

## **‘National Resources’? The Fragmented Citizenship of Gas Extraction in Tanzania**

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Recent discoveries of oil and natural gas across East Africa have provoked a wave of political optimism fuelled by imaginaries of future development. Tanzania is a paragon of this trend; its government having asserted its potential to become a globally significant natural gas producer within a decade. Yet, this rhetorical promise has been countered by a series of violent confrontations that have taken place between state forces and residents of southern Tanzania. Although these struggles are about various articulations of resource sovereignty, this paper argues that they should be located less in questions of resource control, than in a historical marginalisation of the south, or what has been called a ‘hidden agenda’, that privileges urban centres to the north. Drawing on original qualitative data generated over three years in Mtwara and Lindi regions, it shows how gas discoveries reveal the fault lines in the construction of an inclusive ‘Tanzanian’ citizenship. Protesters counter-narrate their sense of citizenship with insurgent strategies ranging from strike action to calls for secession. In short, natural gas discoveries actually *extend* the fragmentation of an already ‘differentiated citizenship’. Studies of resource conflict and sovereignty, we conclude, should pay more attention to the contested nature of citizenship.

Keywords: Tanzania; Mtwara; citizenship; gas; differentiated citizenship;

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*'It is something unacceptable that national resources can be restricted only to the place where they are found' (Jakaya Kikwete, former President of Tanzania)<sup>1</sup>*

*'Here in the south we are different and we need to be respected and to get a good deal with this gas' (Basana Saidi, bar owner, Mtwara town, June 2012)*

## **Introduction**

Between December 2012 and May 2013, a series of violent confrontations took place between state police, army forces and residents of Mtwara region in southern Tanzania. These globally reported clashes, in which 8 people were killed, dozens injured and hundreds arrested, concerned the new construction of a 512km gas pipeline connecting Mtwara to Dar es Salaam, the commercial capital. They are central to contemporary debates over the meaning of Tanzanian citizenship, brought into view by the vast recent discovery of recoverable reserves of natural gas. While this has recently been estimated at more than 57 trillion cubic feet for Tanzania alone, the US Geological Survey estimates that coastal deposits across East Africa could reach 441tcf.<sup>2</sup> Despite the potential for record investment in Tanzania – the IMF recently estimated this somewhere between \$20bn and \$40bn – these discoveries are significant beyond transforming the country into a major natural gas producer.<sup>3</sup> Natural gas also serves to reveal the tensions around the construction of an inclusive ‘Tanzanian’ citizenship predicated on the equitable distribution of its benefits across the nation-state. Protesters in Mtwara interpret government decision to overlook the region as a promised site for the development of a gas processing plant, as a direct echo of decades of marginalisation from *development* writ large. From this perspective, a longstanding ‘hidden agenda’ is understood to both discursively and substantively distinguish between Tanzania’s north as a locus of

economic development and its south as a 'location of passivity and apathy'.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the discovery of offshore gas in contemporary Tanzania has served to reveal the fault lines of inequitable development, citizenship, cultural change or, more simply, what it means to be 'Tanzanian'.

Against this background, this paper views the ensuing gas protests as a catalyst for interrogating the ways in which Tanzanian citizenship is discursively framed and contested more broadly. It presents and analyses original interview data generated over three periods between 2012 and 2014 in order to understand the ways in which competing political imaginaries of gas extraction produce particular kinds of citizenship. In doing so it offers one of the first critical analyses of the political contention around Tanzania's 'new' gas and develops new arguments linking the country's resource politics with its histories of citizenship. Theoretically, it draws upon the notion of 'differentiated citizenship' defined as 'the differential treatment of populations in relation to ethno-racial differences, and the dictates of development programs'.<sup>5</sup> In this formulation, citizenship is not about equating citizens but about articulating, codifying and enacting their differences. Here it is used to explain how the contentious politics of natural gas extraction in Southern Tanzania can be located less in questions of resource control and more in terms of the historical inequities of Tanzanian national membership. We assert that by understanding the fragmented iterations of Tanzanian citizenship in the past, the contemporary processes of Tanzania's gas politics can be better understood. Moreover, this paper is one of the first to demonstrate how specific extractive resources (in this case, gas) actually extend the fragmentation of citizenship in an African context. Gas extraction does not only shape narratives of resource nationalism, but is used to 'rationalize local geographies of dispossession'.<sup>6</sup> By highlighting these processes in the context of the

Tanzanian gas riots, we thus begin to answer Huber's call to show how 'energy extraction is an active moment in the construction of specific geopolitical imaginaries'.<sup>7</sup>

Framing Tanzania's contentious gas politics in this way also invites a novel engagement with the socio-cultural aspects of resource politics and sovereignty. Notwithstanding Must's spatial analysis of anti-gas activism in Mtwara,<sup>8</sup> and the valuable body of established political economic and natural resource management critiques of extraction in Tanzania, empirical analyses which foreground the links between extractive resources and identity formation remain largely absent. Thus, in order to address this, we show how gas discovery is used to produce a series of competing framings by the state and by protesters (themselves holding differing perspectives). As we will show, these are firstly articulated by the state in terms of the 'national' but with a negotiated sense of place that speaks to the imperatives of global capitalist investment. At odds with this framing, the protesters express their sense of citizenship in terms of the 'regional', with a discourse ranging from the insurgent to the silent and strategies varying between strike action and calls for secession. We focus on the clashes which these competing positions have provoked, hence reinforcing the view that resources only '*become* through the triumph of one imaginary over others'.<sup>9</sup> Resource discoveries are by their very nature forward facing and invite a series of imagined political futures. These may not fully determine the policies of resource extraction, yet they do shape them and they are based on different ontologies and imagined geographies. In this paper, different understandings of Tanzanian political identity produce the conditions for the formation of an emergent gas politics.

