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Natural Resources and Violent Conflicts in Anambra Oil-Bearing Basin

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Abstract

This study discusses natural resources and violent conflict in Anambra Oi-Bearing Basin of Nigeria. The paper adopts qualitative research methodology with historical/descriptive research design. The sources and method of data collection are secondary. The paper argues that unless lessons learned in the Niger Delta are applied in the Anambra Basin, there will be a repeat of the tragedy of the Niger Delta where resource conflict has led to security challenges and further underdevelopment of the region. The finding indicates that there a direct link between oil activities and the violent conflict in the Basin since 2012.

Keywords: Natural Resources, Violent Conflict, Anambra Oil-Bearing Basin, Resource Control, Niger Delta Region

INTORDUCTION

Historically, struggle over territory has been the most prevalent form of conflict. And naturalresources often underlie those territorial struggles. For example, competition over the control ofoil production has helped fan the violence among the Kurds, Sunni, and Shiites in Iraq. There is along list of conflicts with a strong link to natural resource exploitation (United States Institute ofPeace, 2007). The violent clash between the people of Aguleri in Anambra State andEcheno/Odeke in Ibaji local government area of Kogi State, which has caused loss of lives andproperty, cannot be an exception. Many people have been killed and injured, and property

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worthmillions of Naira destroyed by the both sides. The struggle for resource control in the NigerDelta region is based on the argument that Nigeria is practicing federalism, which allows eachfederating state to control resources in its territory instead of the federal government. But this is adifferent matter over the violent conflicts in the Anambra basin. The emphasis in the Anambrabasin is on the ownership of the locations of the oil wells for the purpose of the expectedstatutory 13% derivation allocation to an oil producing state.

The violent conflicts have been over the ownership of the stretch of land bearing the oil wells-OPLs 915 and 916 being operated by Orient Petroleum Resources PLC. However, the hostilitiesaccording to National Mirror (2015) editorial, seems more pronounced for now betweenAnambra and Kogi states. It is expected that more oil related activities in the Anambra basinaccording to Ndubuisi (2009), will cause so much negative impacts on the lives of the people ofthe Basin. The traditional and main source of their livelihood of the people in the communities inthe basin are fishing and farming activities. From what is already happening since 2012, therewill be disruption and destruction of these fishing and farming activities.

In Nigerian oil industry, 13% derivation fund is statutorily allocated to an oil-producing state.Hence, with this expected revenue, Kogi state challenged the ownership claim by Anambra stateover the land where the oil wells are located and it is expected that others states within the basinwill follow suit in the nearest further (Alex, 2013). According to Sam (2014), the war betweenAnambra and Kogi States communities is over the oil wells in their boundaries and it hasclaimed the lives of many people and property worth millions of Naira destroyed. This is as aresult of the oil deposits on the Omambala River basin. Speaking in the same vein, Nathaniel(2012), explains that crisis in the basin is over the ownership of the locations of oil and central tothis is the expected 13 per cent derivation which accrues to oil and gas producing state inNigeria. “The clamour for resource control is based on the competitive federal system in whichcontrol of natural resources has gradually moved from regions to the federal government” (Allen,2014, p. 47).

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Kogi state government in her online News of December 11, 2015, reveals that since thediscovery of crude oil deposits in the boundary areas of Kogi, Anambra and Enugu Kogi states,the affected communities have not known peace. Members of these communities in the areashave taken up arms against one another as the states lay claim and counter-claim over theownership of the location of the oil wells. Chris (2015) laments that the building of a privaterefinery by Orient Petroleum Resources Plc in the area has not appeased the people. It has ratherescalated the crisis as two states engage each other in fierce clashes. Though federal governmentdeclared Anambra state an oil producing state, the state is yet to be formally admitted as amember of oil producing states. While the situation lingers, a statement credited to the formergovernor of Kogi state Idris Wada indicated that Kogi State would do everything humanlypossible to reclaim the location of the oil wells.

