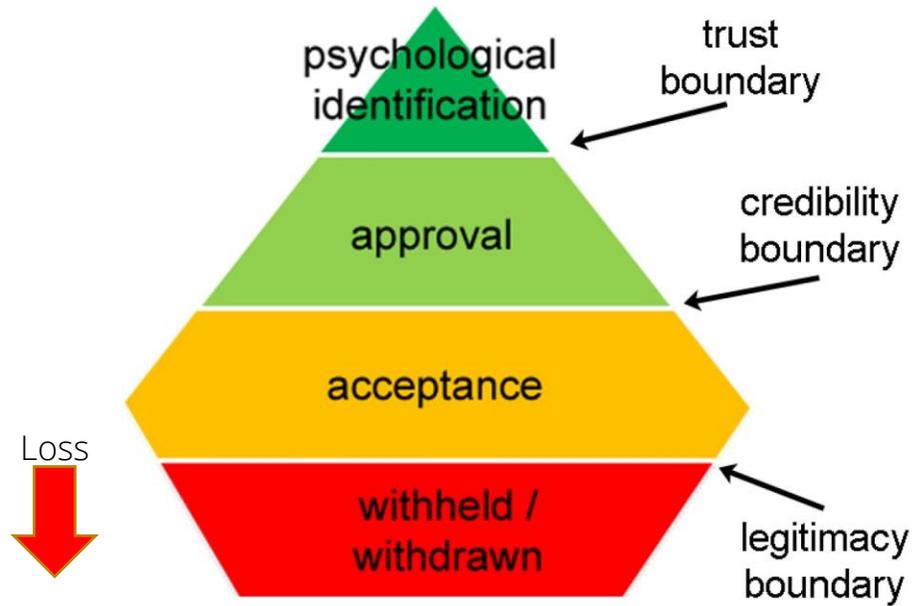


## SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)

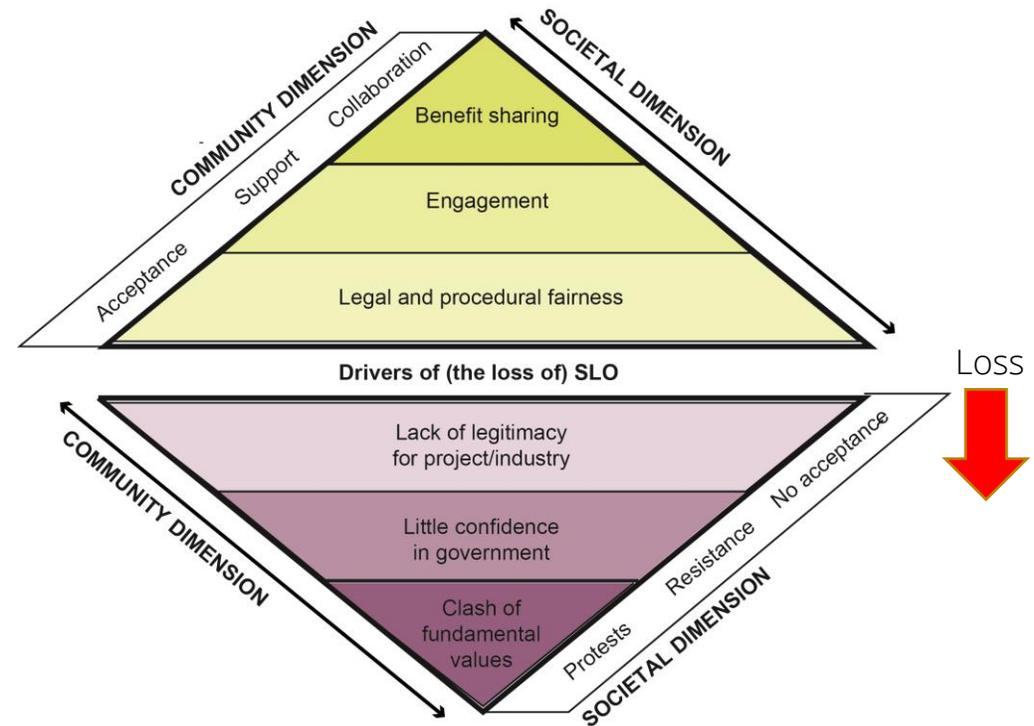
### Main concepts:

- Thomson and Boutilier (2011):
- Acceptance/approval of operations by local community and stakeholders
- Stakeholders: anyone who can be impacted by or able to impact the operations
- SLO: not a formal legal license given by authorities, but it is a consent given by the society for the activities (community)
- Can be lost at any time;
- Fundamental for access to land to explore and exploit;
- Its lack may indicate disputes/conflicts;
- Conflicts may cause delays and extra-costs, or even stop of a project
- Good company-community relationship reduce the risks for that: **TRUST**
- SLO needed for the society's mineral raw material supply

# SLO and protests: indication for its lack or challenging



Thomson and Boutilier (2011)

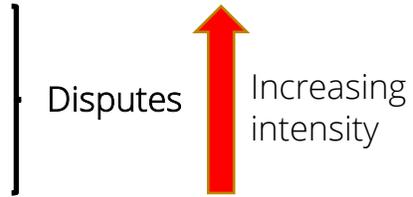


Lesser et al. (2020)