Section 2 details the paper's methodology, before proceeding, in section 3, to a critical review of the literature surrounding citizenship. This section goes beyond work from political geography that has highlighted the differentiated aspects of resource

sovereignty, and outlines the context of struggles over the meaning of citizenship in Tanzania. In section 4, we offer a brief outline of the politico-historical trajectory of gas extraction in Tanzania and how this relates to the historical patterns of Tanzanian national development. Following this, the gas riots in Mtwara are situated in the context of a longstanding sense of marginalisation from ‘national’ development that is prevalent in southern Tanzania. This discussion of a ‘hidden agenda’ is followed by a. Sections 5 and 6 analyse original empirical data generated by protesters and Mtwara residents which, together, illustrate a series of qualitatively distinct political imaginaries. These reveal the fractured nature of ‘national’ claims to gas in the region, a fragmented sense of citizenship, and highlight the array of alternative ways for imagining the political futures of gas extraction. We conclude, in section 7, by identifying future research questions that might emerge from the politics of resource discoveries (in both Tanzania and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa) when the question of fragmented citizenship is foregrounded.

### **Research Methodology**

The first period of fieldwork took place in 2012 and lasted for four months. This involved interviews (both structured and semi-structured) and focus groups, principally in Mtwara but also in the bordering Lindi region. One of the researchers was based in Mikindani (near to Mtwara Town) for the duration and travelled to Kilwa Kivinji, Kilwa Masoko, Lindi Town (Lindi region), Dihimba, Masasi, Mtwara Town, Newala, Msangumkuu, Msimbati, Tandahimba (Mtwara Region). These are predominantly coastal locations but interlocutors based in the interior (Dihimba, Masasi, Newala, Tandahimba) were less concerned about extraction processes and the distribution of future benefits, perhaps owing to the fact that communities are less directly affected by these processes and because of the reduced proximity of (predominantly offshore) gas fields.<sup>10</sup> Criticisms of

processes relating to gas extraction were far more common in those locations adjacent to the Indian Ocean coast and nearer to the gas discoveries.

Interviews and focus groups were held with various groups affected directly incipient processes of gas extraction, including (but not limited to); political actors, port and gas industry workers, and groups of (predominantly) men, especially at Mtwara fish market and adjacent to the redeveloped port. Many other individual interviews and informal group conversations were held in Mtwara Town (the nexus of the process at the time), and ten kilometres away in Mikindani (where the researcher was based). During the initial research period thirty interviews and five focus groups were conducted, largely unstructured and focused on expectations around gas extraction with informants leading the conversations. This allowed for wide-ranging discussions and saw many refer to a 'hidden agenda' against 'the south', discussed later. Research conducted in Lindi region (to the north) also allows for the reflections of local actors that have lived through and witnessed a process of natural gas extraction on Songo Songo Island, and in the affected towns on the mainland. In terms of sampling, this was mostly random although the decision to conduct research in certain places was premised on the assumption that they had more experience of the processes linked to potential future extraction. All interviewees have been anonymised although, largely at their request, other biographic details such as employment status, gender, location of interview and so on, have been included.

The following periods of fieldwork took place in 2014 (three weeks in January and two months later in the year), with the intervening period marked by a number of major protests in Mtwara (December 2012-May 2013) – some violent – against government decisions relating to gas extraction. Both researchers were present for the first period of research in 2014, while the second period was conducted by the same

researcher that had spent time in southern Tanzania during 2012. Across the fieldwork in 2014, another thirty interviews were conducted, focus groups were held with port workers, local residents, villagers affected by the process of gas extraction (after the creation of exclusion zones for sea traffic) and other stakeholders in Mikindani and Mtwara. The main findings and quotations presented here serve as emblematic of those expressed across the coastal part of the Mtwara Region, and in those areas already affected by processes of gas extraction. However, understandably, the focus of research shifted in 2014 to include specific discussions of the unrest in the previous year. Our aim is to offer a thorough reading of the reasons for malcontent in Mtwara, rather than offering a comparison with a more 'national' picture. Suffice to say that both are imagined constructs<sup>11</sup> and we are seeking to offer a sense of the perceptions from southern Tanzania in order to make explicit the sort of regional politics and regional history that inform contemporary notions of citizenship.

This research is also informed by previous experience of both researchers, who have lived in Mtwara in the past, while one has previously completed research projects within the region. Key informant interviews were also conducted with (anonymised) faculty from the Stella Maris Mtwara University College in order to gain further perspectives on the protests and the broader politics of the, and with gas company representatives (in Dar and London) as well as relevant stakeholders from the NGO sector. Other requests for interviews with government representatives to discuss these issues were rejected or ignored. Overall, this has been a wide-ranging process of data gathering against which certain specific claims are made.



## **Citizenship in Tanzania**

Resource discoveries provide key moments for resource-rich states to imagine and legitimate particular socio-economic futures. They carry and enable the transformative promise of particular visions of development through which state discourses are produced. As Fernando Coronil memorably put it, with reference to Venezuela and oil, resources afford a ‘magic’ that brings a fetishized ‘resource state’ into being through a combination of nature, nation-building and the impulses of modernity.<sup>12</sup> In other words, resources become a central part of a ‘geopolitical imagination’ of the state that turns the resource- or petro-state into a naturalised subject.<sup>13</sup> However, the consistency and rhetorical promise of these unified, ‘national’ framings of resources hinge upon particular ways of spatializing citizenship that elides substantively uneven encounters with the state. Taking resource sovereignty as a point of departure, this section interrogates the way in which citizenship is constructed and enacted in Tanzania. By locating the discussion in a broader literature on African citizenship, it highlights the ways in which the link between resources and a fractured sense of citizenship has been under-explored. This specific account of Tanzanian citizenship suggests a conceptual framework for understanding Tanzania’s emergent politics of gas extraction which can be seen to distinguish between and produce differentiated forms of citizenship.