The statement was followed by attacks in the area such that hundreds of people lost their livesand property worth millions of naira were destroyed as the border communities in Anambra andKogi states battled for the land that bears the crude oil (Vincent &Boluwaji, Vanguard onlinereport). Clement (n.d, p.1) also reports that several lives have been lost in the area and propertyworth millions of naira lost following violent clashes in the disputed area. Despite the efforts bythe Anambra and Kogi State governments to ensure that normalcy return to the troubled bordercommunities of the two states, heavy shooting has continued in the area. According to Allen(2014, p. 45), “It would appear that Nigerian state is unable to counter the various forces thatcompel the violence (state and non-state sectors) as well as the danger it spells for a fledglingdemocracy like Nigeria”. In line with this position, Ikelegbe (2001) as cited in Allen (2014, p.48), explains that “clearly, violent conflict associated with oil in the Niger Delta is partly as the result of the struggles for control and ownership of the oil.” Allen (2014, p. 48) also believes that “oil remains the fundamental elements to explain the conflict, especially its mode of production and appropriation. The frustration resulting from these issues plays a substantial role in defining the response pattern of the people of the region.

The Study Area

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Geographically, the Anambra Basin literally sits on top (north) of the Niger Delta and like theNiger Delta cuts across several states of Anambra, Delta, Enugu and Kogi. The area is locatedwithin the southern Anambra Basin covering parts of Anambra State, Enugu State, Imo State,and Abia State. The Anambra Basin is located between Latitudes 5000'N to 80 00'N andLongitudes 60 30'E to 80 00'E (Figure 1.1). The origin of the Anambra Basin is intimatelyrelated to the development of the Benue Rift (Burke et al., 1972; Olade, 1975; Benkhelil, 1982,1989; Hoque&Nwajide, 1984; Fairhead, 1988). The Basin is a northeast-southwest trending,roughly triangular basin which covers an area of about 40,000sq km. It is one of the sub-basinsof the Benue rift structure which form a part of the West African Rift System (WARS) (Fairhead&Okereke, 1987). The basin, also like the Niger Delta, has been divided into oil explorationblocks and awarded to various companies with work commitments enshrined in the various agreements signed. That of OPRL is a Sole-Risk Agreement with a commitment to build arefinery (Nathaniel, 2012). The Anambra Basin is one of the Nigeria inland basins that haverecorded significant level of hydrocarbon exploration activities over three decades. The Basin issituated at the south-western extremity of the Benue Trough and is bounded on the west by thePrecambrian basement complex rocks of western Nigeria and on the east by the AbakalikiAnticlinorium (Odoh et al., 2009).

The primary occupation of the people is agriculture, which includes but not limited to farming ofcrops and fruits, fishing etc. Geologically, Babatunde (2010) explains that Anambra basin is oneof the basins in Nigeria, harbouring the largest deposit of subbituminous coal and lignite. Oilseepages have also been reported from parts of the basin. In line with this fact, Akaegbobi andSchmitt (1998) as cited in Babatunde (2010) say that the Anambra basin is a cretaceous basinwith a total sediment thickness of about 9km, presently an ideal geo-reactor for all manner ofcomplex chemical reactions that can lead to the formation and occurrence of economically viablehydrocarbon deposits. It is also characterized by enormous lithological heterogeneity in bothlateral and vertical extension derived from a range of paleo environment settings ranging fromCampanian to Recent.

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POLITICAL ECONOMY

The importance of theoretical framework in research cannot be over-emphasized. Nachmias andNachmias (1981), see a theory as a logical deductive statements consisting of a set of interrelatedconcepts from which testable propositions can be derived. In their own submission, To Whiteand Clark (1990), a theory as a set of proposed explanations that logically or systematicallylinked to each in other to explain or forecast a phenomenon. For the purpose of analysis, thispaper has adopted Marxist Political Economy comprising of historical and dialecticalmaterialism. Political economy approach looks at the social class relations, especially, powerrelations basically in the production, distribution and consumption of resources. In the word ofNmom (2011) the political economy approach focuses attention on the production, managementand distribution of social wealth coupled with class relation and the resultant conflict, and classconflict that accompanies the development of society from one stage to the other.

