

**PROGRESS, POLITICS AND THE PLACE OF ELITE
BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN IN KENYAN
EXTRACTIVE SECTOR.**



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Abstract

This research contributes to a growing yet understudied area of elite feminism and elite geography through its summation of black women experiences in Kenya's Oil and Gas sector. Using African Feminism as a backdrop to the application of Feminist Political Ecology, this research problematises concepts of care, time, difference and equality. This is in an attempt to bring coherence to and 'Africanise' the experiences of black women in elite, masculine spaces such as extractive industries. It is based upon empirical study done over 5 months in Kenya's capital Nairobi where data was collected through 8 interviews and 2 workshops where elite women and men got to share their experiences of working in and working with black women in the industry. The lines of question involved discussions over how they perceived gender in the industry to infrastructure, race issues as well as sexism and equality. From these responses, inferences were made which pointed towards an existential system and infrastructure that was not only foreign/ western but was also designed to limit the inclusion and growth of black women in highly technical elitist positions and leadership. By contextualising black women's experiences, this research therefore challenges the retrogressive discourses that define, shape and influence the way elite black African women are engaged in extractive processes reconciling existing notions of what a woman and a woman's body should be or a worker in extractives should look like.

This research presents African feminism as an alternative to/ and moving beyond western feminist ideas to include black African women's experiences and point of view. This brings about interesting discussions on its intersectionality with feminist ideas such as leaky bodies and glass cliff and how African women's experiences decent from western feminist ideas and the broader black feminist discussions. I argue that these experiences are intertwined to their environment and black African women's multi-faceted identity as mothers, leaders, workers and wife makes their lived experiences unique and different from western feminism. However,

in this difference, inequalities and exclusionary tendencies thrives and persists (re)creating infrastructures of marginalisation in an environment that is already white, male and patriarchal.

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Dedication

To my daughter, may this serve as a reminder of who you are and who you will be. To my dad, you believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself. In a society that considered educating a woman a waste of resources, you supported mum and my sisters to attain the highest possible level in education. You always knew I would be a Dr, perhaps you hoped for the medical kind but fate had it planned differently. Today, this achievement is not mine but yours. Thank you dad.

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis examines experiences of elite black African women working directly and indirectly in highly skilled positions in Kenya's oil and gas sector. The work is based on interviews and experience sharing workshops which sought to understand the lived experiences of black African women working in extractive sectors. It is framed under an African Feminism and Feminist Political Ecology Framework which seeks to reconcile lived experiences and African Histories and how gender norms and expectations influence how African women's encounters are framed within elite, masculine and foreign extractives spaces.

The thesis makes useful contributions to debates surrounding the framing of gender and elite experiences within an African context. By using African Feminism as a complementary interpretation to Western Feminist ideas and its intersectionality, it contributes to the understanding of the gendered nature of elite feminism. This is through understanding the lived experiences of elite black African women within infrastructures of exclusion, ideas of leaky bodies and glass cliff whilst decentring these debates from Western experience. This is with a view of informing policies on gender in elite spaces in Kenya and similar contexts. I chose elite spaces within extractives given the increased political and economic attention given to the development of the oil and gas industry which has been poised to be the next frontier for Kenya and East Africa in general to attain middle and high income status (GoK, 2015). Elitist spaces are where the politics, powerplays and decisions are made that impact how women are engaged in masculine industries such as extractives and so provided the perfect grounding for my research.

Recognising the persistent gender inequalities in broader economic, social and political spaces, this thesis therefore gives primacy to elite black African women's experiences not just mere

events but as operational links that can be traced overtime to provide a nuanced understanding of the place of elite black African women in Kenyan extractive industries (Hughes, 2002; Lahiri-Dutt, 2007). As such, the influence of infrastructure, culture and discourse on black women's position as understood within an African feminist perspective remains pivotal in the research.

It is conceptualised through a Feminist political ecology (FPE) framework which enables this research to contextualise black women experiences drawing on day to day subjective experience against concepts of care, difference, time and equality (Hughes, 2002). This helps position the elite black woman, a relatively ignored figure in extractives processes, against a social, economic and legal infrastructure that is foreign and designed by and for men. This helps analyse the arguments for or against women's participation in the extractive economies in Africa which have been marred by a thriving sexist, corrupt culture and civil strife (Mkutu-Agade, 2014; Van-Alstine, 2014). FPE therefore enables this research to provide a realistic analysis of the relationship between the political processes of extractive industries and the engendered participation of black elite women (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). This framework also allows for the understanding of the power dynamics among actors, and how this sort of power and control culminates into hegemonic identities that support or impede on elite black African women engagement in the activities of the extractive sector (Rocheleau et.al, 2013; Hughes, 2002).

This research therefore contributes to an understudied yet growing body of scholarship of African feminism as experienced through feminist concepts of care, difference, time. By providing and retaining holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, critical debates that position the black elite women as strong, independent and necessary are highlighted (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

Aim

To reconcile the lived experiences and gender norms and expectations of black African women within a specific engagement with infrastructures of marginalisation and exclusion in an elite, masculine and foreign-dominated extractive sector.

Objectives

1. Investigate Elite feminism and its place in African ideas of feminism and its interpretation in African extractives.
2. Examine how ideas about gender, race, time, language and space contribute to black African women experiences in elite extractive spaces in Kenya
3. Understand how black African women's culture and experiences construct/ deconstruct difference in the understanding of elite feminism and feminist ideas within African extractive spaces.
4. Examine how extractive industries reinforce and/or normalise the creation of hegemonic identities that impede inclusion/ progress of elite black African women in Kenyan.
5. To inform policies on gender in elite circles in the extractive sector in Kenya with potential to contribute to similar initiatives in neighbouring countries.

Relevance of research

This research uniquely focuses on black elite women, a group of women that do not fit into the existent narrative of poverty, illiteracy, and economic disempowerment that comes to mind when African gender and extractives are mentioned. They are also well travelled, often having worked in very senior, technical positions around the world, and do not meet the criteria for 'victims' of patriarchy and male domination that is elicited when black African women experiences are discussed. As such, while it is undeniable that progress has been made on the gender front in gender sensitive laws and policies, there remains a glaring gap on how these

laws support the integration of elite women into the extractive sector. Numerous studies across the continent, whilst affirming the importance of women to the environment and environmental resource management, have not been successful in building counter-narratives that enables elite women to rise above sexist and misogynistic that shape the way extractive infrastructure is built (See...Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Rocheleau et.al, 2013).

This is to say that while academics, particularly in the global South, have acknowledged the history and importance of women to a resource led economy, studies have not sufficiently leveraged this history to generate new narratives that can improve women's social and economic standing (See Adams, 2010; Mothoagae, 2016; Darkwah, 2010). Where such narratives exist, they have not been able to make their way into policies and shape the participation of elite women in extractive sectors (Jenkins, 2014). Black African elite women still remain in the periphery in important aspects like decision making, revenue sharing and labour-force participation despite their impressive resumes. As such, they are disadvantaged twice, first as black women and secondly as women. Gender issues whilst important, do not take into consideration the experiences and contexts within which these women live and have been raised. This is where this research brings in the concept of African feminism and Africanness which unlike western feminism is not about equality between the sexes, rather is about collaboration between sexes. This is important as until laws and policies recognise the place of women in African society, they will not adequately respond to their needs and will continue to view black women as victims and white people as 'saviours.'

In addition to the above, this research attempts to bring back gender issues which seem to be less prioritised in large scale extractive industry frameworks by bringing in a rarely discussed dimension to 'woman,' that is, elite black African woman. By problematising gender, race and the place of black elite women in extractives this research contributes to a growing debate on

race and diversity that has engulfed many sectors today by portray the African woman as a leader, a highly skilled worker and opinion shaper rather than as a victim of circumstances defined by poverty, oppression and etc as evidenced in environment and development literature (See Darkwah, 2010; Ukeje, 2004; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 1997; Rocheleau et.al, 2013)

By bringing to the fore the experiences of elite black african women, this research provides a framework within which extractive industries and key actors can adequately tailor policy response to the needs of these women. This research therefore ensures that the voices of elite black African women are heard and contextualised based on their place and power within the sector, a move that not only problematises existent policies but also shakes extractive infrastructure at the core. This change is not just in the form of problematising tokenised positions of leadership, but also seeking a fundamental shift on the understanding of who the African woman is, the context within which they live and how they experience the environment around them in issues of power, pay, job access/ growth and how their body is viewed and experienced in a male dominated sector like extractives (See Mothoagae, 2016; Rocheleau et.al, 2013). Given the position and the high regard these women have in society as mentors particularly to the younger generation, this change is timely and will ensure the growth and development of the next generation of African feminists.

This essentially means that the dominant economic planning frameworks in use today which continue to determine how and when women are engaged in extractive industries will be challenged and re-negotiated to reflect the realities of black women and African feminism which is different from western feminism owing to its focus on aspects like motherism, womanism and economic empowerment. This is important for the removal of the one-size-fits-all solutions that are currently deployed to address gender issues. (See Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; 2015).

Such an analysis produces new narratives and counter narratives that challenge traditional, legal approaches as well as the underlying corporate discrimination that currently shapes how women are involved in extractive industry processes. This not only brings about new knowledge but also shapes the way barriers, trade-offs and challenges that continue to impede on women's engagement in extractive processes are constructed and understood.

Key Contributions

This research bridges the indicative gap of a sector-wide black african women integration problem within elite spaces in extractives industries. This is by providing a context specific understanding of black African women experiences that can support sector specific policy responses and challenges retrogressive discourses that currently shape and influence the way women are engaged in cultural, social, political and economic processes.

While the above is important, it is crucial to note that elite black african women's experiences in the extractive industry cannot be understood without first contextualising their life experiences. As such, the research will fundamentally contribute to the growing yet under-developed field of African Feminism – and more specifically, contributing to understandings of black elite feminism in Africa – with a case study of extractives. Through Feminist Political Ecology framework, nuances of gender, race and tokenism are explored to give primacy to the understanding of elite women's subjugated experiences in a sector that has historically been dubbed “a boy's club,” more specifically a white boy's club.

As such, this research explores how these themes inter-connect and challenge existing concepts of Care, Difference, Time and Equality as women navigate the extractive sector. Elite feminism is grossly understudied especially in African context and this research will be a welcome contribution to this relatively under-developed concept. The ultimate aim is to stir up a conversation about how even in elite spaces in Africa, feminist corporate policies and progress for women's inclusion in the workplace tend to be tokenistic. This will enable the development of counter-narratives that facilitate a favourable environment where women agency and

identity is primary to her integration in extractive industries. For example, in aspects like labour participation, leadership and decision making and benefit distribution that have proved elusive in existing literature.

[The Elite woman: Body, Time and Difference](#)

This research reconciles the different facets of black women by recognising black experiences as well as the multi-dimensional nature of 'woman' as defined within African culture. By exploring the discursive relationship between the female body and the female self (being), black women's bodies are discussed as material commodities contextualised through discourse, time and space and determined by their environment.

As such, the female body whilst viewed as a thief of time and an anomaly in a sector that is designed to cater for men, the research argues that this is infrastructural and needs to be seen for what it is to improve outcomes for black African women in elite spaces. Black elite African women are disadvantaged twice, first because of their race and secondly because of their gender. This presents an interesting angle to African feminism and the place of elite black/African women who do not fit into the stereotypes of gender existent in literature. While race and ethnicity are a big issue for black women and Kenyan society in general, elite black women are more concerned with job access and retention than in addressing racial inequalities that hold them back in extractive industries.

By combining mothering and nurturing roles with productive roles in a cultural compromise, African women can navigate patriarchal barriers. Such compromise also allows African feminists to 'partner' with masculine structures to provide reasonable involvement and recognition of women in different sectors of the economy. The concept of women as leaky bodies as a form of sexism meant to hold women in subjugated positions of power for the glorification of masculinity and ensuring extractives remain a reserve for men. The fact that women are offered funnels and men's boots and coveralls goes to show just how sexist

extractive industries are. It also goes to confirm that black women only exist in extractive industries so companies can tick checkboxes on equality, diversity and non-discrimination.

Space matters; Infrastructure, Race and Tokens

Space also matters and this research argues that African feminism not only takes account of African women's struggle, but it also recognises the fact that such struggles take place in a context of multiple oppression and hegemony. As such, it works to maintain the status quo in the power balance between men and women where African men remain the face of power whilst women own it. However, no matter how impressive black women's resumes are, they are simply not good enough and are punished for their intellectual 'smartness' by being relegated to glorified token positions that make men look good. Black women are expected to just sit back and be content with what they have as their presence is already an achievement, they should be content with. This, I argue that is akin to black elite women being viewed as objects of beauty designed to make the companies look inclusive and gender equality conscious while in truth, are no more than corporate tokens of attaining social legitimacy.

The fact that we have infrastructures that allows and expects men, white men, to make decisions for black women and about black women, and these women expected to be content with this arrangement is the very core of the gender problem in extractives. These infrastructures have profound outcomes on black African women as individuals and as a group and perpetuates structural and legal inequalities that is propagated through societal and organizational culture, care responsibilities and embodied sexism, aspects that hold elite women back. Such practices only reaffirm concerns that women are 'set up' to fail with companies deliberately appointing women to positions they know will be redundant in a few months or those that are already struggling to score goals of equality and diversity in what feminists have identified as the 'glass cliff.'

Despite this, the research argues that Tokenism is a welcome first step towards ensuring equal and meaningful representation of black African women in elite positions within extractives. It is a ‘one foot at the door’ scenario and cannot be used to as a benchmark for scoring points on equality and diversity.

Thesis Structure

Abstract: This summarises the key approach to the research, objectives, findings and key debates.

Introduction: In this Chapter I explore project background, relevance and contributions of the research to broader scholarly knowledge on elite women involvement in the extractive sector. A summary of key findings is also included here.

Working with Gender: This chapter 2 provides a literary appreciation of extractives and gender literature. Discussions are organised around research themes of race, labour-force participation, Sexism and feminism.

Theoretical Framework: This chapter 3 discusses feminist concepts of care, difference, time and equality and their relevance to the thesis. Feminist political ecology is the framework of choice as it enables the research to reconcile the place of women with environmental processes/ activities such as those of extractive industries.

Methodology (Chapter 4): Critical discourse analysis is the analytical framework employed in the research. This section discusses the context of the research, the structure of the Oil and gas sector, my positionality as a black elite researcher. Discussions on how the data was collected, sample chosen and analysed as well as ethics is found in this chapter.

Findings and Discussion (Chapter 5-7): The research examines three key themes that emerge from the research data- African Feminism, Gender and Racism/ diversity. These are explored within a feminist political framework with feminist concepts of care, difference, equality and time all of which problematise the place of elite women in extractives.

Conclusion (Chapter 8): This section summarises the thesis findings and provides next steps to the research. It also discusses limitations in the data as well as my drive as a researcher to focus on certain elements in the research.

References: This section contains a list of scholarly articles references in the thesis.

Appendixes: Here attachments such as consent forms and participant information forms, are included.

Chapter Two: Working with Gender

Introduction

Extractive industries are an important sector for African communities and women, in particular, with women currently forming the highest number of workers within certain parts of the extractive sector, such as artisanal and small mining (Hilson et.al 2018). However, extractive industries, as a whole, continue to fail on the gender equality front particularly in mechanised large scale extractive processes that preference men. This is manifested in equipment, policies and processes and overall mindset and culture that has been designed and operated with a ‘man’ in mind (Perez, 2019). Such infrastructure has ensured that women’s identity, experience and time is not only unfairly quantified and unrewarded, but also undermined (Perez, 2019). This is justified through ‘misgivings’ of biology and assumptions of basic inferiority to the male gender (Jenkins, 2014; Lahiri-Dutt, 2012). Such assumptions are akin to the silencing of women’s experiences to sustain a systematised exclusionary process geared towards ensuring the glorification of masculinity and the male gender over the needs, feelings and experiences of the female and femininity. It is important to note that male and female are used in this research to denote biological sex whereas men and women are used when speaking about gender as a social construct.

In this chapter, I outline why gender matters as well as the need to focus on elite women within African contexts. I introduce different facets of gender and how it is revealed itself within an African elitist context and build on these aspects in my analysis chapters. My interpretation of gender and its contestations in this chapter is therefore geared towards establishing a basis on which I reconcile extractive industries and feminist theory within a black African context. Having in mind the feminist concepts of care, difference, time and experience that have been outlined in my conceptual chapter, this chapter seeks to tease out key debates and arguments in scholarly literature and how these are relevant to the co-production of knowledge on African

feminism and extractives within African elite circles as well as its interpretations in foreign masculine spaces like extractives. This problematises the current outlook of gender in extractives and provides an opportunity for dissecting the extractive industry and how deficient it is to the needs of black African women from elitist contexts. A group that is key to the gender question in extractives as they occupy specialist positions as workers, mentors and leaders, different from the victim of extractive activities position that dominates understanding of African women in extractives and its implications on power and inequality debates.

The elite woman: contestations and identities

Identity is grounded in social constructivism with language and experience being a product of socio-cultural and subjective experiences within which identity is (de)constructed. As such, black African women identifying as elite do so on the basis of their personal and social circumstances be it wealth, education, skills etc.

It is not that black african women always identified as elite and were not expected to identify as such in order to participate in the research. They were considered elite based on their skills, social status and position they held within the wider extractive sector in Kenya. Whilst the literature I reference in the research is not specifically for or about elite black African women, it is relevant on the basis of similar ideas of feminist political ecology. However, it goes beyond traditional feminist political ecology to bring in an important and interesting dimension that is African feminism to highlight black African women's experiences within a framework that is familiar to African culture, political and gendered space and context.

Currently, there is very little scholarly literature on black African women in elitist spaces which makes my research important and timely. Black African women in elitist extractive spaces is more of a position of privilege rather than just a job. As such the burden of the whole race/ community rests on these few women putting them at a disadvantage in negotiating for fair

access and growth in an industry they already qualify to be in.

As highlighted by Frye (2001), elite women globally continue to experience forms of exclusion as they work towards attaining equality within masculine sectors such as extractives, sports, academia etc; with expectations to act more masculine to attain recognition and progress. Although this is unique to all women in these sectors regardless of race, minority groups such as black African women experience a double bind marginality which has been understood as having limited options/ opportunities to engage with these sectors (Frye, 2001; Patton, 2001). They are marginalised socially first as women and secondly as elite women. They fall in between the cracks; they are neither a part of the western culture within which they work nor are they a part of the African culture they were raised in.

In order to fit in, elite women are expected to embody masculine qualities and more often than not questions arise as to what their identity is. As such elite women in sectors such as sports, construction and extractives are expected to embrace their feminine self, whilst at the same time portray masculine qualities to thrive. Often, their identity is lost as they seek to gain visibility in their social circles and professions. However, even in their newly found identities they become the focal point of scrutiny with events such as the Oscars or Met Gala meant to celebrate achievement is reduced to 'what dress women celebrities wear' thereby demeaning women's achievement over what their bodies represent. As such, minority women in elite spaces must strike a delicate balance that would allow them enough power and skill to negotiate the complex discourses and its intersection with framings of gender, race, social class and sexuality and how these can work together to provide an environment within which they can flourish as professionals.

More recently there have been debates on the place of black African women and other minorities within academia and sports to become more inclusive and diverse (McGannon et.al,

2018; Willson et.al, 2017). Masculine sectors like sports have also been forced to introspectively evaluate their race policies and provide better spaces for elite women to flourish in the sector (McGannon et.al, 2018). However, these initiatives have only barely scratched the surface as these sectors remain the purview of men in terms of pay, progression and visibility. In addition to this, cultural limitations thrive. For example, a study on black African women and other minority groups in UK higher education revealed that elite women view their careers as secondary to that of men (Kachchaf et.al, 2015). As such, these women are likely to be reluctant in pursuing promotions in their professions due to the need to balance their work with the domestic demands of the home and more so the career aspirations of their significant other (Sang et.al, 2013; Acker & Armenti, 2004). This brings in an interesting dimension on the role of intimate partners in the progress of elite black African women in masculine sectors which remains uninterrogated. This research therefore helps us to begin to understand how spaces where elite women occupy are largely controlled by other groups, including black men.

However, with physical strength remaining the standard measure of who should work in traditionally masculine sectors, elite women's bodies continue to be significant in this debate. Elite women's bodies remain an essential part of extractive infrastructure as policies and processes are interrogated to ensure that the status quo remains (Willson et.al, 2017). As a result, elite women remain only but a handful and are an understudied site of contestation within feminist geography. Black African women in particular are a grey area, and this research brings out their significance not only as workers but also as women navigating the same waters and white western women; with added constrains of race, inequality, poverty and lingering colonial undertones that prefers whiteness over blackness.

Race, colonial histories and use of western ideas of feminism to understand experiences of black African women have led to the objectification of black African women and other

minorities as victims of poverty, oppression, and patriarchy. This has diminished minority women's bargaining power by reinforcing ideas of weakness when it comes to corporate power plays (See McGannon, et.al, 2018). This enables the development and sustenance of tokenistic behaviours and initiatives designed to not only take advantage of black African women's vulnerability. This leaves elite black African women not only under pressure to perform as workers but also as representatives of the many other elite women that did not get an opportunity to work in the sector and hitherto the continent or country they hail from (See Sang et.al, 2013). These pressures ensure that elite black African women remain content in the infrastructural and legal deficits that facilitates inequalities which provides invaluable emerging sites of research around race and elite geographies on the construction of the African elite women. It also primes spaces for micro-aggressive behaviours where social actions and comments are used to diminish black African women's abilities due to the negative connotations attached to words and or actions (See Willson et.al, 2017).

Elite black African women identities are also very much their backgrounds and culture, and African culture is very maternal. As such, even in their quest for visibility and quest to break the glass ceiling in masculine sectors like extractives, elite black African women are uniquely poised to conform to cultural provisions as part of their identity (Kachchaf et.al, 2015; Sang et.al, 2013). As such, lack of appropriate policies and infrastructure that enable them to experience their identity as mothers, wives etc deny them an opportunity to belong. Of importance to this research is the need to understand black women's motivations and contestations they grapple with in their quest for economic excellence and belonging. A recent study on minority scholars in STEM academia highlights this issue and argues that women as a whole are already under-cited, with star research surveys invariably favouring men (Kachchaf et.al, 2015; Muradoglu et.al, 2021). Minority groups such as black women face additional constraints of context and the space which they occupy as academics from minority groups like

imposters in a sector where brilliance is white and male (See Muradoglu et.al, 2021).

Looking at elite women's personal experiences, Sang et.al, (2013) brings in an interesting view on the importance of minority women's work in elite spaces. A family support system is crucial to the successful entry and progress of minority women. While there are provisions for flexible work and access to childcare services, cultures like African culture are very matrilineal and the female is expected to put family first and work second. As such, elite women's work in these spaces is secondary to that of their partners and their familial responsibilities. Their experiences at the workplace are therefore determined not by their skill or qualification but with their ability to negotiate and balance their traditional caring roles with those of their professional workplace (See Muradoglu et.al, 2021; Sang et.al 2013). Without a good social network, their careers stagnate and those able to afford alternative childcare still face the guilt that comes with societal judgements on their failures as parents and partners. In societies where a woman's worth is measured by their ability to give birth and marriage such as those in Africa, it is therefore a no wonder there are fewer women in elite spaces such as extractives (Davis, 2016; Kachchaf et.al, 2015). In this research, this was an issue I recognise and explore further in my analysis chapters. I also reiterate the miniscule nature of the sample within which I draw my respondents.

Gender: Fixed or Fluid Construct?

Gender is described as an element in social relationships that is based on perceived differences between sexes (Ahl, 2004). It is also seen as a primary way of understanding power relationships in society (Baker-Miller, 1987; Ahl, 2004). This is in terms of cultural symbols ascribed to masculinities and femininities as well as the normative interpretations of these symbols and their meanings (Ahl, 2004). This is often with an aim of understanding how these interpretations reinforce subjective constructions of gender (Kendall and Tannen, 2001; Montrose, 1991). As such, gender discourse is not necessarily about gender itself, rather it is

the conceptualisation of gender in terms of historically and reciprocally reconstituted categories of man and woman, male and female in socio-cultural, political and economic spheres and experiences (Rocheleau et.al, 2013; Ahl, 2004)

To better understand gender, the concept of space, time and difference comes into play. This is to say that, in order to understand what gender is and how it is reconstituted, we must be able to know the context, the space within which these constructions and reconstitutions occur as well as the time in which they happen (Ahl, 2004; Switzer, 2013). Further public versus private spaces shapes how society understands or constructs gender. Gender is perceived as a partition of men's conceptualization of women's roles in their labour, reproduction and voice; as well as their perceived subordinate space in men's productive paid work and social status (Ahl, 2004; Jaumotte, 2004). In addition gender as a 'private is public' concept is also where women are seen to enjoy greater autonomy over their voice, their bodies and labour with benefits at work such as paid parental leave, subsidised day care centres and the right to stay at home with sick children (Ahl, 2004; Jaumotte, 2004). These approaches to gender interact in different spaces and contexts to produce identities and experiences for women and groups of women in society.

Defining gender

In an attempt to define or rather complicate the gender concept, liberal feminists argue that men and women are inherently the same but with different qualities (Ahl, 2004; Switzer, 2013). The ubiquitous use of sex to mean gender has over the years led to the loss of the original distinction between males and females in terms of not only the biological sex but also the ascribed roles and norms in society applied to men and women (Montrose, 1991). Gender is therefore not only socially constructed; it also rejects the notion that men and women are about the 'essential qualities' ascribed to them by society (Ahl, 2004; Clark et.al, 1991). Rather, gender is a fleeting and malleable concept that is far from the simplistic male/female

connotation in society (Ahl, 2004). It is, as described by post-structural feminists, a relationship that redefines subjectivities over time both as products and producers of a social context (Ahl, 2004). Its meaning is also varied between contexts even for the same person (Ahl, 2004; Kendall and Tannen, 2001).

However, gender is not one size fits all and lumping people into two categories (men/ women) has its problems. People risk being discriminated against as they identify themselves in categories that are not their biologically assigned gender at birth (Kendall and Tannen, 2001; Rocheleau et.al, 2013). This has been a subject of debate in recent years with governments at a crossroads as to whether to adapt or reject these changes. Such categories are considered to be unnatural and therefore unbecoming in many societies. However, with increased campaigns by LGBTQ groups, many nations are slowly accepting the idea of gender difference as a fluid personal choice and not a fixed societal construct. African nations however have been less keen with women's rights still relatively weak and overshadowed by systematised patriarchal constructs that define who is a man or woman as well as expectations that come with such definitions. These highly sexist spaces have continued to ensure that masculinities thrive in all sectors of the economy be it political, social or economic with even the most educated or accomplished women still expected to live under the shadows of men. Scholars have argued that both gender and sexuality are fluid concepts and constructs highly developed within African contexts prior to colonisation (Matabeni, 2014). However, this brings into question what African culture is and how it could be determined. Is it the culture of our forefathers or is has this changed with modernity? If the latter is true, then how far can the continent go in order to maintain the romanticised view of African culture as untouched by modernity in order for its African women and gendered other to feel included? Whilst this thesis will not answer this question, I do look at how culture and modernity are changing our perception of gender and how this is impacting on women's right of choice and agency in social and economic processes.

What is gender?

It goes beyond sex (Beneria, 1981). This is because it is more than just the similarities and common interests between men and women (Ahl, 2004). It goes beyond the socio-cultural and historical differences and considers the local, contextual and social factors like class and race which are important in understanding gender and gender roles in society (Ahl, 2004; Shwalbe et.al, 2000). It is also considered a continuum independent of a person's biological sex yet encompassing socially constructed norms resulting from upbringing and social interaction (Ahl, 2004; Montrose, 1991).

While many feminists agree that men and women are distinct in terms of physical features and biological functions, these categories are also considered the basis of oppression of the 'female' (Ahl, 2004; Tzannatos, 1999). Radical feminists argue that by categorising men and women into specific boxes, society has been able to justify patriarchy and ensured that institutions like marriage remain organized spaces for the oppression of women (Menziez and Harley, 2012; Ahmed, 2018). As such there needs to be a separatist strategy that will change the basic structure of society where women are no longer subordinate to men (Ahl, 2004; Shwalbe et.al, 2000). However, this simplistic view of gender risks marginalising women even further.

As demonstrated by African proponents of feminist concepts of Womanism and Motherism, men and women are inherently dependent on each other for survival of the species and a skewed change in power in society in favour of women would ultimately cause an imbalance in other power structures such as reproduction, economics etc. with such changes likely to encounter resistance (Ahl, 2004). These concepts are discussed in more detail in my theoretical chapter. This brings an interesting juxtaposition in the understanding of gender as not just a malleable concept but as a word that draws various meanings in time and place (Jenkins, 2014). This is itself problematic as without a contextualised understanding of gender, the concept of identity is lost. This canonisation of language depicts a longstanding feminist struggle which

dates back to social movements during early feminist struggle such as the suffragettes in the UK in the early twentieth century, interlaced in race, class, education and political history which are the basis of solidarity movements and identity in society (Walters, 2005; Hughes, 2002).

By forcing people to conform to these society ascribed gender categories, behaviour is reinforced with any deviations met harshly (Jenkins, 2014; Ukeje, 2004). This could explain why and how women organize around extractives, for example in Ogoni, Nigeria where women opted not to tell their husbands and male relatives about their planned protest against Shell Plc for fear of reprisal (Ukeje, 2004). Another example is the association of physically intensive work to men and less intensive work such as clerical work offered to women, roles that conform to their gendered category of care in society (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; Okong'o, 2015).

Framing gender as an institution is thus beneficial to feminist discourse as it draws on the multiple facets of society such as ideology, practice, constraint, conflict and power whilst affirming its complexities and multifaceted nature (Hughes, 2002). This encourages perspectives beyond basic assumptions and allows for the holistic study of gender discourse. It also diminishes debates on what gender is by resisting the reduction of gender to merely a function of biological sex. By understanding gender as a social institution, aspects such as race, ethnicity, class and sex are better framed and understood in feminist discourse (Win, 2016).

However, the requirement to conform or oppose traditionally ascribed behaviour often leads to the development of a new set of identities that are either socially acceptable or unacceptable. For example, in order to break the glass ceiling in their careers, women in positions dominated by men often become tough in their language and wear authoritative 'power suits' or more commonly, 'the bow blouse' (Chakoshi, 2013; Switzer, 2013). While these forms of authority can reinforce women's identities as outspoken, independent and hardworking, capable of

taking on masculinised norms and jobs, there can be a backlash by some due to their perceived inability to dedicate adequate time to domestic care responsibilities and biological functions such as childbirth and childcare. This is indeed problematic as you will rarely hear of a working man abandon their jobs and careers to take up care responsibilities for their families. Even in the face of a global pandemic, women have had to balance between the social expectation of taking care of children and families with their remote working commitments.

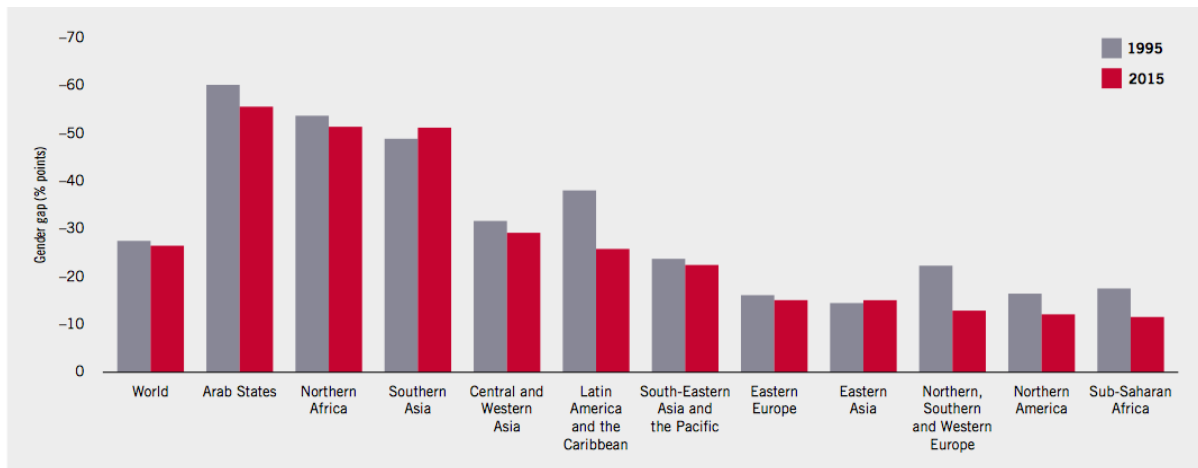
Women, equality and labour force participation

This section highlights some tensions and raises question because I can't really go in and talk about specific information on labour force participation in Kenya. But this is not a labour force participation analysis. Am contributing to a gap by focussing on elite black African women. Discriminatory barriers to women's advancement in the workplace are well established in all sectors including academia. Whilst these include issues like lack of peer support, lower status/ slow progression than male counterparts and the difficulties associated with childcare responsibilities and lower pay, the list is not exhaustive (Agarwal, 2002, Jenkins, 2014). This is because, discrimination goes way beyond these issues as gender imbalance is deeply rooted and institutionalised in patriarchy. Gender is itself a determinant for self-actualization in the workplace. For example, women start on lower salaries than men and spend more years in academia to advance to professorship titles, not because they are underqualified, but because that is how the system says it should be with women more likely to be hired at assistant professor level than given full professorship title (Diggs et.al, 2009). This is a trend that cuts across all sectors including extractive industries, where gender determines what sort of job role you can be employed in. Gender is thus quite salient for women at the workplace as their advancement is shaped and often determined by men.