# Dispute classification (EJAtlas, Temper et al. 2015)

- Categories:

- High: mobilization, violence, mass arrests, etc. (**conflicts**)
- Medium: street protests, visible organizing;
- Low: some local organizing
- Latent: no visible organizing

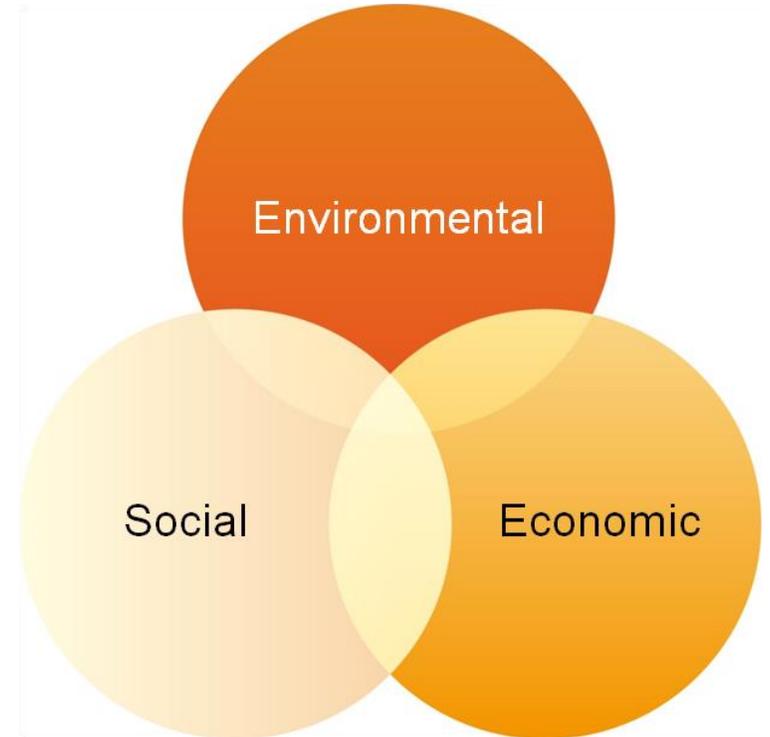


- ICMM (2015):

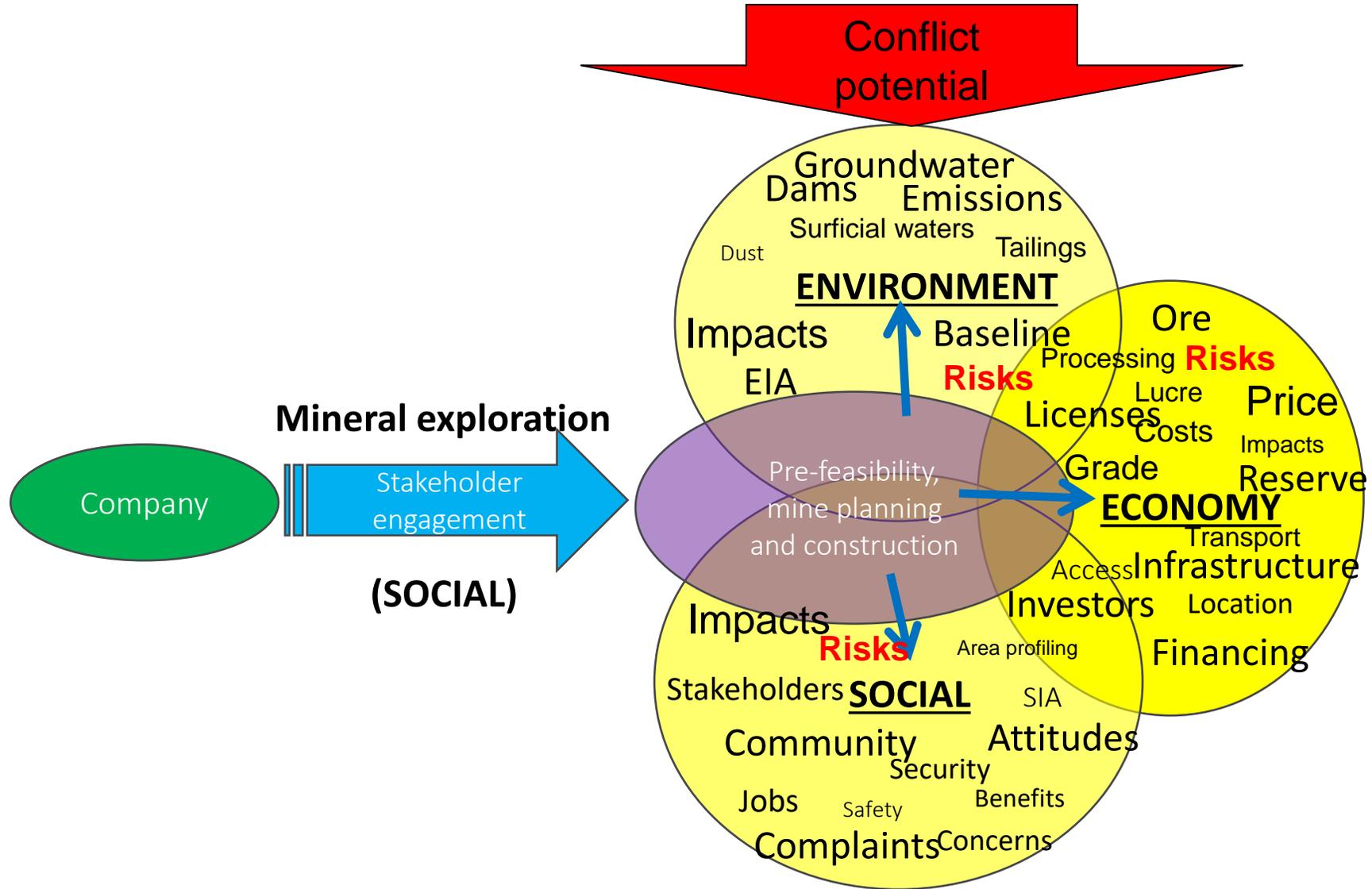
- *Disputes arise when two or more parties believe their interests are incompatible.*
- *Non-violent disputes can be essential to social progress and development and are often a feature of the interactions between mining companies, host communities and host governments.*
- *Disputes or related protests can escalate towards conflict that weaken or damage relationships between companies and communities.*
- *When **conflict** does occur, demonstrations or protest may result in **physical violence**.*

# Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- CSR: voluntary-based actions
- Three pillars: Economic, Social, and Environmental
- Bottom line: Legislation
- **Economic**: financial balance, and benefit sharing
- **Environmental**: impact mitigation
- **Social**: stakeholder engagement, participation, collaboration
- Sustainability reporting;
- Goal: better business, more profit, everybody happy
- Replaced by ESG requested by investors

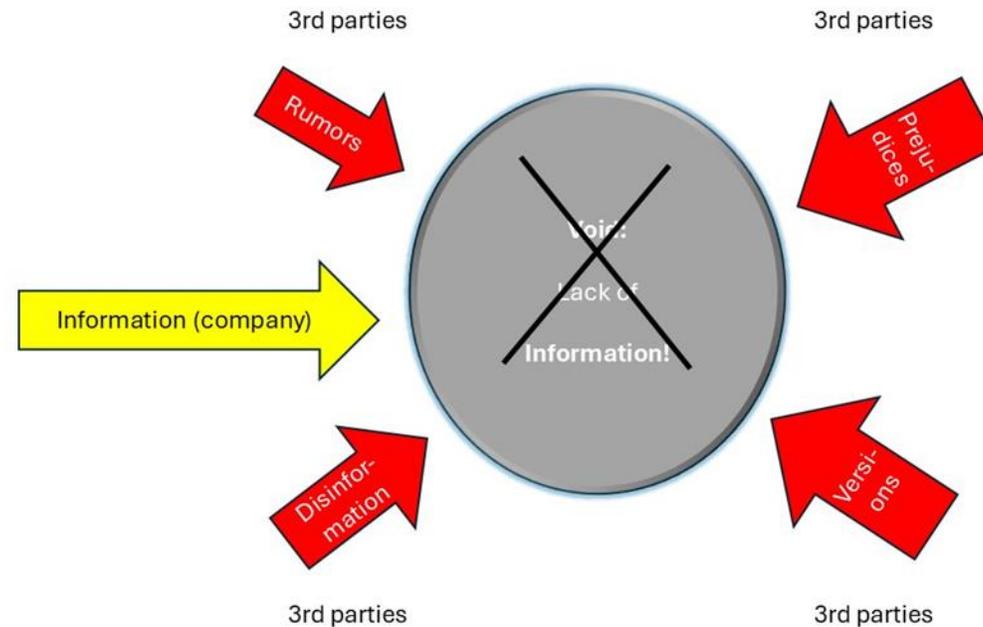


# CSR and ESG in mineral exploration and mining



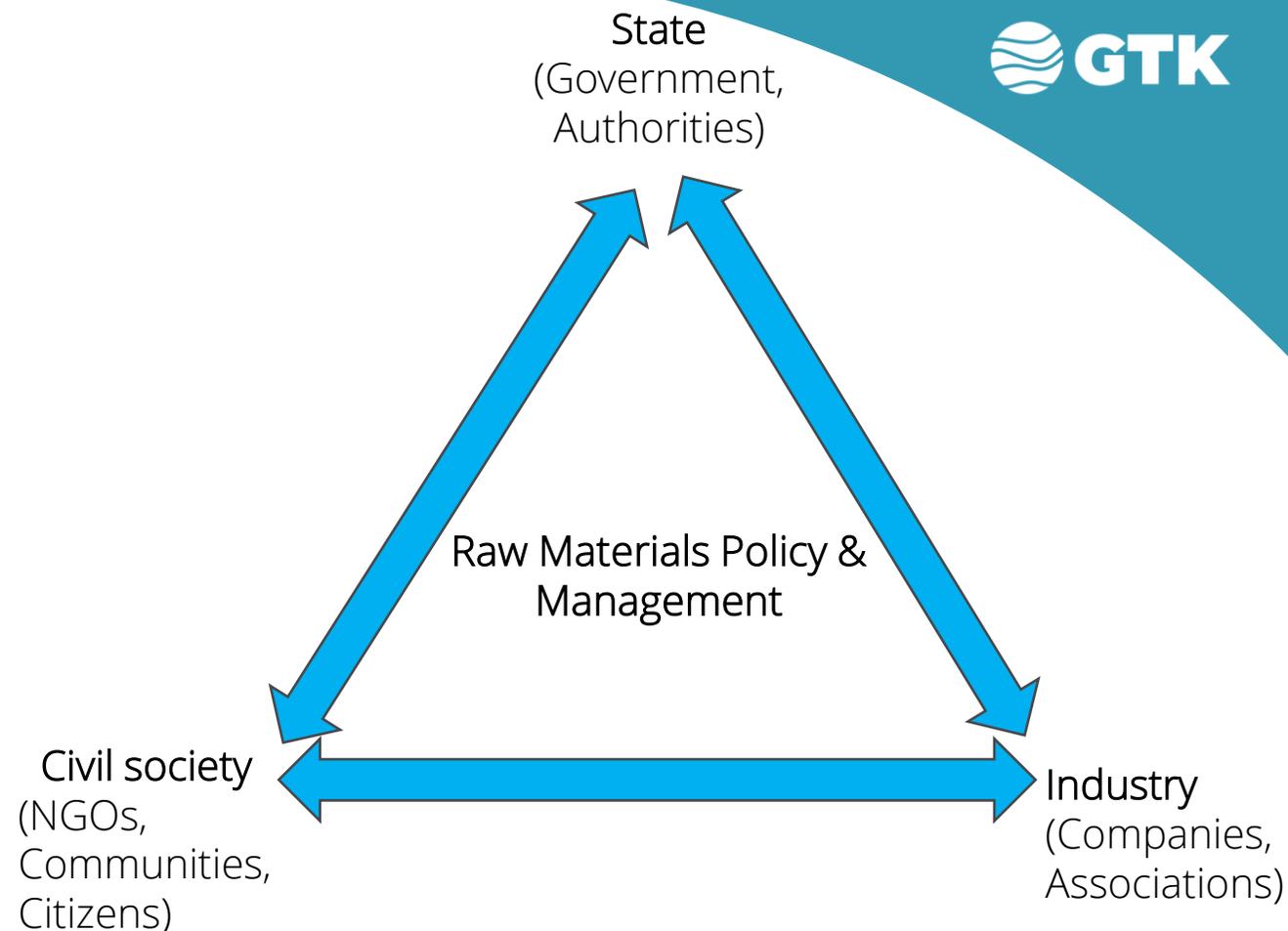
# The importance of information:

- During the engagement and meetings;
- Take advantage – be the first to give it proactively;
- People do not know the difference between mining, and mineral exploration;
- Raise public awareness on geosciences;
- Fill the gap;
- Lack of information: Void
- Can be fulfilled by 3rd parties with their versions;
- Distortion
- Disinformation
- Controversies
- Dispute/conflict
- Little chance for dialogue.



## State and Mineral Governance

- Basic rights and services;
- Permits;
- Monitoring;
- Responses to demands and protests;
- Reforms, regulation changes
- Shape the development of disputes/conflicts;
- Disputes/conflicts;
- Balance between diverse actors, power and influence