This approach will to us do two things. First, it will help to answer the questions of this paper byunravelling the relationship between oil activities and the agitation, which seem to haveinfluenced the resource control struggles in the basin. Second, political economy theory willexplain the intra-ruling class struggles and the use of the less privileged segments of the societyespecially, the youths to cause violence. To further clarify the relevance of the Marxist politicaleconomy to this paper, and the conflict aspect of the problem in Anambra basin, the approachexplains the expected inherent incompatibility of the individuals and groups' interests due tounequal distribution of wealth, or resources, and power in the society.

League for the Fifth International (2006), in line with this school of thought, sees politicaleconomy as primarily about people and the social relationships between them, over the questionsof 'who owners of material wealth and how they use it to exploit others'? What is produced andhow? Marxist political economy encompasses a critical, holistic and rational understanding ofthe essentials forces and factors that link and shape politics and the economy. George (1977)explains that the political economy approach touches on the most political and

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immediateinterests of various classes and strata in the society. Classes, Ekekwe (2009) argues, evolved dueto productive activities of man. There is nothing 'natural'. They are the product of determinedaction, which begins from common relationship to the means of production and two mainclasses- class of owners and class of non-owners. This is the central problem of class struggles.The political economy theory therefore, is a science about class relations and class strugglesbrought about by productive activities in the society. To George-Genyi (2009, p. 90), thisapproach "studies society scientifically in its totality and takes into consideration theinterconnection of social relations, class conflict and the organic relationship between the substructure(economy) and the superstructure (politics)."

The theory assumes that the ruling class in every society pursues, captures and exploits powerresources for its own interest. Thus, those who own and control the means of productioninvariably control and determine all the aspects of the society. In this context, (Vande, 2016),asserts that the ruling class uses the less privileged of the society especially the youths to fightand struggle for the society's resources. It is within this perspective also, that the essence of theruling class in relation to productive activities and distributive forces, and the antagonistic natureof the society can be appreciated in line with this study. Vande (2016, p. 48) further believes that"the essence of political economy as an approach to the study of political phenomenon ispredicated on the fact that economic relations are the basis of all social life". A politicaleconomy approach, in general, takes into account the class structure of each particular society, aswell as exploitation and hence social or class conflicts. It also takes sufficiently into account therole of institutions and power relations, including the state as a basic political institution,recognizing that institutions and power relations are intimately and dynamically intertwined witheconomic relations, and that the economic question is inextricably related to the social question(George, 2010).

Karl Marx (1959) in his work: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, explainsthus:

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> In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations,which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a givenstage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of theserelations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation,on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definiteforms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions thegeneral process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of menthat determines their existence, but their social existence that determines theirconsciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces ofsociety come into conflict with the existing relations of production or -- this merelyexpresses the same thing in legal terms -- with the property relations within theframework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of theproductive forces these relations turn into their fetters. This then, begins an era of socialrevolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to thetransformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformations itis always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economicconditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science,and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic -- in short, ideological forms inwhich men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out (p. 4).

And to produce, people must form certain mutual relationships because isolated individualscannot engage in production. Production relations consist of the three aspects: (1) the ownershippattern of the means of production; (2) people's roles in distribution and their mutual relations;and (3) the pattern of product distribution. The ownership pattern refers to who owns the meansof production including ownership of the land. Nmom (2011, p. 58) in this respect explains that"the political economy unavoidably focuses attention not only the production and

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managementof society's material wealth but also its distribution among the various segments or classes andconflicts which arises from these processes". We are therefore, according to Ekekwe (2009),concerned here in political economy as a scientific method through the society and social changecan be scientifically studied and analysed. To this effect, Ekekwe (2009) asserts that:

> Political economy goes further and posits a basic dialectical relationship between, on theone hand, the pattern or ownership of the means of production and the classes these giverise to, and on the other hand, the pattern of social institutions and the ideas which informthem. The ideas, structures and institutions (also known as 'superstructure') have theirbasis in and are congruent with the pattern and ownership of the means of production(known also as the base or 'substructure') (p. 21).

