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**Value of Territory: A Critical View on Natural
Resources Being a Cause Ethnic Conflict**

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Abstrakt

Tato studie se zabývá etnickým konfliktem ve Federální Republice Nigérie. Hlavním záměrem této práce je analyzování cenného teritoria, Deltu Nigeru, a jehož možné důsledky na etnický konflikt v zemi. Mimo to, geografický jiho-východ se snaží o oddělení území od zbytku federace, z důvodu, že populace Igbo, která tento geografický region obývá, je nespokojena s nerovnými možnostmi oproti ostatním etnickým skupinám v zemi. Dále, jakmile se jiho-východ, kterému se také říká Biafra, oddělí, a tím pádem vznikne Republika Biafra, je velká pravděpodobnost, že se dolní jih oddělí i s nimi, protože mají blízko jazykově, ale také kulturně, a nábožensky. Federace tento fakt odmítá, protože většina celkového příjmu federace, asi 80%, pochází právě z toho regionu. Pokud by se federace tohoto území vzdala, přišla by o veškerý příjem. Závěr této studie dokazuje, že pokud bude separatistické hnutí násilně potlačeno armádou, hnutí se bude radikalizovat a objeví se znovu s větší intenzitou, z důvodu větší nespokojenosti místních obyvatel. Místní obyvatelé utvořili několik hnutí, která bojují za mnoho odlišných věcí, od environmentalních problémů, po chudobu atd., ale mnoho z nich je také zařazeno mezi teroristické organizace, kvůli útokům na civilní obyvatelstvo ve městech, násilná vniknutí, únosy, a v neposlední řadě za vandalismus, ilegální zpracovávání ropy, pirátství atd.

Abstract

This study deals with the ethnic conflict in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The main objective of this study is to analyse whether the valued territory of the Niger Delta region is the cause of the ethnic conflict in the country. Moreover, the geographical south-east region of Nigeria is trying to separate itself from the rest of the federation because the Igbo population inhabiting this region claims they are being marginalised in the country. However, if the south-east region, called also Biafra, becomes the Biafran Republic it is highly probable that the south-south is going to separate along. The federal government is not satisfied with the fact, as 80% of the federal revenue comes from the Niger Delta region and they do not want to lose it. Therefore, my findings show that if the movement for the secession of Biafra is going to be crushed down by force, the movement will radicalise and get stronger with the intensified dissatisfaction of the local population. The local population of these two geographical regions created many movements which are fighting not only the federal government but also the multinational corporation exploiting oil and natural gas from the Niger Delta region. Many of these movements are also on the list of terrorist organisations as they are known from kidnappings, various attacks on cities and its populations, vandalism, pipe-tapping, piracy, and illegal refining.

Klíčová slova

Cenná teritoria, nerostné bohatství, region Delta Nigeru, etnický konflikt, separatistická hnutí, Biafra.

Keywords

Value of Territory, Natural Resources, Niger Delta Region, Ethnic Conflict, Separatist movements, Biafra.

Extend of the study : 17. 460 words, 108. 390 characters

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V Praze dne 2.1.2016

Nicole Okonkwo Gattuso

Statement of originality

1. I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree, or qualification thereof, or for any other university or institute of learning.

2. I declare that this thesis is my independent work. All sources and literature are cited and included.

3. I also hereby acknowledge that my thesis will be made publicly available pursuant to academic purposes.

In Prague January 2, 2016

Nicole Okonkwo Gattuso

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Introduction

Aim of the Study

This research aims at providing the findings and arguments on the questions of 1) How do natural resources in the Delta region escalate the conflict between ethnic groups/classes within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and 2) Are there going to be any other attempts to separate Biafra from the federation and why? The main objective is to stress the importance of the valued territories and conflict over them. In this attempt, the research identifies and discusses interconnected themes among these two topics. I use the concept from the Marxist geopolitics, the valorisation of territories to understand how conflicts appear in connection to them. Furthermore, I use other concepts to clarify and understand certain phenomenons which this study discusses.

Justification of the Study

This study brings a specific case of the valued territory connected to conflict. This issue is important as the concept of the valued territory claims that conflicts are not an integral part of capitalist reproduction but often they are the direct result of it. This study goes deeper in the direct connection between the valued territory and conflict on the case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which is an oil rich country and is suffered by conflict since the oil discoveries in the 1950's. There is only a small area, the Niger Delta region, rich on oil in the great landmass that is called Nigeria. I picked this case as it is interesting to see the conflict from the beginning until its current developments with another attempt to separate Biafra from the rest of the federation. The conflict is even more intensified by the fact that Nigeria is a home to various ethnic groups which are struggling for power and access to the natural resources. Moreover, Africa's resource endowment is significant, and ongoing discoveries, especially in the case of oil on the West African coast, are further reinforcing the importance of the entire continent to global resource politics. Indeed, by

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2015 the United States estimates that one-quarter of its oil supply will come from Africa; second, natural resources conflicts are increasingly important because of the significant role they play in the affairs of the region, especially as they relate to governance, activities of the civil society, and conflicts; third, some African's natural resources are now being linked to a number of global security concerns, including money laundering and alleged links with terrorism, environmental degradation, poverty and other links to various conflicts and wars. Therefore, I believe this study is going to bring an insight to these issues and create an understanding of how valorisation of territory can lead to conflicts. To justify the choice of my topic, I would like to stress that my research is original in the sense that I look at the case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its problem with natural resources and separatist movements through a critical theory, Marxist geopolitics. The case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is studied a lot but only through similar concepts and these concepts usually do separate the natural resources issue and the tribal animosity and separatist movements from each other as they would not be interlinked.

Findings and Arguments of the Study

In this study I aimed at answering the two questions 1) How do natural resources in the Delta region escalate the conflict between ethnic groups/classes within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and 2) Are there going to be any other attempts to separate Biafra from the federation and why? According to the theories I used, the Marxist geopolitics and the concept of value of territory, Harvey's spatio-temporal fixes, and other concepts, my findings are: 1) This study proves that natural resources in the Delta region escalate the conflict between the various groups in the country as the revenue from the resources is not allocated well and fairly. Moreover, the Niger Delta from which 80% of the revenue comes from is environmentally devastated, lacks behind in development, and due to the south-east and south-south region used to be an agricultural one, from which people survived, now, they do not have any other possibility to make out a living because there is lack of

jobs in the regions. This fact leads to dissatisfaction of ordinary people who then rebel against the government and the multinational corporations (MNC's). 2) The second finding is made clear in the last chapter as well as I am discussing the current development and another attempt to separate Biafra from the rest of the federation. This research question has two answers depending on the development of the current issue. If the Biafran Republic will be successful in its separation, the Niger Delta region is most probably going to separate with it. The reason for that is that the south-south of Nigeria used to be already once part of Biafra and they have most in common with the Igbo population that lives in the south-east compared to other geographical regions. Furthermore, the south-south is very much populated by the Igbo. The second possible development is that the Biafran separation will be once again stopped by force, the people will radicalise and there are going to be further stronger attempts for the separation of the Biafran Republic. If the federation is going to handle the separatist movements in a peaceful way and is going to try to negotiate some autonomy possibilities it is more likely that the situation would change and Nigeria is going to stay a federation.

Methodology

This study uses the single case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which helps to make us understand how the valorisation of territory leads to conflict. This qualitative research uses the concept from the Marxist geopolitics, the value of territory, while the valued territory is the Niger Delta region. The data used to complete this study are most of all secondary sources. Literature which made me understand the history of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the problems in the Niger Delta region and others. Also, what makes my research more valid and original, I believe, is that I was able to visit the Federal Republic of Nigeria and did my own field research. I was able to visit places that are portrayed online as environmentally devastated, I was able to do some interviews with the local population. On the other side, I will have to rely on the data collected by the United

Nations and especially by the United Nations Development Program which researches collects the data from the Niger Delta. Very useful are also going to be statistics from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as they will show how well the Federal Republic of Nigeria performs. Lastly, I will collect some data directly in Nigeria as I will read the newspaper where there are many articles about the separatist movements in the south-eastern region, I will also go to the national archive to access articles from the newspaper which were written during the Biafran war. During my stay in Nigeria I did some semi-structured interviews about the feelings Biafrans have for the federation and reasons why they want to separate. I did not use any concrete questionnaires as it narrows the possible answers. The next area of questions was for the non-Biafrans and their feelings about the separation of Biafra. There were many answers which are used in this study and also confirmed by secondary sources data.

Roadmap of the Study

This research has three chapters which provide us through the findings and arguments that answer my research questions **1) How do natural resources in the Delta region escalate the conflict between ethnic groups/classes within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and 2) Are there going to be any other attempts to separate Biafra from the federation and why?** The first chapter defines the concept of Marxist geopolitics, the value of territory, provides us with the definitions of the Niger Delta region and also the definitions of Biafra then, during the civil war, and now, in the current developments of the conflict. In the end of the first chapter I explain how the theory will be used on the single case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The second chapter provides information about Nigeria's history and also history of economic development. In this chapter my main objective is to introduce the history which makes us understand the current conflict in the Niger Delta. We will see that the British established a state of various ethnic and religious groups which hated each other because of the rivalry that was

created during the slave trade. The British ruled the country with an authoritarian regime but thanks to that the rivalry dropped because the Nigerians had a common enemy – the British. When the colonial era ended the conflicts between the ethnic groups appeared again. Nigeria therefore was not from the beginning completely nationally united. The first republic collapsed after civilian politicians had conflicts with each other and corruption and nepotism ruled the politics of Nigeria. Two military coups which brought along an ethnocide of the Igbo population ended after a long period of negotiations.

The third chapter aims at firstly, showing how much revenue the Niger Delta nowadays produces, how much oil is being extracted, and what is the overall standpoint of the federal government towards the issues in the region. Secondly, examining the conflict in the Niger Delta by analysing the ‘valued territory’ and its natural resources, the companies operating there, the natural degradation. Then, analysing the human part of the conflict, various political movements, militias, and also ordinary people’s stories, the allocations from the government, all of which is going to help me to fully answer my two research questions.

Chapter I

Theory - Marxist Geopolitics

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the theory of Marxist conception of geopolitics which privileges territorial space as a lever of change in the political and economic system. Through this theory I am going to explain how the 'valued territory' escalades the conflict in the Niger Delta region of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This study identifies a number of issues which will be enunciated at the beginning. Firstly, even though this study will be mostly focusing on the intra-state issues connecting to value of territory, I made an overall theory overview to understand the links of the intra-state and international sphere. Secondly, the arguments of the Marxist conception of geopolitics is restricted to the geopolitics of contemporary capitalism. And finally, this study does not aim to formulate a geopolitics conception which can explain all aspects of the international politics/economics, rather this study focuses on the understanding of geopolitics as a connection of territorial space and power. Though, before I start with the theory, I would like to emphasise two more important concepts the Niger Delta, and also Biafra. Why it is important to stress these as well is because they are very much connected to answering my research questions.

1.1. Definition of the Niger Delta Region

It is important to explain what is meant by the Niger Delta region because people do have a different understanding of it. The Niger Delta region used to be called the Oil Rivers Protectorate during the British colonisation during 1885-1893, and then later expanded to the Niger Coast Protectorate. People mostly refer to the Niger Delta region as the oil producing states in south-south Nigeria. However, the states considered to be Niger Delta states are Bayelsa, Delta, and

Rivers States and over the years, with the discovery of oil in other states, such as Cross River State, Imo, Edo, Ondo, Akwa-Ibom, and Abia we enlisted. However, some of these states are oil producing and not part of the south-south geographical zone, but the south-east geographical zone (Nairaland Forum, 2009). When I will be referring to the Niger Delta region I will have in mind the oil producing states which are to be found in the south-south geographical zone but as well in the south-east geographical zone.