ROLES AND TRUST

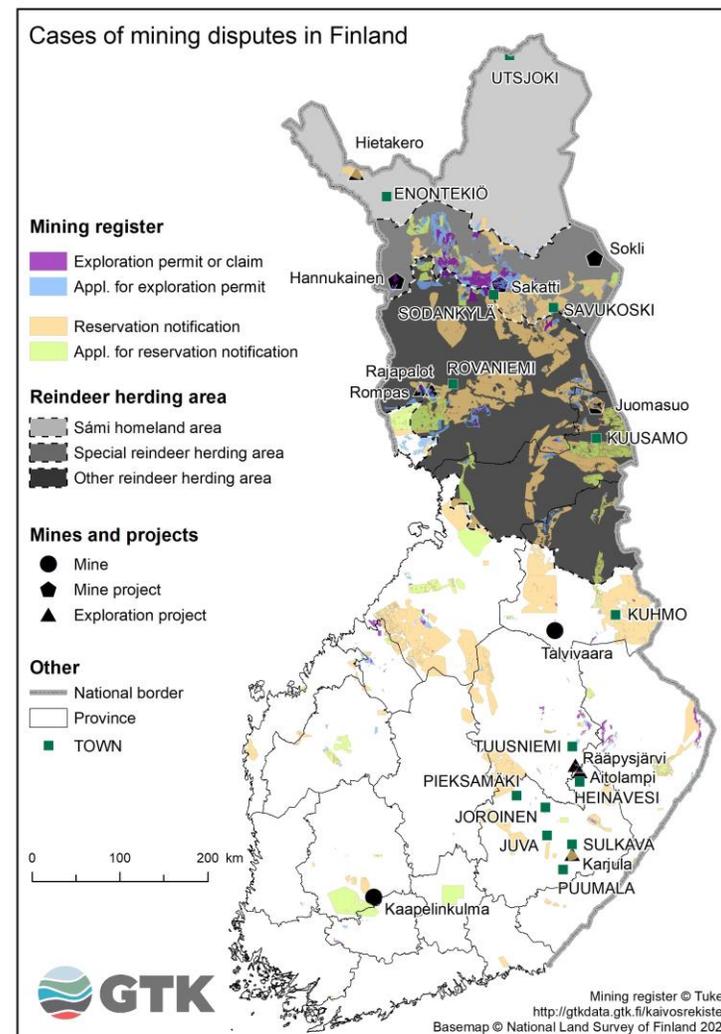
# Finland

- Until 1990's: National, state-owned mineral industry;
- 1995: EU – foreign companies allowed to enter into the country;
- 2005-2008: *Uranium dispute*;
- 2010-2012: Talvivaara Ni mine (*Mining dispute*)
- Government action, social science research projects;
- Finnish Network for Sustainable Mining:
- Few other disputes/conflicts, coalition of NGOs x Dragon Mining
- 2018 -> : Battery minerals boom
- New cycle of disputes related to Co, Ni and graphite exploration
- Discussion on participation, rights, mining tax, royalties, and renovation of the Mining Act;
- Petition for no-go zones.



# Ongoing Mining Disputes in Finland

- Concentrated in Lapland and SE Finland
- Long-term disputes: Northern Finland (mine and development project, minor mineral exploration)
- Most recent ones: Lake areas (mineral exploration)
- Focused on metals
- Booms (uranium and battery minerals)
- 20 cases, 17 companies;
- 23% of companies involved in disputes;
- Good cases!



# Actors and evolution of the Finnish mining-sceptical movement

## Uranium Debate (2005-present)

FANC  