Political economy theory captures in a holistic and dialectical manner, the origin causes andnature of the forces shaping the dynamics of conflict and the ability to resolve and build peace.The relations of class inequality and exploitation, which frequently leads to conflicts, are oftenthan not linked to issues of production and distributive politics. The social relations ofproduction, distribution and consumption, if not properly managed create the condition for theemergence of conflict (National Open University of Nigeria, 2006). The political economy ofresources and resources rich regions always throws quite emotionally the contradiction of powerand benefits between those who own and control, and those who benefit and bear the social andenvironmental costs of exploitation. The costs are in inform of water and agricultural farm landpollution. The appropriation and application of the resources on most occasions tend to ignore,dispossess and disempower locals, community or indigenous people. The resistance that followsthis pervades the political economy of oil and mineral resources in Nigeria and any other naturalresources endowed countries (Ikelegbe, 2005). "The exploration and exploitation of oil in theNiger Delta automatically changed the socio-political and economic well-being of all Nigeriaespecially the people in the region. And thus, oil became the symbol of wealth, the primitiveaccumulation and control of it by the elites and the state became the bone of contention eversince in Nigeria till date" Nmom (2011, p. 69).

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This is because in the opinion of Fayemi (2003) as cited in Allen (2014), oil has become themost powerful, and yet most volatile resource in the contemporary world by virtue of being thelife blood of the modern economy. The fact that the lives of people and the destinies of nationsare shaped by the results of the operations of the oil industry is not unconnected with the sort ofpolitics and violence that regulate this resource all over the world, including Nigeria. Brewer(1980) believes that material things are in the constant process of change brought by the tensionbetween conflicting or interacting forces, elements, or ideas and the economic life of the societyis the objective reality which is independent of human will and consciousness and that therelationship of the two opposed classes is the central defining of the mode of production. AndAke (1981) as cited in Nmom (2011) identifies three major features central to the mode ofproduction which include the primacy of material conditions, the dynamic character of reality,and the relatedness of different elements of society. Dutt and Andrew (1957) explain politicaleconomy as a theory that explains the relations that exists in production and they interact withinherent production forces. It explains the laws which regulate the production and distribution ofmaterial wealth in human society at the different stages of its development.

To Uranta (2009), as cited in Nmom (2011, p. 68):

> The political economy approach does not only look at the social relations in productionand the management of society's materials wealth. It also focuses attention on thedistribution of this material wealth among the contending forces or classes and theconflict arising therein. The discovery, exploration and exploitation of oil always changethe socio-political and economic well-being of a society especially the people in the areawhere the oil resources are located. Oil therefore becomes the symbol of wealth, theprimitive accumulation and control of it by the elites and the state became the bone ofcontention in a society like Nigeria till date.

Niger Delta region is a typical example of this scenario and it has started playing out in theAnambra basin over the expected 13% derivation allocation.Resources are likely to influence the type of violent conflict required and feasible to achievepolitical and economic aims. The transformation of nature into tradable commodities is a deeplypolitical process; involving the definition of property rights, the organisation of labour, and theallocation of profits. The pattern of social relations as well as the quality and democracy orlegitimacy of institutions determines the risk of conflict and deployment of violence. Althoughthis process of transformation can be peaceful and cooperative, it is often conflictual andviolence may be deployed, either in the form of physical force or through coercion anddomination. Access to the commodity value chain is often closely linked to social identities,articulating in particular entitlements and horizontal inequalities along ethnicity, class, orreligion with the political economy of a resource. In short, violence becomes the prime means ofpolitical action, economic accumulation, or simply survival (Philippe, 2001).

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The concept of natural resources

Natural resources as explained by United States Institute of Peace (2007) arematerials that occur in nature and are essential or useful to humans, such as water, air,land, forests, fish and wildlife, topsoil, and minerals. They may be *renewable*—such ascropland, forests, and water that replenish over time by natural processes if usedprudently. Or they may be *nonrenewable*—such as oil and minerals that have a finitequality to them and usually serve as a commodity for export in developing countries(P. 15).Of all natural resources, oil has been found to have the highest risk of civil conflict because ofthe large rents it offers and the shocks to which the government and the national economy areexposed to (Collier &Hoeffler, 2005; Fearon&Laiton, 2005).When there are natural resourceseverybody in the area wants to benefit from such resources. Oil is the basic natural resource anda major issue in Nigeria because the country's economy largely depends on it. According toDavid (2013), all over the world, conflicts have always been centred on economic resources.Where there are natural resources, there are likely to be interests and when there are interests,people will have demands and want those demands met. The damaging side effects of naturalresource extraction on governance and the economy and the resulting post-

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conflict grievancesand decades of poverty are the most significant factors for civil conflict (Reno, 1995; Keen,2000).

