

## Original article

## Imagining Booms and Busts: Conflicting Temporalities and the Extraction-“Development” nexus in Mozambique

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## ABSTRACT

This article presents three sets of divergent and competing understandings of temporalities in relation to the extractive industry in Mozambique, in order to explore the dynamics of power within expectations of “development” raised by extractive mega projects. The first set of understandings involves a forward-looking, long-term view of the extractive industry’s potential to bring transformational “development” to Mozambique and its people, generally expressed by the extractive industry and associated actors. Subsequently, the article zooms in on a specific extractive sector; the coal industry in Tete province. The second set is characterized by expressions of volatility by an elite group of businesspeople who were lured by the promise of a coal boom, and who explain the urban “development” in terms of before, during and after “the boom”. The third set delves into the experience and expressions of “waiting” by people who were resettled by coal mining companies in Tete. By presenting these three sets, the article aims to go beyond binary analyses of the local versus the national, and the community versus the company or state, and offers a layered analysis of the disconnections between understandings of “development” and the expected wealth of resource extraction.

## 1. Introduction

Over the last decade, Mozambique’s economy has taken an extractive turn. The discovery of large reserves of gas, oil and coal has attracted foreign investors from over the globe, suggesting that the country’s “economic potential lies underground” (Besharati, 2012:1). The large-scale mining and other resource extraction projects evoke the promises of rapid wealth and “development”, but also bring about concerns about environmental degradation and exploitation of land and people. Particularly in the context of African resource rich areas, including Mozambique, the role of multinational extractive industry has been described as igniting processes of “enclavisation”, “respacing” and *de facto* governing of territory and populations (e.g. Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu, 2015; Ferguson, 2005; Hönke, 2010; Kirshner and Power, 2015; Symons, 2016; Watts, 2004). Such studies provide insight into how such enclaves are often differentially integrated in and intertwined with the structures of state power and global capitalism (Ferguson, 2005; Ong, 1999: 232). Yet such spatial approaches are less apt to uncover how people in different positions of power make sense of these rapid social and economic changes even before extraction has started (see also Weskalnys, 2014) and how they experience and envision the possible prospects (and problems) of the extractive industry in differentiated ways.

Resource extraction comes with distinctive and multiple

temporalities, including a variety of intervals, rhythms, and speeds, that are infused with affects of time, such as hope, expectations, dread, and nostalgia (D’Angelo and Pijpers, *this issue*). These mining temporalities (D’Angelo and Pijpers *this issue*), below also referred to as ‘extractive temporalities’ may shape the narratives of the past, present, and future in particular ways, generate activities and influence decision-making, and are thereby also political projects, subject to manipulation, contradictions and conflicts (Ibid., see also Kirsch, 2014; Weskalnys, 2014). In this article I combine these extractive temporalities with another temporal project: “development”, which I will persistently refer to between quotation marks to keep a keen eye on its discursive function (Ferguson, 1990). “Development” is by design a temporal and forward-looking project (Lewis, 2009), to which a wide variety of expectations can be attributed (Davidson and Nelson, 2016). A temporal perspective on the extraction-development nexus is therefore particularly apt to uncover how (future) extractive projects are experienced and envisioned, particularly in countries such as Mozambique with long-standing aid dependency. Doing so, I aim to uncover the divergent and competing temporal understandings of this extraction-development nexus, and to explore how such an analysis can provide insights in dynamics by which some extractive futures are legitimized and by which others are silenced.

This article presents three sets of perspectives on the resource boom and recent coal bust in Mozambique that are shaped by different

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temporal imaginations and experiences. I have chosen to focus on these three sets as each represents the views of a group of people who are profoundly affected by the extractive industry and who perceive the extractive industry in relation to “development”. Yet, these sets also present diverse and sometimes contrasting ideas about what kind of “development” the extraction industry could (or should) bring and about *when* this “development” is supposed to happen. These three sets of perspectives involve actors who can be loosely regarded as “strategic groups”, by which Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan (1997:240) mean “empirical social aggregates of variable geometry” and which “help us to understand the convergence of strategies between certain individuals who can be assumed to share the same position in the face of the same ‘issue’” (Bierschenk and Olivier De Sardan, 1997:241).

The three sets of temporal perspectives revolve around the development of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project in the north of Mozambique, and—more in-depth—the coal mining industry in Tete. The first set evolves around the temporal perspectives of representatives from the extractive industry and those associated with the sector, such as consultants, representatives of the government of Mozambique and of donor countries with interests in the extractive sector. This set involved a forward-looking, long-term view of the extractive industry’s potential to bring transformational “development” to Mozambique and its people. The two subsequent sets zoom in on the coal sector in Tete, a province in central Mozambique. The second set consists of temporal narratives of Tete’s urban elite; the businessmen and women who invested in Tete province, lured by the promise of the coal-bonanza, and who explained the urban “development” in terms of before, during and after “the boom”. The third set delves into the experience and expressions of “waiting” (de l’Estoile, 2014) by members of the communities who were resettled by coal mining companies in Tete. While by no means exhaustive, I hope that by presenting these three sets of perspectives, the article goes beyond binary analyses of the local versus the national, and the community versus the company or state, and to provide (a more) layered analyses of disconnections between temporal understandings of “development” and the promised wealth of resource extraction.