No Uranium Mine in Kuusamo  
Lappish against Uranium Mines  
No Uranium Mines in North Karelia  
Uraaniton.org

## Mining Debate (2010-present)

Anti-mining Coalition of the Deatnu Valley  
FANC  
Friends of the Earth  
Kitkan viisaat  
North Karelian Degrowth Movement  
Not in Kaavi  
Pro Kuusamo  
Pro Polvijärvi  
Pro Ylläs  
Save Viiankiaapa  
Stop Talvivaara  
Rising Tide Network

## Green Energy Transition (2016-present)

Extinction Rebellion  
FANC  
Friends of the Sompio Nature  
Heinijärvi Conservation Association  
Inari Friends of the Nature  
Kitkan viisaat  
Koli Landscape Movement  
Limit to Mines in Lapland  
Pro Heinävesi  
Pro Joroinen  
Pro Kiiminki  
Pro Kuusamo  
Pro Osikonmäki  
Pro Pieksämäki  
Pro Puruvesi  
Pro Rautalampi  
Pro Ylläs  
Rising Tide Network  
Saimaa without Mines  
Save Kaapelinkulma  
Save Viiankiaapa  
Sompio Friends of the Nature  
Tammela Water Protection  
Wilderness Sokli

Paradox: support for mining increases!

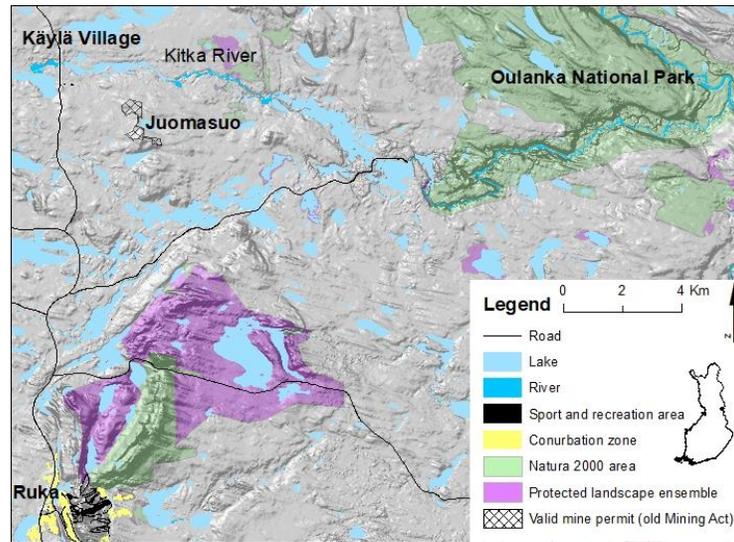
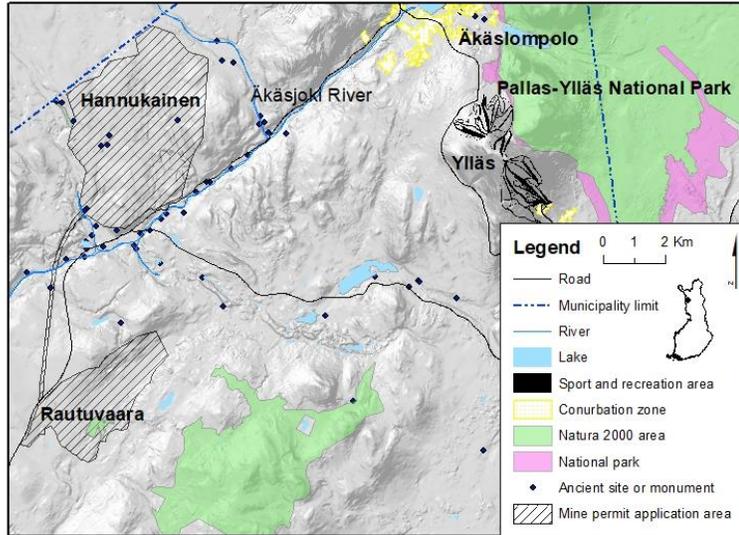
Quantification of issues and concerns:

Corporate conduct, commodity and place

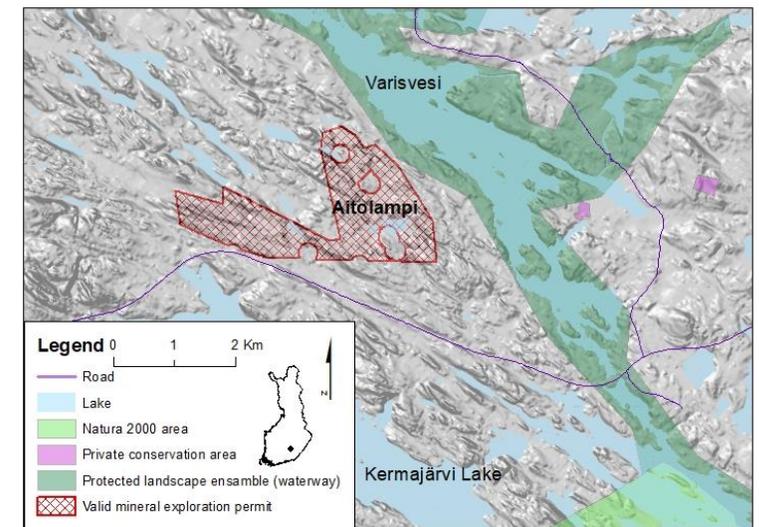
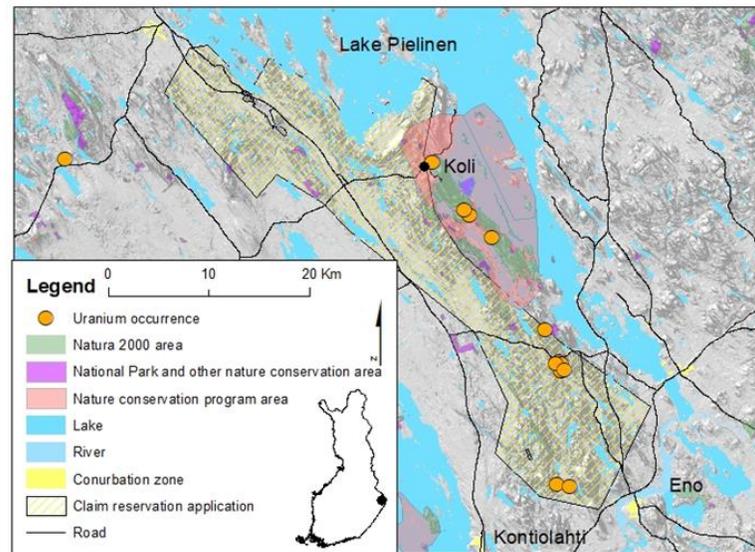
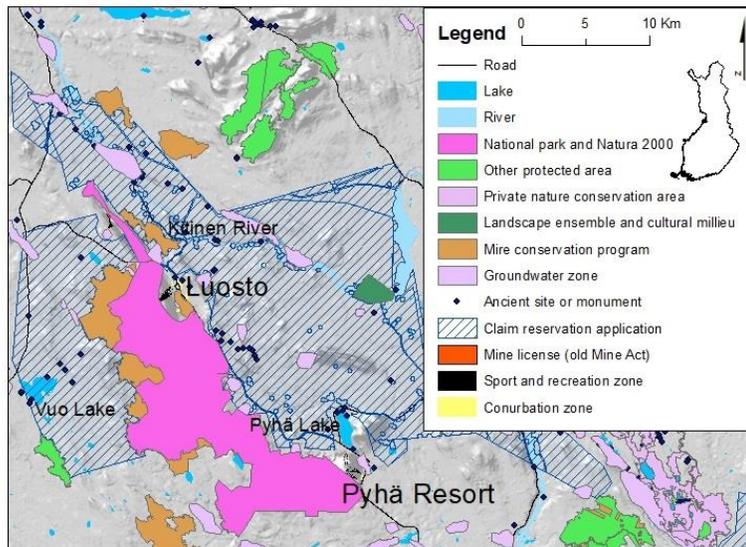
Issues/concerns	Company	Project/Location	Nr
Corporate conduct	Akkerman Arctic Minerals Boliden Finnex BR Gold Mining Dragon Mining Fennoscandian Resources FinnAust Mining Magnus Minerals Pallagen Rio Tinto Suomen malmitutkimus	Hietakero Martimo, Ivalo-Inari Pieksämäki-Joroinen Osikonmäki KaaPelinkulma Heinävesi, Tuusniemi Hyrkkylä-Korkkosaari-Märkälä Joensuu-Kontionlahti-Ilomantsi Kalkkinen Rautalampi Juva-Puumala-Sulkava	13
Groundwater	Arctic Minerals Boliden Finnex	Martimo Pieksämäki-Joroinen	2
Lake regions with holiday homes	Boliden Finnex BR Gold Mining Grafintech FinnAust Mining Magnus Minerals Mawson Pallagen Rio Tinto Suomen malmitutkimus	Pieksämäki-Joroinen Osikonmäki Heinävesi, Tuusniemi Hyrkkylä-Kirkkosaari-Märkälä Joensuu-Kontionlahti-Ilomantsi Korpilahti Kalkkinen Rautalampi Juva-Puumala-Sulkava	10
Nature conservation	Akkerman Arctic Minerals Fennoscandian Resources Sakatti Mining Mawson Rio Tinto	Hietakero Martimo Heinävesi, Tuusniemi Sakatti Rompas-Rajapalot, Korpilahti Rautalampi	8
Sámi homeland	Akkerman Arctic Minerals	Hietakero Inari-Ivalo	2
Reindeer herding	Akkerman Arctic Minerals Hannukainen Mining Sakatti Mining Finnish Minerals Group	Hietakero Inari-Ivalo Hannukainen Sakatti Sokli	5
Tourism	Grafintech Hannukainen Mining Latitude 66 Cobalt Suomen malmitutkimus	Heinävesi, Tuusniemi Hannukainen Juomasuo Juva-Puumala-Sulkava	5
Pollution	Talvivaara/Terrafame	Talvivaara	1
Reputation	Beowulf (Grafintech) Dragon Mining	Heinävesi, Tuusniemi Juomasuo, KaaPelinkulma, Orivesi	2
Uranium	Latitude 66 Cobalt Mawson Terrafame Finnish Minerals Group	Juomasuo Rompas-Rajapalot Talvivaara Sokli	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>53</b>