Following Marshall’s seminal work over half a century ago, the field of citizenship studies has been marked by a Eurocentrism that has marginalized African contexts and their specificities.<sup>14</sup> Where attention has been focused on the continent, it has tended to highlight a series of binaries and contradictions, most of which emerge out of the colonial experience. The faultlines of citizenship have been drawn between different publics and along the struggles over inclusion in societies that have asserted state power through processes of exclusion.<sup>15</sup> From a postcolonial perspective, Mamdani

points to the continuing salience of colonial experiences with a distinction drawn between urban and rural modes of power – what he terms the ‘bifurcated state’.<sup>16</sup> In this formulation, the ‘Janus-faced’ state created the legacy of indirect rule via customary authority that emphasized tradition in rural areas, ‘organized around the principle of fusion to ensure a unitary authority’.<sup>17</sup> Such a ‘split’ between urban and rural modes of rule can be seen, in the present study, to help shape the construction of ‘hidden agenda’ in Tanzania as detailed later. Continuing this postcolonial theme, the coast of East Africa has been analyzed as being marked by a contentious ‘politics of the soil’ in which resources themselves becomes central to understanding citizenship. One example of this are the attempts made to transform ‘the “soil” into a symbolic reference for imagined histories and contemporary aspirations’ of colonial Kenya.<sup>18</sup>

If a politics of the soil has come to be represented by the notion that access to land and its resources ‘symbolizes...citizenship in many African societies’<sup>19</sup>, then it turns on certain framings whereby identity and belonging become of paramount importance. Put another way, at the heart of both citizenship struggles and the question of political identity formation in Africa lies the processes of boundary making, both metaphorically and materially. In symbolic terms, these processes involve the creation of ‘others’ who are excluded from a political community just as the discourse of national citizenship promises inclusivity. Aminzade explores this dialectic by providing a historical sociology of national citizenship in Tanzania – this paper’s country of study. Tracing its contradictory nature, he shows how national articulations of being a ‘good citizen’ work to exclude certain people due to the ‘durable racial inequality inherited from colonial rule’ as well as more contemporary marginalization on account of ‘the supposed imperatives of economic development in a global economy’.<sup>20</sup> However, as Emma Hunter reminds us in the Tanzanian context, concepts such as ‘good citizenship’ are never simply and passively

accepted by the colonized state but rather refashioned as they are ‘incorporated into the local context’.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, it is precisely in the process of this reworking that differential treatment of citizens is made evident and particular groups are included or excluded.

Throughout its history, Tanzanian citizenship has been shaped by simultaneous processes of inclusion and exclusion. For example, the country’s (then Tanganyika) first citizenship law ushered in a debate between, on the one hand, government proposals allowing the granting of citizenship status to non-Africans who had been resident there for at least five years and its opponents who argued that the rights of citizenship should only be conferred to ‘indigenous inhabitants’.<sup>22</sup> This debate no doubt emerged in part because of suspicion and mistrust towards an English speaking elite with links to the erstwhile colonial administration. Furthermore, and as recently as the 1990s, legal changes made the acquisition of Tanzanian citizenship more difficult, especially for people from Commonwealth countries.<sup>23</sup> While this did not explicitly or legislatively target any racial or ethnic groups, it directly impacted people of Asian heritage, resulting in Asian-Tanzanian citizens being seen as foreigners by some.<sup>24</sup>

It is, however, worth noting that post-colonial nation building in Tanzania has played down the role of ethnicity. This is partly owing to Nyerere’s introduction of Swahili as *lingua franca* and the establishment of centralized state institutions.<sup>25</sup> As has been pointed out, ‘whereas ethnic identification has formed the basis of politics and political organizations in [neighbouring] Kenya for more than thirty years, in Tanzania it has not’<sup>26</sup>. Most contemporary citizenship debates in Tanzania have instead centered on the idea of dual citizenship brought into view by an expanding Tanzanian diaspora, but it does so without reference to natural resource imaginaries. This paper seeks to add to this literature with a specific discussion of differentiated citizenship based on regional

imbalances in Tanzania and an emergent identity politics in ‘the south’, particularly in relation to the ownership and (mis)management of natural gas. We argue that contested meanings around natural resource discovery and management is missing from existing discussions, and yet central to contemporary debates concerning citizenship in Tanzania.

Whether parsed as ‘fractured’ or ‘differentiated’, understanding citizenship as unevenly experienced highlights that state technologies and modes of governing involve constructing ‘differences as a means of distancing people from one another’ and distributing differential treatment ‘to different categories of citizens’.<sup>27</sup> This is both specifically evidenced – for example, in the struggles over sovereignty, citizenship and political identity in the first Ivorian civil war in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>28</sup> – and in studies of autochthony discourses and identity politics in Africa more generally.<sup>29</sup> Taken together, it is clear that ‘defining the boundaries and meaning of citizenship’ remains ‘an issue of paramount importance in many countries’ facing up to the political opportunities and challenges enabled by resource discovery.<sup>30</sup> In the next section, we trace a politico-historical trajectory of resources and citizenship in Tanzania and delineate the contemporary significance of the ‘hidden agenda’ for understanding the outbreak of, and responses to, gas riots in the country. This follows an initial discussion of the history of natural gas in the country.

### **Discovering natural gas and uncovering a ‘hidden agenda’ in Tanzania**

The production of natural gas has not been a prominent feature in Tanzania until recently. While BP and Shell first explored the Indian Ocean fields in the 1950s and 1960s, challenging ocean geography and preferable alternatives elsewhere (e.g. cheaper options in the Middle East) saw extraction efforts abandoned until the late-1970s, when higher gas prices saw smaller companies revive exploration. More recently, however, rising

global demand for natural gas brought surprisingly robust commodity prices following the Global Financial Crisis saw global exploration efforts increase. East Africa is one such area of exploration, with significant natural gas reserves recently discovered in the territorial waters of Tanzania and Mozambique. Global gas giants are involved with BG Group (recently purchased by Shell), Statoil, ExxonMobil, Ophir and Pavilion Energy (among others) are invested in the region, with Petrobras recently pulling out after failing to make any discoveries. There has been great excitement at the magnitude of recent discoveries of natural gas in Tanzania with the government, for example, setting the ambitious target of transforming Tanzania from a low to a middle-income country by 2025, with resources rhetorically linked to future ‘development’.<sup>31</sup>