The research material presented in this article is based on fieldwork in 2016 and 2017 in the capital Maputo and Tete province, during which I conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives of several extractive companies working in coal and gas sectors, with representatives of civil society organizations in Maputo and Tete, and with academics, diplomats, company’s community workers, and inhabitants of Cateme and Mualadzi. These are two resettlement areas in Moatize district (Tete province), where I spend several weeks in order to get a grasp of daily life in the resettlement area. In addition, I make use of newspaper articles, reports, and the websites of the multinational companies. From a ‘mining temporalities’ perspective (D’Angelo and Pijpers, 2018 this issue), it is worth noting that over the course of fieldwork the price of coal fluctuated, the plans for the gas industry took further root, and a truce was negotiated in 2016 that halted three years of armed conflict between the armed wing of the opposition party ‘Resistência Nacional de Moçambique’ (RENAMO) – Mozambican National Resistance and the government of Mozambique. As a result, interpretations of (future) booms and busts also shifted and this paper seeks to reflect on some of these changing perspectives in the article, which may serve as a reminder of the volatile and multiple temporalities through which we can start to untangle resource extraction from a temporal perspective (D’Angelo and Pijpers, this issue).

The article is structured as follows: I will first conceptualize the idea of multiple temporalities in relation to the extractive industry and “development.” Then I will provide the necessary background information to Mozambique’s recent “extractive turn,” and subsequently discuss the three sets of temporal perspectives in relation to the natural resource boom (and busts). In the concluding remarks I will reflect on the relevance of a temporal perspective for the analysis of experiences and expectations of extractive “development”, and how such

temporalities are situated in a field of different power relations and often conflicting interests.

## 2. Extractive times: temporality and “development”

In a recent edition of *Current Anthropology* focused on rethinking the economy, Narotzky and Besnier (2014:10) state that economy is “about projecting into the future” and that “[p]eople’s economic practices have a clear temporal orientation to horizons of expectation that are framed by past experiences and the mythical reconfigurations of that past.” Extractive booms (and busts) may be processes that par excellence inspire projections of the future, or “horizons of expectations.” The potential and imagined wealth generated by the resource extraction industry is a central part of such horizons of expectations, which, as this article will continue to show, are imagined in very different ways by different actors in extractive environments.

In this article I follow De L’Estoile’s (2014:64) use of Reinhard Koselleck’s (1976) notion of “horizon of expectations”, by which he understands “the future as it is present.” For De L’Estoile (2014:64), such horizons, collective as well as individual, are defined by a combination of a “space of experience”, meaning the past insofar as it is present, field of opportunities (or life opportunities), and frames of references, both shared and individual, that shape understandings and interpretations of the world. While such a perspective sets out an agenda for wide possibilities for ethnographic analysis, I have chosen to focus on one frame of reference that for many Mozambicans, as well as foreigners working or investing in Mozambique, has some kind of meaning, namely “development”. The country’s economy has been depending heavily on foreign aid since the late 1980s, and the extractive turn is regarded as a way out of this donor dependency (Macuane et al., 2017:4). At the same time it means that the envisioned changes the extractive investments are supposed to bring are very much shaped by the “development” discourse, and the variety of past experiences with “development” projects, resulting in multiple understandings of what “development” contains and how and when this is supposed to happen. As mentioned in the introduction to this article, I thus use “development” for its discursive power and as a multi-interpretable notion to which my research participants ascribe a wide range of meanings and expectations.

The coupling of “development” with the extractive industry can be situated in a larger shift in international development thinking and practice that increasingly privileges trade over aid, and in the “ethical turn” of big businesses, in which corporations are transformed into agents and architects of “development”. This “ethical turn” (Dolan and Rajak, 2016:3) has been analysed largely in relation to debates about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) that have showed the linkages between “development” and CSR to be particularly close in the context of mining or resource extraction since this often takes place in remote regions with limited statehood and where companies assume a governing role (Hönke, 2010; Welker, 2009). It is particularly in such areas, or in the imagination of such areas, where CSR may grant corporations “a pass into Development World” (Gardner, 2016:129). Rather than understanding this “ethical turn” as a good or bad thing, I follow recent anthropological debates about CSR, which aim to uncover how in various ways “corporate power is rendered, exercised, limited or resisted through the discourse and practice of CSR” (Dolan and Rajak, 2016:16). This is helpful to think about “development” and the extractive industry in Mozambique, where the links between the two are not necessarily discussed in terms of CSR, but are formulated in terms of a “social license to operate”, the managing of “social risk”, “local content”, the percentages of resource revenues meant for community development projects, and population resettlement (see also World Bank, 2014). It is through these terms and others that “development” and the potential wealth of resource extraction projects become intertwined in a range of specific ways, creating differentiated futures, encompassing diverse time lines, and contradictory visions of social and

historical inevitability (cf. Wilk, 2007: 440).

### 3. Mozambique's extractive turn

Over the past decade, Mozambique has seen several natural resource booms in different areas of the country, which have, many observers believe, marked a new turn in the country's "development." It is generally assumed that the Mozambican economy is shifting from one that is dependent on foreign aid towards an extraction-driven economy (Anderson, 2012; Macuane et al., 2017). The large foreign investment projects range from the on-going heavy mineral sand excavations in Inhambane province and coal extraction in Tete province, to the large-scale agricultural projects in Nampula province and gas exploration in Cabo Delgado province. This article focuses mainly on the future of gas drilling in Cabo Delgado and the coal mining industry in Tete, but I mention these other mega-projects to illustrate the scope of Mozambique's changing economic landscape due to Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) (Langa, 2015).