Engendered labour force participation is thus a key factor in gender discourse (Ahl, 2004; Omolo, 2014). Globally, the probability of women participating in the formal labour force is 23% less than that of men (see figure 1) with ILO estimating that it will take 70 years to close the current gender gap in employment (ILO, 2016). This is because women constitute majority of the unpaid or underpaid labour force in sectors like agriculture and mining where they are likely to be employed in less technical and less competitive jobs (Omolo, 2014; Jenkins, 2014; Menzies and Harley, 2012). This is particularly pronounced in sectors like manufacturing, engineering and extractives where masculinisation of jobs has meant that women end up with low paying jobs such as secretaries, cooks etc. (Horrell and Humphries, 1995; Casale, 2004; Casale and Posale, 2002).

While marginal improvements have been made since the Beijing Platform for Action came into force in 1995, global gender inequality persists in the global labour market despite significant progress made by women in the educational front where women graduate top of their class in many countries (ILO, 2016). This is with respect to access, treatment and outcomes in the labour market where women make up nearly 50% of the labour force (Jaumotte, 2004; ILO, 2016).

Figure 1: Gendered labour disparity per region



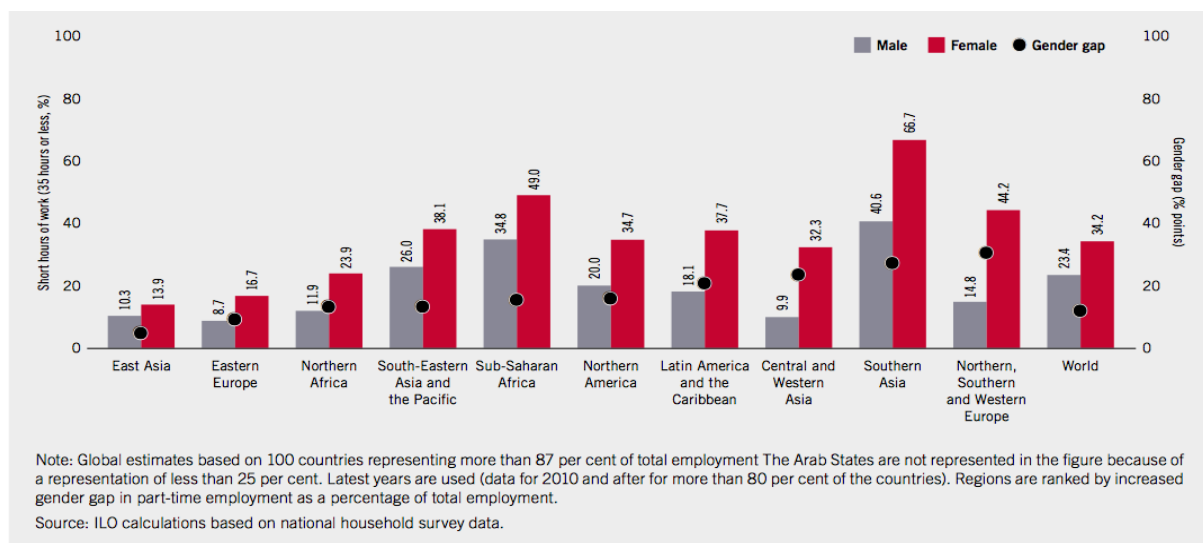
(Source; ILO, 2016 pp xii)

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the disparity in labour force participation between men and women has remained relatively sizeable over 2 decades. This is evidenced in the incomes earned between men and women and between regions (Mincer, 1962; Reardon, 1997; Omolo, 2014). Globally, the gender wage gap is estimated to be 23% less than what men earn (ILO, 2016). This gap is a result of many factors including age, education and most importantly, access to work where women continue to face insurmountable obstacles in their quest for quality, decent work (ILO, 2016; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). In addition to this, most of the work performed by women is unpaid due to socially constructed traditional gender roles where men are held as the sole or main breadwinner (Jaumotte, 2004; Jenkins, 2014; Omolo, 2014). As a result, women’s work is often unpaid. For instance, housework and when paid, is often less valued with only one-fifth of all global wages estimated to go to women (Rocheleau et.al, 2013; Clark et.al, 1991; ILO, 2016). This has meant that women have limited access to formal job-related benefits like social protection such as maternity benefits and pensions where 65% of women in old age are estimated to be without a regular pension (ILO, 2016).

Labour force participation has long been measured through various economic models that take account of issues of leisure and work with ‘men’s work’ often used as a unit of comparison to understand the engagement of women under different economic conditions (Eckstein and Wolpin, 1989; Mincer, 1962). For example, the home-market dichotomy has been argued by economists as an essential unit of analysis of labour force participation amongst married women who until the 19th century were relatively non-existent in the labour force (Eckstein and Wolpin, 1989). However, its assumptions on the benefits of female labour participation such as increased family income without consideration of other gendered factors that impact on women’s entry and progression into the labour force like maternity and child-care requires further understanding and analysis (Tzannatos, 1999; ILO, 2016).

Female participation thus remains depressed due to market failures and policy weaknesses that employ a homogeneous understanding of gender equality without providing a framework for dealing with domestic barriers such as child-care in formal employment spaces (Beneria, 1981; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Omolo, 2014). This is especially true in African countries where the majority of women work in the informal sector where they can better balance work and domestic duties (Reardon, 1997; ILO, 2016).

Figure 2: Global Gender pay disparity between men and women



(Source: ILO, 2016 pp xvi)

Gender discrimination in pay has also seen a reduction in entry and progression of women in the labour market (Tzannatos, 1999; ILO, 2016). Even with existing policies targeted at reducing the gender-pay gap, it persists even in economically developed countries (Jaumotte, 2004; Moody, 2004). The prevalence of minimum wage jobs (see Figure 2) further makes it difficult in assessing the gender pay-gap as it is argued to have improved the relative pay for a large number of women at the bottom of the wage ladder (Schwalbe et.al, 2000; Jaumotte, 2004). While extractive sectors are expected to result in significant job creation, it is unlikely that women will benefit from this due to the masculinisation of jobs in the sector (Jenkins, 2014; Menzies and Harley, 2012; Omolo, 2014). As such, opportunities need to be created to encourage female participation in the labour force both as employees and entrepreneurs in sectors like oil and gas, mining etc, as well as supportive industries in these sectors (Ahl, 2004; Menzies and Harley, 2012; Omolo, 2014).

On the flipside, there has been a progressive increase in women entering the labour force (Horrell and Humphries, 1995). While that has been encouraged, it has also resulted in the

decimation of the family unit; as more black women are choosing careers over marriage/children, which is a fundamental shift in culture and the overall expectations of the woman in Africa (Clark et.al, 1991; Schultz, 1990). Whilst this is consistent with what is happening in the Global North where family structures have changed as a result of more women entering the labour-force; with female graduates topping that of men in recent years with 65.5% of women joining high-skilled work in developed and emerging economies, the reverse is true given the high resistance and social consequences following black women at the workplace (ILO, 2016; Moody, 2004). However, with ‘family getting more redefined within African contexts, it will be interesting to see how the labour market and society accommodates this change beyond tokenistic involvement of women in leadership and high skilled labour (IFC, 2017).

With black women still stuck in low paying unskilled work, a shift in policy and societal attitudes could fundamentally lead to better outcomes and reconcile work and family life in order to ensure retention of black female talent at the workplace (Moody, 2004; IFC, 2017; ILO, 2016). For example, the introduction of child-care subsidies, reduced taxation and child-care benefits could support the flexibility of women in the formal labour force (Jaumotte, 2004; IFC, 2017). However, questions still remain on how this would translate into better and higher paying jobs for women in sectors such as extractives where masculinisation of jobs is still rampant (Jenkins, 2014; Menzies and Harley, 2012; ILO, 2016). Notably, the fact that such policies are mainly deficient in their ability to address existential social and cultural biases that hold black women back leaves more questions than answers. This research will attempt to understand how such spaces can be successfully navigated in order to ensure elite black women reap the full benefits of work and family in a context that glorifies women for marriage and children rather than their intellectual capabilities.

Gender, Power and Extractives

Power in extractives can be explored through understanding equality in participation processes where inequality inhibits participation in collective action (Lahiri-Dutt, 2007). Power discourse in gender studies is also argued to be a cause for reduced trust and sense of powerlessness amongst individuals and groups which in turn leads to the acceptance of the status quo in societies (Machirori, 2013; Ward, 2010). This sense of powerlessness and distrust has generally led to the political exclusion of groups such as women who culturally lack a voice and influence in collective decisions in sectors such as mining (Lahiri-Dutt, 2007; Gaventa and Martorano, 2016).

While this seems to be the dominant theme on participation and equality of women in extractives, recent studies have shown that in the face of powerlessness, there are counter-narratives that arise (Almeida, 1997; Gaventa and Martorano, 2016). These counter narratives have the propensity to alter, change or extinguish the status quo and give rise to new actors who can shape the path and add the voice of previously weaker parties into the political process (Sidanius and Pratto, 2003).

Although these two arguments help explain power and participation, there is still no consensus on the interrelationships between political participation and inequality, a crucial aspect in extractive sectors (Lahiri-Dutt, 2007; Collins, 2002). For example, in negotiation processes, those with a weaker voice and position in the community such as women, often do not participate due to the discourses surrounding their standing in society, their economic status and the available legal frameworks (Kameri-Mbote, 2006; Darkwah, 2010). Such discourses define women as inferior, powerless actors within extractives with women's meetings often overtaken or controlled by men, like in the case of Turkana, Kenya (See Lastarria-Cornhiel, 1997; Agarwal, 2002; Okong'o, 2015).

These masculinities and femininities play a major role in determining who holds more power, access to and control over land and land resources in extractive sectors (Agarwal, 2002; Agarwal, 1994; Almeida, 1997). This is especially true given the limited ownership rights women have in natural resource management (Agarwal, 1994; Kameri-Mbote, 2006; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 1997). This situation reduces the bargaining position for women in the distribution of benefits thus putting them at a disadvantage both as a group and as individuals in negotiation processes (Agarwal, 2002; Machichori, 2013; Darkwah, 2010).

Such inequality also raises questions of power relations within host communities (Sidanius and Pratto, 2003). For example, questions of job access, leadership land use, control and ownership and within the extractive sector and host communities (Darkwah, 2010). This creates uncertainty over changing patterns of power in civic and political spaces in how women's participation is framed and executed (Agarwal, 2002; Lahiri-Dutt, 2007). For example, ecofeminists such as Agarwal (1992) and O'Shaughnessy and Krogman, (2011) argue that resource extraction such as oil and gas destroys natural resources which threatens women's position as producers and sustainers' of the family unit.

In addition to the above, property regimes such as those present in African communities also demonstrate the lack of power women have in extractive processes (Okongo, 2015; O'Shaughnessy and Krogman, (2011). These regimes are seen as an impediment to the possibilities of women becoming landowners in the future particularly in matrimonial contexts (Kameri-Mbote, 2006; Ward, 2010); where women's property rights are blurred along gender roles that gives primacy to masculinities over femininities in aspects like work and distribution of resource rents (Darkwah, 2010; Adusah-Karikari, 2014; Adusah-Karikari, 2015).

As a result, in examining power within a gendered perspective, there is a need to think about not just the politics of pre-established gender identities, but also to expose the dichotomies of

power through which these identities are constructed (Hughes, 2002; Rocheleau, 2013). This is because power derived from oppressive social relations cannot be separated from individual agency as well as the circumstances under which women and men contribute to the understanding of their identity, actions, and motivations for change (Hughes, 2002; Almeida, 1997; Barker and Smith, 2001).

The nature of power relations within which discourse is constructed impacts on how power is applied and understood (Knuckey, 2013; Gardiner, 2002). This is to say that 'meaning' cannot be derived just by exploring the use of words, symbols, or texts (Hughes, 2002). The meanings derived from different words, symbols and texts is dependent on the individual, group or organization bearing the message and the power they exhibit (Lahiri-Dutt, 2007). Early feminist theories have mainly focussed on equality between men and women as means of empowering women (Hughes, 2002). Today, it is about breaking glass ceilings and this is important in contexts such as Africa where women navigate a variety of social, economic, political and cultural factors in addition to workplace politics (Mollett and Faria, 2013; Hughes, 2002).

As such, the issue of political identity is important if gender and economic power in extractives are to be understood (Werner et.al, 2017; Rocheleau, 2013). This is particularly important in deciphering how certain words or language denote issues like entitlement and power thereby creating meaning within which ideas and experience take centre stage (Hughes, 2002; Mollett and Faria, 2013). This helps focus attention on the temporal implications of meanings and how meanings are open to challenge (Mollett and Faria, 2017). This facilitates understanding of how power helps in the construction and deconstruction of 'meaning' of masculinities and femininities in gendered discourse, especially why certain groups within sectors like extractives are more important than others (Jenkins, 2014; Lahiri-Dutt, 2007; Knuckey, 2013).

Characteristics of extractives in gendered context

Africa as a continent is experiencing an 'extractives boom', a second scramble for Africa, with 53 out of the current 54 countries undertaking some form of extraction be it for oil or minerals (Brown, 2014). This places the continent at a very pivotal point in the securing of global energy and economic security (Brown, 2014). However, the character of these industries is male, white and foreign, and this has only further alienated women, in particular the black woman. This entrenched bias is manifest in the dealings of governments, community and industry operations which often give preference to gender-blind policies and projects despite evidence of rampant inequalities between men and women in all spheres of development, be it social, economic, political or cultural (Da Costa, 2015; Debasree, 2015). This has not only further disempowered women but has in particular left black African women in a position of sustained disadvantage when it comes to negotiation and concession signing processes. A situation that has ensured that black women remain at the mercies of a patriarchal society and hegemonic power tendencies that are skewed towards ensuring African women remain in subjugated positions of power.

The interest in gender differential impacts and overall focus on the dystopian impacts of extractives has in particular left African women workers in vulnerable positions with existing literature often focussing on the economic impact of such exclusionary processes, loss of/ decreased bargaining power, exclusion from labour markets and environmental impacts on things like livelihoods (Baum and Benshaul-Tolonen, 2019). Whilst these are important especially in contexts such as Kenya where the economic power of the family is vested in males rather than women, it is not a true representation of the realities of women in extractive sectors. Impacts on women and gender go beyond these basic categories to include a deeply entrenched culture rooted in histories of colonialism and slavery, masculinity and entrenched sexism. In particular, elite women's experiences are understudied in the sector and contextual arguments

that would put into perspective the experiences, identity and overall importance of the attainment of equality for women in the extractive industry are generally lacking especially from an afro-centric perspective. As such, this chapter sets the ground towards the understanding of how aspects of care, difference, equality, time and experience are experienced within an African feminist conceptual approach as discussed in the following chapters (See McAfee, 2018).

Conclusion

It is prudent to understand the theoretical basis of the assumptions and contexts that enable the existence of sexist, misogynistic and general disempowerment of women. It is evident from these contexts that women are disempowered not by the deficiencies of institutions but by the intentional creation of environments that enable the glorification of masculinity. It is for this reason that the introduction of feminist debates into these contexts is crucial. By providing a feminist understanding of the place and experiences of women in extractive industries, these debates are enriched, making it easier for black African women to demand equal opportunities and environments that support the equitable integration of women. In the theoretical chapter I also explored the tenets of feminist theory of equality, care, time and difference to expose the way men dominate knowledge production and define the direction of economics, labour and reproduction with women left to fit into situations that were never designed for them in the first place. This has been the story of elite black African women for decades as demonstrated by classical to modern feminists. Such androcentric representation of women as inferior to men and masculinity is the reason the extractive sector remains an unequal sector.

The exclusivity of men as the preferred gender in these sectors as well as the devaluation of female labour to underpaid and domestic roles demonstrate a preconceived orthodox pattern that is structurally designed to glorify men and masculinity. Although alternative household

forms such as female headed households have taken route in extractive and other masculinised sectors, women still grapple with the requirements to meet their caring and reproductive roles to be deemed 'complete' in black African contexts. By focusing on women's experience and characteristics of equality care, time and difference, the theoretical underpinning demonstrated in this research illuminates the necessity and interdependence of women's lives. In short, the theoretical frameworks juxtapose the interconnectedness of the woman as a worker to the woman as a carer, the woman as a mother and so on. I explore this in detail in my analysis chapter.

However, black African women even in elite spaces have also had to compromise and support polygamy in a win-win situation between men and women. Such rights whilst they put women in a unique position to be able to participate effectively in land and land use change negotiations around extractives, their success is merely on paper because the realities of their experiences differ. This is because of competing cultural expectations that often override legal rights in practice. For example, the gender-blind nature of laws and policies in extractive industries in the Kenya is a noble idea given that there are several other pieces of legislation such as the employment Act, Sexual Offences Act and the Constitution (2010); all of which guarantee equality and non-discrimination between men and women regardless of gender, sex, class etc. However, these benefits are skewed across rural and urban contexts. The foreign nature of extractive industries also skews benefits across race with minorities likely to experience additional barriers to their access, integration and growth in elitist masculine sectors like extractives.

CHAPTER THREE: FRAMING GENDER: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Feminist theory, gender and extractives

Feminist theory has continued to bring to the fore critical debates on gender and the extractives industry (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; 2015). These debates have historically been concerned with promoting women's agency within the mining sector in terms of equal access to jobs, stability of mining families and power dichotomies (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Rocheleau et.al, 2013; Thomas-Slayter et.al, 1995). While this has been instrumental in the reform of the sector to increase the participation of women, these changes have had very little impact on the issue of gender within the mining sector (Menzies & Harley, 2012; Jenkins, 2014). This is because, feminist discussions on gender in extractives have been centred around women as victims of social change (Darkwah, 2010; Ukeje, 2004; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). As a result, much of this work is found within protest literature where women are mostly seen as victims of extractive activities and therefore in need of 'empowerment' to claim their lost rights (Ukeje, 2004; Rocheleau et.al, 2013; Menzies & Harley, 2012; O'Shaughnessy and Krogman, 2011).

Further to this, feminist geographers have emphasized the role of women as political agents in the struggle for equality throughout history (Lahiri-Dutt, 2007; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). This is a critical debate that gives primacy to gender identities within the extractive industry sectors where women's role in the labour market has been critical in supporting the emergence of solidarity movements amongst the working class (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Rocheleau et.al, 2013; Thomas-Slayter et.al, 1995). However, the power dichotomies within extractive communities are such that women are not considered a part of the formal solidarity movement, thereby making it difficult to document their role in these processes (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Hughes, 2002).

Despite the above, feminist discourse in extractives has been criticized as being influenced by the subjectivities of western feminist geographers (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). Although these debates

remain crucial to feminist discourse globally, they mainly emerge from processes unaffected by realities of women around third world mining activities such as poverty, disempowerment, illiteracy, disease and are therefore difficult to reciprocate in the Global South (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Weitzner, 2010). Such discourses are often ‘too white’ and largely out of touch with the context, culture of host communities and political climate which has led to a one size fits all replication of western research and policies in Extractive processes in Africa (Van-Alstine, 2014). A key example being Nigeria, Ghana and Angola where extractive processes have left communities and women in particular worse off often due to loss of livelihoods, land, pollution and of course loss of revenue due to corruption in government (Mkutu-Agade, 2014; Van-Alstine et.al, 2014; Darkwah, 2010).

Instead, there is need for an introspective form of research (which contemporary geographers are slowly adopting) that seeks to broaden the scope of gender focus within the extractive industry beyond the ‘miner’s wife’ narrative to include the ‘woman worker or leader’ (Lahiri-Dutt, 2007; Lahiri-Dutt 2012; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). This would help generate new narratives that negotiate and renegotiate the position of women as not merely homogenous but also juxtapose how extractives selectively impacts women individually and in groups (Lahiri-Dutt 2015; Lahiri-Dutt, 2007).

Such introspection must take cognizance of the societal limitations placed on women as well as the African feminist narrative in order to understand the ‘woman’ as an individual and a group navigating patriarchy in a deprived economic space. This contemporary understanding of feminist discourse brings about a nuanced understanding of gender as defined within African communities and examining how the accompanying titles of woman, mother, girl, interacts and changes within extractives. This is through framings of texts, experiences and differences of women within space and time and how these narratives impact on women’s agency (See

Hughes, 2002; Mollett and Faria, 2013). It seeks to do this whilst working under the following discourse assumptions (Hughes, 2002):

1. That Knowledge is circular and therefore constantly reproduced
2. That all knowledge is situated in the knower i.e. the women, community etc., within which it is produced and counter-produced.
3. That women experience is commensurate to their position in society

Conceptualising Feminism within an African context

Feminism is a largely European and western concept, and this could explain why African feminism is largely missing or misunderstood within the greater gender discourse (Mikell, 1995). While there are similarities with western feminism, African feminism is different as it is drawn from a history of slavery, oppression and underdevelopment (Mekgwe, 2008). As such, unlike western feminism that is largely about equality and equal rights, African feminism is mostly about emancipation and identity, initially from colonial western thinking of African as backward and African History as ‘nothingness. (See Whatley & Gillezeau, 2011)

Whilst black feminism in the United States has emerged strongly into a discourse of racial equality, African feminism on the African continent continues to grapple with patriarchy and the culture of being African vs the new world of westernization and industrialisation that has made Western ideologies superior to African thinking (Adichie, 2014; Mekgwe, 2008). This could explain the backlash between western feminism and African feminism as although western feminists can trace its history often dating back to for example 1600s in Britain where women were mainly limited to domestic, excluded from social thinking, religion and even work, African feminism can only be traced to post-colonial times (See Walters, 2005).

As discussed by Margaret Walters in her book ,’A very short introduction to Feminism,’ (2005), Western feminism has emerged over 5 centuries to become what it is today, dating back from the days of Julian of Norwich when the state and religion were viewed as one and exclusion of women justified through biblical scriptures that portrayed women as treacherous (Delilah), murderous (Jezebel) and promiscuous (Mary Magdalene); thereby weak and vulnerable to manipulation and so in need of being controlled (by men) (Walters, 2005). Such portrayal whilst effective in keeping women docile and away from state and religious politics, served as a platform for emergence of the feminist network that exists today in countries such as United Kingdom; with women seeking equal rights such as in the works of Margaret Cavendish and Mary Astell who sought equality in education and philosophy through their writings which demanded recognition of women’s intellectualism, to the 1800s when women demanded the right to vote culminating into legal and civil equality in the 20th century, the basis of what women’s rights is today (Walters, 2005).

Western feminism has thus grown to become a reference point for what feminism is and should be. Anything different from this is often viewed as backward and unacceptable (Mikell, 1997). As such, to decolonise feminism as a western ideology, there is a need for African feminists to come up with their own definition of feminism which would reflect the history and experiences of black women. African feminism definition is however not straight forward and has proven problematic with proponents coming up with what can be referred to as ‘strands of feminism’ rather than an actual definition of what African feminism really is. These strands include Womanism, Motherism, STIWATISM and Nego- egoism (See Mekgwe, 2008; Adichie, 2014; Badejo, 1998). These will be discussed further in the next paragraphs.

African feminism proponents argue that African women embrace the politics of western feminism but not the label. This is because, unlike in Western feminism, African women are further disadvantaged by social, economic, political and cultural oppression that impacts their agency in ways that is not seen/ experienced by western white women/ feminists. This include issues of race, gender roles, poverty and neo-colonialism all of which are unique to Black people and the African continent. In essence, African feminism is feminism by African women for African women. It is not clear cut in definition but reflects the feelings and experiences of black African women seeking to create an understanding of their place, role and agency in society. Although it can be argued to have been contaminated by western influences, African feminism is distinct as it does not seek to compete or overshadow the western concept of feminism but rather offer an alternative interpretation of what feminism means to African women and African society.

This takes into account the complexities and multi-dimensional nature of 'woman' in African contexts with regard to conflicting modalities of gender, time, place, nature and divinity. (Badejo, 1998). It is about the obscurity of power and how it balances with existing politics of masculinity and femininity. As such, African women, unlike western women are conscious not only of the fact that they are women by biology, but also that their experiences as 'African' in a predominantly patriarchal and economically challenged context take prominence over rights and privileges – the basic tenet of Western feminism.

Thus, African feminism distinguishes itself as the brand of feminism that does not seek to exclude men but one that seeks to cooperate with 'men' – taking into account the shared history of racial oppression, slavery and under-development. It looks at an African woman as a wholistic human being embracing both her biology as a woman, her maternal and material experiences and struggles that 'she' has to navigate to realise her agency. Despite setbacks such

as colonialism which very much sought to rewrite what 'Africanness' was and is, African feminism can be said to have evolved into a formidable concept that is unique to the African continent albeit with similarities of some goals and drive with Western feminism. However, given that African history is mostly oral - contained in folklore - and passed down from one generation to another, as well as the erosion of Africanness through settler colonial ideologies such as compulsory western education, slavery and conversion to Christianity, Africanness can be said to have been lost to a large extent (Ahikire, 2014; Adichie, 2014). Compounded by slavery and assimilation into western culture, African generations have continued to lose their identity resulting in generations that do not have a shared history or experience with the older generation bringing an interesting dimension to what African feminism is and means to intra-generations of African women and the feminism movement on the African continent.

Despite this, African and Western feminism do share a common understanding and that is the liberation of women - to become free thinkers and determinants of their own destiny. For example, in both contexts, the term is often seen as a 'bad wolf' and there has been a backlash on women who ascribe to the term as either being 'haters of men', 'lesbians' or 'bitches.' (Ebunoluwa, 2009). This is something that can still be seen even in modern day extractive industries where women who challenge the status quo and demand equal opportunities like those given to men are regarded as a 'threat' to the existing system (Perez, 2019).

Western feminism is also argued to have borrowed the term, 'women liberation' from African feminism when women in the west began to organize in the 1960s and 70s when demanding for protection of equal rights at work, in the home, better pay as well as protection of sexual reproductive rights such as right to contraceptives and safe abortion (Ahikire, 2014; Walters, 2005). Such rights whilst only being realised in post-colonial modern day African context, the

pre-colonial African women and the African culture paints liberation in an interesting, often controversial way which has often led to African women being viewed as oppressed. However, when viewed through an African lens, the fact that economic aspects such as farming, mothering and decision-making processes such as when to and whom to get married to (and the surrounding practices such as FGM) are all under the control of women. African culture thus places its women on a pedestal and the protection of women in the home and at the workplace is 'expected' rather than earned as is the case with Western feminism.

As such, African feminism can be argued to be distinctively heterosexual and pro-birth which grants women a pivotal supportive role in society, but this position is largely evolving with excellent literature on queer feminism emerging from the continent in recent years (See Pindi 2020). However, the traditional position of heterosexuality and pro-birth remains anchored in both the political and religious underpinnings of African society. As such, black african women maintain a deep matriarchal legacy that has propelled them to power and positions of authority. However, these matrilineal structures also puts black African women at a disadvantage especially since the elite spaces they work are conceptualised around foreign ideas including gendered ideas enshrined in laws which these foreign companies are required to follow by their mother countries where they are headquartered. Sweaty notions and pictures of extractive industries also makes extractives masculine and given the matrilineal nature of black African women's culture and experiences, black African women are considered a liability due to their inclination to have families and children (See Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; 2015). The theory of 'leaky bodies' therefore thrives in these spaces and has continued to be used to deny black African women access to equal opportunities and growth in male-dominated industries such as extractives (See Hughes, 2004).

Despite this, black African women are continuously taking back western feminism terms such as leaky bodies and reconceptualising their sexuality and identity within an African feminist framework in order to better theorise feminism that is reflective of their realities and experiences as black African women. Kaplan (2021), for instance, argues that motherhood instigates the politics of reproduction and blackness and creates a precarious position of 'freedom and unfreedom' or rather 'choice' as a concept in black African culture and experiences. When looked at within elite spaces, such politics help shape black African women (dis)empowerment but are also key to the revolutionising thought on the genealogy of concepts such as gender, motherhood and blackness and their significance in African elite spaces. Pindi (2020), further brings in an interesting dimension by introducing queer theory to the understanding of black women's sexual empowerment, reiterating the fact that African feminism is indeed a current, relevant and evolving malleable concept. In practice, elite black African women are already taking control of their sexuality and feminism at the workplace with noticeable changes in aspects of childcare, maternity leave etc, issues that feature quite prominently in this research.

Whilst the concept of Motherism - proposed by African feminists - seeks to celebrate the unique heritage of African women seen from the lens of motherhood and caring responsibilities of women, it does not do much for women as it is the same caring responsibilities that hold women back in their careers on the African continent (Mekgwe, 2008). The backlash between ideas and practices of polygamy on the African continent by western feminism also characterises the deficiency of such a concept. Perhaps that's why concepts such as Womanism by Alice Walker have also emerged (Walters, 2005; Mekgwe, 2008; Ahikire, 2014). This concept came about to address the needs of black women with a view that just like white women, black women also expressed a unique feminist consciousness. This was mainly conceived through an intersection

between race and class given the assertion that Western feminism concentrated mostly on the needs and experiences of middle-class white women. This can be seen in the critique of the works of feminist scholar Betty Friedan, the *Feminine mystique* which black scholars felt was written ‘as if black women didn’t exist’ (Ebunoluwa, 2009).

Therefore, when talking of race, black feminism in the USA and South Africa provides a good example. From the civil rights movement where Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat at the front of the bus to a white person in Alabama; to Apartheid South Africa where black African feminists interrupted proceedings of ‘women and gender’ debate where they questioned the dominance of white women’s voices on issues appertaining to women in South Africa in 1991 (Parks & Haskins, 1992; Lubbe, 2016). ‘Sarafina’ the movie also portrays how black women stood up to Apartheid colonialism led by their black history teacher to stand up against settler colonialism that made it difficult for black men and women to roam freely in their own country and enjoy their resources (Lubbe, 2016). This shows how African feminism is embedded in black consciousness and how black women challenged discriminatory practices. The recent gender pay gap debate in the UK also presents a befitting example of how this discrimination plays out where black academics are paid much lower than Asian and White colleagues despite women’s pay in higher education being lower than that of men already (Costa Dias, 2020).

Further to the issues above, identity issues such as class and race continue to impact how women experience the social spaces around them (Hughes, 2002). For example, African feminism is very much a race issue as it is a social and political issue. As such, even with increased attention on racial equality, black African women’s spaces remain a construct of race and ethnicity and cannot exist without the other. In an African context, race is replaced by ethnicity and class with identity as defined by experiences of where you were born and class/

influence (Collins, 2002; Win, 2016). Race and ethnicity whilst dominated by theories of social contract, operate as aspects of material exclusion. Women born within these privileged circles tend to excel or stagnate depending on their social circle and context within which they live. However, this is not as straight forward as it seems because masculinities often overshadow femininities even in privileged circles. This could explain why well-read and established black women still work twice as hard to get to the same position as white women and men, yet still get paid less and are least likely to be promoted (ILO, 2016; Omolo, 2014). This constant construction and deconstruction of feminist identity is central to the understanding of differences between men and women and difference between women in groups (Hughes, 2002) Such differences exist to enrich debates on sexism, equality and belonging and ensure that experiences of women are understood across ethnicities. However, such understanding is still skewed towards westernised feminist ideology with black women's experiences existing only in tokenised contexts and in debates of poverty and women emancipation. Rarely are black women featured as pillars of radical feminist ideology despite the historical existence of women such as the Amazoni female warriors of Benin who were the protectors of culture and the Kingdom of Benin (Adedze, 2020; Piquin and Rainer, 2000).

Undoubtedly such erasure of black identity is a direct result of colonialism and slavery which not only uprooted Africans from black history, but also sought to whitewash black experiences and culture (Adedze, 2020; Mothoagae, 2016). A situation that exists in many forms today where western feminism overshadows black experience in all sectors. As a result, black women today are fighting for equality and equal rights in a foreign and constricted space that downplays their experiences and works on the assumption that all women, black or white are the same/ or inherently have similar experiences and therefore require similar interventions.

As such, an amalgamation of African feminist ideas with existing well-developed frameworks like Feminist Political Ecology is indeed necessary if meaningful and radical change is to be realised for black African women. This merging of ideas allows for African women to tell their own stories which is important in dismantling colonialist and white-washed ideas of who an African woman is and her place in society and the world. Elite black African women are pioneers of this change and by telling their stories through an African feminist lens, concepts of care, time, space, identity, and experience are better framed and understood.

Gendering Extractives

This research uses Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) as the theoretical framework FPE emerged as a cross-discipline framework drawing from anthropology, environment and development and Geography in the 1990s (Mollett and Faria, 2013; Rocheleau et.al, 2013). It uses gender to analyse nature-society relations, agency and power dynamics to shape knowledge and politics about the environment (Rocheleau et.al., 1991). Feminist discussions on gender have thus been theorized through a feminist political ecology (FPE) framework which reconciles the woman as a person (identity) and the woman as a political being (politics) (Rocheleau, 2013; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Elmhirst, 2011).

While there is no clear definition of FPE, Bacchi (1990) as quoted in, Hughes, (2002), defines FPE as ‘neither a difference in opinion nor a concept linked to common standard theories, rather as an analysis of concepts and categories shaped by political goals and intentions, contests over meanings of these concepts and the desired political results’ (Hughes, 2002; Mollett & Faria, 2013).

This definition is a crucial underpinning within the extractive industry as it enables the researcher to examine gender from a holistic perspective cutting across political, social and economic spheres (Rocheleau, 2013; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; 2007). It also enables the researcher

to provide a coherent theoretical understanding of women's relations to the environment (Sundberg, 2016; Sultana, 2020). It is therefore useful in critiquing how resources are accessed, used and controlled within social contexts through patriarchy, class, culture, politics etc (Hughes, 2002; Afrika, 2014; Sultana, 2011).

FPE as gendered theory

There is consensus that women's issues in extractive industries are no longer an excluded aspect in development research. However, much of the feminist literature has focussed on capital intensive extractive industries in rich countries (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Weitzner, 2010). This is often with the assumption that countries in the Global South would follow the same trajectory (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). This assumption has meant that research on FPE is not well linked to the political economy of African nations making it insufficient in producing gender-differentiated results on how the highly masculinized extractive industry impacts on women (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015).

