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At an extractive pace: Conflicting temporalities in a resettlement process in Solwezi, Zambia

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Mining sites have often been described as enclaves, but the influence of mining companies extends far beyond their fences. I explore the planning and construction of an access road cutting through state and customary land in Solwezi, Northwestern Province of Zambia. For the Canada-based mining company First Quantum Minerals Ltd, the road is an attempt to disengage from the environment (Appel, 2014). This both illusionary and one-sided attempt to disentangle has re-structured people's lives in multiple ways and integrated even more people into the mine's circle of gravity, though. The mine's management balances two different planning logics: the overall goal of long-term profitability of the entire company and the much shorter rhythm of fluctuations on the stock market and the need to keep shareholders satisfied. This dual planning temporality creates the extractive pace : the transformation of constantly shifting time horizons into a concrete agenda for today's actions and tomorrow's plans. Adopting Alfred Gell's (1992) epistemology of time, I show how the implementation of a temporal regime on the environment is one aspect of how mining companies try to disentangle themselves from the economy and politics of their host country. This implementation often has the opposite effect on the local population.

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