

Rita Kesselring (Basel)

Capital Investment and the Local State at an Extractive Frontier, Zambia's Northwestern Province

Solwezi was a small town during most of the colonial period and became the capital of the Northwestern Province in Zambia in the 1950s. First established as an administrative centre overseeing mining activities in the area, the administration has slowly developed a presence in the region despite a mostly dormant mine. In the early 2000s, the mine was reopened and quickly grew into the largest copper mine by output in Africa, attracting tens of thousands of migrant workers looking for opportunities in a country which has suffered since the 1970s, first from low global prices for copper, then from the imposed structural adjustment reforms.

Most research on the recent wave of resource extraction focuses on the new and spectacular actor, the mine, as well as resistance against it. This paper however looks at the local state (the municipal council) as a stable and long-term actor in a rapidly changing environment triggered by a global resource boom. To understand the effects of capital investment onto local governance practices and stateness more generally, I examine the work of the municipal council before and after the most recent re-opening of the mine in Solwezi.

Rita Kesselring is Senior Lecturer at the Institute for Social Anthropology, University of Basel, Switzerland since 2013. She studied social anthropology at the University of Zürich and the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and obtained her PhD at the University of Basel in 2013. Between 2009 and 2012, she was a research fellow in the bilateral project "Safeguarding Democracy: Contests of Memory and Heritage" between the Chair of African History, University of Basel, and the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. In 2011, she spent one year as a visiting researcher at the Human Rights Institute, University of Connecticut, USA, financed by an Swiss National Science Foundation writing fellowship. She was also a visiting researcher at the Department of Anthropology, University of Cape Town in 2012 and at the Dag Hammarskjöld Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of the Copperbelt, Zambia in 2015. She is author of the book "Bodies of Truth: Law, Memory and Emancipation in Post-Apartheid South Africa" (Stanford University Press 2016). She leads and coordinates the interdisciplinary project "Valueworks: Effects of Financialisation along the Copper Value Chain" and currently works on her Habilitation on *The Mining Frontier under Construction: Governance, built environment and the body in the Solwezi Region, Zambia*

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