1.2. Definition of Biafra then and now

In order to be able to answer the research question adopted in this study, there is the need to define or conceptualise Biafra. The issue associated with Biafra is a complicated one because the concept of Biafra has changed over the years since its inception. The conception of Biafra associated to a geopolitical zone in 1967 is different from what is obtainable today. During the declaration of the Biafran Republic which led to the civil war, the geo-territorial regions that claimed Biafra were the south-east and south-south regions. Thus, during the civil war, the federal forces attacked mainly the south-south with the Niger Delta states for two reasons. First, because the south-south has access to the Guinea Gulf, from where the Biafran Republic could have been getting aid, and being supplied; and second, the south-south was attacked first as there were the Niger Delta states, which the federal government wanted to get back for its oil revenues. However, nowadays, when we hear about Biafra, mostly the south-eastern territory is meant because the Igbo population wants to divide from the federation for political discrimination. It is important to note though, that not all of the south-eastern states want to separate as in the past. Neither the south-south states want to separate from the federation. But if the states in the south-east were successful to separate in the future it is highly probable that the south-south, including the Niger Delta states would become part of Biafra as the Igbo population live there, the culture, and languages are mostly

similar. Additionally, there is the argument that if the Federal Republic of Nigeria splits, the oil producing states would want to become one country, in order for them to keep their natural revenues without sharing it. Nonetheless, some of these Niger Delta states do not have a precise boundary, which will make it difficult for them to create an easy working state.

1.3. Definition of the Marxist Conception of Geopolitics

To grasp what this theory is about it is important to understand what is geopolitics.

Geopolitics at its core analyses political and geographical factors and tries to find correlations between them. Mainly it focuses on territories which are in some way strategic because of its position, natural resources, or valuable for some other reason. Geopolitics tries to explain the behaviour of states by analysing these geographic features. As Alejandro Colas and Gonzalo Pozo put it: “[...] today [geopolitics] acts as a kind of textual analysis, deconstructing the different ways in which power and space are imagined and represented” (211). Even though Edward Soja once said: “Marxism doesn't do space well” (Colas 1), Marxism has a lot to share in the debate about the relationship between violence and profit; and also the struggle of globalisation and territory (Colas 1). While classical geopolitics takes the state as a biological being, meaning birth, growth, decline, and extinction, Marxists geopolitics understands the state as a historical product, in which states were created on the bases of social processes, where borders were shifting by the means of production, circulation, and accumulation of value, and the centralisation of power which enabled the reproduction of capitalism. Compared to geopolitics, Marxist geopolitics analyses the capitalist value of territory and so explains the impact it has on the international scene (Colas, Pozo 212). These distant ‘valued territories’ are integrated in the world’s capitalist market through the mediation of the local sovereign bodies, mostly elites, who enable and regulate exchanges by using diplomacy and foreign policy, and furthermore sticking to their strategic and security concerns.

David Harvey's conception of 'spatial fixes' is very on point with the valorisation of various territories. In the past, territorial spaces had been shifting according to the empires which conquered other empires, the territorial space was shifting according to power, rivalry or spatial possibilities and resources. Nowadays, territorial spaces are not shifting that much anymore, because fixed territorial jurisdictions - states were established. This creates a struggle in finite space and scarce natural resources. David Harvey introduces spatial fixes, temporal fixes, and spatio-temporal fixes to make the temporal dynamics of global capitalism which is shared between so many states more understandable (Colas 4). When we talk about the valorisation of territory we will most often be talking about spatial fixes, but when it comes to natural resources we can also talk about spatio-temporal fixes.

Due to this theory aims at explaining conflict in the Niger Delta, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it is important to incorporate the effects of colonialism on the current territorial and political establishment. Industrial capitalism introduced by the colonisers provided them with free working force and raw materials from their colonies. This process created a class structure in which the elites of the colonised world moulded their political authority which symbolised the sovereign territorial state later on. What is important to stress, that the class structure created during the era of colonialism is still present in the current social stratification. For example, the Hausa ethnic group was given the privilege by the British to administrate the country and until now we can see the links to it. Why the British privileged the Hausa people was that they welcomed them, and opened up to them, they were more organised as the south was basically a caliphate, while the Igbo population had different kings all over the area and they were not centralised. Moreover, the south-east of Nigeria had a difficult terrain to come across due to the area was covered by tropical rain forests, and mangroves surrounded by swamps and water from the river Niger. After the British colonisation of Nigeria, the sovereign territorial space had to ensure the social infrastructure to open up to the world's capitalist market. However, in the colonies the social infrastructure was not as well

established as in the Western world and after independence the little that was established mostly decayed. The sovereign territorial state not only mediated the capitalist interests but was also the place of class and other socio-economic antagonisms (Colas 6). In that stage, the national state was established which sought for democracy, especially in the Third World. There, the imperial structure was reordered and established “formally equal territorial jurisdictions” (Colas 7).

Continuing in time, the Cold War era made the superior American hegemony possible. The collapse of the Soviet Union allowed the United States to globalise market power and its relations. Capitalist interests gave value to territories because of sources of profit and what more because of “socio-political upheaval, instability and more recently, failed states which were generally not conducive to expanded capitalist reproduction” (Colas 7). As Colas notes compared to the tributary and feudal societies, capitalist reproduction is not tied to wars and violence, rather it is tied to various forms of governments which ensure class privileges of elites by protecting private property, allow the market’s invisible hand to operate, and confront any political threats to the established order (8). Political elites in the developed world had to develop various ways to secure their access to distinct valuable territories. There are several mechanisms how to do it: the first being diplomatic relations with the post-colonial elites who usually are willing to cooperate with the Western world; the second, being a regime change, also more recently under the humanitarian interventions, which is adopted rather in countries in which elites were not willing to cooperate with their former colonisers. In both of these cases, it is the privileged access to the levers of territorial power. Conflicts and wars are not an integral part of capitalist reproduction but often they are the direct result of it because “where the hidden hand of the market fails, the iron fist of the military force becomes an attractive policy tool for ruling elites” (Colas, Pazo 215). There is a close connection between war/conflict and profit making. Marxist geopolitics gives us another point of view from the usual resource wars perspective. The value that capitalism creates has only a conditional relation on conflict or war because capitalist markets do not rely on a constant war economy but rather any

conflict/war that appears is a “context-specific and agent-driven exercise by distinctive economic sectors or class fractions in defending their privileges” (Colas 9).

Lastly, most concrete valorisation of territory is ground-rent and what Marx called “particular portions of the earth and its appurtenances”. What Marx meant by it, was that there are ways of generating value from the territory directly and that is agriculture and mining, as well, for my purposes I would add oil exploitation. Harvey’s spatio-temporal fixes are important in this case as crude oil extraction is not endless and the location plays a central role in the valorisation of crude oil and natural gas. The valorisation of crude oil and natural gas is determined by various other factors as well, such as technology, legal issues, political issues, infrastructure, and climate change (Colas, Pazo 215). When talking about oil transmission, pipelines are still the most used and the most cost-efficient way to quickly get crude oil to refineries and other countries. The investments in pipeline networks and negotiating rent agreements are strategic issues which require long-term geographical commitments. Due to crude oil and natural gas are scarce resources and they are territorially fixed, they create international rivalry between states. Again, capitalist reproduction does not structurally depend on conflict and violence but valorised territory serves as means to power in the international system. And “as social agents struggle to make the world safe for capitalism, capitalism’s valorisation of space continues to make the world unsafe” (Colas, Pazo 215-216).

Summary

To sum it up, the capitalist reproduction creates three different levels to analyse the importance of territory, such as social infrastructure, a locus of class politics, and as a source of contested value. There are various combinations of these three possible and due to the fact we are not limited or overwhelmed by space we can exactly point out the country of our interest and analyse it through the combination of historically-geographical materialism and geopolitics, which

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reflect more “historically-specific, contingent, and agent-driven dimensions of contemporary international relations” (Colas 10). In the case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria the combination of class antagonism and contested value applies. Such as almost everywhere in Africa, even in Nigeria the borders between the colonies were artificially drawn and nobody took into consideration any tribal differences and divisions based on language regions, indigenous political establishments, and religious beliefs. The final ‘states’ created by the European Imperial powers were and are a mixture of various ethnic groups, religious groups, ethnic groups living on one territory which they have had to share with someone they used to fight against in the pre-colonial era. Some people compare Nigeria to a time bomb which is going to explode in the coming years as religious and ethnic divisions fuelled by the conflict for natural resources intensifies everyday.

To apply this theory on Nigeria it is necessary to identify what are the classes and which territory they are struggling for. First of all, in Nigeria we cannot find any clear divisions between classes as Marx knew it, rather we find the division in ethnic groups which have through history gotten a social status that lasts until today. The ruling elites that got to power after independence in 1960 were mostly from the Hausa and Yoruba ethnic groups, the other ethnic groups such as the Igbo and the smaller ethnic groups living in the Niger Delta were soon pushed out from high politics as this study will explain in the next chapter. Therefore, the class struggle that Marx talks about will be analysed through these ethnic groups. The territory that is the ‘valued’ one is the Niger Delta itself which lies in the south-eastern and south-southern part of Nigeria bordering with Cameroon. This region was a huge ecosystem as most of the area was covered with tropical rainforests. After the discovery of immense reserves of crude oil and natural gas the region was overloaded with oil companies willing to extract natural resources and the ecosystem was destroyed. Thus, these groups were not given the possibility to decide what is going to happen in the area they live. Therefore, when the land degradation got worse, the soil and the water was polluted, and their livelihood was affected tremendously as this region was mostly dependent on

agriculture and fishing. To this effect young people started radicalising against the government, specifically against the elites of the other ethnic groups.

Chapter II

History of Nigeria

Introduction

This chapter aims to outline the historical struggle between the ethnic groups/ classes, the discovery of oil reserves and the start of the petroleum sector, and the consequent ups and downs which oil brought along. Thus, to understand what is happening now in Nigeria, mainly in the Niger Delta it is necessary to know the historical background of it. This chapter starts with the colonial era period in which Nigeria as a country was basically put together, and continues with the political history from independence in 1960 until the Fourth Republic which we know today. During these five decades Nigeria has gone through four military coups and a bloody civil war, all of it connected to the issues being raised again and again in the Niger Delta today.

2.1. Colonial era

The time Europeans discovered the West African coast, they started taking advantage of the ethnic conflicts in the area where now Nigeria is. During the tribal wars, stronger tribes captured people from other tribes and sold them to Europeans who were waiting in built fortresses on the coast. The dirty work was mostly done by Africans and thus Europeans did not have to go to inland to capture their own slaves. Chiefs of the stronger tribes got thanks to the trade very rich because they got money, alcohol, and weapons which they could sell or with the weapons capture more slaves (Sir Burns 1972, 78). European companies got wealthy too through transporting African slaves to America where there was not enough labor for mining. Competition and animosity between tribes still prevails until today as the consequence of the slave trade which caused rapid slow down of the socio-economic development because all the resources that were used to fight one another could have been used for the development of cities, villages, and communities (Klima 2003,

16). Therefore, during the time when modern European states were created, Africans did not have any bigger entity than a village in which the life standard and education was very low and the productivity and efficiency of agriculture too (Olojajulo 2013). After the slave trade was abandoned by the British, they wanted to exploit other resources Africa had because the United Kingdom just went through the industrial revolution and they needed more natural resources to develop faster. They tried to intrude into inland of West Africa but they were not welcomed and many of them were killed or died because of unknown diseases (Olojajulo 2013).