The potential of Mozambique's extractive industry has been described in overly positive terms (Macuane et al., 2017:4). On the website of Anadarko, a large US-based oil company, we can read that the LNG industry has the "potential to elevate Mozambique to the world's third-largest exporter of natural gas" and that this, Mozambique's country manager of Anadarko stresses, will be "a transformational development opportunity for Mozambique and its people."<sup>1</sup> The country's gas-industry, it has been predicted, will challenge Qatar "as the largest producer" of gas "very soon."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, The World Bank (2014) suggested that Mozambique could become part of the world's top ten coal exporters and the coal reserves located in Tete have been described as "the largest undeveloped coal basin on the planet" (Kirshner and Power, 2015:67). All this resource wealth has attracted companies such as ENI, Anadarko, Sasol, ExxonMobil, Royal Dutch Shell, as well as mining giants Vale and Rio Tinto.

However, up until now, the country has not been able to secure much of the accrual profits of extraction (Macuane et al., 2017:4). Only since 2013 Mozambique has implemented legislation that regulated the taxing of capital gains, which has resulted in some windfall for the government budget (Macuane et al., 2017:19). But generally, the arrival of mega FDI projects has not resulted in much industrial activity or linkages to the national economy, as most local business opportunities have been captured by ruling elite coalitions (Buur and Monjane, 2017:214) and most products are shipped out of the country in a "raw" condition (Langa, 2015). Additionally, in May 2016 the Mozambican government became engulfed in a 2 billion USD debt scandal, as it had borrowed vast amounts between 2012 and 2014 to allegedly fund the coastal protection projects Proindicus and the fishing company EMATUM (Mozambique Tuna Company). The loans were taken out in anticipation of the gas windfall, but were kept hidden from parliament and the public (Macuane et al., 2017). The government is unable to return these loans, and the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and several others donors have stopped or limited their budgetary support to the government. These hidden debts have thrown Mozambique into an economic crisis, and have heightened the already growing concerns that the (future) resource wealth will not benefit the majority of Mozambicans in a tangible way (Castel-Branco, 2014). This is perhaps most palpably felt in the proximity of extractive mega-projects, where the prospect of mega-projects is accompanied with expectations of social and economic betterment, but also has resulted in the loss of livelihood and increased inequality (Symons, 2016; Vines et al., 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2013).

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.anadarko.com/Operations/Upstream/Africa/Mozambique/>, accessed 31/05/2016. But note that as Vines et al. (2015) point out, this is most likely overstating the potential of LNG in Mozambique.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gasworld.com/is-mozambique-the-new-qatar-/2007993.article>, accessed 8/05/2016.

The expectations and experiences with "development" through extraction are well observed in the coal mining industry in Tete, which was recently described as the "El Dorado of coal" (Mosca and Selemene, 2011; Kirshner and Power, 2015). While Tete had seen some coal mine activity since the mid-19th century (Hatton and Fardell, 2011:3), the recent 'boom' was of a very different scale. This was marked by the arrival of mining giant Vale, which together with Rio Tinto invested 12 billion USD to get a large open-pit mining projects started.<sup>3</sup> The building of the Vale coal mine commenced in 2008 and in 2011 the first coal was produced and transported from Moatize to the port of Beira from where it is exported elsewhere, mainly to India, China and other Asian countries (Langa, 2015:228).<sup>4</sup> Since then the coal-sector's growth potential did not materialize as expected, coal prices dropped dramatically since 2010. Additionally, the transportation of coal from the mines to the port of Beira has been challenging due to the ill-maintained rail infrastructure, and the construction of the recently finished railway to Nacala port has been time consuming (Langa, 2015:228). Between 2013 and 2016, coal transportation has been obstructed by the political and military conflict in central Mozambique as armed men have attacked several coal trains.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, in 2016 the coal production of the Vale mine had slowed down to a reportedly 15 per cent of the mine's capacity, whereas other mining companies had suspended production altogether.<sup>6</sup> The temporal decline of the coal industry and its volatile nature is further illustrated by Rio Tinto's sell of its coal assets in Mozambique: in 2009 Rio Tinto paid 3,7 billion USD for the mine concession of the Benga mine, in 2014 it sold for 50 million USD to an Indian largely state-owned consortium, International Coal Ventures Ltda (ICVL).<sup>7</sup> Since 2017 the coal export has picked up again as coal prices were on the rise, the armed conflict in central Mozambique stabilized and the railway to Nacala came in full use.

The mining companies have had tremendous infrastructural impact on their surroundings, characterized by rapid urban development and the construction of infrastructure such as roads, bridges and railways (Kirshner and Power, 2015). One of the most disruptive social and economic changes has been the involuntary resettlement of entire villages to make way for the open-pit mines. Such dislocations must be situated in Mozambique's history of disruptive resettlement policies such as the colonial villagisation (*aldeamentos*) and the post-independence communal villages (*aldeais comunais*) (Borges-Coelho, 1998), and, specifically in Tete, the resettlements for the Cahora Bassa hydroelectric dam (Isaacman, 2005; Kirshner and Power, 2015:71). But as I will detail further on, the recent mining-induced resettlement presents a new element: the large-scale investments by multinational companies that come with extractive projects and the particular expectations of "development" that these projects inspire.

