

Philosophical Thinking About Somalia's Oil And Gas Exploration

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Abstract

Somalia is currently at a crucial moment due to the possibility of discovering oil and gas deposits, despite its long-standing instability and economic complications. This article provides inclusive philosophical analysis of the environmental, ethical and economic dimensions of resource production in the context of Somali's fragile social, environmental, and political context. This study evaluates the moral responsibilities of shareholders involved in gas and oil exploration, especially balancing economic benefit with environmental sustainability and communities' justice. We used different methods of deontological ethics, utilitarianism, and deep ecology.

We discuss ethical considerations such as intergenerational justice, corporate social responsibility, promoting governance frameworks that confirm equitable distribution of resource wealth, and avoiding the onset of the "resource curse." We also take some case studies from Venezuela, Nigeria, and Canada and give insights into the potential pitfalls and best practices for resource management. This article accomplishes by recommending the best strategic approach that incorporates ethical considerations into petroleum Somalia's industry, economy equity, promoting sustainable development, and long-term environmental stewardship.

Keywords: *oil and gas exploration, environmental sustainability, resource management, ethics, Somalia, philosophical analysis, economic equity.*

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I. Introduction

Somalia is now in a critical juncture with the potential discovery of oil and gas reserves, notwithstanding its enduring instability and economic challenges. The emergence of this potential requires a philosophical analysis of the economic, environmental, and ethical consequences of resource extraction. In this regard, philosophy offers important perspectives.

The ethical concern in resource extraction involves weighing the gains against the problems, using frameworks such as utilitarianism, which seeks to maximize overall pleasure, and deontological ethics, which emphasizes adherence to moral obligations regardless of the outcomes. In terms of economic justice, theories such as Rawlsian justice focus on affirming equality and prioritizing support for the disadvantaged, while the capabilities approach aims to enhance individual well-being, proposing to distribute resources in a way that promotes equity. Environmental responsibility, meanwhile, needs to address the long-term ecological effects of resource extraction and ensure sustainable management to protect the environment for future generations.

This article explores various philosophical approaches that can be used to help Somalia leverage its resources while preserving ethical principles and promoting environmental sustainability.

II. Historical And Political Context

Historical Overview

The history of oil prospecting in Somalia spans many years. During the colonial era, geologists from Italy and Britain made the initial discoveries of oil seeps. US-based Sinclair Oil and the Italian firm Agip (now Eni) initiated their exploration of the petroleum geology in Somalia during the 1950s. By the 1970s, geologists recognized Somalia's potential for significant hydrocarbon reserves. By the 1980s, eight key petroleum basins were considered the most promising areas for oil and gas exploration in the country. Despite the first efforts, these early expeditions were not successful due to the political turmoil that ensued when Somalia gained independence in 1960. The succeeding autocratic rule led by Siad Barre from 1969 to 1991, followed by a civil war in the early 1990s, caused additional delays in the exploitation of valuable resources.

During the early 2000s, Puntland, a self-governing area in the northeastern part of Somalia, started to gain attention from oil firms because of its encouraging findings in oil exploration. Somalia offshore oil deposits have gained attention recently years. Coastal exploration and Spectrum Geo did offshore survey in 2014-2015. Their studies indicated that the potential for offshore oil reserves in Somalia is highly promising. The identification of significant oil deposits resulted in heightened confidence regarding the prospects of the industry. Nevertheless, the presence of political instability, piracy, and ongoing conflicts has impeded the progress of extensive development. The obstacles encountered in the oil and gas industry are indicative of more extensive concerns regarding governance, stability, and economic administration in Somalia.

Political and economic context

The oil and gas business in Somalia is greatly influenced by its political climate. Over the past two to three decades, various national and regional authorities in Somalia have entered into agreements with both major and minor companies, creating a complex concessionary landscape. For instance, TOTAL signed an oil exploration agreement with the Transitional National Government (TNG) in 2001. This deal grants the company rights to exploration Indian Ocean offshore, south of Somalia. But this deal creates several years of distribution between different transitional federal governments and regional authorities over the rights to oil resources. The shift from a state of collapse to a federal system under the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in 2012 signified a new stage in the administration of resources. An initiative was undertaken to attract international investment by creating a comprehensive legal and regulatory system to oversee exploration and production operations.