The combined reserves of the two major previous discoveries of gas in Tanzanian waters, at Songo Songo (Kilwa District, Lindi Region) and Mnazi Bay (Mtwara Region), are less than 5% of recent discoveries, with the existing gas at Songo Songo already providing 45% of total electricity generation capacity in the country. Furthermore, it is claimed, that recent discoveries could ‘sustain 30-40 years of export production at a rate of between 10 and 20 million metric tons per year... a substantial boost to government revenue arising from the anticipated production-sharing contracts.’<sup>32</sup> A 36-inch gas bore pipeline has since been developed, which pipes natural gas from Mnazi Bay on the Mozambique border, and Kilawani (further north) to Dar es Salaam for use in the national grid. Confirmation of this pipeline led to major protests in the Mtwara region in 2013, a violent response to the seemingly inequitable distribution of gas revenues regularly framed as part of a longstanding ‘hidden agenda’.<sup>33</sup>

There exists a widely held claim that the state, both in colonial and post-colonial times, has either ignored or has sought to deliberately marginalize the south of modern-day Tanzania. Kamat argues that Mtwara remains ‘Tanzania’s most neglected and

underdeveloped region'<sup>34</sup> and it is against this backdrop that contemporary claims for the just distribution of future gas revenues are made, thus bringing the politics of regional identity sharply into focus. This prominent sense of geographical injustice in 'the south' is noteworthy, especially given that Tanzania is often portrayed as a country not blighted by the ethnic tensions and political problems associated with other African states and especially those associated within neighbouring countries.<sup>35</sup>

It has been argued that this process of marginalization began more than a century ago, in response to the *Maji Maji* rebellion (1905-7) in the south of German East Africa. Colonial authorities decided to abolish infrastructural improvements in order to limit the extent to which 'people in the area [could] organize themselves into an effective resistance group'.<sup>36</sup> This continued when Tanganyika became a British Protectorate in the early 1920s, with 'preferences for other districts already established by their predecessors' consolidated by the new administration.<sup>37</sup> While colonial rule tended to create opportunities in other regions, away from the south, the Tanganyika Groundnut Scheme (1947-53) marks a noteworthy exception. Often seen to have been an abject failure when measured against the stated aims, this Scheme created job opportunities for local residents and brought about major infrastructural changes, including the construction of a railway and the creation of a new port at Mtwara.<sup>38</sup> This represents a short-lived challenge to the 'hidden agenda', for some, although widely held views of significant post-colonial 'development' policies echo the general negativity of the colonial experience in the region.<sup>39</sup>

By the late 1960s, the Tanzanian government had sought to resettle the rural majority. This, it was argued, would improve the centralized provision of government services; increase agricultural outputs; and foster a sense of shared (national) identity.<sup>40</sup> While initially voluntary, this process became compulsory in 1973 with many people

forcibly resettled. This destabilized the everyday lives of many in the rural majority and had a disastrous impact on the economy, with resultant food shortages commonplace.<sup>41</sup> A disproportionate number of these *Ujamaa* villages were established in southern Tanzania, which became a test ground for this government experiment in social reorganization with Mtwara was the most intensively ‘villagized’ region in Tanzania.<sup>42</sup>

The damaging effects of villagization were tacitly acknowledged by Julius Nyerere on his retirement in 1985,<sup>43</sup> with Tanzania’s succumbing to structural adjustment under Mwinyi’s presidency the following year. Such processes had already brought about far-reaching political change and national competition for resources, and intensified a sense of regional injustice, in many African countries.<sup>44</sup> Tanzania was no exception and the pain caused by structural adjustment, coupled with the damage caused by villagization, led the ruling CCM party (*Chama cha mapinduzi* – Revolutionary Party) to run a southern candidate, Benjamin Mkapa, for president in the first multiparty elections in 1995. During his tenure, he promised major infrastructural investments, not least the ‘Mkapa Bridge’, which was completed in 2003. This bridge traverses one of the most perilous and inaccessible stretches of the Rufiji River and allows southern Tanzania to remain connected by road during the rainy seasons.

Mkapa then signed plans for an Mtwara Development Corridor (MDC) in 2004, a huge infrastructure project agreed to in conjunction with the leaders of Mozambique, Zambia, and Malawi. A lack of funding meant that the MDC was not implemented until the African Development Bank provided loans in 2012 (following major gas discoveries).<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the completion of the Mkapa Bridge and the inauguration of the MDC have led political leaders to assert that there is no credibility to claims that the south has been deliberately harmed. For example, former president Kikwete, that Tanzanians need to dispense with ‘the tale that people living in southern parts of the

country were still Tanganyikans and those living in the northern part were real Tanzanians, that is now history'.<sup>46</sup> Yet, the continued failure to fully complete the paved road between Mtwara and Dar-es-Salaam, has been consistently seen as evidence of a 'hidden agenda'.<sup>47</sup> This narrative was commonplace during our fieldwork, particularly in response to the construction of a gas pipeline, and in light of apparently broken promises concerning the distribution of national gas benefits.

### **Gas, Citizenship and the 'Hidden Agenda' in Southern Tanzania**

First, the region should benefit [from gas revenues]. We should be attached to the national electricity grid and then the electricity, which should be created here, can be used here before helping in other regions. Development [maendeleo] would then happen here [in Mtwara], as well as national development. But currently the government people are developing themselves privately, there are no benefits for the people (Muhammad Issa, Fisherman, Mtwara Town, January 2014).