While my fieldwork in Mozambique was focused on Tete, the upcoming gas industry in Cabo Delgado was a recurring point of references in conversations about extraction with representatives from the extractive sector, government officials, diplomats and other researchers. It was in Palma, the district where the large infrastructure for

<sup>3</sup> Besides Vale and ICVL there are several other mining companies operating in Tete: Jindal Steel, Beacon Hill Resources, Ncondezi Coal and Minas de Revubué (Langa, 2015:228).

<sup>4</sup> <https://fairplay.ihs.com/bulk/article/4293531/coal-exports-and-freight-rates-set-for-strong-year>, accessed 5/02/18.

<sup>5</sup> Ports-and-freight-rates-set-for-strong-year" <http://allafrica.com/stories/201610090010.html>, accessed 16/06/17, accessed 5/02/18. At least two attacks happened in the first week of October 2016 and in July earlier that year. Other attacks happened in April 2014 that were allegedly carried out by RENAMO, but denied by RENAMO spokesperson. <http://www.mining-journal.com/world/africa/vale-halts-sena-deliveries-after-attacks/> accessed 16/06/17.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with community relations employee of coal mine company, 4/4/16, Tete; see also <http://clubofmozambique.com/news/hundreds-out-of-work-as-coal-mining-grinds-to-a-halt-tete-mozambique/>, accessed 31/05/16.

<sup>7</sup> R. Hoyle, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/rio-tinto-to-sell-mozambique-coal-assets-for-50-million-1406704712>, The Wall Street Journal, published on July 30, 2014. Accessed on 8/06/2016.



the gas extraction will be located, what they imagined to be the next “hot spot” (Pijpers 2016). Palma lies in the upper north of the country, in Cabo Delgado province, close to the Tanzanian border, and has recently become the locus of explorations of offshore natural gas by Anadarko, ENI and ExxonMobil, with also the keen interest of Shell to establish a Gas-to-Liquid plant. No final deals have been made between the extraction companies and the Mozambican government and the first gas extraction is estimated to happen in 2022 or 2023.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the prospects of the natural gas windfalls are enormous and millions have already been invested by Anadarko and other companies for preparing the grounds in Palma for the building of an airstrip, a LNG plant, compounds, offices, a business park and so on (Symons, 2016). As an employee of a natural gas company told me, Palma is the place where “things are happening” or where “things will be happening” in the near future. This brings me to the first of the three strategic groups and its “horizons of expectations” of extraction and “development” that I will discuss in the next sections.

#### 4. “A chance of a generation”

The first set of temporal perspectives involves a forward-looking, long-term view of the extractive industry’s potential to bring transformational “development” to Mozambique and its people, which was generally expressed by representatives of the extractive industry and those associated with this sector such as consultants, representatives of the government of Mozambique and of donor countries with interests in the extractive sector. By no means does this represent a homogenous set of actors, but I consider them a “strategic group” (Bierschenk and Olivier De Sardan, 1997) as their projections for the future reveal coherence in the long-term and progress oriented perspective taken toward Mozambique’s extractive turn, and acknowledge the fundamentally transformative character of the extractive industry. Importantly, the proclaimers of these understandings broadly share a common geographical position (Maputo) and a high socio-economic status.

This long-term perspective is reflected in the discourse of planning of both the extractive companies and the government of Mozambique. When I asked an employee working on (local) government and community relations for one of the natural gas companies about CSR efforts, he emphasized the company’s focus on establishing “sustainable businesses.” He explained that the company “is in this for 50 to 100 years. This will give us the opportunity to educate a generation.”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, we can read in the project description of the LNG park of Anadarko that this is a “once in a generation” opportunity for Mozambique.<sup>10</sup> The length of mining concessions sustains these long-term perspectives as these concessions generally encompass several decades. The mining concession of Vale to explore coal in Moatize is for example valid for 35 years.<sup>11</sup> The long-term temporality is also reflected in the government’s vision of the mining and extractive industry, which in the 20-year national development strategy (2015–2035) is presented as one of the “transformative industries.” The strategy document estimates that Mozambique’s GDP will increase fivefold and regards the boom of the extractive industry as the start of a shift from poverty reduction to industrialization (Ministerio da Planificação e Desenvolvimento,

2014:47). It is thus predominantly through extractive mega-projects that the government of Mozambique is planning a route out of donor dependency and towards a more industrialized and, it envisions, prosperous future.

The discourse of long-term economic transformation equates resource extraction with “development” and thereby legitimizes these extractive projects through the language of national interest. These long-term projections of prosperity and anticipated economic windfalls have already had actual and far-reaching consequences for government decisions, as Mozambique’s recent debt crisis has shown. Simultaneously, such discourses de-legitimize campaigning against extraction projects, which are consequently deemed as “anti-development” or even anti-patriotic (Symons, 2016). Similar processes are observed by Rajak (2011:59), who argues that CSR discourse and practices have a tendency to “colonise the discourse and, in some sense, the identities of critics” (*emphasis in original*) by creating a collaborative and consensual future in which industry, government and civil society all strive for much-needed “development”.