The nature of the environment, ecologies, politics and gender is thus an important relationship that FPE enables the research to explore productively. Nature-society relations and society-capitalist relations are explicitly explored and understood within an ecological context without losing focus on political nature of seeking equality. The push and pull provided by the messy nature of FPE when exploring gender relations to the environment is thus critical in this research as it circumnavigates, problematises and then reconciles the 'women' as a 'biological entity,' the woman as a 'social being,' the woman as a worker, and the woman as 'socio-political being' (See...Sundberg, 2016; Nightingale, 2011).

By using feminist concepts of equality, care, experience, time and difference to critique gender within extractive industries, FPE enables the research to challenge the normalization of hegemonic identities of masculinities and femininities which epitomize men as dangerous,

heroic and strong and therefore suitable for extractive sector work to the detriment of women (Hughes, 2002; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Elmhirst, 2011). It also allows for the shifting of opportunities and pressure points that challenge the notion of women as subjects of biological functions (Menzies & Harley, 2012). This is to say that by applying FPE as a theory for examining gender in extractives, this research can engage more effectively with the context, time and space constraints that socio-economic and political processes poses leading to redefinitions of work, home and gender roles in women's everyday life (Rocheleau et.al, 2013; Sultana, 2020).

FPE as a theory can also help provide a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of women and groups of women (See Agarwal,1992; Elmhirst, 2011). For example, by linking gender and occupation, FPE enhances understanding of the complexity of women's participation in the labour force where women are often disadvantaged by marital status, time and culture (McDowell, 2011; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). FPE in this research is therefore conceptualized around five main concepts. These include: equality, difference, care, experience and time (Hughes, 2002). This is due to their importance to the production and counter-production of feminist theory across different schools of thought (Werner et.al, 2017; Mollett and Faria, 2013). By exemplifying gendered subjectivities and how these change and are negotiated across contexts, this research is able to map out the struggles of elite black women in their quest to equality within a sector that is masculine and white (Mollett and Faria, 2013; Elmhirst, 2011). This is necessary towards the understanding of experience, time and difference between elite men and women in the industry, racial difference and difference between groups of elite women. This research findings point to disparities in the way elite black women navigate the extractive industry. Through FPE, such difference is necessitated and embodied as crucial to the understanding of the place of black women in masculinised

extractive sectors, coupled with interconnected concepts of care, time and experience and equality, FPE enables this research to draw on the messiness that is gender, race and equality

Difference

Various Feminist schools of thought agree that there is a difference between men and women, biologically and even socially (Gardiner, 2002). However, such simplistic interpretations have been challenged over time with authors such as Baachi (1990) arguing that feminist history is not a reflection of reality given the political biases and exclusions in which gendered constructions thrive (Hughes, 2002). The term ‘Woman’ should therefore be seen as both a unified whole and a process if the feminist concept of equality and indeed feminism is to stand the test of time (Hughes, 2002; Mollett, 2017). This should be done whilst appreciating the theories of difference upon which feminism theory is hinged (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012).

This research, whilst drawing on these frameworks, will focus more on the differences produced and experienced by women and women within groups (Hughes, 2002). That is, differences between a man and a woman (masculinities and femininities) (Gardiner, 2002), differences between groups of women i.e. elite women (Julien-Francois and Sandra, 2010; Hughes, 2002) and differences of politics e.g. culture, policies, infrastructure (Afrika, 2014; Pereznieto & Taylor, 2014). Difference is also explored in relation to race and ethnicities. This is important to the understanding of position of black elite women in a white, competitive, masculine environment.

Time

Time is a crucial aspect in the analysis of our daily thoughts and experiences (Hughes, 2002). It is imbued in our everyday interactions and language but seems not to be given enough attention particularly when talking about gendered issues in extractive industries. Time models have often been criticized as deficient as they do not take into consideration the reality of

women's time (Hughes, 2002). This is because they use inadequate indicators that only consider formal full-time and continuous paid work done aggregated on men's work thus failing to account for women's time and neglecting unpaid work done by women such as childcare and domestic chores (Merchant, 1992; Julien-Francois & Sandra, 2010).

This theoretical interpretation of time was important to the research as it provided a context within which discourses on women's experiences in the labour market can be analysed (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012). This research thus explored the qualitative and quantitative difference of women's time and how this difference supports or impedes their entrance and progression in extractive industries (see May et.al, 2016; Afrika, 2014).

Care

The economic character of care has been argued as denoting that women's work such as cooking and childcare should be recognized as work and therefore paid (Hughes, 2002). However, many societies consider this the natural role of women and therefore justifiable as part of their normal care routine (Aguinaga et.al, 2013; Lahiri-Dutt, 2012). Reduced time in the kitchen, a characteristic of modern society, does not therefore abolish gender roles (Hughes, 2002; Gardiner, 2002). This is due to persistent concepts such as patriarchy, capitalism and socialization (Hughes, 2002; Elmhirst, 2011). Of importance to this research is how these concepts reinforce discourses that impact on women's access to jobs, job progression, and participation in decision making processes (See Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; Mollett and Faria, 2013; May et.al, 2016).

Equality

Feminists argue that men and women are distinctly different but equal (Hughes, 2002). This has resulted in legal and social changes such as voting rights, access to education and higher pay (See Wex, 2013; Lang & Mokrani, 2013). This has been based on the notion that women

and men are the same and therefore entitled to similar and equal rights (Coles et.al, 2015; Hughes, 2002). However, this view of 'sameness' means that the norms and ideals of a masculine value system and its power remain unchallenged (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012). Such arguments are reliant upon the assumption that just because men and women have equal rights, equal results can be obtained for both (Jenkins, 2014). However, this is not usually the case as equality policies often just produce indicators upon which 'equal' can be evaluated rather than realized (Pereznieto & Taylor, 2014; Afrika, 2014).

This argument is a central theme within the research as it explores the framings of 'equality' in the law within the research context and how this' equality translates into better outcomes for women in the extractive sector (Hughes, 2002; Lahiri-Dutt, 2012). This is in terms of access to jobs and progression, infrastructure, pay etc (Lakshmi, 2008; Lahiri-Dutt, 2012).

Experience

Women's experiences happen within their personal social context (Hughes, 2002). Therefore, women's personal life is also their political life (Mollett and Faria, 2013; Jenkins, 2014). The centrality of women's experience is therefore the platform for development of collective consciousness (May et.al, 2016). Redefining such consciousness is thus a redefinition of masculinity and femininity within social relations (Hughes, 2002; Mollet, 2017).

This understanding will be an important aspect in the research as it will form the basis of critique of identity politics and how this invokes notions of truth in social, political and economic relations within the extractive industry (Jenkins, 2014; Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; Afrika, 2014). In particular, the basis within which women are institutionally involved in extractive industry change processes and the political implications of these involvements will be explored (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; Jenkins, 2014).

Conclusion

This research seeks to integrate African Feminist ideas into the interpretation of Feminist Political Ecology concepts within an African extractive context. It uses FPE concepts of time, care, difference, equality and experience to analyse the gendered realities of black elite African women within extractive sectors. Theorised as a reconciliatory element, FPE is used in this research to reconcile the African women as a human being first, as a political being navigating a masculinised extractive industry whilst staying true to self as a carer, worker, and leader. Scholarly literature has focussed on black African elite women and the messiness of gender around extractives, especially complicated by African feminist ideas. Feminist literature has also focussed on foreign led/ or owned large-scale extractive processes which have undermined black African women experiences thereby producing insufficient gender and racial results in a sector that is foreign run, male and white. Through FPE, the ecologies and politics surrounding elite black African women' successes are dismantled, constructed, deconstructed and reconciled with the experiences and realities of black African women as a social, political and economic beings. These are problematised and challenged under concepts of care, difference, equality, time and difference. By challenging the normalisation of sexism, tokenism, racism, infrastructure and gendered inequality, this research is thus able to engage more effectively with the African extractive context as experienced by elite black women.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY, POSITIONALITY AND NEGOTIATED ETHICS

This chapter explores the context of extractives in Kenya. It begins with context then discusses the methods used in data collection, analytical framework as well as sampling. I also discuss my position as an elite black woman and how this influenced the research and research findings.

Geographical context

The search for hydrocarbons in Africa has become so intense that there are explorations going on in almost all of the 54 countries with the exception of Burkina Faso, Lesotho and Swaziland (Brown, 2014). While some new oil economies like Ghana are already at production stage, Kenya is still in the exploration stage with some companies recently moving to the early oil phase (See Adusah-Karikari, 2015; Brown, 2014). Oil exploration is not new in Kenya and the wider East Africa. In fact, Oil exploration dates back to the 1960s. However, commercial quantities were only discovered in 2012 in Turkana by Tullow Oil Plc, a British Oil Exploration Company. (Johannes et.al, 2015; Mkutu-Agade, 2014).

Turkana is a County within the expansive Great Rift Valley in the North-western part of Kenya, bordering Uganda to the West, South-Sudan to the North-West and Ethiopia to the North (Mkutu-Agade, 2014). It is predominantly a pastoralist community characterised by nomadic populations (Mkutu-Agade, 2014; Mkutu, 2005). The region also experiences persistent armed ethnic clashes and cross-border cattle rustling (Mkutu, 2005; Johannes et.al, 2015). The proliferation of small arms and weapons in the region has intensified resource conflicts in the region and made it difficult for meaningful development to take place in the region. As a result, the region is largely plagued by poverty which has been worsened by persistent drought and famine. The discovery of Oil in the region is therefore a welcome development, something that

is already being witnessed through the proposed LAPSSETT project that will see transport and communication infrastructure completed in the region over the next decade to transport crude from Turkana to the Port of Lamu at the Kenyan coast for export (GoK, 2016; Enns, 2019). The LAPSSET project is on schedule with sections of rail and road already completed. This transformation will ensure that the region is weeded from its over-reliance on aid from both government and international NGOs who have operated in the region for decades (See Adano et.al, 2012).

Structure of Oil in Kenya

Kenya's oil and gas reserves are in four main areas (See Figure 1 below)– Turkana Ngamia wells in Lokichar, Lamu basin, Anza basin and Mandera basin under exploration by companies such as Tullow Oil, Africa Oil, British Petroleum (BP), China Oil etc (Vasquez, 2013; Vasquez, 2016). Majority of these companies are foreign owned. However, the National government through the National Oil Corporation of Kenya also owns some wells (Nandako, 2020). Other smaller local players also own oil blocks across the country but majority of oil blocks are in the hands of foreign companies which has impacted on Kenya's ability to negotiate viable concessions and contracts that benefit the country well (Tyce, 2020; Enns, 2019). This can be seen through the recent tension between the Kenyan government and leading oil company, Tullow Oil which threatened to withdraw operations in the face of increasing production costs incurred in the exploration phase. This prompted the government to allow the company to recoup costs through the early oil pilot scheme, a situation that has left the country worse off and unlikely to enjoy any oil benefits for some years.

The extent of oil and gas reserves in Kenya is still unknown but the Turkana Oil field is estimated to hold 560million barrels of Oil (Vasquez, 2013). Anza basin is also viable due to its proximity to the proliferous petroleum areas of Turkana and South Sudan basins. Whilst

only 4 wells have been drilled in this vast basin, the potential for commercial production of oil is high with all the wells showing oil presence and estimated to contain up to 6.7 billion barrels of oil, thereby showing significant potential for hydrocarbon generation (Vasquez, 2013; Tyce, 2020). The Tertiary basin is an extension of the oil rich Albertine Basin in Uganda and is estimated to contain 3.5 billion barrels in oil reserves (Vasquez, 2013; Van Alstine et.al, 2014). The Mendera basin is also part of the Somalia's Mendera-Lugh basin and Ogaden basin in Ethiopia which are both quite rich in oil reserves (Vasquez, 2013).

The Lamu basin on the other hand has shown similar characteristics to the Tanzania and Mozambique's coastal oil reserves both of which are commercially viable (Vasquez, 2013). However, the Lamu basin has been met with protests from environmentalists owing to the threat oil production poses to the archipelago and its wildlife. These concerns are not centre stage in government plans and risk becoming bigger problems if not adequately addressed. Somalia is also claiming a significant portion of the Kenyan maritime waters which Kenya has already awarded oil exploration contracts in with these disputed areas (Osman, 2021). Claims have been filed by both parties at the International Maritime Court in an attempt to settle the dispute. Should Somalia win, Kenya is poised to lose a significant portion of its Lamu offshore oil reserves as well as its relatively small coast (Osman, 2021).

At present, only the Turkana wells are under production with the early oil pilot scheme exporting upto 100,000 barrels of oil that will see the major players- Tullow Oil export millions of barrels to recoup costs incurred in the exploration phase (Vasquez, 2013; Tyce, 2020; Osman, 2021). This early oil phase offers an opportunity for self-introspection by the Kenyan government and civil society to address any bottlenecks and ensure that the country benefits from the oil and gas resources. With Kenya's economy growing at an estimated 5.7% between

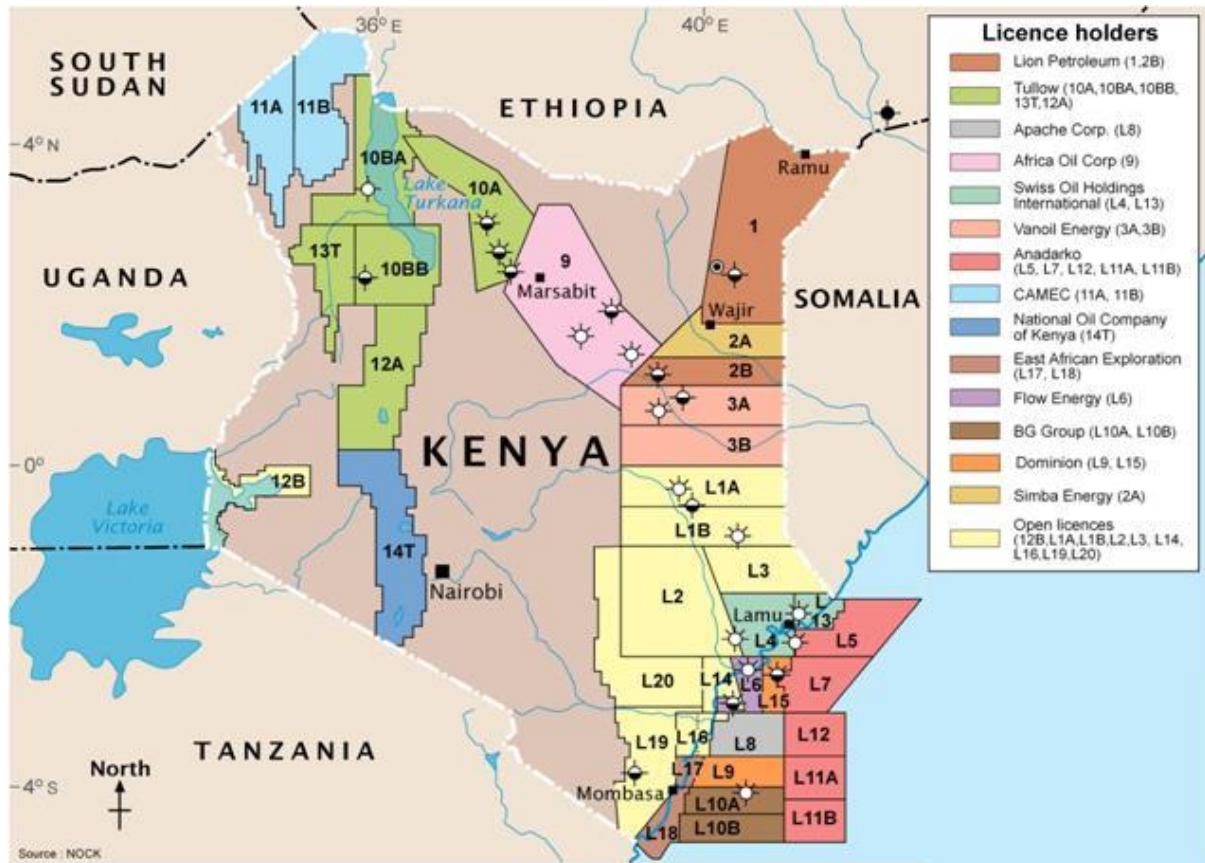
2015 and 2019 with expectation of it going up to 6.9% after shrinking slightly due to COVID-19 crisis, the country is on track to become the fastest growing economy in Sub-Saharan Africa and an economic leader for the East African region ((AFDB, 2021; WBG, 2021). Even with economic shocks brought about by COVID-19 pandemic, the economy has been relatively stable, losing out only about 0.3% in 2020 (WBG, 2021).

To help steer faster economic growth, the country's resource governance is managed through devolution with National and County governments playing an equally important role in income generation, legislation and resource management (CoK, 2010). Land for instance, is divided in three, Private land, Public Land and Community land. Public land as the name suggests is held in trust by the national government on behalf of the people of Kenya (CoK, 2010). Community land is governed at the County level on behalf of the community by county governments (CoK, 2010). Therefore, the governance of land in Oil rich Turkana falls under the remit of the county government as the land under which the oil reserves lie is community land (Mkutu-Agade, 2014).

However, the Constitution of Kenya (2010) places the governance of nationally important resources such as Oil and gas under the leadership of the National government (CoK, 2010). As such these resources do not belong to any individual or community, rather, they belong to the People of Kenya. This is indeed problematic and has been a cause of tension between National and County governments on issues of revenue sharing and concession agreements with county governments and local stakeholders lobbying for 10% of royalties and rents collected over and above the 5% proposed by the National government (RoK, 2012). This is mainly due to the Oil rich regions being largely remote and under-developed-often cut off from the rest of the country (Mkutu-Agade, 2014). However, with devolution, this can be argued to

be irrelevant as there is already an equalisation fund in place meant to bring these regions infrastructure at par with the rest of the country (CoK, 2014).

Figure 2: Kenya's Oil and Gas Map



(Source: PA, 2021)

Political and Development context

Persistent civil war in countries like Sudan, DRC and Eastern Uganda have made the region a home to over 600,000 refugees at the Kakuma Refugee Camp (Network et.al, 2005; Van-Alstine et.al, 2014). Kakuma has been a source of political debate between the government and international agencies such as the UN and USAID over the length of time it was taking to relocate refugees (Osman, 2021). This is in the face of a growing terrorist threat by the Somalia based Militia Al-Shabaab in the Country, whose members were said to have been travelling into Kenya under the guise of being refugees (Osman, 2021). This political tension resulted in agencies such as the British Consulate relocating Visa services to South Africa and the UN

relocating most of its services to Tanzania (See Osman, 2021; Vasquez, 2013; Enns, 2019). The region has also suffered from political marginalisation over the years which has led to gross under-development evidenced by the high number of aid agencies and the heart-breaking pictures of starving children and elderly people (See Mkutu-Agade, 2014). With a population of around 900,000 people, the region has been politically irrelevant until recently in 2012 when commercially viable quantities of crude oil were discovered. The coming of oil has opened up the region for business with more investment channelled to the region such as the Lamu Port-South Sudan- Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPPSETT) infrastructure project which has seen road and rail transport links established to improve connectivity of the region to the rest of Kenya (Enns, 2019; Enns and Bersaglio, 2015). A large wind energy project is also ongoing to support the country's Vision 2030 on energy security in the face of a failing material infrastructure (GoK, 2016; Enns, 2019).

There is conflicting literature on the potential of extractive industries capacity to promote national development (Tadeo, 2016; Brown, 2014). Proponents of resource-led development argue that land resources can contribute to poverty alleviation and sustainable development in communities through the influx of foreign direct investment (FDI) (Johannes et.al, 2015; Ladan, 2015). This is in terms of job creation and economic diversification which lead to poverty reduction in the long run (Mutuma, 2012). Institutional vulnerabilities such as corruption and weak governance systems also impact on the country's ability to maximise revenue from oil and gas exploration and with weak legislative systems that demand meaningful accountability and investments in the country's institutions and social systems, the paradox of plenty could soon turn into a curse (Odhiambo, 2015; Sachs and Warner, 2001). Proponents of the resource curse argue that the issue of equitable resource rent and wealth sharing remains contentious and with no consensus on how the oil and gas wealth is to be

distributed and shared, the potential of the sector to transform the Kenyan economy remains blurry (Odhiambo, 2015; GoK, 2016; Vasquez, 2013). The Petroleum Act that was recently passed into law remains contentious as it only awarded 5% of royalties collected to the communities despite calls by community leaders to increase the allocation to 10% (RoK, 2012). This comes from a background of economic marginalisation of the region as well as loss of livelihoods by communities who have been displaced because of the oil exploration (Vasquez, 2013; Vasquez, 2016).

Despite this, Kenya is on track to achieve economic success. The Oil and Gas sector is accelerating this success and is vital to the transformation of the country into a stable middle-income country (GoK, 2016). However, in the face of terrorist threats from Alshabaab militia, questions have emerged over the potential of the country to develop Oil and gas reserves in areas where Alshabaab are active such as in the Lamu archipelago where both onshore and offshore oil operations are active (Osman, 2021;). The Island is also home to the new port being developed to handle oil and gas exports under the LAPSSETT project (Vasquez, 2013; GoK, 2016).

Gender context

Gender equality in Kenya is an interesting endeavour. Whilst in rural contexts such as Turkana women are considered ‘children’ regardless of class, education or social status and are required to express their views through a male relative, the urban context is different (Okong’o, 2015). This is due to the presence of dual income households which has given women more power and autonomy over the home and in general, their work (KDHS, 2014). However, this newfound autonomy, the experiences of women in both rural and urban contexts is quite similar within the workplace (ILO, 2016). Women’s work is still considered unimportant in both contexts (Okong’o, 2015). Despite this, elite women seem to have it harder as they are expected to be successful and therefore capable of challenging deficiencies in the sector to assert their

autonomy. This unfortunately is not the reality and elite women are caught between a rock and a hard place when it comes to their work and their place as women in society. Black women, regardless of their socio-economic status are still expected to be excellent wives, mothers' and employees despite the demanding realities of work within extractives that ensure women are barely able to strike a workplace and personal life balance. As such, more and more working women are delaying marriage and having children, something that is not unique within African contexts but generally loathed within African society and seen as a desecration of African culture.

Elite women's lifestyles is also changing the place of women in society. They are highly mobile, smart, and carefree meaning they are not afraid of having drinks after work with colleagues something that in rural contexts such as Turkana and overall Kenyan society is generally considered promiscuous (Okong'o, 2015). Despite this coveted position of power black elite women hold in society, this power is yet to be translated in socio-political spaces with women's representation in leadership spaces dismal (Okong'o, 2015; Darkwah, 2010). However, with the coming of the New Constitution in 2010 in Kenya, the rights of men and women have been guaranteed before the law with the national and county government tasked to ensure the two-thirds gender requirement is met in public appointments i.e. at least one third are women (Okong'o, 2015; FIDA, 2013). This is a contentious issue that is has been under debate in parliament since the inception of the new Constitution in 2010 with no agreement on how the two-thirds gender principle is to be realised in both public and private spaces.

Interestingly, whilst women's leadership spaces are constricted in the public domain, women power seems to rule within the home in both urban and rural contexts. One interesting aspect in rural Kenya in areas such as Turkana is the position of women as the pillar of the family. (Okong'o, 2015). The rise in female headed households in rural Turkana and in Nairobi as men

move further away in search of pasture months on end or in contexts such as Nairobi women choosing to stay as single parents, black women (elite and non-elite) have taken charge of the household (Okong'o, 2015). Corporate sectors are increasingly building creches and adopting national laws regarding maternity leave albeit with differences from company to company (Gatrell, 2013; IFC, 2017). This has ensured that women stay at the workplace and take care of their childcare responsibilities. However, within extractive sectors this is a bit difficult to implement as majority of companies are multinationals domiciled in their home countries and as such not under obligation to implement some of the employment laws in Kenya. At the moment, there are no women CEOs within the Kenya extractive sector and this situation does not seem to be remedy itself anytime soon.

In terms of education, Nairobi, the County where the elite women interviewed lived has a very high literacy rate and very good education infrastructure that enables women to study around family and work. Flexible degree programmes have allowed women to attain Masters' and PhD degrees, MBAs etc which are key to their growth and competitiveness within the Kenyan and international job market. In contrast, in the rural areas such as Turkana where the Oil and Gas exploration is one of the least educated Counties in Kenya, with an illiteracy rate of about 80% (KDHS, 2009). School drop-out rates among both boys and girls is also high, with family commitments and early marriage being the greatest drivers (KDHS, 2009; KDHS, 2014). For the girls, cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation are at the forefront in denying girls educational opportunities as many are married off soon after (KDHS, 2009; Network et.al, 2005).

On the economic front, Kenyan women are very industrious and ambitious which can be explained by the sheer number of women at the workplace in various sectors and the recent increase in young women taking up STEM courses at Higher education institutions (Okong'o,

2015; KDHS, 2014). Even in rural contexts such as Turkana, women are very industrious with many women engaging in small-scale businesses (Okong'o, 2015). With the discovery of oil in the region, some Turkana women, often those living in town settlements, have been awarded tenders to supply food to Tullow Oil, the major oil company in the region (Okong'o, 2015). Women are also slowly getting into the property market with many women in urban centres buying and developing land, a feature that is already common place in urban contexts such as Nairobi where women control some of the largest real-estate development companies such as the now defunct Tatu City project (Okong'o, 2015).

Environmental context

Oil exploration in Turkana, Kenya is significant in this research as it provides a good timeline within which to understand the development of extractive industries in Kenya. Since exploration started in 2012, there has been widespread environmental degradation given that some wetlands and traditional grazing lands have been converted into oil exploration sites (Mkutu-Agade, 2014; Okong'o, 2015). This has led to loss of livelihoods and has prompted the pastoral communities' endemic to the region to travel even further in search of water and pasture in the already difficult desert terrain (Schilling et.al, 2016; Enns and Bersaglio, 2015). It is also feared that excavation of traditional habitats to pave way for roads is also impacting on the fauna and flora in the desert landscape (Mwinzi, 2017; Imana and Mmbali, 2016). This is further worsened by the continuous clearance of land to support construction of roads and real estate for the growing extractive industry as well as the emerging sectors such as hospitality (See Okong'o, 2015). For example, the LAPSSSET project that is expected to provide the much-needed rail and road link from the oil extraction region to the Port of Mombasa for refining and exporting was faulted for its limited consideration of the concerns of local communities, women notwithstanding (Musikali and Musikali, 2015). This is with regard to land rights, preservation of traditional archaeological spaces and loss of livelihoods (Van-Alstine, 2014).

The project was given approval without the pre-requisite Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that is characteristic of such large projects (Schilling et.al, 2016).

Legal context

In terms of legal framework and rule of law (See table 2), land and land resources in Kenya are governed by different pieces of legislation. These include: the Constitution 2010, The National Land Policy, the Petroleum Act, Community Land Act among others (CoK, 2010; RoK, 2012). The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 is the overarching framework of governance of resources as well as rights and responsibilities of different parties (CoK, 2010). According to the Constitution, land resources such as oil and gas belong to the People of Kenya and as such are national resources falling under the jurisdiction of the Central Government (CoK, 2010; Okong'o, 2015). Land on the other hand is governed under three categories: Public land, Private land and Community Land. Public land is managed by the national or county government, government departments on behalf of the people of Kenya (CoK, 2010). Private land as the name suggests, belongs to individuals and is acquired through direct purchase, inheritance etc (CoK, 2010). Community land is owned communally. It belongs to a certain number of people within a jurisdiction, often ascribing to certain values, norms and traditions (CoK, 2010). This land is managed by the County Government on behalf of the community (Okong'o, 2015).

When it comes to oil and gas exploration in Kenya, the land that was sought was community land (Okong'o, 2010; Mkutu-Agade, 2014). The Community Land Act, (2016) attempts to provide a framework for the acquisition and management of this land. The emphasis here is 'community' (GoK, 2016). It is the bone of contention given that there have been accusations and counter accusations of illegal allocation of these lands to oil companies and elite politicians and businessmen without consultation and consent of local communities (GoK, 2016; Okong'o, 2015).

Land ownership amongst women is also quite controversial. Whilst the Constitution and other land legislations provide equal rights to access, ownership and control of land, women in Kenya lag behind in the fulfilment of these rights (CoK, 2010; Kameri-Mbote, 2006). In practice, women only have user rights and cannot own or inherit land and other property in traditional contexts. Culturally, ownership is conferred through a male relative or a spouse (Kameri-Mbote, 2006). The dimensions for land ownership are however changing with more women venturing into real estate, albeit only in the urban areas (Okong'o, 2015).

Although Kenyan legal practice has always recognised non-monetary contribution by spouses in the acquisition of matrimonial property, recent jurisprudence has clawed back these gains in a manner that puts at risk gender equality rights in property spaces (RoK, 2013). For example, the Matrimonial Property Act only allows women the right to matrimonial property upon their spouse's death or at the point of divorce only if they can prove their contribution to the acquisition of that property during the subsistence of the marriage (RoK, 2013). Given that many women, especially in rural areas like Turkana are not in paid employment, it becomes very difficult to prove contributions (Network et.al, 2005). In addition to this, the Marriage Act, 2014 which permits polygamous unions within customary and religious realms further reduces the spaces for negotiation of equal rights to land and property ownership and/ or disposal within a marriage or at the dissolution of a marriage (KDHS, 2009; FIDA, 2013).

However, it can be argued that even though women do not benefit directly through land ownership rights, in rural contexts, they do benefit somehow through the various Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects offered by the companies (Okong'o, 2015; Mutuma, 2012). These CSR initiatives are often negotiated during the concession signing process but are of very little value in terms of economic transformation of host communities (Lipschutz, 2014; Limani, 2015). This is because, the CSR laws operational in Kenya are pegged on

English Corporate law which takes into consideration the needs of its shareholders first and the company image before interests of third parties such as host communities (Musikali and Musikali, 2015; Limani, 2015). In addition to this, most of the firms are foreign owned and controlled and as such Kenya as a country gets very little benefit, if any, from concession agreements as legally, the directors of these companies are accountable only to their stakeholders (Limani, 2015; Van-Alstine, 2014). As such, if there are any agreements to be made with communities, for example in relation to land or land resources, women are likely to lose out as most do not legally and traditionally have ownership rights to land and property in the oil exploration sites (Musikali and Musikali, 2015; Mutuma, 2012; Okong’o, 2015).

Table 1: Legal frameworks around extractives in Kenya

| Framework/ Legislation | Summary |
|----------------------------------|---|
| The Constitution of Kenya (2010) | Chapter 4, 5 and 6 provides a legislative framework and sets the ground for legislative reform on governance of land and land resources, benefit sharing, Leadership and Governance, citizen participation, transparency etc all of which are important in oil governance. Parliament is required to enact laws that would enable the fulfilment of constitutional provisions on natural resources. |
| The Land Act (2012) | Rationalizes Article 68 of the Constitution (2010) to ensure sustainable management of land and land resources. |
| Matrimonial Property Act (2013) | This Act provides for the rights and responsibilities of spouses in in relation to property acquired in a before and during a marriage as well as other marital responsibilities |

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|---|--|
| | <p>such as childcare, joint businesses etc. It accords equal rights to both parties in a marriage. Property is divided according to the contribution of each party for its acquisition and protects women in cases of polygamy where property is shared in accordance with the position a wife holds i.e. first wife, second wife etc. It also accords parties to a marriage the rights to acquire, hold, administer or dispose of property in a marriage.</p> |
| LAPPSETT Corridor (GoK, 2015) | <p>The project seeks to connect Kenya’s port of Lamu to the Oil rich region of Northern Kenya by creating a land bridge to open up transport and logistics link between Kenya and other countries. It is a part of the wider East African Community infrastructure initiative set to improve trade and movement of goods and services across the region.</p> |
| Petroleum Exploration and Production Act (2019) | <p>The Act seeks to regulate petroleum agreements- negotiation and concession signing processes as well as development and transportation</p> |
| Local Content Bill (2018) | <p>Provides a framework that will facilitate local engagement, ownership, finance and control of extractive industry activities in order to ensure local value capture.</p> |
| Employment Act (2007) (Amended 2021) | <p>This Act of parliament provides a framework that defines the rights of employees, provides minimum thresholds to be met by employers in terms of contracts, equality and equal opportunities, sexual harassment, pay, working conditions etc as well as regulating child labour and any other matter</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>that relates to the workplace. The Employment Act was amended in April 2021 in a bid to align Kenya's employment laws with international best practice. Pre-adoptive leave entitlements are introduced where employees (Male and female) are entitled to leave with full pay where a child is placed in their continuous care or in the case of adoption. This is in addition to the already existing maternity and paternity leave benefits provided for in the 2007 Act.</p> |
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My journey as a black African researcher

I was born in the lake side city of Kisumu, Kenya. I am a Nilote, a Luo by tribe. A tribe that traces its roots to ancient Egypt who migrated downwards along the Nile River in the wake of Arab occupation settling in Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. I come from a working-class family. My father was a civil servant and my mother a teacher. Growing up in the slums of Nyalenda, in Kisumu I was privileged to attend the best schools in the city. Despite our humble surroundings, we were amongst the few families privileged to own the house we lived in, a three bedroomed house. We were also among the few families that managed three square meals and a balanced diet daily. This was not easy of course as my parents worked overtime and had multiple income streams. In an environment where the girl child was only as good as what they could offer- their body- my parents ensured that we lived by a certain code of ethics, not letting our environment define who we were. My father is an accountant by profession and worked his way up the civil service ladder up until retirement in 2015. My mum started out as an untrained teacher and worked her way up to become Director of Gender in the devolved County government. She ran for Member of Parliament twice unsuccessfully, losing to her opponents in an often biased election geared towards maintaining status quo and men in power.

Therefore, I would say that growing up I was considered an elite based on factors such as where I went to school, the occupation of my parents, my parents owning property, income level etc. I also seemed to have it a lot easier than others due to the lighter shade of skin I have. Colourism is a major issue in black circles around the world. I remember being quite called 'Mzungu' (white) due to the colour of my skin with my darker skinned acquaintances and friends always under the impression that my skin colour made me more beautiful and gave me easy access to finer things in life- better treatment, better suitors, better jobs etc. The colour of my skin also did put me at risk during the post-election violence of Kenya in 2007. I was quite shielded by my parents growing up and despite the realities of the environment around me, I never really

got to experience it first-hand. So, sitting on a motorbike calculating how I could get away from a mob of over 20 angry young men with machetes who planned on doing the worst to me and even killing me because I was not 'dark skinned enough' to be a member of my tribe really put colourism into perspective for me.

