

SOCIAL IMPACTS OF OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXTRACTION IN SOUTH AFRICA.



Research Study by The Green Connection

DRAFT

WHO STOLE OUR OCEANS?



SOCIAL IMPACTS OF OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXTRACTION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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WE THOUGHT IT WAS OIL, BUT IT WAS BLOOD

The other day

We danced on the street
Joy in our hearts
We thought we were free
Three young folks fell to our right
Countless more fell to our left
Looking up,
Far from the crowd
We beheld
Red hot guns

We thought it was oil
But it was blood

We thought it was oil
But this was blood

Heart jumping

Into our mouths
Floating on
Emotions dry wells
We leapt with fury
Knowing it wasn't funny
Then we beheld
Bright red pools

We thought it was oil
But it was blood

We thought it was oil
But this was blood

Tears don't flow

When you are scarred
First it was the Ogoni
Today it is Ijaws
Who will be slain this next day?
We see open mouths
But we hear no screams
Standing in a pool
Up to our knees

We thought it was oil
But it was blood

We thought it was oil
But this was blood

Dried tear bags

Polluted streams
Things are real
Only when found in dreams
We see their Shells
Behind military shields
Evil, horrible evil gallows called oilrigs
Drilling our souls

We thought it was oil
But it was blood

We thought it was oil
But this was blood

The heavens are open
Above our head
Toasted dreams in flared
And scrambled sky
A million black holes
In a burnt sky
But we know our dreams
Won't burst like crude pipes

We thought it was oil
But this was blood

We thought it was oil
But this was blood

This we tell you
They may kill all
But the blood will speak
They may gain all
But the soil will RISE
We may die but stay alive
Placed on the slab
Slaughtered by the day
We are the living
Long sacrificed

We thought it was oil
But it was blood

We thought it was oil
But this was blood

---Nnimmo Bassey

First written/performed in Amsterdam, 16 September, 1998. Revised in Benin City, January 3, 1999.
Dedicated to Oronto Douglas & the youths of the Niger Delta

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The social impacts of oil and gas exploration and extraction are many and severe. In this report, these impacts will be explored in depth. Presently there is a block just of the coast at Mossel Bay, and this is one of many all around the South African coastline, that may be exploited for gas, including the West Coast and KZN Natal.

Overy (2019) argues that this discovery is not good news for our country. He cites reasons such as undermining South Africa's climate change attempts, and that the money made will not reach those who most need it in this country.

In this report, the social impacts of what would happen if this and other offshore areas are exploited in the country will be explored. These include the impact on the social fabric, the social psyche, health risks, the impacts on women, and the potential to bring conflict and even war to South Africa. Examples of offshore oil and gas mining in the rest of Africa and the world will be discussed as practical examples of what impacts have occurred there.

INTRODUCTION

The story of oil and gas in Africa is the story of rogue exploitation, despoliation and bizarre brigandage. It is the story of pollution, displacement, and, pillage. It is a montage of burnt rivers, burnt forests and, maimed lives. An oil well is a death sentence if it is located in your backyard (Nnimmo Bassey 2000).

Bassey's powerful words, although said over twenty years ago, still seem fitting to begin this exploration of the social impacts of oil and gas extraction. It would not be erroneous to claim that the travesty and conflict that occurred in Nigeria, Sudan, and the massive conflict and social upheaval in Mozambique at present can be traced back to the arrival of oil and gas extraction in these countries. (Bassey 2000). The global economy, functions on fossil fuels. Africa is a major player in oil production among the oil exporting regions in the world. As of 2017 Africa was estimated to contain 126 billion barrels of proven oil reserves (Odviado 2019). In this report the social impacts of the extraction of oil and gas will be explored, using the experiences in the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and Africa as a framework, which will then speak to possible social impacts that may occur with the potential offshore mining of oil and gas that is planned around the South African coastline.

This mining is aligned with the concept of the Blue Economy, which (Bond 2019) describes as:

Sustainable Developing Goal framing, soaring rhetoric and technological sophistication which disguise the darker side of Blue economy concept: Its coincidence with a drive towards ever-deeper and destructive undersea oil and gas drilling and mineral extraction...and corporate corruption of weak states.