The long-term perspective is also reflected in a focus on “sustainability” and which implicitly and often also explicitly involves the distancing from short-term actions. Several community relations employees I spoke with presented the people’s eagerness to “sell” their lands in the districts of Moatize and Palma respectively to the companies, as examples of “bad”, but understandable short-term thinking (cf. Davidov, 2016). “They see it as an opportunity to have a fresh start in a place where there are not many fresh starts,” one company community officer described. “This is rather short-term thinking. We do not want to relieve them from poverty, but to create businesses that will last.”<sup>12</sup> These words reveal a rather classic paternalistic portrayal of “the subjects of development”, but also evoke a “fluffy” buzzword that is much in vogue, namely “sustainability” (see Gardner, 2016), which has a clear long-term implication, and invokes benign and environmental friendly connotations.

The coupling of the extractive industry with “development” is deepened by recent shifts in international development cooperation that furthers social entrepreneurship as a more sustainable alternative to “traditional” cooperation (Jenkins, 2005). To give an example, the Dutch government’s approach to development cooperation made a clear discursive and policy shift “from aid to trade” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2013; Van de Vijzel, 2014). In Mozambique, a Dutch diplomat explained to me, the embassy’s approach has been one of “trade and aid”, in which the embassy envisions a role of Dutch companies in “the vanguard of corporate social responsibility.”<sup>13</sup>

Underlying this set of discourses of long-term and transformational “development” lays the implication of inevitability and certainty that in the near future gas will be extracted and that this will result in a prosperous extractive future for Mozambique. Yet in Tete and Moatize, in the proximity of the coalmines, this extractive future seemed to be a lot more volatile and a lot less prosperous.

#### 5. “I feel so sorry for this town”

The second set of temporal perspectives focuses on Tete’s urban elite, a strategic group consisting of businessmen and women who invested in Tete, lured by the promise of the “coal-bonanza.” One of these investors was a German lady, who owned the bed and breakfast where I was staying during my first visit to Tete in 2016. She had bought a piece of land on the banks of the river Zambezi and constructed a small but quite luxurious accommodation sometime in the 2000s. She had seen very busy times, but now business was slow which was why she had lowered the prices that were still visible on her websites. The first night

<sup>8</sup> <https://macauihub.com.mo/2016/09/23/extraction-of-natural-gas-in-mozambique-due-to-begin-in-2022-or-2023/>, accessed 05/02/18. It is worth noting that these estimations keep on changing.

<sup>9</sup> Conversation with employee of a multinational extractive company, 30/03/2016, Maputo. When referring to statements of individuals I have anonymized my interlocutors as well as the companies. There are not many people working in the social relations offices of extractive companies, therefore mentioning the company name would jeopardize the anonymity of my interlocutors.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.anadarko.com/Operations/Upstream/Africa/Mozambique/>, accessed 31/05/2016.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.vale.com/EN/investors/information-market/Press-Releases/Pages/cvrd-assina-contrato-para-exploracao-de-moatize.aspx>, accessed 23/01/18. Press release by Vale.

<sup>12</sup> Conversation with employee of a multinational extractive company, 30/03/16, Maputo.

<sup>13</sup> Conversation with Dutch Diplomat, 01/04/16, Maputo.

I was her only guest. When I asked her about expat life in Tete, she said surprised and almost reproachful: “They all left! It was so interesting and lovely here. Six years ago there were so many people from all over; engineers, geologists. We had the loveliest conversations.” She looked over the Zambezi river towards the town’s skyline, marked by the bridge and several new luxury hotels. “It’s such a sad sight. All those new hotels, empty. Everything is for sale. We hope there will be one or two projects coming... Another hydroelectric plant might give some movement. But besides that, I feel so sorry for this town.”<sup>14</sup>

In March 2016 I spoke to several businessmen and women, Mozambicans and foreigners, and when talking about their experiences in Tete, they divided the last decade in clear terms of before, during and after “the boom.” Similar to the B&B owner’s reference to the “empty hotels”, they would illustrate their narrative by referring to the particular urban expansion of Tete and neighbouring Moatize, and the tremendous changes the towns and their surroundings had seen. As Kirshner and Power (2015) described, Tete was Mozambique’s “sleepy backwater”, but then the coal “boom” came and it became buzzing and expanded. The towns of Tete and Moatize urbanized in a rapid pace to meet the demand for accommodation, catering, transport, and telecommunication for the influx of expatriate workers, subcontracted companies, national staff from Maputo, domestic and regional labour migrants, and business visitors. This new urban landscape involved among other things many hotels, luxurious compounds, several shopping malls, a new bridge over the Zambezi river, a new railway corridor connecting Tete to the Nhacala port (owned for 85 per cent by Vale), fancy restaurants overlooking the Zambezi river, universities with courses in mineralogy, geology and accountancy for mining industries, and a general increased urban expansion particularly on the road between Tete and Moatize, where dwellings, shops and workplaces emerged (Kirshner and Power, 2015:75–76, as well as own observations).