United States Institute of Peace (2007) further explains that natural resources are an integral partof society, as sources of income, industry, and identity. Developing countries tend to be moredependent on natural resources as their primary source of income, and many individuals dependon these resources for their livelihoods. In these and other ways, competition over naturalresources can lead to, intensify, or sustain violence. It should be noted here that conflict overnatural resources is often part of, and exacerbates, a larger struggle over political, economic,cultural, or religious issues in the society. Christian Aid Report (2001) on the situation in Sudan,believes without oil, the civil war fought between the government of Sudan and the mainopposition force, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) would not have been or escalated.

The Report cites testimony of Sudanese people displaced from the oil areas. Among them isMalonyKolang, a Nuer chief who lamented:

> Before oil, our region was peaceful. People were cultivating with their cattle. When thepumping began, the war began. Antonovs and helicopter gunships began attacking the villages- sometimes four times every day. All the farms have been destroyed. Everythingaround the oil fields has been destroyed. Oil has brought death (Christian Aid, p. 11).

Oil reserves are predominantly located in the Lake Albertine Graben region between Uganda andthe Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Lake Albert region is an ecologically sensitivearea with an enormous amount of biodiversity. It is also a politically sensitive area that liesbetween two countries with a history of violent conflict and border disputes. Oil deposits straddlethe border between Uganda and the DRC, increasing the value of their riparian boundary. Thishas increased tensions between the states, provoking conflict between the Ugandan Peoples'Defense Forces (UPDF) and the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC). Moreover, oil

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deposits arelocated near and within wildlife protection areas and environmentally sensitive regions. If notproperly managed, environmental degradation could lead to local strife (Jacob & Megan, 2011).Michael (2002) reveal that studies have find that natural resources intensify the danger that acivil war will break out, and once it breaks out, that conflict will be more difficult to resolve.

Oil industry activities are largely predicated on their unrestrained access to land because theyderive their oil from the earth crust. The oil-bearing enclave on the other hand, depends on landto grow their food, fish and hunt. Land is central to the social system of the people of the NigerDelta as well as other parts of Nigeria. In this respect, clashes between the people and oil firmsare inevitable. The acquisition of land by the oil firms for pipelines rights of ways, flow lines,flow stations and gas flaring sites normally engender acrimony between oil firms and hostcommunities (Aghalino, 2011).

The concept of Resource Control

One of the contemporary issues in the political economy of oil in Nigeria is the ownershipquestion or what has come to be termed “resource control” (Chijioke et al., 2012). Igbuzor(2007), posits that resource control is the power and right of a community or state to raise fundsby way of taxation on persons, matters, services and materials within its territory. That is,resource control is the right to manage and to exercise authority over the resources both naturaland created within the state’s territory by the state. The phrase “resource control” according toNnaji (2012) has become amazingly popular in the Nigerian federation. Popularized as a politicalconcept in 2003 in the aftermath of the legal fight between the federal government and thelittoral states over offshore/onshore dichotomies, the phrase quickly gained attraction in thecountry. The concept has generated substantial literature that one might even think; it is entirelya new concept.

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Fred (2013, p. 36) is of the view that

> The central control of natural resources currently in force in Nigeria is premised on theeconomic assumption that it has the capacity to bring about macroeconomic stabilizationand the redistribution of income and wealth. This stems from the assumption that thecentral government is alive to its developmental responsibilities to all parts of the countryin a manner that demonstrates justice and equity.

Dibua laments that "The control of the wealth derived from natural resources and the manner ofresource allocation has been a contentious issue in Nigeria right from the colonial period,particularly with the emergence of the federal system of government" (2005, p.9). The strugglefor the control of the nation's resources according to Ikeji (2011) has been based on the regional"cleavages" and entangled with political conflict. Resource control has thus being associatedwith political considerations with the purpose of influencing wealth allocation from federationaccount.