All in all, I have grown up in a highly sexist and misogynistic society where my father was ridiculed by society for educating his three daughters. He was also ridiculed for allowing his wife, my mother, to go back to school and pursue higher education, something she did to Masters' level. My father has always been a champion for women's rights and has stood by us and my mum in ensuring that we are accorded all the rights and privileges my brothers had.

On a personal note, I was a top performing student which could come down to the fact that I went to good schools with resources and low student-teacher ratio. However, I still walked 8kms everyday to school during my primary school years and was sent home quite a bit for lack of school fees. My attendance at these top schools came with the perks of having a mother who was a teacher at the schools. I went to an all-girls boarding school for secondary school and this is where I got my voice as a feminist and an ardent women rights champion. Being in a church run school and school system where corporal punishment thrived. At some point I felt the need to speak up against what was happening. In my own small way I did manage to bring change but with a high price to pay.

I started my career in International Development by working as an intern during my placement at African Medical research Foundation (AMREF), a pan-african organisation committed to ensuring lasting change in Health in Africa. I worked in projects and Admin before moving on to Human Rights at FIDA Kenya, a leading women's rights organisation where I worked as a Grants Officer. I represented the organisation in International and National fronts and travelled in and out of the African continent to advocate and fundraise for projects geared towards

education/ advocacy, litigation and establishing precedence in matters affecting women's human rights etc. I moved on to work as a Fundraising manager for a cancer charity where I helped establish the fundraising department and put structures and events in place that enabled the organisation to build a medical endowment fund geared towards sustainability of cancer diagnosis, treatment and management for under-privileged in society.

I am also involved in a lot of charity work geared towards advancing women's human rights. Specifically, I volunteer as a board member in charge of fundraising, research and grants for a reproductive health and rights charity working on Fistula issues. I also volunteer as a chairperson for a Young Women Leadership Centre, a community organisation rescuing girls and women from early childhood marriages, domestic violence, Female Genital Mutilation etc. The organisation also provides entrepreneurship training to these women and girls and help secure scholarships for those wishing to go back to school.

I am a mother of three children and a beneficiary of an inter-cultural muslim marriage. I would say that my marriage is normal but there is definitely a lot of compromise that has come about in the lifetime of our relationship. The first one being issues of my career and quest for higher education. On an African front, an educated woman and feminist is seen as a threat to masculinity and masculine systems and women like me are considered stubborn and unfit for marriage. While my husband is educated, he holds this view to a certain extent and over the years there have been a lot of push and pull with regard to me getting back to work, pursuing a PhD and childcare. Throughout my tenure as a student, I have had to balance my caring responsibilities and my place in the world as a professional and as a student. It's always common play for me to show up at supervisory meetings with my children in tow mostly because traditionally and my everyday experience is such that my time is not considered as important as that of my partner who works at least 6days a week. My needs are secondary to

his and as a woman, I am expected to be submissive, patient and to fulfil my roles as a wife and mother with utmost dedication. As an African feminist, this is the journey I have to take and I often define myself as a junction feminist because like other black African women, am always at an impasse with regard to my views, space and experiences.

Positionality and negotiated ethics

The issue of positionality and negotiated ethics is therefore an important aspect of this research. My position as an Elite Black African Woman is key as it provided me with the authoritative voice to not only speak as a researcher, but also as a woman who has lived the experiences of the research respondents as they negotiate patriarchy in their quest to become authoritative figures in a male dominated extractive industry and by extension, a society that treats women as secondary to men. I also reference my position as a Black African Woman as an opportunity to exercise reflexivity and self-introspection in the production and co-production of knowledge. This is important as by recognising my inherent biases and subjectivities, my place as a Black African Women researcher is strengthened and any conflicts that may be encountered due to my subjectivities are promptly recognised and navigated.

Positionality is particularly important in research contexts such as those in Africa where an individual's loyalties to and understanding of the political, ethnic and social landscapes of research contexts play a significant role in access to research subjects and the quality of responses received in research. Being a Black African Woman of Kenyan descent, I was largely aware of these local realities and therefore was able to negotiate the politics, power and structures which I encountered during the research process. This insider knowledge is crucial as it enabled knowledge production to occur within the context of my inherent inter-subjectivities as well as the place I occupied at a specific moment. As such, this intersubjective learning enabled me, the researcher to promptly deal with unstructured, context specific ethical issues that were difficult to pre-define in institutional ethics forms (See...England, 1994). As

a result, this research produced findings that were interpretive and impartial, yet also quite telling of individual subjective experiences of research subjects that would have otherwise been missed.

I must recognise that my position as an educated Black woman from a reputable University also played a key role in me being able to secure interviews with elite women at the peak of extractive industry governance in Kenya. This respect was important as it strengthened the bond between me as a researcher and respondents in the research. This relationship is important as it enabled me to have productive peer-to-peer conversations where my position as an expert in my field was respected and my respondents' position as experts in their field also respected. As a result, issue of superiority was eliminated.

Positionality strengthens commitment to good research as it builds relationships with research subjects based on mutual respect and recognition by opening up spaces for engagement on complex and distinctive understandings of issues particularly where the research process and content are vague (Sultana, 2007; Hopkins, 2007).

This familiarity of environment and social circle of respondents ensured that I blended in well with the research subjects. However, the outsider-insider feel also arose. Elite Women in extractive industries are a close-knit group so coming in as an outsider was a bit difficult and it took quite a bit of time to build trust (See Pechurina, 2014). However, many commonalities such as nationality and culture made it easier to strike a good rapport with the respondents and overcome these hurdles (Pechurina, 2014).

Research Framework

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was the guiding methodology in the research. The research made use of the Van Dijk Socio-cognitive approach and the Dialectical-Relational Approach to CDA (Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Fairclough, 2013). The socio-cognitive approach viewed

Discourse as a communicative event, such as conversations, written text, gestures, typography and multimedia dimensions of signification (Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Lazar, 2005). The Dialectical-Relational Approach (Fairclough, 1993; Wodak and Meyer, 2009) on the other hand focussed on aspects of social practice and how they manifested themselves in discourse in elements such as dominance, difference and resistance. Specifically, their means of production, social relations, social identities, cultural values and consciousness which were responsible for the constitution of genres and styles (Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Koller, 2009).

Research Design

Case study was used as the research design due to its ability to allow the research to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 2013; Yin, 2017), in this case, women engagement in extractives. The explanatory nature of the questions 'how and why questions' also informed the choice of research design as it provides operational links that can be traced overtime rather than as mere frequencies or incidences (Yin, 2013; Yin, 2017). It also enabled the research to deal with a full variety of evidence in the form of existing research, newspaper articles, symbols, interviews and in some cases, observation, which are critical information sources in this research (Yin, 2013; Yin, 2017). The major limitations of the case study approach were that it's time consuming given that data collection and analysis takes place simultaneously. It was also very context specific and may not be applicable to large population samples.

Sample

Respondents were drawn from a sample of elite black women working in extractive industries or around extractive sectors either as engineers, lawyers, private contractors, government workers, academics, or entrepreneurs. They were identified through purposive sampling and snowballing techniques. This was because of the specificity of the research question which required the selection of specific individuals who were considered to bear certain attributes.

These attributes included but were not limited to: they were women and /or headed companies that employed women I elite positions, they were black, were working in or around extractive sectors, were largely successful in their career/ considered privileged or in a position of power among others. As such men were not locked out in the selection process, and one responded to the interview request. While the technique employed was highly subjective and can be argued as not being inclusive, it was necessary for the specificity of the research and offered an opportunity to draw the most appropriate and rich sample that would enable me to answer the research questions. This is also because of how close-knit the extractive industry is with everyone knowing ‘who is who,’ having worked together in various capacities across industry and government both in Kenya and in Western nations. It thus follows that a network of respondents was built through the initial contacts established.

My sample size was small and this was because the pool from which the sample was drawn was already small. This is not to say that the sample was inadequate. It is to reiterate that elite black African women are already a minority and being able to get the sample I did was in fact commendable. In addition to their busy schedules, it was not easy establishing interviews within the timeframe I had with the sample I originally wanted to work with and also because there simply were not enough women who met the criteria for selection. All in all, patterns did emerge in my data quite quickly and by the time I was getting to my last interview, it was clear I had reached saturation which was a welcome development.

Data Collection

Eight (8) Interviews were administered to a sample of drawn from industry, government, and academia. These were mostly audio recorded (6 interviews) albeit with a few exceptions (2 interviews) who opted not to be recorded. These were later transcribed and analysed (See analytical framework below). Two workshops were also attended and recorded where various black elite women and men spoke on the challenges faced by elite black women in extractives

as well as spaces of engagement. For respondents who did not consent to being recorded, handwritten notes were taken and later transcribed and analysed using the same process as the recorded interviews. In interviews where respondents opted not to be recorded, notes were taken by hand with as much accuracy as possible to ensure all key details were captured. The University Research Ethics Regulations were followed to the latter and verbal and written consent taken before the interviews were administered. Existing literature from newspaper articles, online blogs, TV clips, government reports, NGO reports etc., formed part of the data used in the analysis.

Two workshop which I attended, hosted by a group in academia also proved an important source for data collection with various actors sharing their experiences and challenges as women in the extractive industries. It was an experience sharing event where elite black African women drawn from various oil companies, representatives from government, NGOs, lawyers and academia. This was with a view of establishing a call to action that would inform activities of the organising party in its efforts to influence legal and policy change and enhance spaces for inclusion of black African women in elite spaces. Men also shared their views on gender and gender equality and the place of women in extractives. This interactive process brought about quite a rich mix of debates and conversations around black women and extractive industries which proved quite a rich source of data for my research. As a researcher, I obtained permission to record and play an impartial observer as participants interacted over two days. These were later transcribed, and data used to support my findings.

While I had set out to carry out between 30 and 40 interviews in my research proposal, this proved impossible due to the tight schedule my respondents had. It took up to two weeks to establish meetings and last-minute cancellations were also prevalent. Despite this, the interviews and workshops did provide about 30 hours of data which proved to be more than enough for the research during the analysis process.

Scope of Research

The scope of the research was limited to urban context. This is because the respondents were based in company headquarters in the Capital Nairobi where they travelled to field offices for work. Some respondents were consultants who worked across different African countries.

Analytical framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used as the main analytical framework (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Through CDA, the research analysed the meanings of statements, words, phrases, experiences, and overall body language of respondents (See Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This helped generate critical narratives and debated on women and extractives giving primacy to women's subjective everyday experiences as shaped by views on gender, extractive infrastructure, and race. However, given that CDA does not have a specific empirical method for data collection and analysis, procedures of grounded theory were used. By contextualising women's everyday experiences, CDA provided an in-depth understanding of how discourses on gender and politics shape women's interaction with the oil and gas economy in Kenya, an issue that has been given limited primacy in resource rich contexts (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). The conceptualisation of the analytical framework in this way was because CDA was not concerned with investigation of single linguistic units, rather, it studied the complexities that come with notions of text and language within specified contexts (Fairclough, 1993; Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

Data was manually coded and analysed using open, axial and selective coding. Patterns in the data were then organised into categories which were finally grouped into themes. Overall, four themes were chosen and discussed. These included: African feminism, gender, race, diversity and inclusion, and infrastructures of exclusion. Data from videos, blogs and newspapers were also used to enrich discussions. This analysis enriched discussions and ensured that the data remained in tune with the current happenings in the Extractive Industry in Kenya.

Data Validation and Analysis

The findings of the research were validated to ensure they are a true reflection of the situation of women in extractive industries. Utmost ethical considerations were taken into account to ensure integrity and consistency of the data. Data was analysed in accordance with the research objectives as shown in the table 1 below. The final findings were presented here in the form of an academic thesis to the University of Sheffield for assessment and potential publishing. Findings of the research will be disseminated to key stakeholders to influence policy change in industry and government. The thesis is available to participants on request in accordance with University of Sheffield rules and regulations.

Table 2: Data Analysis per objective

| | Data collection methods | Data analysis methods | Analytical framework/ Analysis |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| Objective 1 | Desk-based study, workshop, interviews | Literature review, multimedia analysis, Open, axial, selective coding | Critical discourse analysis |
| Objective 2 | Desk-based study, Workshop and interviews | Literature review, Open, axial, selective coding | Critical Discourse analysis |
| Objective 3 | Desktop study, Interviews, Workshop | Literature review, Open, axial, selective coding | Critical Discourse analysis |
| Objective 4 | Workshop, Interviews, Desk based study | Literature review, Open, axial, selective coding | Critical Discourse Analysis |

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|-------------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Objective 5 | Workshop, Interviews, Desk based study | Literature review, multimedia analysis, Open, axial, selective coding | Critical Discourse Analysis |
|-------------|--|---|-----------------------------|

Stakeholders/ Focus groups?

Elite Black Women: My respondents were black elite women with the exception of one who was a black man. They were characterised by their high social status, they were well travelled, highly educated and successful in their careers. The majority were on the verge of breaking the glass ceiling despite being held back by masculinised systems in extractive sectors.

Academics: Academics were a crucial part of the research as they provided a scholarly angle to the research. Through academic links, I was able to identify and select key respondents to my research. Academic groups also organised workshops which also formed part of my data collection as they brought about elite women from various companies working in the Oil Industry.

Government Officials: I did have a few women working for the government in various capacities in the Extractive sector who formed part of my sample. This provided me with a policy angle to the question of gender in extractive industries.

Industry: Women in Industry formed majority of my respondents in the research. This was deliberate as they had a lived experience in the sector which enriched my research findings. The fact that they were black, successful and highly mobile, made them the perfect candidates for the research as they had similar characteristics to elite men in the industry. This evened the playing ground and made data comparisons largely more straight forward and simpler.

Ethics

The research was approved in accordance with the University of Sheffield ethics application process (See appendix for approved application form). A research permit was applied for and approved by the Kenyan authorities prior to the data collection process. Consent was obtained both verbally and/or in written form from respondents prior to the interviews. Respondents were provided with information about the research both via email and verbally when the interviews were set up and also before the interviews began. They were also made aware of their right to withdraw. Research data was also anonymised to help protect the identity of respondents. Interviews were recorded, stored, transcribed and analysed in accordance with University for Sheffield Data protection and handling regulations and participants rights to be anonymised or not anonymised respected. As such, to ensure uniformity, all interviewee names were truncated from the interview transcripts and any personal identifiers removed. This was communicated to respondents and consent obtained.

Limitations

The research methodology was limited in the sense that there were fewer respondents. I had set out to carry out 30-40 interviews but only managed 8 interviews with data also collected from 2 workshops. This is because of the limited scope of my sample which focussed on elite women in the extractive industry. This sample was difficult to find and interviews as they were highly mobile and their diaries full. In addition to this, the research permit application process in Kenya is also lengthy and it took 3 weeks despite having put in an application a month before leaving for Kenya. This was beyond the 2 weeks limit put on the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) guideline. Kenya was also on high security alert following terrorist activities in the Country and as such extra caution was taken to ensure my safety and that of my respondents. I met my respondents mostly in their offices or in coffee shops in buildings with high security procedures.

Conclusion

This methodology was chosen as it enabled this research to contextualise women's experiences within a Feminist Political Ecology framework by giving meaning to women's experiences, meanings of words and processes as shaped by aspects of race, sexism and infrastructure. Whilst it is a good methodology, it did have its short comings which ranged from my sample size to research design and overall time available to undertake the research. Despite this, my position as a black, elite feminist researcher worked in my favour and provided opportunities wherever I went. This ensured that my sample was drawn from the very top clique of elite women in the extractive sector, a veteran group with a wealth of experience in the sector as well as a younger group of elite women navigating the sector which created the right balance needed for my research questions

CHAPTER FIVE: BLACK ELITE FEMINISM: RACE TO EQUALITY

Elite feminism; Dangling Carrots versus Positive Change

From the research, it was evident that colonialism mindset was still dominating industry with black women and men being treated disproportionately to their white colleagues in terms of job access, job advancement, pay and associated benefits. As a result of this, African women are disadvantaged twice when it comes to the workplace, first because of their race and secondly because of their gender. This presents an interesting angle in terms of African feminism as African women did not seem to see/ identify with gender discrimination as an issue they needed to tackle albeit recognised its existence. They preferred to deal with race issues so as to fit into the industry before tackling gender. I argue that this is because both African men and women have a shared experience on race matters and therefore more likely to align on racial matters than on discrimination which is quite a shame. However, considering the African context and the various obstacles black women have to negotiate to enter or grow in a highly masculinised environment like extractives, issues of feminism seem to take a back seat and are more of an afterthought for most black women. I argue that black women are more likely to be concerned with getting and keeping the job that the discriminatory practices surrounding the job. The fear of losing out on both their place at work as employees and at home as wives, mother etc could be a factor hence preference for a status quo. Focussing on gender issues such as sexualisation, harassment etc therefore only serve to put elite black women on the spotlight and makes them easy targets for demotions or dismissal should they decide to pursue discrimination or harassment cases.

Despite this, the extractive industry has been transforming itself and as was evidenced in Kenya, more and more Africans are being employed to replace white colleagues. Notably, the current CEOs in two of the leading oil and gas companies in Kenya are African men,

appointed within the last five years of this research data whilst the head of the government owned oil company is female. Whilst this is notably welcome, it also brings to light the extent of the gender gap in senior management roles, as most senior technical and non-technical roles were still occupied by men and white men to be exact. Although this has been justified as having a link to the nascent oil and gas sector, a lot of African women and men are qualified to take up such roles given the vast experience in countries such as Angola and Nigeria. Industry can also replicate the Shell Plc model in Nigeria by training qualified engineers in oil and gas management either through secondment to other sites or by sponsoring courses. From the research, one company tried to do this through sponsorships to study postgraduate degrees around oil and gas, environment and sustainability, but this was short lived as it only run for 3 years. Also, such impact has not been felt in the local industry as graduates have not been transitioned into roles within the sector owing to a disclaimer condition attached to the scholarship where there was no job guarantee. As a result of this, the industry can be argued still be particularly behind when it comes to inclusion and diversity of its workforce.

On the issue of gender, the equation of a woman's life to a 'walking Miss World' during the civil rights movement in 1960s Britain remains a significant event to the place of western and African feminism today (Walters, 2005). This is because, despite there being 'perceived' equal rights in Western Nations and in African states such as Kenya, women continue to be seen as 'spectators/ flower girls' in a highly sexist environment both at home and at the workplace (Walters, 2005; Perez, 2019). This can be seen in different sectors such as construction, Medical, Automobile and most importantly Extractives where women are denied opportunities due to their physical attributes and assumptions of being weaker physically than men (Perez, 2019; Pickerill, 2015). Even with advancements in technology, industry has still not been able to take time to design infrastructures and goods that work for women. Instead, existing products designed for men are 'downsized' to fit women (Perez, 2019). A recent example would be the

cancellation of the first ‘all women Mars expedition’ by NASA on the basis that there were ‘no space-suits’ that could fit the women (BBC, 2021). Another is the lack of female dummies in car testing with the only dummy available used on the passenger’s seat in EU only (Perez, 2019).

“That is something even our CEO says, that we need to increase gender definitely, some men are really type men because the main reason I was going to board meetings ...they would tell me they will talk so I was like what was use of me coming to the meeting? There are some men who were really bullies. When I talk or maybe I become strong and to be honest I have been strong in this matter and they become threatened because I haven’t been picked out for some of the meetings...” (Senior Engineer, Manager, Female, Nairobi, 2018).

While industry argues that they are doing the best they can to accommodate women, the infrastructures created around industries such as extractives are a product of engraved masculinity and patriarchy, I argue that they are deliberately designed to deny women equal rights and opportunities whilst allowing men to evolve and thrive. Such has resulted in a situation where although women are competent and qualified to fill technical roles, they are denied the opportunity or are not able to take up such opportunities due to what companies conveniently call ‘market trends’ when they are in essence masculinised systems that were never designed for women in the first place (See...Perez, 2019). These arguments are in tandem with the research where infrastructural issues such as equipment, uniforms, overalls, helmets and boots are built around men’s bodies slowing down women at work and exposing them to safety risks. This is because they were ill-fitting, bulky and did not take into account the biological uniqueness of the female body. This could explain why women engineers were offered funnels to allow them to pee like men given that it took on average 15minutes for a woman to get out of the ill-fitting clothing, use the toilet and get back to work. This is unlike

male colleagues who benefitted from urinals at strategic places around offshore rigs and also their ability to 'go' in relatively open areas in remote oil sites.

These scenarios are worsened by engrained patriarchy in the home particularly in African contexts where women have to not only prove themselves at work, but also are required to satisfy domestic roles such as child-bearing to be considered 'complete' by society. While such issues can be said to be almost non-existent in Western nations due to greater agency and protection of women in legal realms, women in these regions and in Africa still have a long way to go in terms of aspects such as gender pay gap, maternity leave and period sick leave which is unique to women's biology. This is mainly due to the concept of body and embodiment where women are argued to be too leaky to be trusted with important roles in companies given their likelihood to take 'unorthodox' leaves of absence every month and in the case of maternity, a whole year. Companies have seen this as an added cost and while they argue that they are welcoming to women, the contrary is true as extractives offer women returning from maternity leave their jobs back, but with a lower pay and often lower title in the office as was ascertained in the research.

"...that the work is very demanding and working long hours, working in very remote areas... we have others who work for 28 days and off for 28 days...like you go and work for 28 days... some positions you have no choice but to work those rotations. Like one of my colleagues come out of work because she had a baby and she really wanted to have a little more time with the kid but because of the rotation, she didn't have a choice. You can imagine that child didn't breastfeed enough the way she wanted." (Senior Engineer, Manager, Female, Nairobi, 2018).

The impact of such referencing to the feminine body is sexist and appalling for this time and age and owing to the decades of global feminist activism, should not exist in the first place.

However, this is the reality that women have to live with today where their positioning as a 'leaking vessel' puts them at a disadvantage to their male colleagues when it comes to managerial positions and higher pay which is often argued to be based on experience yet it's anything but. A woman is still viewed by her ability to procreate rather than as a human being and a competent worker capable of undertaking her job just like her male colleagues. This could explain why in the research, respondents implied their success to their decision to not start a family or for those with families, to not have kids as family was a career killer and designed to hold women in the industry back.

The lack of female mentors to look up to in the extractive industry could also be a contributing factor to the seeming insurmountable obstacles that have been laid on women's paths in the industry in the name of masculinity. As a result, women's bodies at the workplace and at home remains unresolved with the conceptualisation of the female body seen as unpredictable and thus a 'risk factor' at the workplace. This could explain why women continue to be asked if they have children or plan to have children in job interviews around the world whilst the same standard is not applied to men despite the fact that men are also husbands and fathers and are equally responsible for parental duties. Women's bodies should therefore be celebrated for their uniqueness in their ability to transform to comply with biological functions of reproduction such as breastfeeding and periods, not condemned for not fitting into an idealised 'professional image' that is mostly constructed from a masculinised angle. Such misinterpretations of the female body as an object that transgresses social norms due to its propensity to leak and bring the private world of reproduction into public view are therefore misplaced and should be treated with the contempt it deserves. This is because women are unique and different and in their difference to men therein lies their strength which should be embraced because without women the human race itself cannot exist.

Men are thus still considered superior intellectually and physically to women, a situation that persists to date in African contexts. This has led for men to be distanced from the labour of reproduction. As such, although men share the responsibility of parenting, it is widely assumed that paternal work such as nurturing is only meant for women. Whilst this is slowly changing in western contexts with men given adequate time of to assist with domestic responsibilities including childcare, in Africa, notably the research context, this is not the case. Men still view childcare as a woman's role and any man partaking in childcare particularly in rural communities is considered a weakling. This situation has left women with the burden of taking care of children and the household single-handedly. In fact, a housewife is regarded more highly than a working wife as she can dedicate all of her time to her home, albeit with no pay. A working woman is therefore disregarded in society despite the financial contributions she makes to the family. This is deeply rooted in culture and women are socialised from a young age to be 'good wives and mothers.'

"I don't have anybody to pick my kids. I used to have a nanny and we had a good understanding and the policy is smart working, you pick two days of the week and work from home...as long as they have a computer and internet...technology and innovation you know it has really helped us out because you don't have to be there physically. You can dine, when it comes to conferences you don't have to travel and speed internet it makes it a little bit easier. So that's company policy and other one is not company policy it's just you to agree with boss how you want to work as long as it's not affecting performance. US and UK they have adequate policies ...I think we are more old school... Kenya is not left behind, we are ready for smart working, me and my boss have a good relation and he allows me to work from home and in the office. I have that with my boss but some people don't have that with their bosses." (Senior Engineer, Manager, Female, Nairobi, 2018).

The good news is that women are slowly protesting such narratives and in urban areas, the issue of 'shared household' is highly welcomed. However, such narratives have also led to an influx of single-parent households with many elite and educated women opting to have and raise their children without the presence or help of men. This brings an interesting twist to the concept of African feminism which proponents have argued that is all about partnership, working together with men rather than against them. However, such immutable notions remain challenging and uncomfortable in gendered narratives in African countries and whilst noble, will take a bit of time to achieve especially in conservative rural contexts. A supportive social network is thus important to ensure that women flourish both at the workplace and at home as was demonstrated in the research. Technology is also enabling women to balance work and domestic responsibilities especially in light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic which has forced companies to adopt home working as a matter of policy.

“I have been picked up as a member of the subcommittee of Diversity and inclusion and we will be discussing about all this gender balance so we are good... We have been talking to people trying to figure out ways of recruiting women. Smart working is one of them. I was the one representing Kenya and I was able to meet some people and discuss... We have been talking a lot about that and our CEO said that we were Africa's leading company... we don't have African executives but let's say we are working on that.” (Senior Engineer, Manager, Female, Nairobi, 2018).

CHAPTER SIX: PERCEPTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF GENDER

Messing with Gender

I started out by assessing what gender meant to the respondents and how they saw gender in society. I argue that gender is a rather masculinised undertaking that is designed to exclude women from the industry or make it as difficult as possible for women to enter and grow, whilst maintaining a normalised structural outlook of equality and non-discrimination. The industry has no concept of Gender and difference. Women are treated and diminutive versions of men, anomalies in the sector that are accommodated rather than included as evidenced by the highly patriarchal nature of operations embedded in social and economic processes both in policy decisions as well as day to day operations and interactions between men and women at home and at the workplace. Generally, majority of respondents felt that Gender issues were not being given the attention it deserved despite advancements in laws and policies that promoted equality and non-discrimination in all spheres of life – Economic, Social, Cultural, or Political. It was evident that change was slow, and it was not in favour of women owing to the upbringing of men as superior to women.

“I think generally in Kenya in my view, we are still a patriarchal society where men are still seen as the leaders, decision makers, do not know whether that perception is a man`s role and as a woman it is almost like we are still trying to find out our space and trying to preach on about gender mainstreaming and inclusivity at all levels like in decision making, in society...what is the place of that woman in this changing narrative? Unfortunately, I think Kenyans are very traditional. They may be urbanized because of where they work, a bit of exposure and some have travelled, some have become a bit urbanized but at the end of the day I think our socialization is very traditional and a very patriarchal society so breaking that belief in which people have been brought up where the boy child has always been seen as the leader, the roles and

how he socializes and he is taught to play being a leader and the girl child has always been brought up to be a girl and woman is a softer role, this is her place in society and what is acceptable from her. I think the place of women in society is still patriarchal and there is still change to be done to that narrative, preach more about gender inclusivity and gender main streaming issues in the country.” (Lawyer, Women Rights Activist, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

The respondent goes further to say;

“They may be urbanized because of where they work, a bit of exposure and some have travelled, some have become a bit urbanized but at the end of the day I think our socialization is very traditional and a very patriarchal society so breaking that belief in which people have been brought up where the boy child has always been seen as the leader, the roles and how he socializes and he is taught to play being a leader and the girl child has always been brought up to be a girl and woman is a softer role, this is her place in society and what is acceptable from her.’ (Lawyer, Women Rights Activist, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

It shows that Kenyan perceptions of gender are in fact embedded within the psyche of women and men and this thinking is passed down from generation to generation in such a way that it has become normal for women to be seen as lesser beings. This can be seen in the number of women that are lost in the sector. Whilst majority are employed in softer roles such as HR, accounting and administration, the research evidenced the lack of talent retention due to competing demands (Chatterji and Chakrabarti, 2021; Okong’o 2015). I argue that companies deliberately make the industry structure impossible for women to cope such as long hours, rigid rota patterns and of course limited upward growth. This explains why there are fewer women working in the fields as technicians because the industry was built to be hostile to women. (See...Perez, 2019). So how then is it expected to cater for women and differences between

women and women groups? This question remains problematic and has far reaching implications to feminist concepts of care and time which are important if women are to succeed in all aspects of their lives. As such more in-depth research and policy interventions to ensure gender is adequately defined, recognised and included in extractive industry operations.

“...it’s a mandate that they have to really bring in women, to make sure women are not fast tracked but you know to get the right women and able to progress these women. So there was a discussion on where women have done extremely well and that to me is something that I’m really complacent about and I ask what part? what related part can I play in this recreation? It’s important. Think of it as long as all of us do our stuff it won’t become an issue one day. It’s just that if you don’t see the numbers is because the women are not interested for a number of reasons. Then towards the end I think we need to think of how do retain the retention. I think that’s an area a lot of people tend to forget, and they think okay we will bring them in. And I’ve seen a lot of good engineers leave the industry because they are frustrated, they just feel that as I said that those who are mothers, those taking care of sick, of elderly parents and you know we come with our own issues that I think that a man may not necessary understand in the work place. I think we forget about retention we talk about bringing women in and forget how to make sure we retain them and let them progress.” (Female, Senior Engineer/ Businesswoman, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

The Female Body, Sexism and Embodiment; evolution of the female body

“My personal opinion is men because they are objective and structured and know what they want. The men would be very objective. I do not have to like you or care about you but this is the objective. If you are oriented to that objective, then let us work but women will ask; is she nice? does she treat people in a certain way? how does she look at other women? for you to make your decision so that makes the rest of the people powerful because of the objective and are focused on the objective.” (Female, Senior Manager, Oil Consortium, Nairobi, interview, 2018).

The female body is a unique entity given its ability to change and adapt to the physical and mental demands of biological processes such as childbirth and menstruation (Diagle and Golomb, 2009). Despite this, a woman’s body is often compared to that of men as demonstrated in the research and this is the root of sexist notions and structures within extractive industries and society as women are socialised to accept the superiority of the male body. As such, only the physical nature of the body features prominently in extractive industry literature where it has been dubbed inferior to that of men in terms of physical strength required to undertake the labour-intensive work in the industry (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012). For women to engage effectively in the sector, the female must therefore be understood beyond the physical to include both intellectual and emotional strength that makes women much more resilient than men and thus very much capable of labour-intensive work just like men. This can be seen in extractive sectors such as Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining and in Agriculture where women form the majority of workers. Mechanisation of Large-Scale extractive industry processes in the Oil and Gas sector has also made redundant the need for physical, rather it has made necessary the requirement for intellectual and emotional strength to cope with the demands of the industry such as long working hours, off-shore working etc making women a perfect fit in the sector.

By exploring this discursive relationship between the female body and the female self (being), this research fundamentally challenges the exclusion of the female and female experiences in extractive industries. This is necessitated by the fact that bodies are arguably produced, co-produced and contextualised through discourse, time and space and as such are materially attached to the environment and experiences of those in such environments. Through incorporating and understanding the female body, femininity can be explored and its strengths, experiences and limitations as manifested through the female body can be used to advance female progress in a masculinised extractive sector. Femininity in this context is derived to mean the behaviours, attributes and roles associated by being female and/ or experienced by women. This is important given the contradictions and contestations on how feminism and feminine embodiment plays out in individual and different groups of women.

My research explores these contradictions amongst and between elite women in extractive industries bringing together a juxtaposed understanding of engraved corporate sexism that has ensured that women albeit of higher class and social status, are still held back by masculinized systems of oppression. This can be seen in the way masculinity has found its way into policy and everyday social and professional interactions creating an incredibly archaic, dangerous and toxic environment where feminism and femininity is unlikely to flourish. Elite women lacking fundamental rights such as maternity leave and equal pay and opportunities is just one way in which extractives are excluding women. This has the effect of propagating structural and legal issues that impede women's progress in the sector such as lack thereof or poor maternity leave and the inability of women to choose between having a family and growing in their career.

“...take a lot of women to this industry like when I was working, I didn't have women to turn to and all my bosses were men, but I don't want you to think it is miserable this

is a very wonderful industry.” (Female, Engineer/ Businesswoman, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

By exploring this sense of female embodiment, the extractive industry can become a part of the gendered change process as current standards on what is and should not be ‘feminine’ is nothing but a masculinised corruption of ideas and processes designed to hold women progress back. This can be explained through the continuous use of the male body as a measure of what is and what is not acceptable in the extractive industry (See... Perez, 2019). By saying this, the sector can no longer function on the assumption that being female is an anomaly and being male cannot be the standard by which society and industry determines what women can or cannot do at the workplace. Women do not choose their bodies and should not be victimised based on what they have no control over.

As such embodied identities such as gender, race, sex, and body have no place in the functioning of the female as an intellectual being in the industry but are still as important as they make women who they are and should be celebrated rather than condemned. These concepts are fundamental to the understanding of women as capable intellectual and physical beings that can labour with the same effort as men without erasing who they are and how they experience their body and the world around them. Negative connotations of these concepts thus only serve to impede progress of the female and obscures the true meaning of what it means to be female inevitably creating a normalised sexist environment that reinforces masculinised systems and rules at the expense of femininity and equality between the sexes.