Notwithstanding these endeavours, the political situation persists as volatile, characterised by sporadic clashes and difficulties in governance. The Federal Government must traverse the intricacies of managing and exploiting natural resources while balancing the requirement for revenue creation with the imperative of establishing political stability and good government. The potential for Somalia's gas and oil reserves provides a substantial economic chance for expansion. The improvement of these resources has the potential to meaningfully increase the economy by financing social services, infrastructure projects, and development programs. However, the likelihood of a "resource curse"-whereby the plenty of natural resources findings in harmful consequences such as violence, corruption, and economic mismanagement-gives rise to apprehensions. To successfully manage resources, it is mandatory to decrease these risks by applying strong governance structures and transparency procedures.

III. Ethical Considerations

Environmental Ethics

The consequences of the extraction of oil and gas in the environment are substantial and frequently irreversible. In Somalia, the infrastructure for environmental protection and ecosystems is limited, and petroleum exploration poses a huge risk to biodiversity, water resources, and land use. Utilitarianism, as formulated by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, assesses actions by their consequences, with the goal of maximising overall happiness and minimising harm. Regarding Somalia's oil and gas exploration, utilitarian ethics would include conducting a thorough evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages linked to the extraction of resources. Petroleum exploration can produce considerable economic benefits, such as strengthened government income and job generation. But it can also lead to environmental problems characterized by possibility like deforestation, water contamination, and oil spills.

Deontological ethics, which is influenced by Immanuel Kant, emphasises the importance of following moral responsibilities and principles rather than judging actions exclusively based on their consequences. From a deontological perspective, it is imperative that oil companies operating in Somalia cease any ecological harm and uphold the rights of local residents. The deontological ethics, for example, would be against actions that result in the destruction of the environment or the exploitation of vulnerable groups, despite the economic advantages. It is estimated that corporations would maintain high ethical standards, which involve operating with transparency, offering fair compensation to impact communities, and adhering to rigorous environmental protections. This approach prioritizes moral commitments over the use of calculations to weigh disadvantages and advantages.

The philosopher Arne Naess articulated deep ecology, suggesting that the wilderness possesses essential worth that extends outside its worth to humans. This view questions the idea that causing damage to the environment can be rationalized by economic prosperity. In the setting of Somalia, the principles of deep ecology would contradict the exploration of gas and oil if it's the outcome in substantial harm to the environment, such as the reduction of biodiversity, distraction of ecosystem, or air pollution.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The first ethics is care, as promoted by thinker such as Carol Gilligan, noticed the importance of relational obligations and empathy. Within the context of corporate social responsibility (CSR), this idea recommends that gas and oil firms ought to perform utmost significance to the welfare of local societies and keenly participate in addressing their issues. For example, corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies directed by the ethics of care would require allocating resources towards societies development edges, contribution assistant for local healthcare, and education and warranting equitable distribution of benefits from resource extraction. Enterprises are advised to encourage robust connection with societies, intently heed their needs, and proactively address any difficult consequences of their activities. This strategy cultivates a feeling of shared accountability and encourages moral conduct in corporate operations.

Virtue ethics, based on Aristotelian philosophy, centres on the cultivation of moral character and virtues. Oil and gas firms prioritise the development of qualities such as honesty, integrity, and respect. It would recommend that companies should work with honesty, adhere to ethical business principles, and make beneficial contributions to society's growth. This view sponsors the calculation of cooperate actions based on moral character and values, confirming that they act in ways that are constant with ethical values and contribute to the well-being of the community. Cooperate can actively participate in the encouragement of ethical resource management and accountable, by developing a culture of centred around moral excellence.

Intergenerational justice is describing the ethical accountability that current generations have to future generations. Gas and oil resources are finite, and their production today could reduce the profits available for future generations of Somalia. One of the ethical questions is here: should Somalia utilize its gas and oil resources now to tackle immediate economic needs, or should Somalia preserve these resources for future generations to utilize and manage? From a moral view, the ethics of equity and fairness propose that future generations deserve the same opportunities to gain from the country's natural wealth. If Somalia selects to quickly decrease its gas and oil reserves, its dangers leaving future generations with environmental degradation, a lack of alternative resources, and economic instability. Instead, delaying exploration may mean missed opportunities for the present population to lift themselves out of poverty.