The Blue Economy has been named Operation Phakisa in South Africa which (Bond 2019) describes as corporate expansion into the ocean. "Where externalities appear beyond the political will of national and global regulation... especially in South Africa (Bond 2019).



Borras (2019) predicts an extra 200 million African deaths this century due to droughts, increasing temperatures and extreme weather caused by climate change. Whilst there is an acknowledgment that at the root of the concerns about the social impacts of offshore oil and gas lies climate change and its potentially devastating effects on African people, this report will focus on the social impacts of offshore oil and gas extraction.

Social impacts occur mainly on the people who are closest to the actual extraction site, or those living next to refineries, those on the ground, the affected communities. It will be the most vulnerable and marginalized sectors of these communities, who do not reap the benefits of these developments that will be most badly affected by negative impacts. (Van Alstine 2014; Redelinghuys 2016)

1. OIL AND GAS EXTRACTION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WORLD

One hundred and seventy-six kilometres off the southern coast of South Africa in an area known as the Quteniqua Basin, the oil and gas company Total appears to have discovered what they called a significant find of gas. This was announced on the 17th of February 2019. (Overy 2019). The finding was hailed a 'game changer' and a 'world-class gas and oil play.' According to (Overy 2019) there was great excitement at the riches this find would bring to the South African economy, and R1 trillion was thrown into the mix. Mossel bay was touted as being the town where most of the development would occur. At present TOTAL has postponed their application for additional drilling, but they have the necessary environmental authorisation to drill in the western portion. In 1988 Soekor (now amalgamated into Petro SA) discovered oil near Hondeklip Bay of the West Coast known as Gazania-1. This has now been approved for further exploration. In KZN Natal authorization has been granted to ENI and Sasol, for offshore oil and gas exploration. The South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA), supported by Natural Justice and Green Connection has challenged this in court and awaits an outcome.

Most recently, in an attempt to deal with the problem of energy shortages in the country, the Gas to Power Powerships project in South Africa (Karpowerships) planned to set up power ships in the South African Ports in Richards Bay, Ngqura in the Eastern Cape and Saldanaha Bay in the Western Cape. It soon became clear that the EIA for this project



was deeply flawed. The social and health impacts were not covered adequately as were the environmental impacts, and Green Connection challenged this in court. Liz Mc Daid, strategic lead of Green Connection said the following:

Upon inspecting the EIA report with our legal team, we believe that these proposed projects should not be considered nor endorsed. There is too much missing data. Too many negative impacts for South Africans and the environment that has been brushed over and not given the scrutiny it needs to make informed decisions...these Karpowerships are not worth the risk, especially not at the expense of our coastal communities. (Green Connection 2021)

Green Connection were successful and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment Department suspending the environmental impact impact (EIA) process for the Saldanha Bay component until further notice. This judgement has been appealed by Karpower, and the fight continues (Carnie 2021).

The social impacts that will result if exploration and extraction go ahead are complex and multifaceted (Redelinghuys 2016). It is useful to examine what occurs elsewhere, and Africa has a long history of such extraction, where most Africans have failed to experience any positive changes, but rather the extractive industry has been synonymous with conflict generation and gross human rights abuses, usually in undemocratic or at least unstable regimes. (Anty 2001; Torres, Afonso & Soares 2013; Siakwah 2017; Ahmed 2020; Gillies 2020). As onshore oil and gas reserves are drying up, offshore extraction is opening up and is susceptible to even more exploitation, as toxic wastes can be dumped into deep water, where environmental accountability may be harder to police. Many researchers have argued that in the developing world, resource abundance becomes a curse, not a blessing (Stiglitz 2012; Lagercrantz & Chabba 2019; Ahmed 2020; Chimhanjwa 2020). Poverty, poor growth, political instability, lower levels of democracy, environmental degradation, and violent conflicts are common and impact communities severely. (Anty 2001; Stiglitz 2012; Siakwah 2017; Lagercrantz & Chabba 2019). In addition, these countries are predisposed to rent-seeking, exorbitant elite spending, and corruption (Torres, Afonso & Soares 2013; Siakwah 2017; Chimhanjwa



2020). In other countries in the world, such as the United States of America, Canada, and Australia, it appears that impacts on indigenous communities are can be devastating.