The first successful British that got into inland and were not killed by African tribes or various diseases were Lander brothers who explored the Niger delta from 1830 to 1834 (Klima 2003, 18). In this period, they found out that the slave trade among African tribes did not fully disappear and there Christianity should play an important role for people to behave better to each other. In 1849, John Beecroft was appointed British consul of the Benin gulf which meant that Nigeria entered a period of British superiority (Klima 2003, 23). Different commodities were being exported such as palm oil, precious woods, and ivory. Unequal treaties were made in order for the British to have more profits from those commodities and local people were still living in poverty (Isichei 1983, 220). During the 1860's, the British changed their perception about colonialism, they did not want to be only trading but they wanted to exploit the country, because their industry was growing and they needed more and more natural resources and cheap labor force (Klima 2003, 24). Thanks to the conflicts Africans had between each other the British were able to get more influence on a bigger territory. In the mid-1890's, the British created several protectorates around the oil rivers which is now called the Niger delta (Olojajulo 2013). The first protectorate was the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria which was created by uniting the Colony of Lagos and the Niger Coast Protectorate. The Protectorate of Northern Nigeria unified many tribes in the north of today's Nigeria. These two were later unified and the Protectorate of Nigeria created. The British were able in a relatively short period of time effectively capture a large territory in which hundreds of ethnic

groups who spoke different languages, had different religious beliefs, and various political organisation suddenly lived together. The British were willing to save some money on administrative expenditures and therefore employed local elites who wanted to cooperate with the British and were pursuing their interests (Klima 2003, 24). Thanks to these elites the British were able to rule over the huge territory with only a few people.

In 1920, the National Congress of British West Africa met (Sir Burns 1972, 240). The main aim was to discuss the increase of Africans in public administration. This call from journalists, lawyers, and doctors for a political change was heart and confirmed in the new Clifford Constitution of 1922, which allowed 10 African members of the Parliament out of 46 to take part in the legislative body (Klima 2003, 29). These members of the Parliament had little influence on the legislative body and thus, the legislature was able to pass laws which were again only in British interest. Taxes that the legislature passed were too heavy for the state and people raised against them in the years 1927-1928 (Klima 2003, 29). On the contrary, thanks to the taxes the British were able to invest in the coastal territories, built big cities, modernised them, and placed the whole production there (Sir Burns 1972, 131-132) .

After the great crash of 1929, the Great Depression hit Africa too. The British were exporting many things from Nigeria such as palm oil, cocoa, and natural resources such as oil but during the Great Depression the exports were monopolised and the prices of the exported goods were just set by the others (Klima 2003, 30). The development was very unequal. Investment in some parts remained but in other parts it decreased and thus stayed underdeveloped. The part which was mainly developed was the area around Lagos and Lagos itself. The port was modernised so that the British could export goods faster and more efficiently, and also the infrastructure was developed along with the railway (Sir Burns 1972, 135).

During the whole era of colonialism the revenues flowed mostly to Lagos and Africans believed that once the colonialists leave the country the country would become wealthy and so

would the people living there (Klima 2003, 31). Unfortunately, their expectations were exaggerated and African politicians were not ready to overtake the developing economy and also parliamentary democracy the British created. However, because the British parliamentary democracy was artificially established and was rather an authoritarian system than democracy, it did not have any tradition in the country, so after they left there was lack of tolerance of free opinion, no free media, and lack of tolerance of opposition (Sir Burns 1972, 135). The new elites that got to govern the country understood the political power as living a luxury life, with no responsibilities. The political culture in Nigeria did not have any elegance and often used violence to get what they wanted (Klima 2003, 33). An important factor was also a quite high illiteracy which prevented many people to get involved into politics (Ololajulo 2013). This problem of corruption still prevails in Nigeria until today.

Even though the British established new modern cities such as Lagos, they created a country of different ethnic groups which believed they have the right to have its own state, in which they would rule themselves under their laws. Therefore, the country was never completely united. Thus, when the British left Nigeria as a colonial power, they left behind a weak civilian state full of ethnic divisions and tensions, which also gave wave to the several following military interventions after the first republic was established. Moreover, the elites in power did not want to give up easily the access to resources and that is where the whole struggle started.

2.2. Independence

2.2.1. First Republic

The Federal Republic of Nigeria was given full independence on October 1st, 1960 from the United Kingdom under a constitution which provided for a parliamentary democracy. The federal government had the monopoly on defence and economic management of the country. The political parties that emerged though were representing not various ideologies, ideas, or opinions but they

were created on the ethnic backgrounds (Isichei 1983, 406-408). The parties were: the Nigerian People's Congress (NPC) which was the representative party of the Northern, Muslim, mostly Hausa population that was rather conservative; then, National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) which mostly represented the Igbo and Christian population of the South; and lastly, the Action Group (AG) which was supported by the Yoruba ethnic group living mainly in the West of the country (Isichei 1983, 410).

In October 1963, Nigeria proclaimed itself as the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with the first president, an Igbo, Nnamdi Azikiwe. The first republic had an optimistic future as the manufacturing industry was developing. There were huge resources of oil found and still new were being discovered. The Federal Republic of Nigeria started being an exporter of oil and did definitely not expect that during the 1970's will become one of the biggest oil-power in the world and one of the most important members of OPEC (Alison-Madueke 2013). With this positive development, Nigeria expected a high flow of investment in the country so that it can industrialise faster and create more working possibilities for the huge population.

However, Nigeria was a federation, which included different religious beliefs, traditions, and most importantly ethnic groups, which hated each other since the start of the slave trade, and later because of that Nigeria was compared to a time bomb that could explode any time. The major ethnic groups which were influencing their region only supported and protected the interests of their ethnicity. High officials were promoting also only people of the same ethnicity and those of minority ethnic groups or nationalities were left out (Alao 2007, 1). Nepotism and corruption were booming which stayed rooted in the political system until now. Many Nigerians were not satisfied with the development of the first republic because in the beginning the leadership was promising better living conditions and more jobs but none of those promises were fulfilled. The whole situation became even worse when the prices of cocoa, which Nigeria exported in huge amounts, rapidly decreased (Klima 2003, 44). The elites of the country were enjoying luxury life but ordinary

people were suffering. The leadership could not blame the colonial era for everything that was happening and thus several strikes and demonstrations against the government arose. Due to there was no stability and several conflicts appeared the foreign investment started decreasing because foreign investors were reluctant to invest in a place that is not stable.

In December 1964, everyone was expecting the elections. During the election campaign people could have read in the newspaper quotes which were supporting the end of the federation, but also various scandals about corruption, fraud, and intimidation (Ololajulo 2013). The president Nnamdi Azikiwe was disgusted by what was happening in his country and said, “So many awful things could happen in Nigeria that the Congolese crisis would be a children’s game compared to it” (Klima 2003, 52). The fight for power in Nigeria started, while Nigeria lost its power because of that. The elections were boycotted partly in the end which concerned most of the Igbo population. The whole political situation got worse during the year 1965 and the many conflicts had bloody ends. More and more people had the feeling that politics and negotiation could not solve the problem anymore and that a stronger power will have to intervene. The most authoritative and organised power was the army (Isichei 1983, 469).

2.2.2. First Military Coup

In the night of January 14th to 15th, 1966 the military decided to take over the country (Klima 2003, 55). The operation was highly synchronised and took part in the federal capital, Lagos, and in the capitals of the regions, Enugu, Ibadan, and Kaduna. The military’s aim was to break the influence of the civilian politicians who did not lead the country according to the constitution. The new political leader became major an Igbo from the Delta region, general Johnson Ironsi. Ironsi was an experienced soldier but not a politician. He was ruling Nigeria according to several decrees. The decree number 34 was the one that was the beginning of hard times. The decree stated the federal should be replaced by a unitary statute (Isichei 1983, 471). That meant, that Nigeria will become a

centralised country and the government in each of the regions will not have as much power. Of course that disturbed especially the Northern region because they wanted to be more independent not more dependent. The North was annoyed that many Igbo people were occupying high politics posts and that they are establishing a new majority army elite. The Northern officials took the January military coup as an attempt for the Igbo hegemony. Several days after the publication of the 34th decree, Northern warlords started mass murdering of the Igbo population in the North (Isichei 1983, 472). Many Igbo families living there were running away to the south-east where the population increased again.

2.2.3. Second Military Coup

The second military coup happened in the early morning on July 29th, 1966 (Klima 2003, 58). The first target was Nigeria's leader major general Ironsi who was assassinated. Many other Igbo commissioned officers were killed that day all over the whole country. While looking for a new leader of Nigeria, the Northern region agreed on lieutenant colonel Yakubu Gowon. He was not a Muslim but a Christian and belonged to one of the small ethnic groups in the North. That was the reason why he should have been respected and recognised also by the other ethnic groups in the country. While the military was discussing the future of the federation, the massacres on the Igbo population continued (Isichei 1983, 473). More and more people were escaping to the south-east and the population there was a million bigger. Even though, the south-eastern region was overpopulated people had the hope that they can start from the beginning thanks to the wealth the south-eastern region had. It was the Igbo south-eastern region that the rest of the federation sponged on (Isichei 1983, 473). The Igbo population, thus, was very much annoyed and wanted to leave the federation because they believed they could live on their own and not divide the wealth of the Niger Delta between the rest of the federation.

Lieutenant colonel Chukwuemeku Odumegwu Ojukwu who was the military governor of the Eastern region was also a separatist (Isichei 1983, 473). He wanted his region to be separated from the rest of the federation because of the reasons stated above - oil wealth and ethnic diversities. On May 30th, 1967 lieutenant colonel Ojukwu proclaimed the independent Republic of Biafra. During one year Biafra was completely surrounded by military forces of the Federal government which invaded the city of Port Harcourt and seized oil facilities around it. The brutal civil war broke out because the federal government wanted to have the petroleum reserves under control again as soon as possible because Biafra obstructed the expansion of the industry (Falola, Heaton 2008, 181-182). The war lasted for almost three years and more than a million civilians died in fighting and famine. The famine was caused by the blockade of the coast of Biafra so that the people living in Biafra and the soldiers would surrender earlier. In the second half of 1969, Biafra was almost destroyed. Many soldiers were exhausted and gave up. The civilians of Biafra were suffering of terrible famine, the land was devastated and instead of Ojukwu capitulating, he sat on a plane with his family and left Biafra behind.

With the end of the civil war Nigeria was unified and Biafra forcefully integrated back into the federation. There were anti-corruption laws introduced because Gowon wanted to organise the country very well before giving it back to the civilian politicians (Isichei 1983, 474). All these reforms would not be put into practice if there was not an oil boom which brought a lot of wealth along. Moreover, in the 1970's there were new oil discoveries and the export increased which brought over 93% of the total federal budget. More positive years followed because from 1971 to 1980 the oil prices increased (the price of one barrel went up approximately 17times) (Klima 2003, 80). With such an income, Nigeria could have overcome the underdevelopment of its agriculture and start new industrial projects. However, the leaders of Nigeria, as they lived above the life standard of all citizens, did not predict future problems with agricultural product short cuts. As oil

extraction made the country wealthy, the political leadership believed that anything which was missing could be imported.