This quotation, taken from a focus group, sees the management of gas extraction by the Tanzanian government through the lens of the aforementioned the 'hidden agenda'. In nearly every interview that we conducted (51 out of 60), it is argued that the southern part of the country has been deliberately marginalized or ignored by central government. The very recent interest in the region is viewed with suspicion, as one informant astutely remarked: 'it has taken almost fifty years to complete the road from Mtwara to Dar-es-Salaam, but these [gas] companies arrive here and the road from the port to town is perfect and completed within a year' (Hamisi Ali, Port worker, Interview, Mtwara Town, January 2014). This highlights local and historical modalities of identity, with further respondents emphasizing the broken promises made by central government, both now and in the past. This has fomented a sense of unequal citizenship, wherein an urban elite is posited as



superior and more Tanzanian, than a 'backwards' or 'inferior' south. This was nowhere more evident than the oft-cited construction of a gas pipeline.

Rumours of the gas pipeline were widespread during 2012 when construction was, as yet, unconfirmed. However, announcements of this possibility were met with a great deal of hostility and sparked protests across the Mtwara region, from December 2012 onward. A series of protests in late January 2013 saw seven deaths,<sup>48</sup> with the following months marked by sporadic protests. Of those interviewees that were involved in the protests in some way, the vast majority (20 out of 22) saw this as an essential response to broken promises: 'we have been told too many lies to keep quiet any longer, we needed to be heard and to show that we were angry' (Baraka Juma, farmer and protestor, Interview, Mikindani, June 2014). In more general terms, nearly all interview participants across the three periods of fieldwork referred to suspected mismanagement of the gas industry, and while some saw this as a result of corruption the overwhelming view put forth to us was that of a government disinclined to support the south of the country. This further reflects a perception that areas to the north, especially cities, receive an unfair share of government support and also creates an adversary against which a shared 'southern' identity stands.

Final confirmation of the construction of a pipeline from Mtwara to Dar-es-Salaam came during parliamentary proceedings on 22 May 2013. This brought further protests – the culmination of long running protests in Mikindani and Mtwara – since it went against previous promises to keep more of the benefits in Mtwara: 'when we first found the gas they told us "you will get the jobs, you will profit", but after the budget announcement we knew that this was not true and many of us felt enough was enough' (Selemani Kidume, Protestor, Interview, Mikindani, July 2014). Major crowds gathered outside of government buildings in Mtwara town and the ensuing riots clearly targeted

the apparatus of the state, with police stations set on fire and officers attacked. Some journalists – that were seen to have failed to accurately report the inequities of the processes relating to natural gas extraction – were also attacked.

In the majority of interviews (24 out of 30) that took place in 2014, specific reference is made either to ‘our gas’ or to the ‘resources that we own’ – with reference either to Mtwara region or to southern Tanzania more generally. The unrest caused by the pipeline and the perceived mismanagement of the gas industry marks a subnational politics of resistance, understood through the lens of perceived historical marginalization. Moreover, there is a keen sense of injustice over resources that should nevertheless be seen as part of future regional, rather than national, wealth. In a recent analysis of the Mtwara riots, Must argues that the perceived injustice over resource benefits spilled over into a conflict that would not otherwise have emerged.<sup>49</sup> However, we contend that this is more the crystallization of a series of long-standing grievances that centre on the contested nature of citizenship, which offer an incipient challenge to the post-colonial order in Tanzania.

In response to the protests, the government called in the riot police and the army, deploying tear gas in an attempt to disperse the crowds and, according to some informants, used live rounds of ammunition on gathered crowds. While this claim is rejected by the government, it has acknowledged one fatality in relation to the unrest.<sup>50</sup> Few respondents openly support violent protests, yet the government response agitated many: ‘they say that only one died, but we know that it is many more than that. Three died here in Mikindani, and more than ten in Mtwara. Not only that, they keep taking people out of Mtwara and beating them’ (Hadija Ahmadi, cashew nut farmer and protestor, Interview, Mtwara Town, July 2014). Across the different fieldwork periods it was common for respondents to suggest that the map of Tanzania’s political

constituencies further supports the notion of a historical ‘hidden agenda’. In other words, there is no incentive for the incumbent government to support the south: ‘they have never helped us before and they know that we will not vote for them in the [2015 general] election anyway, so why would they help us now?’ (Yusufu Masoudi, opposition party representative, Interview, Mikindani, January 2014).

This view is borne out by the results of the 2015 election, with opposition parties and candidates dominating votes shares in the Mtwara urban district, as well as urban and rural districts in Lindi.<sup>51</sup> As discussed in the methodology, most of the hostility towards process relating to future gas extraction emanated from those located closest to where the pipeline was to be constructed and those who had actually witnessed port development and other infrastructural changes. Exposure to the changes linked to future gas extraction has cemented a clear sense of regional inequality, especially in Mtwara. It is not only that the post-colonial order is being challenged, however, but that this is a symptom of emergent process of democratization. In other words, citizens being allowed to organise freely and to express views, even in protest, is a heritage of the nation-building project in Tanzania that created the very post-colonial order that is being challenged. Many that we consulted in Mtwara view the political decisions surrounding incipient processes of gas extraction as a form of patrimonialism thus favouring other regions – a differentiated citizenship that is discussed below.

During the fieldwork conducted in 2012 rumours of pipeline construction were rife and partly informed by the state’s historical failure to meet and manage expectations: ‘we have been made promises but experience tells us that they will not be kept. For example, the road [to Dar es Salaam] is unfinished and jobs go to outsiders. Now we hear that a pipeline is coming, the profit will leave our region’ (Habiba Selemani, market vendor, Interview, Mtwara Town, July 2012). Of particular significance here is the timing

of this comment, which precedes final confirmation of the pipeline but frames expectations in relation to gas discoveries as unlikely to be met. It illustrates the notion of differentiated citizenship, or at least a different articulation of such in relation to the assumption that the profits from resource discoveries will, and were always going to, be used to benefit other parts of the country (the more economically prosperous ‘north’ and particularly the commercial capital of Dar es Salaam). Participants consistently draw figurative boundaries around southern Tanzania and and echo Mamdani’s rural-urban distinction.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, they posit a sense of differentiated citizenship which confers the sense of a lesser status on southerners who therefore need to provoke action in order to receive what they ‘deserve’. Natural gas, then, enables an articulation of citizenship ‘as a political identity’ from below.<sup>53</sup> This challenges the national(ist) position of the state and, perhaps more fundamentally, the post-colonial order in Tanzania and especially the marginalized position of ‘the south’.

