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Learning from Africana critical theory: A historicized contextualization of the impacts of Mozambique's natural gas project

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, Mozambique's liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in the province of Cabo Delgado has symbolized a new development opportunity for the country. The project attracted foreign investments to the province, and the national government has used it to showcase its progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The project however also introduced various socioeconomic ills including the displacement of over 10,000 people from their homes and livelihoods. Since 2017, Cabo Delgado province has simultaneously been an epicenter of armed violence, predominantly attributed to radical Islamic insurgency, communities' marginalization from an expanding frontier of extractivism, and overall economic development. In this paper, we argue that understanding and addressing the negative impacts of contemporary extractivism in Mozambique require a historicized contextualization. Drawing on Africana critical theory (ACT), we contribute to this scholarly gap by highlighting several ways in which the challenges presented by the LNG project in Cabo Delgado are reminiscent of or rooted in colonial extractivism. To address the contradictions of contemporary extractivism, we propose that ACT scholarship which influenced some of the progressive policies of the anti-colonial and early post-independence periods may be insightful.

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, Mozambique has risen to be one of the major frontiers of mineral and hydrocarbon extraction in Africa. The exploitation of large reserves of coal, gas, graphite, ruby, among others has increased the country's prospects for growth and development. In particular, the discovery in 2010 of the third largest natural gas reserves in Africa offshore of Cabo Delgado province in the north of the country stirred anticipation nationwide of a windfall of economic and social benefits. The expected benefits included increased government revenue, industrial development, local employment, and relatively clean energy (Africa Oil and Power, 2020; Uetela and Obeng-Odoom, 2015; Macuane et al., 2017). The possibility of producing liquefied natural gas (LNG) – a potential 'bridge fuel' from coal and oil to renewable energy (Levi, 2013) – particularly attracted the attention of major players in the oil and gas industry (Africa Oil and Power, 2020; Salimo et al., 2020). In 2020, the Government of Mozambique through its Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) showcased the gas project as a way for the country to achieve multiple SDGs (Republic of Mozambique, 2020).

However, Cabo Delgado's LNG project is currently marred by major contestations, the most significant of which are those surrounding the displacement and resettlement of over 10,000 people (Alberdi and Barroso, 2020; Mozambique Gas Development Project, 2016; Symons, 2016) and marginalization of the local population, especially from the promised employment and business opportunities (Hanlon, 2020a). Various scholars have conducted studies to understand the socially contentious impacts of the current extractivism in Cabo Delgado, which centers around natural gas, but also includes graphite and ruby projects (e.g., Alberdi and Barroso, 2020; Gqada, 2013; Symons, 2016; Uetela and Obeng-Odoom, 2015). These studies have employed diverse lenses including the political economy framework (Gqada, 2013), the institutional approach (Uetela and Obeng-Odoom, 2015), and the enclave thesis (Symons, 2016). However, minimal efforts have been made to historically contextualize the impacts of extractivism in the province even though contemporary extractivism is re-creating socio-political dilemmas reminiscent of or rooted in the extractivism of the colonial era (Ayelazuno, 2014; Hamouchene, 2020), which was characterized by various ills including resource plunder, land grabbing, and population displacement and dispossession (Acosta, 2017).

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In this paper, we seek to historically contextualize the impacts of extractivism in Cabo Delgado using the case of the LNG project. We utilize empirical data collected in 2018 and 2020 to understand the lived realities of people affected by the project, particularly through displacement and resettlement processes which vividly show the impacts of contemporary extractivism experienced by local people. We draw on Africana critical theory (ACT) to contextualize these impacts within the history of Cabo Delgado and propose to learn from ACT in understanding and addressing the ills of contemporary extractivism in Mozambique.

The paper is organized as follows. The next section introduces ACT as a critical approach to studying extractivism and its impacts such as displacement and resettlement. Section 3 presents the historical context of Cabo Delgado, focusing on past displacements and resettlements, leading up to the current LNG-induced displacement and resettlement. Section 4 outlines the methodology of field research. Section 5 presents and discusses the lived experiences of people displaced by the LNG project, how these experiences match some of those witnessed in the colonial era, and how some policies from Africa's anti-colonial or early post-independence periods may be relevant in addressing the dilemmas of contemporary extractivism. We conclude with section 6 where we highlight the key arguments of the paper.

2. Africana critical theory as an approach to studying the impacts of contemporary extractivism in Mozambique

The Africana Critical Theory (ACT) represents a body of works by influential Africana scholar-activists, such as Amílcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, and Kwame Nkrumah who wrote critically about African being and experiences in past imperial domination of continental and diasporan Africans, particularly during the periods of slavery and colonialism. Our understanding and use of the theory are as proposed by Reiland Rabaka et al. (2009) who discusses the theory's relevance in analyzing oppressive structures in contemporary contexts. ACT is driven by two major precepts, namely critique of domination and discrimination wrought by racial, imperial, and capitalist forces in African life-worlds, and aspiration for the total liberation and radical social transformation of these life-worlds (Rabaka et al., 2009).