2. IMPACTS ON THE SOCIAL FABRIC

According to (Atkinson 2016), the 'social fabric' includes a mix of different occurrences, facts, experiences, and happenings. These include demographic and economic factors, behavioural issues, and political dynamics. Included too are social institutions such as families, organisations, for example, municipalities, schools, and churches, and relationships amongst people. Underpinning all the above are people's beliefs, opinions, feelings, and attitudes, including a sense of belonging and fitting in.

The social fabric interacts with several key themes including the natural environment, economic development, tourism, agriculture, health, heritage, and 'sense of place' (Atkinson 2016).

2.1. Social cohesion and population change (Rapid in-migration).

The communities that may be impacted are often small, with close-knit family ties. They may have common values, a sense of ownership, and a focus on fishing, agriculture, and tourism. (Redelinghuys 2020). In South Africa, there may be many people who are dependent on social grants, and poverty and unemployment are rife. The 'social disruption' thesis contends that large scale resource development results in rapid economic and demographic changes, and can lead to a breakdown in traditional community social structures and lead to social and psychological dislocation (England and Albrecht 1984; Lawrie, Tonts & Plummer 2013; Atkinson, Schenk & Matebesi *et al* 2016; Clabots 2019; Ruddell & Britto 2020). Any social migration resulting from an influx of people coming to the town looking for employment can severely disrupt social cohesion. The rapid pace of development stretches infrastructures which can undermine a sense of community and belonging (Flanagan, Heitkamp, Nedegaard, & Jayasundara. 2014; Atkinson *et al* 2016). Significant demands are placed on health, education, and social services, and local governments often struggle to manage the influx of people into the community. (Rundell & Britto 2020). There may be perceived tension over jobs, differing values and feelings towards the town and the mining activity, and there will be



rising costs of living. It also stands to reason that with an influx of people, there will be pressure on already inadequate municipalities. hospitals and schools will be unable to cope, and housing will be compromised (Lagercrantz & Khabbaz 2019; Hamilton 2021). In South Africa most municipalities are in a chaotic state, crippled by debt and severely mismanaged (Makwetu 2020; Hamilton 2021), and despite vast income generated from mining, hundreds of thousands of people who live in mining town communities live in a state of severe deprivation in this country (Cole & Broadhurst 2021). In Mossel Bay, now even before extraction takes place, inequality levels are high and there are worrying disparities that would worsen with the expected in-migration. The numbers of the indigent are rising already as is the demand for free basic services, social grants, and housing. If and when extraction goes ahead there, these demands will rise even more. (Mossel Bay Municipality 2020).

An example of a boom and bust mining town in South Africa is Rustenberg, whose population grew from 68 000 in 1996 to 626 522 in 2016. The experience here showed that basic services such as water, electricity, housing, sewage, public transport, health facilities, and school were severely impacted ((Lagercrantz & Khabbaz 2019; Hamilton 2021).

2.2 Social ills

Social ills such as increased drug use, alcohol abuse, crime rates, domestic violence, prostitution, and teenage pregnancies will rise. (Atkinson *et al* 2016; Chapman, Plummer and Tonts 2015; Redelinghuys 2020; Ruddell & Britto 2020). Ruddell (2017) describes the social problems emerging in boomtowns as follows; increases in antisocial behavior, violent crime, industrial mishaps, and traffic collisions, and increased alcohol and drug use (Ruddell & Britto 2020). Victims of these crimes are already members of vulnerable or marginalized groups, including rural women, Indigenous populations, and young people. Environmental impacts from mining cause a decrease in the quality of life, including air, water, and noise pollution. Law enforcement agencies are seldom able to manage the population growth and courts, and correction facilities in boomtowns are often overwhelmed by the growing demand for their services (Ruddell & Britto 2020).