In Lindi Region, respondents were interviewed at Kilwa Kivinji and at Kilwa Masoko, in relation to Songo Songo Island which had already begun to extract and pipe gas to Dar es Salaam. Many expressed a high degree of resentment at the way gas extraction has been managed, with some adding that the same fate would befall those in Mtwara: ‘we have seen this before, they told us that we would get the jobs, that we would get the infrastructure, that *we* would get the technology, but we only got a few jobs as drivers, chefs, and manual labourers. We do not even have electricity other than in town’ (Aridi Basha, market trader, Interview, Kilwa Kivinji, August 2012). The longitudinal nature of this research, coupled with the wide geographical reach, lends additional layers to these findings and reflects the role that the circulation of narratives along the coast played in forewarning Mtwarans of the likely construction of the pipeline. A third of informants in Mtwara in 2014 (10 out of 30), all of whom had protested the previous year,

made specific reference to gas extraction in Lindi region: ‘we knew that our people [*wenzetu*] in Kilwa did not benefit from the gas and that they built a pipeline to Dar. It should not have been such a surprise to us and we were stupid to believe the government’ (Ally Adeni, restaurant chef and protestor, Interview, Mtwara Town, July 2014). While the experiences in Kilwa might have forewarned of unrest in Mtwara, the size and scope of the 2013 protests were unheard of during the post-colonial era, likely a combination of the very ability to gather for protest, on one hand, and the magnitude of resentment at a failure to meet yet more expectations, on the other.

These concerns also presage a further concern, as witnessed in Kilwa, that that the very commodity produced – gas – would be principally used to produce electricity and yet most stakeholders in Mtwara (other than those in the main town) lack access. In the following quotation, the issue of injustice comes through very strongly in the argument that residents local to the physical infrastructure of gas extraction, the emerging pipeline and the redeveloped Mtwara port, ought to benefit from the electricity generated: ‘You are here, look around, very few people have electricity. Soon Tanzania will export gas all over the world, to China, India and even Europe, but we will not get it here. When they finish, electricity will be exported, even though we need it here’ (Bashir Lisingi, Logistics, Interview, Mtwara port, January 2014). While this is a widely held and logical view, it is built on misinformation and demonstrates the major informational asymmetries that surround gas discoveries in Tanzania. The construction of a pipeline was certainly catalysed by the discovery of significant reserves of offshore natural gas, yet the vast majority was always destined for export, rather than domestic consumption (through the pipeline).<sup>54</sup> This ambiguity also reflects the notion of a political imaginary that was discussed at the start of this paper, with future gas exports and (from the previous

quotation) electricity generated for the national grid (which does not stretch to Mtwara and Lindi regions), seen to undermine any semblance of regional or ‘local’ benefits.

An even more common trope, among most respondents in 2014 (22 out of 30 interviewees), was the juxtaposition of Dar-es-Salaam and Mtwara, when it comes to accessing electricity: ‘The pipe will take this gas to Dar, they will have the jobs and the electricity but we will not. We are citizens (*raia*) but we have no rights (*haki*). Are we Tanzanian, or not?’ (Juma Ali, shop owner and protestor, Focus Group, Mikindani, August 2014). The issue of citizenship is explicitly brought into focus here and is widely reflected in the narratives of the protestors that we consulted (14 out of 22), many of whom referred to the fact that their mistreatment was at least partly an outcome of their remote location. Moreover, this was not exclusive to the group that felt that they had ‘lost out’ through the construction of the pipeline but was even shared by some who, superficially, seemed to have benefited. A concern with fragmented citizenship, in other words, transcended the allocation of costs and benefits (a distributive justice) derived from gas extraction.

The view that Lindi and (in particular) Mtwara regions should receive specific benefits from the development of the gas infrastructure and, more importantly, from future extraction, is echoed in the sentiments of many in southern Tanzania. This is similarly articulated by those that have, at least on an individual basis, benefitted from the burgeoning gas industry:

‘There is a big gap between what is said and what is done. The government makes many promises, they say a lot of things but they do nothing. They told us we would benefit, that we would clean [process] the gas right here in Mtwara. Then we found out that it would all happen in Dar, after they have built the gas pipe; this made many people in Mtwara angry’ (Musa Fikiri, offshore rig worker, Interview, Mtwara, January 2014).

Given the widespread mistrust of the government in southern Tanzania and the belief in a 'hidden agenda', it is perhaps unsurprising that many assumed that the benefits of gas extraction would not remain in Mtwara. This offers a clear divide between state actors and their Southern constituents who want regional or 'local' benefits. Once again, this can be seen as part of an ongoing struggle for recognition and one that, through active protest and unrest, is subtly challenging the post-colonial order in Tanzania, and starting to question the extent to which previous nation-building efforts have been an unqualified success. Moreover, this again points to an idea of southern identity and belonging, a subnational political imaginary that asserts both resistance to a process deemed unfair and rights to be treated more equally in relation to other regions.

This regionalism or 'localism' stands in sharp contrast to the way in which 'local' is used by national (and international) discourses on resource management, most notably through 'Local Content Policy'. Created in 2014, Tanzanian local content policy identifies 'local' as anything from within 'the Tanzanian mainland and its people'.<sup>55</sup> While it is acknowledged that this is international terminology in the extractives sector, this version of 'local' was viewed ironically and with anger by dissenting voices. This view, articulated most clearly by the former head of a prominent Tanzanian NGO and critic of resource policy in Tanzania, described it as 'not local, without content, and lacking genuine policy direction!... They take "local" to mean "national" based on the view that a sophisticated industry requires sophisticated – meaning foreign – people. This is what Professor Muhongo [then Minister of Energy and Minerals] wants' (Anonymous Interview, Dar es Salaam, July 2014). When coupled with the residual belief in a 'hidden agenda', a range of alternative possible futures are proposed by informants in Mtwara, some of which are extremely radical.