However, people’s references to this rapid “development” were without exception followed by the observation that the high expectations of “development” never really materialized, not even in the heydays of the coal boom. The influx of foreign and Mozambican workers and business people was less than expected and the new workforce was to a large extent accommodated by the housing facilities of the companies themselves (see also Kirshner and Power, 2015:76). Due to the bust in coal prices most of the expats had left, business services to the mining industry were halted, and many construction projects were suspended. This downfall was not only a consequence of fluctuating markets, however. It is also inherent to the life cycle of coal mines, as such projects are especially work-demanding in the initial construction phase, when the mine is fully operational the workforce and number of sub-contracted companies needed generally declines.<sup>15</sup> “Fifty businesses are closing down every month in Tete”, a Portuguese business woman told me, and while this was difficult to verify, the empty shops, plots of land for sale, unfinished malls and reduced prizes on land and accommodation provided some anecdotal evidence for this claim. The despair of the business elite was captured by a rumour that one of the town’s most prominent real estate owners had orchestrated his own kidnapping in order to escape his creditors.<sup>16</sup> While it was not possible for me to verify this, it is telling that in Tete this story was deemed plausible, as the coal crisis has led many investors to despair.

This set of temporalities is one of expressed by people with “fields of opportunities” (de l’Estoile, 2014:64) that allowed them to take business or employment opportunities when they appeared in Tete during the coal boom. The coal bust made them envision the possible ending of their businesses. Despite their despair and losses, and their faint hopes for a hydroelectric plant or for an increase of the coal price, these

people were far from stuck. Most of them had plan Bs; the foreign and national investors I encountered had the option to count their losses and leave (as many in 2016 already did), or to stay put and wait for better days (which in fact emerged in 2017 when coal prices picked up again). Similarly, many of the educated nationals I encountered in Tete anticipated that it would be easy to find a job elsewhere, in Palma perhaps.<sup>17</sup> This is in stark contrast to the last set of perspectives of a group of people with generally more limited “field of opportunities” (de l’Estoile, 2014:64).

## 6. “When will they take care of us?”

The third set of temporalities focuses on perspectives of people who were resettled by coal mining companies between 2009 and 2014 or who are still awaiting resettlement. Most of the people who were living in the concession areas of the mines were resettled to the newly build villages Cateme and Mualadzi approximately forty kilometres from their previous settlements (see Fig. 1). 716 households were relocated by Vale to Cateme and approximately 470 households were relocated to Mualadzi, the resettlement area developed by the small mining company Riversdale and later by Rio Tinto, which acquired Riversdale in 2011 and whose concession is now owned by ICVL (Lillywhite et al., 2015). Several reports and studies have detailed the problematic implementation of the resettlement process, singling out a variety of problems: the poor quality of the new houses; the insecure supply of water; the long distance to the market of Moatize and the irregular transportation offered by the mining companies; the arid quality of the land; the loss of activities to sustain their livelihood such as farming, fishing and selling stones and charcoal; the partial resettlement of Capanga, leaving over 250 families in insecurity; and the repressive attitude of the government when community members voiced their discontent (Selemane, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2013; Lillywhite et al., 2015; Kirshner and Power, 2015).

Initially, the *reassentados* (resettled people) perceived the resettlement process as a “development” opportunity, which was also the way in which the government of Mozambique and the coal companies presented the process.<sup>18</sup> “At first I thought resettlement would be a gain”, a woman from Mualadzi said during a conference in Tete, organized by an environmentalist NGO. She and many other *reassentados* recounted how they had hoped their lives would change for the better, hopes that had been fed by promises made by mining companies. She continued: “But now I know it is a disgrace. In [Capanga] we did not depend on the government or on the companies. Now we are suffering. Begging for things to eat and water to drink.”<sup>19</sup> The situation of anticipated growth and accelerated change had created expectations for “development.” But after resettlement the *reassentados* quickly found themselves in a situation that can be characterized as “cooling down” (Pijpers, 2016), as the opportunities they had envisioned did not materialized. People in Mualadzi expressed a complex mixture of feelings of loss, longing to their former way of life, powerlessness, as well as continued hope for future gains, such as further compensation and “projects.”

The resettlement processes in Tete have created particular modalities of “eviction time”, by which Harms (2013: 346) understands “the complex assortment of temporalities that arise when people are displaced from their lands and homes.” I argue that for the *reassentados* in Tete “eviction time” is characterized by “waiting”, which becomes a metaphor for blocked expectations, but also expresses the hope for individual and collective mobility (de l’Estoile, 2014; Narotsky and Besnier, 2014:11). I will subsequently present an analysis of “eviction time” for the members of resettled communities in Tete and

<sup>14</sup> Conversation with B&B owner, Tete, 4/4/16.

<sup>15</sup> Conversation with representative of Investment Promotion Center, 17/01/17, Tete.

<sup>16</sup> “Mozambique: Businessman Kidnapped in Tete”, 15/03/2016: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201603151889.html>, accessed 10/06/2016.

<sup>17</sup> Interview employee of community relations office of coal mining company, 4/4/16, Moatize.

<sup>18</sup> National Director of Land, Environment and Rural Development, Arlindo Djedje, opening speech at the national conference on resettlement, 24/11/16, in Tete.

<sup>19</sup> Conference organized by *Justiça Ambiental*, 03/11/17, Tete.