An Amnesty International report exploring energy development in British Columbia, (Amnesty International 2016) described the social impacts on extractive mining. They mention that there is great wealth together with great inequality, which causes conflict and social ills. They mention that indigenous populations suffer and are unable to continue to practice their traditional and sustainable ways of life. The report said the following:

The sheer number of people coming to the region drives crime rates higher...Younger men in Canada are proportionally more likely to commit violent crime. This is compounded by the fact that for some, high-pressure work conditions lead to unhealthy patterns of behaviour, the of long shifts, including drug abuse and binge drinking (Ruddell & Britta 2020). High wages in the resource sector drive up local costs, and create competition for necessities like housing and food. Economic insecurity amongst those without access to resource sector wages, or who lost their incomes, drive some into dangerous situations, such as insecure housing and illegal occupation. (Amnesty International. 2016)

Graham & Ovadia (2019) mention that in Cameroon, the Bakola/ Bagyei pygmies found that the influx of workers and poor social conditions led to an increase in transmittable diseases such as HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and there was a rise in prostitution and crime. Ghana's Jubilee Oil Field was discovered in 2007 and in 2010 it began production of oil. A longitudinal study of the impacts (real and perceived) was done by (Ovadia *et al* 2020), five years into oil production communities described an increased crime and prostitution, as well as an impact on services.

In Mossel Bay a fisherman being interviewed by a Green connection team commented on the social impacts of the MossGas project in Mossel Bay and confirmed that there had been a rise in prostitution, drug and alcohol use, and crime in his area, as well as people, being afraid to stand up for their rights as it might result in their dismissal from the job at MossGas.

These social ills are a direct consequence of in-migration and this has a direct and severe impact on women. This will be discussed further in section 5.



2.2. Loss of sense of place, beauty, loss of history, and sense of community.

A loss of sense of place is often shared by people who either live in a place or who value it as a destination for work or holidays. In South Africa communities are not always the same often because of the legacy of apartheid planning, and therefore may perceive the sense of place differently, but it will still have meaning for each group that lives there. For example, subsistence fishermen will see it as a place where they can be self-sufficient and feed their families. According to (Seeliger, de Jongh, & Morris 2016) a sense of place is not adequately protected in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). In South Africa, the loss of history is not addressed in the NEMA act, but the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) does allow for some protection, within the concept of 'cultural landscapes. The timeframes for the EIA are too short to allow communities to reach agreement on levels of change, that could turn out to be profound. According to (Seeliger, de Jongh & Morris 2016) the sense of place is a real concern for marginalized communities because of their vulnerable economic status, and the intangible, subconscious connection with the sea and land. This then leads to the impacts on the social psyche. According to (Mc Daid 2021), the South African west coast has gone from pastoral to desert and is just covered with mining heaps and the coast is being destroyed through mining. Merle Sowman, associate professor and head of the department of environmental and geographical sciences at the University of Cape Town and a PTWC advisory board member says the following:

There have been several objections and appeals against the increase in prospecting and mining applications along the West and Northern Cape coasts, but these have been mostly ignored by the minister of environmental affairs, Barbara Creecy. The South African government is greenlighting companies to mine on vast areas along the West Coast with very little pushback and consideration for anything other than some short-term jobs and some cash in the bank, What is alarming is that the environment minister is supporting these mining activities and did not stand up and protect our coast as required of the minister charged with protecting our coastal resources and heritage....this is undermining



the fishing industry. Large numbers of trucks on gravel roads generate air pollution. The impact on groundwater resources affects local farmers (Masterson 2021)

Butt (2021) concur with the above statements saying that the Australian mining company responsible for the mining on the West Coast was an example of colonial extractivism, which is a characteristic tactic used by multinational corporations, who would not be allowed to mine as they do, in their own countries. He continued that the impacts would be dire for communities; impacting the fishing industry, the loss of archaeological resources and fossils, air pollution, a loss of sense of place, impacts on already scarce water resources, and most significant impacts on the First Nation communities who live there.

In its submissions, for the proposed Gas to Power Powerships (Karpowerships) in Saldanha Bay in the Western Cape, the Green Connection highlighted a number of deficiencies in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), where key impacts have not been considered or factored in. According to the social and environmental justice organisation, this could be devastating for the country's affected small-scale subsistence fishing communities, whose livelihoods were already dealt a crushing blow when their fishing and other rights were compromised during the pandemic lockdown. Strategic lead for Green Connection said the following:

Upon inspecting the EIA report with our legal team, we believe that these proposed projects should not be considered nor endorsed. There is too much missing data. Too many negative impacts for South Africans and the environment that has been brushed over and not given the scrutiny it needs to make informed decisions. It is almost as though the government does not want to know the full impact of its projects so that they can go ahead with a 'clean' conscience. However, by our assessment, these Karpowerships are not worth the risk, especially not at the expense of our coastal communities. (Green Connection 2021).