In 1976, Olusegun Obasanjo a Yoruba Army general, was decided to lead Nigeria. The economy of the country worsened a lot because there was a need to decrease oil export as the world market was already overwhelmed with oil (Isichei 1983, 475). The crisis in Nigeria came also because of neglected the agriculture, Nigeria had to import more food. Many farmers and their families moved to cities because they thought they could live a better life there, so the consequence of that was no farmers who would actually work in agriculture. Overpopulated cities with no jobs, with bad infrastructure gave basis to the establishment of huge slums around big cities such as Lagos. The only industry in the country that was still quite developing was the manufacturing industry but in all other industries the industry growth dropped from 27% to 10.6% (Klima 2003, 89). Obasanjo introduced Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) to increase agricultural production (Klima 2003, 89). This operation was supposed to increase the sowing area, ensure good fertilisers, and tractors. The villages which were producing mainly for themselves were supposed to be feeding the nation. Due to the agricultural 'green revolution' rain forests cut down which affected the climate and caused desertification and erosion (Klima 2003, 89).

2.2.4. Second Republic

The transition from the military government to the civil one was long expected, even though many feared that the problems and issues that appeared in the First Republic will be repeated. The military, on the other hand, was convinced that they already created an all Nigerian feeling and that the next civil government will be able to make all the regions prosper the same way (Isichei 1983, 477). The elections were fair and the results also corresponded with the population number (Isichei 1983, 477). The president became Alhajim Shagari, a northerner.

Sharagi was a very good politician and leader and his party's slogan which he promoted in the campaign was the political independence of Nigeria which should be supported by the economic independence too. The government's first plan was to develop agriculture. Nigeria did not have as much profit as before and could not afford to buy as much food which was a sixth of all the imports. The agricultural development was a right step at a right time because in the 80's the oil price dropped to 29USD per barrel and all exporters of OPEC had to decrease the oil extraction to stabilise the prices in the world market. Nigeria had to bind itself to extract only 1.3 million barrels a day. The profits of years 1980-1982 went down by half (Alison-Madueke 2012). The federal reserve dropped to 1billion which was approximately a tenth of the former amount (Klima 2003, 93). All the problems of the First Republic were back.

2.2.5. Third Military Coup

In 1983, on New Year's Eve, the military took over again and had the same aim – to create conditions to have a non-corrupted government which would look after the whole federation and leave after the elections. Major-General Muhammad Buhari began to rule in 1984 with a New Years speech. In his speech he stressed why the military had to step for to change the former government because they disobeyed the constitution:

“The last general election was anything but free and fair. The only political parties that could complain of election rigging are those parties that lacked the resources to rig. There is ample evidence that rigging and thuggery were relative to the resources available to the parties. This conclusively proved to us that the parties have not developed confidence in the presidential system of government on which the nation invested so much material and human resources. While corruption and indiscipline have been associated with our state of under-development, these two evils in our body politic have attained unprecedented height in the past few years. The corrupt, inept and insensitive leadership in the last four years has been the source of immorality and impropriety in our society. Since what happens in any society is largely a reflection of the leadership of that society, we deplore corruption in all its facets. This government will not tolerate kick-backs, inflation of contracts and over-invoicing of imports etc. Nor will it condone forgery, fraud, embezzlement, misuse and abuse of office and illegal dealings in foreign exchange and smuggling.” (Osewa 2011)

As in the past Nigeria has to face serious environmental problems which were caused by foreign companies. Many people at that time said that Africa will once become a huge dump just because it is poor and thanks to that the companies will be able to compensate the people for environmental degradation. The population of Nigeria still grows fast and with such a growth it will not be able to feed itself. Erosion, floods, pollution, deforestation, urbanisation, not enough drinking water, and climate changes might once cause serious problems.

In the 90's, Nigeria was again preparing for the next transition to civil government. That was the time when the Iron Curtain in Europe broke down, and Apartheid in South Africa too, everyone was expecting Africa to develop in a different way too. International financial organisations were convincing newly established democratic governments that with freedom prosperity will come. A huge step forward was made in transportation, and telecommunication (Klima 2003, 107). Media were free again. Bashira Tofu, who was a rich businessmen, who was interested in insurance and industry, was chosen by the military as the next candidate for presidency. What more, he was loyal to the military. The other candidate, not chosen by the military, was Moshood Abiola. He came from a very poor family but finally got into high position on ITT Nigeria Ltd and was very popular among people because he was doing charity and sponsoring students (Klima 2003, 110). The military were strongly aware that Abiola will not be easy to manipulate and therefore they annulled the elections which were won by Abiola. The Nigerian population was outraged and did not believe the military had any good intentions. Sometimes this short period of elections and a few weeks of civilian rule is called the Third Republic.

General Abacha decided that the military will get to power again. He never talked about giving back the rule to anyone and he was acting like he would rule forever. Instead of having freedom and democracy, he brought dictatorship. By this time Nigeria was a fully established rentier state, but Abacha brought it even further because citizens did not have be heard as the accountability of the government was owed to the multinational petroleum corporations which paid

the rent (Falola, Heaton 2008, 184). Abacha very well knew how to use his absolute power to get what he wants and so was it also with Shell and BP and other which were his main partners and did not care about environment pollution or how people in the region suffer (Alao 2007, 6).

Exploitation of oil in the East with the help of the dictator made people so angry that they started protesting. Mainly a tribe, Ogonye or Ogoni, had problems with oil companies which were destroying their land and they did not see any revenues from the government to improve their life standards. In 1990, the political activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was also a famous writer as well, founded the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) to push greater autonomy which would give them greater access to oil revenues. When there was no reaction to the demands handed to the Federal government huge protests started which also later turned to riots all over the oil producing areas which disabled rent-seeking opportunities for Abacha and people around him (Falola, Heaton 2008, 232). In order to get rid of the activists from MOSOP, Abacha contrived a political process stating the MOSOP activists killed five chiefs in this area. The court was absolutely unfair and all of the activists were found guilty on no evidence. When Nigeria got into its worst crisis, Abacha suddenly died. After more than ten years, jailed political figures came out and the military started a program for transition to civil government again.

2.2.6. Fourth Republic

The elections in 1999 showed that parties can be Nigerian not depending on ethnic characteristics. and the main concern was economy again. How to keep inflation down while maintaining growth, and another aim was diversification of economy by increasing the agricultural productivity. Many Nigerians blame Obasanjo for corruption and mismanagement of Nigerian finances because there were several scandals during the period of his presidency from 1999 to 2007 (Odugbesen 2013). The Fourth Republic which continues until now has serious socio-economic problems and issues which have to be managed such as inflation, debt, unemployment, unequal

development of the parts of the federation, managing oil and gas resources, and most off all conflicts in the Niger Delta and the northern part. During the term Obasanjo was in office, groups have organised politically and militantly to gain greater control over land, and the resources and revenues from them. Such groups were for example the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) which I will be talking about more in detail in the next chapter.

Summary

All of the regimes above oversaw the oil boom and the development of the petroleum sector but all of them mismanaged the funds and grew the tradition of corruption and kleptocracy connected to it (Falola, Heaton 2008, 181). Nigeria became a book example of how easy it is to mismanage the wealth because of bad governance. And while a tiny part of the Nigerian population became extremely wealthy thanks to access to power and so to the petroleum sector (licences contractors, revenues) the majority lives in poverty (Falola, Heaton 2008, 181). Rent seeking thus, created a market division between these two groups of people, which enabled the ones in power to maintain it, thanks to bribing, buying votes etc., while they disregarded the majority's needs and opinions (Falola, Heaton 2008, 184). This chapter was to show the inherent struggle between the classes, in which the elites fought through history to maintain their privileges meanwhile the people in the Niger Delta fought for more privileges and autonomy.

Chapter III

The Analysis of the Niger Delta Conflict

Introduction

The formation of modern states in the second half of the 20th century introduced more complex dimensions into the nature of resource politics, with issues such as newly drawn geographical borders, protests and bloody conflicts over the forceful incorporation of different ethnic groups into one state, and last but not least the clashes over natural resource control. The efforts to build a strong federation between diverse groups brought along fragile social structures, the greed of elites which took over the political leadership, and foreign companies that took the opportunity to make huge profits from conflicts in the country (Alao 2007, 1). In this chapter I aim to firstly, show how much revenue the Niger Delta nowadays produces, how much oil is being extracted, and what is the overall standpoint of the federal government towards the issues in the region. Secondly, examine the conflict in the Niger Delta by analysing the ‘valued territory’ and its natural resources, the companies operating there, the natural degradation. Then, I aim to analyse the human part of the conflict, various political movements, militias, and also ordinary people’s stories, the allocations from the government, all of which is going to help me to fully answer my **two research questions 1) How do natural resources in the Delta region escalate the conflict between ethnic groups/classes within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and 2) Are there going to be any other attempts to separate Biafra from the federation and why?**

3.1. Petroleum Sector

From the statistics of the revenue watch, Nigeria is Africa’s largest oil exporter and world’s 10th largest oil producer, accounting for more than 2.2 million barrels a day in 2011. The total oil

revenues received were \$50.3 billion, generating 70% of government revenue the same year (Revenue Watch Institute 2013). As statistics show, oil still provides the main economic source for Nigeria. As OPEC's statistics show, "The capital-intensive oil sector provides 20 per cent of gross domestic product, 95 per cent of foreign exchange earnings, and about 65 per cent of budgetary revenues" (Alison-Madueke 2012). Although, there are four refineries with the capacity of 445, 000 bpd in Nigeria they have never been able to work to its full capacity as a result of poor maintenance, theft, and fire (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2012). So not only that Nigeria is dependent on crude oil exports but it is also dependent on final oil products which are imported from other countries back to Nigeria. Nigeria exports crude oil mainly to the United States 33%, India 12%, Brazil 8%, and the Netherlands 6% (US Energy Information Administration 2012). Nigeria's oil consumption is about, "petrol 30 to 33 million litres per day; diesel 12 million litres per day; Kerosene 10 million litres per day; and ATK (Aviation Turbine Kerosene commonly known as aviation fuel) 1.6 million to 3 million litres per day depending on the season" (The Economist Nigeria 2013). Such a high consumption cannot be satisfied with such a low production of petrol which the four refineries offer. "For almost the whole of 2010, the four refineries with a combined capacity in excess of 445,000 barrels per day could only refine a mere 80,757 metric tons of petroleum products. These are 19,967 of petrol; 53,223 metric tons of diesel, and 7,567 metric tons of LPG or cooking gas" (The Economist Nigeria 2013). The rest must be imported. The sad story about this is, that the Delta region is exploited to this extent and provides the government with such high revenues and they are not capable to repair or establish working refineries which would make the revenues to be higher and so the share for the Niger Delta as well.

Secondly, Nigeria has been subsidising oil prices for a very long time. Many Nigerians claim, that this is the only way they benefit from the fact, that they live in an oil exporting country. On the other hand, they do not realise that subsidising would not have to be the issues if there were

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enough working refineries and refined oil would not have to be imported from abroad. There were several attempts by the governments in the past to end subsidising oil which would mean that the prices double for the ordinary Nigerian citizen. Following the protests the government postponed the decision. This year, with the newly elected President Mohammadu Buhari, and self-appointed Minister of Petroleum decided to end subsidies as the prices of oil critically dropped world-wide from \$115 to \$48 compared to last year (Investment Mine 2015). The graph shows the developments of oil prices since July, 2014 until now.