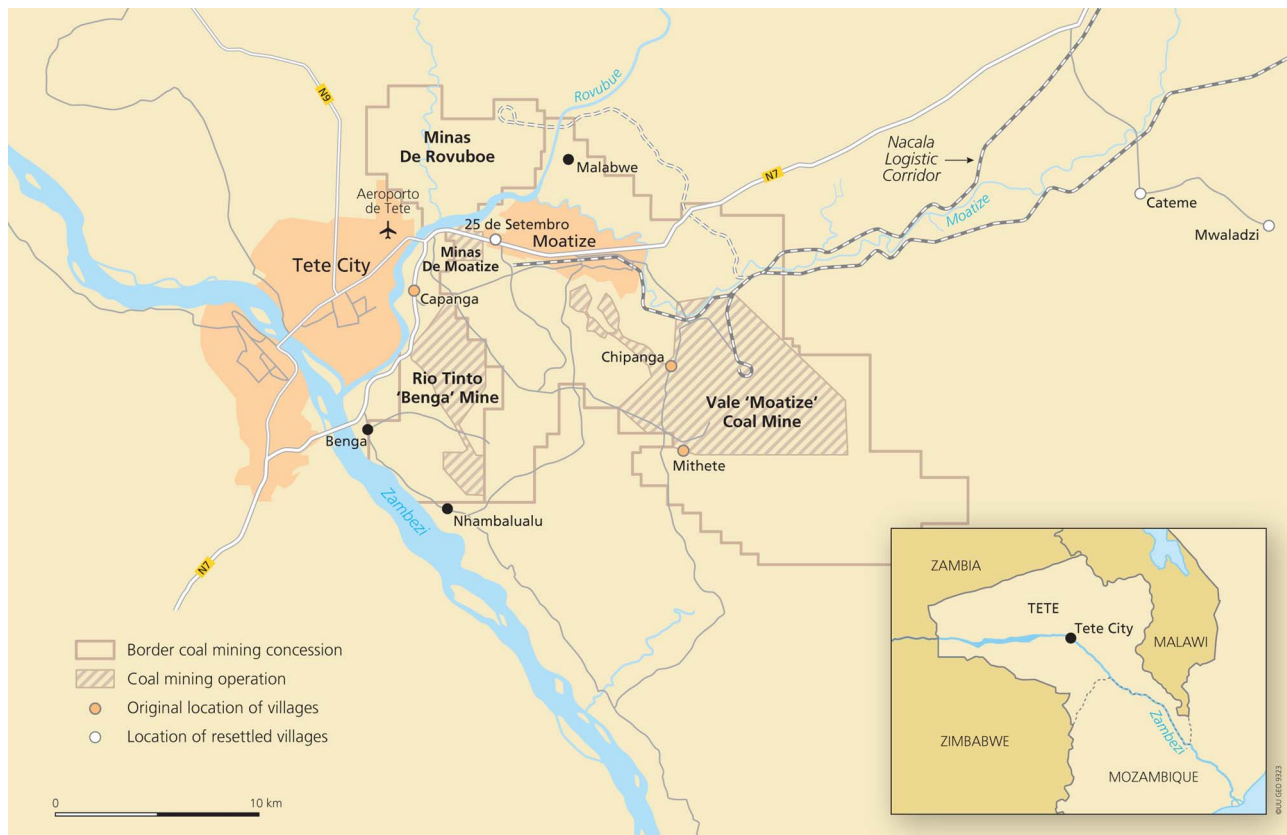


Fig. 1. Map of mining areas around Tete city and in Moatize district, including resettlement locations.

demonstrate how “waiting” is involved in several aspects of the resettlement process. I focus in particular on the resettlement of Capanga, a community of which a part of the population was moved to Mualadzi and another part remained awaiting resettlement.

First of all, the “waiting” is reflected in the timing of the resettlements (who can go when?). Previous to resettlement, Capanga’s residents had been classified into “rural” and “urban” households, and whereas Riversdale and Rio Tinto resettled the “rural” households between 2010 and 2014, their “urban” counterparts remained in Capanga awaiting resettlement by ICVL. For many *reassentados* this meant that they had relatives who were still living in Capanga, and in the case of several polygamous families, men were separated from (some of their) wives. For those residents remaining in Capanga, it meant that several services such as the school, the health post and the market had disappeared, and that they were not allowed to rehabilitate their houses or huts or construct new ones.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the “waiting” complicated the resettlement’s anticipated compensations, as the cadastres and lists of people designated for resettlement were “fixed in time.” The information about number of members per household, as well as the number and dimension of a family’s houses, huts, fields, and fruit trees, had been registered on a particular day in 2009, when Riversdale conducted its community census. The cadastre information did thus not take into account the dynamics of family life over time. This was for instance an issue for young adults, as some got married over the course of the resettlement process but could not be incorporated into the system as families (see also Selemane, 2010:26–27). Much akin to Askland (2018) description of life in the coal-mining affected area of Wollar in Australia, the residents of Capanga can be described as being “displaced in place” as due mining activities their dwelling situation has become characterized by “spatial and temporal immobility.”

The “waiting” of those who had been relocated took a different

shape, captured in the question: “when will they take care of us?” While visiting Mualadzi, I attended a meeting of the local *comite de gestão de recursos naturais*, the natural resource management committee, with eighteen participants, during which it became clear that the inhabitants of the resettled communities had expected a drastic break by relocating, but they also had imagined better living conditions.<sup>21</sup> One of the *reassentados* said he considered himself and his family “*parado*,” “stopped.”