Glorified illusions of the female body as a weak point in extractive industry functions therefore fundamentally ignores the body as a plural entity and treats it as if it were one. As if male and female bodies were the same in outlook and function and consequently, should evoke the same

responses. This also brings in a wicked problem of the standardization of the body (Perez, 2019; Parkinson, 2016). As it is, the extractive industry seems to function as though the male body is the standard and anything contrary such as the female body is considered an anomaly to be dealt with as miniature or petite versions of men. As such, the materiality of the female body and discourses that surround it is constructed in a way that ensures masculinity becomes the norm and the rule. Such norms and practices engraved in human history, leaves women fragile and vulnerable to the excesses and unchecked power of men (Ahmed, 2018).

By recognising the difference between men and women, extractives can be enriched in terms of intellectual and physical diversity and true equality and non-discrimination realised. This will make irrelevant the need for women to find strength in numbers in order to enjoy basic maternity rights and family life. Indeed, there is no such thing as gender neutral laws because men and women are different, and this difference must be acknowledged and celebrated not in terms of physical strength but rather intellectual strength which is what is needed in the extractive industry processes. The fact is that the female body is unique, and it is ‘the normal’ for women and is what brings about difference and diversity in the industry which must be recognised, and policies designed to accommodate such if females are to thrive in the extractive sector. A woman just like a man does not need to justify why they have to keep their job when they go on maternity leave, miss work due to period cramps or have to tend to domestic issues at home.

“What I do know is that the employment laws in the country is ...I can’t say gender neutral, but I think they take special recognition of the fact that women have with them certain peculiarities, like I know cases of where someone has severe cramps and can’t come to work now that is something that is only within a woman. Someone with a child will have to be given a little bit more consideration. You will remember at the ... forum

one of the ladies said that she is happy that among her colleagues most are women and it's structured that in case she has to be off for 3 weeks, she also has 3 weeks off, so I mean in our industry it is not yet that far advanced so I cannot speak about the peculiarities within the petroleum sector. But I think our Labour laws and generally our country laws especially from a government perspective, I think it would be unfair to say that they don't consider gender to be an issue. I think I have seen it with my former bosses, my former colleagues, whereas there are certain liberty like in terms of the level of jokes that some would find inappropriate but you will also find that they are not even aware that there are legal implications..." (Female, Commercial Lawyer, Government, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Considering the quote above, it is important to understand that women do not always experience their bodies specifically as females. There are variations to it, be it as a mother, a worker, a colleague, a leader etc. As such, whatever happens within the female body that makes it fluid such as pregnancy and menstruation, two main issues that are used to disadvantage women in industry, are nothing but mere biological processes that have got nothing to do with the female mind. Essentially, the body is controlled by the mind and as such it is necessary that extractive industries recognise this difference and eliminate such misconstrued biases that are mere concepts designed to glorify masculinity and reduce the female body to nothing more than a commodity to be quantified in terms of 'man' hours and company bottom line (See Eden et.al, 2013). Consequently, this diminishes the need for women to feel objectified in their own skin for fear of judgement, abuse or degradation through derogatory comments, unwanted touching and or outright judgement of their bodies. I find that women are increasingly feeling a need to justify who they are and why they are important in the industry. Unfortunately, this is a direct consequence of patriarchy where women are made to believe they are beneath men and any attempt to appear equal are quickly squashed mostly through objectification of the

female body and misogyny. That is why women in extractives have been made to believe that the body is secondary to their experiences in the industry.

“it is still a conversation that can be lost because unfortunately the policy makers and the players are still men making decisions in the extractives space so it is still at the point where cautiously and deliberately talk about it in mind the decision makers and lobbying for engendering the policies, the legislative framework, the opportunities and the chances. Otherwise, we are not at a point where we can take it back and say enough has been done and when decisions have been made we are sure the space is for women... men still hold a lot of power in the extractive space and are still the decision makers. We have started the conversations of creating the opportunities. If I was to rate how far we have gone with the conversations, I think we are still at 30% or 40%. More needs to be done and especially telling the men fine it is equal opportunities let all come in but then let us all give equal chances to rise so that with time those people who are making decisions and conversations let us have few women in those board rooms but if you go into the decision-making spaces, there are still very male dominated. The men are still very dominant in the sector and there still much to be done and until we get to a space called a comfortable wish. We are not saying it has to be 50/50 but a comfortable wish where you can call a meeting on an extractive sector issue and you find you have almost many women as there are men in this conversation... Women are slowly coming up and being able to challenge that narrative and how the existence is none of your business. You pay me what I am worth not by qualification but pay me by what the job is deserving. My gender is not the topic for what I earn. I think there is more conversation that is empowering women towards a new gender front. I have seen very empowered women and even earning more than some of their male counterparts which I think whatever lobby initiatives have been set have started to work but I think

so much more can be done and should be done.” (Female, Senior Lawyer/ Activist, Consultant, Interview, Nairobi, 2018)

However, there are also contestations to this argument, and I wrestle with the need for women to feel relevant in the industry by conforming to its requirements such as accepting that extractive industries are just the way they are, a boy’s club. In my theoretical framework I do try to discuss this contestation in so far as my ‘Elite respondents are concerned. This is not to say that elite women in the industry are not feminists, but they do wrestle with the word as they do with the concept and the ethos that surround it. So as much as they are strong spirited women with the ability to compete and change the industry for the emancipation and empowerment of black women, many wrestle with their identity as women and as women of African heritage in a white dominated industry while at the same time identifying more with westernised feminist thinking of equality. This contestation is important in my thinking as it reveals the complexities of the female body as an object of capabilities and at the same time as a vessel of change and emancipation of the female from corporate commodification (Eden et.al, 2013).

Such sexualisation has co-produced and reproduced a generation of women who seem content with the liberal retorts of ‘choice’ which have plagued feminist discourse and practice (See Conboy et.al, 1997). Such choice amounts to a scenario where women are placed at cross-roads between having a career/ advancing in their careers’ verses having a family and/or children (See quote below). Such choice is even more difficult for African women as cultural norms, beliefs as well as patriarchy ensures that women who choose their careers over family are ostracised or deemed incomplete. A woman therefore cannot just have it all whereas men are not plagued by such a choice and can generally grow in their careers. Whilst the concept of choice has been the bedrock of feminist discourse in getting women back to work in sectors predominantly considered male- the contradictory and unintended consequences of female

disempowerment that the concept brings forth has only served to further alienate women further in the extractive sectors.

“...you can say let me have a baby and still take the time needed but in that time you still need to think how to come back to work and may be have some hours at home. It is a fast industry and technology is changing everywhere and if you do not keep up, it is hard for you to maintain your job.” (Senior Manager, Union of Extractive Industry Organisations, Female, Nairobi, 2018)

The legitimisation of the feminist concepts/ equality issues has also normalised misogyny at the workplace with women who choose to advance their careers in the sector often assumed to have gotten their positions because of their sexual prowess rather than hard work. With notions of permeability of the female body renegotiated not through the natural state of the female body but through socialised expectations of what and how a body should be, often through the eyes of men, black women's bodies continue to be a matter of interest in extractives and indeed other sectors. In this sense, black women's bodies are generally portrayed as objects of pleasure and amusement documented in the dark histories of slavery and colonialism and continued today with black skin, hair and general body viewed differently, non-standard, out of place, ugly (Parkinson, 2016; Mothoagae, 2016). Unlike in advertising where fashion and cosmetic brands have been shamed into catering for the multimillion-dollar African market, extractives are still far from recognising black women bodies and indeed women's bodies in general as normal with infrastructures such as toilets and uniforms built for men rather than women.

Based on my findings, I therefore argue that sexism transcends boundaries, class, ethnicity, and social standing and although affects different groups of women the same way, these experiences are differentiated by context and social standing in society. Sexism against elite black African women is deliberate, narcissistic, and racially motivated and enabled by

systematised laws and policies derived from colonial and slavery undertones. It is thereby uniquely differentiated between black women and white women. Consequently, black African women in elite spaces are likely to experience sexism not because of their gender, but because of how they look like, how they talk, where they come from and the colour of their skin. Although black women are navigating sexism within the industry by challenging laws and policies that deny them equality and full acceptance in the industry, it's still a difficult task and from my findings it will take more than just activism to effect change. In fact, the recognition of women's individuality and acceptance of black women as they are a good starting point. That is, they are women, they are black, and they are from a background that will require them and judge them harshly for their choices to work. Black women must be allowed to flourish in their bodies and to be accepted for both their strengths and shortcomings for this is the only way they will grow as individuals and as a group in the industry. They needn't compartmentalise their lives, rather, their lives should be part and parcel of who they are at the workplace.

“Most women are not confident. You could be smart and have gone to the best schools but when you come to the work place you get intimidated by the man. I believe it is all about confidence and that is where it begins...You need to have a very big personality to be able to deal with your issues. One undoing of women is we are very emotional like ...you need to make a decision but your emotions get into play and that gets the best of you even though you have the right point. I have sat in interviews where we interview both men and women and I got disappointed because you look at the papers that this man has tabled but when they present themselves, you get to rethink the papers. But when it comes to the woman she has straight As and everything but end up presenting themselves wrongly and you get to rethink her papers...Woman generally

want to learn so much so as to be comfortable but for men they like to know the way of doing things (Senior Manager, Female, Nairobi, 2018).

However, whilst sexism affects women employed by the industry, it also affects women who have moved on to become their own bosses, women who have established their own successful businesses. Sexism transcends contexts and tends to follow women wherever they go and no matter how successful they may be (Pickerill, 2015). It is just impossible to ignore and extractives seems to reward women in the most unconventional ways and feminine research has confronted masculinist discourses over the years by questioning the naturalisation of men as industrial workers and women as ‘helpers’ (Ahmed, 2018; Perez, 2019) This has necessitated the rethinking of extractives as a feminine place of work and rightly so as women make a significant contribution to extractive industry processes and any critique of the industry must hinge upon reinforcing women’s agency and redefining the workplace as a place that is a feminine place of work just as it is masculine. Questions about women’s competence and capabilities are therefore out of place and as it emerged from the research, are only sideshows meant to glorify patriarchy. Such questions ignore the fact that women are not only smart and intelligent but are sometimes more well trained and better placed to do technical jobs than men in similar job groups. The sort of questions that should be asked are about ‘what women are bringing to the table, which company can do the job best and at what cost, without bringing in gender matters.

“I think that change in technology, perception and even industry has become that it can be endangered and now women could be considered at par to enter at the same level as men... Women are at every risk whether you are doing exploration for oil, gold or gas. It happens in very remote areas; terrain is not conducive for women. It is a high risk and high return kind of business. Women are generally known to be risk takers. There is a lot of gambling and a lot of uncertainty which already neglects the characteristics

of what a woman is in entering the extractives place. But with the improvement in technology and a lot more information available, it is not a jungle anymore to enter the extractives business. Much has been done in a manner such that it has been made what could have otherwise been a harsh environment become more neutral that anybody can be like female geologists because technology allows them to go to these terrains. A lot more geologic information means they are not risking themselves going to some wild world west. They know exactly where they are going and what resources they need and what needs to be done. (Female Commercial Lawyer, Women rights Activist, Nairobi, interview, 2018).

On the flipside, the oil and gas sector has witnessed an upsurge of women owned businesses which is encouraging. As put by one respondent, there still is potential for growth of women. This is because the sector doesn't discriminate in this respect and with fewer women in technical roles in oil companies, starting a business is a good alternative as women are able to grow and build their careers at their own pace and on their terms. With increased use of technology, the idea of masculinity and masculine strength is also slowly becoming irrelevant as jobs that require physical strength can now be carried out at the touch of a button. The increased use of technology in the industry has also computerised most operations and therefore physical strength should no longer be a factor in determining whether to employ a female worker or not. What matters then is the skills and capabilities of the person undertaking the job making it unnecessary for the oil industry to discriminate on women based on their femininities.

“I think I'd start by saying from a country perspective oil and Gas is new and all I can say is that there is a place for Kenyan businesses for Kenyan people and I see pretty much the women as a part of the population and so they definitely have potential. From an employment perspective. I wouldn't say we all try to become STEM candidates or

whatever it is, but I think in whatever we're doing, how can women be able to tap into the opportunities and similarly if there's a business opportunity, how can they play a role in the supply chain? Because there are lots of opportunities. Yeah, and I think I'd also want to improve it by saying we look at it and say as a specialist...you still find women running consultancies, women as engineers, surveyors, whatever it is.”
(Female, Business Owner, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Denying women growth in the industry because of their body is therefore discriminative and should be treated with the contempt it deserved as it only serves to reinforce the sexist and prejudiced corporate culture of discrimination against women. With technology and the right experience, women should be given the chance to grow in the sector which could increase the current staffing level in the industry which one respondent indicated to be at only 20% (See... WIM, 2010). Technology can therefore be the bridging gap that could ensure that women are given equal opportunities to serve in the oil fields as men creating a win-win for both the company and women workers. However, having said this, technology alone cannot be relied on to change the fortunes of women in the oil and gas industry. This is because technology is changing and as more and more operations are computerised, women risk losing their jobs all together as machines take over human labour.

Passing or keeping the power: Employing women

By using western feminist ideas to understand black women experience, elite black African women remain in the cracks of time and space. And while elite western women have moved on to enjoy legislative provisions on choice and individuality, elite black African women and indeed other minorities are faced with the difficult choice between their careers and their identity as maternal beings. While masculine environments like sports, construction and academia (STEM subjects) have accelerated this choice, elite black African women continue to strike a balance between their maternal responsibilities, marriage and work in order to gain legitimacy.

Further to this, women who are deemed to be ‘threats’ to the status quo such as career aggressive women are often promptly streamlined to conform to the status quo. A respondent had also been promptly removed from a high-level panel as they were considered ‘too smart’ and therefore a threat to the positions occupied by their bosses. This brings to question why they were not appointed to such senior positions in the first place, if they are indeed smarter than the people expected to supervise them. Women throughout the research are also scrutinised more closely and although some were appointed to positions of power, these were largely precarious with sectors headed by women/ positions occupied by women being the first to go when companies cut down operations. This concept is explored under the ‘glass cliff’ theory and is quite rife in the extractive sector as was demonstrated in the quote below where the respondent was given Country Manager’s position at a time when the oil economy was generally failing mainly due to global economic shocks and companies were mostly down-sizing. This shows that women are usually not given high power positions because they are ‘wanted,’ rather they are given these positions to provide a false narrative of equality and non-discrimination by the corporate world. This in turn is a ‘win-win’ as when these women fail, although they are already set up to fail, the company has no liability and instead gains recognition for their ‘good work’ in supporting women’s progress.

“I was still an expatriate, so I lived a very good life then I looked around and remember talking to one of my senior bosses and said why aren’t we seeing women running operations? There is absolutely nothing. I remember them bringing a lady from Equatorial Guinea who was supposedly going to be the first country manager, but it never transpired. She seemed to just come in and fizzled out. Nothing happened with her. So, I was like no this cannot be right... I started investigating what is it that I needed to do to get myself more exposed you know. Regional office was at that time in Johannesburg working a lot with product lines and senior management. At one point

they wanted me to go back to Angola and said no I have been there, done that. I want to do something more into management that is in a business environment. I had a very good opportunity. The then vice president for sub-Saharan Africa had heard a lot about me and came to Kenya and we all had to do presentations. He liked what I did and felt I really understood the market and asked if I could meet him and his team and it was then that he offered me the job so I think they had me in their mind. They gave me the country manager for Kenya and within less than 6 months *I was given the whole of Eastern Africa. I was given the East Africa role at a time when the market was terrible, when East Africa was not doing well in comparison and the company was trying to shut down the Eastern Africa operations...* I said no, let me go buy some time. We had a lot of assets in the region. I said look, I am going to clean up the region, I am going to make lean operations, headquarter everything in Kenya you know, bring all the critical mass here and then we will be targeting operations here within east Africa if need be. I quietly did that and managed to achieve my goals and came up with a very clean operation and everybody was very surprised. (Female, Senior Engineer/ Business Women, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

While such a scenario is generally policy related, it also transcends beyond policy into a racial debate. Why do women, black women have to fight so hard for positions in an environment they fully understand? It would go without question that a qualified black female in East Africa, who is from East Africa would be a very good fit to run the operations in the region as they understand it. But why wait until the company starts shutting down operations to appoint them to the position/ or never at all? Or is the female especially in a black skin just not good enough for the job? It goes without question that women especially black women are disadvantaged in the sector and are second-guessed at every turn. Such compartmentalisation of the black female transcends beyond biology (sex), rather, it is a product of systematic materialisation and

(re)materialisation of a regulatory framework that is designed to subjugate women into inferior positions for the glorification of men and masculinity (See Diagle and Golomb, 2009). Such sexist and misogynistic take on women and their bodies should be seen for what it is - a tragedy of the corporate world and a co-production of the commodification/ materialisation of the female body as an object of sexual desire and existing only for the pleasure of men.’

“I think they are and now not strange to find a woman an engineer. I am doing you know... before it used to be a fascination and we were so few or even unheard of. I think now it stopped being anything so miraculous. We are still few, but I can see women really trying to and I can see a lot being done in terms of nurturing young talent even creative awareness because I think women not taking up these opportunities is because of lack of knowledge of knowing that opportunity is there like who goes to that girl child, high school girl and tell her there is a job called petroleum engineering. That girl still knows there is a lawyer, doctor but who has told her there is this opportunity and if you are good in your stem studies so don’t think main engineering but think petroleum engineering so think majoring engineering going there and creating that interest and have more girl children who study the right subject to take up these opportunities that have been created.” (Female -older female, Lawyer, Women Rights Activist, Nairobi, Interview, 2018)

Interestingly, as demonstrated by the research findings, women are just as mobile as men and can effectively just be as aggressive and as assertive as men in their quest for growth in the industry. Arguments that are put forth to deny women progress in the industry are thus irrelevant and are mere extensions of sexist misogynistic behaviour designed to ensure men ‘keep the power’ to the detriment of female progress. Looking at it from an African perspective, the lack of black women in extractive industry leadership is quite sickening as they are not only qualified, but also have the advantage of ‘local knowledge’ which places them at a higher place

in the job market. Instead, the industry is overrun by male, white and mostly chauvinistic bosses who have no desire to see women progress. Instead, women are intentionally placed on a glass cliff or shown the highway in order to ensure they remain in positions that are considered 'safe' for women. These are mostly jobs that conform to their traditional gender norms. Women who manage to wiggle through such obstacles are promptly setback as was demonstrated in the research where one senior manager was removed from a high-level government panel because she was considered 'too smart.'

"I moved to the US and started in the marketing department even though I had an engineering degree. I was new to the US and basically got to learn about the business. It was a very good group. I was exposed to both North-American- Mexico and had access to very senior people all up to the CEO ... So again, it's a very wide scope and I decided I wanted to go into sales. I thought sales was good, *I looked around and there were no women doing sales so I approached the regional sales manager [Who was a man]...and he took one look at me and said it will never happen and I could not understand why* and I remember they were merging with a company, I forget the name but this company was bringing on board a woman [who was a white woman] and she was not technically trained and I said I am technically trained and surely that would have an advantage and he said yes you are technically trained but you have never been in the field and it is going to take you 5 years or more and I left his office very dejected and thought where do I go from here?" (Female, Senior Engineer/ Business Woman, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

This I argue is in a bid to reinforce sexist arguments of women being less equal to men and black women being even more less equal. As such, as evidenced from the research, I argue that women in extractives are akin to objects of beauty designed to make the companies look inclusive and gender equality conscious while in truth, are no more than corporate tokens of

attaining social legitimacy. Black women are especially subjects that are mostly overlooked not because they do not have the qualifications, but because the colour of their skin will never make them good enough. This is why as demonstrated in the quote, the respondent was not deemed capable of handling the job with the boss even suggesting it would take at least five years to be able to ‘qualify’ properly for a job they are already technically trained in. Such discouragement is what is holding women back and the lack of black females in leadership positions within extractive industries is further creating a gap as there is no one to mentor and fight for the growth of these women from the top albeit with the exception of one respondent who had a female mentor. Black African women in Kenyan extractives are also trying to change this narrative by creating mentorship and experience sharing platforms to encourage, support and develop elite black African women’s talent in the highly foreign, male and white industry that is extractives.

All in all, from the evidence in the research it is implied that to be a fully qualified, capable worker in the extractive sector, you have to be white and male. Elite black women are expected to sit back and be content with what they have, as their presence is already an achievement. It is therefore not surprising for women in key positions to lose their jobs often without notice when extractive industries fold up as they were never meant to ‘have those jobs in the first place.’ (See Glass and Cook, 2020) The first targets for redundancies often includes women with families, those on maternity or with childcare commitments. Such practices only reaffirm concerns that women are ‘set up’ to fail with companies deliberately appointing women to positions they know will be redundant in a few months or those that are already struggling to score goals of equality and diversity in what feminists have identified as the ‘glass cliff.’ (See Sabharwal, 2015). Such materialisation of the female coproduces the concept of sexism where

the commodified ideal of the body is demarcated and regulated through social, economic, political and cultural practices.

“So, I approached my boss and said, ‘look, *I am going to apply to get into this program and he looked at me and said why would you want to do that? You have a very nice job and* I said it’s somehow I feel not really utilizing my skills set and I look around and do not see any women and it bothers me and where we are there are lots of women.”

(Female, Engineer/ Business Woman, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

One foot at the door or is it? The Corporate Fallacy

While companies hide under market forces and company bottom line, the low number of women in both offshore and on-shore facilities only go to show that the problem isn't with the infrastructure, rather it is with the policies and practices of the companies which piggy-bank on the physical body of women to deny them opportunities in the oil sector. In short, women’s ability to adapt to an oil rig environment should not be pegged on how they use the toilet. The fact that a woman squats and a man stands does not in any way reduce a woman’s mental and physical capacities, rather, these are natural biological processes that have no place in determining who works where. As such, women’s engagement in the industry cannot be brought down to what happens in their bodies as this is as normal to women as it is normal for men when it came to their bodies. Women are therefore not a fixed category of nature. Neither are they a mistake of nature that is to be rectified through masculinised standards of operation or pieces of legislation designed to make corporates and society in general look progressive.

Whilst women have mostly been socialised to accept the shortcomings of the industry and take pride in the small successes against discriminative and misogyny practices, the buck stops with all of us in the feminist movement to ensure that companies and government lives to its expectations. Black African women should not in any way be made to feel that it is a privilege

to have them in positions of power and authority, rather it should be commonplace to see women progress in extractive sectors, not because of affirmative action or diversity programmes, but because as women, they are as capable if not more capable and qualified to handle the demands of the sector. Companies must therefore look beyond the ‘skirt’ and concentrate on a more balanced and skilful workforce rather than one that conforms to the demands of a patriarchal world and ensure there’s equal pay for equal work done for both men and women (See Washington and Watkins, 2018).

“..there will be certain aggression directed towards you because you are a lady, I mean I can’t prove it but it’s definitely a feeling and there are certain liberties such matters will take from you because you are a lady. In the workplace, it’s not blatant, remember we are trying to adopt progressive laws. We have seen in the international scene, the effect of not taking women seriously in the world. In the last 1 year, about 15 months there has been this hashtag ‘Me too’ movement that has brought with it significant implications, significant consequences for people who have abused their power especially when it comes to the remuneration of their women staff, essential overtures towards their women staff, you know, lack of equal pay for equal work done. So there is a bias but I cannot say for example that I have faced maybe a lack of opportunity or a lack of progression because I am a woman. In fact to be fair we have the one third gender rule now in this country, I don’t know when it was implemented but I can say that there have been advantages to being a woman. My personal view of the one third gender rule is that, I think that all affirmative action programs, because that’s what I think it is, you have to be very careful, you have to strike a balance between being a woman and having the qualifications...The intention behind them is to give you a foot in the door or give you a seat at the table as well. But once you get a foot at the door or

once you get a seat at the table then you have to earn your keep. “ (Female, Commercial Lawyer, Government, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

It is not enough to get women a seat at the table as referenced in the quote above. Such affirmative action programmes make equality seem discretionary and at the behest of companies, mostly as a way of attaining legitimacy whilst ensuring financial performance (Fine and Sojo, 2019; Mollett, 2017). There has to be a balance between getting women a seat at the table and ensuring that seat is meaningful in decision making processes. What we have now is a charade meant to send us on a fools’ errand, to mislead black African women in elite extractive spaces into believing they already have it all when they have nothing. Black African women need not make a good business case to be considered relevant and deserving, rather, there should be a level playing field that not only considers women’s competencies but also ensures elite black African women can compete as individuals devoid of any gendered baggage (See quote below). Perhaps by considering the economic and social costs of including/excluding women, companies will be able to come up with better strategies that ensure women’s experiences are as positive as can be.

“I think also whereas I can’t speak to the vibrancy of the law, I can’t say women do business differently. For example, I have seen it with a lot of my male colleagues that they are happy to conclude a board room discussion in the bar or over drinks or you know, whatever, you know after hours, but these are my male colleagues. But my female colleagues have different means because come home time they have to go back to their children, they have to figure out how supper is being made... so to that extent being a woman would be a barrier in the sense that if someone decides to have a discussion outside business hours; that is obviously a deterrent and would be a deterrent to many women who essentially have to have balance between their professional and

personal needs. Unfortunately, not many of us, at least as much as I know have the means, like your partner being supportive and might have the financial strength to keep you at home. You may want to be a housewife but the realities, the financial responsibilities at hand may not extend that luxury. So you shouldn't have to pay by going home consistently at 11 or midnight. That would definitely bring an issue in your home, a scenario where you can't produce at work and at home, you know you're running late, you are tired, so that is to me what I have observed that could potentially be a challenge (Senior Lawyer, Government, Female, Nairobi, 2018).

Sexual harassment reporting procedures is one way in which actual action can begin but these must go further if they are to yield any results for women in the sector. Shaming of women who report sexual harassment and abuse featured prominently in the research and could explain the 'silence' on the matter with many respondents choosing not to touch the subject. Repercussions of reporting are such that black african women are damned if they do and damned if they don't and they shouldn't have to live like that. As such, companies and governments will have to figure out a way to make the extractive sector more accountable for what is going on in their backyard.

Currently, the metric used ignores the social and individual aspect of gender, sex and difference and lumps women into one large category under the guise of equality and non-discrimination (Menzies & Harley, 2012; Perez, 2019). Such metrics limit our ability to understand the value that elite black African women bring to leadership spaces. Instead, they embody masculinised undertones that devalue being women and instead pushes black African women to become an empty shadow of men. Such undertones are associated with low cooperation abuse, poor work-life balance and in general poor mental and physical health of the workforce. Research does point to a positive link between female representation and organization social and financial performance as women leaders are more likely to engage more with communities/ stakeholders

and promote and protect legislations that ensure equality and non-discrimination, good work-life balance and discourage corrupt behaviour (Fine and Sojo, 2019; Dabasree, 2015). This arguably shifts the focus from what elite black African women can do for firms to what firms can do for elite black African women. A case example in the research is when female engineers were able to agitate for the introduction of coveralls and work boots that were designed with women in mind – lightweight with a zipper underneath- rather than the oversized petite versions of male uniforms that is the norm.

However, the female body never quite complies with the cultural norms ascribed to it and is in fact re-materialised through time and space as can be seen in the ability of women to organize over the past decades. A key event in Kenya for example is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 when Kenyan elite black women chose to stand up for their rights, organised and created solidarity movements that changed the fate of the black African woman. It remains a key moment that significantly transformed the place of the Kenyan woman dismantling images of African women as victims and replacing them with images of fearless, competitive, independent and resilient beings capable of charting their own destiny, that is the true form of a black African elite woman. This is evidenced in the way elite black African women are resilient in challenging the status quo to be recognised as conscious intellectual beings rather than judged because of their physical body and strength. Progress has to some extent been realised locally with legislative processes in Kenya for example erasing the traditional and patriarchal biases that exist especially with regard to access. The reality however is different as was evidenced in the research with tribalism, nepotism, racism, culture holding more weight on how black African women were treated in the job market. Western nations have also enabled an environment where white women are able to adequately choose, pursue and grow in careers that are traditionally male, like extractives. However, minority groups such as black African women continue to get the raw end of the stick even when they have embedded

themselves into the fabric of western society and possess the necessary skills, education and ambition.

The feminist movement has in fact continued to fail on this front and as a result the legislating of discrimination, misogyny and sexism in African countries such as Kenya continues to yield little to no fruits for the black elite African woman and other indeed other African women. In fact, little has changed in the extractive industries since the 80s as women who entered the industry two or three decades earlier are still fighting a similar battle to their younger counterparts today. For example, elite black African women must still choose between their careers and their families regardless of social status or class. But while it appears that white women 'have it all' and are accepted by society for their ambitions, backed by progressive laws and supportive systems, their experiences are similar to those of Elite Black African women within extractives, albeit with African women judged more harshly for their ambition and choices. Many elite women -black or white- fit this profile and as the research showed, have the choice to delay/ or not to have kids or families in order to advance in their careers. Such women end up quite high up on the job group ladder which validates such choices. However, in African societies like Kenya, such women are still considered weak and incomplete as only marriage and /children are considered enough validation of womanhood. Borrowing from Motherism, a woman's ability to have children and nurture them as such bears a higher social status than being financially successful or educated. Elite black African women are in this grey area where they are in a constant battle with self- who they are, what they want and where they belong. Choosing either or trying to balance both aspects of self- family and work - thus becomes near impossible in the current conditions presented by extractive industries and only serves to further marginalise black African women and place them in precarious positions where their vulnerability is likely to be exploited for the 'diverse' corporate fallacy.

“...so it’s only recently that I start seeing that as a woman there are certain prejudices, there are certain liberties people take for granted...we do live, we do exist, we do trade in a very patriarchal society. A lot of the people in authority tend to be a very male dominated industry and even then its older men, so sometimes I’ve heard for example, I have been in meetings where somebody walks in and because you are the only woman, they don’t even mean to be biased, they will ask you to serve them tea, they will ask you where the washrooms are, they will ask you when lunch is going to be served. These are the things you know you will ask yourself why would they ask you such a question? Is it because you are the only woman in the room or because you are the youngest woman in the room? So there are those things I noticed then and I have my personal views about them but they have not to date been an impediment to me at personal level, but I do feel as I get into, as I think about maybe having a family and so on and so forth, I should say, am down with having children, but as I think about those things I am becoming aware of the fact that I will have to make certain adjustments, I will have to make certain long-term provisions for all that (Senior Lawyer, Government, Female, Nairobi, 2018).

Such conflict and tensions were evident in the research where elite black African women sought to define their activism and place as being equal to that of men; therefore not in need of affirmative action spaces or tokenised roles. However, even with this activism, elite black African women were still required to fall back to ascribed societal gender roles that hold women in positions that are more aligned to caring responsibilities (See quote above). As demonstrated in the research, such thinking is so normalised that some respondents still felt the need to validate their ‘caring roles’ by ‘serving tea and donuts’ to male colleagues proudly linked to their culture and upbringing. Although it can be considered an innocent gesture, it does speak volumes on the extent to which black African women have been ‘brainwashed’ and

socialised into accepting superiority of the male gender and their ‘domestic role.’ But is this culture? Or are these women conflicted in who they are? I argue that this goes beyond culture and is a culmination of normalised sexism, and racism perpetuated by years of oppression both by remnants of colonial systems and patriarchy engraved in laws and policies.

“We need the women rights movement...there is a duty of care and responsibility placed on the male gender to open up doors for access. That could be through policy, informal engagement etc that then propel women to certain positions - affirmative action or by recognition. I think the conversation in this question is not premature because it is necessary. We are ready to understand that there are gender differences...we could understand gender difference instead of approaching extractives. It’s easy to talk about a woman as a doctor but in geosciences, those are two different conversations because of the work it entails. But in my thinking, we are having the wrong conversation now... we want to jump to accessibility and equality without talking about recognition and difference. We talk of gender neutral but I think this conversation is a little premature because we have not understood the genesis of challenges for women in extractives. Extractives don’t know the challenges women have in other fields...like I said, some barriers need a gate keeper to knock down those barriers...I think it’s quite sad...I wish we had a different conversation ten years ago. I wish we were being heard in parliament and not in the board room that’s all I think... we assume one size fits all. Women in Turkana are not the same as women in Nairobi. They have different challenges... (Senior Lawyer, Women Rights Activist, Industry Consultant, Female, Nairobi, 2018)

Decolonisation of the female African mind and empowerment of the black woman can thus go a long way in not only reconnecting black women to their roots and culture. It can also liberate their way of thinking, back to empowerment and liberation, and away from consumerism and power between the sexes which only seems to negate the value of women at the workplace.

Such struggle spills over to the workplace with companies investing poorly in female issues such as maternity leave and sick pay with women forced to take unpaid leave to care for their children and/ or accept lesser paid non-technical office roles on return. While big multinationals and African countries such as Kenya have some policies on maternity leave, this is hardly enough and there have always been complaints of women being made redundant when on maternity leave with women held positions often to the first to go in the event of company restructuring or at the first sight of financial troubles (See Ahmed, 2020). Existing policies are thus not enough to protect women and I argue that they are designed to be this way to ensure that companies do not incur extra costs of hiring replacement staff to cover for employees on maternity leave.

“I remember one thing in particular every time I had an operation and as the lead engineer I had customers and I always made a point to always welcome my customers or my clients and I always made sure I had served them tea and cooked donuts because donuts were a big thing and one day my district manager came in. this is a field operation and he said ... can I have a word with you? So, I went out with the main van and said yes, what is the problem? He said I never ever want to see you serving tea to any man in this operation. I looked at him and said yes but my culture and I am Kenyan but he said I do not care. You are an American and you are in America, you understand. This is how we do things. These men will never respect you. It does not matter how good you are.” (Female, Senior Engineer, Businesswoman, interview, Nairobi, 2018)

Career decisions are indeed affecting family life with women being forced to choose between jobs and family life. One of the respondents mentioned that a colleague had to return to work two weeks after delivery leaving behind a new-born due to potential loss of pay, rigid rota systems and the imminent demotion that awaits women who dare take maternity leave. Whether this is the norm in extractive industries is debatable as most companies do rely on

local labour laws. However, in countries where there are poor legislative environments such as in Africa, women are at the behest of their corporate employers and women's bodies and the choice of what happens to it has subsequently become a matter of corporate control, a commodity that is traded and negotiated in terms of company bottom line.