Graph 1

Source: City A.M. (2015) <http://www.cityam.com/221510/brent-crude-oil-flirts-51-barrel-first-time-january>



There are also many that support the end of oil subsidy because there was much corruption and fraud hidden behind it as the middle men, usually the political elites who negotiated the deals stole this way huge amounts (Mamudu 2015).

President Mohammadu Buhari promised in the election period that he will fight corruption, especially connected to the revenues of oil. A political associate told Reuters: “Nigeria’s oil sector is

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so dirty that nobody's hands are clean enough to do the surgical changes needed" (Bolashodun 2015). Buhari has extended knowledge about the petroleum sector as he has been the head of the Petroleum Trust Fund under the military rule of Abacha, and the Oil Minister under Obasanjo. Due to corruption was widespread in the sector at that time, Nigerian citizens doubt the decision of Buhari being the President and the Minister of the Petroleum at the same time as it gives him absolute power over the revenues. On the contrary, he has taken a lot of action since he is in office such as already mentioned end of oil subsidies, and also he decided to divide the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and change most of the management in order to improve efficiency and prevent corruption (Reuters 2015). There was an audit commissioned to find the missing funds of the NNPC but the auditors were unable to get sufficient documentation to track the funds. The next audit is planned to be in 18 months for further re-evaluation of the NNPC (Reuters 2015).

Finally, the Nigerian government is taking long in passing the reform bill on oil extraction which would benefit a wider community. The bill should have been passed by the year 2012 but it was postponed as officials were waiting for reports from the Delta region. Lawmakers were to vote on the reform bill which would increase Nigerian profit from 61% to 73% through higher taxes and royalties (Elisha Bala-Gbogbo 2013). Oil companies which operate in Nigeria would not profit as much on extraction of oil anymore in case the bill was passed (Odugbesen 2013). During the delays in passing the reform bill companies such as Shell have acted quickly and invested in the huge deep-water reserve which they bought from Malabu Oil and Gas Ltd. The reserves in this field are estimated to be 9 billion barrels (Elisha Bala-Gbogbo 2013).

3.2. The "Valued Territory" and Its Environmental Problems

Exploitation of oil seriously affects the socioeconomic development in Nigeria. The Niger Delta, which is located in the South-East and South-South of Nigeria, has been a huge concern for many environmentalists, human right activists and fair trade advocates around the world. In order to

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understand why the Niger Delta is getting so much attention, there is a need to explain what is happening in this region. The Niger Delta is heavily populated by 40 various ethnic groups speaking 260 languages. This region is oil rich and therefore it has been the victim of exploitation by several multi-national corporations (MNCs) which heavily pollute the environment by oil spills and oil well fires, drinking water contamination, and cause many conflicts in the region. Among these MNC's are Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Shell, Elf, Agip (Elisha Bala-Gbogbo 2013). These MNC's have been cooperating for many years with corrupt governments which were supported by the governments of the developed world just because of profits from the oil wealth the Niger Delta has and nobody was concerned about the environment, or people who are depending on the nature to survive for example with fishing, or relying on drinking water (Alao 2007, 6; Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs 2013). As Anup Shah rightly says, "A series of repressive and corrupt governments in Nigeria have been supported and maintained by western governments and oil corporations, keen on benefiting from the fossil fuels that can be exploited. As people, and transnational oil corporations have been fighting over this 'dark nectar' in the delta region, immense poverty and environmental destruction have resulted" (Shah 2010).

The Niger Delta covers an area of about 70,000 km² and is the largest river delta in Africa. The Niger Delta is a 50 millions year process of fluvial and marine sediments (United Nations Environmental Program 2011, 20). The ground characteristic is deposition and erosion of sediments in the course of channels and creeks. There are several storages of underground freshwater, and aquifers in the coastal belt on which the region's population depends on. The area comprised mostly of creeks, lagoons, swamps, rainforests, and woodland before the discovery of crude oil reserves. Now the area consists of only 12% of the former vegetation as deforestation causes climate change, erosion, and desertification (United Nations Environmental Program 2011, 20). The deforestation was also highly motivated by the agriculture-based economy as most people in the Niger Delta were

farmers. Much of the area was used for palm oil and rubber plantations. The local population lives in rural communities and their livelihood is based on farming or fishing.

The oil companies operating on the area are all together around 70 belonging to various MNC's from all over the world. I would like to name the most famous ones which are the Brazilian Petrobras, ExxonMobile, Chevron, Agip, and the most problematic one for the Delta region Shell. These corporations have all put a hand in the current environmental degradation of the Niger Delta, oil spills, and huge pollution. These companies have operated here more than half a century and were involved in all upstream and downstream activities exploration, production, processing, and distribution.

ENI, the Italian oil giant which is owned by the Nigerian Agip Oil Company is a much smaller player in the Nigerian petroleum oil industry compared to Shell, and therefore has received much less attention, even though it has caused a comparable damage to the natural environment. The damage ENI has caused is enormous from 474 spills in 2012, and 500 spills in 2013, to 349 oil spills in 2014. To compare it with Europe between 1971 and 2011 there was only an average of 10 oil spills a year. Moreover, ENI operates on a much smaller territory than other petroleum companies in Nigeria, and the reported number is twice as high. The governments of Italy and Nigeria must take urgent action as the situation is alarming. Audrey Gaughran, Amnesty International's Global Issues Director, clearly stated "The Italian government must investigate what is happening in ENI's Nigerian operations. These figures raises serious questions about potential negligence by the company going back many years" (Amnesty International 2015). ENI, as well as other companies in the region faces huge pipeline explosions which they have to deal with. The number of people that die in pipeline explosions is increasing dramatically and oil companies do not know how to deal with it (Graeber 2015).

Chevron, a company that has already a longer tradition in the Nigerian petroleum sector. Chevron has been several times portrayed as a polluter but also as a close cooperator with the

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Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) and connected to bribes and wider corruption. For example, recently, there has been an agreement signed with the Nigerian national oil company which secured about \$1 billion in financing operations from a Chevron subsidiary. The agreement was for the financing of onshore and offshore wells which are to be developed by 2018. The company stated that the projects prepared could benefit Nigeria from \$2 to \$5 billion revenue for the government. The expectations are the following the 19 planned wells could deliver “21,000 bpd of oil and 120 million cubic feet of natural gas by 2016; and 20,000 bpd and 7 million cubic feet of gas per day through 2018” (Graeber 2015). This fact that Chevron is investing to such a huge extent in onshore and offshore wells as the sabotage from the local population raises, and the prices of oil are rapidly dropping and are to drop significantly in the next years as the commodity prices are falling world-wide, is a strange strategy. The former Nigerian Minister of Petroleum noticed that OPEC countries are very uncomfortable with the drop of oil prices. The production of oil will drop by 500,000 bpd in 2020 without any other investments in the offshore in the country (Graeber 2015). Also, we see Shell selling its share in the Nigerian onshore oil field. Therefore, the strategy of Chevron is for many very illogical, and they see corrupt behaviour behind it. Furthermore, Chevron had several problems with the explosions of pipelines and huge fires on the drills in which many people died (UPI 2012).

Royal Dutch Shell Group has a much longer tradition in the petroleum sector in Nigeria than any other company operating here. Shell Nigeria is owned by the Royal Dutch of the Netherlands by 60%, and 40% is owned by the Shell Transport and Trading Group of Great Britain. Shell Nigeria is also one of the largest producers in the Shell Group. Shell was also one of the main so called sponsors of the Abacha regime which was the most corrupt regime in African history accounting for 50% of the total income at that time. Shell in general has been most criticised for its actions in the country, especially connected to the Niger Delta region, by various organisations ranging from the United Nations, to human rights activist groups, to environmentalists from all over

the world. The company was even accused of having 'its own people' in all important ministries of the Nigerian Federal government. WikiLeaks disclosure in 2010 stated that Shell "have people on the payroll in every community [as well], which is why they get away with everything" (Smith 2010). After 2011, United Nations Environmental Program released a report, describing all the findings that had been done during a three years environment analysis. The report criticised the actions of Shell as well as the government for contributing to the pollution caused, and stated that the region needs the largest oil clean-up in world's history costing (estimate) \$1 billion. "The environmental restoration of Ogoniland could prove to be the world's most wide-ranging and long term oil clean-up exercise ever undertaken," a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report released (Eboh, Onuah 2011). The analyses showed that Shell is very much aware of the collapsing old infrastructure in the region but lacks a control and maintenance system. In November 2014, a court took place where Shell was forced to admit the pollution its two major spills have caused. As Amnesty International explains: "The volume of oil spilt matters because the amount of compensation paid to affected communities is linked to the amount of oil that is estimated to have been spilt" (Amnesty International 2015). Shell agreed to compensate one of the communities in the Niger Delta by £55 million after originally offering a paltry £4,000 (Amnesty International 2015). The way Shell wanted to cheat people in the Niger Delta sparked another violence as many communities have been cheated exactly the same way by the company. The director of Global Issues Amnesty International, Audrey Gaughran explains:

"When a company has to pay £55 million for two oil spills it originally tried to pass off as minor, it should raise serious questions for investors about the hidden liabilities Shell may be carrying in the Niger Delta. If all oil spills could be scrutinised the way the two Bodo spills were then the true scale of the damage and Shell's financial liabilities would be revealed. But this is not only about liabilities – there is a very serious human issue. Shell is cheating people out of just compensation. The Bodo case makes clear just what it takes to get this company to own up to the truth about oil spills – six years and UK court proceedings. What about all the hundreds of other communities this company has potentially cheated?" (Amnesty International 2015)

Shell had to pay the price for its actions as in the 1993 it was forced to leave Ogoniland a part of the Niger Delta oil production ground as it was accused by the local populations of destroying their fishing environment. Most recently, Shell had to pay its price once again because the local population of the Niger Delta as a whole has been attacking it continuously to leave the onshore exploitation (Eboh, Onuah 2011). Due to the difficulties Shell decided to sell its oil fields onshore and focus on offshore operations.

The other petroleum companies are not so often to be found in the media, as most of them are rather involved in the offshore operations and/or do not harm the environment to such an extent as the other companies I introduced before.

In Nigeria oil spills are nothing rare. When we look at the statistics by the Nigerian Oil Spill Monitor we see some slight reduction compared to the most dramatic years. For example, in 2010 there were 5092 confirmed spills reported, in 2011 there were 4249 confirmed spills reported, in 2012 3235 confirmed spills reported and when we skip to 2014 there were just 746 confirmed spills reported, and in 2015 only 260 confirmed spills reported. However, given the very poor reporting systems used by oil companies this figures are very likely to be an underestimate. Slowly, we see the oil spilt in Nigeria decreasing. There is the general belief that this tendency is due to the focus of Shell on offshore fields rather than onshore. As it is still too early to talk results for this year, this year's numbers are going to be the lowest in decades. Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) contributed to the pressure on the petrol MNC's to control oil spilt in order not to harm the environment more. The question that occurs here is how come the Niger Delta suffers so much of oil spills compared to other places that are oil producing too. Oil companies blame the local population for sabotage, pipe-tapping, and vandalism, and claim that only a tiny part of the oil spilt is resulted by lack of control and deteriorating structure (Vidal 2010). During the court process, where Shell was tried for pollution, there was a pile of documents revealed that the company was aware of one of its main pipelines was old and likely to get damaged, but has failed to maintain it.