Project location and associated land use

# 'Not in My Leisure Area!' (NIMLA): tourism and cottages



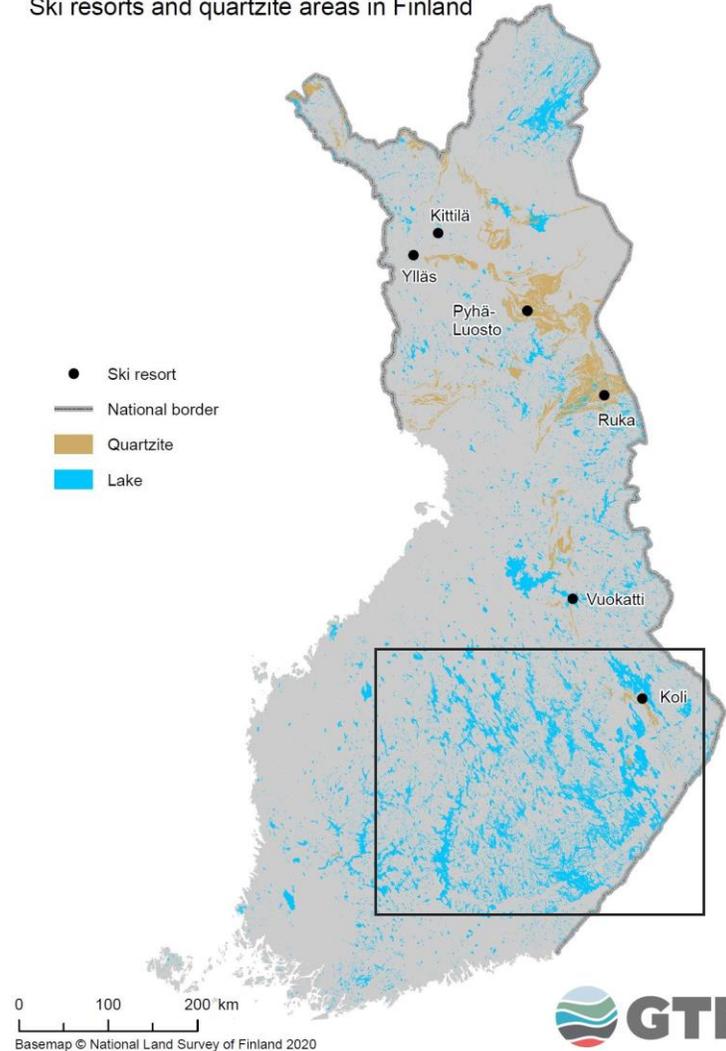
Landscapes with prominent quartzite hills and/or geological structures (water systems)