We advance ACT as a historically sensitive framework to examine the impacts of the current extractivism, in particular the associated displacement and resettlement in Cabo Delgado, but also in Africa in general. ACT scholar-activists such as Walter Rodney (1973) documented and explained how labor and natural resources were extracted in and from Africa by both local and foreign actors from the earliest societies to the end of the colonial period. The slavery and colonial epochs are of course highlighted as the epitomes of foreign-led extractivism. In the case of minerals, European and North American companies collected immense revenues from the extraction and sale of diamonds, manganese, uranium, gold, zinc, among others throughout the colonial period. The companies' profits depended on the incredibly low wages and harsh working conditions imposed on laborers and on the fact that they invested very little capital in obtaining the land. This was sold to them by the colonial governments at nominal prices after displacing and dispossessing the local populations.

Moreover, wielding their political, financial, and military power, former colonial powers have managed to maintain influence on African economies. This has ensured their continued access to land concessions and minerals on the continent. Nkrumah (1965) referred to the post-independence period as the neocolonial epoch, where African states are nominally independent, but while their economic systems and political policies are directed from abroad. However, despite continuing foreign influence, independent states have more control over mineral extraction activities in their territories and do retain some of the rents, although unevenly distributed (Castel-Branco, 2014; Macuane et al., 2017; Salimo et al., 2020). Transnational corporations (TNCs) have consequently continued to displace and dispossess local populations to

advance their activities, this time through sovereign states.

ACT provides a framework to historically contextualize contemporary extractivism and is particularly insightful when drawing parallels with colonial extractivism. Except for a few emerging works and initiatives (see Hamouchene, 2020; Olukoshi et al., 2020), insights from Africa's colonial and anti-colonial past have hardly been used to deeply contextualize our understanding of contemporary extractivism. In applying ACT, it is crucial to start from the concrete realities of the people in the places in which the theory is applied and to situate these within their historical contexts (Rabaka et al., 2009). Following this rationale, below, we examine the history of displacement and resettlement in Cabo Delgado, followed by a detailed case study of the lived experiences of people displaced by the LNG project.

3. History of past displacement and resettlement in Cabo Delgado

Various studies have chronicled the history of Cabo Delgado, including the constituent processes of displacement and resettlement (see e.g., Funada-Classen, 2013; Hafkin, 1974; Isaacman, 1992; Newitt, 2017). In this paper, we focus on four epochs¹ in Cabo Delgado's history that are indispensable to our contextualization of the impacts of contemporary extractivism; that is, the slave trade, the colonial period, the liberation struggle, and the early post-independence period (the civil war and development efforts).

First, the extraction of slaves caused the uprooting of as many as one million people from Cabo Delgado and nearby communities (O'Neill, 1885; Thomas, 1997). In addition, the hardships interlinked with the acquisition of slaves forced communities to flee from their homes to escape slave traffickers (O'Neill, 1885). The protracted impact of the slave trade on Cabo Delgado societies can be gleaned from the fact that the Portuguese were the first in Europe to ship captives from Africa and the last to leave the trade (Rodney, 1973). They would later use their proceeds to finance colonial ventures, such as joint participation in agricultural and mining companies in Angola and Mozambique (Rodney, 1973).

Second, the abolition of slavery in the late 1860s coincided with an intensification of Portuguese colonialism. One of the major causes of displacement and resettlement during this period was agrarian extractivism, specifically compulsory cotton-growing (Isaacman, 1992). Residents of isolated and dispersed settlements were forced into co-living situations near communal cotton fields (Isaacman, 1992). Even in the backdrop of harsh labor practices by colonial powers across Africa, the Portuguese were known to have the worst record of engaging in slavery-like practices (Isaacman, 1992; Rodney, 1973). During this period, displacement occurred as residents fled the oppressive colonial regime to neighboring countries such as Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, where the conditions in the mines and plantations were at the time viewed as relatively less loathsome (Funada-Classen, 2013; Isaacman, 1992).

Third, in the 1960s, Mozambicans initiated an overt fight for liberation, a guerrilla war that was mainly fought in the northern regions of Cabo Delgado and Niassa. The Portuguese colonial authority reacted by, among others, adopting a villagization policy whereby people living in dispersed settlements and according to their traditional systems were resettled in 'protected villages' (*aldeamentos*). This was to control their movements and sever any contacts with decolonization guerrillas (Funada-Classen, 2013). Fourth, two years after achieving independence from Portugal in 1975, Mozambique became embroiled in a civil war

¹ The processes within these periods had significant overlap. They are presented separately here to emphasize the displacement processes within each of them. Also, although the paper emphasizes lessons from the colonial period onwards, the slave trade period is included in this overview as it contributed to the dynamics seen in the colonial era.

(Newitt, 2017). It was mainly fought in the central regions of the country (Manica and Sofala provinces), but also affected several parts of the Northern provinces and led to more displacement in these regions. Additionally, to promote socialist development, the post-independence government continued the villagization policy even though some communities had been eager to live independently again (Adam, 1996).