One solution to this dilemma could be the establishment of a sovereign wealth fund, where oil revenues are saved and invested for future use. This would ensure that future generations also reap the benefits of today's extraction, thereby balancing present needs with intergenerational justice.

IV. Economic And Developmental Philosophy

Somalia gas and oil exploration give noteworthy potential to transform the country's economy. Nonetheless, this potential is accompanied by deep philosophical questions concerning the best approach to economic growth, wealth distribution, and sustainable development.

Resource Curse vs. Blessing

A central philosophical debate in resource-rich developing countries revolves around the "resource curse"—a paradox in which nations rich in natural resources often experience less economic growth, weaker institutions, and more conflict than those without such resources. This paradox arises from the mismanagement of resource wealth, corruption, and over-reliance on a single economic sector, which can undermine other industries and lead to social instability.

Somalia must avoid this fate, it must embrace a developmental philosophy centered on transparency, diversification of its economy and robust governance. Petroleum revenue should be utilized to build other resources, such as education, agriculture, technology and fisheries, confirming that the economics of the country's development are boarded-based and sustainable. This method associates with the philosophical principles of long-termism-prioritizing policies that confirm growth and stability for future generations, rather than short-term benefits.

Wealth Distribution and Social Equity

The most important feature of Somalia petroleum exploration is the issue of wealth distribution. In the philosophically, should the wealth belong to the whole Somali population, or belong to the local state, local societies in resource rich-areas?

One of theories suggested by John Rawl's is that justice, as explained in his work of theory of justice, places much emphasis on the perception of fairness and the "difference principle." This method permits inequalities within society only if they serve to enhance the condition of the most disadvantaged individuals. Applying the theory of Rawlsian to oil and gas in Somalia entails confirming that the continues derived from resource exploitation are allocated in a manner that improves the conditions of the most marginalised groups.

During the Somali setting, there are questions have arisen about whether local societies, especially those near extraction sites, should obtain a larger share of the profits, given that they will probably face the most

significant environmental and community impacts. Simultaneously, gas and oil resources are a national asset, and there is a moral dispute for confirming that revenues profit the whole country. The theory of distributive justice, a key principle of economic philosophy, explores that wealth should be spread in a manner that supports equity and fairness.

Another theory, known as a developmental theory, based on fairness and equity, underscores the significance of creating systems like social programs, infrastructure projects, and sovereign wealth funds that ensure the distribution of resource wealth evenly among the population. This method would better decrease income and foster social stability and inequality, preventing the potential for conflict and unrest that frequently accompanies unequal resource distribution.

V. Cultural And Social Impact

The exploration of oil and gas can have a substantial impact on the cultural practices and traditions of Somalia. Philosophical viewpoints about cultural preservation contend that economic progress should not be achieved by sacrificing cultural assets. Cultural preservation refers to the efforts made to protect and safeguard the cultural heritage of a particular group or society. It involves the conservation and promotion of cultural traditions, practices, artefacts, and knowledge for future.

forexample, cooperation could endorse cultural preservation initiatives, cooperate with local communities to incorporate traditional knowledge into the management of resources, and guarantee that development activities do not interfere with cultural traditions. By placing cultural preservation as a top priority, Somalia may effectively uphold its cultural identity and foster social cohesiveness. Promoting cultural traditions in resource extraction requires actively involving local communities, acknowledging their cultural values, and integrating these values into development methods.

The ramifications of oil and gas development on Somali social structures encompass alterations in community dynamics, social cohesion, and local administration. Philosophical investigation of these effects explores how the abundance of resources might shape social connections and stability. Responsible resource management entails the promotion of inclusive decision-making, the resolution of possible disputes, and the cultivation of community engagement. For example, incorporating local populations into decision-making processes, offering assistance for social initiatives, and resolving grievances can enhance social structures and foster stability. Somalia may ensure that resource management supports harmonious communities by prioritising social cohesiveness.

