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Resource Curse? Governmentality, Oil and Power in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

MICHAEL WATTS

The most dangerous level of primary commodity dependence is 26% of GDP. At this level the otherwise ordinary country has a risk of conflict of 23%. By contrast, if it had no primary commodity exports (but was otherwise the same) its risk would fall to only one half of one per cent.

Paul Collier¹

The oil-impedes-democracy claim is both valid and statistically robust; in other words oil does hurt democracy ... There is at least tentative support for three causal mechanisms that link oil and authoritarianism: a rentier effect ... a repression effect ... and a modernization effect.

Michael Ross²

A year prior to the events of 11 September 2001, the US Department of State in its annual encyclopaedia of 'global terrorism' identified the Niger Delta – the ground zero of Nigerian oil production – as a volatile breeding ground for militant 'impoverished ethnic groups' for whom terrorist acts (abduction, hostage-taking, kidnapping and extra-judicial killings) were part of their stock in trade.³ A Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report concurred, alerting the American stenographers of power to the possibly apocalyptic consequences of 'environmental stresses' on 'political tensions' in the region.⁴ Nigeria – the thirteenth largest producer of petroleum and an archetypal oil nation for whom petroleum products accounts for 80 per cent of government revenues, 95 per cent of export receipts, and 90 per cent of foreign exchange earnings – provides at least 5 per cent currently of US daily consumption (and over 10 per cent of US imports), and West African fields now exceed the volume of US imports from Saudi Arabia.⁵ The Petroleum Finance Company (PFC) acknowledged the enhanced significance of Nigerian oil in a March 2000 presentation to the US Congressional International Relations Committee Sub-Committee on Africa, taking particular note of the strategic value of West African oil whose high quality and low cost 'sweet' reserves – including new offshore, deepwater discoveries – demanded substantial foreign investment. Not surprisingly, in the wake of the Al Qaeda attacks, the crisis in Venezuela, and now the Iraq war, the West African 'new Gulf oil states'⁶ have emerged,

as the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies observed in January 2002, as 'a priority for US national security'.⁷ In the last year, the ugly footprint of Africa's black gold – in Gabon, Angola, Equatorial Guinee – has been rarely off the front pages. Oil and blood, as Jon Anderson says, are ubiquitous.⁸ Political Islam, in the popular imaginary, has added an extra *frisson* to this ugly pairing, namely oil terrorism: the 'nightmare', as the *New York Times* noted, of 'sympathizers of Osama Bin Laden sink[ing] three oil tankers in the Straits of Hormuz'.⁹

The *geist* of oil has been central to the history and mythos of the modern world. The great Polish journalist Kapuscinski noted as much in his marvellous meditation on oil-rich Iran: 'Oil creates the illusion', he noted, 'of a completely changed life, life without work, life for free ... The concept of oil expresses perfectly the eternal human dream of wealth achieved through lucky accident ... In this sense oil is a fairy tale and like every fairy tale a bit of a lie.'¹⁰ It is this deceit, one might say, that currently confounds oil producers in West Africa, and Nigeria in particular. The fact that perhaps \$50bn of the total of \$270bn oil revenues that have flowed into the Nigerian exchequer since 1960 should have 'disappeared', speaks powerfully to the deception at the heart of Nigeria as an oil nation.

It is no accident, then, that Robert Vitalis, in an exceptionally valuable reinterpretation of the early history of oil in the Middle East, could suggest that the rapid, complete and irreversible rise of American dominance in Saudi Arabia (corporate investment in what he calls 'white supremacy' and the 'ascriptive hierarchy' known as racism) has so much light to shed on why 'the Niger Delta is currently in crisis'.¹¹ And indeed it is. The Niger Delta is located at the crossroads of contemporary Nigerian politics – it was the epicentre of voting fraud in the April 2003 elections – and yet is virtually ungovernable. Since 12 March 2003, escalating violence between ethnic communities (Ijaw, Urhobo and Itsekiri in particular) in the creeks around Warri has led to over 100 deaths and the devastation of eight communities. President Obasanjo's deployments of notoriously corrupt security forces to the Delta prompted further violence and threats by Ijaw militants to detonate 11 occupied oil installations. On 19 March 2003 all of the oil majors withdrew staff and closed operations, with the consequence that production has dropped by 817,000 barrels per day (40 per cent of national production).

Marginalized and excluded from the benefits of oil, the Niger Delta stands at the confluence of four pressing political flashpoints in the current political economy of Nigeria. First, the efforts led by a number of Niger Delta states for 'resource control', in effect expanded access to and control over oil and oil revenues. Second, the struggle for self-determination of minority people and the clamour for a sovereign national conference to

rewrite the constitutional basis of the federation itself. Third, a crisis of rule in the region as a number of state and local governments are rendered helpless by militant youth movements, growing insecurity and ugly intra-community, inter-ethnic and state violence. And not least, the emergence of a South-South Alliance linking the hitherto excluded oil-producing states (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Ondo and Rivers) in a bulwark against the ethnic majorities (the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Ibo). Standing at the heart of Alliance politics is the dispute between the federal state and the littoral states over offshore oil revenues.¹² Oil is the theatre of conflict within which Nigerian politics is currently being played out.

In virtue of the geo-strategic significance of oil to contemporary capitalism – and to US hegemony in particular – it is perhaps no surprise that the relations between natural resources, and oil in particular, and economic growth, democracy, and civil war should have emerged as an object of substantial scholarly attention, not least by economists and political scientists.¹³ None other than Jeffrey Sachs and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have entered into the fray positing a strong association between resource-dependency, corruption and economic performance. Sachs and Warner argue that one standard deviation increase in the ratio of natural resource exports to gross national product (GNP) is associated with a decrease of just over 1 per cent in the growth rate (irrespective of the endogeneity of corruption, commodity price variability and trade liberalization).¹⁴ Leite and Weidemann of the IMF believe that for fuels the figure is 0.6 per cent and due ‘entirely to the indirect effect of corruption’.¹⁵ Michael Klare sees oil as a dwindling resource – and a key strategic one – that will be increasingly generative of inter-state conflict (see also Homer-Dixon) and associated with what he calls the ‘economization’ of international security affairs.¹⁶ This line of argument developed by Paul Collier of the World Bank, using resource dependency as a way of thinking about rebellion, especially in Africa, sees oil as central to the economics of civil war. It permits, indeed encourages, extortion and looting through resource predation (at least up to the point where 26 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) is dependent on resource extraction). It is the feasibility of predation that determines the risk of conflict. Rebels predate through secession. For Collier the risks are greater from resource dependency than from ethnic or religious diversity. For Michael Ross oil is a ‘resource curse’ due to its *rentier effect* (low taxes and high patronage dampen pressures for democracy), its *repression effect* conferred by the direct state control over sufficient revenues to bankroll excessive military expenditures and expanded internal security apparatuses, and a *modernization effect*, namely the ‘move into industrial and service sector jobs render them less likely to push for democracy’.¹⁷ Ross inventories a

number of 'factors' peculiar to oil (employment and linkage effects, its territorial and enclave properties and so on) but such qualities are less unique to oil than to extraction, and as a consequence his analysis resembles a sort of commodity determinism confirming perhaps Coronil's point that 'Oil, more than any other commodity, illustrates both the importance and the mystification of natural resources in the modern world.'¹⁸ But if oil hinders democracy (as though copper might liberate parliamentary democracy?), one needs to surely appreciate the centralizing effect of oil and the state in relation to the oil-based nation-building enterprises that are unleashed in the context of a politics that predates oil.