The normalisation of sexism amongst women in the extractive industry also points to a much bigger problem of systemic chauvinism where women are compelled to work in office roles that conform to their 'perceived traditional role' rather than in technical fields. This in itself is problematic and points to an engraved sexism where women seem to have accepted their place in the industry as lesser beings and are only but adapting to the status quo:

'As women we don't want to get our hands dirty. We just want roles that will allow us to sit in the office.' (Female, Nairobi, Engineer/ Businesswoman, interview, 2018)

The expectation that elite black African women have to bear children and take care of the home to be considered 'complete' indeed has no place in society. What is interesting is the way these expectations followed women into the workplace with one respondent mentioning how she was posted to a new office and everyone (all men in the room) expected her to serve them tea, take minutes and clean up right after although she was the 'boss'. African women disproportionately suffer from such discrimination with many often mistaken to be a cook, cleaner or an office clerk especially if in the company of white female colleagues. White women often rose-up the ranks quicker in their careers than black women. Black women also felt the need to have a male mentor (mostly white) and high approval from male colleagues which they believe is the key to their progression in extractive industries. A high approval rating means 'they are part of the boys' club and therefore 'one of their own.'

"I think it is a societal thing in Africa. Women of other cultures are oriented differently but it is not culture entirely but also in our nature. With what I have seen with women

in these high positions, I do not know if it is training or experiences that got them to where they are, but also there has been a man behind, pushing them forward and shaping them into who they are.” (Senior Manager, Oil Consortium, Female, Interview, Nairobi, 2018)

Such misplaced fallacies are the reason women and black women in particular still feel the need to be aggressive and/ or put off having a family life to advance faster in their careers mostly because if you step aside as a woman, you never catch up with your cohort (See... Delgado-Romero et.al, 2007; Moody, 2004). This shows how women have been socialised to accept things the way they are and could easily fit into the realms of patriarchy where women look up to men for leadership and guidance as is often the case in African contexts. Whether this was strategy or because there are fewer women and black women for that matter in higher ranks is perhaps something that should be researched further.

“... It's a mandate that they have to really bring in women, to make sure women are not fast tracked but you know to get the right women and able to progress these women. I think more so than other companies. So there was a discussion on where women have done extremely well and that to me is something that I'm really complacent about and I ask what part can I play in this recreation. It's important. Think of it as long as all of us do our stuff it won't become an issue one day. It's just that if you don't see the numbers, it is because the women are not interested for a number of reasons. Then towards the end I think we need to think of how to retain the retention. I think that's an area a lot of people tend to forget and they think okay we will bring them in. And I've seen a lot of good engineers leave the industry because they are frustrated, they just feel that as I said that those who are mothers, those taking care of sick, of elderly parents and you know we come with our own issues that I think that a man may not necessarily understand in the workplace. I think we forget about retention; we talk about bringing

women in and forget how to make sure we retain them and let them progress.” (Female, Senior Engineer/ Businesswoman, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

This scenario isn't just limited to the workplace and to career women, it cuts across the board and women of all groups and social classes reported similar experiences. This to say that women's experiences at home were not any different from their experiences at work as they were treated as inferior in both realms. Elite black African women in the extractive industry have to balance paid labour with care responsibilities in a patriarchal setting. The story doesn't end with elite black African women in the extractive sector. Instead, the challenges they face in the have knock-on effects for other women in other sectors such as childcare whom elite black African women rely on extensively in order to strike a balance between their two realities, highlighting the need for adaptive workspaces that provide elite black African women with families the much needed space to juggle both roles. As demonstrated in the quote below, the creation of 'a mother's space' and flexi time (despite not being mainstream policy) by one company in the research does give elite black African women the much needed headspace to concentrate on their jobs and indeed be more productive.

“...we've moved into this building in 2014 and in 2014 and there was a room that we used wherever and there were discussion of having a quiet room. We have a mother, she went to the room and eventually it was converted into you know a mother's room and I think as we got more women and younger women that were getting more children, the room was nicely made. It has an office, big showers in the room when the mothers come back, they express... when in the mothers' room. And so they're comfortable. It is a nice secluded area so I'd say the company has moved a long way in tandem with the number of women coming into the organization just make sure that it's comfortable for us.” (Senior Manager, Oil Company, Female, Nairobi, Interview, 2018)

The use of masculine words to push women to perform such as ‘man-up’ are seen as ways of reinforcement of these masculinities as women are judged by how much physical and mental strength they can exhibit when performing their duties, whether by display of physical strength or by their ability to command an audience of men. Such reinforced sexism is the reason women advanced slowly in their careers, or not at all in the extractive industry or left their careers all together. I find the expectation of women to become more masculine to advance in their careers ludicrous as it totally ignores the fact that men and women have different abilities and strengths which could be demonstrated in different ways to achieve the same goal. Such expectations also completely ignore the need for a good work-life balance to enable women prosper in their social life as wives, mothers, friends or even sisters. This is to enable men and by extension fathers to take on a greater domestic load in the upbringing of children to free up time for women to flourish in extractives. Away from the workplace, the same prejudices exist with women who keep late nights or hang out in bars as a way of becoming a part of the ‘boys club’ considered to be promiscuous, characterless and unmarriageable. So there really is no place that is better for women and as such extractive industries have to work hard to overturn their institutionalised sexism to provide a conducive environment for women to prosper both as workers and as wives/ mothers. What is needed as demonstrated in the quote above is a work environment where women thrive regardless. Diversity should therefore move away from drumming up the number of women to creating an environment where women can be their best and one in which they are accommodated with their different needs.

“Honestly, so far it has been quite positive. When we started the research centre 4 years ago, I was alone. Now we have a staff of about 20 and yet there is no office I have not been invited to and I am happy I have not been kicked out of an office but it is probably because of the space I occupy in academia. I am not in industry. I am not challenging anybody directly...I am not in government so it is possible that women in

those sorts of sectors...have a different experience from mine. But mine has been extremely positive, it surprises me.” (Senior Lawyer, Senior Academic, Female, Interview, Nairobi, 2018)

Arguably, the persistent push to make women’s work invisible in the extractive industries is engrained at the very core of the extractive industry and it does not matter if a woman is employed by a company/ government or is running their own business. The fact that nothing is done to address sexism in the industry is a corporate strategy and women should not have to justify or work twice as hard just to prove that they are capable of being given a promotion. Rather, the industry needs to be restructured to ensure that positions are allocated on merit and not on how ‘flexible/ mobile’ an employee is. Afterall, from the research it is evident from the research that women are just as mobile as men and should therefore be provided with the same opportunities for growth as men. As a way of navigating these barriers, women in the research reported having to become ‘louder’ or ‘bitchy’ (as popularly referred to aggressive women at the workplace) in order to command respect from their male colleagues. They also had to behave ‘like men.’ That included expectations to stay out late to work, joining their male colleagues in bars for a few bottles after work and working out to build muscle and strength as a stereotype for physical prowess in order to perform in the same way men did. However, it is important to recognise that there is no direct way of addressing sexism at the workplace, and the roadmap to a robust system is long and will take lots of commitment, investment and support. The existence of standards such as Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), policies and professional codes of conduct is a step in the right direction. However, these need to be localised and made more gender responsive to include scores for diversity and inclusion. These could go a long way in promoting the equality and non-discrimination.

“... For example, *a woman of childbearing age, if she opts to have children, will definitely be out of commission for a 12month period*, at least in terms of her ability

to work at 100%. You know gestation period is 9 months then the legal position is that I think you have 3 months unpaid leave. I am not sure whether it's unpaid or paid. So basically you have 1 year where you will not be able to attend to your duties as you would if you were a man...And it struck me that that is something that is unique to women, you don't hear many fathers say, I can't come to the office because my son is sick unless there is a situation in their lives which has removed the participation of the primary care giver who is the mother. So it's only from last year that I started thinking of myself in terms of my female identity. I have never had reason to think that I am at a disadvantage in any way for having been a woman." (Female, Lawyer, Government, Nairobi, interview, 2018).

CHAPTER SEVEN: INFRASTRUCTURES OF EXCLUSION VERSUS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

What are infrastructures and how are women affected?

Infrastructure refers to the material and organizational structures of social life in diverse settings (Frischmann, 2004). This includes roles of the state and other mediating institutions such as development partners and private sector etc (Agenor, 2010). When talking about infrastructure what comes to mind are transport systems, equipment, communication systems. Rarely do we hear about the human capital that surrounds these infrastructures or the laws and policies that govern the implementation of such infrastructure and the associated outcomes.

For example, lack of infrastructure is thought to be the number one obstacle to the growth and development of Sub-Saharan Africa economies as well as the high mortality rates in these regions (OECD, 2019). Based on many studies, poor roads and healthcare are linked to the high number of maternal morbidity and mortality of children under five in countries like Kenya (OECD, 2019; SSATP, 2015). However, these infrastructures have more profound outcomes on women as a group because they are already at a disadvantage due to structural inequalities propagated through societal and organizational culture, care responsibilities and embodied sexism. That we have men making decisions for women and about women is the very core of the gender problem in extractives and other male dominated sectors. So how do we change the conversation? It requires self-reflection within the sector and an overhaul of the entire physical, cultural, social and legislative structure to ensure gender equality.

‘...Unless you put efforts to bring that conversation or remind people when talking about engendering the sector that has been experienced in the country. If you do not remind people that you need to talk about gender mainstreaming, it is still a conversation that can be lost because unfortunately the policy makers and the players

are still very more men making decisions in the extractives space...’ (Female, Senior Manager, Oil Company, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Infrastructure goes beyond physicality (of roads, telecommunications etc) to include human capital (Kemerink et.al, 2016). It is an object of study enclosed in the materiality of space, networks and actors, and interconnections between objects and bodies (Aradau, 2010; Enns, 2019). As such, it is improper to discuss infrastructure without including the people around the said infrastructure as well as the context in which these infrastructures occur. In discussing the materiality of infrastructure, academic and development literature has often focussed on the physical aspects of infrastructure (SSATP, 2015). Those that result in economic outcomes for an organization or company such as roads, health systems etc at the expense of those who interact, affect and are affected by decisions and processes resulting from inclusion and enforcement of ‘infrastructures.’ I argue that infrastructure also transcends beyond economic outcomes to include the wellbeing of workers.

An emerging set of literature also further interrogates the concept of infrastructure to include the body which brings an interesting dimension to our understanding, definition and framing. For example, Andueza et.al, (2021), interrogates the (re)production of the human body as a function of capitalism by emphasising the historical and geographic ways within which the body is transformed into a system of inputs and outputs (Andueza et.al, (2021). I argue that the contradictions and counter-indications produced and co-produced in elite masculine spaces where the body – the female body and mind- is seen as nothing short of an anomaly, reinforces the view extractive industries have on women in the labour force. By interrogating minority spaces and how extractive infrastructures supports/ or impedes their inclusion, this research brings in an interesting dimension to the understanding of infrastructure as a function of space and time. It brings out interesting anecdotes on how the female body can withstand the infrastructural deficits and physicality of extractive labour. This understanding is also

important given the important space women occupy in society and labour force (See Quote below). This is important in ensuring that infrastructure does not become a catalyst of exclusion rather an opportunity for inclusion, particularly of minority women in elite spaces who already face additional barriers to their integration and growth.

“Yes, because women make up more than 50%, so you’re missing out on a whole group that could come in and turn the industry around. Again, as I said, I think most women don’t really understand the industry. I did this talk to some young achievers in high school, the first thing they told me was “Ms. we are very interested in what you're doing but we don’t want to get our hands dirty, so we don’t think we want to go into this industry, we just want to sit in an office” and, I was shocked, I was like some of my best jobs have been in the field. When you sit in office it takes long to get results but in the field the results are right there. When you leave an operation, you know whether it is successful or not, about 99% of the time. So for me its like a drug. The field has a drug because you're doing everything, everything can be quite exciting. If you make a mistake you’ll know it right away. So again lack of these young girls really understanding what is out there and these are really bad girls. So I’ve actually been asked to come back and talk to them and hopefully mentor some of them who’ll show some interest in the extractive industry...I’m not advocating that companies go out and make it overly simplified because it’s for a woman. But I think ... if we can start at the prime new level to encourage. Let girls know that, hey, a lot of women that are doing extractive jobs. Because they don’t see people like us doing what we do. I think if more girls see that I don’t think that really they would go out and do what they would do for anybody else that’s just my opinion and it’s going to take time and again it comes back to the oldest folks. Those of us who are already in the industry what is it that we are doing? I would say in Kenya those of us that are in industry I think we are doing a lot

of...mention people like engineer Anna (Name changed) with her mentorship program and she is in the production engineering that's the senior production engineer ...you've seen some very good women engineers as well as others that have come out. I think that in my particular area there must be more office service more than the contractor's side. I don't think we really have time to be thinking about that. We are just there to get jobs. *I think on the office services side some companies have done extremely well. If you look at companies like ..., they are doing very well. It's a mandate that they have to really bring in women, to make sure women are not fast tracked but you know to get the right women and be able to progress these women. I think more so than other companies. So there was a discussion on where women have done extremely well and that to me is something* ...and I ask what part what can I play in this? It's important. Think of it, as long as all of us do our stuff it won't become an issue one day. It's just that if you don't see the numbers,' it is because the women are not interested for a number of reasons. Then towards the end I think we need to think of how to retain ... *I think that's an area a lot of people tend to forget and they think okay we will bring them in. And I've seen a lot of good engineers leave the industry because they are frustrated, they just feel that as I said that those who are mothers, those taking care of sick, of elderly parents and you know we come with our own issues that I think that a man may not necessary understand in the work place.* I think we forget about retention we talk about bringing women in and forget how to make sure we retain them and let them progress.” (Senior Engineer, Female, Businesswoman, Nairobi, 2018).

As such, infrastructure can also be defined as a means for social and spatial wellbeing that governs our social, economic and intellectual wellbeing. It is a tool for governing our social life in diverse ways. I explore key aspects of public goods, plurality and dynamism of law as well as spatial and time variations, interactions and experiences of female workers within a

highly rigid and masculinised extractive industry. This approach allows the research to look beyond the institutional needs of extractive industry and instead dissect the everyday life and experiences of elite black female workers within the spatial context of oil and exploration in Kenya. It is a lens of analysis that highlights the connections and dependencies that produce and co-produce experiences and govern the way we live. As shown in the quote below, the analysis in this research goes beyond the existing infrastructural deficits to propagate and envision an environment where women can push back and organise in order to deliver more meaningful benefits for black African women and indeed other minority groups in the extractive sector.

“...it’s not until last year I happened to be undertaking some studies in Australia that I started thinking of myself as a woman in the sector and don’t get me wrong, I have never thought I am a man... it’s just that all of a sudden I was presented with the inclination that caused me to pause and think women do have certain and special needs, or special considerations that are distinct from those of men.” (Female, Commercial lawyer, Government, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Kenya’s extractive industry has witnessed major infrastructural development in the form of Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPPSET) Corridor (Enns, 2019). A mega project that is meant to open up the country to trade and link rural oil rich regions of Turkana to the rest of the country and to the Port of Lamu for easy export and import (Enns, 2019). This is expected to drive up economic growth and attract investment to these areas. However, rural communities in this corridor, particularly those without protected land rights such as women have been stripped of access and user rights and communities disenfranchised. While it’s easier to quantify the impacts of infrastructure in extractive settings on issues such as the economy, it is more difficult to segregate these impacts amongst men and women especially by class, sex and social status. The promise of high returns on infrastructure development and focus on

physical aspects has also left elite black African women in rural and peri-urban communities along the development corridors worse off, displaced in land deals that only seem to benefit extractive industries and middlemen, often corrupt businessmen and politicians (Enns, 2019; Enns & Bersaglio, 2015). While good roads and telecommunications systems means well for elite black African women given the opportunities it opens up for business, the engrained sexism and misogyny within corporate culture continues to be an impediment to the growth of women and even with the existence of robust policies and solidarity movements, elite black African women continue to grapple with an infrastructure that is foreign, male and deliberately designed to serve men.

“...so it is still at the point where cautiously and deliberately talk about it in mind the decision makers and lobbying for engendering the policies, the legislative framework, the opportunities and the chances. Otherwise, we are not at a point where we can take it back and say enough has been done and when decisions have been made we are sure the space is for women. (Female, Senior Manager, Oil Company, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

There are also less visible power inequalities that constrain the way women experience infrastructure around extractives which shape the way elite black African women engage and are treated within the industry. This is central to discussions on equality and equal opportunity for women. When we talk about infrastructure in extractive industries, we cannot ignore the body and embodiment. As such the previous section on sexism and the female body is central to this section. This is due to the way the physical body interacts with the systems and processes in the industry to yield precarious results for elite black African women. Existing infrastructure such as laws, policies, equipment and the materiality of the sector has ensured that elite black African women remain on the periphery in extractive industry. Supported by a structural bias and a weak legal framework that is skewed towards masculinity, the industry has ensured that

black African women experiences in the industry are limited and challenging. What exists is a sexist structure of operations that is designed to protect the status quo, and this not only includes the design and use of equipment but also the way black African women are viewed, incorporated and supported in the industry.

Although increasing mechanisation of the industry can be argued to be an equaliser and a development that places all workers- black, white, male or female- at the same level; it unfortunately does little to eliminate the structural and cultural biases experienced by elite black African women and women in general. By eliminating the need for massive physical labour -which has been a constant in extractive industries and a justification for the limited number of women - (See Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015), extractive industries are at a point where they can focus on elite black African women's intellectual capabilities rather than physical strength. Why this is not happening to black African women points to a multiplicity of barriers such as race and tokenism (discussed in the next chapter) and reinforces the need for a different/ hybrid feminist approach that will understand black experience and propose solutions that are unique to black African women and other minority groups.

“I think equal policies in the sector is very important so that anybody is willing to enter and you know the nature of the industry, there is no entry barrier, make the playing field equal and opportunities for all genders. The other place is where technology can assist to make this less difficult, let us use technology because even it can be used to make things very easy and a bit more even and neutral. It does not need too much effort. We are not talking about too much physical work or saying a woman cannot lift a heavy thing because when technology is there, no one is lifting anything so either you or me can press a button cause no one is lifting anything so advancements in technology, creating equal opportunities for entry, a lot of sensitization where for traditional people who have been in this sector to have more acceptance to the fact that now women can

actually do this job. Go out there and create that awareness that it is not just a male thing, create opportunities and accept these women and the facilities you give them.”

(Female, Lawyer, Activist, Consultant, Interview, Nairobi, 2018)

As implied in the research, (see above quote), infrastructure such as offshore oil rigs must also be adapted to the changing face of extractive to ensure women do not just have a foot at the door but a place to call home. The industry must recognise and embrace the fact that women’s bodies although dynamic and designed to adapt to the pressures of nature, these bodies are also designed for ‘oil rigs’ as can be evidenced by the large number of women in the agricultural and artisanal mining economy undertaking back-breaking work (See Agarwal, 1994; 1992). As such, any perceived permeability does not reduce a woman’s physical and/ or mental capabilities. Therefore, just like men, women can achieve greatness in the extractive sector. Assumptions made about successful women such as those denoting that such women only got there because of their bodies i.e. ‘the perceived notion of women having to have sexual relations with their senior to succeed rather than through their intellectual strength,’ do not have a place in this context.

“It does because it resets clock. This is because if you are a young woman trying to get in the industry and the first conversation you are having is ‘what are you going to do for me’ and ‘do you know what that means?’ It sets people back but I guess the opposite is also through a lot. Men would feel that well we are also under immense pressure by women to play that game.” (Senior Lawyer, Senior Academic, Female, Interview, Nairobi, 2018)

The use of crude infrastructure such as funnels in place of toilets and ‘standard sized overalls’ also point to the persistent lack of investment in females with women treated as a more petite version of men and as such, infrastructure designed for men such as overalls, boots and funnels is quickly adapted to fit females by reducing their sizes (See Perez, 2019). Such standardisation

of the body does not take into account the uniqueness of the female body and often puts women at risk as has been demonstrated in other sectors such as Transport and Security where women are likely to die from car crashes owing to the lack of testing of female sized dummies when designing cars (Perez, 2019). Women in the police force have also lost their lives due to inadequately fitted vests (Perez, 2019). While such standardisation of infrastructure makes a good point in terms of saving money for the companies, it also points to a systematic exclusionary process that is designed to make the traditional masculinised sectors such as extractives as hostile as possible for women. As such, I argue that extractive industries have systematically worked out a way to exclude women whilst still being able to attain legitimacy with regard to attaining goals of equality and inclusion. Therefore, I argue that the female body in the extractive sector is mostly a curse rather than a blessing as companies are simply not in the business of equality and inclusion and will use all means to appear to be inclusive whilst in reality it is far from achieving such goals. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the female body as a wicked problem. If elite black African women are to thrive in the industry, especially given the continuous existence of archaic cultures that disproportionately ‘pull women back’ and require women to have to prove themselves as deserving of appointments. These cannot be resolved by policy alone, rather, it will take a lot of investment and attitudinal change for extractive industries to view and treat women and men as equal and productive workers.

“I passed and decided to go in a line called hydraulic fracture engineering, that’s what I did. I worked at that time mainly onshore then I was put out into the district heating so I worked as a field engineer and worked my way up. I was exposed to a whole range of fracking operations. Again, I was the only woman and only minority in terms of technical. The field was very difficult; I did it for about 2 years. it was a very lonely experience. I did not have family or anybody around and I did not have anyone I could turn to not a woman who really understood some of the stuff I was going through but I

learnt a lot. It taught me how to interact with men in the field and how to be confident and I watched how men interacted and not that these men were intelligent than I was especially if I looked at my peers, the engineers but they always seemed to have this sense of yes I can do it even if they knew 10%” (Female, Engineer/ Business Woman, interview, 2018).

Gender as infrastructure

Infrastructure projects including around extractives are designed to be gender blind, built on the assumption that both men and women will benefit equally and unequivocally (OECD, 2019; SSATP, 2015). The automatic assumption that infrastructures will benefit women in the same way as they do men is problematic and despite being well planned and executed, benefits for elite black African women are not assured. It is notable that the most positive outcomes from infrastructures as experienced by women are often unplanned and unintended such as the watering trucks around oil wells that have unintentionally helped local women access water more easily in Kenya’s extractive communities (See Okong’o, 2015). With this in mind, it is evident that extractive industries are built to serve men and not women (Pickerill, 2015). Any adjustments made to absorb women are therefore vague and insufficient. In fact, I argue that the design process of extractive industries and associated infrastructure is built for men and that is why it is normalised to offer women engineers ‘funnels’ to use in offshore facilities or give women smaller sized men’s coveralls and boots as uniforms (Perez, 2019; Pickerill, 2015).

“...let’s just pause it there so these are the quarters we tend to be living in and as you can see we came to work with choppers and it’s pretty exciting but we really work in really cold areas from the arctic to North Sea. I have worked for seven weeks whole and two weeks off. When we work, we do so in a team so it’s quite intense and I have done that for six years. It’s not easy and you really have to do your bit and you can’t

talk your way out by saying I'm a woman so I can't lift this I can't do that and as you can see its quite a team effort and that means you are all pulling in to achieve a common goal for twenty-four hours a day... you can't come up and say I'm a girl I can't risk this, I can't risk that. You have to get in there and get your hands dirty. You can't say I'm an engineering supervisor, you can't say let the other guys sweat. We all do a bit to get the project done. It can be very manual but also quite technical. So basically we work in different regions and at the end of the checkout you can do not only do your technical moves but you can also manage your teams... It's a good career ...I'm the only Kenyan in my segment so have to show it's not about numbers and also being African. There are things that you have to do more than those people it was quite a challenge but I can say I finished as a senior. We all doing a bit to get the project done it can be very manual but also quite technical... I was hired straight out of University and so I had to do a lot of training and exams... So they set a test and you do it for a specific number of months which is eight months or a year and the next one two years but we don't just do it for nine months and you are promoted no you have to do exams and we have to keep doing these exam" (Senior Engineer, Female, Oil Company, Nairobi, Workshop, 2018).

Combined with the sexist and racialised climate in extractive sectors, masculinised infrastructures such as equipment and uniforms further ensure that women do not experience the full benefit of the sector (Perez, 2019). It is easier to exclude women who seek entry and professional growth in the sector by justifications on inefficacy of these infrastructures than it is for companies to admit their shortcomings and invest in wares that are appropriate for women. A case in point is the cancellation of the 'all women' space exploration by NASA due to lack of uniforms, demonstrating how significant the needs of women are in these industries and prompts the need to re-examine not just the priorities but also the design process of

infrastructures around extractives (Perez, 2019; Chatterji and Chakrabarti, 2021). Women are hardly petite versions of men to be treated as tiny men rather than have investments in infrastructures that conform, flatter and effectively correspond to the needs, body and build. Some elite women in the research have responded to challenge these infrastructural issues by demanding uniforms that fit and effectively protect women's needs while others rallied together to ensure the establishment of a creche to allow nursing mothers a place to bring their children to work. Such organising around women might be what is needed to change the sector. However, it isn't enough given that women's issues are never given the importance they deserve and are often treated as infrastructural deficits. The ramifications for making gender issues central to discussions have also only served to ensure a staggered mobility of females or facilitated their exclusion all together, often justified through market forces to ensure men have an upper hand when it comes to recruitment and retention/ promotion.

“For me I thought it won't be the best segment that I would ever have and I thought it would be a crunch hip but no one told me that the moment you step in, it is a lot of hard work...it's something I could use physically and mentally and it's like for example when I first went there to look for a job I was like we are girls so I can just watch. ...immediately I was told in this station, bring tools- like 46 -then I was like what is that? And I wondered what kind of spanner is this? There were somethings I couldn't lift and I had to drag them and I was like who sent me to this place? why didn't I read something else in the first place? and then with time I saw this one lady, she was in her mid-forties and all the guys are like wow! How do you do this? and I was like it's just techniques. *A lot of work does not need physical skills, it's just techniques and I learnt how to make work easier and the guys respect you because you are pulling the weight and its work of strategy*, a lot of team work and you make a lot of friends.” (Senior Engineer, Oil Company, Female, Workshop, Nairobi, 2018)

In practice, extractive sectors are designed to be as hostile as possible for women (See quote below) demonstrated by the expectation that women workers function as men ‘literally’ in terms of physical labour output, speech, and overall decorum as though being male is the standard template for being human. Such hostilities not only impede the ability of women to grow in the sector but has also ensured that young women delay having families or put aside their desires and care responsibilities altogether in pursuit of conditions that they have been conditioned to believe are acceptable practice.

“Again I think it is how u sell yourself and present yourself with your work and what they are doing to empower more women. What I have seen now ...they are happy that women can take up positions or do things and so if they see you are a hardworking person from your boss, they will be confident to see you come up. *Some of these bosses you talk to them and they say a woman manager is the best for them but is this woman strong enough or ready to take up this position.* In a board room you can find *like 20 men and one woman and this woman inspires the rest to rise up. You will see them promote one woman and you will see others come up. It is a strategy I have seen going on and if you visit these offices ...*People have this mentality that men will always be chosen up before women but it is not always the case.” (Female, Senior Manager, Oil and Gas Consortium, Interview, Nairobi, 2018)

As was demonstrated in this research, the overall expectation of young women in technical roles to spend their prime years in off-shore or inshore rigs in order to make a name for themselves or have male mentors to groom them into positions of leadership; is an example of infrastructural conditioning designed to ensure young women abandon their desires to have a family altogether owing to demands of work on their time and space. There is nothing stopping extractive industries from taking a more suitable infrastructural approach to create a little more permanence that would ensure the rise of mining communities/ towns that would ultimately

attract and benefit both women and local communities owing to the infrastructural investments that would take place such as schools, water, telecommunications etc. Infrastructures that would ensure that women just like any other worker in any industry are able to have it all, are able to work and have their family around them as has been done in other economies such as Australia and Canada.

“I will say we have been (black women) struggling especially in technical, we are about 3% and I will say society still thinks that. When it comes to technical, engineering, all the sciences are still male dominated so I find that fear, a lot of girls fear to take the science and also the society still don’t provide that environment that somebody can pursue a male dominated career, so we still have a long way to go. Even when you are in the boardroom we are still struggling. I personally struggle when am in boardroom, there is always a secretary but most of the time I am the only lady in the board room. So, there is a lot that needs to be worked on...woman can do great so we need to adjust with it.” (Female, Senior Engineer, Oil Company, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Why is this not being done in Africa? Extractive industries in Africa are designed to be quick fixes. They are deliberately made temporary as a form of escapism by headquarter industries located in Western nations. They are not designed to benefit Africa or the African population, rather, they are an extension of neo-colonialism and only there to serve the interests of the colonial country. As such, it is not surprising that there is little to no investment in these remote locations where oil rigs are located. It is even more appalling that the sector has not made any efforts to address the security risks associated with makeshift camps for women workers. In addition to this, the physical and social structure around extractives is often portrayed as a sweaty, masculine environment.

“Women have not entered the field where women pick up social sciences. Family obligations act as a gap. Men are considered hunters, women seen as carers...Women are placed in a particular corner for being black in a white dominated industry. So how do you win men over and how do you win them and ensure they know you are good at what you can do? Women struggle with traditional roles. Conversations in industry/government as a country we do not use research to inform policy. In the beginning it was a fight between nationals (who have no skills/ capacity, no need for scholarships) and expatriates. Now we have old tech courses to teach our students, we bring expatriates to do the job and universities are unwilling to change courses. Now we have a woman designing oil and gas courses. She is idealistic about how these industries ignore community perspectives. For example, the local content bill does not differentiate space for women.” (Female, Businesswoman/ Oil and Gas Consultant, Nairobi, Interview, 2018)- Deduced from interview notes.

These infrastructures have ensured that women in the industry are only there for show as a token and to rationalise the need to keep extractives as they are - a man’s world. This is despite the reality that most extractive industry work is computerised and mechanised and therefore requiring intellectual rather than physical strength. In fact, extractive infrastructures are to keep women occupied with non-essentials while men continue to advance in the sector. Most women who advance in extractives are set up to fail, often given precarious roles that are there to ensure they not only fail but also serve as an example as to why women are not suited for extractive jobs. It is for this reason that scholars have pointed to these gendered biases and inequalities in the corporate world and even in academia where women and minorities face discrimination and exclusion (Reyes et.al, 2012; Delgado-Romero et.al, 2007). This goes to show that women are tolerated rather than appreciated in extractives and although evident in extractives, it is the same story in other masculinised sectors such as construction where bricks are designed to fit

the size of men's hands because it is assumed that 'only men' should be working in such labour-intensive careers. To assume that extractive infrastructure will benefit women as they do men is therefore misplaced and leaves gender equality goals and women worse off.

“Okay, it's obvious there is a gap when it comes to gender pay you find that in the woman compared to men, women are paid less compared to men and that one I don't understand why. We tend also lose opportunities in career progression because of the boys club like you trying to fit in and when an opportunity comes, it just feels like boys are given the priority compared to us so career progression becomes tough and you have to hold on and feel like it's tough when it comes to career progression it's just stuck, it's okay for a woman to lead so there is that trust issue for a woman to lead and some comment and they don't say directly but there is one that is caught saying it to younger engineers to take care of their position if am going for maternity and also we have women with that fear of post maternity. Are we going to come back? Most of the time they are given a lesser position which doesn't require technology, some which require technology. We enjoy the technical challenge, when we come back we do understand the challenge. I remember they said that I have young children that am not positioned to go to the field...I understand they are caring but now we are all professionals and they should not make decision on our behalf, let them give us an opportunity and let me tell if am able to do it instead of pre-empting and saying you know discussion has young people and you know we are all different.” (Female, Senior Engineer, Oil Company, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

As such, to remedy this, I argue that gender should in fact be centre stage in all stages of infrastructure development if women are to realise the same benefits men do in extractives (SSATP, 2015; OECD, 2019). This does not mean adding elite black African women's needs to the table, rather, it's about having a complete culture and mindset change to ensure that

gender is integrated into every aspect of the sector and society (Menziés and Harley, 2012). This should start by acknowledging gender as an infrastructure that needs to be built and executed with finesse in such a way that being a woman is celebrated, not tolerated. Such thinking ensures that gender is personified as a core element in extractive sectors. This results in elite black African women being not just being viewed as women or by extension the weaker gender but are humanised as an important part of the sector without which the institution is incomplete. Such personification not only makes women's needs and attributes known and respected, but also ensures that they are incorporated into the daily functioning of extractive industries.

Framing, Experience and Execution: Gender at crossroads

The way we frame and experience infrastructure is characteristic of material-discursive practices which expressly argues that the natural and social state of objects and subjects is not pre-given, rather are a function of the other (Aradau, 2010). Building on the above arguments, there is a distinctive bias in the way gender equality/ equity is framed and executed within and around extractives. Extractive jobs are often marketed as masculine requiring physical strength and ability to work away from home, all things that women are distinctively thought to lack (See Lahiri-Dutt, 2015, 2012).

This is despite evidence from the research proving that women are just as dexterous as men if not more. This makes extractive jobs by design a men's purview not because women cannot do the job but because women are perceived to lack the strength and stamina to do the work, notions that are not only misplaced, but supported by centuries of female exclusion on the basis of biology and sexism. Women are just expected to fit into the preconceived standards of masculinity. A case example from this research is the way women are excluded from offshore rigs due to them taking up too much room with arguments made of being able to house four men in a cubicle that would only take one female. Perhaps the question is why the reverse isn't

being attempted. Why not have more women on the rigs to balance the equation? This just proves that there is a hostile pattern directed towards women and this goes beyond simple housing to include how extractive infrastructure is built. I thus argue that instead of adapting infrastructure to serve women better, the industry only seeks to change women.