Comments from those voices on the ground, whose communities will be impacted if the Karpower goes ahead, echoed other voices in other African countries, where there seemed to be very little consultation and information is given, particularly to the small



scale fishers, whose livelihoods and sustainable living would be threatened. According to community leader and activist Zukisa Mankabane from Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay:

We only heard about the Karpowership plans for Coega a short while ago, and we are gravely concerned about the impact it will have on the environment, marine life, and also for communities. We are not satisfied with this proposed project. It will destroy our areas and the ocean we, as fishing communities, rely on. (Green Connection 2021)

3. IMPACTS ON THE SOCIAL PSYCHE.'

3.1. Fears and anxieties.

People (Redelinghuys 2016) may have health concerns, worry over contamination of their drinking water and food (fish), there may be the loss of ability to continue to live sustainably. Food availability may become an issue, and food may increase in price. They may fear that noise, and pollution will affect people's quality of life. There could be job losses from the tourism and agricultural sector. People may fear being displaced, losing their land and their livelihoods. In Uganda (Owang & Vanclay 2019) studied the social impacts of land acquisition for oil and gas development. Many people were displaced, which caused food insecurity, the disintegration of social and cultural cohesion, and reduced access to social services. These fears are realistic. People are dispossessed and lose the ability to be self-sufficient and self-sustainable.

A member of the Eastern Cape Environment Network (ECEN) Mankabane, speaking about the proposed Karpowerships in the Eastern Cape says:

But, before I even start on impact, I want to start by highlighting how this project was introduced to us, the injustice of this process. It has been introduced in a wrong way. During this period of CoVid restrictions, government themselves acknowledge that we are living in a new normal. So how come they continue to introduce new projects, like normal, when those affected are restricted from



participation? They have reduced this process to a mere box-ticking exercise, not really meaning to understand how their proposals will affect us... On top of that, all the requirements that should be adhered, have not been done. Remember, we are small-scale fishers who have been suffering a lot under the CoVid restrictions, and since many of us cannot afford data or computer equipment, this means that we cannot participate in the decision-making process. Also, the environmental consultants did not adequately advertise meetings about having these karpowerships here. We are very dissatisfied that while we are trying to make a living for ourselves and improve our lives, our government is prepared to put our ocean at risk (Green Connection 2021).

This blatant dismissal to take into account the feelings of the people who would probably be the most impacted if this project was to go ahead, is an indication of how feelings of frustration and of not being listened to or engaged with do affect people deeply.

3.2. Feelings of frustration and being overwhelmed.

There may be a rush to benefit from the development. A new and alien culture of greed may take over the town and change the character of the community. This could lead to feelings of alienation, frustration, and being overwhelmed. There may be no forum to address these concerns and people will feel as though they do not have a voice. There may be deep apprehension about the possibility of oil spills and blowouts. (Redelinghuys 2016). In Ghana, after a few years of extraction the frustration of not being heard or listened to rose. Affected community members said the following:

The meetings have become 'talk shops', with few tangible benefits. How are we sure that anything good will come out of all this information we are giving them in these meetings? We have been waiting for a long time for practical action from the company, but nothing ever comes. Ovandia *et al* 2020

This lack of listening or caring for communities leads to a deep sense of disillusion and betrayal. This was the experience of Fishers in Mossel Bay, with the MossGas



project. During an informal meeting with a fisherman from Mossel bay, a team from Green Connection became aware of the sense of disillusion and betrayal that the fishers had experienced. They had not benefitted but rather felt afraid to voice their opinions, and share their stories.,

3.3. Sense of disillusion and betrayal.

People may have built up unrealistic expectations, they will feel betrayed by both the government and the oil and gas companies. People's trust in the oil and gas industry is extremely low, because of past high-profile failures. People will experience changes to the beauty of the landscape and ocean, which has an intangible impact that profoundly affects the community's socio-psychological connection to their environment. The psychological connection to the land is often severed, and the spiritual connection is lost. There will also be a loss of access to recreational activities, impacting the quality of life (Redelinghuis 2016). The fisher's culture of subsistence fishing, which has been going on for generations will be impacted, destroying indigenous culture. But most serious of all is that the community most in need of benefitting from these developments often reap a disproportional share of the disadvantages, whilst not reaping any of the advantages. (add some of Neville's quotes)