Much of this resource politics work is deeply problematic. It either elides the purported effects of oil with incumbent politics, or as Collier's work illustrates, presumes a predation-proneness for what is in fact the dynamics of state and corporate enclave politics.¹⁹ Collier's analysis assumes that oil can be preyed because of asset specificity and because of choke point that can be looted.²⁰ But it is not clear how oil can be looted (as opposed to say diamonds) and what difference its specific qualities make for rebellion or conflict in general. But what is distinctive about oil is its enclave character and the fact that there are certain tactical points (nodes in the commodity chain as Le Billon puts it²¹) for holding up supply (oil flow stations, pipelines). Collier, for example, has little to say about the rebel organization and the forms of mobilization and how oil enters into them (other than the presumption of funding rebel organization in ways that have to be documented). What is striking in all of this resource-politics scholarship is the almost total invisibility of both transnational oil companies (which typically work in joint ventures with the state) and the forms of capitalism that oil or enclave extraction engenders. My analysis charts the relations between oil and violence but does so through examining how forms of governable spaces are shaped and recreated out of what Dean calls authoritarian governmentality.²² Rather than seeing oil-dependency as generative of predation or as a source of state power through its security apparatuses, I explore how oil capitalism (what I call petro-capitalism) produces, from the realities of forms of rule and political authority into which it is inserted, specific sorts of what I, following Rose, call 'governable space' (that is a specific configuration of territory, identity and rule). I focus on three such spaces – chieftainship, the space of indigeneity, and the nation – each of which is associated with conflict and violence.²³ In contrast to Collier and others, I seek to trace the variety of violences engendered by oil (not just civil war or rebellion), to elaborate the ways in which resources, territoriality and identity can constitute forms of rule (or unrule), and to understand the genesis of violence associated with the differing sorts of governable or ungovernable spaces.²⁴ These spaces are

sorts of enclaves in which, contra Ross and Collier, oil capital is an active presence.

Petro-capitalism, in my analysis, operates through a particular sort of 'oil complex' (a unity of firm, state [and its security forces], and community) that is territorially constituted through oil concessions. This complex is generative of substantial unearned income and strong centralizing effects at the level of the state (it is, in other words, a particular fiscal sociology).²⁵ The presence and activities of the oil companies as part of the oil complex, constitute a challenge to customary forms of community authority, inter-ethnic relations, and local state institutions principally through the property and land disputes that are engendered, via forms of popular mobilization and agitation. These political struggles are animated by the desire to gain access to (i) company rents and compensation revenues, and (ii) federal petro-revenues by capturing rents (often fraudulently) through the creation of new regional and/or local state institutions. The oil complex (as a static institutional description) and petro-capitalism (as a dynamic set of forces) refigure differing sorts of governable spaces in which contrasting sorts of identities, and forms of rule come into play. In some cases youth and generational forces are key, in some cases gender, the clan or the kingdom or the ethnic minority (or indigenous peoples). In other instances local governmental authorities or electoral wards may be crucibles within which oil politics are generated.²⁶

My analysis emphasizes the *simultaneous* production (and reworking) of differing forms of pre-existing rule and governable space consequent upon the insertion of centralized oil revenues (unearned income) into the Nigerian political economy. What concerns me is the simultaneity of different 'scale politics' to use the language of Neil Smith.²⁷ Each scale – each governable space – is the product of the oil complex and petro-capitalism, but these spaces curiously work against, and often stand in direct contradiction to, one another. There are obvious slippages between these spaces. A youth within a system of Chieftly rule can and often is a member of an ethnic minority; politicized ethnic minorities may become or self-identify as nations. But all of these idioms of political identification (and for me spaces of rule) are inseparable from, and in some profound way shaped by, the political economy of oil. Chieftainship, ethnic minority, and nation represent ways of exploring what I call 'governable spaces': particular politics of scale which are more or less coherent, more or less stable, more or less violent. Standing at the centre of each governable space is a central contradiction: at the level of the oil community, the overthrow of gerontocratic authority but its substitution by a sort of violent youth-led Mafia rule. At the level of the ethnic community is the tension between civic nationalism and a sort of exclusivist militant particularism. And at the level of the nation one sees the

contradiction between oil-based state centralization and state fragmentation, as oil becomes a sort of generalized equivalent put to the service of massive corruption. I have tried to root these contradictions in the double-movement of petro-capitalism which is generative of an authoritarian governmentality constituted by the three forms of governable space that I have described.

There is a deliberate irony in my deployment of the term 'governable space' in that the Foucauldian project, from which it is derived, is often chided for its panoptical sense of closure, its overwhelming aura of domination, whereas my account of Nigeria reveals ragged, unstable, perhaps *ungovernable*, spaces that hardly correspond to the well-oiled machine of disciplinary and bio-power. Such is, in my book, the heart of the so-called crisis of the post-colonial state in Africa. It is in this sense that I invoke the idea of 'economies of violence' – rather than a resource curse – to characterize governmentality and rule in contemporary Nigeria. I seek to shed rather different light on why, as Achille Mbembe puts it, 'regions at the epicenter of oil production are torn apart by repeated conflicts'.²⁸

A Note on Governmentality and Governable Space

Governmental thought territorializes itself in different ways ... We can analyze the ways in which the idea of a territorially bounded, politically governed nation state under sovereign authority took shape ... One can trace anomalous governmental histories of smaller-scale territories ... and one can also think of these [as] spaces of enclosure that governmental thought has imagined and penetrated ... how [does it] happen that social thought territorializes itself on the problem of [for example] the slum in the nineteenth century?