In the same early post-independence period, forced displacement and resettlement also took place under development efforts like the Operação Produção ('Operation Production'), the government's largest forced relocation (da Silva, 1993). It was launched in 1983 to push petty criminals and the unemployed out of the towns to provide seasonal labor for farm plantations in the northern provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado (da Silva, 1993). Meanwhile, the civil war was continuing. It ended in 1992 with the signing of a peace accord between Frelimo (the party in power since independence) and Renamo (the main opposition party). The war left over one million dead and more than five million displaced across Mozambique (da Silva, 1993). Thousands of ex-soldiers also had to be resettled, some of whom were taken to Cabo Delgado (da Silva, 1993). Since then, various reconciliatory agreements have been signed by Frelimo and Renamo, only for other confrontations to erupt. Finally, in August 2019, a peace and national reconciliation agreement to cease all hostilities was concluded.

The development impact in Cabo Delgado caused by the slave trade, colonization, the liberation struggle, the post-independence civil war, and some early development efforts, including their associated processes of displacement and resettlement, destroyed and stagnated the socio-economic system of the province. For instance, by the end of the colonial period, in rural areas (which included most of Mozambique), Newitt (2017) describes the only education offered as pre-primary at best. Moreover, although the liberation struggle – which formed the basis of contemporary development in Mozambique – was predominantly fought in and by peasants from Cabo Delgado (see Mondlane, 1969), the province has not gained significantly from post-independence development. The location of the capital, Maputo, in the extreme south of the country, and the proximity of this region to South Africa, has concentrated the resources and the modern sector of the economy in the south (Newitt, 2017).

Nonetheless, except for sporadic attacks in the center of the country that continue to date especially around election cycles, most parts of Mozambique, including Cabo Delgado, were peaceful, and consequently suffered limited displacement. This was until 2017 when an armed insurgency erupted in the province (Habibe et al., 2019). The insurgents have claimed a radical Islamic agenda² and are locally identified as Al-Shabab ('the Youth' in Arabic). They predominantly consist of young people (aged 18–25) from Cabo Delgado, and a few from neighboring provinces and countries (Habibe et al., 2019). In March 2020, the group also declared their allegiance to the Iraqi/Syrian Islamic State (IS) group when they hoisted a jihadist flag in one of Cabo Delgado's towns.

The recruited youths are primarily enticed – with some parallels to the advertising of the LNG TNCs – with promises of cash, jobs, and educational scholarships (Swart, 2019). Some youths from the ruby-mining areas in Cabo Delgado are for instance said to have joined the group following their expulsion and displacement from these mining areas (Feijó, 2020). By January 2021, the insurgency-associated violence had resulted in over 1000 civilian fatalities (ACLEED, 2021), the displacement of an estimated 670,000 people, as well as led to about 1,300,000 people requiring humanitarian assistance (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2021). In the next sections, we present contemporary experiences of the LNG-induced displacement and resettlement and highlight how they as well as the insurgency may be underpinned by some of these past and recent displacements and resettlements.

4. LNG-induced displacement and resettlement in Cabo Delgado: methodology of field research

The natural gas reserves in Cabo Delgado were uncovered by US-based Anadarko (which sold its operation stake to Total in 2019) and Italian Eni between 2010 and 2013 (Salimo et al., 2020). Licenses have been awarded to the three consortia-operated projects led by Total, Eni, and US-based ExxonMobil to conduct offshore natural gas extraction with onshore supporting facilities for LNG production. Before the Covid-19 pandemic and the armed insurgency, the projects planned to produce LNG in the early 2020s. However, the ExxonMobil-led project has postponed its final investment decision indefinitely due to the economic downturn caused by Covid-19. Eni seems to be continuing its project despite the uncertainty, and Total has suspended its activities until the security situation in Cabo Delgado improves.

The anticipated markets for the LNG are countries in the Atlantic and Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent (Total, 2020), and Europe (Africa Oil and Power, 2020). Besides LNG exports, the government of Mozambique also plans to supply gas to South Africa (Africa Oil and Power, 2020). The government considered using the domestic share of the gas (25% of the total produced³) to manufacture fertilizers, develop a gas-to-liquids project, and construct a gas-fired power plant, the outputs of which could be both exported and used in-country (Hanlon, 2020b). However, these projects have either been abandoned or deferred because the government was not able to, among other reasons, promise a sufficient quantity of gas at an agreeable price to satisfy the needs of the proposed projects. If these projects or alternatives do not advance, Mozambique will likely sell the domestic gas allotment for revenue (Hanlon, 2020b). In terms of direct socioeconomic benefits for Mozambicans, Total (2020) pledged to create thousands of jobs in addition to giving preference to Mozambican-owned or -registered businesses when awarding gas development-related contracts.

In 2012, the government awarded the LNG project a land user right known as a DUAT (Direito do Uso e Aproveitamento de Terra) for approximately 7000 ha to make way for the construction of the relevant gas development infrastructure (Mozambique Gas Development Project, 2016). The granting of the DUAT was strongly contested by civil society and some community members over inadequate prior consultation with the communities in the DUAT area (see Symons, 2016), and the economic and/or physical displacement of over 10,000 people from five communities (Mozambique gas development project, 2016; p47).