### **The Politics of the Possible: Gas and alternative citizenships**

The belief in a deliberate attempt to marginalise southern Tanzania goes some way to explaining the gas riots. However, they are also framed by a fragmented and disconnected sense of citizenship which has provoked more radical imaginaries. One of these relates to the potential for the ‘southern’ region to secede from the Tanzanian state in order to take control of resource discoveries. For example, one participant sees seceding from the state as a potential option for Mtwara: ‘here in the south [of Tanzania] we are different and we need to be respected and to get a good deal with this gas. If not, we need to take a lesson from what South Sudan did last year’ (Basana Saidi, bar owner, Mtwara town, June 2012). The argument followed that if the Southern Tanzania region fails to get a ‘good deal’ then, as with South Sudan, secession ‘is a serious option’. Other informants referred to the Arab Spring in a similar manner and sought to enact something closer to this (although on a fraction of the scale), through their protest. In other words, if the region fails to benefit sufficiently then an uprising might be necessary to ensure that the benefits of gas extraction remain. Always framed by the question of citizenship, the anti-state tone of respondents during research periods has hardened since protests were so ruthlessly suppressed in 2013.

The fieldwork conducted closest to the Mtwara protests, in January 2014, provoked the most hostile responses and anti-state rhetoric, perhaps given that this was within seven months of these troubles and these had continued with extrajudicial beatings and abuse by state actors seemingly commonplace (and articulated by several interviewees – as above), especially against political opponents in Mtwara.<sup>56</sup> One focus group interaction highlights the fragmentation of Tanzanian citizenship in the context of secessionism:



People in other parts of the country think that we are different to them, before they thought we were just poor and uneducated. They still don't think we are the same but now it is because they think we are violent and greedy. All we want is to benefit from this gas, not to continue suffering...

[Interjection from another participant] ... but we ARE different. Truly. Many of us would be happy with a separate country here. Maybe Mtwara, Lindi and Ruvuma, maybe the north of Mozambique too because we are the same, they are our people [*wenzetu*]. People in the north of the country do not know us, our own new country would be good. (Issa Abdulahi, university student, and Kritopha Mwangi, cashew nut farmer, Focus Group, Mikindani, August 2014).

From late in 2012 until May 2013, it was common for generally peaceful protestors to display signs with messages such as '*gesi ibaki [huku], au tugawane nchi*' ('the gas must remain [here] or we must divide the country') and '*gesi kwanza, vyama baadae, hapa hakitoki kitu*' ('gas first, political parties later. Nothing should be leaving here [Mtwara]'). Both of these sentences articulate an alternative position with the fault lines of Tanzanian citizenship, exposed by calls for secessionism if the gas does not remain in the region. They suggest that it is gas itself which offers the opportunity to debate the meaning of both sovereignty and political identity in contemporary Tanzania, with secessionism more of a rhetorical device than a reality, precisely owing to the inclusive citizenship and democratization processes that until recently allowed for mobilization in Tanzania. This contrasts with the work of Ross in that resources discoveries within peripheral regions of other (African) states have led to prolonged civil conflicts with marginalized ethnic groups taking up arms.

Although, these examples highlight a rhetorical politics of secessionism as a response to the inequitable distribution of gas revenues, it seems to be more of a tactic to attempt to gain a better outcome for the region rather than a serious demand to rupture the existing political order. What is clear, however, is that Tanzanian citizenship is no

longer being confined to national boundaries with the contemporary experiences of the people in northern Mozambique also highlighted by some to demonstrate that similar problems exist within a bordering country, and one that has close ethnolinguistic ties to southern Tanzania given the preponderance of Makonde people across this frontier. ‘Just like ‘our people’ [*wenzetu*] in Mozambique, we have suffered in the past and we suffer now. They have gas and do not benefit, just like us, and they have oil too. We should be together and look after these resources, but our governments scare us into silence’ (Fatuma Mohammedi, cashew nut farmer and protestor, Interview, Mtwara Town, July 2014). This suggestion of unification along ethnic lines across a political border uses natural resources as a means to recalibrate political identity away from national citizenship, and towards alternative configurations that are oppositional to national state actors and multinational corporations alike.

Beyond the high-level reimagining of political identity wrought by calls to secede, more everyday manifestations of citizenship were imagined in the light of employment patterns in the nascent gas sector. For many respondents, these have been marked by the favouring of foreign workers as well as Tanzanians from other regions of the country: ‘Of course, we know that most people in Mtwara cannot dig for gas and oil, we do not have the skills and education, but we can cook and we can driver. Why do these jobs always go to people from Dar and the north?’ (Ali Muhammadi, teacher, Interview, Mikindani, June 2014). Both prior to and following the major protests, Mtwara Port itself emerged as a socio-material terrain of struggle and activism. This was informed by a strong sense of inequitable distribution of employment opportunities within ASCO, the British firm that took over operations at the Mtwara port in September 2013. As articulated by one informant here:

‘They [ASCO] promised jobs and training, but people from Mtwara just work with our hands [manual labour]. The government must force them to do more. We want more jobs for people from here so we went on strike. We will do it again’ (Mika Masoudi, Striking Port worker, Interview, Mtwara Town, January 2014).

An anonymous British logistics expert working at the port in 2014 added that one of the key demands of the striking workers, which accounted for the majority of Tanzanian nationals employed at the port, demanded the removal of a number of expatriate managers from Europe, North America, and Australia alike. While research in the region has suggested that exploitation by global capitalism is preferred to the marginalization of the region,<sup>57</sup> the targeting of foreign workers is significant in that it sees that state as complicit with global capitalism. This echoes the earlier work of Emel et al., wherein ‘the national’ framing within the Tanzania gold mining industry is quite clearly articulated alongside foreign capital.<sup>58</sup> This adds further nuance to the idea of a coherent Tanzanian political identity and demonstrates that competing political imaginaries are always dynamic. At the state-level, emphasis is placed on natural resources as part of ‘national’ wealth while at the regional level, in Lindi and especially in Mtwara, gas discoveries are seen through the lens of unequal historical treatment.