Nikolas Rose²⁹

I am taking the idea of governmentality from the work of Michel Foucault for whom it implies an expansive way of thinking about governing and rule in relation to the exercise of modern power.³⁰ Government for Foucault referred famously to the 'conduct of conduct', a more or less calculated and rational set of ways of shaping conduct and of securing rule through a multiplicity of authorities and agencies in and outside the state and at a variety of spatial levels. In contrast to forms of pastoral power of the Middle Ages from which a sense of sovereignty was derived, Foucault charted an important historical shift, beginning in the sixteenth century, toward government as a right manner of disposing things 'so as to not lead to the common good ... but to an end that is convenient for each of the things governed'.³¹ The new practices of the state, as Mitchell Dean says, shape human conduct by 'working through our desire, aspirations, interests and beliefs for definite but shifting ends'.³² Unlike the new governance literature of Putnam³³ and others for whom governance is the self-organizing

networks that arise out of the interactions between a variety of organizations and agencies, governmentality for Foucault refers not to sociologies of rule but, to quote Rose, to the:

studies of stratum of knowing and acting. Of the emergence of particular regimes of truth concerning the conduct of conduct, ways of speaking truth, persons authorised to speak truth ... of the invention and assemblage of particular apparatuses for exercising power ... they are concerned with the conditions of possibility and intelligibility for ways of seeking to act upon the conduct of others.³⁴

It was Foucault's task to reveal the genealogy of government, the origins of modern power, and the fabrication of a modern identity. The conduct of conduct – governmentality – could be expressed as pastoral, disciplinary or as bio-power. Modern governmentality was rendered distinctive by the specific forms in which the population and the economy was administered, and specifically by a deepening of the 'governmentalization of the state' (that is to say how sovereignty comes to be articulated through the populations and the processes that constitute them). What was key for Foucault was not the displacement of one form of power by another, nor the historical substitution of feudal by modern governmentality, but the complex triangulation involved in sustaining many forms of power put to the purpose of security and regulation.³⁵

Governing, that is to say what authorities wanted to happen in relation to what problems and objectives and through what tactics, can be assessed through the 'analytics of government', in other words the processes by which we govern and are governed within different regimes, the conditions under which they emerge, operate and are transformed.³⁶ Dean notes that there are four dimensions to government so construed. The first he calls *forms of visibility* (the picturing and constituting of objects). The second is the *techne of government* (through what means, mechanism, tactics, and technologies is authority constituted and rule accomplished). Third, the *episteme of government* (what forms of thought, knowledge, expertise, calculation are employed in governing and how is form given to what is governable). And fourth, *forms of identification* (the forming of subjects, selves, agents, actors, in short the production of governable subjects).

On this theoretical canvas, I seek to explore the relations between two interrelated aspects of governmentality.³⁷ One is what Foucault explicitly refers to as relations between men and resources (in my case, people and oil in the Niger delta) as an expression of his complex notion of the governance of things. As he put it:

On the contrary, in [the modern exercise of power], you will notice that the definition of government in no way refers to territory: one governs *things*. But what does this mean? I think this is not a matter of opposing things to men, but rather of showing that what government has to do with is not territory but, rather, a sort of complex composed of men and things. The things, in this sense, with which government is to be concerned are in fact men, but *men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those things that are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, and so on; men in their relation to those other things that are customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking and so on; and finally men in relation to those still other things that might be accidents and misfortunes such as famines, epidemics, death and so on ...* What counts is essentially this complex of men and things; property and territory are merely one of its variables.³⁸

The other aspect, taken from Rose's notion of 'governable spaces' as they emerge from the four analytics of government detailed above. For Rose, governable spaces, and the spatialization of government, are 'modalities in which a real and material governable world is composed, terraformed, and populated'.³⁹ The scales at which upon government is 'territorialized' – territory is derived from *terra*, land, but also *terrere*, to frighten – are myriad: the factory, the neighbourhood, the commune, the region, the nation. Each of these governable spaces has its own topology and is modelled, as Rose puts it, through systems of cognition and remodelled through government practice in a way that frames how such topoi have emerged: the social thought and practice that has territorialized itself upon the nation, the city, the village or the factory.⁴⁰ The map has been central to this process as a mode of objectification, marking and inscribing but also as 'a little machine for producing conviction in others'.⁴¹ But in general it was geography that formed 'the art whose science was political economy'.⁴² Modern space and modern governable spaces were produced by the biological (the laws of population which determine the qualities of the inhabitants) and the economic (the systems of the production of wealth). Governable spaces necessitate the territorializing of governmental thought and practice but are simultaneously produced as differing scales by the 'cold laws of political economy'.⁴³

Petrolia: The Oil Complex and the Niger Delta

One of the great deltaic regions in the world, the Niger delta is a vast sedimentary basin constructed over time through successive thick layers of

sediments dating back 40–50 million years to the Eocene epoch. An immense coastal plain covering almost 70,000 square kilometres, its geographical perimeter extends from the Benin river in the west to the Imo river in the east and from the southernmost tip at Palm Point near Akassa to Aboh in the north where the Niger River bifurcates into its two main tributaries. A classic arcuate delta, typically below the 15 metre contour across its entire extent, the delta is also endowed with very substantial hydrocarbon deposits (31.5 billion barrels according to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)). Crude oil production in the Niger delta currently runs at 2.18 million barrels per day, accounting for over 90 per cent of Nigerian foreign exchange earnings. To say that Nigeria as the largest producer of petroleum in Africa is heavily dependent upon the oil sector is a massive understatement. Post-colonial Nigeria is a mono-economy, much more an export dependency than it ever was in the colonial period.

It is difficult to estimate the current population, but since the 1960s, population has been growing at about 2.7 per cent per annum and the population of Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa States is in excess of 7 million. The settlement pattern is largely nucleated and rural, typically occupying isolated dry sites within the deltaic swamps. Farming systems are predominantly peasant, characterized by small land parcels, short-fallow systems of cultivation, and diversified forms of rural livelihood including hunting and fishing. The delta is a region of astonishing ethnic and linguistic complexity. While there are five major linguistic categories (Ijoid, Yoruboid, Edoid, Igboid and Delta Cross), each embraces an enormous profusion of ethno-linguistic communities. The history of the delta is in some respects captured in this linguistic and cultural complexity since pre-colonial trade across the region was linked to a social division of labour rooted in occupation and micro-ecology. Early European explorers commented upon the trans-deltaic trade networks, but these transactions were radically compromised by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, and subsequently by the French, Dutch and British slavers. The rise of the so-called legitimate trade of the nineteenth century – the genesis of rubber and cocoa which displaced slavery after abolition – shaped, under British auspices, the creation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in which a vital commercial life flourished. The establishment of the Nigerian colony and the imposition of Indirect Rule in the early 1900s initiated a process of profound political change through the warrant chief system, yet at the same time economically marginalized the multi-ethnic communities of the Delta.⁴⁴ Indeed, in the transition to Independence in the 1950s, the so-called ethnic minorities voiced their concerns to the Willink Commission in 1955, that they were positioned outside a federation dominated by three ethnic

majorities (the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Ibo) that constituted 70 per cent of the population. What was true under colonialism became more so in the post-colonial oil era.