One of the ways in which the *reassentados* in Mualadzi imagined getting out of the impasse they found themselves in, was through “projects”, in particular for breeding chicken. Such projects, it was imagined, would create a bit of income, as chickens could be sold in Cateme or Moatize, or to the company’s catering services. This call for project fits in a larger frame of “development” and how this imagined in Mozambique’s district communities. Such imaginations and expectations are shaped by Mozambique’s history of NGO interventions and by a large-scale government-initiated district development fund, the so-called “seven million”, that unrolled in 2006, providing individual loans (that few ever repay) for small-scale livelihood projects. According to Smart and Hanlon (2014:29) the “seven million” has resulted in “a new sort of deal—[...] the farmer provides the labour, outsiders provide the inputs for free, and the farmer keeps any sales income.” The waiting of many resettled individuals was thus shaped by the hope for projects as it is through projects that people in Mualadzi largely imagined they would be “taken care of.” The *reassentados* thus expected some kind of engagement of the company that would last over time. But in contrast to these long-term expectations, the company was experienced as distant and absent.

<sup>21</sup> Meeting at the office of the natural resource management committee of Mualadzi, 5/4/16. These committees are so called “co-management committee” on the level of a locality or community with a mandate to promote economic development. These committees are often a focal point for capacity building initiatives and could (co-) managed the royalties of natural resource extraction, such as timber and coal.

<sup>20</sup> Interviews conducted in Capanga, Moatize, 14/01/17.



It is noteworthy that in the phrase “when will they take care of us?” it was not necessarily clear for the various Mualadzi community members who used such (or similar) phrasing, who “they” are. The *reassentados* did not know where the companies’ responsibilities ended and those of the government began, nor did the government or the company for that matter. Residents of Mualadzi sketched several impediments that made relations with the company and the government complicated: such as the “buying” of community leaders, the theft of chicks by the company’s social relations officers, absent government authorities, and so on.<sup>22</sup> “Eviction time” of the people in Mualadzi was thus also characterized by being in-between government and company, and by disorientation, suspicion and uncertainty.

Another approach by which the *reassentados* (at least the ones present at meeting in Mualadzi) imagined a way out of the impasse of “waiting” and the non-response from both the government and the company, was protesting. This was imagined as a violent action, as one member of the group said: “the government never replies to our letters. But they will note down the time and details if we mention to protest. And the government will be there with the police. Not to protect us, but to fight us.”<sup>23</sup> Similar protest in Cateme had in fact ended with the violent intervention of state security forces (Lillywhite et al., 2015). Again, other inhabitants of Mualadzi had seen no other option than to leave. They sold whatever they could take off the house such as doors, wooden beams, and tin roofs, and returned to Capanga or elsewhere. In 2017, it was estimated that between 96 and 181 families had already left the resettlement area.<sup>24</sup> Thus as living conditions seemed to worsen in Mualadzi, the resettlement itself seemed increasingly of a temporal nature.

## 7. Final reflections

In this article I discussed three temporal perspectives related to resource extraction and “development” of three strategic groups in Mozambique and uncovered several horizons of expectations of people with distinct fields of opportunities, past experiences, and frames of references (Koselleck, 1976; de l’Estoile, 2014). While each of these sets merits more ethnographic depth, by juxtaposing them I believe we can begin to tease out how a focus on temporalities may offer insightful perspectives into the live worlds created and imagined by extractive booms and busts in an ethnographic manner. As this article has shown there are multiple temporalities at play around coal mining and the extractive sector in general (D’Angelo and Pijpers this issue), which involve the phases of resettlement, the rhythms of the markets or the “extractive pace” (Kesseling this issue), the booms and inevitable busts, the life cycle of the mine, the forward looking aspirations of “development”, and the various stages of “eviction time,” to name a few.

One striking difference surfacing from these different perspectives is the long-term visions versus short-term experiences and expectations. The long-term discourse surrounding the LNG projects in Cabo Delgado, illustrated by Anadarko’s emphasis on the LNG project as “a chance of a generation”, resonates with findings of Rajak (2011: 97) in relation to the Anglo Rustenburg mine in South Africa, whose discourse also stressed Anglo’s committed to be there for “the coming 100 years.” These discourses seem to emphasize a linear process towards some idea of progress that, as Rajak (2011) also shows, is in contrast with the experiences of “extraction time” of people directly affected by the mining activities of which the business elite in Tete and *reassentados* in Mualadzi are two examples. For the small(er) scale investors “extraction time” was shaped by volatility, the fluctuation of markets, and the

cycles of labour necessities. Those who were dispossessed and resettled by the mine expected some kind of long-term relationships of dependency (to be “in the hands of the company”), whereas companies’ resettlement practices seemed to be of a short-term nature, also depending on the fluctuation of the market and where shaped by changing ownership of the mines (Owen and Kemp, 2015). Consequently, the temporal perspectives of those directly affected by extractive mega-projects are shaped by rupture, insecurity, and “waiting.”

The three temporal typologies explored in this article reveal the intertwining of extractive projects and “development” and provide an analytical lens to uncover the multiple and sometimes contradicting lifeworlds that are created and imagined in relation to this extraction–“development” nexus. Moreover, this draws attention to the moralization of “futures” (Davidov and Nelson, 2016:8), and to the processes by which some extractive futures are authorized as more desirable than others.

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<sup>22</sup> Meeting at the office of the natural resource management committee, 5/4/16, Mualadzi.

<sup>23</sup> Meeting at the office of the natural resource management committee, 5/4/16, Mualadzi.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with community activist in Mualadzi 21/11/2016,

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