“...Your history disappears as a woman. No one recognises if you were the first to open an oil company. I recommend that we come together as women ...” (Female, Community Leader, Nairobi, interview, 2018)- Translated.

The adoption of feminist language in government policies and laws exacerbates the problem (Aradau, 2010; OECD, 2019). This is because it is difficult to complain about a discriminatory system when the laws are already in place in favour of gender equality and non-discrimination. What then happens is that gender issues are not taken seriously and are not considered when concessions are signed between governments and extractive industries. This leaves women in a rather vulnerable position because it is hard to fight for something that is already enshrined in law.

“By the nature of women in the industry itself, if a woman decides to enter this space you cannot, I do not want to use up this word but unfortunately it is used a lot in this space but they need to man up a bit. It is not a soft industry. It is not sitting behind a desk and writing policy conversations but wearing boots and getting in very hard. So if you want to engage in the way the industry knows how to engage, toughen up...I have to toughen up because there are people I am talking about that's is where they are operating. They do not operate in a fancy office somewhere in a 7th floor with an escalator. So you want to engage in the industry, appreciate the nature of the industry you are entering into, appreciate its challenges and what it is and be ready to then engage. I do not think you can soften it and that oil is in Turkana and not in Nairobi Westlands. You want to do oil, work in that, you go to work in Turkana. Can you

make that better for you to engage? Can you say you have never been to a desert before, what do people drink? That is where the oil is and if you want to be a petroleum engineer, that is where you will have to work.” (Female, lawyer/ women rights activist, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

That gender equality and non-discrimination laws exist independent of all the agreements signed between industry and government thus only serves to rubber-stamp the exclusionary environment women find themselves in. It rationalises sexism, misogyny and discrimination as there is no clause in these policies that require these industries to honour the laws of the country in which they operate. Most are loyal to their home countries and operate in such unregulated environments which is detrimental to women’s rights in the sector. Yet conversations on gender have been heard for decades and progress made such as the Beijing Platform for women’s rights which essentially placed elite women in Kenya in unique positions and gave them space and a voice to navigate cultural and structural inequalities (FIDA 2013; Hilson, 2018). A situation that has resulted in the progress made in laws and policies. Indeed, elite black women no longer answer to traditional anecdotes on gender but are still held back in one way or another by structured patriarchy (Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012; Pickerill, 2015). This argument is also important and relevant to other spaces within which elite women exist within the industry. As demonstrated in the quote above, women are expected to conform and be content and there are no two ways about it. The industry is masculine and sexist, and women are expected to accept this and move on. What is worrying is that elite women believe this to be the only way to engage in the industry which normalises the sexist and misogynistic environment within which they find themselves.

“Introducing the topic of women in the extractives sector is not anything new because it is conversations that have been heard in the agricultural sector about gender empowerment, so it is nothing new. In the extractives sector you talk about empowering

women or the role of women. It is a conversation already that has been in other sectors. It is just for the country to understand is there any uniqueness about the sector and are there any new ways to attain gender empowerment that has not been done in other industries...(Female, Lawyer, Women Rights Activist, Nairobi, interview, 2018).

Coupled with the infrastructural challenges on the continent in law, policy and poor physical infrastructure, I argue that women are disadvantaged twice, first as women and secondly as black African women. There is a sense of *deja vu*, with extractive industries in Africa expected to fail often for the benefit of the mother companies who profit from these unstable civil environments (See Mkutu-Agade, 2015). Even for those African countries considered success stories in extractives, there is still a sense of exploitation which means earnings from extractives are never sufficient in addressing the problems in Africa and women bear the brunt of these problems (Van Alstine, 2014). The painting of Africa as the black continent riddled with darkness, corruption and backwardness in need of saving places the continent at a crossroads (Mkutu-Agade, 2014). This means that the continent is focussing on other issues such as poverty and disease, therefore issues of gender equality and equity are at the bottom of the priority lists of governments and industry. The white superiority complex in African industrial sectors further places the needs of women on the periphery as industries such as extractives seek cheap labour to maximise profits (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012). Examining the extractive industry in Nigeria provides insight into this matter with effluent discharge into rivers polluting waterways and in turn destroying livelihoods and affecting an already vulnerable population (Ukeje, 2004).

“In Kenya, extractives have never been the main thing in our economy. Kenya’s development has always been based on other sectors like agricultural, finance sector and tourism. The last 5 to 10 years ago is when the topic of extractives has intensified

...so it will ride on the wave of already engendering activities that have happened in other sectors.” (Female, Commercial Lawyer, Government, interview, 2018).

Further to this, the continuous ignorance to the plight of black women in extractive industries points to the precarious nature of the workplace. The workplace is predominantly white and male and given the competing demands African women have to balance to be able to work, extractive industry workplace is toxic for black women both physically and intellectually. The exclusion of black women from ‘expert’ roundtables in favour of black men demonstrated how vulnerable the black woman is.

“A lot of things have changed ...they want the qualification and all that but you can still play a big role and I think you are doing that by being able to showcase some of the things that women go through. Because usually when you talk about South Africa or Kenya we tend to look at the women, we tend to look at what would I say, we tend to look at the marginalized woman being the low income women. And we don’t maybe look at the professional women and what role they are playing and a lot of times it’s done very quietly.” (Female, Senior Engineer, Businesswoman, Consultant, Nairobi, 2018).

Women in the research said it took them at least 15minutes to use the toilet as taking a break meant undressing the bulky, manly uniform completely. The solution, funnels so women can use the urinals located all over the rigs. Phrases such as ‘man up’ and ‘bitch’ have taken root in the industry with black women expected to not only perform like men but to also behave like men including in how they use the toilet. The industry finds it easier to just create petite versions of the uniforms and boots to be handed to women. Why waste money on feminine uniforms when altered men’s uniforms can do exactly the same thing? The problem is they don't work for women. The toxicity of the extractive infrastructure points to a problematic environment built purposefully for the glorification of men and masculinity.

“That’s where in some sites you find no toilets for women because at the back of their heads minds the people who are building camps sites have never thought that a woman would be at the camp site. But when you are creating awareness that this thing is for everyone, a woman could come here when putting these facilities be sensitive to men and women. I think that would be important. Also concerning the gender of the sector whereby I still believe if you are willing to engender it do something about it. Put something like engendering laws so that even if you are prompt to say you only want men, there is also a law that says no and that you have to show minimum requirement like two thirds have been given to women so that we do not leave it to be if I don’t like or like.” (Female, lawyer, women rights activist, interview, 2018).

Covid-19 has further gone to show just how invasive the workplace can be on the lives of women. Women’s personal spaces turned into offices overnight forcing women to literally juggle between work and taking care of their families without the protection the office buildings offered. While this can be said to be temporary, extractive industries have been giving women the raw end of the stick for decades with off-shore rigs and on-shore rigs designed to be as hostile as possible for women and their families owing to the remote nature of these facilities that ensured women choose between a career and family. However, there are pockets of ‘success’ albeit in Western countries where many women are employed in geospatial roles. However, these roles are considered less demanding hence more feminine. This links to the sexism I have outlined in previous chapters. The conversation has focussed on the acceptance of women as workers, but this needs to change to transitioning and retention to enable women have a steady career growth in the industry.

“I think yes because of conversations and efforts by various players. I think now slowly it is becoming more accommodative to women. There is more acceptance and not wrong to say like a woman will be the one to work at the oil head. I think it has reached

a point where it is not being formed. If a woman is qualified, I think the conversation is now going to be like you have told us to include the women and we have no problem with giving them the job. I think the conversation is now changing slowly from put women, are these women qualified to do the job because if these women, it is no longer about man or woman but who can do the job, who has the competence. (Female, Senior Lawyer, Activist, Consultant, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

When extractive industries employ ‘experts’ they are more likely to be white men and if there are women, chances are they will be white as well. The black woman is left behind even in their own countries where local knowledge is an advantage whilst the company ticks’ boxes on equality and non-discrimination. Blacks are considered inferior, and this would explain why the industry is structured to keep Africans down, in insignificant non-technical roles that barely uses the qualifications and talents that African women have. In this research, an exclusionary pattern is established where ‘smart’ women are placed on committees for the glorification of their male superiors. Any attempt to outshine their bosses intellectually are met with harsh penalties including getting excluded from these committees and having women’s abilities second guessed.

“I used to attend the ministry of Energy, the chairman was quite impressed you know even some member of parliament were quite impressed that they didn’t know we have a woman who is quite courageous and technically well, this is exactly what we want. We see things in a different way whenever you want to make a decision you need to consult me. This becomes a threat to board and they told me not to be attending anymore. So there are some men who can’t let a woman shine over because am a junior compared to management what they see is you are over shining that’s what have experienced its individual because have never experienced because have worked in US in different fields so am not sure this is happening or it happened because there are

other woman who don't have self-esteem and anything else like that can kill their morale at that particular moment just my battles I want to fight and that in particular never wanted to put myself in wanted to concentrate on my performance, I want people to see me in my performance want people to respect me, because I have performed not trying to think am there because of gender balance.” (Female, Senior Engineer, Oil Company, interview, 2018)

There is a sense of disrespect of an elite black African woman in leadership (See quote above) and an assumption that women are not smart and there is no way they can commandeer a room full of men. Framings of gender / or lack thereof in extractives is particularly disturbing. Gender and women seemed to be lost in the wording of extractive industry policy often with the assumption and expectation that other gendered policies and laws in the country would take care of the deficit. However, the lack of integration of gender in such policies enables companies to avoid gender issues altogether because it's not their problem. In fact, it's not anyone's problem except women with meetings between women in extractives and the political leadership in Kenya as was shown in this research, resulting in nothing more than a political statement and women being asked to be content with the fact that they are able to meet and have a cup of tea with the President. Such language demonstrates the place of women in extractives still is in work in progress.

“It's only from last year that I started thinking of myself in terms of my female identity. I have never had reason to think that I am at a disadvantage in any way for having been a woman. In my class growing up, I was literally those kids who were always no 1 and no 2. I remember even my parents through boyfriends told me that one of them told them I told him that that our relationship had to end because I thought I was smarter than him and I don't remember it, but it sounds very much like me, it sounds like something I would say (laughs) so it's only recently that I start seeing that as a woman

there are certain prejudices, there are certain liberties people take especially we do live, we do exist, we do trade in a very patriarchal society, a lot of the people in authority tends to be a very male dominated industry and even then its older men, so sometimes I've heard for example, I have been in meetings where somebody walks in and because you are the only woman, they don't even mean to be biased, they will ask you to serve them tea, they will ask you where the washrooms are, they will ask you when lunch is going to be served, this are things you know , you will ask yourself why would they ask you such a question, is it because you are the only woman in the room or because you are the youngest woman in the room. So there are those things I noticed then and I have my personal views about them but they have not to date been an impediment to me at personal level, but I do feel as I get into, as I think about maybe having a family and so on and so forth, I should say, am down with having children, but as I think about those things I am becoming aware of the fact that I will have to make certain adjustments, I will have to make certain long-term provisions for all that.” (Female Government employee, Commercial Lawyer, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Women would particularly benefit from local content policies as it would mean that resources and labour are sourced locally creating more job opportunities for women, opportunities for entrepreneurship and of course a chance to empower and free women from the shackles of patriarchy. Although local content infrastructures are being adopted into extractive industry policies, women numbers remained dismal. In addition to this, women owned businesses were also rare in the industry with the majority being lowly jobs at the bottom of the extractive pyramid. Elite women therefore almost stood no chance of breaking the glass ceiling. It is a matter of hope that the new more explicit local content framings will yield more for women and women led businesses.

“Are there any? Unless you put efforts to bring that conversation or remind people when talking about engendering the sector that has been experienced in the country. If you do not remind people that you need to talk about gender mainstreaming, it is still a conversation that can be lost because unfortunately the policy makers and the players are still men making decisions in the extractives space... take it back and say enough has been done and when decisions have been made we are sure the space is for women.

(Female, Commercial Lawyer, Activist, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Infrastructures that support women do not necessarily resolve issues experienced by women in the industry or support the entrance and growth of women in the sector. Physical infrastructure such as roads, hospitals and schools are common in communities around extractives and although built in the name of women, are often justified as a way of bridging female issues such as maternal mortality. However, women rarely enjoy the presence of these infrastructures. In this research, oil companies, albeit marketing CSR projects as women driven, were heavily symptomatic and did not delve into the real issues facing women. Notably, it is women that headed these projects which sounds noble but having women head projects that work against women is by itself a failure of the industry. Infrastructures often leave women worse off. Physical infrastructure for example the oil rigs and feeder roads are located on land that is traditionally grazing land and watering points in a fragile desert ecosystem. While there is an attempt to compensate the loss of these lands, the projects initiated through CSR do not address the core issues and rarely compare to the loss already suffered by these communities. That oil companies prefer to bring in water in tanks instead of dig water wells just shows how temporary and symptomatic these projects are and in a patrilineal system like Turkana where masculine power is dominant, we are seeing a change in citizenship as women take over leadership roles in society.

“...What, what we've seen is that this seems to be some areas that women seem to be organized themselves around and are tactical as far back as 2014 when we were encouraging a lot of women with a lot of local participation and I remember having a session with potential suppliers..., it's almost one year since we had our first conversation, how is it looking and they said, we're interested but we're not given sufficient work. Because during our session in my plea to them was not just continuous delivery activities that you've been given and prove yourself so that you will be able to get more. At that time were also able to tap into some training fund available through ADP. That was supporting the growth-oriented women enterprises program.” (Senior manager, Female, Oil Company, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

This demonstrates how women are organising around infrastructure. By providing avenues for business and solidarity, women in the industry have been able to challenge and change some of the infrastructure that denied them full enjoyment of the sector. For instance, it was noted in the research the creation of a multipurpose space that functioned as a creche, bonding room, mother's room etc within the office environment to enable nursing women bring their children to work. In this sense, extractive industries demonstrate the importance of women by appreciating the economic character of care by integrating women's care responsibilities with their time at work (Hughes, 2002). This is important as it not only breaks down stereotypes of women not being equal to the task/ or not belonging to the industry but provides an opportunity for women to live out their lives as they want and not according to some sexist expectations that equates biology to performance. However, the masculinised nature of the industry still poses a variety of barriers and small wins like these while important, remain limited and are therefore not reflected in the overall experience of women in the industry.

“It taught me how to interact with men in the field and how to be confident and I watched how men interacted and not that these men were intelligent than I was

especially if I looked at my peers the engineers, but they always seemed to have this sense of yes I can do it even if they knew 10%.” ...I will say...we have been struggling especially in technical, we are about 3% and I will say society still thinks that, when it comes to technical, engineering all the sciences are still male dominated so I find that fear, a lot of girls fear to take the science and also the society still thinks don't provide that environment that somebody can pursue male dominated career, so we still have a long way to go. Even when you in boardroom still struggling, I personally struggle when am in boardroom, they always think am a secretary most of time...most of the time am the only lady in the board room. So there is a lot needs to be worked on, sensitisation that woman can do great, so we need to adjust with it.” (Female, Senior Engineer, Businesswoman, Interview, Nairobi, 2018).

There are some other examples of women organising in the research that points to a growing trend. However, the extent to which these translate into widespread action and better outcomes for women is still limited. A key example is the way sexual harassment is handled by the industry. Despite there being in place a clear system for reporting and investigation of these cases, the number of cases reported was still fairly low. There is no problem with the law, but there is a problem with the infrastructure around the law. Women who reported abuse or harassment were treated and judged quite harshly by peers and the working environment made to be as hostile as possible to 'snitches.' This points to a system obsessed with numbers rather than the welfare of women. By punishing women who come forward to report abuse, the extractive infrastructure has only served to push abuse underground making women even more vulnerable whilst satisfying the egos of men in a system that is built on the back of misogynistic, sexist and discriminatory practices.

“...he spoke to me in a manner not within the specified rules which should be common knowledge, so I think, like I said personally I have not experienced such and really the

times that I have felt uncomfortable because of somebody's speech or because of the intent of inappropriate touching, I disengage, you know I just walk out of the room, I tell them blatantly please do not touch me. I do it politely and try and keep it professional, but I also try to be explicit about it, you touched me in a manner that is inappropriate I say, watch it please don't touch me again, I don't like it." (Commercial lawyer, Female, Government, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Such practices have given rise to an alternative dispute resolution system by women where senior women in the industry spoke out for younger ones experiencing abuse. However, these also come with advice to these women not to report officially because having a record makes you a target and hinders their growth as engineers. This begs the question as to how many women have suffered in silence as a result of these under the table resolutions and how ineffective company policies are. As shown in the quote above, women have to deal with an uncomfortable environment where they are objectified for the amusement of men. How are women supposed to thrive in these environments when they are constantly treated as lesser human beings? It will take more than policy for women to enjoy just being women without reference to their biology. Women do choose careers in engineering strategically and are therefore not there by chance, rather by design and it is not fair for infrastructures built to benefit men to deny them opportunities to grow. In line with my theoretical framework, the extractive industry needs to change and by understanding the workings of African feminism, the industry can deliver better outcomes of care, time and difference for women as well as true equality in aspects of work, discrimination and diversity. The extent to which companies can commit to this is what remains unresolved.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RACE, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Where are African women?

Race is arguably the most complicated concept in Gender studies. Whilst it can't be ignored, it cannot be separated from gender either. However, issues of race have continued to be ignored in contemporary feminist thinking arguably reneging on the promise of advancing gender equality and advancement of women in all spheres of life - social, political and economic. Although complex, race continues to intertwine with the lives and experiences of black women and is therefore an integral part of understanding the place of African women in the global and local extractive industry sector. This is due to the exclusionary patterns that are exhibited both consciously and subconsciously by the elite western nations who own and run most of the multinationals in Africa and the larger developing world. Arguably, race is akin to equality and discrimination and is interwoven in these concepts making it difficult to exclude it when talking about women and their place in extractives (Berry, 2010; Mullings, 2014). It is a murky subject and emotive as can be seen in African-American debates and protests around 'black lives matter' and sexual rights movements such as #metoo movement and the 'surviving R Kelly' documentary' where black women are seemingly not believed when they come out and report sexual abuse (Perez, 2019; Mullings, 2014). The saviour mentality in Africa is also a case example of how race plays a role in the understanding of local issues where white foreigners are considered to be more knowledgeable and therefore experts on local issues rather than local Africans who have lived experiences and traditional knowledge (See...Nieymann, 1999).

“...and not the only black woman faces a lot of discrimination but in order to overcome you have to be tough in this field. I became the first Kenyan woman to do it and I was working offshores and started working in West Africa and ended up in Angola and it was not tough as I would meet men who did not make it. ... I frankly want to tell you that during this period still I faced a lot of discrimination in a new level but at the back

of my mind I knew I wanted to stay in Kenya and not get back to US so I had an invitation to go to the US and I turned it down and that's when I decided to start my company a year ago ...and it has been a wonderful journey and I have learnt a lot about myself am not going back...(Engineer, Business Owner, Female, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

This engraved 'superiority' complex is systematically entrenched in the Extractive sector in Africa and is essentially an extension of neo-colonialism where black Africans are still considered poor, uneducated and inferior and therefore incapable of taking up positions that require 'experts.' The place of women in this light is thus quite shaky as these facets of colonialism dictate how and who is employed, their pay as well as how they progress in the sector. This further constricts the spaces for women employment and reinforces inequality in an already unequal space. Aspects of race also feature showing the messiness of gender in extractive industries where aspects of race, gender and sexism are all interconnected and cannot be understood separate from the other.

“And looking back when I joined about five years ago, it was mostly expatriate men. So the bit about even being female did not occur to me, you know, I'd sit down, I'm thinking my goodness, I need more of ourselves, you know, in this room.” (Senior Manager, Female, Oil Company, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

From the research, it was evident that colonialism mindset was still dominating industry with black women and men being treated disproportionately to their white colleagues in terms of pay and associated benefits. As a result of this, African women are disadvantaged twice when it comes to the workplace, first because of their race and secondly because of their gender. While companies interviewed in the research seemed to be conscious of issues of race and diversity, this fell short of just a statement indicating the company's commitment to the issue. Moreover, annual reports only showed the number of men and women in both technical and

non-technical roles where women seemed to flourish in the latter albeit with their ethnicities conveniently left out. It is also difficult to attribute challenges faced by black women to black women as all minorities including women are all jumbled up into one category despite these groups needing different approaches to their unique challenges (See Deonandan et.al, 2016).

“In the mining sector, earlier on as we were trying to do the law, it is not allowed to allow women in the mining fields cause you are a bad omen you are a taboo then you are told you cannot go close to the oil field because if you go there when they are drilling ...you know, the oil might disappear or you might just cause the drill link to cease, something ridiculous you know, and we want to tell them women can do it that’s why you see children in this room are doing engineering.” (Senior lecturer, Academia, Female, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

As such, in recognition of these unique challenges, this research aimed to focus only on challenges experienced by black women irrespective of their abilities. However, with race issues I must also take cognizance of the shared history between black women and that of black men mainly due to history of colonialism, war and culture which have shaped and continued to shape the way they interact with each other and people from other races i.e. white. Recognising this, it is important to note that both black men and women faced uniquely the same challenges in progressing in the extractive sector (Reyes and Rodrigues, 2012). However, black women seemed to have it harder and had to work twice as hard to not only compete with their black male colleagues for the few spots available to them, but also white women who seemed to have it easier and dominated the statistics quoted by companies on diversity/equality. It was indeed rare to find a woman of black origin appointed as head of an extractive sector company albeit with some exceptions for homegrown companies such as the National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK) which is government owned.

“...we need to have knowledge transfer among ourselves so that we don’t have to start looking for websites where we can get certain information in this sector. Anybody who did research in matters of mining over here like five years or ten years ago like I was part of the team doing research on that sector and I had to change my topic because of no information or data. If you went to the government for data nobody could give you comprehensive data that you can quote in a study.” (Lawyer/ Women rights activist, Female, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Data on diversity and equality in African or less developed nations is also missing in annual reports save for a few ‘tokens’ who were used in PR exercises making it difficult to have a constructive debate around diversity and inclusion of African women in the sector. What is available are stories about tokens often used in photo ops and PR exercises to provide a picture of how diverse the industry is when in reality it is the opposite. A key example is the glorification of a single female engineer as the face of gender equality and diversity in Tullow Oil’s operations in Kenya. The focus on such tokens takes away from the real issue which is an unequal work environment where black African women are struggling to flourish (See...Adichie, 2014). These sentiments have been echoed throughout the research with some of the respondents indicating the sheer challenge of being able to secure a job with the leading Extractive companies in the country. Coupled with the triple barrier of race, ethnicity and nepotism, inequalities between elite women of different African origins is also evident and is a problem that will need to be addressed in further research. This is because in addition to being a black African woman in a masculinized sector, the histories and divisive products of colonialism in the form of ethnicity and nepotism continue to dictate ‘which black woman’ ends up getting the job or who is promoted or even tokenized. These triple barriers do not allow black women to access elite positions in the industry as they may not have the ‘right connections’ to be able to navigate corrupt systems thriving on masculinity.

“In my experience I think my testimony would be very good because there is no roadblock that I have met in the profession. There is no roadblock that I have met ...by being a woman. So I can be able to apply for and secure opportunities just like my male colleagues, i have also applied for and gotten regrets just like my male colleagues, I think, specifically that corruption and nepotism in terms of tribalism is a bigger barrier to my progression than barriers based on the fact that I am a woman. I think that is how I would put it. If you knew the boss and you are going to maybe have a discussion with him and he promised to give the opportunity to you, there is a higher likelihood that I will not get that opportunity but not because of the fact that I am a woman so it could be because of corruption factor but not because I am a woman.” (Government employee, Lawyer, Female, Nairobi, interview, 2018).

Arguably, there seems to be a glass ceiling that black women are not able to reach or break in the Extractive Sector particularly Elitist black women who were the focus of this research. The unwritten rule of ‘boy club manners’ which requires women to ‘fit in’ that is behave, speak or perform as men is a clear way in which women are excluded even before they try. It does not matter how qualified they are, they do not stand a chance against their male counterparts simply because they are women, black and African. These chances are even lower when aspects of race, motherhood or menstruation come into play. Companies justify these shortfalls as market forces in a system that accords more weight on men simply because they do not take a central role in birthing and raising children by biological default (Baum and Benshaul-Tolonen, 2019). This brings back the concept of time and how a woman’s time remains the greatest barrier to their entry and progress in the sector and with family playing a central role in African feminist spaces, black women are bound to struggle as a system built on monetisation of time is unlikely to be responsive to the needs of the elite black African women.

“I think also whereas I can’t speak to the vibrancy of the law, I can’t say women do business differently, for example I have seen it with a lot of my male colleagues that they are happy to conclude a board room discussion in the bar or over drinks or you know, whatever, you know after hours, but these are my male colleagues. But my female colleagues have different means because come home time they have to go back to their children, they have to figure out how supper is being made, ... so to that extent being a woman would be a barrier in the sense that if someone decides to have a discussion outside business hours. That is obviously a deterrent and would be a deterrent to many women who essentially have to have time balance, their professional and personal needs. Unfortunately, not many of us, at least as much as I know have the means like your partner being supportive but might not have the financial strength to keep you at home. You may want to be a housewife but the realities, the financial responsibilities at hand may not extend that luxury. So you shouldn’t have to pay by going home consistently at midnight. That would definitely bring an issue in your home a scenario where you can’t produce at work and at home, you know you running late, you are tired, so that is to me what I have observed that could potentially be a challenge.” (Government employee/ Lawyer, Female, Nairobi, interview, 2018).

This is further seen in the context of pay with white workers earning up to 6 times the salary paid to local black workers despite doing the same job even if the latter is more qualified (Reyes et.al, 2014; Perez, 2019). A review of the company's diversity and inclusion data on recruitment, promotion and /or pay returned zero results on how pay is segregated across ethnicities despite this being a major issue in many companies operating in Africa and the developing world. Instead, companies place more focus on the number of women vs men employed regardless of gender or race or position they are recruited for and herein lies the

problem. This is because whilst equality and non-discrimination are important, elite black African women and other ethnic minorities face disproportionate challenges to their white counterparts and therefore a blanket assumption on issues of pay, recruitment and promotion is not only unethical but also discriminatory.

Respondents from non-technical roles also reported an undefined gap between them and their white colleagues. This was in the context of pay, with expatriates who were mostly white, doing the same job as black colleagues, often earning more than their black counterparts. The equal work equal pay narrative was therefore a myth in the industry and could probably only apply to temporary or early career roles (See...Baum and Benschaul-Tolonen, 2019). However, as superiority increased, the race card as well as the gender issue became more apparent. This meant that being black equalled lower pay in an environment that was dominated by expatriates from western nations. As such, doing the same job in the same hardship conditions did not mean equal pay for many black women working in East Africa.

“I am not sure it is only in the extractives sector but I think it depends on the industry generally. I think it is in our nature where we understand ourselves so where we feel more qualified and we can ask for much more. Like if it is in the extractives space there are not even enough women in the sector and I do not want to ask for too much because they will say now we have given you a chance and you are still asking for more. I think it is not only the extractives space but everywhere we are, we do not ask for what is ours. At times I think there are situations you are asked for more money and the person you are negotiating with. It is almost like I am a dude and you are a chick , what business do you have earning so much money? So there is the issue of we not asking for the much we are worth but there is also the issue of the people who are supposed to pay us our worth thinking the patriarchal issue comes up again and you are not the one who is the bread winner where they feel even if I give you less it is not unfair and some of your

needs are somebody else's." (Female, Senior Lawyer, Activist, Consultant, Interview, Nairobi, 2018).

However, given that ethnicity reporting is not a legal requirement, information on how ethnicity/ race impacts on entry, pay and retention of black African women is largely unavailable and needs to be explored further especially in relation to elite women in masculinised sectors such as extractives. It is currently considered a non-issue as governments are perhaps looking to grow the economy and have no interest in competing issues of gender. My research does not answer this but gives insight on the importance of the issue and future research should definitely focus on this within African settings as Perez (2019) and Pickerill (2015) have attempted to do so within sectors like construction and housing albeit in Anglophone contexts.

"Oil and gas industries are not easy, especially in a country where it's totally new, you get, um, your introduction to the organization, to the industry is that it's an industry for people who have been dealing with oil and gas for many years. And because they're (implying the white expatriates) in your country they tend to be mobile. Now you know the men are more mobile than women in my experience." (Female, Senior Manager, Oil company, interview, Nairobi, 2018)

Companies however, continued to demonstrate their commitment to inclusion and diversity with outreach programmes targeting minorities. However, this is mainly in early career jobs and in the Kenyan oil and gas industry, it's unclear how this is playing out. In a country where colonial mind-set on superiority of the white race still being dominant, it will be interesting to see how companies report on the issue as part of their annual data to government as it will give a rich background for analysing narratives on how race and gender supports or impedes women growth in the extractive sector. What is lacking is consistency across the sector. There is no set requirement on what type of CSR activities can be run and so companies might be doing as

they please for legitimacy reasons. For example, only one company seems to be running CSR programmes in the host community and this is headed by a woman. Data is unavailable on other companies operating in the country. In addition to this, mentorship programmes are largely personal and are the initiative of elite females and males interested in getting more black women into the sector rather than the sector itself showing just how committed the sector is to black women progress.

Whilst gender issues were more open and largely discussed within extractive sectors, race issues are murky and often hidden under fancy titles of diversity and inclusion with no real commitment to the advancement of black African women in the sector. Companies were unwilling to talk about the subject when I was in the field collecting data and there was no race/ethnicity data reporting in the companies working in the Kenya. Arguably, this was not an issue black women considered important despite racism and ethnicity featuring consistently in conversations. This can be attributed to the competing issues black women have to deal with in the sector such as job access, sexism, which limited elite black women's chances at leadership, equal pay and training opportunities (Reyes & Rodrigues, 2012). With white men continuing to run African extractive industries, the future of black talent at the helm of the industry remains bleak.

“So again it's a very wide scope and decided I wanted to go into sales. I thought sales was good, I looked around and there were no women doing sales so I approached the regional sales manager in Houston and he took one look at me and said it will never happen and I could not understand why and I remember they were merging with a company I forget the name but this company was bringing on board a woman and she was not technically trained and I said I am technically trained and surely that would have an advantage and he said yes you will be technically trained but you have never

been in the field and it is going to take you 5 years or more and I left his office very dejected and thought where do I go from here.” (Female, Senior Engineer/Businesswoman, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Arguably from the findings, elite black women had to work twice as hard to prove that they were capable of doing the job. When looked at in terms of gender, this meant that black women were discriminated on twice in the industry, first because of their race and second because of their gender. As such I argue that being black and female is the greatest impediment black women face in their quest to navigate an industry that has continued to remain a preserve for men. Gender and race are so intertwined that black women cannot experience one without the other, it's like they are part of the same coin. Experiences of one respondent showed how she was denied opportunities to work in the field not because she was a woman but because of her skin colour, although it is also clear that being a woman, a black African woman, is the reason she was a target in the first place. Her first assignment saw her work extremely hard to demonstrate to male colleagues that she could do the job just as well as they did. Black women's intellect being questioned is by far the worst experience people of colour have to face and clients showing open preference to white contractors is very open racism and discrimination in a sector that is already quite sexist. Such experiences deter the growth of black women in a sector that is already racially and gender biased towards people of colour as demonstrated in the quote below. As such I argue in order for black women to experience the sector the same way their white counterparts do, there needs to be a fundamental shift in attitudes and workplace culture to ensure that blatant racism is dealt with amicably and anyone whose deemed racist called out on their behaviour and actions. The fact that a manager stood out for the respondent is to be applauded but whether this was because there was no white engineer to take up the assignment is something that can never be known.

“I remember one other incident ... I tended to work in areas that were very racist or come across very racist clients. You are always trying to justify where you come from but I got to a point where I realized it`s your work that spoke for you and one particular operation we had, the client refused to do the job. Actually two operations I remember clearly the client refused because they wanted a white engineer and my boss my district manager stood up for me so whether he stood up for me because there was no one else, that is debatable but I thought he stood up for me and said look if you do not have her the operation will shut down and we do not know when we will have time cause this is an extremely busy period when we could re-slot them so the client agreed and we did a fantastic job and I went and fracked all these wells.” (Female, Engineer/ Business Woman, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

All in all, this research findings do demonstrate a reluctance by companies in extractive sectors to take responsibility over the needs of women and those of black. What exists is a tokenistic attitude with piecemeal investments here and there occasioned by agitation from female staff. In fact, it became quite apparent in the research that companies were reluctant in deploying female engineers to roles that demanded physical strength due to sexism and perhaps the structure of the extractive sector machinery which emphasised on physical strength rather than intellect. This was despite advancements in technology in the industry. In fact, the research findings indicate that;

“...by employing one woman, four men are displaced in an offshore facility. This is because offshore rooms housed 4 employees so by having one woman on the base, three potential staff are lost which is costly for companies.” (Interview notes, Male, Senior manager, Oil Company, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

As such, diversity and inclusion of women and black women for that matter was quite dismal albeit with modern changes adopted by companies such as Schlumberger which had an all-

female crew onboard their offshore facility thereby creating space for elite black women to flourish, However, the fact that it is only one company doing it is disturbing and more needs to be done to eliminate discrimination and promote diversity in the sector. All in all, as shown in the research, it will need to be the subject of a much larger debate that will ensure societal change as well as policy change to ensure black women and women in general are accorded greater inclusion in the sector.

“I think society plays a much bigger role in terms of, can women do engineering jobs and stuff like that. It’s changing...My experience, I don’t think it’s a matter of women are not in engineering because you’re dad doesn’t think it’s right or society thinks it’s more of a man’s job or you’re scared to do it. It’s just the choice that people make...”

(Female, Senior Engineer/ Business Woman, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

This will need to go beyond talk and include radical changes to the structure of extractive industries with deliberate measures taken to ensure that black women are represented adequately in elite positions within the sector, something that’s currently lacking.