VI. Case studies

The Niger Delta, Nigeria

The Niger Delta is part of southeastern of Nigeria. It is one of the crucial drivers of negeri's economy. since the initial discovery of oil in the Niger Delta during the 1950s, the region has been plagued by extensive pollution, environmental deterioration, and socio-economic issues. The ethical and environmental challenges in the Niger Delta exemplify the adverse outcomes of inadequately regulated resource development. Utilitarian ethics contend that the advantages of oil extraction, such as generating national money and fostering economic growth, should be carefully considered in relation to the substantial negative consequences for local communities and the environment. The neglect of ethical obligations by oil companies and the Nigerian government has led to increased corporate social responsibility and accountability. The Niger Delta's experience underscores the significance of enforcing stringent environmental standards and guaranteeing the equitable distribution of benefits from resource development. In the context of Somalia, this situation highlights the importance of having a governance system that is transparent, environmental safeguards that are effective, and involving the community genuinely in decision-making processes.

The Alberta Oil Sands, Canada

One of the worlds largest petroleum is the Alberta oil sands. It is advancing national income and growth economy of the Canada by creating jobs. Nevertheless, the mining of oil sands has significant environmental consequences, such as deforestation, water pollution, and the release of greenhouse gases. It also prompts enquiries on the enduring viability of such resource extraction and the moral ramifications of contributing to climate change.

The progress of oil sands poses a threat to the inherent worth of natural ecosystems, as seen from a profound ecological standpoint. The Alberta Oil Sands exemplify the necessity of thoroughly evaluating the environmental consequences associated with extracting natural resources. Somalia can learn this scenario underscores the significance of implementing sustainable measures, such as reducing land disruption, allocating resources to reclamation initiatives, and tackling greenhouse gas emissions.

Venezuela's Orinoco Belt

One of the world's largest heavy crude oil reserves is the Orinoco Belt. But despite this opportunity, it faced political challenges, severe economic corruption, encompassing hyperinflation and social unrest. The Orinoco Belt scenario exemplifies the difficulties linked to the "resource curse," wherein the presence of ample natural resources can result in adverse consequences such as political instability, mishandling of the economy. The inadequate management and distribution of oil earnings have worsened social inequalities and economic deterioration.

The experience of Venezuela highlights the importance of having effective governance and transparent administration of natural resource wealth. Somalia can learn and underscores the significance of developing efficient institutions, combatting corruption, and guaranteeing that resource income is utilised to promote inclusive economic development and social welfare. Establishing resilient systems for financial management and accountability is essential to prevent the negative consequences of the resource curse.

VII. Future Prospects And Recommendations

The prospects for oil and gas exploration in Somalia provide both advantageous possibilities and obstacles. Further advancement in the industry has the potential to result in substantial economic expansion, upgrades to infrastructure, and improved public services.

To enhance ethical and sustainable resource management in Somalia, it is crucial to enforce environmental safeguards through stringent regulations, comprehensive impact assessments, and the adoption of environmentally friendly technologies. Establish systems that are transparent for the distribution of resource riches in order to promote social fairness and mitigate disparities. Implementing fair revenue-sharing frameworks, allocating resources to community development projects, and tackling systemic inequalities can effectively promote widespread distribution of the advantages derived from resource extraction. Advocate for oil and gas businesses to actively participate in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives that prioritise the welfare of local communities and uphold ethical principles. This entails advocating for openness and clarity, actively involving relevant parties, tackling social and environmental consequences, and aiding local development initiatives.

VIII. Conclusion

Philosophical inquiry offers unique perspectives on the ethical, economic, and environmental aspects of oil and gas extraction in Somalia. Through the use of different philosophical perspectives, we can enhance our comprehension of the intricacies associated with resource management. By incorporating philosophical principles into the process of developing and managing oil and gas resources, we may establish responsible and fair methods that have a good impact on Somali society, while also upholding environmental and cultural values. In order to ensure that resource management in Somalia supports sustainable and just development, it is essential to use philosophical viewpoints as the country continues to face the challenges and opportunities of oil and gas exploration.

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