The first author conducted fieldwork in four of the five communities directly affected by the project's displacement and resettlement activities. The communities are Quitupo, Senga, Maganja, and Mondlane in Palma District (Fig. 1). Quitupo was in the process of physical resettlement, Maganja was losing all its farmland, Senga was hosting the displaced households from Quitupo, and Mondlane was providing replacement farmland for Quitupo and Maganja. These four communities also incorporate the villages of Macala, Mangala, Patacua, Missonobali, and Milamba 1 and 2, which are shown in Fig. 1.

During the first phase of fieldwork, which was conducted in February–May 2018, the first author and a field assistant from Palma collaborated with Associação do Meio Ambiente (an NGO active in Cabo Delgado) to conduct semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) on how the four communities experienced LNG-induced displacement and resettlement. In total, the researchers conducted 50 individual interviews and 11 FGDs which involved 57 people across the four communities. In the end, the field research engaged 107 people, 41 percent of whom were women. The field assistant spoke several of the local languages including Makwe, Macua and Swahili but also Portuguese; Mozambique's official language and English. The researchers therefore conducted the interviews in one of the local languages depending on the preference of the interviewees, while simultaneously

² <https://www.voanews.com/africa/extremists-northern-mozambique-declare-goal-caliphate>

³ Mozambique petroleum law, 2014.

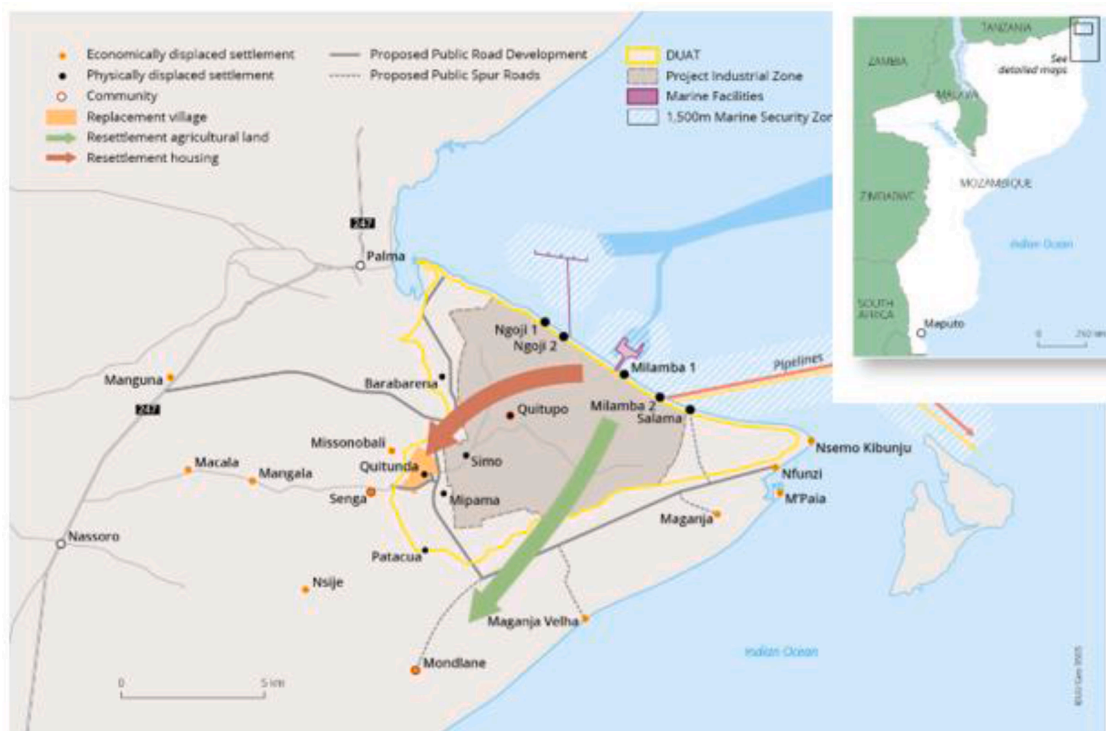


Fig. 1. Displacement of communities caused by the LNG project in Cabo Delgado province.

translating them to English for note-taking and later analysis. Of the 107 interviewees, only 14 were Christian whereas the rest were Muslim. The average age of the interviewees was 45 years old, and the minimum and maximum ages were 20 and 74, respectively. During this phase, the first author also interviewed key informants from 15 organizations (including government, civil society, and industry) working in Cabo Delgado. These interviews were conducted in English.

The second phase was conducted in February–March 2020. During this period, the first author conducted 22 interviews with individuals from organizations (again including government, civil society, and industry) identified through literature and existing networks, as well as in collaboration with Centro Terra Viva (a Mozambican NGO), which has been working in Cabo Delgado and across Mozambique for the past 20 years. The aim was to delve deeper into the historical background of the province and to better understand the dynamics of both past and current processes of displacement and resettlement in the region.