The decision to attack government offices and police stations is significant since it crystallizes opposition to the pipeline as explicitly anti-state. State discourse consistently frames natural gas as a ‘national’ resource and political actors have suggested that nebulous ‘foreign elements’ fuelled the unrest. In 2013 John Cheyo, a member of the opposition UDP, questioned the motivations of protestors questioning whether: ‘this chaos is just about transferring natural gas from Mtwara to Dar es Salaam. There are certain forces behind the Mtwara chaos.’<sup>59</sup> Aden Rage, a Member of Parliament for the governing CCM party added that: ‘in the Mtwara saga some global powers are out to

show China that they can thwart any project that is not in their interest', since Chinese loans funded the construction of the pipeline.<sup>60</sup> These suggestions were not pursued in this research, owing to its scope and a lack of evidence, but whichever forces are behind the "chaos", respondents in the protests themselves framed their futures in terms of citizenship struggles, regional politics and history - rather than geopolitics.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Discoveries of gas in Tanzania can be seen as only one of many examples of the ways in which the frontiers of extraction are changing across Africa. Global energy markets are shifting unpredictably in response to multifarious forces and take place in various political economic configurations and at different speeds. As Bridge and Le Billon argue, these places might be rendered 'unconventional' on account of their extreme geographies (such as deep-sea mining and the Arctic) but also because extraction occurs in places where 'state capacity...and civil society are in a fledgling condition'.<sup>61</sup> In other words, the matter of resource politics is always geographical; resources like gas move across space, through pipelines and so forth. Moreover, geographies of investment in resource extraction are also changing on account of governments renegotiating the terms of access to 'national' resources.<sup>62</sup> However, for all the new attention that resource geographies have attracted, little has focused on their links with citizenship in the African context.<sup>63</sup>

The example presented in this paper attends to, but also goes beyond these dynamics. In offering one of the first analyses of the political economy of gas in Tanzania it interrogates the political geography of citizenship *within* the country, framed in the context of a 'hidden agenda'. We have shown how the politics of resource conflict actually serves to extend the fragmentation or 'differentiated' nature of Tanzanian citizenship, which also serves to reveal the fault lines of national claims to distributive

justice. To make clear, the government's assertion that gas related protests are not in the 'national interest' and that resources should 'belong to the nation', and not to proximate communities, is founded on the idea that state territorialisation of resources is the legitimate and *fairest* way of configuring the national economy.

What our study has shown is that this claim to fairer distribution is contested and challenged by a differentiated citizenship, but also that it belies both a misrecognition of affected communities (as 'anti-state' and lacking patriotism) and a sense of procedural injustice in which community access to information is lacking (even over planned exports) and government corruption remains problematic. Concern over corruption has been witnessed across Tanzania for some time and was expressed in the context of the emergent gas industry throughout the fieldwork periods represented here: 'the government agrees these contracts [with multinational companies] but we do not see them. They develop themselves and we just suffer... We knew about the pipeline before it was announced but we could not stop it, all we could do was respond with *vurugu* [violence]' (Hamza Yusufu, Port worker and protestor, Interview, Mtwara Town, August 2014). Here, the physical manifestation of gas, in the form of a pipeline, serves to further fracture an already differentiated citizenship with the state seen by some as more of a conduit for flows of international capital than as an institution committed to distributive justice. This has become such a widespread concern that the most recent presidential election, in 2015, was won by John Magufuli who stood on an explicitly anti-corruption platform.

There are unquestionably tensions, when it comes to claim-making over gas, between what we might refer to as the national and the local/regional scales in Tanzania. This is the case whether we focus on the distribution of revenues, the sharing of information relating to gas extraction, and the recognition of the discrepant historical

experiences of citizens from different region. In this instance the focus is on the southern Mtwara (and to a lesser extent Lindi) region, illustrating a further fracturing of the 'national' picture in Tanzania and perhaps reflective of a 'differentiated citizenship'. Moreover, this has led to the articulation of an array of alternative ways of imagining the political and economic future of gas extraction with radical alternatives – from further protests to secessionism – forwarded as possible solutions. Indeed, the next major investment will be the Liquefied Natural Gas Plant (LNG) in Lindi Region, and a key issue for communities will be compensation for land, which is dragging on.<sup>64</sup>

There is clearly a strong sense of regional affiliation and long-term identity-based politics which are significant in Mtwara. These are both intensified by past marginalization and are likely to be reworked and reasserted in relation to gas extraction. To a certain degree, the fateful combination of ethnicity and resource-based conflict can be seen elsewhere on the continent, with a large range of examples found especially in the Niger Delta.<sup>65</sup> However, much of this literature bypasses the role of citizenship in explaining and analysing the dynamics of conflict. Instead, there is a tendency towards analytical primacy for approaches that centre on classical geopolitics or international political economy. These dimensions are important for the present study too; how precisely these impact upon resource-based development policy at the national level is unclear, particularly in a global context in which commodity prices for natural gas remain some way below those of early 2014.<sup>66</sup> What we argue however, is that studies of resource conflict should pay more attention to the contested nature of citizenship and go beyond an uncritical national framing.

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## NOTES

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<sup>5</sup> Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship*; Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception*, 88.

<sup>6</sup> Huber, "Theorizing Energy", 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Must, "Structural Inequality".

<sup>9</sup> Bridge, "Material Worlds", 1221.

<sup>10</sup> This echoes the work of Must, "Structural Inequality".

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<sup>18</sup> Prestholdt, "Politics of the Soil", 252.

<sup>19</sup> Nugent, Hammett and Dorman, *Making Nations*, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Aminzade, "The Dialectic", 336.

<sup>21</sup> Hunter, "Dutiful Subjects", 277.

<sup>22</sup> For more on Tanzanian citizenship policies, see Aminzade, "The Dialectic".

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