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Universidad  
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Navarra Center for  
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## **8th NCID Research Workshop on Development Economics**

**Navarra Center for International Development,  
Institute for Culture and Society  
University of Navarra**

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**Pedro Vicente** - Does Information Break the Political Resource Curse?  
Experimental Evidence from Mozambique

The political resource curse is the idea that natural resources can lead to the deterioration of public policies through corruption and rent-seeking by those closest to political power. One prominent consequence is the emergence of conflict. This paper takes this theory to the data for the case of Mozambique, where a substantial discovery of natural gas recently took place. Focusing on the anticipation of a resource boom and the behavior of local political structures and communities, a large-scale field experiment was designed and implemented to follow the dissemination of information about the newly-discovered resources. Two types of treatments provided variation in the degree of dissemination: one with information targeting only local political leaders, the other with information and deliberation activities targeting communities at large.

A wide variety of theory-driven outcomes is measured through surveys, behavioral activities, lab-in-the-field experiments, and georeferenced administrative data about local conflict. Information given only to leaders increases elite capture and rent-seeking, while information and deliberation targeted at citizens increases mobilization and accountability-related outcomes, and decreases violence. While the political resource curse is likely to be in play, the dissemination of information to communities at large has a countervailing effect.