Economic displacement had already taken place in the LNG-project affected communities, and physical resettlement was starting in phases. Below, we present and discuss the lived experiences of people facing displacement and resettlement. These experiences are organized under two major themes covering the majority of the interviewees' discontents with the LNG project, that is, inadequate employment opportunities and suboptimal compensation and resettlement arrangements. We also highlight four ways in which some challenges presented by contemporary extractivism match those seen during colonial extractivism, to learn lessons from the latter.

5. Results and discussion: experiences of LNG-induced displacement and resettlement

5.1. Discontents over promised employment opportunities

The LNG project raised various expectations of employment in the studied communities and across Cabo Delgado, where communities have historically been marginalized from Mozambique's socioeconomic development. In the hope of gaining employment, for instance, younger

people were open to resettlement to facilitate the project's development. A 28-year-old male respondent from Senga formulated it as follows:

If the project comes, maybe we will give the land to them. If we get jobs, we'll be happy, they can even get the land for free...[laughs]. We'll be busy working so we won't have time to use the land.⁴

Senga is a rural community with farming and fishing as the main economic activities for the residents. Therefore, some interviewees, especially the youth were eager to engage in other income-generating activities such as employment with the LNG project. Contrary to the high expectations, however, only a few of the expectant youths in Senga, but also in Mondlane, Maganja and Quitupó had so far been employed, and mostly to do menial jobs such as housekeeping, security guarding, traffic control, and a few construction-related jobs (following training). In Quitupó, by March 2018, two community leaders⁵ reported that only about 20 people had been employed. Although, others were contracted periodically for short-term work.

The project employed even fewer women and older people due to the physically demanding nature of the jobs available to the un- and semi-skilled Cabo Delgado population.⁶ Higher-level jobs had gone to more skilled labor from the urban parts of the southern provinces of Mozambique, such as Maputo.⁷ The higher level of employment of 'southerners' (and in this context, implicitly particular ethnicities) compared to people from northern Mozambique where the project is located reinforced regional and ethnic socioeconomic imbalances which have been comparatively more favorable for the 'southerners' since the colonial period. Consequently, in Senga, youths armed themselves with stones and machetes and evicted in-migrants from other districts or provinces who posed the threat of appropriating their jobs.

The creation and/or reinforcement of regional and ethnic

⁴ Interview with a 28-year-old man in Senga, 26 February 2018.

⁵ Interview with two community leaders in Quitupó, 14 March 2018.

⁶ Interview with a 45-year-old woman in Mondlane, 7 February 2018.

⁷ Interview with a 28-year-old man in Maganja, 13 March 2018.

socioeconomic imbalances under contemporary extractivism is a recurrence from colonial extractivism; where these differences were used to divide, control, and exploit the native population (Cabral, 1974; Mondlane, 1969). Currently, they seem to be reinforced rather than intentionally created. An interviewee who moved from Pemba (the capital of Cabo Delgado province) to Senga in search of employment put it as follows:

The men you see carrying sand are constructing a road to Barabarani [commissioned by the LNG project]. This work is only done by locals. They refused people external to their community from coming to work in the area. They argue that there are many people without jobs in Senga, and yet the company often hires people from other areas. The locals at times even hit you with stones if you are an external person coming here to work.⁸

Other residents of Cabo Delgado also protested against 'southerners' taking their jobs, instanced in an open demonstration by hundreds of youths in Palma (the closest town to the LNG project) in May 2018.⁹

Moreover, despite contestations based on regional and ethnic inequalities, a substantial number of jobs also went to foreigners.¹⁰ According to CDD – *Centro Para Democracia e Desenvolvimento* (2020), the LNG project in particular sources most of its labor and supplies from the involved TNCs' countries of origin and international partners. To stimulate the project to engage more local labor, in August 2019 Mozambique's economic council approved a local-content bill to compel the project and other mega-projects to purchase local goods and services and hire local labor. However, in 2020, under pressure from the TNCs, the bill was shelved (CDD, 2020). Moreover, the proposed domestic gas development initiatives that could have provided Mozambicans with employment had either been canceled or deferred for an unknown period. Unmet promises and expectations of employment are a common trend also in other resource extraction projects across Mozambique (Macuane et al., 2017).

The weak link between contemporary extractive projects and human development in the projects' host communities is another similarity with colonial extractivism. Throughout their works, Rodney (1973) and Cabral (1974) explained how the benefits of colonial extractivism were geared primarily towards the extracting TNCs, their countries of origin, and local elites in and outside the colonial government, rather than the projects' host societies. Concerning contemporary extractivism, during an interview with an LNG project officer,¹¹ the officer explained that only a limited number of people could be employed from the local communities in Cabo Delgado because of community members' low literacy and skill levels. However, this discourse neglects to reflect upon the reality that the current unskilled labor is partly an outcome of historical extractivism in the region (cotton, labor, foreign mines) which sought to maximize the extraction of surplus-value while maintaining the conditions of the local people depressed to maintain the territory as a reserve for raw material (Isaacman, 1992). This foundation is then indeed coupled with the slow development of the labor quality in Mozambique which has not caught up with the country's needs in the extractive industry (Castel-Branco, 2014).