The onset of commercial petroleum production in 1956 in the delta – discovered in Oloibiri in Baylesa State – seemed to hold out the promise of rapid development for the hitherto neglected ethnic minorities. But the presence of the transnational oil companies in joint ventures with the Nigerian State (the Nigerian National Petroleum Company, NNPC) presided over enormous environmental despoliation and a crisis of forms of traditional livelihood. By the 1970s and 1980s, a number of ethnic communities had begun to mobilize against the so-called ‘slick alliance’ of oil companies and the Nigerian military. A foundational role was played in the 1990s by Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni people, a small ethnic group of 400,000, who established a political movement (MOSOP) and a Bill of Rights to challenge both Shell for environmental compensation and the Nigerian state for direct control of ‘their oil’. Saro-Wiwa and the MOSOP leadership were hung by the Nigerian military in 1995, but their legacy was the proliferation of ‘many Ogonis’ as more minorities (the Adoni, the Itsekiri, the Ijaw for example) organized precisely as MOSOP fell into decline amidst internal political bickering and acrimony. Women’s groups – building upon a longer history of political mobilization⁴⁵ – have been at the forefront of the oil struggles, recently gaining international attention by occupying a Chevron oil refinery and demanding company investments and jobs for indigenes.⁴⁶ A 1997 co-ordinated protest by 10,000 youths at Aleibiri to end Shell’s activities, captured much of these post-MOSOP energies. At the same time, by 1998–99, the mobilization of the Ijaw in particular, building upon the struggles of the Ijaw Youth Council, the Ijaw National Council and the Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality against the Abacha junta, had devolved into the so-called ‘Egbesu wars’ – named after an Ijaw cult – marking a period of deepening political disorder across the Delta.⁴⁷

Let me say a brief word about oil and its relationship to Nigerian political economy.⁴⁸ Nigeria is a multi-ethnic state, and a former British colony until 1960. Colonial indirect rule imposed a ‘decentralized despotism’,⁴⁹ orchestrated through regional rule by the powerful ethnic (and regional) majorities. The backbone of each region was an export commodity and a government Market Board. At Independence, Muslim northerners sustained a fragile hegemony over a highly charged multi-ethnic polity and it was into this weak federal system that commercial oil production was inserted. The break up of the federation in 1967 (following a succession of military coups) was detonated by a civil war (1967–1970) prompted by the secession by Biafra (the former eastern Region), a conflagration that was in

no small measure a reflection of the new saliency of oil politics. In the wake of the oil boom of 1973, black gold provided the material and fiscal basis for ambitious modernization and for autocratic state-led development. Nigeria became, in short order, an oil nation. Oil unleashed a rapid state-led industrialization project articulated through fiscal linkages and a vast investment of petro-dollars. Oil production in Nigeria has always been a joint venture, currently 16 oil majors bound by joint operating agreements to determine the distribution of royalties and rents. Oil, one might say, created a form of state-landed property.⁵⁰ But what began as a boom and untempered ambition in the 1970s ended with the bust in 1985, and its attendant austerity and World Bank adjustment programmes. In 1999 after a terrifying period of military authoritarianism under Sani Abacha, Olesgun Obasanjo became the first democratically elected President in two decades, inheriting an economy in shambles, vast political and economic resentments by ethnic minorities, and the prospect of building a democracy on the backs of long-standing regional, ethnic and religious frictions.

I want to make four fundamental points about the political economy of oil. The first is that oil capitalism operates through what I call an 'oil complex' involving: (1) a statutory monopoly over mineral exploitation (the 1946 Solid Minerals Law, and 1969 Petroleum Law);⁵¹ (2) a nationalized oil company (NNPC was set up in a phase of state indigenization in 1971) that operates through joint ventures (memoranda of understanding) with oil majors who are granted territorial concessions (blocs);⁵² (3) the security apparatuses of the state (working synergistically with those of the companies themselves) protecting costly investments and ensuring the continual flow of oil; and (4) an institutional mechanism (in Nigeria called the 'derivation principle' and the Distributable Pool Account (DPA) formed in 1966, later renamed as the Federation Account in 1979) by which federal oil revenues are distributed to the states and producing communities, and not least the oil-producing communities themselves.⁵³ In Nigeria this marked, as oil revenues grew, the rise of fiscal centralism and a shift from derivation (which plummeted from 100 per cent to 3 per cent) to a Federation Account (i.e., a centrally controlled account which dominated the allocation of federally collected revenues).⁵⁴ Much can be said about this complex – which has parallels in Indonesia and Venezuela – but it provides the setting, at once institutionally dense and politically cogent, within which new governable spaces are manufactured.⁵⁵ Central to the oil complex is its enclave character, the extent to which it is militarized as a national security sector, and a dominant fiscal sociology, namely the massive centralizing consequences of vast unearned income, flowing to the federal exchequer, derivative of the alliance of state and capital. As Wirpsa and Dunning show in this volume, the oil complex often has associated with it, in the name of

the 'economization' of security affairs, a panoply of paramilitary, mercenary, security and other militarized agents. As anyone who has spent any time in or around oil installations – whether Warri or Midland, Texas – it is saturated with all manner of actual and symbolic violence, and the stench of security and surveillance.

Oil matters profoundly, and this is the second point, to the character and dynamics of Nigerian development. Oil is a biophysical entity (fluid, subterranean, and enclave in character); it is also a commodity that enters the market with its price tag, and is the bearer of particular relations of production. And not least it has its fetishistic qualities, it is the bearer of meanings: a harbinger of El Dorado and unprecedented wealth, avarice and power. Not unexpectedly oil crops up constantly in the popular imagination;⁵⁶ its evil powers ('the devil's excrement'), its ability to corrupt, and so on. Only in these three ways can we understand Coronil's claim that 'oil illustrates the importance and the mystification of natural resources in the modern world'.⁵⁷ My third point about oil is that Nigerian oil-fuelled capitalism, petro-capitalism, contains a double movement, a contradictory unity of capitalism and modernity. On the one hand oil is a centralizing force, one that rendered the state more visible (and globalized), and permitted, that is to say financially underwrote, a process of secular nationalism and state building. On the other, centralized oil revenues flowing into weak institutions and a charged, volatile federal system produced an undisciplined, corrupt and flabby oil-led development that was to fragment, pulverize, disintegrate and discredit the state and its forms of governance. It produced conditions which challenged and undermined the very tenets of the modern nation-state. Coronil dubs this conundrum 'the Faustian trade of money for modernity' which in Venezuela brought 'the illusion of development'.⁵⁸ In Nigeria it brought illusion too but more importantly it produced forms of governable spaces that question Nigeria itself, that generated forms of rule, conduct and imagining at cross purposes with one another, antithetical to the very idea of a developed modern nation-state that oil represented.