Additionally, the British court stated that Shell has to take responsibility and ensure that all the pipelines are able to function properly (Amnesty International 2015). To understand how much pollution the oil spills caused I would like to compare it to one of the most devastating human-caused environmental disasters which occurred in Alaska, when the Exxon Valdez, an oil tanker spilled 11 to 38 million US gallons. The four offshore spills in Nigeria though, have far exceeded the Exxon Valdez oil spill and it does not include the crude oil from waste water and gas flares. Judith Kimerling, the author of a book about oil development noted: “Spills, leaks and deliberate discharges are happening in oilfields all over the world and very few people seem to care” (Vidal 2010). This is true especially for Nigeria as Mr. Gaughran stressed: “In any other country, this would be a national emergency. In Nigeria it appears to be standard operating procedure for the oil industry. The human cost is horrific – people living with pollution every day of their lives” (Amnesty International 2015). Later on, I am going to talk about the pollution oil spills caused in the Niger Delta and I am going to refer to some particular oil spills and tell the stories of local people who have to face the devastated environment and live in it.

Horrific is also the fact that one of the high staff in the industry business who did not want to be made confessed that the spills are more likely to be increased in the coming years because the industry enters more challenging terrains and deep water operations are going to be harder to work with. Then, in case anything goes wrong it will be harder to control the spill and respond to the issue (Vidal 2010).

In 2011, the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), released an independent study which was the result of a two year examination of the pollution caused by petroleum companies in a particular part of the Niger Delta, the Ogoniland. This area is said to be most affected by the operations of oil companies. The Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland covers contaminated land, groundwater, surface water, sediment, vegetation, air pollution, public health, industry practices and institutional issues. This study, involving the fieldworks and laboratory analysis, is

one of the most complex on the ground assessments ever undertaken by the UNEP (UNEP 2011, 8). The assessment process was as follows: the team surveyed De of pipeline rights, visited the oil spills, oil wells, and other facilities in the area of Ogoniland. Then, samples of drinking water, sediments from creeks, surface water, rainwater and fish and air were collected from various parts of the Ogoniland area. The UNEP has also analysed 5,000 medical records of people, and 264 community meetings in which more than 23,000 people took part (UNEP 2011, 9). The findings the UNEP report shows are divided into several sub-chapters which include contaminated soil and groundwater, vegetation, aquatic, then public health and institutional issues, and last oil industry practices. The report found that oil contamination is widespread and it extremely impacts the environment. Even though, the companies were forced to leave Ogoniland, oil spills continue to appear with an alarming regularity. As this area is a tropical one, the rainfall is high and any delay in the clean up of spills leads to a chain reaction where the oil is being washed away floating with the rainfall to farmlands, and ending up in creeks of the river Niger. When oil touches any plants they are immediately prevented from 'breathing' and try. Once groundwater and soil is polluted people cannot use the soil to grow anything, and should not drink the contained water as it is life hazardous. Oil pollution in creeks of the Niger River has destroyed most of the mangroves where fish nurseries were and so badly affected the fish life cycle. Moreover, when the oil spilt occurs on land it usually sparks fire and burns down whole areas of vegetations creating crust over land making revegetation much more difficult. Oil pollution also comes with the Darwinian 'the stronger survives' as native vegetation is being colonised by invasive species such as the nipa palm and water hyacinth which are much more adaptive to the polluted environment and are not sensitive. As for the water hyacinth it grows very quickly in water and prevents sunshine to reflect in the river and so the ecosystem in the water dies. The whole fish populations therefore move out from these areas because they are not able to survive there. The area of wetlands in Ogoniland is highly

degraded and shows disintegration. The report concludes that it is still feasible to restore the former ecosystem but only if technical and political initiatives will be undertaken (UNEP 2011, 9-10).

Gas flaring is another big problem in the Niger Delta region. Gas flaring started approximately at the same time as oil extraction in the 1960's (IRIN 2012). This practice is associated with petroleum extraction, in which the natural gas is burned off in the atmosphere than by re-injection into the ground or storage for further sale. According to the World Bank, Nigeria flares 75% of the gas produced (World Bank 2008). Gas flaring usually happens for economic reasons as it is much cheaper than eliminating it by alternative methods. The most dangerous about gas flaring are the toxic pollutants which penetrate into the atmosphere and lead to environmental problems such as acid rain, greenhouse gases etc. (Obanijesu et al. 2009, Osuji and Avwiri 2005). Not only affects gas flaring the environment badly but it has a direct impact on the health of inhabitants living close to it. Chemicals penetrated by gas flaring intensifies the cases of asthma, breathing problems, and bronchitis. Moreover, benzene that stays in the air from gas flares causes serious blood-related diseases, and in worst cases even leukemia (Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry). According to Climate Justice the exposure to benzene results yearly in 8 new cases of cancer in one of the affected states in the Niger Delta region (Climate Justice Database 2009). Even though the government put a moratorium on gas flaring in 2008, the practice is still frequent in the Niger Delta, including areas that are proximate to local inhabitants. Gas flaring causes significant increases in already high temperatures by approximately 10 degrees. Research by the AAAS Geospatial Technologies and Human Rights Project, in partnership with AI-USA showed that the increase in temperatures is associated with crop yields reduction (AAAS Geospatial Technologies 2015).

3.3. *The Human Part of the Niger Delta Conflict*

Now, that we know what the general facts are about oil extraction and governmental issues; then the companies operating in the region, and the natural degradation they cause, we can move to the probably most important part which is the local population of the Niger Delta and their stories. First of all, I would like to introduce the livelihoods of the people living in the Niger Delta; secondly, analyse the poverty level; third, I would like to explain what consequences it brings when people are deprived of their livelihood such as attacks on oil companies, pipe-tapping, oil-bunkering; and a more radical way of compensation is joining a group with radical ideology.

Livelihood activities in the Niger Delta villages are pretty limited and they can become even more limited with the environmental degradation and communal conflict (Onakuse and Lenihan 3-4). Livelihood security is dependent on agriculture in rural areas of the Niger Delta region. Table 2 shows the source of income of poor and non-poor families in the Niger Delta region. Mostly we can see activities which are affected by the environmental degradation such as fishing, growing any type of vegetation, farming.

Tab 1

Sector	Poor Families	Non-poor Families
Labour	Farm and non-farm labour	Not a source of income
Agriculture	Any kinds of cereals, root crops and legumes	Rubber, Oil Palm and coconut
Livestock	Chickens, ducks, goats	Goats, chicken, and ducks
Fishing	Fish/Shrimps/Sea food	Not a source of income
Processing	Palm wine, local gin & Banga	Not a source of income
Shop, kiosk	Shopkeeper	Owner
Skills used	Make fishing equipment, basket making broom making from coconut leaves, and making fishing nets	Skills for outside salaried employment or business skills

Source: Participatory rural assessment activities in Niger-Delta (2003).

In spite of the progress Nigeria is making in its economic development, a significant part of the Nigerian population still lives in poverty. Around 70 million people live below the poverty line and over one third of it lives in extreme poverty (UNDP 2006). Furthermore, poverty has increased in recent years dramatically. The Human Development Index (HDI) for Nigeria is low (0.448) (UNDP 2006). Poverty and inequality in general has strong regional concentration. The region's human development index is 0.564. It is higher than the overall Nigerian HDI, but the area rates are far below regions with similar gas and oil reserves, for example Venezuela 0.772 and Indonesia 0.697 (UNDP 2006, 15). Also, the HDI of the Niger Delta declines steeper than other region's own (UNDP 2006, 137). Additionally, the high salaries of workers working for the petroleum companies in the region are "distorting the local pieces, constraining the purchasing power of ordinary people and making it difficult to meet the costs of basic needs as housing, healthcare, transportation, education [...]" (Overseas Development Institute 2009, 5).

Unemployment plays a crucial role in the conflict as well. Unemployment rates in Nigeria are very high. "Job-creation is the need is the hour" that is what Dr. Ismail Radwan, a senior economist working with the World Bank (Agbu 2011). According to him, 50 million youths were unemployed and another three million are joining the queue each year. "The rate of unemployment in the Nigerian economy is currently one of the highest in the world at 19.7 per cent. Over 50 per cent of the youths in the urban areas are unemployed. It is a very disheartening situation for parents who had laboured and strained to educate these youths. The state of affairs has assumed the dimension of an economic and social crisis. There is a relationship between rising criminality and unemployment. We should do something urgently to create jobs" (President of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry).

Unemployment in the geopolitical south-south including the Niger Delta states, and in the south-east of Nigeria have direct effect on the conflict emerging there. The conflict emerges between the local population and the MNC's, local gangs fighting the MNC's and federal

government, and rarely also the conflict occurs between the local population of the Niger Delta. The conflict between the MNC's and the locals manifests itself in various ways. The locals are attacking the MNC's by pipe-tapping, oil-bunkering, and in general, vandalising pipeline infrastructure. Pipe-tapping and oil-bunkering are very similar. Pipe-tapping is basically damaging the pipeline infrastructure and stealing oil for personal use, or small scale sales. Oil-bunkering, is rather a larger scale action. Locals or also the militia groups have places where the pipelines are already damaged by them and the oil flows more. Oil-bunkering "involves siphoning oil from pipes on land or underwater, loading it onto small barges, then transferring it to bigger barges offshore in the Gulf of Guinea. Sometimes thieves use pipes up to 12 inches in diameter to tap the lines [...] or from export terminals" (Nossiter 2013). When oil is stolen in a larger scale it is either refined in illegal refineries and sold or the crude oil is taken to ports, where it can be sold easily. The African Business Magazine shares how actually oil is stolen, and how much technical know-how one has to have, in order to be successful in the theft.

"Oil is usually stolen by attaching an illicit spur pipeline that allows this oil to be transferred elsewhere, usually on to vessels controlled by the oil gangs. The technical difficulty comes in attaching the spur pipeline to a highly pressurised, volatile oil pipeline but two methods are regularly employed on a successful basis by the thieves. Hot tapping, also known as 'under pressure drilling', requires perhaps the most technical know-how. It is employed as a means of providing a branch connection to a live pipe in constant operation, where the consequences of a shutdown would not be practicable. This method uses a short section of pipe, to which an isolating valve is either welded or fitted mechanically. After fitting – and with the valve in the open position – the pipe is drilled to the maximum permissible size through the valve. On completion of the drilling operation the valve is closed, and the drilling equipment removed. Alternatively, oil gangs blow up a pipeline, putting it out of use and giving them the opportunity to attach their spur pipeline, with the intersection normally hidden underwater in a swamp or undergrowth, making it difficult for security patrols from the oil company to discover it. Some very professional techniques are employed: closing wellheads and securing T-junction lines with valves that can be reused" (African Business Magazine 2012).

The article also states that these actions are very dangerous not only to the thieves but also for ordinary people as the pipeline pressure is disrupted and it can explode anytime. There have been many accidents in which local people were the main victims. In addition, oil-bunkering on a large

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scale requires know-how of the pipeline system, which usually former workers of petroleum companies have.

Illegal refineries became more common in the Niger Delta, as unemployment rose and people working in these refineries can get \$60 a day (Taylor 2013), which is a very good salary for people who would be otherwise most probably unemployed. On the other hand, it is not possible to track the illegal refining business as “the bush refining business is highly decentralised and secretive which makes its size hard to estimate” (Taylor 2013). Illegal refineries are also contributing to the already bad environment by burning crude oil and leaving the rests from the refined oil on ground absorbing into the soil and groundwater.

