



Extractive entanglements: Community relations & regimes of accountability at Frieda River Project in PNG



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Speaker

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Abstract: The discourse of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) introduced new forms of relations between companies and their local stakeholders. In this paper I sketch out the process through which resource extraction companies use CSR to manage ways in which they get entangled in local social, cultural and economic contexts, and outline some of the mechanisms they use to disentangle and limit their obligations in resource localities.

I argue that while the CSR rhetoric brings the entanglements at resource extraction projects to light, mainstream CSR practice can facilitate a process of disconnection from local realities and personal obligations. I use an example of the Community Affairs team at the Frieda River Project in Papua New Guinea to contrast the professional and detached arenas in which CSR mechanisms tend to be developed, with the entangled and deeply relational contexts in which they are implemented on the ground in the project location.

Focusing on experiences of the Community Affairs Officers (CAs) I argue that while the company developing the Project was accountable for the impacts of its operations to shareholders and the PNG government, the CAs felt accountable to both – the company managers and members of local communities. I describe the impact this had on the ways in which they enacted their roles.