

## Research Project

### The Mining Frontier under Construction: built environment, the body and sociality in the North-Western Province, Zambia

#### Third-party funded project

**Project title** The Mining Frontier under Construction: built environment, the body and sociality in the North-Western Province, Zambia

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**Organisation / Research unit**

Departement Gesellschaftswissenschaften / Visuelle und politische Ethnologie (Förster)

**Department**

**Project Website** <https://ethnologie.unibas.ch/about-us/people/profil/portrait/person/kesselring/>

**Project start** 01.02.2015

**Probable end** 31.05.2016

**Status** Completed

After a long lull starting with the global drop of copper prices in the 1970s, the Zambian extractive industry is booming again. International firms prospect for copper, cobalt and uranium and build up new mines. At current price levels, the extractive industry is highly profitable, but it also creates ecological and social problems of which the inhabitants of mining towns carry the heaviest toll. In the North-Western Province of Zambia, the mining boom transforms villages into sprawling towns and lets new urban structures emerge. This sudden, corporate-driven opening of new economic frontiers is not simply a re-enactment of the colonial extractive project. It calls for new research on the current transformations of social life. My research project analyses local consequences of industrial development by focusing on life in a new mining area.

Mining projects in general are distinguished by their massive capacity to change the built environment. Hence I inquire at an **empirical level** into the relationship between urban architecture and social life. I focus on practices that emerge from the bodily engagement with the built environment and are concerned with the habitual effects of town planning. On a **theoretical level**, the project draws on the anthropology of the body, on new theories of human-environment relations, and on recent debates on mining and urbanity. It aims at a) developing an approach to social theory that includes the projective capacity of embodied experience of space, but goes beyond the dichotomy between agency and structure, b) understanding the production of urban and social spaces by looking at the actors' engagement with the built environment.

Its **findings** will be highly relevant to social scientists, architects, urban planners and mining companies. The project builds on **research cooperation** with Swiss and Zambian universities and contributes to capacity building in Zambia.

**Keywords** Zambia, urbanity, mining, built environment, the body

**Financed by**

University of Basel

## **Add publication**

### **Published results**

2689083, Kesselring, Rita, Augenschein im alten und neuen Copperbelt Zambias: Auswirkungen des globalen Rohstoffbooms auf Alltag und Umwelt, 1661-5603, Publication: NewsItemPrint (Artikel in einer Tages, Wochen- oder Monatszeitschrift)

3169262, Kesselring, Rita, Cultural reproduction and memory : past, present and future, 978-3-905758-62-7, Explorations in African History, Publication: Book Item (Buchkap., Lexikonartikel, jur. Kommentierung, Beiträge in Sammelbänden etc.)

3845265, Kesselring, Rita, The Electricity Crisis in Zambia: blackouts and social stratification in new mining towns, 2214-6296, Energy Research & Social Science, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

3888915, Kesselring, Rita, Disenclaving the Planners' Enclave: The housing project Kabitaka in Solwezi, Northwestern Zambia, Publication: Discussion paper / Internet publication

## **Add documents**

## **Specify cooperation partners**