Economies of Violence and Governable Spaces

Let me now turn to these governable spaces, which I shall refer to as the space of chieftainship (the politics of youth and gerontocratic rule in an oil-producing community), the space of indigeneity (the politics of ethnic mobilization as a basis for civic nationalism), and the space of the nation-state (the politics of nation-building and citizenship). I want to think about the genesis of differing sorts of governable spaces in Nigeria as part of a larger landscape of what Dean calls 'authoritarian governmentality', that is

to say an articulation of generalized uses of the instruments of repression with bio-politics (as he says, 'it regards its subjects capacity for action as subordinate to the expectation of obedience').⁵⁹ These spaces and forms of power emerge from the oil complex as part of an overarching logic of petro-capitalist development, that is to say a particular sort of extractive development generative of differing sorts of scale, or the 'politics of scale' as Neil Smith calls it. Oil violence is generated by the evil twins of authoritarian governmentality and petro-capitalism.

The Space of Chieftainship

Nembe community⁶⁰ in Bayelsa State stands at the originary point of Nigerian oil production. In the 1950s, the Tennessee Oil Company (a US company) began oil explorations there but oil was not found until much later when Shell D'Arcy unearthed the Oloibiri oil field in Ogbia. Subsequent explorations led to the opening of the large and rich Nembe oil fields near the coast in the Okpoama and Twon-Brass axis. Currently the four Nembe oil fields produce approximately 150,000 barrels of high quality petroleum through joint operating agreements between the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), AGIP and Shell. If Nembe is the ground zero of oil production, it is also a theatre of extraordinary violence and intra-community conflict, the result of intense competition over political turf and the control of benefits from the oil industry. The violence can be traced back to the late 1980s when the Nembe Council of Chiefs acquired power from the then King, Justice Alagoa Mingi IX, to negotiate royalties and other benefits with the oil companies. The combination of youth-driven violence and intense political competition has transformed Nembe's system of governance and set the stage for further challenges to the traditional authority of chieftainship.⁶¹

Oil became commercially viable in the 1970s, but to grasp its transformative effects on Nembe politics and community – that is to its genesis as a distinctive governable space – requires an understanding of chieftainship in the Delta. Indirect rule in the colonial period certainly left much of the Niger Delta marginalized and isolated, but it also, in the name of tradition, built upon and frequently invented chiefly powers of local rule which in the Nembe case were grafted onto a deep and complex structure of kingship and gerontocratic rule. To understand the dynamics of Nembe as a governable space one needs to recall that land lay in the hands of customary authorities (notwithstanding the fact that the 1969 Petroleum Law granted the state the power to nationalize all oil resources). Land rights and therefore claims on oil royalties were from the outset rooted in the *amayanabo* (king), and derivatively the subordinate powers, namely the Council of Chiefs and the Executive Council. Historically, the Nembe

community possessed a rigid political hierarchy consisting of the *amayanabo* presiding over in descending order the Chiefs (or heads of the war canoe houses⁶²) elected by the entire war canoe houses constituted by their prominent sons. Although the Chiefs were subservient to the *amayanabo*, they acted as his closest advisers, supported the *amayanabo* in the event of military threat, and in turn were responsible for electing the *amayanabo* from the Mingi group of Houses, or the royal line. The current Nembe Council of Chiefs is the assemblage of the recognized Chiefs of Nembe 'chalked' by the King.⁶³

In 1991, the Nembe monarch's ineffectiveness in dealing with the oil companies led to a radical decentralization of his powers to the Council of Chiefs, headed by Chief Egi Adukpo Ikata. In so far as the Council now dealt directly with Shell, and handled large quantities of money paid by the oil companies, competition for election to the Council intensified as various political factions struggled for office. By 2000, the Council had expanded from 26 to 90 persons. Coeval with the evisceration of kingly powers, the deepening of the Council mandate, and the expansion of the Council members, was a subtle process of 'youth mobilization'. In an age-graded society like the Nembe Ijaw, youth refers to persons typically between their teens and early forties who, whatever achievements they may have obtained (university degrees, fatherhood and so on), remain subservient to their elders. Central to any understanding of the emergence of a militant youth in Nembe town was the catalytic role played by a former company engineer with Elf Oil Company named Mr Nimi B.P. Barigha-Amage. He deployed his knowledge of the oil industry to organize the youths of the Nembe community into a force capable of extracting concessions from the oil companies in essence by converting cultural organization into protection services. Chief Ikata was quick to exploit the awareness and restiveness of the youths to pressure Shell into granting community entitlements. A pact between Chief Ikata and the young engineer was in effect instituted: the engineer supplied the youths with information regarding community entitlements, and the Chief deployed his knowledge of military logistics to organize the shutting down of flow stations, the seizure of equipment and sabotage.⁶⁴

Armed with insider knowledge of the companies and an understanding of a loosely defined set of rules regarding company compensation for infringements on community property, Barigha-Amage pushed for the creation of youth 'cultural groups' which gradually, with the support of some members of the Council of Chiefs, were the intermediaries with oil companies and their liaison officers, and manipulated the system of compensation in the context of considerable juridical and legal ambiguity. Liaison officers, colluding with community representatives, invented ritual

or cultural sites that had ostensibly been compromised or damaged by oil operations, for which monies exchanged hands. As the opportunities for appropriating company resources in the name of compensation became visible through the success of the cultural groups, other sections of the youth community began to organize in turn around clan and familial affiliations. In 1994, for example, a group called 'House of Lords' (*Isongoforo*) was created by a former university lecturer, Lionel Jonathan, and a year later in 1995 Mrs Ituro-Garuba, wife of a well-placed military officer, established *Agbara-foro*. Inevitably, with much at stake financially, and control of the space between community and company in the balance, conflicts within and among youth groups proliferated and deepened. In turn, growing community militancy spilled over into often violent altercations with the much detested mobile police ('Mopos') and local government authorities. The regional state and governor attempted to intervene as conditions deteriorated but a government report, on which such action was predicated, was never released for political reasons. A subsequent banning of youth groups had, as a result, no practical effect.⁶⁵

Slowly, the subversion of royal authority, the strategic alliances between youth and chiefs, and the growing (and armed) conflict between youth groups for access to Shell resulted in the ascendancy of a highly militant *Isongoforo*. In an environment of rampant insecurity and lawlessness, occupation and closure of flow stations, and tensions between the companies, the service companies and local security forces, *Isongoforo* were provided 'stand by' payments by the companies, that is to say hired for protection purposes, and at the same time colluded with the community liaison officers to invent compensation cases. *Isongoforo* occupied the centre of a new governable space which they ruled through force rather than any sense of consent or customary authority. This 'mafiosi' was funded by the large quantities of monies that they commanded from the companies, and by the arms with which they controlled. This volatile state of affairs collapsed dramatically as local resentments and struggles proliferated. In February 2000 a 'Peoples Revolution' overthrew *Isongoforo*, ostensibly precipitated by the humiliation of the Council of Chiefs at the hands of Shell (backed by the intimidating *Isongoforo* forces). The Chiefs now orchestrated the occupation of flow stations and undermined the powers of *Isongoforo* by recruiting and supporting other youth groups. By May 2000 *Isongoforo* had been sent into exile but they were promptly replaced, in the wake of the return of Barigha-Amage as High Chief of Nembe, by his own 'cultural group' *Isenasawo/Teme*. *Teme* instituted a rule of terror and chaos far worse than their predecessors. It too proved unstable in the context of excessive youth mobilization and split into two factions, producing in short order a number of 'counter coups' and much bloodshed. A government

Peace Commission was established in January 2001 in a desperate effort to bring peace to one of the jewels in the oil-producing crown.⁶⁶

Much of this later violence (after 1996) was largely beyond the control of the relatively weak local state authorities because of its concurrence with the 1999 elections in which some of the key youth leaders were expected to deliver votes for the incumbent gubernatorial race. In the creation of what in effect was a sort of vigilante rule, there were complex complicities between chiefs, youth groups, local security forces, and the companies. The occupation of oil flow stations (for purposes of extortion) were often known in advance and involved collaboration with local company engineers; youths were *de facto* company employees providing protection services, and local compensation and community officers of Shell and AGIP produced fraudulent compensation cases and entitlements. Nembe, a town with its own long and illustrious history and politics, had become a sort of company town in which authority had shifted from the king to warring factions of youth who were in varying ways in the pay of, and working in conjunction with, the companies. The Council of Chiefs stood in a contradictory position, seeking to maintain control over revenues from the companies and yet intimidated and undermined by the militant youth groups on whom they depended. In the context of a weak and corrupt state and strongly polarized social class forces, the genesis of this power-nexus bears striking resemblances to the genesis of the Mafia in nineteenth-century Sicily.⁶⁷ Privatized violence and the deployment of youth for protection services – involving collusion and fraud between all parties – were central to the disorder of the reconfigured space of chieftainship.

What I have described is the displacement of a specific form of power (chieftainship) by a governable space of civic vigilantism, a sort of thickening of civil society that does not necessarily imply the basis of the kind of governance put forth by Putnam⁶⁸ and others. Civic powers have expanded by overthrowing a territorial system and a gerontocratic royal order. Youth mobilization – whose political affiliations and ambitions in any case were complex because they reflected an unstable amalgam of clan, family and local electoral loyalties – had thrown up an identity and subjectivity that was indisputably revolutionary, representing an unholy alliance between civic organizations (presenting themselves as cultural organizations) and private companies. Rule in Nembe is a realm of privatized violence; force presiding over consent. Government here turns on what Foucault calls men in their imbrication with wealth and resources – the government of men and things, as opposed to territory.⁶⁹ It is institutionalized through forms of calculability, *techne*, and visibility that emerge from the legal and company dispositions to regulate local populations backed up by the forces of what one might call civic repression.

The governable subject is *de facto* a sort of company employee, and cultural categories serve as the form by which this company rule is experienced – violent youth groups – but in a way that renders the space increasing *ungovernable*.

The Space of Indigeneity

The Niger delta is a region of considerable, perhaps one should say bewildering, ethno-linguistic complexity. The eastern region, of which the delta is part, is dominated statistically by the Ibo majority, but there is a long history of excluded ethnic minorities in the delta dating back at least to the 1950s when the Willinck Commission took note of the inter-ethnic complexity of the region. Throughout the colonial period prior to the arrival of commercial oil production, there had been efforts by various minorities, who saw themselves as dominated by the Ibo, to establish Native Authorities of their own. In the 1960s, prior to the outbreak of civil war, two charismatic local figures, both Ijaw – Nottingham Dick and Isaac Boro – declared a Delta Republic, a desperate cry for some sort of political inclusion that lasted a mere 12 days. Isaac Boro and the ill-fated Delta Peoples Republic in 1966 was the forerunner of what is now a prairie fire of ethnic mobilization by the historically excluded minorities – now tagged as ‘indigenous’ in order to capture the political and legal legitimacy conferred by the International Labour Organization of the United Nations (ILO169).⁷⁰ The paradigmatic case in the delta is the struggle by Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). Their case reveals a rather different sort of governable space, one marked by ethnic subjects and indigenous territory.

The Ogoni are typically seen as a distinct ethnic group, consisting of three sub-groups and six clans dotted over 404 sq miles of creeks, waterways and tropical forest in the north-east fringes of the Niger Delta. Located administratively in Rivers State, a Louisiana-like territory of some 50,000 sq. kilometres, Ogoniland is one of the most heavily populated zones in all of Africa. Indeed the most densely settled areas of Ogoniland – over 1,500 persons per sq. km. – are the sites of the largest wells. Its customary productive base was provided by fishing and agricultural pursuits until the discovery of petroleum, including the huge Bomu field, immediately prior to Independence. Part of an enormously complex regional ethnic mosaic, the Ogoni were drawn into internecine conflicts within the delta region, largely as a consequence of the slave trade and its aftermath, in the period prior to arrival of colonial forces at Kono in 1901. The Ogoni resisted the British until 1908 but thereafter were left to stagnate as part of the Opopo Division within Calabar Province.⁷¹ As Ogoniland was gradually incorporated during the 1930s, the clamour for a separate political division

grew at the hands of the first pan-Ogoni organization, the Ogoni Central Union, which bore fruit with the establishment of the Ogoni Native Authority in 1947. In 1951, however, the authority was forcibly integrated into the Eastern Region. Experiencing tremendous neglect and discrimination, integration raised long-standing fears among the Ogoni of Ibo domination.⁷² Politically marginalized and economically neglected, the delta minorities feared the growing secessionist rhetoric of the Ibo and consequently led an ill-fated secession of their own in February 1966. Ogoni antipathy to what they saw as a sort of internal colonialism at the hands of the Ibo, continued in their support of the federal forces during the civil war. While a Rivers State was established in 1967 – which compensated in some measure for enormous Ogoni losses during the war – the new state recapitulated in microcosm the larger ‘national question’. The new Rivers State was multi-ethnic but presided over by the locally dominant Ijaw, for whom the other minorities felt little but suspicion and sometimes contempt.⁷³

During the first oil boom of the 1970s, Ogoniland’s 56 wells accounted for almost 15 per cent of Nigerian oil production⁷⁴ and in the past three decades an estimated \$30bn in petroleum revenues have flowed from this Lilliputian territory. It was, as local opinion had it, ‘Nigeria’s Kuwait’. Yet according to a government commission, Oloibiri, where the first oil was pumped in 1958, has no single kilometre of all-season road and remains ‘one of the most backward areas in the country’.⁷⁵ Rivers State saw its federal allocation fall dramatically in absolute and relative terms. At the height of the oil boom, 60 per cent of oil production came from Rivers State but it received only 5 per cent of the statutory allocation (roughly half of that received by Kano, Northeastern States and the Ibo heartland, East Central State). Between 1970 and 1980 it received in revenues one-fiftieth of the value of the oil it produced. Few Ogoni households have electricity, there is one doctor per 100,000 people, child mortality rates are the highest in the nation, unemployment is 85 per cent, 80 per cent of the population is illiterate and close to half of Ogoni youth have left the region in search of work. Life expectancy is barely 50 years, substantially below the national average. If Ogoniland failed to see the material benefits from oil, what it *did* experience was an ecological disaster – what the European Parliament has called ‘an environmental nightmare’. The heart of the ecological harms stem from oil spills – either from the pipelines which criss-cross Ogoniland (often passing directly through villages) or from blow outs at the wellheads – and gas flaring. As regards the latter, a staggering 76 per cent of natural gas in the oil-producing areas is flared (compared to 0.6 per cent in the US). As a visiting environmentalist noted in 1993 in the delta, ‘some children have never known a dark night even though they have no electricity’.⁷⁶

Burning 24 hours per day at temperatures of 13–14,000 degrees Celsius, Nigerian natural gas produces 35 million tons of CO₂ and 12 million tons of methane, more than the rest of the world (and rendering Nigeria probably the biggest single cause of global warming). The oil spillage record is even worse. There are roughly 300 spills per year in the delta and in the 1970s alone the spillage was four times greater than the much publicized Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska. In one year alone almost 700,000 barrels were soiled according to a government commission. Ogoniland itself suffered 111 spills between 1985 and 1994.⁷⁷ Figures provided by the NNPC document 2676 spills between 1976 and 1990, 59 per cent of which occurred in Rivers State,⁷⁸ 38 per cent of which were due to equipment malfunction.⁷⁹ Between 1982 and 1992, Shell alone accounted for 1.6 million gallons of spilled oil, 37 per cent of the company's spills world-wide. The consequences of flaring, spillage and waste for Ogoni fisheries and farming have been devastating. Two independent studies completed in 1997 reveal the total of petroleum hydrocarbons in Ogoni streams at 360 – 680 times the European Community permissible levels.⁸⁰

The hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni nine in November 1995 – accused of murdering four prominent Ogoni leaders – and the subsequent arrest of 19 others on treason charges, represented the summit of a process of mass mobilization and radical militancy which had commenced in 1989. MOSOP necessarily built upon previous cultural and political organizations like the Ogoni Klub and Kagote (both élite organizations) and, most especially, the founder of modern Ogoni politics, Naaku Paul Birabi, who established in 1950 the Ogoni State Representatives Association (OSRA) to promote Ogoni interests in the new eastern Region Government. The civil war hardened the sense of external dominance among Ogonis. A cultural organization called Kagote which consisted largely of traditional rulers and high-ranking functionaries, was established at the war's end and in turned gave birth in 1990 to MOSOP. A new strategic phase began in 1989 with a programme of mass action and passive resistance on the one hand and, on the other, a renewed effort to focus on the environmental consequences of oil (and Shell's role in particular) and on group rights within the federal structure. Animating the entire struggle was, in Leton's words, the 'genocide being committed in the dying years of the twentieth century by multinational companies under the supervision of the Government'.⁸¹ A watershed moment in MOSOP's history was the drafting in 1990 of an Ogoni Bill of Rights.⁸² Documenting a history of neglect and local misery, the Ogoni Bill took the question of Nigerian federalism and minority rights head on. Calling for participation in the affairs of the republic as 'a distinct and separate entity', the Bill outlined a plan for autonomy and self-determination in which there would be guaranteed 'political control of

Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people ... the right to control and use a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources ... [and] adequate representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions'.⁸³ In short the Bill of Rights addressed the question of the *unit* to which revenues should be allocated – and derivatively the rights of minorities.⁸⁴ At the heart of Saro-Wiwa's political vision was an Ogoni state.

In spite of the remarkable history of MOSOP between 1990 and 1996, its ability to represent itself as a unified pan-Ogoni organization remained an open question. There is no pan-Ogoni myth of origin (characteristic of some delta minorities), and a number of the Ogoni subgroups (clans) engender stronger local loyalties than any affiliation to Ogoni 'nationalism'. Gokana clan, for example, was the most populous and well-educated and its élites wielded disproportionate influence in Ogoni. Conversely, the Eleme clan-head did not even sign the Ogoni Bill of Rights and Eleme's leading historian has argued that they are not in fact Ogoni. In 1994 Eleme leaders proposed the creation of Nchia state which comprised non-Ogonis from Bonny, Andoni, Opobo and Etche, thereby turning their backs on Saro-Wiwa's goal.⁸⁵ Furthermore, the MOSOP leaders were actively opposed by elements of the traditional clan leadership, by prominent leaders and civil servants in state government, and by some critics who felt Saro-Wiwa was out to gain 'cheap popularity'.⁸⁶ Some Ogoni notables (Edward Kobani and Dr Leton) aspired to participate in conventional politics by running for the two major parties rather than assisting in the birth of a nation. MOSOP moreover was a political movement of the élite led by the élite. MOSOP was not in fact a mass movement and both youth and women were not represented on MOSOP's first steering Committee. Gradually the youth wing of MOSOP, which Saro-Wiwa had made use of, emerged as militants but the leadership were often incapable of controlling them. MOSOP in short was wracked by tensions. There were as Okonta says 'cracks in the pot'. The movement dramatically unravelled along class, gender, generational and clan lines.

