



Enclave oil development and the rearticulation of citizenship in Turkana, Kenya: Exploring ‘crude citizenship’[☆]



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ABSTRACT

Turkana County, located in the arid region of northwestern Kenya, has long been imagined as backwards and unproductive. As a result, successive governments have neglected to provide adequate social services and investments in the county, leaving Turkana to rely on humanitarian organisations for access to rights and protections traditionally associated with citizenship. Yet when oil was discovered in Turkana in 2012, the county was thrust into the international spotlight. The oil exploration and development activities that followed the oil discovery have already begun to impact life in Turkana. Accordingly, this paper focuses on changing social and political relationships in light of emergent spaces of enclave oil development in Turkana. Our analysis draws from key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations carried out in Kenya between October 2014 and May 2015. Specifically, we demonstrate that the Kenyan state's historically hands-off approach to governing this region has led some Turkana to seek recognition, legitimization, and fulfillment for their rights from oil companies, rather than the state. We argue that this is drawing oil companies and rural communities into an uneasy citizen-state-like relationship, altering the experiences and practices of citizenship in Turkana. We conclude that while the presence of oil companies in Turkana may benefit some, it also works to the detriment of others, introducing new forms of inequality and marginalization – a process we refer to as ‘crude citizenship’.

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1. Introduction

In October 2014, protesters gathered outside the walls of a heavily secured oil camp in a remote part of Turkana, a rural county in northern Kenya. Protestors demanded that oil companies provide more job opportunities to Turkana and distribute the benefits of oil development more widely throughout the county, where oil was discovered in 2012. Interestingly, the protestors directed their demands at oil companies rather than the national government, which has been accused of writing Turkana communities out of the national oil equation. In this paper, we examine how

enclave oil development – namely, economic investment in resource-rich spaces with little or no economic benefit to wider society – is transforming relationships between rural communities, oil companies and the state in northern Kenya.

By examining evolving social and political relationships in Turkana's emergent oil enclave, our analysis reveals that large-scale extractive development by foreign companies is altering relationships between key actors in the region. More specifically, we argue that enclave oil development is influencing how citizenship is experienced and practiced in Turkana. This paper contributes to existing scholarly literature that focuses on the diverse ways that rural communities in Africa understand, contest and engage with enclave development on or surrounding their lands (see Ackah-Baidoo, 2012; Ferguson, 2005, 2006; Le Billon, 2004, 2005; MacEachern, 2010).² Specifically, we aim to extend this literature by considering a situation in which enclave oil development is contributing to rearticulated forms of citizenship, as rural communities

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² We use the term Africa throughout this paper in reference to those countries on the African continent that are located south of the Sahara.

residing near extractive sites turn to companies to fulfill their economic and social needs. The case of Turkana contrasts with much of the existing research in this field of study, which has focused largely on cases of community resistance and conflict in response to the emergence of resource development enclaves.

By drawing attention to the experiences and practices of citizenship in and around resource enclaves, we also seek to reinvigorate politics in the study of natural resource development in Africa. This is important given that some of the more recent discourses on extractive industries in Kenya use language that downplays and depoliticises power-laden relationships between extractive companies and rural communities (Van Alstine and Barkemeyer, 2014). Within such discourses, community members residing in or near extractive sites are referred to as stakeholders or beneficiaries (Eweje, 2007). Such language is impartial and apolitical, overlooking complicated and shifting relationships between social groups in and around sites of extraction. Our analysis takes the power-laden relationships between corporate actors and rural communities seriously, starting with the fact that private companies have emerged as competitors with the state for providing protection to citizens (Isin and Nyers, 2014). For this reason, we turn to the literature on critical citizenship studies in order to conceptualise relationships between rural communities, oil companies and the state in Turkana's emergent resource development enclave. Beyond this specific case study however, we hope that this lens may be useful for studying social and political relationships in and around extractive operations in other parts of the continent, where resource extraction also unfolds in an enclaved manner.

