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Unconventional oil and gas extraction in South Africa: water linkages within the population–environment–development nexus and its policy implications

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ABSTRACT

The development of unconventional oil and gas resources, controversial in many countries, is currently being pursued by the South African government. This activity can have large impacts on the socio-economic and biophysical environments, especially water resources. In South Africa, little consideration has been given to water-related impacts from the perspective of the interrelated people–ecosystem linkages that are necessary for sustainable social and economic development. This article explores specific water-related linkages between facets of the natural and social environments pertaining to unconventional oil and gas extraction, with the objective of achieving more effective water resources management and water policy development.

KEYWORDS:

Unconventional oil and gas | water | impacts | policy | PED-nexus | South Africa

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