Moreover, if monetization of gas is prioritized over domestic industrial development, the central government may forego another opportunity to improve the industrial and skill level in Cabo Delgado, and the country at large (Hanlon, 2020b). This would add to the government's existing challenges in managing the gas project for development, showcased by the discovery in 2013 and 2016 of Mozambique's so-called secret debts amounting to US\$ 2 billion, acquired based on the

prospects of resource (especially natural gas) revenues, and used to fund dubious projects or for the personal benefit of members of the ruling elite¹² (Macuane et al., 2017).

5.2. Discontents over compensation and resettlement

Besides marginalization of the local population from employment with the project, there was contestation of the processes of compensation and resettlement. This mainly occurred between the LNG project and the government on the one hand, and the affected communities and supporting advocacy organizations on the other, as well as among various groups within the communities. Civil society organizations have been forming (at times contested) alliances (Symons, 2016) with the affected communities to counteract the pressures of the TNCs and government. At least five interviewees in Quitupo specifically reported that they had been coerced into relinquishing their land and livelihoods and forced to accept the terms and conditions of displacement and resettlement. As we reviewed in the history of the region, the involuntary resettlement of communities from their land and livelihoods by the state, often in conjunction with TNCs, without adequate efforts for sustainable livelihood reconstruction has been recurring since the colonial period. A middle-aged female interviewee affected by LNG-induced displacement and resettlement said:

We agreed to the resettlement because the government pushed us and we're weak in comparison to them.¹³

And in Senga, a 32-year-old male respondent told us:

The company pays 5000 meticals [approximately 80 US\$] for cashew trees, but this is not something our kids can benefit from. [...] the price wasn't good. The government decided the price. We spoke up but they'd come with the government agriculture department personnel and they'd show you the national market price. So, we agreed. It's the government after all.¹⁴

A community resettlement committee member from Quitupo described how this coercion took place. Community resettlement committees existed in the five directly affected communities and consisted of 10–17 people (including on average 2–4 women) selected by the community leader and members, at times supported by NGOs, to liaise between the project managers and the communities.

When Anadarko came, the community didn't want to leave the area. Old people especially didn't want to leave. [...] but I talked to them until they accepted. Gas development will benefit Mozambicans from the Rovuma to Maputo. It will improve our livelihoods. In Quitunda [location of the resettlement village in Senga] the project is going to bring us tap water. We're also expecting houses for leaders, hospitals, schools, markets, and a soccer field.¹⁵

While younger people were often open to resettlement, older people – who had recollections of the recurrent displacements and resettlements, and who had fewer transferable skills to facilitate livelihood reconstruction in new locations – largely contested LNG-induced resettlement. An older woman in an FGD in Quitupo reflected:

We've been living here since 1978. During colonial times, everyone was in a zone that consisted of a family of five to seven people per

¹² Interview with a researcher from a civil society organization, 29 February 2020.

¹³ Interview with a middle-aged female in Quitupo, 20 February 2018.

¹⁴ Interview with 32-year-old male in Senga, 2 March 2018.

¹⁵ Interview with a male respondent in his fifties in Quitupo, 20 February 2018.

⁸ Interview with a 30-year-old man in Senga, 26 February 2018.

⁹ Personal observation by first author during fieldwork.

¹⁰ Interview with a researcher who works with a university in Maputo, 25 February 2020.

¹¹ Interview with a resettlement officer, 11 March 2020.

family, and several families per zone. After independence in 1975, the government said, let's stay together. [...] This is our home.¹⁶

The committee member from Quitupo countered these hesitations with assertions about the potential benefit of gas development to Mozambique, and especially to the most directly affected communities. The government, TNCs, and their partners therefore invoked ideas of public benefit or national interest in this project, as has occurred in other projects in the country (Macuane et al., 2017; Otsuki, 2019) to rally support for the megaproject and its associated displacement and resettlement. They eventually succeeded in obtaining consent from communities for resettlement. The invocation of the idea of displacement for national interest by the state through local intermediaries was also one of the strategies employed by colonialists, especially towards the end of colonial rule when they faced massive resistance. In Portuguese colonies like Mozambique, the colonial government stipulated colonies as overseas provinces, then justified their exploitation as a contribution to 'national' development (Cabral, 1974). Unlike the colonial period, contemporary extractivism supplements 'national interest' invocations with arrangements for compensation and resettlement of displaced communities, albeit disputed.

A project resettlement officer¹⁷ explained that the project had promised the following to those displaced:

- Physically displaced households would receive more modern, brick-based, corrugated iron-roofed houses along with electricity and piped water.
- Economically displaced individuals would be monetarily compensated per acre of lost farmland and for the lost crops, economic trees and any shading structures on their farmland, and be given 1 acre of replacement farmland regardless of the size lost as well as a monetary and in-kind subsidy to assist with clearing and cultivating new land.
- Those who lost fishing grounds would receive various in-kind compensations, for example equipment to assist with accessing alternative fishing grounds and financial recompense for any time they were completely unable to fish.

Six key issues had surfaced with this compensation and resettlement package. First, interviewees, including participants in two FGDs in Quitupo were unhappy with the amount, timing and sequencing of the compensation components. They reported that the money offered for lost assets was dictated by the project in conjunction with the government, with very limited community consultation. However, Symons (2016) reports that although compensation arrangements were unclear in the beginning, the LNG project later revealed plans to spend up to US \$36,000 on compensation for every villager affected by displacement and/or resettlement. Nonetheless, during our field research in 2018 and 2020, several interviewees reported project delays in issuing compensation. Some interviewees in an FGD¹⁸ for instance reported that their assets had been surveyed by the project over three years earlier but they were yet to receive compensation or replacement land, a situation that had suspended many livelihoods and led to food insecurity in the communities.

For those who had been compensated, the project awarded monetary compensation before replacement farmland, which limited the opportunities for beneficiaries to invest the money in their traditional agrarian livelihoods. In Quitupo and Senga, besides some who had invested part of their financial compensation in purchasing new pieces of land, there were many more who had used their money for other personal needs for instance house improvements; and purchase of cars, motorcycles or

bicycles to aid their transportation - given the very limited public transport in all the communities.¹⁹ In 2020, the project suspended its activities, making it difficult to know how much of the money pledged to be spent on each displacement-affected person was actually utilized for sustainable livelihood reconstruction. Situations of protracted and problematic compensation have also been seen in other projects in Mozambique, for instance coal in Tete province (Wiegink, 2018).

Second, there are interviewees who challenged the standardization of replacement farmland to only one acre per displaced landowner. A 45-year-old woman from Mondlane²⁰ reported that standardization of replacement land to only one acre would lead to a reduction in their most tangible form of familial and transgenerational wealth: land. Of the 107 interviewees, sixty-six²¹ were specifically asked about how they acquired their residential- or farm-land. Majority, approximately 44 percent had inherited it through their families, whereas others had either cleared unoccupied bushland for personal use or were renting their land from others within their communities. Moreover, even with in-kind support to access alternative fishing grounds, fisherfolk were being resettled further inland, which also seriously affected fishing livelihoods.²²

Third, similar to project employment, the negotiation and provision of compensations marginalized women and youths. For instance, when describing the operation of Mondlane's resettlement committee, a 70-year-old male interviewee²³ said that the committee members who brokered the negotiation between the project and the community largely "talk to each other and then to the company. It's only when the company specifically asks for us that they come to us e.g. when they called women". This comment implied among other issues that women were often excluded from the discussions about compensation and resettlement. Also, even though northern Mozambique is a matrilineal society and the rights over property are transferred through the maternal lineage, resources generally remain under the control of the men within that lineage. As a consequence, women and younger family members were often overlooked by the project during the registration of community assets. So once the company had provided replacement farmland and monetary compensation, it was the men who decided whether and, if so, how to share these proceeds within their wider families. The youths also had few rights over compensation money or property, even though many, by cultivating their families' land, depended on it for their survival. An interviewee in Quitupo in his twenties explained it as follows:

My father gave me a farm as a source of livelihood. But during compensation, only my father was compensated, even though, I also lost my livelihood. We have talked to the government but they don't understand.²⁴

Fourth, interviewees - especially women - contested the adequacy of the replacement houses for their typically large extended families. Being predominantly Muslim but also rural communities, many families in the visited communities included a husband with multiple wives, children but also other relatives living at close quarters. A woman from Quitupo complained that the type of house proposed by the project was too small for an extended family and said that she had requested them to enlarge it.²⁵ Moreover, the long-term sustainability of the houses was not guaranteed. According to a project resettlement officer:

¹⁹ Synthesis of multiple interviews from Senga and Quitupo.

²⁰ Interviewed on 7 February 2018.

²¹ This question was only asked during one-on-one interviews or small FGDs where responses could be easily acquired, and not in FGDs of more than 3 people.

²² Interview with 27- and 33-year-old male fishermen in Quitupo on 21 February 2018.

²³ Interviewee from Mondlane, 7 March 2018.

²⁴ Interview with male in his twenties in Quitupo, 20 February 2018.

²⁵ FGD with older women in Quitupo, 20 March 2018.

¹⁶ FGD with older women in Quitupo, 20 March 2018.

¹⁷ Interview with project resettlement officer, 6 March 2020.

¹⁸ FGD in Quitupo with 10 women, 21 February 2018.

In the next five years, when the [project's] construction jobs that are employing some of the people from the resettled communities start to phase out, they [the displaced community members] may have no land, no jobs, and a relatively high cost of living.²⁶

Besides the precarious futures of the current homeowners, the higher cost of living is likely to negatively affect the younger generation, who are starting their independent livelihoods with minimal familial or communal resources, and with limited or no alternative sources of livelihood besides the now limited agriculture and fishing.

Fifth, community resettlement was disrupting the social fabric of both the resettled and the host communities. The timing of communities' resettlement was primarily based on technical efficiency, which resulted in parts of communities and families being resettled as long as years before others. This is straining and disarticulating communities' social, cultural, economic, and other ties.