4. HEALTH RISKS.

Whilst the focus of this report is on offshore oil and gas, according to D'sa (2018) South Durban refineries run by BP, Shell and Engen have been devastating our air, land and water quality. The Physicians for social Responsibility (2020) have put together a compendium of the risks and harms of unconventional gas and oil extraction. The list of health risks to both the communities and those employed by the oil and gas companies is appalling. Both air and water can be contaminated, and multiple studies show indisputable impacts on reproductive success, which include threats to fertility, pre-term births, low birth weight, and birth defects. There are also detrimental impacts on the nervous system and blood disorders. Other impacts include Kidney, bladder, and skin problems, high blood pressure, heart disease, hypertension, and cognitive impairment. There are well-documented cases of other cancers such as Leukemia, bladder, and



thyroid cancer, as well as young children and adults being diagnosed with a rare cancer known as Ewing sarcoma. Air pollution leads to asthma, lung cancer, silicosis, and pneumonia, which in combination with Covid 19 and in South Africa, TB, makes a deadly cocktail. Sleep disturbances are common as are, headaches, throat irritations, coughs, shortness of breath, wheezing, fatigue and nausea. These health effects lead to stress, anxiety and depression, and an increase in suicide. ,

One of the biggest threats to coastal communities in South Africa would be an explosion or leaks from the oil rigs used for offshore oil and gas. The explosion of a rig in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 caused many adverse health effects on cleanup workers, fishermen, and the local population, which continues to this day. (Levy & Nassetta 2011). The recent oil spill in Mauritius has caused untold harm to the environment and to the psyche of the communities affected. One woman interviewed shortly after the spill had this to say:

I don't think I can come to the shore again to see this. My heart will break in two. I will stay indoors. But even if I don't see it, I can smell it. There is no escaping from it (Khalil. Cassimally & Bassin. 2020).

4.1. Food and water insecurity and impacts of pollution.

According to a study done by (Ite, Harry, Obadimu, Asuaiko, and Inim 2018), contamination of the groundwater in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, had the following consequences. Petroleum hydrocarbon spills lead to a 60% reduction in food security, nutritional values in food decreased, and with these adverse effects associated with petroleum hydrocarbons contaminating arable land, it is postulated that this could have lead to a 24% increase in the prevalence of childhood malnutrition. These impacts have been documented to cause environmental distress, worry, anger and impatience over the last 55 years (Ite *et at* 2018). If rivers and are contaminated by a blowout, because of oil slicks, agriculture in the area would suffer, people would have to move away. Finally, some justice prevailed over the travesty that has occurred in Nigeria, after a 13-year legal wrangling, in January 2021, The Hague ruled that Shell's Nigerian branch must pay out for oil spills on land in two villages (Channels Television 2021).



Fishers in Ghana's offshore Jubilee Oil Field, bear a disproportionate burden of the negative social and ecological effects of its exploitation (Ayelazuno 2014). Both (male) fishermen and (female) fishmongers were impacted by the deteriorating catches, which had changed in the five years since oil production began. This is what they said:

As a result of the reduced catch and small sizes of the fish, our businesses have been affected. Now we cannot get the quantity that we want and even what we sell the prices has fallen because of the sizes of the fish. We do not make any profit. Our fishing activities are being affected and we cannot even pay our children's school fees... whenever we go near the rig, they seize our nets and sometimes they threaten to beat us (Ovadia *et al* 2020).

A fisherman in Mossel bay was being interviewed by a team from Green connection about the impacts of the Moss gas development in Mossel bay, also spoke of how there are fewer fish to catch, and those they do catch are smaller. (Notes)

One cannot fail to see how the presence of the oil and gas extraction process has profound effects on the poorest and most marginalised people, causing livelihood loss, food insecurity, starvation, illness, and polluted water. People are removed from their lands and can no longer live sustainably (Ovadia *et al* 2020). In Cabo Delgado almost 700 000 people have been displaced from their land.