The political economy of resource control in the view of Orji and Jaja (2007) has assumed theposition of an obstruction to the socio-economic development and political stability of Nigeria'sdemocracy. To this extent therefore, Orji and Jaja warn that unless some urgent meaningful stepsare taking, there will be no socio-economic progress in Nigeria. To Ojo (2010), resource controlis the right vested on the communities or state of derivation to levy customs and excise duties ongoods manufactured in its territory. Such resources as mineral land rents, and oil royalties shouldbe managed by the communities or state of derivation, rather than the federal government. Thiswill go a long way in ameliorating the problems associated with resource control. The problemof how to share resources according to Ukwueze (2011) has generated a lot of heat which isalmost suffocating the whole nation. This is because Nigeria's fiscal relations centres on thefundamental question of who gets what, when and how of the national cake. Given that Nigeriais a monolithic economy with the overdependence on oil and to the detriment of other areas ofeconomy, there are agitations, reactions and demonstrations among different ethnic

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groups inNigeria, to the extent that some people have taken up arms in order to get their share of oil booty.

The Concept of Violent Conflict

Conflict, according to Onuoha (2008), is a situation of struggle between and/or among opposingindividuals, groups, communities or states over certain perceived desirable values arising fromdifferences in the action of any of the parties in the quest to realise or secure those values. Thestruggle may be over tangible values such as money, property, land, water, mineral resources, oranimals. However, from late 1990s, the situation developed into violent conflicts between the oilbearing communities, the Nigerian state and the oil companies. Much of the violent conflictsexperienced in the Niger Delta have been directed at the oil companies' facilities, with oilresources constantly plundered (Ndubuisi, 2009). “Conflict thus arises from the interaction ofindividuals or groups who pursue incompatible goals using incompatible means, leading to asituation of deprivation for any of the parties” (Onuoha, 2008, p. 41). “Violent conflict refers tothe fact that the parties use lethal violence to gain control over some disputed and perceivedindivisible resource, such as a piece of land or local political power. This follows a generallyaccepted conceptualization of armed conflict” (Galtung, 1965, pp. 348-349).

Conflict to Onuoha (2008) assumes a violent dimension when:

> There is no superior force or effective regulatory mechanism to balance the struggleand thus prevent the situation from becoming more intense, and when the partiesinvolved employ physical force or lethal means to inflict injury and damage, or toeliminate the opponent in the quest to secure the value(s) at stake (p. 41).

The perpetuation of environmental pollution and neglect of the Niger Delta by the Federalgovernment, Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria created a perceived need to take violentaction especially by the youths from the early 1990s (Raji et al., 2013). The discourse on

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theoil-development nexus in Africa is often predicated on the view that oil breeds corruption,bad governance, human rights abuses and violent conflict (Human Rights Watch 2002; Obi2007a; Ross 1999, 2001, 2004a, 2004b).

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The relationship between resource control and violent conflict

In the Niger Delta and as it is now in the Anambra Basin, the 'oil curse' perspective defines oillargely in terms of a central role in increasing the risk of violent conflict, poor economic growth,or acting as a disincentive for peace (Basedau& Lay, 2009). Of note is the work of Lujala(2010), which examines 'empirically how the location of natural resources affects armed civilconflict', and he concludes that 'oil substantially prolongs conflict when located inside theconflict zone', thus rendering oil endowment a critical factor in the location, duration andintensity of armed conflict. Violence in the oil bearing communities in the Niger-Delta started atthe inception of oil production in late 1950s.

Environmental resources are critical to the survival of people and nations, both for subsistenceand for economic mainstay. In some circumstances, access to or control of the resources of anenvironment has been a contentious issue often generating tensions and violent conflicts within,between and among nations (Onuoha, 2008). "Thus, it could be rightly stated that violentconflicts in the Niger Delta predate the discovery and exploitation of crude oil resources"(Amukali&Fajir, 2014, p. 100). There is a school of thought that consists of those scholars thatfocus on the connection between natural resources and violent conflicts. The central assumptionof this school of thought, which to some extent contradicts the assumptions of the rentier statetheory, is that, resource dependent countries such as Nigeria are more likely to experienceinternal instability and violent conflict than non-resource countries. The scholars according toBagaji et al (2011) that belong to this school of thought of the resource curse debate include(Collier &Hoeffler, 2005; Billon, 2000 & De Soysa, 2002b).