# Social and political geology of tourism and second homes

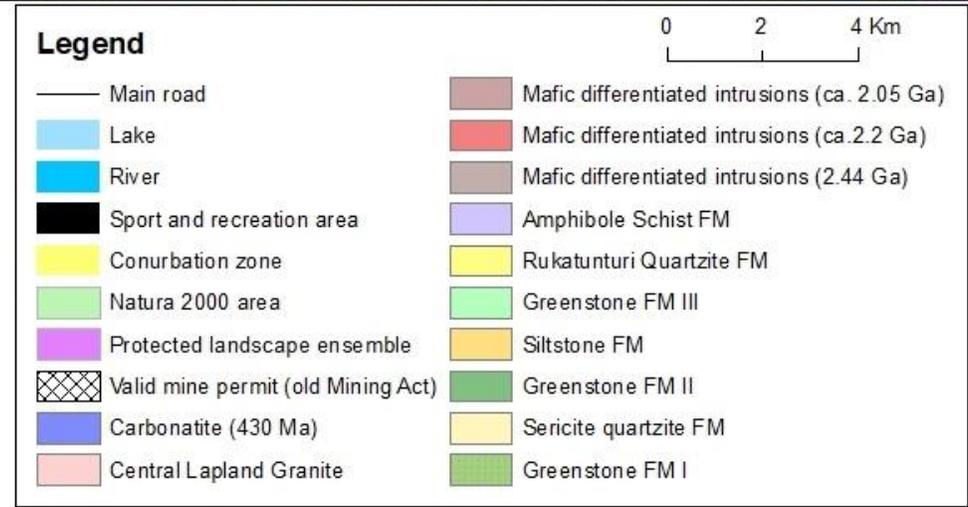
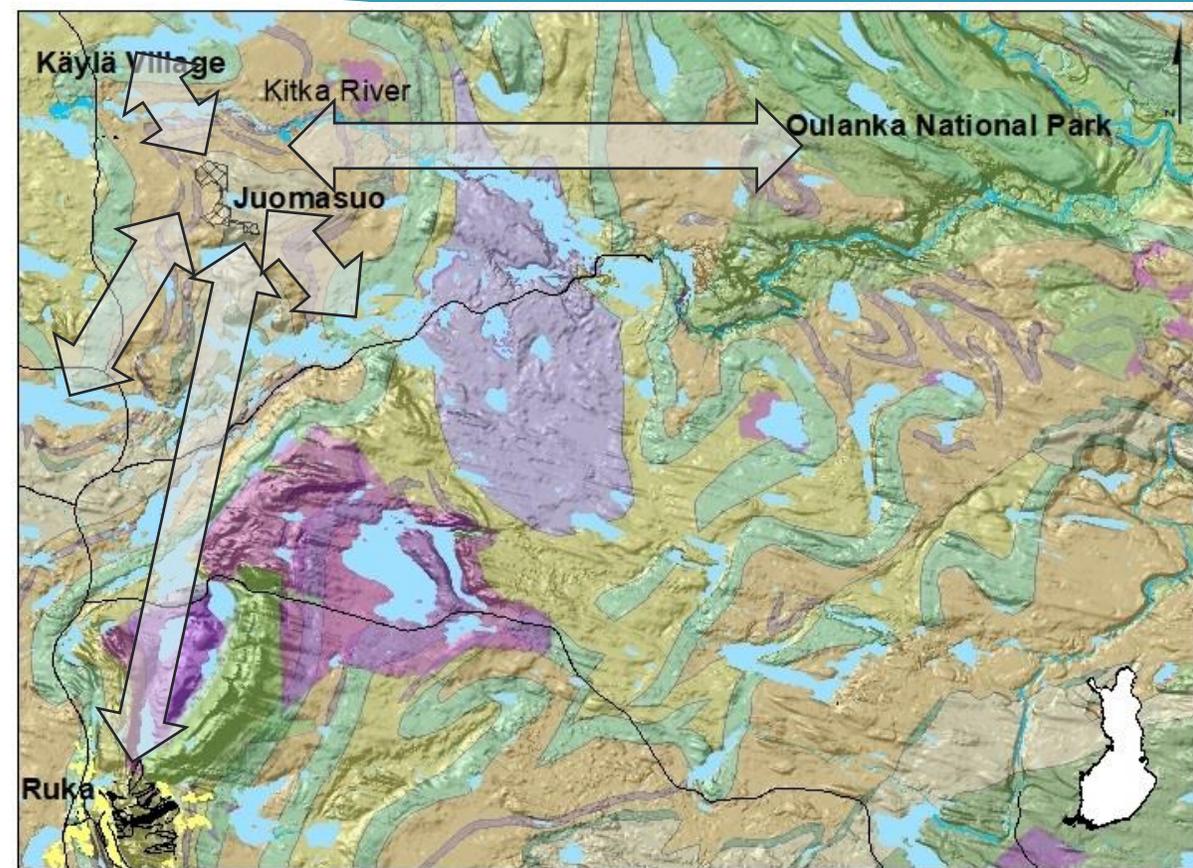
- Quartzite: quartz-bearing metamorphosed sandstone
- Resistant to weathering and erosion;
- Prominent geomorphological features in landscape;
- Tourism and recreation destinations;
- Mineral deposits and/or mining and mineral exploration projects closeby;
- Most of them related to disputes;
- NIMLA;

Ski resorts and quartzite areas in Finland



# Social and political geology: Geo- and ecosystem services

- Kuusamo:
  - *History of natural resource disputes;*
  - *Among the oldest mining-related disputes;*
  - *Kouvertavaara (uranium exploration);*
  - *Juomasuo mineral deposit (Au, Co);*
  - *Uranium;*
  - *Nature-based tourism and recreation;*
  - *Ruka resort (quartzite hill, landscape);*
  - *National Park (protected biodiversity on a greenstone belt);*
  - *Lakes and rivers;*
  - *“Interaction and communication” with each other;*
  - *Human interests;*
  - *“Political “actors” with “agency”;*



# Characteristics and causes:

- Dispute classification (EJAtlas): low to medium intensity
- Predominantly in mineral exploration;
- Foreign companies (resource nationalism);
- Importance of place: target selection
- Corporate conduct: lack of communication and stakeholder engagement;
- Poor reputation from past disputes or misconduct;
- Generation of the mining-sceptical movement;
- Impacts on mineral governance;
- CSR, ESG;
- Social and political geology: spatial studies



Aitäh!



**GTK**