5. CONFLICT AND WAR

5.1 Social tension and opposing views.

With the arrival of oil and gas companies, social tension rises. People will have to choose sides in debates around allowing oil and gas extraction. At first, they may feel confused about what is best, and this can generate conflict and tension. People for extraction may be supported by the oil and gas industry and political interest groups. Bribes and corruption may result. This can be highly polarising and these tensions can profoundly affect the community fabric and attempts at building consensus. Conflicts over jobs will arise and often outsiders are mistrusted and blamed for social ills, and conflict and xenophobia may arise (Atkinson *et al* 2016).



In Ghana, (Ovandia *et al* 2020) in 2010, community members had extremely high expectations about development that would result from the production of oil and gas, but they were concerned about the negative impacts on fishing. When they were interviewed again in 2015, there was a huge change. Trust had broken down to such an extent that even the research assistants were greeted with suspicion and hostility. They expressed a growing level of frustration over the fact that there had been no benefits for them. They had difficulty accessing information, there was a lack of communication and no proper public consultation by the company nor the government. One local fisherman complained (Ovadia *et al* 2020):

They extract oil and gas, but they do not give us anything. They are always deceiving us; they say they will come and help but no help comes.

The community members felt that the influx of economic migrants had deepened their poverty and increased conflict. They experienced pressure on their public services and amenities, and an elevated criminal activity as mentioned in the literature above. (Atkinson *et al* 2016; Redlinghuys 2016). They mentioned floods of people coming in because of gas activity, which had a significant impact on people's lives (Ovadia *et al* 2020). Conflict arose between the fishermen and the local elites, even the prominent NGOs were not trusted, as it seemed that the very people who were supposed to be their voice and protector, were betraying, and exploiting them. A Fisherman from Half-Assini commented thus:

The oil rig is in the Jomoro Sea, and we are those suffering but we don't get any benefit. Whether it is the oil company or the government that benefits we do not know...people must leave the community in search of jobs (Ovadia *et al* 2020).

These examples from Ghana explain how increasing social fragmentation occurs and leads to conflict and underdevelopment. Graham & Ovadia (2019) suggested that resource extraction in communities can produce tensions between the private sector and government on one side, and indigenous groups on the other which may lead to social dislocation and conflict.



5.2 War

Violence and war in Niger Delta occurred because there was no fair access to oil profits. The conflict became severe, increasing violence, where militant groups were formed and communities vented their anger about unfair sharing of oil revenues, restricted employment chances, and impacts on local fishing and farming livelihoods (Graham & Ovadia 2019).

Five hundred thousand people died in the Angolan civil war, and 3.5 million became refugees. Gonzales (2010) argued that it was oil and diamonds that gave the warring sides the opportunity to pursue military options and to prolong the war there.

Sudan was similar to Angola. The government displaced indigenous non-Arabs to secure and clear territory for oil development. Brutal tactics, such as the abduction of women and children, gang rapes, and ground assaults were commonly used. Oil is considered the single leading factor in the Sudanese civil war (Gonzalez 2010). This displacement, coupled with other violent situations, gave Sudan the honour of contributing one out of every eight refugees and displaced persons in the world.

In Mozambique (Chimhangwa 2021), there is mounting evidence that the discovery of gas fields by multinationals and the pouring of billions into the development is a factor in the brutal war in Cabo Delgado. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR 2021), since 2017, the conflict in northern Mozambique has left tens of thousands of people dead or injured, and forcibly displaced more than 700,000 people in Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa, Sofala, and Zambezia provinces. A humanitarian crisis of epic proportions has unfolded there. The resulting social impacts are extreme. Starvation, displacement, severe trauma, families being separated, and death.

Gonzalez (2010) summed up well how oil and gas cause and perpetuates war, particularly in Africa, in the following quote:

Oil can fund military campaigns, prolong war, shatter peace initiatives and cause untold suffering and misery on a civilian population. Any potential positive effect on national development has been lost in a myriad of greed, corruption, and poor governance.



It is clear that oil and gas extraction has been integral in causing and sustaining war and conflict in Africa. One cannot imagine a more extreme social impact on communities. The social fabric is torn to shreds.