The fieldwork informing this paper was conducted in Kenya between October 2014 and March 2015. Qualitative data was collected through key informant interviews, focus groups and field observations. Key informant interviews were conducted with 16 development experts, including representatives of oil companies and international organisations. An additional 18 interviews were conducted with community experts in Turkana, including local government officials, civil society leaders and current and former employees of oil companies. We also conducted focus groups with women, youth and men (pastoralists) respectively in rural communities surrounding one particular site of oil exploration, bringing the total number of research participants to 134. Interview and focus group questions were open ended but focused on relationships between rural communities, oil companies and the state. Participants were identified with the help of civil society organisations. This approach was intentionally non-random, as we targeted participants who had experience with or pertinent information on Turkana's emergent oil industry. We also sought to account for Agrawal and Gibson's (1999) warning that rural communities should not be treated as homogenous, undifferentiated collectives, recognising that groups throughout Turkana may have different experiences with enclave oil development. To do so, we supplemented our own data with relevant data from other studies, including civil society reports, media reports and secondary literature. However, we recognise that this may be a limitation of our study given that research on community perspectives on oil in Turkana is only just beginning to occur.

This paper begins by proposing a theoretical framework for understanding the complicated relationships emerging between rural communities, oil companies and the state in Turkana, drawing from two bodies of literature: literature on resource enclaves and literature from critical citizenship studies. In this section, we clarify our use of the term 'citizenship'. The next section of the paper provides an overview of the context of the study area, the history of oil exploration and development in the region and the emergence of a resource enclave in Turkana. Next, we analyse citizenship in Turkana, suggesting that the emergent oil enclave is influencing citizenship experiences and practices in the county.

We argue that some Turkanas are seeking recognition, legitimisation and fulfillment for their rights from oil companies, and that such companies are (uneasily) resigning to the role of mediating rights in order to obtain social licenses to operate from rural communities surrounding their operations. However, the ability to make rights claims on oil companies is distributed unevenly across Turkana and is experienced differently by different groups in society. We refer to this process as 'crude citizenship.' We conclude by discussing how rural communities may redirect or refine crude citizenship in order to use enclaves as political spaces where their rights can be heard and recognised by companies and governments alike.

2. Theorising citizenship in resource enclaves

This paper critically reflects on evolving relationships between rural communities, oil companies and the state in Turkana. In this section, we develop a theoretical framework that guides our analysis of social and political relationships in Turkana's emergent resource enclave. This framework combines the notion of resource enclaves with theories from critical citizenship studies. We argue that, combined, these theories create a useful framework for examining how the practices of citizenship – namely, the way in which rights and duties are performed – are being influenced by the presence of extractive companies.

2.1. Natural resources and enclave development

The idea of enclave development can be traced back to studies on economies of agglomeration in the 1960s. The term represented an attempt to make sense of the observation that industrialisation tends to congregate economies and networks in geographical spaces that have enclave-like characteristics – meaning that they are economically and/or politically distinct from the rest of society (see Cardoso and Faletto, 1969). The notion of enclave development eventually emerged from this literature to explain:

... physically, administratively, or legally bounded territory[ies] whose geography or morphology is intimately related to the following economic characteristics: dependence on one or a few large firms; high specialization in one activity; and weak integration into the local economy, which is used primarily to access some local factors of production.

[Phelps et al., 2015: 120]

While the idea of resource enclaves has been used to analyse diverse contexts around the globe – ranging from off-shore oil development in Africa (Ackah-Baidoo, 2012) to Chile's mining industry (Phelps et al., 2015) – the common assumption is that enclaves are incapable of contributing to sustainable, local economic development in the long term. With the history and wide applicability of the concept in mind, we use James Ferguson's work on enclaves in African contexts to better frame our analysis.

A seminal piece by Ferguson (2005), entitled *Seeing Like an Oil Company*, demonstrates how resource extraction occurs within secure enclaves in many parts of Africa. Drawing from Cardoso and Faletto's (1969) notion of enclaves, Ferguson (2005) describes resource enclaves in contemporary Africa as characterised by expatriate corporate control over land and resources, high levels of securitisation and capital-intensive production in spite of high labour surpluses. He suggests that enclaves are used in part to secure capital investments in order to ensure that they remain out of the reach of actors (such as corrupt states) that are seen by investors as irresponsible, unpredictable or untrustworthy.

Following Ferguson's lead, other scholars have critically reflected on the enclaved nature of resource extraction in contemporary Africa. This body of literature has examined the

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