By pipe-tapping, oil-bunkering, vandalism of pipeline infrastructure and illegally refining oil Nigeria loses its revenues. An estimate from 2012, when the crisis in the Niger Delta region escalated, there was an approximate loss of 1 million bpd in production a day (African Business Magazine 2012). It is about a half of the total daily production. Von Kemedi, a Consultant to the President, introduced a simple formula of how to count the losses in the federal revenues by oil theft. If the theft was approximately 150,000 bpd at a price of \$100 a barrel then it would equal \$ 7.5 million a day at a discounted price by 50%. The total yearly loss would then generate 2.7375 billion, even though the total cost to the Nigerian economy would show much higher losses (African Business Magazine 2012). The losses are huge, which has a huge impact on the regional economy. Billions of dollars are missing in the federal government, but many NGO’s claim that the money would get wasted anyway as for bribery and corruption. Most of these missing billions are going to the oil gangs, militias and other in the Niger Delta region for the same issues - bribery, corruption of local officials, and policeman, but also for community support which shows to be very effective (African Business Magazine 2012).

More organised than the ordinary population are various militias, pirates operating in the creeks, oil gangs, and even some groups listed as terrorist groups, which are targeting the MNC’s by

stealing oil and kidnapping employees of the MNC's. Though, the conflict they have is not only with the MNC's but also with the federal government for several reasons such as bad allocations of oil revenues, corruption, separatism etc. The first question that one asks, is why do people join all these various militias, pirates, and separatist group when they put their life on stake. There are several reasons for this: first of all, as I have stated earlier, there are not enough opportunities for young men to be involved in the ordinary working cycle. There are not enough positions, and if there are any, there are about 3000 job-seekers for one position. Moreover, these positions are requiring professional skills, which means specialisation/education. Secondly, joining a militia is very lucrative because one can get up to \$100 a day for oil-bunkering, pipe-tapping, or illegally refining crude oil. What more, some politicians, during the elections, hire these militias to rig elections. Some small children, especially boys go to the militias as for a summer job as they can earn a lot of money too for being messengers etc. When IRIN asked one of the militants why they joined the group they answered: "There isn't a disconnect between the motives of the Niger Delta struggle [and the militancy], the motive is that people want all of their rights... if they are not going to have them by negotiation, then they will have them by violence" (IRIN 2008).

Each of the following group has differently specified aims. Going back a little bit in history I have listed two main groups fighting for the clean-up of the Niger Delta region: Climate Change Operation, and the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in the second chapter of this study, therefore, I am not going to come back to them again. Due to these groups such as MOSOP and Climate Change were peacefully demonstrating and the federal government crushed their demonstrations down by force, the people supporting them started radicalising.

One of the most famous groups, also acknowledged as a terrorist group by the Nigerian federal government, is the MEND - Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta. MEND's objective is to completely destroy all oil facilities to disable the Nigerian government and the MNC's operating in the region to export oil. First, MEND was mainly operating from the cities, but

later on, when the activities widened, the MEND moved its operations to the creeks of the Niger Delta. MEND is very difficult to capture as there is no clear leadership, the only publicly known person in the MEND is their anonymous spokesman Jomo Gbomo, who is only known for strategic statements in the media and press (Courson 2009, 18). Due to this group is very decentralised, the cells operate separately and some cells do not know about the planned attack until they hear it in the media. Moreover, each of the cells have a different leader not knowing each other. Thanks to this structure the the movement is fluid, very effective, but very difficult to capture. Compared to the other former groups like the already mentioned MOSOP, whose structure was hieratically defined and so easily crushed down the MEND has a enormous advantage. The MEND is analysed in two dimensions the local one, and the global one. Thanks to the MEND there global media have been paying much more attention to the issues happening in the Niger Delta region. The media have focused on the potential causes of the radicalisation of groups such as MEND, also they have paid attention to the environmental degradation, and the lack of services in the Niger Delta region. MEND has also enlightened the world with the raise of prices of crude oil while destructing the facilities. All these acts which MEND organised have been connected by a sophisticated strategy, in order to raise global awareness through the use of information technologies, international agencies, and NGO's (Courson 2009, 19). The local dimension of the MEND action, is the support of the local population, feeling that groups like the MEND would bring change to the region. The Nigerian federal government though, sees MEND with other groups as militias, and terrorist organisations that must be dissolved or crushed down.

Another of the groups, operating in the Niger Delta, on the list of terrorist groups as well is the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF). The NDPVF is one of the largest armed groups in the region. Most of the members in the groups are from the Ijaw ethnic group. The group was founded in 2004 and its main objective is to gain control over the oil resources, particularly in the Delta state, where the ethnic group is a majority (Terrorism Research&Analysis Consortium). The

NDPVF was created on the basis of unfair allocation of revenues from the oil business in Nigeria, therefore, they demand separation of the Delta state from the federation, in order to manage the revenues from the petroleum business on their own. Furthermore, the NDPVF also played an important role in the conflict between the Niger Delta small ethnic groups. Due to the group's members are from the Ijaw ethnicity, there is a long-term rivalry between them and the Itsekiri and the Urhobo ethnic groups. The conflicts were mainly entered around the cities of Warri and Port Harcourt. The conflict was mainly about the allocation of revenues of oil, and the more political patronage in the main metropolitan areas each of the group has the more allocation they may claim (Human Rights Watch 2005).

When we talk about piracy in Africa, the first area that comes into anyone's mind is the Horn of Africa, especially Somalia. However, piracy nowadays is very frequent in the Guinea Gulf, especially in the delta of the river Niger. The pirates are targeting creeks in the Niger Delta and its facilities in order to steal oil (. Due to their vessels have access to ports all over the gulf of Guinea, they can sell it in other countries because the prices of oil are in Nigeria lower than in the neighbouring countries and in the region. Furthermore, pirates kidnap employees to demand financial compensation for a safe return of the employees (Reuters 2014).

Last of the group operating on the area of the Nigerian south-east and south-south, rather more where the Igbo population is located is the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). The MASSOB was created on the basis of a widespread discontent of the Igbo population. The Igbo population is being, according to MASSOB, marginalised compared to the other major ethnic groups. MASSOB was founded in the 1999, and is marked as an illegal group, as it goes against the constitution by unfollowing the ban of "political organisations on an ethnic, religious, and/or geographic basis" (LandInfo 2012, 3). The group's leaders claim that they are peaceful and so it wants to achieve its goal by separating Biafra, comprising the south-east and south-south regions. On the contrary, the Nigerian federal government accuses the group of

violence, and radicalism. The former President Goodluck Jonathan, who actually comes from the area of the Niger Delta region, Bayelsa state, declared in 2013 that Nigeria is facing three main security challenges one of them being the MASSOB (Nairaland Forum 2013). The federal government cracked down another meeting by force on the anniversary of the MASSOB this year in September by arresting several members. However, the MASSOB still continues its actions for the separation of Biafra.

Additionally, what speaks against all the separatist groups and also other groups wanting more autonomy, in order to control their resource wealth is the declaration made by the Nigerian Federal government in 1972. By the time there was the civil war almost at its end when Biafra wanted to separate with the Niger Delta region from the rest of the federation which would have been a huge loss for the federation. In order to secure its revenues from the Niger Delta region, the declaration states that all “property not owned by any foreign entity is legally the property of the government, which gained jurisdiction of the sale and allocation of concessions to foreign investment” (Onyiri 2009, 109). The federal government assured this way that all the mineral resources which are discovered and will be discovered are in its possession.

Last but not least, I would like to enlighten the way allocation are distributed in Nigeria to better understand where the ethnic animosity comes from connected to the natural resource issue. As Adegami notes in his study, revenue allocation, or rather inequitable revenue allocation, is one of the issues which generates tensions in divided countries like Nigeria (Adegami 2013, 145). As discussed earlier in this chapter, Nigeria’s revenue is coming mainly from the petroleum taxes, mining rents, and royalties. In the Nigerian allocation system the federal government shares the revenue with the states and local governments. The intergovernmental sharing applies to a horizontal sharing scheme. This formula is applicable to states and local governments only. The problem in allocation sharing is that since 1970’s these processes were driven by political fraud, and then formula characteristics as jurisdictional population and state equality, rather than by

characteristics related to economic development (Adegbami 2013, 145). Nigeria's revenue allocation formula allocates more funds to the federal government, which is also described as imbalance revenue allocation due to the centralisation and concentration of fiscal powers with no "correspondence between the spending responsibilities and the tax powers and revenue resources assigned to different levels of government" (Adegbami 2013,145). Because of the concentration of fiscal powers in the hands of the federal governments there is the violation of the principles of federalism because the states are deprived of the right to control their resources within themselves (Adegbami 2013, 145).

Conclusion

To sum up, in this chapter I have been discussing three main topics connected to the "valued territory" the Niger Delta Region. The first part introduced the petroleum sector in the country in general, analysed the price from of oil in the last year and the expectation of prices for the future year, and the current political situation at the Ministry of Petroleum. The second part, analysed the environmental degradation problem in the Niger Delta region, introduced the main polluters, and discussed the major oil spills causing most harm, and lastly the gas flaring issue as well. The last part introduced the human factor of the conflict. I enlightened the lack of opportunities in the region and the inadequate allocations systems which lead to the the boom of militias, and illegal activities such as pipe-tapping, oil-bunkering, illegal refining etc. Furthermore, I introduced the main and most known groups operating in the region and their aims and objectives.

The chapter enabled me to answer the main two research questions of this study: **1) How do natural resources in the Delta region escalate the conflict between ethnic groups/classes within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and 2) Are there going to be any other attempts to separate Biafra from the federation and why?** The answer to the first question is that natural resources in the Delta region do escalate the conflict between the groups within the country due to the revenue

of the natural resources are not allocated fairly, the Delta region still lacks behind in development, and the government does not provide enough working and training opportunities for graduates which leads to the more violent way of solving the conflict in the Niger Delta as men rather join militias as it is the only way of making a living. The answer to the second question is more problematic, as the Biafran separation issue is a very current one. There are two possibilities, if the Biafran Republic separates again the Niger Delta region is most probably going to separate along. If the attempt is going to be stopped by force this time again, there will definitely be more attempts in the future as the marginalisation of the Igbo people is getting stronger in the federation and the Igbo population is dissatisfied with the situation. If the federation is going to handle the separatist movements in a peaceful way and is going to try to negotiate some autonomy possibilities it is more likely that the situation would change and Nigeria is going to stay a federation.

Conclusion

Summary

The aim of the study was to answer the two research questions: 1) How do natural resources in the Delta region escalate the conflict between ethnic groups/classes within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and 2) Are there going to be any other attempts to separate Biafra from the federation and why? My findings were that the valued territory is escalating the ethnic conflict in Nigeria, and brings conflict on the ground of the Niger Delta region as well because the geographical regions of the south-east and south-south are suffering of vast environmental degradation, lack of development, and poverty, as allocations from the natural resources revenues are not well and fairly distributed among the Nigerian states. Then, there are two possible answers to the second research question as the conflict for the separation of Biafra is a current one. One possible outcome of the Biafran secessionist movement is that the Biafran Republic is going to get its independence from the federation by peaceful means. If this happens it is more likely that the rich region of the Niger Delta is going to separate with the Biafran Republic from the rest of the federation. The second possible outcome, which is more likely to happen when watching the current developments is that the Biafran secessionist movement is going to be broken down by the military force, as the federation does not want any secession, also due to this region is rich on natural resources and the federation is getting most of its revenue from there. If the movement is going to be forced to stop, there are going to be more radical attempt to separate Biafra from the rest of the federation.