The discontents regarding the economic and physical displacement and resettlement caused by the LNG project were thus mounting. Yet, the affected communities do not have concrete grievance mechanisms. The resettlement committees try to handle the grievances, and the company also has a redress system. However, the interviewees generally do not trust the committees endorsed by the company and the government. This is also observed in other parts of Mozambique (Colua de Oliveira et al., 2021). Therefore, whereas working through the resettlement committees was a practical, relatively participatory, and even an effective strategy to convince the local population to move, it also created intra-community conflict.

The high likelihood to instigate conflict between and within communities, and also between communities, the state, and TNCs is another similarity between colonial and contemporary extractivism. Currently, several analysts of the Cabo Delgado insurgency (e.g., Bonate, 2018; Swart, 2019) propose that the discontents from alienated groups such as the youth around the distribution of actual and potential benefits of the LNG project have contributed to the armed insurgency in the province. Regarding colonial extractivist projects, scholars like Isaacman (1992) and Funada-Classen (2013) for instance elucidate how cotton-growing bred conflict within communities, and between communities and the colonial state. Within communities, an example is conflict between locals and the 'African police' (so-called "sepais" or "sipaios") who were coerced to supervise others forcefully during cotton growing. Between communities, the state, and companies, various kinds of resistance to cotton growing were met with state violence.

Africana critical scholar-activists' analyses of colonial extractivism including the resolution of some people to participate in insurgencies might be insightful here. For instance, Cabral (1974) and Fanon (1963) explained that alienated youth in the colonial (now neocolonial) society who often belong to the rural society but do not own land, or who find themselves at the margins of urban society but struggle to find employment are prone to joining insurgencies. This proneness to join insurgencies often comes from the need to challenge a socioeconomic and political order that has kept the youth impoverished, rather than religious ideologies (Bonate, 2018). However, since the web of actors that constitute the socioeconomic and political order that oppress such groups is often complex, these insurgents tend not to have clear enemies (Fanon, 1963). Therefore, attacks are often directed at closer targets, who in the insurgents' worldview threaten for instance, their value systems or livelihoods, including people with different religious beliefs, migration statuses or ethnicities. In Cabo Delgado, the insurgency has led to the death of thousands of other poor and equally marginalized people. Meanwhile, the real malefactors; elements in government, TNCs, and international financial institutions that collectively have a determining role in the way Mozambique is incorporated into the global extractive industry, remain largely unscathed, except for financial losses

caused by business delays.

To address the ills of contemporary extractivism in Mozambique and Africa at large, ACT scholarship which influenced some of the progressive policies of the anti-colonial and early post-independence periods may be insightful. The ACT scholars showed the importance of such policies, which include a shift to high-value processed commodities that are more likely to stimulate industrial and endogenous growth and increase employment opportunities for local citizens; focused tariff protection for goods that can be supplied nationally to the extractive industry; a more interventionist role for the state in the management of the extractive industry especially its linkages with the population and other public sectors that provide basic services, among others (Olukoshi et al., 2020). Anti-colonial and early post-independence policies were not uncontested. However, the goal of decolonizing African life-worlds and instituting development that starts from the local realities and material conditions of the local populations was prevalent. Research focused on how such policies could be insightful today for how we understand and address dilemmas in the extractive industry would be timely.

6. Conclusions

The experiences of communities affected by LNG-induced displacement and resettlement in Cabo Delgado show that the impacts of the current extractivism must be more historically analyzed and deeply contextualized than at a project level, where such projects are usually problematized. The impacts are inextricable from the colonial history of Mozambique, including its remnants in the socioeconomic and political situation of the country. We discussed two major contradictions of the LNG project including local discontent with the level of employment and inappropriate compensation and resettlement of the displaced population.

Both the employment and resettlement processes have been exacerbating regional, gender, generational, ethnic, and religious socioeconomic imbalances in the province. This situation is contradictory to the government's claim that contemporary extractivism is for the sustainable development of all Mozambicans (Republic of Mozambique, 2020) since sustainable development of Cabo Delgado and its displaced communities is not consciously pursued. The accumulation of discontents with the LNG project, other mineral extraction projects in Cabo Delgado (e.g., Ruby), and Mozambique's extractive industry in general has contributed to locally and globally articulated forms of resistance and violence by repressed groups.

To address the contradictions of contemporary extractivism, we have argued that ACT scholarship especially that developed during the anti-colonial and post-colonial period provides contemporary researchers with opportunities for reflections. By applying ACT to our field research results in Cabo Delgado, we have highlighted four ways in which some of the challenges presented by contemporary extractivism match those witnessed during colonial extractivism. These similarities include the creation and/or reinforcement of socioeconomic imbalances; the weak link between the extractive projects and human development in their host communities; involuntary displacement of communities from their land and livelihoods; and a high likelihood to instigate various forms of conflict. The identification of such similarities allows us to revisit some of the progressive policies of various African countries' anti-colonial and early post-independence periods, which are likely to offer us a useful starting point for reflecting upon how to center local realities and development aspirations in contemporary resource extraction developments.

Declarations of Competing Interest

None.

²⁶ Interview with project resettlement officer, 6 March 2020.

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