“Tullow’s Inclusion & Diversity Plan is currently focused on nationalities and gender with the intention to broaden the scope. We recognise the value that an inclusive and diverse workforce brings to our business and how it enhances our reputation and the employee value proposition. We aim to have a diverse employee population with a nationality mix that is representative of the countries where our assets are. In particular, we want to improve the numbers of Africans and women in senior technical and leadership roles. We introduced an improved approach to ensuring the we consider a wider and diverse talent pool when recruiting. This has been challenging to implement due to the low levels of recruitment in the current environment but we are extending this practice to our internal moves and promotions.” (Tullow Oil, 2018).

Women advancement or Tokenism?

Tokenism can be argued to be linked to the psychological climate which represents an individual's perception of their work environment and experiences (Stroshine & Brandl, 2011). Whilst multi-dimensional, tokenism proffers a false sense of belonging and acceptance amongst black women in the extractive industry sector thereby validating the policies and events that continue to deny women opportunities for advancement in the sector (King et.al, 2010). It includes aspects such as structures (place), processes (Experience and Identity) and events (Time) all of which are in line with my theoretical framing of Feminist Political Ecology in the research. Collective and individual perception of extractive contexts in the research pointed to a long-standing acceptance of token status by majority of women in the sector thereby validating the existing climate of gender and racial inequality witnessed in the sector (Stroshine & Brandl, 2011). As was witnessed in the research, such false sense of belonging has led to a rather quiet gender equality environment where 'tokens' fear agitating for greater representation for fear of being viewed as problematic and/or losing their place altogether. Whilst these experiences are widely subjective, as a collective, it provides a highly structured environment riddled with patriarchy and hierarchy where hegemony thrives further eroding the benefits gained on gender equality so far in the sector.

“I remember we said we want to be given the ministry of petroleum and mining. None of those ministries have had a female CS (Cabinet Secretary) or a female PS (Permanent Secretary), only parastatals have tried a bit to have women employed ... But why are the women not appointed Mr. president? Is it that we are not qualified? Can't any of us make a PS and he started laughing and said that - the problem with women is that they ask for too much. You are seated with me at the highest table what else do you want? ‘
(Female, Lawyer/ Activist, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Tokenism emerged as a concept in the research and it cannot be ignored in this discussion owing to its direct link to systematic racism and women advancement/ gender equality in the workplace. It is understood as a solution that although prompt and earnest in effort, only acknowledges the existence of an issue rather than resolve it. It has its roots in Racism and can therefore not be discussed without delving into racism and or ethnicity discussions. The inclusion of women in the extractive sector in Kenya can be equated to institutionalised tokenism. A case in point is the emergence of female owned businesses supplying the oil and gas sector. Of interest is the level at which the supplies take place. While it was encouraging to see women in business, these businesses were mostly at the lowest level where the rewards and benefits were often too little and female participants dismal. There were very few women owned businesses that had emerged to provide technical services to the Extractive sector. Of all interviewed, there seemed to be continuous reference to only 2 black women who had successfully started a service-oriented company that directly provided the much needed well-paying technical services to support to the industry in Kenya. However, in company reports and in interviews with company representatives, the way these few successes were spoken of was as though the issue of equality had been achieved. Such acceptance and/ or inclusion of black women amounts to tokenism as it only appears to address diversity whilst in essence constitutes only a minimal acceptance of women and black people in general.

“Yes, there is and I believe every company would do it differently but one thing that is constant is that there is money set aside to compensate first the land owner then everyone around and I mean everyone who is in the sphere. Also when a company has taken up a block you see them taking up a social investment in 4 or 5 counties around them. They also think about women like in Turkana their cultures are so different in that the men are up. If you want to do anything you speak to the men. But if you talk to some of these companies like Tullow, they have established women groups where they

are working with and they tell them these are the things we are doing and as women this is where you can benefit and things you could do and services you could provide and things that are coming up. If you are talking to a community, you have to be very inclusive because these women are the ones who are taking care of the kids who are going to be men so you have to take care of the women as well.” (Senior Manager, Oil Consortium, Female, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

Companies and the women also took pride in the fact that at least the minimum threshold of 30% allocation of contracts in public and private companies was to go to women and other minority groups. It was however unclear on how many of these contracts went to women, especially the more lucrative deals. Interviews with elite black African business women in the sector did echo this challenge given the institutionalised barriers to setting up a business in the sector as a woman and the subsequent growth of the business as it took as much as 10 years for a female owned business to take off when compared to those owned and/or run by men. Similar experiences seemed to affect women at the grassroots community level where elite women in the local community were allocated contracts through a sub-contractor rather than the company itself not because they couldn't do the job, but because the company felt they did not have the necessary business acumen/ financial backing to take on big business contracts. Well in essence, this all comes back to the fact that they are women and that is the truth (See...Pickerill, 2015).

“...in terms of our culture, us women are not recognised but we strive to improve ourselves by doing small/ micro businesses and in 2012 we as women decided that we could venture into the Oil Sector Business but there was fear that we could lose ourselves and forget our place as women in the society. So we came together as a group of 120 women and registered a business then bid for a supply contract from Tullow.

We got a contract to supply vegetables to the company and we worked through a sub-contractor ...which worked directly with Tullow. We did supplies until the company went under sinking with our money of Ksh3.5million (£30,000)...The dividends we have gotten from this business are very high. Our children are able to go to school and we have also been able to go back to school. Truly there is no place without challenges. Our biggest challenge is that we only have one client...and if the oil operations die our business dies with it. We also lack a vehicle to transport our products. Lastly finances as with our Ksh.10 Million capital, we can only supply the sector for a month and a half at the most or two. We cannot do mass orders and have to go back to the bank to apply for a loan...(Local business owner Turkana, Nairobi, Workshop, 2018). - Translated

Whilst there seemed to be efforts to train these women in business skills through a specialised consultancy company hired by the leading extractive company in the region. These skills were very basic and were only geared towards helping the women secure smaller contracts whilst the main lucrative tenders were given to more established national and international companies that 'met' the criteria set by the company headquarters. This demonstrates how women's lives are constrained by economies of scale in the Extractive sector and extractive politics and leaves them vulnerable to the shocks of market forces and unscrupulous middlemen out to gain at the expense of the women. A case in point is the loss of revenue by women subcontracted through a company that had won a supply bid at one of the major companies in the research location. Whilst the women could have supplied the company directly, the fact that they are small scale traders did not deem them worthy of handling the big supply contract and so had to go through an unscrupulous company that had won the supply contract. Instead of the company bearing some form of responsibility for this loss of revenue through their supply chain, the women were left with nothing with the company denying responsibility for acts committed in their

value chain. Such issues of scale only go to show how elite women both at company level and at the grassroots are simply props to be used to gain social legitimacy.

Tokenism could also be seen in the way women were hired in the industry and how they rose up the career ladder. A case in point is the few number of women in the extractive industry particularly black women. The black female engineers in the sector seemed to know one another owing to their small number in the industry. In addition to this, one of the respondents' experience pointed towards a systematic exclusion of black women from the sector due to their peculiarities as women (See...Pickerill, 2015). A case in point is the way women have been socialised to believe that 'emotional women have no place in the extractive sector with women deemed to be less emotional or less baggage (in terms of children and family) finding it easier to grow in the sector than those who are themselves. As was mentioned by one respondent in the research, women need to compartmentalise their lives to be able to advance in the sector. What this compartmentalisation entails is difficult to decipher as it means women have to stop being women for them to advance in the sector which is challenging while men are not expected to be anything they are not. The double standards between men and women does make it difficult for women to thrive in the industry as there are too many expectations to be different versions of 'self' all in a bid to 'fit in.' Women's personality is therefore put above their expertise which is itself problematic and points to an even bigger problem of patriarchal hegemony at the workplace.

"I do not think women should be like men. Women could grow in the industry doing big and great things. The only thing they should know is how to compartment their lives. If you are dealing with something at home, do so and if it is at work, deal with it at work. I know how to deal with things differently and are not carried away by emotions...no because this is an industry that determines someone's job and life so I am

not going to take you because I need to understand your emotional issues so that you make a wrong decision and someone dies on a rig. That is why when you find that you cannot put aside emotions then you cannot do the job. It is about operations and everything that happens around it. Safety is first and everything else is number 2.”

(Senior Manager, Oil Consortium, Female, interview, 2018)

As such, women’s success in the industry can be equated to tokenism as only a few seemed to benefit. Despite this, when mentioning success, these two companies seemed to be used quite a lot to denote the successes women businesses received in the sector. It's therefore important to assess the gains purportedly made by women in the sector as most of the gains only seem to be done to ensure conformity or acceptance of the companies as diverse. So when companies in the research mentioned they were gender inclusive, what did they mean? This was a tricky question that could not get a clear answer from the respondents. What was clear was that companies confuse tokenism with equality and diversity and this needs to be addressed if women are to realise their full potential in the industry.

“Thanks to Tullow, I am the only woman in a crew of 40 contracted drivers. When I walk into a room, they do not look at me as a woman, but as an equal in the profession.”

(Oil Truck Driver, Female, Turkana, 2018)- Tullow Oil Facebook page.

Token beliefs are thus a function of gender and race and black women are disproportionately affected by token status when compared to white women and black men. In fact, black women have been socialised to accept tokenism as progress at the workplace. This could explain why a black woman would be comfortable enough to be the only woman amongst 40 male truck drivers and consider themselves an equal when such status does not even meet the basic requirements for gender equality in light of existing laws in the host country. This is in contrast to western countries such as Australia where one company employed an all-female truck driver

crew because they were found to be more hardworking, capable and trustworthy than male counterparts (CSMonitor, 2010). The use of an all-female crew on Kenya's national airline also goes to show how tokenism is systematised across different sectors and it sure is not just about men verses women but rather a marketing strategy geared towards gaining social legitimacy and financial success. It is not about the women; it is about what is gained by using the women. With conversations on race taking a more central debate across the world, it is perhaps time the use of black women as props of diversity and inclusion are re-examined and decolonised to ensure that meaningful equality and inclusion is realised especially in sectors like extractives where black women are already seriously disadvantaged first for being women and secondly as black women.

“...like you are in the extractives sector, how did you get into it? There are those who already know women are in this phase and there are those who are still catching up. Acceptance that women can do this job and they are as good as you are and you know what we are talking about and we are brave enough if given the opportunity. I will give you an example one of the largest gold extractives in Australia. They used to have a lot of monster trucks that are used to move materials. They used to have a lot of incidents and accidents because the nature of trucks so it was an ego booster for men to drive those trucks men so the speeds they want to drive at and the way they want to manoeuvre. Then they realized the maintenance ratios were very expensive so they decided to give women to drive those monster trucks because the size of that truck was so big no one ever thought that a woman would enter that truck. Then one woman said she wanted to drive that truck and they gave her a chance. That's why I said technology is a good thing because it was a huge truck but it is really automated. That woman started driving the truck and guess what every day as we were going for maintenance had to go to 3 segments without then they were like huh! She is gentle and more careful

and trucks do not have incidents. They changed all the truck drivers to women. All of those who were entering were being given the big trucks and were giving even young girls who were between 25 and 30 years. This changed the accident ratios so give them the chance. Do not frown on men and discriminate because of the nature of work they deserve. It is not just acceptance, you accept they are here and also give them the chance. You see we can you to become a petroleum engineer and then call you by name and when we are going to the oil heads nobody gives you a chance to drill but you are just rubber stamping. Accept them and give them the chance. And then they want to rise, to prove they are good and a chance to rise and prove you are good but we never move, we are never the decision makers. We just remain perpetually like a mainstreaming agenda, we gave you a chance so what else do you want. Give them the opportunity to rise up to the best of abilities and talents would take them to.” (Female, Lawyer, Women rights activist, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

In addition to the above, discrepancies between Western and African contexts do point to the place of women in the extractive sector with white women ‘seemingly’ valued for their knowledge and experience while black women being used as a tool for meeting diversity targets and gaining legitimacy in host countries. Despite this, women in general continue to face endearing challenges in the extractive sector with black women disproportionately affected. As such the fallacy of gender equality in the extractive sector is a structured and systematic process of exclusion that is used as a proxy for discrimination and ensuring the maintenance of the status quo. By examining the spatial context within which tokenism thrives, the research is therefore able to understand the correlation between token status and the subjective experiences of women in the extractive sector. So, it is right to argue that extractive industries have never been designed for women and gender spaces only exist as a way of glorifying and reinforcing masculinity and hegemony. However, token status could be a first step for giving black women

a seat at the table. The problem is companies stop here and this is where they fail. Tokenism should ideally be a start and not a solution to the issue of inequality and racism within extractive industries. Further research should explore this and design concrete solutions towards the realisation of meaningful inclusion within the sector.

“Yes, that is true because a man can see what a woman cannot. They can tell you that you are actually better than me but you are selling yourself short or this is what you are not doing.” (Senior Manager, Female, Oil consortium, Nairobi, interview, 2018)

In addition to this, context provides patterns which help us understand the existential inequality between men and women in leadership within the extractives sector. Although the lack of mentorship and opportunities has been decried as a possible explanation to this disparity, the answer itself is as complex as the question being asked. In simple terms, I argue that there simply is no goodwill to provide an equal space within which gender equality and diversity can thrive. What exists is a carefully crafted ‘boys’ club’ that has no plan of changing the status quo. This is significant because it provides context to the understanding of the place of women in extractives and gives us an indication of what to expect when extractive industries wind up as has been seen in the case of Kenya Early Oil Scheme where gains made by women and for women are in Limbo owing to their unsustainable nature. What is clear is that the gains made on the gender front are mere legitimacy stunts to ensure companies get as much resource rents as possible in the shortest time without really transforming anything.

“...we as women decided that we could venture into the Oil Sector Business but there was fear that we could lose ourselves and forget our place as women in the society. The dividends we have gotten from this business are very high. Our children are able to go to school and we have also been able to go back to school... Our biggest challenge is that we only have one client - Tullow- and if the oil operations die our business dies with it...(Local/ rural business lady Turkana, Nairobi, interview, 2018- Translated).

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS

Starting points

When I started my PhD research it was about understanding how women engaged with a nascent oil economy in East Africa. This included women at all levels and was mainly inspired by my Masters' Research findings which revealed grave inequalities in access, use and benefits from oil resources despite progressive laws and policies on gender equality by local women in host communities. As the research progressed, it became evident that there was a group of women that were gravely overlooked in academic research- elite women. This was mainly due to the misconception that they were 'ok.' After all, they are successful, well paid, travel the world and own property. Poor rural women in host communities perhaps needed the close attention as history has always projected Africans to be a poor barbaric continent in need of saving and African women as victims of patriarchy. But then there is this new cohort of neo-liberal women who have defied the odds and successfully navigated a masculinized system built for and by men. I wanted to explore these women's experiences.

The research findings albeit consistent with some of the existing literature on rural women in Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining industries, the scale of and consistency of discrimination, sexism and misogyny in aspects of job access and progression, women experiences, time and general laws and policies, in addition to existing barriers of culture pointed to a situation that warranted attention and in-depth analysis in order to call out various actors in the extractive sector and to place elite women's voices on a platform that would inspire policy change.

One interesting dynamic to my research is the focus on black African women who seemed to be missing even in race studies in western academic scholarship. Whilst race issues are well studied to a large extent in Anglophone literature, the African woman's experience is left out altogether. As such, I introduce the concept of African Feminism and its intersectionality with

gender and extractives. I project an amalgamation of Motherism, Womanism and Empowerment waves of African feminism and how these interact to form a new wave of neo-feminism for African women which seems to have been overpowered or diluted by Western feminism.

However, I also argue that African feminism still stands apart in the way it seeks to share and collaborate with black African men, (often portrayed as oppressors) owing to a shared heritage of slavery, colonialism, poverty and corruption that has undermined the education, opportunities and successes of people of African descent in entering and prospering in extractive industry. The concept of whiteness against blackness/ Africanness seems to come out strongly as African extractives are largely foreign owned and temporary in their operations. As such are not designed for the benefit of the African women or man, rather for the exploitation of African wealth for the benefit and development of Western nations.

This brings me to the concept of tokenism and how the extractive industry attempts to cover up its wanton disregard for women and Africanness. This is indeed an interesting topic quite understudied within African extractive sectors or even Anglophone academia. This presented an opportunity for my research to positively contribute to the ongoing debate of decolonising academia and Geography at large to introduce a viewpoint of black African women who are or have tried to navigate the race barriers in the West. What is evident is that tokenism is real and due to lack of willingness to change a widely sexist and misogynist industry, companies are choosing to add-in a couple of black African women and claiming to be diverse and inclusive whilst in essence they are just projecting a neo-colonised idea of whiteness.

However, I also argue that tokenism is a first step towards ensuring equal and meaningful representation of African women in elite positions within extractives. This is in particularly traditionally white, male technical and leadership roles which have transcended boundaries to

create a neo-colonial environment within African extractive industries where white foreign men work as experts despite existence of experienced, highly trained and even more qualified African women and men more familiar with the African context. Extractive industries actors must therefore ensure that tokenism does not remain the only way for African women to break the glass ceiling, rather, it should be a first step in ensuring progression and transition of African black women into more permanent, lucrative and competitive technical roles.

[African feminism, Gender and Extractives](#)

In summary, this research reaffirms the existence of sexism and misogyny within extractive industries. By focussing on an afro-centric feminist approach, this research is able to conceptualise black women experiences in a highly white and masculinised sector. This is cognizant of the shared history of slavery and colonialism and how these translate into white superiority in an industry that already disadvantages women based on how they look and how society perceives their roles to be. By failing to recognise black histories as well as the multi-dimensional nature of ‘woman’ as defined within African culture, the extractive industry also fails to ensure inclusivity of ‘woman’ as a worker, a mother and a colleague/ friend which is detrimental for African women in their pursuit of power and privilege in a largely white male sector. I argue that the design process of extractive industries and associated infrastructure is built with men in mind and that is why it is normalised to offer women engineers ‘funnels’ to use in offshore facilities or give women smaller sized men’s coveralls and boots as uniforms.

As such, gender is a masculinised undertaking that is designed to exclude women from the industry whilst still maintaining a normalised outlook of equality and non-discrimination between genders. With masculinity embedded in social and economic processes both in policy decisions as well as day to day operations and interactions between men and women, the number of women in technical well-paying roles traditionally considered a purview for men

was wanting. This is not because of the intellectual capacities of women but to the biology and societal perceptions of who a woman is and where a woman should be. In simple terms, I argue that there simply is no goodwill to provide an equal space within which gender equality and diversity can thrive. What exists is a carefully crafted 'boys club' that has no intention of changing the status quo.

By exploring the discursive relationship between the female body and the female self (being), this research fundamentally challenges the exclusion of women and women's experiences in extractive industries. This is necessitated by the fact that bodies are arguably produced, co-produced and contextualised through discourse, time and space and as such are materially attached to the environment and experiences of those in such environments. Through incorporating and understanding the female body, what it means to be a woman can be explored and its strengths, experiences and limitations as manifested through the female body can be used to advance female progress in a masculinised extractive sector. This is important given the contradictions and contentions on how feminism and women's embodiment plays out in individual and different groups of women. The ability of a woman's body to adapt to the physical and mental demands of biological processes is thus itself unique. However, this uniqueness has been the undoing of women in extractive industries as they are considered leaky vessels incapable of performing as well as men.

The fact that we have men making decisions for women and about women is the very core of the gender problem in extractives and other male dominated sectors. The masculinisation of extractive infrastructure in both policy and practice is in fact the greatest impediment to positive women's experience and advancement in extractive sectors. In an already imbalanced equation this is important as infrastructure already transcends the social and spatial wellbeing of workers and governs social, economic and intellectual wellbeing. It is a tool for governing

our social life in diverse ways. As such aspects of plurality and dynamism as well as spatial and time variations, interactions and experiences of female workers within a highly rigid and masculinised extractive industry, point to the skewed environment created and sustained by sexism, misogyny and narcissistic tendencies that are designed to undermine the role and place of women as equal members of society and workers.

Time, difference and exclusion

The materialisation and commodification of the woman's body as a thief of time and an unwanted anomaly in the extractive sector points to an existential structure designed to exclude women and to keep them out. It is a no wonder sexist language such as 'man up' 'boys club' and equipment such as funnels have been normalised to force women to be 'more like men, more like miniature versions of men' in order to 'fit in,' into an industry that seeks to remain the way it is rather than invest in change in order to improve women's experience in the sector. As was affirmed by this research, the extractive sectors are designed to be as hostile as possible for women with such hostilities intended to ensure a skewed balance of genders as the sector seeks to remain a territory for men.

It is evident that women are set up to fail and breaking the glass ceiling for women is more like falling off a glass cliff. Women are offered precarious positions of leadership when companies are at their poorest economically or when the global markets are in a such a state that success is indeed a poor attempt by companies to address race and gender inequality. What was clear was that companies confuse tokenism with equality and diversity and this needs to be addressed if women are to realise their full potential in the industry. Whilst multi-dimensional, tokenism proffers a false sense of belonging and acceptance amongst black women in the extractive industry sector thereby validating the policies and events that continue to deny women opportunities for advancement in the sector.

Space, equality and non-discrimination

A superiority complex is systematically entrenched in the extractive sector in Africa and is essentially an extension of neo-colonialism where black Africans are still considered poor, uneducated and inferior and therefore incapable of taking up positions that require 'experts.' The place of women in this light is thus fragile and uneven as these facets of colonialism dictate how and who is employed, their pay as well as how they progress in the sector. This further constricts the spaces for women employment and reinforces inequality in an already unequal space. Focus on gender issues such as sexualisation, harassment in gender policies and activism has also only served to put women in the spotlight making them an easy target at the workplace for demotions or dismissal as companies attempt to avoid dealing with complaints at the workplace.

African Women are thus disadvantaged twice, first as women and second as black women. The sector is not responsive to the needs of black women and does not recognise the competing issues elite black African women have to deal with in addition to inequalities at work. As such, for fear of losing out altogether, the black women seemed to accept the raw end of the deal in terms of job opportunities, progress and pay. Their focus is more on getting and keeping the job rather than career growth in the industry. In addition to this, issues of labour are far too complex to be understood on the basis of race alone, racial stereotypes and as such, distinctions of 'true womanhood' within an African context continue to dictate how black women navigate the extractive sector with those with mentorship support, often white male colleagues, seemingly advancing faster than their counterparts with no social networks at the workplace. What is advocated is that black African women must attach themselves to white male counterparts to be able to succeed and grow in an already sexist environment which reinforces a climate of male domination, sexism and systematised racism. Given that the extractive sector remains white, foreign and male dominated with most senior technical and non-technical roles occupied by white men, women who do not get an opportunity to work with progressive

white male bosses or colleagues are thus doomed and this needs to change. In the course of my research, black women mentioned the need for mentorship programmes to address this gap and although I did not delve into this in my analysis chapter, it is a very important initiative that must be embraced by extractive actors if meaningful change is to be realised.

Continued exclusion

By examining elite women experiences in a highly masculinised sector, this research gave a voice to an overlooked group of women – elite black African women- who are often disadvantaged due to their perceived success having navigated a patriarchal society and sexist industry to secure lucrative well paying positions that place them on the same pedestal as men. But are their experiences the same? This is a question that seems to have been understudied in literature especially in relation to black African women.

Elite are argued to enjoy greater autonomy over their voice, bodies and labour yet such misconceptions are complicated by research affirming the need for these women to give up/ trade in their non-work needs such as the quest for a family, children for success in the industry. This situation has been detrimental to black African women owing to the centrality of children and marriage in the cultural makeup of Kenyan society. As such, despite success at work, the women are still considered failures, and this is a direct consequence of the masculine nature of extractive industries which has in place policies that do not allow women to explore their biological inclinations and options fully.

All in all, extractive industries continue to fail on the gender equality front with large scale extractive infrastructure projecting a preference for men over women purely on the assumption that men are physically stronger than women. This is despite advancements that have been made on the technology front that requires intellectual prowess rather than physical strength in the operation of machinery and equipment.

As such, extractive industries remain structured and designed with a man in mind and women are expected to adapt and perform like miniature versions of men with women's identity, experience and time grossly undermined and treated as a disadvantage in hiring and promotion activities. This is justified through 'misgivings' about biology and assumptions of basic inferiority to the male gender. Such assumptions are akin to the silencing of women's experiences and prop up a systematic exclusionary processes geared towards ensuring the glorification of masculinity and the male gender over the needs, feelings and experiences of women and femininity.

With Africa experiencing what has been described as an 'extractives boom', it has never been more important to ensure that gender equality and the place of black African women is centralised in extractive processes to ensure that African women also enjoy the benefits that come with resource wealth. This will require a fundamental policy shifts to ensure industries build a more permanent presence in order to encourage settlement and growth of women around extractive sectors as they seek to balance traditional roles of childcare and marriage which take centre-place in African feminism and culture.

Next Steps

My research is informative as well as deficient owing to the complexities of the issues at hand. However, key issues of gender, infrastructure and racism are central to the betterment of women's experience in the extractive sector. As such, extractive industries do have a lot to do to ensure African women are meaningfully involved in the sector. This will likely include a comprehensive action plan and policy that will restructure how the extractive industries views and treat particularly women and black women. One key focus of such a plan should be on entry and retention of black talent in the industry. By providing a gender-blind recruitment and appraisal process and in local content policies, companies can ensure that the best talent is

recruited thereby creating a win-win for elite women in the sector. However, this does not address the issue of access.

In order for black women to access opportunities in the sector, there needs to be in place a comprehensive mentorship programme that will ensure black women systematically advance both in pay grade and job opportunities without the need for validation from a male white colleague/ boss. Rather, a system that will ensure women access the right training and are attached to relevant mentors, preferably female, to help bring in aspects of shared experience and solidarity amongst women in the sector with an aim of helping more women break the glass ceiling in different parts of their job and in leadership positions.

On the legal front, a shift in how women are viewed in the sector needs to be explored. It is of no use to have a policy or law on gender and non-discrimination if the system that is supposed to implement these laws is a product of the very system we are seeking to change. We cannot continue to have men making decisions for women, on women and about women's bodies. There needs to be an injection of colour into the board room if issues of race, equality and non-discrimination are to be addressed. Tokenism I argue, is a product of ignorance and misinformation and the only way it can be eliminated is by having a more balanced board room full of people of varied ethnicities. This will be able to bring black women experiences onto the table as it will also those of Asian, Latino and even white women thereby enriching discussion on gender and enabling companies and other actors make decisions from an informed point of view.

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Web Links

<https://twitter.com/kenyaairways/status/1236596931385790465?lang=en>

<https://www.icsspe.org/system/files/Beijing%20Declaration%20and%20Platform%20for%20Action.pdf>

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Interview questions

Interview questions

Policy Makers

What do you think about the place of women in Kenya? Probe for state of gender in extractives in relation to land, decision making, jobs.

What laws and policies safeguard women issues in Kenya particularly in extractive industries? Probe for how gender is defined and expressed in these laws and policies.

Do you think these laws are enough/ appropriate for women? Probe

To what extent are women around extractives aware of these laws and policies?

To what extent are these laws impacting on women's agency around the oil and gas sector?

How are extractives changing the economy?

How are extractives influencing gender identities at work and at home?

How are land-use change processes around extractives impacting on women property rights?

What are your thoughts on women at work?

What can you as a decision maker in government/ academia do to improve women agency in extractive industries?

Companies

What do you think about the place of women in extractive industries? Probe for state of gender in extractives in relation to decision making, jobs etc.

What laws and policies safeguard women issues in extractive industries? Probe for how gender is defined and expressed in these laws and policies.

To what extent are women in the company aware of these laws and policies? Probe for procedures for redress, no. of cases handled and outcomes etc.

What are your thoughts on women at work? Probe gender, sex, education influences in hiring and promotions.

Gender pay gap, is it an issue for women in Kenya? Do you think women are justified to earn less than men? Why?

How many women are currently employed in your company and in what positions?

Do you believe that the positions women occupy in your company are appropriate? And why?

How many women have been promoted in your company in the past five years? Probe for positions. Probe for basis for these promotions.

What are some of the incentives companies use to encourage women to get back to work?

How is the company working to promote equality between men and women within the extractive sector? Probe for pay gap, promotions etc., ask for examples if possible

How are land-use change processes around extractives impacting on women property rights?

Community Leaders/ members/ Academics

What is the place of women in your community? Probe for state of gender in extractives in relation to land, decision making, Power, language

How is this changing with the coming of extractives?

Do you think women are treated fairly in our communities? Probe. If no, how and why are they treated differently?

How are relationships between men and women expressed in everyday life? Probe for language, text, symbols and body language

How do you feel about the gendered languages and expressions used to address, define women and women identity? Probe

Who holds power at home and at work? Probe for how this is changing around extractives

How much power do women yield in the household? Who controls the household? Who makes decisions?

How do power relations affect/ influence women engagement in extractive industry sectors?

How are extractive industries affecting women and communities around extractives? Probe for jobs, benefit sharing, decision making, livelihoods.

How have extractives influenced women's place at work and at home?

What are your thoughts on female breadwinners? Probe for beliefs on a woman's place.

How have perceptions changed regarding female headed households with the coming of extractives?

Informal industries, what are some of the informal industries in your community? How are women involved in these industries?

How have these industries changed since the coming of large-scale extractive industries?

In your opinion, do you think that these industries are better at gender equality than formal extractive industries? Probe

Do you extractive industries pay women as competitively as they pay men? Why?

What are some of the incentives used by government, companies and the community to encourage women to get back to work?

Academics

What do you think about the place of women in Kenya? Probe for state of gender in extractives in relation to land, decision making, jobs.

What laws and policies safeguard women issues in Kenya particularly in extractive industries? Probe for how gender is defined and expressed in these laws and policies.

To what extent are these laws impacting on women's agency around the oil and gas sector?

How are extractives influencing gender identities at work and at home?

What are your thoughts on women at work?

How are relationships between men and women expressed in everyday life? Probe for language, text, symbols and body language

How do you feel about the gendered languages and expressions used to address, define women and women identity? Probe

Who holds power at home and at work? Probe for how this is changing around extractives

How much power do women yield in the household? Who controls the household? Who makes decisions?

How do power relations affect/ influence women engagement in extractive industry sectors?

How are extractive industries affecting women and communities around extractives? Probe for jobs, benefit sharing, decision making, livelihoods.

What are your thoughts on female breadwinners? Probe for beliefs on a woman's place.

How have perceptions changed regarding female headed households with the coming of extractives?

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How have these industries changed since the coming of large-scale extractive industries?

In your opinion, do you think that these industries are better at gender equality than formal extractive industries? Probe

What are some of the incentives used by government, companies and the community to encourage women to get back to work?

Appendix 2: Participant Information sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Thank you for your time. My name is Nerea Amisi Okong'o, a PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. My research seeks to undertake a Discourse Analysis of Gender and its intersection with politics in the Oil and Gas sector in Kenya. The research has obtained Ethics Approval in line with University of Sheffield regulations and is expected to take 4-6 months. Detailed below is more information on my research. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me via email at Naokongol@sheffield.ac.uk or my supervisor Prof. Jenny Pickerill at j.m.pickerill@sheffield.ac.uk or Dr. Charis Enns at c.enns@sheffield.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can reach me by phone on ([local number]).

Do you accept to participate in the research? Yes/ No (Consent will also be requested verbally as the information below is read and during the interviews)

The Purpose of this Study

This research seeks to critically examine gender inclusion, participation and/or alienation trends in the newly found oil economy by assessing the scale of alienation/ participation, as well as the drivers towards the low participation of women in Kenya. This is against a backdrop of persistent gender inequalities in economic, social and political spaces which has impacted on women participation particularly in relation to changing levers and pressure points for policy responses

Study Procedures

Data will be collected through structured and unstructured interviews and will be recorded using an audio recording device. I will also employ observation as a technique in the interviews where body language of respondents as well as the emphasis on certain words will be closely monitored to help in the analysis of the discourses used in the research context. I will ask general questions about how gender is perceived in your community, how you relate to gender and what your thoughts are on gender issues in the oil and gas sector. You are free to let me know if you are uncomfortable with any of the approaches or questions at any time during the interview. You can also withdraw at any time.

Potential Risks

While there are no immediate known risks in the research, your participation is completely optional and you should not feel pressured to participate. However, in the interest of data integrity, I request that you maintain confidentiality of the discussions we have here in relation to the research. If you are concerned about any specific risks that you might face by participating in the research, please let me know so that we can draw a plan to mitigate the risks.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this discussion is completely voluntary. You can leave the discussion at any time without being penalized. If you have any questions, you can interrupt the discussion to ask for clarification at any point. If you require a report on the research findings, a summary will be drawn and shared with you.

Anonymity and consent

No information that can identify you will be used in the research. As such, your participation will be anonymized and kept confidential and nobody who is not authorised to be part of the research will have access to your personal information. Your personal details will also not be collected in the research. You are also required to consent to your participation as well as aspects such as recording of interviews. You can withdraw your consent at any time during the interview.

Your responses (anonymized) will form part of my final Research Thesis and may be included in publications resulting from the research findings. However, any requests to keep certain comments off the record will be respected. Only myself and authorized personnel from the University of Sheffield will have access to the transcribed interviews and these materials will be stored and used in line with University of Sheffield Ethics requirements.

Photos and Recordings

Interviews will be recorded using an audio recording device. These will later be transcribed. Should you refuse to be recorded, alternative methods such as note taking will be used. By agreeing to participate in the research, it is also implied that you have consented to have your photos taken. Should you withdraw your consent, the photos will be promptly deleted.

Rights of Research Participants

You may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study. This project has been reviewed by the University of Sheffield Ethics Committee in compliance with research involving human participants.

Thank you!

Appendix 3: Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: Politics of progress: A discourse Analysis on gender in the extractive sector in Kenya

Name of Researcher: Nerea Amisi Okong'o

Participant Identification Number:

I confirm that I have been informed about the research in detail and I understand the what the research project is about. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline anytime by contacting the researcher on xxxxxxxx@xxxxx.com or +xxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.
I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.

I agree for the anonymised data collected from me to be used in future research

I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:

