

OIL, INEQUALITY AND RESISTANCE IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF THE IJO PEOPLE OF THE NIGER DELTA REGION

Iti Orugbani

Department of History and Diplomacy, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island

orugbaniiti@yahoo.com

Cite this article:

Iti,Orugbani. (2025), Oil, Inequality, and Resistance in Nigeria: The Case of the Ijo People of the Niger Delta Region. International Journal of Humanities and Multidisciplinary Research, 3(1), 1-20.

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.19148.32648

Manuscript History

Received: 8 May2025 Accepted: 25 May2025 Published: 13 Jun 2025

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND4.0), which permits anyone to *share, use, reproduce an* redistribute in any medium, *provided the original author and source are credited*.

ABSTRACT

Oil exploration in Nigeria dates back to the early 20th century, with the Niger Delta emerging as the epicentre of petroleum production. Despite its vast contributions to Nigeria's economy, the region continues to grapple with environmental degradation, socio-economic marginalisation, and rising conflicts linked to resource control. This study examines the historical evolution of oil exploration in Nigeria, focusing on its impact on the Ijo people, one of the most affected ethnic groups in the oil-producing areas. The objective is to assess how oil exploitation has influenced economic development, governance policies, and local resistance movements in the Niger Delta. Using a qualitative research approach, this study relies on oral interviews, historical accounts, government policies, and existing literature to trace the trajectory of oil production, illegal oil bunkering, and the state's responses. Findings reveal that while oil has significantly boosted Nigeria's GDP and facilitated infrastructural development in some areas, the Ijo communities remain largely underdeveloped, facing high fuel costs, poor transportation networks, and environmental pollution. Moreover, the study highlights how economic exclusion and inadequate government intervention have fuelled illegal oil bunkering and artisanal refining (kpo-fire), despite military crackdowns and regulatory frameworks. The paper concludes that the persistent neglect of oil-producing communities has exacerbated economic inequality and security challenges in Nigeria. Addressing these issues requires a more inclusive governance structure, equitable resource distribution, and sustainable development policies tailored to the needs of the Niger Delta region. The study is significant in informing policy discussions on oil governance, economic justice, and conflict resolution in resource-rich but marginalised communities.

Keywords: Oil exploration, Niger Delta, Ijo communities, illegal bunkering, resource governance



INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's oil industry has played a crucial role in shaping the country's economic, political, and social landscape. Since the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantities at Oloibiri in presentday Bayelsa State in 1956 (Onor & Ityonzughul, 2024; Ojo & Beaulieu, 2024), petroleum has remained the backbone of Nigeria's economy, accounting for at least, 80% of the country's foreign earnings (Ebimobowei, 2022). However, despite the wealth generated from oil exploration and production, the Niger Delta region-home to the vast majority of Nigeria's oil reserves-continues to experience pervasive environmental degradation. economic marginalisation, and socio-political unrest (Siloko, 2024; Alaye, 2024). The paradox of resource wealth alongside persistent underdevelopment has fuelled a cycle of grievances, protests, and resistance, often manifesting in illegal oil-related activities such as crude oil theft and artisanal refining, especially among the Ijo people (Alozie, 2022; Gould, 2024). These activities, while economically beneficial to local actors, have severe implications for Nigeria's economy, environment, and security (Lasisi, 2023; Ekanem, Jackson & Munasuonyo, 2022).

The history of oil exploration in Nigeria dates back to the early 20th century, when the Nigeria Bitumen Company, a German firm, initiated exploratory drilling in Lagos State (Edo *eta al.*, 2024). However, large-scale oil exploration and production began with the arrival of Shell Petroleum Development Company in the 1930s (Ajebon, 2021). Over the years, Nigeria has witnessed a rapid expansion of its oil sector, with multinational corporations such as Mobil, Chevron, Agip, and Exxon joining the exploration and production of petroleum products (Thomas, 2021). The government, recognising the strategic importance of petroleum resources, established regulatory bodies such as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to oversee the sector and ensure state participation in oil production (Olujobi, *et al.*, 2024). By the 1970s, Nigeria had become a major oil-producing country, joined the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) (Usman, 2022), and significantly increased state control over the industry through nationalisation policies.

Despite the economic benefits of oil production, the Niger Delta—comprising oil-producing states such as Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, and Akwa Ibom—has faced significant challenges. Environmental degradation due to frequent oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation has adversely affected traditional livelihoods such as fishing and farming (Usiobaifo, Chidiebere, Olusola, Dada & Ukoje, 2023). Poor infrastructural development, unemployment, and political marginalisation have further contributed to widespread discontent among local communities (Agbonifo, 2022). In response to these socio-economic challenges, some groups have resorted to militancy, oil bunkering, and artisanal refining as alternative means of survival (Iniemiesi & Yokori, 2024). Illegal oil activities, particularly in Ijoland, have flourished due to economic desperation, weak regulatory enforcement, and the complex network of rivers and creeks that provide natural cover for illicit operations (Iniemiesi & Yokori, 2024).

Against this backdrop, this paper critically examines the historical development, economic significance, and socio-political implications of oil exploration and illegal oil-related activities in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Ijoland. It explores how the evolution of oil exploration, government policies, and local socio-economic conditions have shaped both legal and illegal activities within the petroleum sector. The study also evaluates the impact of crude oil theft, artisanal refining, and illegal bunkering on local communities, the environment, and national



security. Furthermore, it investigates government responses, including regulatory measures, security interventions, and amnesty programmes, to curb these activities.

Methodologically, this study adopts a historical approach. The research combines primary and secondary sources of data, integrating interview responses with relevant insight from academic literature, government reports, industry analyses, and policy documents, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues under investigation. From these sources, it details the historical overview of oil exploration in colonial Nigeria, post-colonial developments, challenges with petroleum products distribution in Ijoland, the origin and expansion of artisanal refining and oil theft, and the implications for the Niger Delta region and broader Nigerian state.

Historical Overview of Oil Exploration in Colonial Nigeria, 1908-1960

The Niger Delta region, which is synonymous with oil production, was not the first geographical region in Nigeria where oil exploration activities started. In fact, the first search for oil in the country actually took effect in 1908 in the present day Lagos state environment (Anyanwu, *et al.*, 1997). The pioneer company then, was a German company, named the Nigeria Bitumen Company. The company, due to lack of modern survey techniques, adopted the presence of surface hydrocarbon as a guide for exploration of crude oil (Siyeofori, 1978).

However, in spite of the crude system used in the search for the black gold, the company was able to drill fourteen (14) shallow oil wells in the vicinity of Lagos. Further operations by the Nigeria Bitumen Corporation Ltd. (NBCL) were stalled by the outbreak of the World War I in 1914 (Nnoli, 1986). In this war, Germany, the company's parent country and (Britain) Nigeria's colonial master fought against each other on the sides of the Axis and Allied powers, respectively. It should be noted that the end of the World War I consequently witnessed the end of the Nigeria Bitumen company's operations in Nigeria. However, the exit of the international oil corporation did not impede further oil exploration activities in the then British-ruled Nigeria. After the World War I, Shell Petroleum Development Company Limited, an oil exploration and production giant arrived in Nigeria. It was incorporated in Nigeria in 1936 and financed then by Royal Dutch-Shell Group of Companies and British Petroleum (BP) group on equal basis. The company started operations in the country in 1937 as Shell D' Arcy and changed its name to Shell-BP in 1956 (Shatzl, 1968).

Shell D' Arcy commenced its Nigerian operations when oil had not been discovered in any part of West Africa (Eleazu, 1985). The company's search for petroleum initially covered the whole country. As time went on, the company restricted its operations to 103, 600 square kilometers (40,000 miles) around the Niger Delta Basin. The early efforts of the company were rather fruitless and disappointing. Indeed, a great deal of perseverance and huge sum of expenditure were involved with no commensurate result until the outbreak of the World War II in 1939. As would be expected, the exploration efforts of the company were curtailed for six years as the Second World War lasted from 1939-1945. However, oil activities resumed in the country as soon as normalcy returned in 1946.

After thirteen years of searching for crude oil in Nigeria, Shell D' Arcy strove to drill the first exploration oil well in 1951 at Ihuo, North-West of Owerri; the depth was 3, 422 metres (11,228 feet) but oil was not found. In 1953, the company again drilled Akata-1 and found a meager quantity of oil which was not of commercial quantity. Consequently, due to the disappointing



results of the company's efforts, drilling of appraisal well was terminated in 1954 (Ayiga, 2003). But only a period of two years awaited shell 'D Arcy to make an indelible mark in the oil exploration history of Nigeria. In January 1956, the company made its successful discovery of oil in commercially viable quantity at Itokopiri, Otuogidi in the Olobiri group of Ogbia in the currently existing Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State (Okorobia, 2008). Towards the end of the year, another gainful discovery was made at Afam in Rivers State. Thus, a blissful future was set for the oil firm. The 1956 discovery also led to the change of the name Shell D' Arcy to Shell –BP.

Subsequently, in order to convey the crude oil to Port-Harcourt for further shipment to the international markets, pipelines were constructed from oil fields. On February 17, 1958, the first cargo of oil was shipped abroad when oil production increased from about 4,000 to 5100 barrels per day (Siyeofori, 1978). On the 8th day of March 1958, the Nigeria first crude oil exports of 8,500tons arrived at Rotterdam (Yirakina, 2010). By 1960, petroleum production rate had risen to about 17,000 barrels per day (Yirakina, 2010). But this was prior to the discovery of other oil wells such as Ekuleama in Ijoland and Afam, Bomu, Dere, Ebubu, Korokoro, Nonwa, Yorla in Ogoni area of Rivers state. With this development, the company constructed and commissioned its Bonny Terminal in April 1961, and by June 1961 shifted its base from Owerri to Port-Harcourt.

In addition to Shell D'Arcy, another oil giant, Mobil, came to Nigeria on August 6, 1954 as Socony Vacuum Oil Exploration Company (Nigeria) Limited, and was on November 15, 1955 granted an Oil Exploration Licence (OEL) covering 72, 1895 square kilometres in the former Northern Nigeria (Orugbani, 2010). This company later changed its name to Mobil Exploration Company Nigeria Limited on February 8, 1956 and was granted Oil Exploration Licence for 10,000 square kilometres of land in the then Western Region. Its serious involvement in the geophysical activities in both the defunct Northern and Western Regions were all fruitless. Hence, after seven years of unfruitfulness and expensive efforts by the company in the said regions, it finally abandoned the regions in 1958 and 1961, respectively (Aleazu, 1985).

Post-Independence Developments in the Oil Industry

With the attainment of independence in 1960, Shell-BP surrendered to the federal government of Nigeria 61, 833 square kilometres of the company's oil prospecting licence. This move created opportunity for other oil multinational corporations to operate in the country. Besides, since Nigeria has gained independence, she was now having the latitude to freely permit companies other than Britain and USA origin to operate in the country. Consequently, within five years of Nigeria's independence, no less than nine international petroleum exploration companies were granted licences in the country. In 1962, the federal government granted offshore licenses to Gulf Oil (now Cheveron); Amosea (later Texaco Oversea Unlimited); Mobil Oil and on-shore licences to Esso West Africa, Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC); Gulf oil; Safrap (which later changed its name to Elf and now Total); and Tennessee Nigeria incorporated (later Tenneco) mainly out of the surrendered Shell-BP areas. An oil prospecting licence (OPL29) covering about 4,196 square kilometers was granted to Shell-BP and three to Gulf Oil Company. The OPL 34 granted to the Nigeria Agip Oil Company Limited (NAOC) in 1962 was unique. The licence was subjected to an option in favour of the government to purchase thirty per cent of the share



capital of the company if and when it discovered oil in commercial quantity. This was the initial period the federal government had began participating interest in the oil companies.

In 1965, ESSO Exploration Company was granted two oil prospecting licences on land. In addition, Philip Oil Nigeria Limited (Philips) was also granted four oil prospecting licences on land covering parts of OPL 33 relinquished by Tenneco (Aleazu, 1985). These new licences, no doubt, increased petroleum exploration business in Nigeria because between 1962 and 1965 there were intensive and detailed exploration activities, resulting in the discovery of new oil fields and development of these newly discovered fields. The production rate thus rose from 47,000 barrels per day in 1961 to 350,000 barrels per day (bpd) by the end of 1965 and a very bright future for the petroleum industry was in the offing.

1966 was not a memorable year for Nigeria. The year witnessed two coups and intense infractions, leading to the outbreak of a civil war which eventually broke out in 1967. As could be expected, exploration operations inevitably declined in 1967 following the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war. Since the main theater of the war was in the oil producing areas of the then Eastern Region, the disturbances eventuated in cessation of oil activities in the affected areas. However, in spite of the war, more concessions were granted to Union oil of California and Great Basis Petroleum (Nigeria) Limited in 1967. Delta oil Nigeria was also granted OPL 51 on 15th January, 1968. Also, the operations of some companies such as Gulf were not truncated by the war.

Although the Nigerian civil war ended in January 1970, and was immediately followed by the reconstruction of damaged oil facilities, a dramatic upsurge of oil production reaching 1,000,000 barrels per day by April 1970 was realized (Ododo, 1981). Immediately after the war, the Nigeria government advertised bidding for open off-shore acreages between 26th February and 18th March 1970, comprising 27 OPLs. Only 15 were offered to various Nigerian oil resources, the remaining 12 were reserved for the then proposed Nigeria Oil Company (which was the Nigerian National Oil Corporation established in 1971). The year 1970 also witnessed the beginning of production by three other companies, namely, Mobil on 15th January 1970, Texaco on 1st March 1970, and Agip in December 1970 (Oguntonye, 2021). In 1971, new on-shore and off-shore concessions were granted to some companies such as Japan Petroleum Company, Occidental Petroleum Corporation, Henry Stephens and Deminex Oil. However, some of the then existing companies have since relinquished their concessions despite some more discoveries.

In Ijoland, the Ekulema oil field was the first oil field discovered. This oil field was discovered in the very year Nigeria made the first shipment abroad following discovery of oil in commercially viable quantity at Otuabagi in Olobiri area of the present Bayelsa State. Since then, many other oil fields have been discovered not only by the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) but other oil companies in the Ijo territories. Going by the information sourced from the 2009 NNPC Draft Annual Statistical Bulletin, 15 oil exploration and exploitation companies are operational in Nigeria with a total number of 245 producing oil fields in the oil producing states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers It should be indicated here that among the aforementioned nine (9) oil producing states, only the four cartographical Niger Delta states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, 2017).



Table 1: Oil Companies and Numbers of Producing Oil Fields in Nigeria as of 2011

S/NO	OIL COMPANY	NO.OF PRODUCING OIL FIELDS
1	SPDC	80
2	MOBIL	26
3	CHEVRON	40
4	TOTAL	17
5	NAOC	38
6	PAN OCEAN	6
7	ADDAX	19
8	ESSO	1
9	NAE	2
10	SNEPCO	1
11	AENR	1
12	NPDC	11
13	DUBRI	1
14	WALTESMITH	1
15	BRITTANIA-U	1

Source: NNPC 2011 Draft Annual Statistical Bulletin, Pp.5-16.

S/N	COMPANY NAME	OIL FIELD	QTY OF OIL	QTY OF GAS
1.	SPDC	AGBAYA	52,314.64	74,934.44
2.		AKONO	23,522.45	7,901.82
3.		AKASO	2,425,656.81	2,179,494.78
4.		ALAKIRI	358,583.08	4,360,654.71
5.		AWOBA N/WEST	1,501,251.43	1,152,900.17
6.		AWOBA	4,169,085.80	5,794,973.40
7.		BELEMA	4,799,336.68	2,899,426.07
8.		BELEMA NORTH	-	-
9.		BENISEDE	5,760,115.22	3,369,722.27
10.		BONNY	832,969.50	89,006,804.96
11.		BONNY NORTH	1,113,574.46	1,082,882.56
12.		CAWTHRONE	8,007,929.05	7,881,383.05
		CHANNEL		
13.		DIEBU CREEK	1,959,472.10	3,189,599.50
14.		EKULAMA	3,845,109.33	2,494,920.59
15.		ETELEBOU	949,414.07	1,281,405.43
16.		NEMBE CREEK EAST	32,967.05	214,055.24
17.		NEMBE CREEK	12,170,582.93	10,323,859.17
18.		NUN RIVER	1,282,502.66	1,561,783.00
19.		ODEAMA CREEK	-	-
20.		OGBOTOBO	-	-
21.		OPKUSHI NORTH	1,606,403.16	979,368.47
22.		OPUAMA	-	-
23.		OPUKUSHI	3,481,359.25	2,105,435.85

Table 2: Oil Companies and Oil Fields in Ijoland as at 2011



S/N	COMPANY NAME	OIL FIELD	QTY OF OIL	QTY OF GAS	
24.		ORUBIRI	-	-	
25.		SANTA BARBARA	-	-	
26.		SANTA BARBARA			
		SOUTH			
27.		SEIBOU	522,893.11	-	
28.		SOKU	2,549,296.69	165,894,258.02	
29.		TUNU	1,987,569.30	2,234,618.93	
30.	NAOC	AZUZUAMA	367,827.00	2,176,046.82	
31.		BENIBOYE	935,643.00	603,011.00	
32.		OBAMA	1,248,084.00	5,969,108.49	
33.		OGBAINBIRI	4,089,146.00	2,054,395.68	
34.		PIRIGBENE	39,542.00	232,147.50	
35.		PRIGBENE S.E	109,742.00	533,998.89	
36.		SAMABIRI EAST	1,991,853.00	6,072,668.05	
37.		TAYLOR CREEK	215,775.00	0 5,831,530.17	
38.		TEBIDABA	1,759,215	1,162,693.18	
39.	CHEVRON	NORTH APOI	1,121,023	2,651,617.00	
40.		SENGANA	-	-	
41.		DELTA South	3,742,840.00	1,363,9376.00	
42.		OPUEKEBA	1,397,999.00	1,949,9611.00	
43.		ROBRTKIRI	2,646,859.00	3,172,569.00	
44.		IDAMA	1,633,158.00	2,444,123.00	
45.		BELEMA UNIT	289,694.00	14,669.00	
46.		PENNIGTON	181662	136,010.00	
47.		MIDDLETON	419,317	0.00	

Source: NNPC 2011 Draft Annual Statistical Bulletin, Pp.5-12.

These are just the producing oil fields as of 2011. There are numerous oil fields discovered in Ijoland that are not either producing or abandoned. However, rough statistical investigation shows that Ijoland contributes more than 20 per cent of the total oil production in Nigeria following available from the NNPC 2011 Draft Annual Statistical Bulletin. This is a contribution any single ethnic group can hardly offer in the country presently. Oil exploitation in Ijo areas contributed to making Nigeria to be eligible for OPEC membership.

Nigeria joined the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC) in June 1971 at a time when member countries were consolidating oil polices in their respective states with a view to exercising greater control in the exploration of their hydrocarbon resource (Akpan, 1997). The federal government made several moves to fully participate in the oil industry. A dissemble action adopted to improve the upstream sector was the signing of operating agreement. The federal government represented by the NNPC entered into Joint Venture Agreement with the multinational oil companies.

Government participation in all phases of the oil industry began in 1971 with the promulgation of Degree N0. 18 1971, establishing the Nigerian National Oil Corporation (NNOC). There was



also in existence the Ministry of Petroleum Resources operating concurrently with the NNOC, but its functions were mainly regulatory and did not involve any participation in oil exploration and production. However, in 1977 in order to create a more virile oil agency and to make the best of the scarce qualified human and infrastructural resources at the government's disposal, the NNOC and the Ministry of Petroleum Resources were merged to form the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) by Decree 33.

The functions of NNPC compulsorily combined the commercial objectives of the NNOC which included exploration, transportation, refining, processing of oil, marketing of crude oil and products as well as research and the regulatory function of the former Ministry of Petroleum Resources. The regulatory functions today are being performed by an independent arm of NNPC called the Petroleum Directorate.

In 1977 when NNPC was established, the country started to acquire majority participating interest in all the oil producing companies in the country. Between January 1978 and July 1979, government increased its participation in the oil exploration and production companies to 60%. And in August 1979, in a political move against the British government, the federal government nationalized all British Petroleum (BP) interests in Shell-BP, thus increasing government participation interest in Shell to 80% (Eleazu, 1985).

NAME OF	GOVERNMENT'S	DATE	NO. OF	PROD.BPD
COMPANY	PARTICIPATION		OMLS/OPL S	
	INTEREST %			
ELF	35	1 APRIL, 1971	4	40,000
	35	1974	4	85,000
	60	1 JULY, 1979	4	78,000
AGIP/PHILIPS	331/3	1971	4	30,000
	55	1974	4	125,000
	60	1979	4	230,000
SHELL-BP	35	1 APRIL, 1973	58	1,240,000
	55	1974	58	1,380,000
	60	1979	58	1,360,000
SHELL	80	1 AUG. 1979	58	1,360,000
GULF	35	1 APRIL 1973	10	368,000
	55	1 APRIL 1974	16	390,000
	60	1 JULY 1979	16	380,000
MOBIL	35	1 APRIL 1973	4	210,000
	55	1 APRIL 1974	4	245,000
	60	1 JULY 1979	4	380,000
TEXACO	55	1 MAY 1975	6	10,000
	60	1 JULY 1979	6	56,000
PAN OCEAN	55	1 JULY 1978	1	10,000
	60	1 JULY 1979	1	10,000

 Table 3: Government's Percentage of Shares in some of the Major Oil Companies

 Operating in the Country.

Source: Uma Eleazu (ed) Nigeria the first 25 years, Ibadan: Heinemann, 1985, p. 208.

Challenges with Petroleum Product Distribution in Ijo Land



Petroleum variously known as oil or crude oil occurs naturally beneath the earth. When extracted and subjected to refining process through fractional distillation, it gives rise to a variety of petroleum products. Five main stages are undergone in the oil industry to reach at the various refined petroleum derivatives. A synopsis of these stages may be instructive here. First, exploring stage. This is the initial level of oil production where seismic operations are carried out by geophysical firms. This stage usually provides massive casual labours for the youths of the host communities. The workers are carefully grouped to man different departments such as survey (frontiers), drillers, layers, shooters, line checkers, etc. by the seismic companies for proper operations. The exploring phase would be followed by the drilling stage. Under this second stage, oil wells which have been discovered during seismic operations in the first stage are drilled. Oil rigs are contracted to drill and build oil well heads at various locations. The drilling phase is immediately followed by the production stage. The production process covers the construction and installation of flow stations and the connection of oil well heads to the flow station. The production of the crude oil through the flow station requires another stage, which is the fourth and transportation. That is, pipelines are constructed and laid from production sites (flow station) to oil terminals. The fifth and final phase that produces a variety of petroleum products is the refining stage. In this stage, at a refinery, crude oil is heated, distill and separated through fractional distillation into fractions such as natural gas, gasoline naphtha, kerosene, diesel, fuel and lubricating oils, paraffin wax, and asphalt. Oil is also used as raw material for a wide range of derivative products.

There are six petroleum exporting terminals in the Niger Delta. Shell has two which are the Bonny (Ijo) and the Forcados Terminals in Rivers and Delta States, respectively. Meanwhile, Mobil operates the Qua Iboe Terminal in Akwa Ibom State; Cheveron has the Escravos Terminal located in Delta State; Taxaco operates the Pennington Terminal also in Delta State. In Bayelsa State, the only constructed terminal is owned by the Nigerian Agip Oil Company at Brass (Ijo) which is known as the Brass Terminal. Through these major terminals and other offshore platforms oil is shipped abroad from the country. But oil and its derivatives are also needed for industrial and other uses within the country. In the Down Stream sector, the country has four refineries to produce petroleum products for local use. These include the two Port Harcourt Refineries (old and new) in Rivers State, the Warri Refinery and Petrochemical Plant, and the defunct Kaduna Refinery. These refineries rarely stay in good functional conditions. In recent times, the country was mostly dependent on imported petroleum products for local uses.

In the Nigeria Delta region, the Ijo mostly occupy the swampy and rivers dominated areas. This means most of the Ijo communities are not linked to their various state capitals by road. Unlike the other ethnic groups in the Niger Delta such as Ikwere, Engene, Ishan, etc. which are located in upland areas and easily linked to the state capitals by road, the Ijo are separated by numerous wetlands and rivers. This explains why transportation of goods and people in the area is basically by water. Most littoral communities such as Odioama have a very bleak future of even dreaming to have road linkage with urban centres. Apart from the traditional canoe and paddle system, boats mounted with petrol or diesel consuming engines serve a greater part of the transport sector. The few community/private generating plants and machine-saws also require the use of petrol and diesel. Kerosene consumption in Ijoland is also high. Especially in the semi-urban towns which are not linked to the state capitals, kerosene is largely habitually consumed.



None of the 5 state capitals of the Ijo home states is situated on Ijoland. It is also true to state that as at 2011 not more than 9% of the Ijo oil producing communities was directly linked to the their state capitals by road. This shows the reason why petroleum products, which are derived from the crude oil found in the Ijo territories, are ironically higher in prices in Ijo territories than the regulated prices. The higher prices of petroleum products in Ijoland are due to the distance, medium of transportation and the risk involved in the transportation of products. Nembe is a quintessential oil bearing community and should serve an example here. In the year 2000 the pump price of a litre of PMS (petrol) was twenty two naira (N22.00k), that is, the cost price of a 20-litre jerrican was four hundred and forty naira (N440.00) but in Nembe, the same 20-litre jerrican of fuel was sold at the rate of six hundred and fifty naira (N650.00) (KII/Male/Trader/2015).

Before 1973, petroleum products pricing was not uniform in Nigeria. The retail prices of petroleum products were dependent on the point of sale, relative to the only primary distribution depot then at the Shell-BP Refinery Alesa Eleme, near Okirika, near Port-Harcourt, Rivers state (Kombo, 2003). In October, 1973, the Gowon administration decreed uniform pricing of refined petroleum products for the Nigerian market. Subsequently, the Petroleum Equalization Fund (PEF) Decree N0 9 of 1975 was promulgated. It provided for the uniform pricing of all petroleum products throughout Nigeria, irrespective of distance from point of production. The board of the PEF retained all surplus revenue from the sale of petroleum products, reimbursed marketers for losses incurred because of uniform pricing, and recovered the difference between the landed cost of imported petroleum products and the regulated price in Nigeria (Kombo, 2003). The country was divided into twenty-six (26) zones, with each zone assigned an applicable price differential that could be claimed from the PEF, depending on delivery distance from point of supply. Paradoxically, the scope of PEF reimbursements did not include claims from Ijo oil producing areas of the country since emphasis was on distance covered by tanker trucks. Obviously, the terrain of the Ijo oil endowed areas of Nigeria is swampy or difficult to service by road.

Most of the Ijo communities are by location comparably closer to the refineries in Port-Harcourt and Warri but yet get the refined products at higher prices. However, the deregulation of the downstream sector has brought another bulk game into the system of refined petroleum products pricing in the country. The major sources of supply of refined petroleum products to Ijoland are Port-Harcourt, Rivers State; Warri, Delta state; and Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. As has been indicated earlier, petrol, kerosene and diesel are the most needed petroleum products in Ijoland. These products are purchased in the urban centres and conveyed through mostly in a river network system to the real oil producing communities with higher prices. For instance, Nembe's major source of supply of refined crude oil products was Port Harcourt, Rivers state. Though, recently, Ogbia-Town in Bayelsa State has increasingly played a delivery point of petroleum products to Nembe too. Dealers usually travel to Port-Harcourt to purchase the products from customers at Nembe waterside or directly from filling stations as the case maybe. At Nembe waterside, fuel would be loaded on the local passenger boats. These boats normally spent about 8-10 hours from Port-Harcourt to Nembe. In the case of Akasa it required about 19 hours driving. Transportation charges are based on litres. In 1999, a 25 litre jerrican was charged for fifty to seventy naira by Nembe fated transport boat; and hundred naira by Akasa bound passenger local boats. By the year 2000, the same quantity was charged a hundred naira



(N100.00) and one hundred and fifty naira, respectively (KII/Male/Twon Brass/2015). Loading of the petroleum products at Nembe waterside in Port-Harcourt and offloading at the various destinations also incurred extra monetary charges. This explains why prices of petroleum products are always higher in Ijoland than approved pump prices.

The Ijo people in their home communities hardly buy petroleum products from the conventional filling stations because filling stations are not constructed where there is no serviceable road. In that case, many of the Ijo oil producing communities are unable to buy petroleum products with the normal market price. In the case of kerosene, almost every petty trader is a dealer in the products. This is due to the high demand. Kerosene is sold inside and outside shops. It is also sold in the streets and along the roads. Meanwhile, petrol, because of its inflammability is kept away from residential areas. Dealers usually construct small houses to store the product for sale. These houses are constructed at the waterfront of dealers' choice and linked to the ground with wooden bridges. Sometimes, wooden jetties are made to serve the same purpose. These places they sell the products serve as the filling stations. This is what obtainable in about 90% of Ijo oil producing communities.





Plate 1: Local Petrol Filling Stations in Ijo.

The demand for diesel in Ijo territories is considerably low compared to the petrol and kerosene demand. The supply of diesel to the Ijo oil host communities is mostly made by the oil companies on contract. Oil multinational companies as a matter of corporate social responsibility usually donate generating plants to host communities which they also fulfill the diesel requirement (Oral Interview/Male/Generator Operator/Nembe, 2014). Usually, petroleum products are distributed to Ijoland from the depot through a number of channels. However, nowadays, petrol, kerosene and diesel have been also alternatively illegally sourced in Ijoland. From crude oil which they criminally get by tempering the pipelines, the three petroleum products are refined crudely. The illegitimate production, buying and selling of these petroleum derivatives and/or theft of crude oil is locally called oil bunkering.

Origin and Expansion of Artisanal Refining and Oil Theft

The Ijo territory has been playing host to both international and local trade since the 16th century. The trans-Atlantic slave trade and the subsequent so-called legitimate trade in which the Ijo city



states of the Niger Delta played a significant role had come and gone. In recent times, new forms of syndicated criminal proclivity have emerged and threatening the very foundation of Nigeria's petroleum industry, and by extension, the Nigerian economy. The problem is the "illegal bunkering" of crude oil and / or its derivatives.



Plate 3: Cotonu boat conveying illegally sourced petroleum product, diesel.

The term 'bunkering' (whether legal or illegal) has been so thoroughly abused and misused in Nigerian parlance, that the mere mention of it readily evokes subliminal suggestions of grand illegality in the Nigerian paradigm. For example, when petroleum pipelines get cannibalised, the Nigerian mind very effortlessly visualizes "illegal bunkering' in progress. When shiploads of crude oil (from refineries) get stolen, and are routinely sold off as Low-Pour Fuel Oil (LPFO) - a relatively cheaper commodity in the international oil markets - Nigerians simply conceive in their mind that 'illegal bunkering' has definitely taken place. While in the Nigerian world-view, "bunkering" is synonymous with stealing of crude oil or other petroleum derivatives, in Oxford English, bunkering is a legitimate process whereby a duly licenced operator provides fuels, water and lubricants (bunkering services) for marine vessels on request (Orugbani, 2010). Simply put, 'bunkering' is the fueling of ships. It is like having a floating fuel service station on the high seas, or at coastal jetties, or/and supply provisions for ships (Kombo, 2003).

The theft of crude oil or its derivatives, as illegal oil bunkering has been a celebrated lucrative business in Ijoland. This business was not too pronounced until 2000/2001, when, a petroleum derivative locally called *condisent* (condensate) was discovered by Ijo youths in the Oluasiri-Soku area of Bayelsa and River States within the vicinity of the Soku Gas Plant. They tagged the business *condisent*. In this business, strategic areas of pipe-lines linking the Soku Gas Plant were secretly bored, fixed with hose, and the petroleum derivate (condensate) tapped for loading and sale (KII/Businessman/Nembe-Bassambiri/2011). They called these areas loading points, and about fifteen of such points existed in the eastern Niger Delta. The Oluasiri area was the main centre of the *condisent* business in Ijoland; and these loading points were owned individually. They sold the product to whole buyers from near and far. The product, 'condensate,' was used both as kerosene and petrol. When the liquid was exposed to sun for about three to four days, it



changed to kerosene. While in its raw state, it could be used as petrol to service the transport industry, electric generators and other petrol consuming engines (KII/Businessman/Nembe-Bassambiri/2011).

Between 2003 and 2009, selling and buying of 'condensate' had been the most lucrative business in this part of the Niger Delta area. It was a major source of livelihood to a great number of young people. The involvement of many youths in this business reduced cases of crude oil pipeline vandalism in the Ijo communities that were engaged in it. Because of the product's inflammability, it usually claimed the lives of youths at the slightest accidental fire incidence. However, the condensate business continued until certain strategies were put in place by the multinational oil corporations and the federal government. The deployment of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) though obstructed the business, but the business could not have been stopped left with the JTF alone. This is because the men of the JTF became serious partners in the business. They had specific charges on every grade of loading boats. So the JTF intimidated with the power of their riffles mostly when someone did not comply with the payment of their commissions. Sometimes, surveillance contractors who were paid to guard oil facilities acted as agent of the JTF to liaise with men of the illicit oil bunkering. The business however came to a halt when the management of the Soku Gas Plant technically stopped the flow of the petroleum product in the pipelines. Later, SPDC which owns the Soku Gas Plant re-excavated the pipelines and buried the pipes so deep in the ground in order to prevent easy tampering by vandals.

Consequently, the stoppage of the condensate illegal business aggravated another form of illicit oil bunkering in Ijoland. A more capital intensive oil theft came to the fore. This was/ is crude oil theft. In this particular one, crude oil pipelines are bored by local experts for the siphoning of the crude oil. Ships were usually stationed at the Nigerian shores of the Atlantic Ocean for loading of the crude oil. Smaller vessels were loaded with crude oil at the various loading points onshore and then conveyed the oil to the ships. This was the big-time money-making venture which almost all the militants engaged in. It was the form of illegal oil bunkering that seriously existed throughout the militancy era till the declaration of amnesty.

However, at the declaration of the federal government amnesty and the acceptance of it by the militants, the engagement of the Ijo youths in crude oil theft for sale abroad was subsequently reduced. But another reason for oil theft emerged. This time crude oil would be stolen and refined crudely by the youths of local Ijo communities. This illegal artisanal refinery business is locally called *kpo-fire* in various Ijo communities; and was mostly done by non-militant Ijo youths who did not benefit from the amnesty programme. Just as the process of stealing crude oil for sale goes beyond the shores of this country, crude oil is loaded from various criminally bored points and conveyed to local refining centres where they set some constructed pots and other materials. Technically, crude oil is poured into metal trough and subjected to intense heat by fire beneath the pot. The resultant products are usually diesel, petrol and kerosene which are then exposed for private or commercial purposes.





Plate 3 Youths Busy at Artisanal Refineries in Ijoland.

This crude alternative measure of refining petroleum products has become a major occupation of Ijo youths, especially the formerly law-abiding youths who do not enjoy the federal government granted amnesty on the Niger Delta militants. They hold that their fellow youths (the exmilitants) are receiving monthly stipend from the federal government and so use the 'crude refinery' opportunity to claim their own share of the revenue from oil which is produced beneath their soil. And so, they tenaciously engage in the oil stealing occupation.

Generally, the federal government for some 38 years, reeled seemingly punitive decrees, all centered on the theft of crude oil and or petroleum products. For example, the Petroleum Production and Distribution (Anti-Sabotage) decree (1975). Under this decree, it is an offence, punishable by death or 21 years imprisonment, to sabotage, disrupt, or even interfere with the smooth distribution of petroleum products in Nigeria. The Trade Disputes (Essential Service) decree (1976) empowers the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to proscribe any trade union that is involved in acts that either disrupt the smooth running of any essential service or cause industrial unrest in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Violators risk up to five years imprisonment (Kombo, 2003).

Another step by government to fight theft of petroleum and its products was the enactment of the Special Tribunal (Miscellaneous Offences) decree No. 20 (1984), the most draconian of all decrees against 'illegal bunkering'. This decree is the brainchild of General Mohammadu Buhari's administration, while he was the military Head of State some 30 years ago. Decree No. 20 (1984) prescribes very stiff penalties, including death by firing squad, revocation of licences, and forfeiture of both fixed and movable assets, for offences committed against the milder provisions of the Petroleum Decree of 1969, promulgated earlier by the military junta of General Yakubu Gowon. The scope of decree No. 20 (1984) covers willful or malicious obstruction, damage, destruction, tampering, or interference with the free flow of crude oil and/or refined petroleum products.



Apart from the decrees and laws, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) through the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) has exerted some efforts to combating the obstruction of the free operation of the Nigeria's oil industry. The DPR keeps and updates records of all Nigeria's oil industry operations, particular for petroleum reserves, export of crude oil and refined products, licences and leases. It advises the government on policies that impact on the administration, control and compliance with relevant petroleum laws and regulations. The regulations are issued as guidelines, circulars, and standards to the industry. The DPR also has regional offices across the country and maintains an office in each of the state-owned refineries and deports.

The JTF and the Nigerian navy have been the federal security agents being deployed to the creeks of the Niger Delta to forcefully bring to an end oil theft and artisanal refineries centres. However, the presence of the JTF in the creeks has not actually stamped out oil theft. This is not to say that the men of the security forces are weak. They do destroy illegal oil bunkering materials and arrest actors. For example, in the year 2012, the Nigerian navy claimed to have destroyed 7, 378 illegal refineries and 908 deep canoes (cotonu boats) in six months (Iniabasi, 2013). Despite the continued concerted effort at fighting illegal oil bunkering and/or oil theft in the Niger Delta, the business of oil stealing seems to be resilient and undying.



Plate 4: JTF in Operation Destroying Illegal Refinery.

But this has been made possible by among other things two major factors. First, the security forces in most cases habitually connive with local actors in the business to uphold some pecuniary interest. Second, the intricate and zigzag nature of the creeks, rivers, and seas make surveillance by security personnel difficult to effectively monitor oil theft. Upon the strict measures taken by the federal government to maintain a free operation of the oil industry, illegal bunkering (theft of petroleum products) persists with so much negative effect on the economy and people of the country.

Implications for the Region and the Broader Nigerian State

Nigeria is the highest oil producing country in Africa, sixth in OPEC, and eleventh in the world (Enemugwem, 2010). The country is also the seventh in gas reserve/production in the world. Nigeria has a capacity to produce about 2.5 million barrels per day with proven recoverable



reserves of over 33 billion of crude oil (Moses, 2006). Over 95% of the country's foreign earnings come from oil. However, the clandestine business of illegal bunkering has gone increasingly out of control and consequently affected the national economy. The country in 2005 lost as much as N10.75 billion every month to criminal syndicates of crude oil and petroleum products thieves operating actively in the swamps of the Niger Delta. In recent times, observers have said that between 180,000 to 200,000 barrels of crude oil, an equivalent of Gabon's oil production, amounting to over \$120 million is stolen daily in Nigeria (Chinedu, 2013).

Illegal bunkering has also discouraged the free operations of the oil companies in the country. Those areas serving as the nerve centres of illegal oil bunkering used to be protected by the dealers for safe perpetration of the act. Thus, the free operations of companies in those terrains have never been easy. The frequent vandalism of oil pipelines for the purpose of drawing oil from the pipelines has never created good conditions for the operations of the oil company. Apart from the huge amount of funds required for repairs of damaged pipelines, the flow of oil in such areas is in most cases necessarily halted during the repair work. Many a time, flow stations within damaged pipes area have to be put off before rehabilitation of vandalized pipeline take effect.

In recent times, illegal oil bunkering has become a foremost source of oil pollution and caused a lot of environmental havoc in the areas where it is perpetrated in Ijoland. With their local knowledge about the danger of environmental pollution, the illegal oil workers are usually very careless in the handling of materials which they use to siphon stolen oil. In the process, crude oil is carelessly allowed to pour with no concern. The illicit oil refining camps are also a medium of polluting the immediate environment. These areas where the artisanal refineries are sited, and the refining activities take place undergo severe environmental degradation. This is caused by mostly the careless pouring of crude oil and /or the products. The heat generated by the fire for the refineries also usually harmfully affects the surrounding vegetation.



Plate 5: A Deserted Artisanal Refinery Camp. A Source of Environmental Disaster.

Occasionally, apart from environmental pollution occasioned by uncontrolled discharge of crude oil and/or petroleum products on the environment, people usually lose their lives and property during illegal oil bunkering in Ijoland. In the Oluasiri-Soku zone where there was a field day for illegal bunkering as at 2003 to 2007, informants were unanimous that on the average a total of about 90 persons met their tragic deaths due to fire incidents emanating during or after loading of



fuel every year (KII/Businessman/Ikensi, 2015). Most victims that were able to escape death during such fire incidents sometimes suffered severe burns.

Another veritable impact of illegal bunkering is the wide range of crises that befall the illegal business area. These crises, among other things, are usually caused by groups' ambition for the control of trade routes of the petroleum products. In the process, several militant groups or irate parties usually emerge and fight against one another for supremacy. During such crises some people as could be expected sustain injuries while others lose their lives. In 2009 there were series of crises between militant groups in the Kalabari/Nembe borders. For example, the De Bull and Okisi camps fought each other two consecutive times over the control of the Campala area. In the first clash the De Bull camp lost one person, while during the second clash the Okisi Camp was defeated and the site was utterly destroyed (KII/Ex-militant/Yenagoa, 2015).

Prior to the granting of amnesty to the militants, when an illegal oil bunkering route or territory was under the control of a particular group, certain benefits were accruable. Among other things, those that involved in the bunkering business were compelled to pay some money to the boys controlling the territory. These boys also had free access to loading points, where oil was being siphoned from the pipelines (KII/Ex-militant/Yenagoa, 2015). The quest for control of bunkering territories also led to militancy in the Ijo environment. In order to control the place, arms and ammunitions were possessed by the boys to terrorize the area and show their control of the terrain. With the guns they exerted authority on the territory by intimidating and extorting money from the armless actors in the oil stealing, buying and selling activities on the rivers. Also by possessing arms, the terrorizing youths could repel or resist the excessive destructive and intimidating tendencies of the JTF on the rivers (KII/Ex-militant/Yenagoa, 2015).

Illegal bunkering has contributed to educational backwardness of oil communities within bunkering zones. The oil thieves usually make huge money in oil theft business as quickly as possible. This serves as a disincentive for the youths to consider education as a necessity. The matter is exacerbated by the fact that some of the few educated youths are also usually interested in the illegal oil trade because of unemployment, an experience which created apathy towards attaining education (KII/Ex-militant/Sabatoru/2014). Youths who have endeavored to pass through the secondary school career, hardly struggle for higher education. This is also one of the factors that have contributed to the stunted growth of education in Ijoland. However, to encourage the youths to attain education, Bayelsa state being one of the worst affected states, has been promptly paying students bursaries and awarding both overseas and local scholarships to indigenes. But bunkering, no doubt, has also helped some parents in training their children in school.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is important to note that oil activities in Nigeria began during the colonial era. And since the discovery of oil in commercially profitably quantity at the Olobiri oil field in 1956, the cartographical Niger Delta has remained the major source of crude oil in Nigeria. The landmark discovery of the Ekuleama oil field in 1958 by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) brought Ijoland into the scene of oil production in the Niger Delta. Since then SPDC and other oil companies have discovered several oil fields in Ijo territories. Three major oil exploration and producing companies namely SPDC, NAOC and Cheveron are operational in



Ijo areas, which make Ijoland in the Niger Delta to remain the single ethnic group that produces the highest quantity of oil in Nigeria. As of 2011, Ijoland across the five states had more than 50 out of the 245 producing oil fields in the political Niger Delta.

The spatial location of the various Ijo oil producing communities is said to have proved difficult the supply of the refined petroleum products to Ijo communities. This causes the oil producing Ijo communities at every given time to get the refined petroleum products at a price always higher than the regulated prices. Also, however, the deltaic terrain of the Ijo oil producing areas encourages an oil stealing occupation. Illegal oil bunkering and artisanal refining of crude oil are increasingly becoming major sources of occupation in Ijoland. However, the process of stealing, transporting and crudely refining the oil has caused a lot of environmental issues than the activities of the oil companies themselves these days. Oil exploration and exploitation activities have a lot of effects on an oil producing environment. But these impacts could be positive as well as negative.

References

- Agbonifo, P. E. (2022). Socio-economic implications of poor environmental management: a framework on the Niger Delta questions. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 24(2), 2453-2470.
- Ajebon, H. C. (2021). Oil, Conflict and Everyday Security in Post-Amnesty Niger Delta, Nigeria (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University).
- Akpan, L. (1997). The role of petroleum profit tax in the fiscal policies of selected OPEC countries with particular reference to Nigeria, 1960–1967. *Ibom Journal of History, 3 & 4*, 133–14.
- Alaye, A. (2024). Oil Politics and Governance: Emerging Socio-Economic Trends in Nigerian States. *Acta Universitatis Danubius. Juridica*, 20(3), 126-145.
- Albinus, C. (2013, February 13–17). Dealing with oil theft in Nigeria. Niger Delta Herald Newspaper, p. 10.
- Alozie, M. T. (2022). The left behind: oil, youth and symbolic violence in the Niger delta. Journal of Youth Studies, 25(9), 1165-1181.
- Anyanwu, J. C., et al. (1997). *The structure of the Nigerian economy (1960–1977)*. Onitsha: Janance Educational Publishers Ltd.
- Ayiga, B. (2003). Old Brass Local Government Areas in the oil politics of Nigeria, 1956–1996 (Master's thesis, University of Port Harcourt).
- Dudafa, U. J. (2017). Niger Delta crisis and the challenges of development in the region. International Journal of Scientific Research in Education, 10(2), 228–245.



- Ebimobowei, A. (2022). Oil revenue and economic growth of Nigeria: 1990–2019. African Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, 5(1), 17-46.
- Edo, G. I., Samuel, P. O., Jikah, A. N., Ekokotu, H. A., Ugbune, U., Oghroro, E. E. A., ... & Owheruo, J. O. (2024). Petroleum discovery, utilization and processing in the World and Nigeria: a comprehensive literature review. *Sustainable Chemical Engineering*, 191-215.
- Ekanem, I., Jackson, T., & Munasuonyo, A. (2022). The effect of militancy on local and informal enterprises in developing countries: Evidence from Niger Delta. In *Entrepreneurship and the Informal Sector* (pp. 92-109). Routledge.
- Eleazu, U. (Ed.). (1985). Nigeria: The first 25 years. Nigeria: Heinemann.
- Enemugwem, J. H. (2010, June). The Niger Delta of Nigeria: A world-class oil region in Africa, 2000–2006. *Africana A Journal of Ideas on Africa and the African Diaspora*, 165.
- Gould, B. (2024). Cradle of Depletion: Unravelling the Tears of the Niger Delta. Cambridge Journal of Political Affairs, (9), 131-148.
- Iniabasi, F. (2013, March 8). Navy destroys over 7378 illegal refineries, arrests 40 vessels. *National Daily*, p. 29.
- Iniemiesi, O., & Yoroki, E. (2024). Illegal Oil Bunkering and National Security: An Assessment of the Niger Delta Region. *Social Facts: FUOTUOKE Journal of Sociology and Anthology*, 4(1), 1-17.
- Kombo, M. B. (2003). The political economy of illegal bunkering in Nigeria. Retrieved from https://www.gamji.com/kombo/kombo3.htm
- Lasisi, R. (2023). Illegal Oil Bunkering in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region: Prevalence and Consequences. International Journal of Advanced Research in Global Politics, Governance and Management, 4(1), 203-218.
- Moses, J. (2006, October 10). Oil. The Exclusive, 2(33), p. 29.
- Nnoli, C. (1986, April 23). Nigeria's petroleum industry. Daily Times, p. 14.
- Ododo, R. (1981). Unequal development: The Niger Delta case study, 1900–1977 (Master's thesis, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada).
- Oguntoye, M., & Oguntoye, A. (2021). An appraisal of the impact of the oil sector on the Nigerian economy (LLM thesis, University of Lagos).



- Ojo, T., & Beaulieu, M. S. (2024). Oloibiri: Lessons from the lifecycle of a single-industry town in Nigeria. *The Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 19(3), 120-148.
- Okorobia, A. M. (2008). Socio-economic implications of oil and gas production in Nigeria: Preliminary reflections. In Abi & Atei (Eds.), *History concourse 2007 – The future of the Niger Delta: The search for a relevant narrative* (p. 193). Onyoma Research Publications.
- Olujobi, O. J., Irumekhai, O. S., Olujobi, O. M., Aina-Pelemo, A. D., & Olipede, D. E. (2024). Challenges Militating against Indigenous Oil Companies Operating in Nigeria's Upstream Petroleum Industry: Strategies and Panaceas for their Sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy (The)*, 15(3), 145-176.
- Onor, K., & Ityonzughul, T. T. (2024). Oil Economy and Society of Nigeria's Niger Delta Region, 1956-2019. Jurnal Administrasi Publik, 14(1), 77-91.
- Orugbani, I. (2010). *Oil companies and infrastructural development in Nembe, 1973–2001* (Master's thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka).
- Shatzl, L. W. (1968). Petroleum in Nigeria. Ibadan: NISR.
- Siloko, B. E. (2024). Human security, sustainable livelihoods and development: the case of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria. *Global Discourse*, *1*(aop), 1-22.
- Siyeofori, E. O. (1978). A history of oil exploration in the Niger Delta (Master's thesis, University of Port Harcourt).
- Siyeofori, E. O. (1978). A history of oil exploration in the Niger Delta (Master's thesis, University of Port Harcourt).
- Thomas, O. (2021). Strategic alliances in the Nigerian oil and gas industry: implications for local capacity development (Doctoral dissertation, University of Warwick).
- Usiobaifo, A. H., Chidiebere, A., Olusola, A. S., Dada, A. R., & Ukoje, N. L. (2023). Assessment of the Impact of Flared Gas and Oil Spilled on Human Health and Environmental Degradation: Evidence from the Niger Delta Region, Nigeria. *American Journal of Environmental Science and Engineering*, 7(1), 5-16.
- Usman, Z. (2022). *Economic diversification in Nigeria: The politics of building a post-oil economy* (p. 312). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Yirakina, N. C. (2010). *The Ogoni oil economic crisis and politics in Nigeria: The Niger Delta perspective.* Zana: Amadu Bello University Press Limited.