Potential weaknesses

Potential weaknesses of this study are that this is a single case study using the Marxist geopolitics concept of the value of territory. Even though, this study showed that the concept is

perfectly fitting the case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it might not be possible to generalise it to every ethnic conflict over a valued territory.

Future Prospects and Implications

During the next years, Nigeria is to become Africa's largest economy with its current growth rates. Economists say that the country will experience even higher growth rates in the next decade (Donnelly 2012). Unfortunately, we cannot predict whether the expected economic growth will also transform the lives of the 150 million inhabitants Nigeria has. As is written in an article from allAfrica, "With two dollar billionaires, many more millionaires, but with 61 per cent of its population living on less than a dollar a day, Nigeria is a country of extremes, a reality that makes grappling with its challenges and taking advantage of its opportunities altogether more complicated" (Donnelly 2012). Nigeria is a country of huge differences between the rich and the poor, between the South and the North, between cities and the countryside. If Nigeria is to become African's leading economy it will have to start transforming the weak parts of the state into stronger, definitely the country would have to solve its internal problems with separatist movements of Biafra, violent terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, and also ethnic and religious hatred among the diverse population.

As Nigeria is heavily dependent on oil exportation, it should establish various kinds of other sources of income as the natural resources reserves are not endless. Definitely, the country will have to create more jobs for the growing population and provide conditions for countryside farmers to feed the population so that Nigeria is not dependent on the food imports as well. Due to the exploitation of natural resources destroyed a vast area of land in the Niger Delta region, the government will have to invest in the environmental cleaning up, in order for the inhabitants of those affected regions not to have health problems because of water and food contamination from oil spills and gas flaring. Moreover, the current developments of the separatist movements is very

much dependent on the reactions of the federal government. Whether this conflict is going to lead to another civil war, or whether the country handle the situation is still a question, but this research provided possible solutions to the conflict.

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KATEDRA MEZINÁRODNÍCH VZTAHŮ

BEZPEČNOSTNÍ STUDIA

Value of Territory: A Critical View on Natural Resources Being a Cause Ethnic Conflict

Jméno: Bc. Nicole Okonkwo Gattuso

Ročník: 1.

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Africa, a continent full of diversity, huge potential, endless reserves of natural resources, but on the other hand a huge gap between the social classes which go hand in hand with terrifying poverty, separatist movements, bloody conflicts, bad governance and most of all corruption and struggle for power. All these we can find not only in Africa but even in one single country on this continent, which is the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Federal Republic of Nigeria has huge reserves of natural gas and oil which is being exported all over the world. Sadly, the country is still coping with its development as bad governance and corruption make it impossible to allocate any capital meaningfully. Moreover, during the era of colonialism the tribes that lived in this region were put into an administration unit which later became a republic. These tribes have had several bloody clashes during the history and until today they compete between each other for power. Power is very important in countries such as Nigeria because when a certain group is in power they get more benefits than all the others. One of the benefits which all groups seek to get is the access to natural resources which are in the south-eastern region in the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta is the richest territory in the country as it generates most of the capital for the whole federation. Unfortunately, the people that live in this region do not have any special benefit coming from the government even though their land is being destroyed because of oil extraction by various multinational corporations. As they cannot grow anything on this land, and the waters are contaminated living in the Delta region is either very expensive because most of the food and water must be imported or the living becomes very dangerous as the foods grown and water fetched from this region is most probably contaminated. In 2011, the United Nations Development Program published a report which contained the environmental assessment of a part of the Niger Delta region of the Ogoniland. It covers contaminated land, groundwater, surface water, sediment, vegetation, air pollution, public health, industry practices and institutional issues (UNEP 2011, 8). This assessment concludes that the cleaning up of oil pollution in this one part of the Niger Delta would take 30 years and \$1 billion to start it up.

The condition of the Delta region brings nostalgia to the Igbo population living there for their own independent country. Such a nostalgia comes with remembrance of the Nigerian civil war, the war for an independent Biafran Republic, in which the Biafrans fought against the whole federation. This war was a result of economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions between the tribe living in the North, the Hausas, and the Igbo population, living in the south-east of the country. During the almost three years of fighting over two million people died of famine or fighting. There have been villages that have died of famine because no humanitarian aid was provided to them. Since the war ended there has not been any Nigerian president who would come from the Igbo tribe until nowadays – president Goodluck Jonnathan. It was supposed to be a punishment for the Igbo people not to try to separate Biafra from the rest of the federation. Now, when the Igbo people are in power again, there have been more separatist tendencies than ever. The separatist movements in Biafra are getting stronger thanks to the pipeline destruction and illegal extraction of oil, and separatist movements supported by Biafrans living outside Nigeria are being seen all over the world.

The separatist movements nowadays are fuelled by the growing dissatisfaction of the situation in the Niger Delta region as the multinational companies extracting oil and natural gas are hiring greater numbers of private armies to protect the gas and oil fields which are more and more attacked not only by various militia groups but also by ordinary citizens who want to get richer by illegally tapping the pipelines. Secondly, the Niger Delta is generating most of the capital of the whole federation and the government does not allocate it back in the region to develop it better, rather the capital disappears in the accounts of corrupted politicians. Most Biafrans I talked to believe that when they get their own independent state they are going to use the wealth to develop the country for the future generations and not only destroy the environment and take the capital which disappears in anyway due to corrupted government or bad governance.

I decided to look closer at the problem with natural gas and oil extraction and separatist tendencies in the south-eastern region of Nigeria because the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a very interesting case to be studied due to the vast diversity this country provides. Furthermore, what deepens my interest is the fact, that I have spend most of my life in this country, and therefore I have the possibility to access local newspaper and also I am able to do a field research which would provide a bigger validity of the findings and arguments. My aim in this study is to show how the value of the territory of the Niger Delta region intensifies ethnic conflict between the three major groups inhabiting Nigeria, the Igbos, the Yorubas, and the Hausas as the Igbo people create separatist movements to gain their independent country, the Biafran Republic.

On the single case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria I will use the concept of value of territory. This concept comes from the Marxist geopolitics which “emphasizes specific combinations of uniquely temporal imperatives that drive capital to expand across the world”(Colas, Pozo 2011, 213). According to the concept, if capitalism is used in a state to social reproduction, then various territories acquire value that transcends the distinction between capitalist and territorial logics of power (Colas, Pozo 2011, 213). Capitalism constructs geopolitical spaces by class antagonism and ground rent-seeking. The first, class antagonism, is produced through powerful capitalist interests that valorize territories because of socio-political upheaval, instability and failed states are not capable of expanding capitalist reproduction. Capitalist reproduction ensures privileges of elites in power by protecting private property relations, allowing capitalist markets to grow, and undermining any radical political threats to the prevailing order. Secondly, the strongest expression of the capitalist valorization of territory is ground-rent, capital attached to a single territory which cannot be moved anywhere. However, there are forms of generating value directly from the ground and that is mining. Natural resources are scarce access to it cannot be left to market mechanisms because they are territorially fixed, this fact creates rivalry between various

groups which seek to get the wealth from these valuable territories. Lastly, as the authors stress, unlike feudal and tributary societies, expanded capitalist reproduction is not tied to violence, and war in structure, rather violence and war is most often a direct result of it.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a perfectly fitting example for this concept because there are elites in power which gain from the prevailing order and they do not want to change it, and if somebody tries to change it, such as the separatist groups in the south-east, the elites in power use any means to maintain the prevailing order. Also, most of the natural gas and oil reserves in the Federal Republic of Nigeria are in the south-east region which wants to become an independent country, the Republic of Biafra, and if the succession happens the whole federation will not have any natural resources. Understandably, this fact creates rivalry between the three major ethnic groups and intensifies the animosity. The questions I would like to use to direct my research would be 1) How do natural resources in the Delta region escalate the conflict between ethnic groups within the Federal Republic of Nigeria?; and 2) Are there going to be any other attempts to separate Biafra from the federation? Why?

To justify the choice of my topic, I would like to stress that my research is original in the sense that I look at the case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its problem with natural resources and separatist movements through a critical theory, Marxist geopolitics. The case of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is studied a lot but only through similar concepts and these concepts usually do separate the natural resources issue and the tribal animosity and separatist movements from each other as they would not be interlinked. Talking about natural resources most used concepts and theories we can find in the literature are the concept paradox of plenty, the Dutch disease, resource curse, and others which usually handle natural resources as something that instead of helping the country to develop itself better the resources make the country to be even in worse condition than as if it would not have any resources to extract. Many Africans have the same belief

as one resident of Koidu said, “We are fighting and killing ourselves over what God gave us to make us happy and comfortable. I sometimes wonder whether it would not be better if God takes away the endowment, and by doing so, spare us the tragedy it has brought to our life” (Alao 2007, 1). Also the issue of natural resources is connected in Nigeria in many articles about democracy saying if Nigeria was a democratic country, institutions would provide enough checks to unveil mismanagement and corruption in the process. Second, we can find the issue of ethnic tensions and separatist movements in the literature usually connected the era of colonization. European colonial powers created states in order to have administrative units which would be better controlled. In the process the European colonial powers put together ethnic groups which were different in the language they talked with, religion they lived in, and politics they practiced.

I will prove in my research that all the concepts connected to natural resources are not reliable and cannot be used to generalize all cases which reflect mismanagement of natural resources. Then, ethnic tensions are surely historically connected to the colonial era but there are many countries which consist of many ethnic groups or tribes and they do not have the same problems as the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Therefore, I will connect mention in my research also the historical development of tribal relations and tensions but I will show that if there was no wealth coming from the one territory which has value, the south-east, then the tensions would not escalate in a conflict such as the Biafran war in the 1970’s nor would the separatist movements be so strong.

The data I will use to complete my research are secondary sources which will direct my research and ensure that I will not lose the track. I will go through some literature which will make to understand closer the history of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Second, I will go through Marxist geopolitics literature which will enlight the concept of value of territory and show me how capitalist reproduction establishes an order which brings violence and conflicts. Thirdly, the concepts connected to natural resources will have to be proven wrongly, and therefore I will use

literature to find cases in which the resource curse is not fitting. Furthermore, in order to make my research original I plan to visit the Federal Republic of Nigeria and do my own field research which, I believe, will make my research more reliable as the data to be found in the literature are not up to date. On the other side, I will have to rely on the data collected by the United Nations and especially by the United Nations Development Program which researches collects the data from the Niger Delta. Very useful are also going to be statistics from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as they will show how well the Federal Republic of Nigeria performs. Lastly, I will collect some data directly in Nigeria as I will read the newspaper where there are many articles about the separatist movements in the south-eastern region, I will also go to the national archive to access articles from the newspaper which were written during the Biafran war.

During my stay in Nigeria I would like to do some semi-structured interviews about the feelings the Biafrans have for the federation and reasons why they want to separate. I am not planning to use any concrete questionnaires because I think that it narrows the possible answers. The next area of questions will be for the non-Biafrans and their feelings about the separation of Biafra. Then, I will try to meet some local politicians in the states of Biafra and ask them about how they think the federal government will react and if there is going to be any similar scenario as it was in the 1970's which ended with a bloody civil war, in which more than two million people died of starvation and fighting.

My findings will answer my two research questions 1) How do natural resources in the Delta region escalate the conflict between ethnic groups within the Federal Republic of Nigeria?; and 2) Are there going to be any other attempts to separate Biafra from the federation? Why?, and prove my hypothesis right or wrong whether natural resources in the south-east do intensify the conflict between the major ethnic groups.

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