6. THE IMPACT ON WOMEN

South Africa has the dubious status of being the rape capital in the world. Three to nine women are raped every day. A woman is murdered every three to four hours, and half of those murders are at the hands of an intimate partner, either through femicide or partner violence. Femicide is five times higher in South Africa than the global average, with South Africa having the fourth-highest female interpersonal violence death rate out of the 183 countries listed by the WHO in 2016. This is a country that is not considered safe for women (Ramafolo, Dicks, Pilane & Mthombeni 2020). These statistics are horrific, but if one adds communities impacted by oil and gas exploration and extraction, one becomes aware of how deadly this will be to the women of South Africa.

There is much evidence that resource-based booms put women at exceptionally high risk for an increase of sexual violence, rape, and other violence towards women. Eswaran (2020) adds that during the Covid 19 crisis, violence against women has risen, with women being isolated at home with abusive partners and very few resources.

There have been fewer specialized studies that focus on violence towards women, but over the last few years studies showing significant increases in domestic violence and sexual assault after the start of the oil boom in the Bakken area in America (Jayasundara, Heitkamp & Ruddell (2016); Martin, Barrick & Richardson et al 2019). Ruddell & Britto 2020; Martin et al. (2019) found that family violence increased by 47% and intimate partner violence rose by 50%. Scholars in the Marcellus Shale region in the Eastern USA also found an increase in violence against women (James & Smith 2017; Kormarek 2018).

Ruddell & Britto 2020 describe 5 factors that contribute to violence towards Women in Resource Boom areas. These include



1. precarious housing arrangements, due to the rapid population growth;

2. Social isolation of women especially marginalised women who may find themselves with unequal power dynamics in their relationships because they are less likely to gain employment with the mining companies, and are more likely to be in low paying jobs, or unemployed. Men also suffer from social isolation because they are strangers in the towns and are often not accepted. Ruddell & Britto (2020) mention that “resource-based booms likely exacerbate conditions in communities and further reinforce the patriarchal and hyper-masculine attitudes”.

3. Lack of domestic violence shelter and support services due to the huge influx of people into an area

4. A Workplace culture that supports substance abuse and hyper-masculinity. Hyper-masculinity is associated with sexual violence, and this has been observed all over the globe.

5. An under-resourced justice system, which is caused by the overwhelming demands placed on police, court, or police stations.

In the USA, Australia and Canada it appears that first nation women are most profoundly impacted by violence against women in extractive settings, It is believed that the placing of ‘man camps’ close to these communities, brings violence and localizes crime in mining-affected communities. In 2019 the U.S Bureau of Justice Statistics completed a study on known violent victimization in the Bakken oil-producing region of Montana and North Dakota (University of Colorado 2020). There was an increase in physical and sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual assault of minors, and sex trafficking and murder in affected communities. The study showed that from 2006 to 2012 when there was a rapid rise of oil workers, the rate of violent victimization increased by 70%.

Clabots (2019), says:

The growing evidence that the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women are directly linked to fossil fuel production. There is a direct correlation



between increased rates of sexual abuse, trafficking, and domestic violence against women and children in regions where fossil fuel extraction companies set up 'man camps' to house workers.

In South Africa, there is a vibrant women's movement called Womin: their statement about themselves shows that they are deeply aware of the impacts that extraction has on women, and they are standing up against it. They say:

Women along with their communities, organisations and movements across Africa do not stand by meekly as extractives, corporations, and governments try to take their land and natural resources. These women fiercely defend their right to livelihoods, health and well-being, freedom from violence, and community life. At WoMin we profile their voices and stories of inspirational organising and action. (WoMin 2020)

The evidence is clear that women are at risk when connected to the extraction industry. Being aware is a start, but "We strive for an Africa in which all women have secure access to resources for life and livelihood and can exercise full control over their bodies and development choices (WoMin 2020).

7. CONCLUSION

This report has given an overview of the social impacts of offshore oil and gas extraction in countries in Africa and the world and plotted a scenario of what these impacts could look like if full-scale offshore oil and gas extraction goes ahead in South Africa. The impacts could be severe and will impact the poor and marginalised communities the most. These impacts along with the environmental and financial impacts should be taken into account when choosing whether to go ahead with this form of extraction or not. If climate change is added to this mix, there should be no question that any extraction of oil and gas should be taking place. It should be kept in the ground, and under the sea.



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