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Another opinion by Adeyeri (2010) has it that the agitations by ethnic minority groups,particularly in the Niger Delta, over the allocation and control of oil revenue, compensation forenvironmental degradation arising from oil exploration, and political marginalization, appear tobe the greatest challenge to nation-building and national stability in Nigeria, in recent times. Oil,the mainstay of Nigeria's mono-cultural economy, has been a source of persistent discontent andturmoil since the colonial era. The real test of fiscal federalism and resource management couldbe traced to the return of democratic rule in October 1979 but with a lot of conflicts, litigationsand intense debates in the National Assembly with extensive lobbying and complicatedmanouvres land serious agitations for resource control (Orwari& Briggs, 2015, p. 164).

Adeyeri(2010) further observes that oil minority agitations assumed a very militant and violent characterfrom the early 1990s which ushered in the emergence of ethnic militias and the attendant violentprotestations against economic and political marginalization by the Federal government.Ndubuisi (2009) writing on the violent nature of the conflict over the agitation for resourcecontrol in the Niger Delta region states thus: "The oil delta region in Nigeria is seen as a theatreof violent conflicts which sees kidnapping of oil workers, illegal oil bunkering, vandalization ofoil pipe line and high level of militancy involving lots of small arms and light weapons" (p. 3).

The new wave of violence over resource control is traceable to Gen. Babangida and Gen Abacharegimes chronic intolerance for unfavourable public opinion; and the Odi massacre carried outby the Obasanjo civilian government in 2000. It must be emphasized that the character of theregimes, particularly those of Babangida and Abacha deepened the contradictions and crisis ofthe Nigerian federation, culminating in the rise of ethnic militias such as the Niger Delta PeoplesVolunteer Force (NDPVF), Niger Delta Vigilantes (NDV), Egbesu, Ijaw National Congress(INC), Urhobo National Union, Martyrs Brigade, Niger Delta Liberation Army (NDLA),Chikoko Movement, Coalition for Militant Action in the Niger Delta (COMA) and theMovement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) (Adeyeri, 2010). Osaghae et al

(2007)conclude that "Control for Niger-delta communities mean 'ownership and control' of allresources which signify the freedom to willingly dispose of these resources, to negotiate itsalienation or extraction without reference to a violent and or an undemocratic state."

Studieshave established a causal link between natural resource abundance and civil conflict. Collier andHoeffler (1998), for example, show that natural resource availability/abundance considerablyincreases the chances of civil conflict in a country. De Soysa (2000) observed a similarcorrelation between resource wealth and civil conflict; while Addison et al (2003) note that inAfrica as well as other developing regions countries with point resources such as minerals have ahigh propensity for conflict ranging from high levels of political violence to outright wars. Ross(2004b) provides similar evidence linking mineral resources in general to civil conflict. Fearonand Laitin (2003) and Fearon (2005) however argue that the risk of civil war is limited to oil.

Conclusion

Natural resources have played a conspicuous role in the history of armed conflicts. Fromover wild game to merchant capital and imperialist wars over precious minerals,natural resources have motivated or financed the violent activities of many different types ofbelligerents (Westing, 1986). Conflict can be motivated by the pattern of resource exploitation,or vice versa. What matters is how specific groups are able to use violence to secure control ofvaluable resources and translate this control into greater power. In either case, the perpetuation ofviolence – either in the form of war or coercion – will depend on the distribution of power acrosssociety and the level of consensus over that distribution. Natural resources can contribute to thelikelihood of armed conflicts as well as influence the duration, course and impact of the conflictupon populations (Billon, 2001a).

The emerging violent conflict in Anambra oil-Bearing Basin has added to the list conflicttheaters in Nigeria induced by natural resources especial, oil. The crisis can be resolved ifNigerian state can reflect on the negative experiences of Niger Delta region over the years. Thegovernment has to more proactive with political will and commitment to tackle the situation nowit has not escalated to youth militancy, illicit oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism and othernegative tendencies. One of the approaches to resolving the crisis is proper boundarydemarcation between the two states by the National Population Commission.

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