What sort of articulation of indigenous identity and political subjectivity did Saro-Wiwa pose? What sort of governable space did it represent? It was clearly one in which territory and oil were the building blocks upon which ethnic difference and indigenous rights were constructed. And yet it was an unstable and contradictory sort of articulation. First, there was no simple sense of 'Ogoniness', no unproblematic unity, and no singular form of political subject (despite Saro-Wiwa's claim that 98 per cent of Ogonis supported him). MOSOP itself had at least five somewhat independent internal strands embracing youth, women, traditional rulers, teachers and Churches. It represented fractious and increasing divided 'we', as the splits and conflicts between Saro-Wiwa and other élite Ogoni confirms.⁸⁷ Second,

he constantly invoked Ogoni culture and tradition, yet he also argued that war and internecine conflict had virtually destroyed the fabric of Ogoni society by 1900.⁸⁸ His own utopia then rested on the reinvention of Ogoni culture and suffered like many reinventions from a quasi-mythic reading of the past, and of Ogoni ur-history. Third, ethnicity was the central problem of post-colonial Nigeria – the corruption of ethnic majorities – and for Saro-Wiwa its panacea (the multiplication of ethnic minority power). To invoke the history of exclusion and the need not simply for ethnic minority inclusion as the basis for federalism, led Saro-Wiwa to ignore the histories and geographies of conflict and struggle among and between ethnic minorities. Saro-Wiwa's brilliance then was in the face of élite opposition (and his own marginal position in the 1980s) to make MOSOP a green, indigenous movement (with international backing and visibility) and to take the movement to the poor and the young to secure a powerful identity. Saro-Wiwa's crowning moment of glory was Ogoni national day on 4 January 1993, when he presided over the birth of the Ogoni flag, the Ogoni anthem and the National Youth Council of the Ogoni People.

Paradoxically Ogoni/MOSOP surfaced as a foundational indigenous movement even though its significance as an oil-producing region was diminishing. By the late 1990s moreover, as a movement it had fallen apart and inter-group struggles deprived it of much of its previous momentum and visibility. But it gave birth to what one might call indigenous movements among oil-producing communities. The same forces have spawned a raft of self-determination indigenous movements among Ijaw (INC, IYV), Isoko (IDU), Urhobo (UPU), Itsekiri (INP), Ogbia (MORETO), among others.⁸⁹ MOSOP itself fell apart precisely as these other movements gained power. Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, there has been a rash of such minority movements across the Delta calling for 'resource control', autonomy and a national sovereign conference to rewrite the Nigerian constitution. At the same time the Delta has become ever more engulfed in civil strife: militant occupations of oil flow stations, pipeline sabotage, intra-urban ethnic violence, and of course the near-anarchy of state security operating in tandem with company security forces.⁹⁰ The shock troops of many of these indigenous movements are youth and women, and the multiplication of ethnic youth movements is one of the most important political developments in contemporary Nigeria. And it is here that the politics of oil-producing communities meet up with the politics of oil-producing indigenous groups.

What does the Ogoni case reveal, then, as a form of governable space? Oil entered an already fraught multi-ethnic polity in which a sort of Ogoni proto-nationalism had emerged from the experience of colonial exclusion and what they saw as subjection to locally dominant ethnic minorities like

the Ijaw. Birabi's ORA movement, the independence struggles of the 1950s, the short-lived Delta Republic in 1966, and the civil war all laid the foundations for the Ogoni movement that was to follow. But it was Saro-Wiwa's particular genius to manufacture a sort of Ogoni unity – in the face of local opposition and his own political weakness – by using international organizations such as the ILO Convention 169 on indigenous peoples and transnational environmental groups like Greenpeace to make MOSOP into a compelling mass movement.⁹¹ Oil was key to this process because it provided an idiom in which claims-making and rights talk could be instigated; oil served as the ground on which claims could be made for corporate compensation and accountability, for resource control and self-determination, for human rights violations, and so on. The emergence of a national debate in Nigeria over resource control in the late 1990s is precisely a product of indigenous claims-making on the state, a process through which ethnic identifications must be discursively and politically produced. The Ogoni case shows that there is no pre-given ethnic identity, and that the space of indigeneity was fragile, heterogeneous and contested.⁹² MOSOP contained all of the tensions of elite rule, and traditional clan power, attached to a popular civic mobilization. Ogoni nationalism with its anthem and flag appeared full-blown in 1993 but within a decade MOSOP was to all intents and purposes moribund. The fortunes of Ogoni governable space, in other words, rose and fell quite dramatically.

MOSOP under Saro-Wiwa's leadership had helped create an indigenous subject and an indigenous space. MOSOP's claims were territorial as a basis for an Ogoni state, and as a way of securing 'their oil'. But these property rights and the boundaries of the territory proved to be hotly contested since they were necessarily exclusivist (Ogoni oil was by definition not Andoni oil). The Ogoni movement, and those that followed, made the politics of territory and property of central concern and it was inevitable that conflicts between differing ethnic groups (each with long histories of conflict and accommodation with other local indigenous groups) would run afoul of the juridical and legal ambiguities surrounding the history of land and land rights. One of the legacies of MOSOP then has been the bitter and often violent inter-ethnic struggles over territory made in the name of custom or tradition or long-term occupancy. There is no doubt that the state and the oil companies exacerbated these conflicts – sometimes deliberately so.⁹³ But the incontestable fact is that land – and the customary institutions such as chieftainship that have regulated it – has become an object of intense conflict. Questions of boundaries and mapping are necessarily central to this territorial struggle. It is for this reason that of some of the inter-ethnic violence takes the form of urban struggles (rather than rural disputes over property or boundaries) over the delineation of electoral wards and the

territorial basis for the creation of new Local Government Areas, all of which are in the service of providing dispersed ethnic groups with a political basis for claiming centrally controlled oil revenues, even if there is not literally oil within their immediate territorial jurisdiction. This is precisely what is at stake in the long-standing conflicts in Warri among the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo communities. At the heart of all of these governable spaces is a profound tension between rule in the name of indigenous institutions or governance practices (decentralized despotism) and the democratic impulses of a civic nationalism.⁹⁴

Indigenous space was powerfully achieved through an imbrication of things and people – oil and ethnicity – and it has been generative of a profusion of indigenous movements. Indigeneity has in this sense unleashed the enormous political energies of ethnic minorities who recapitulate in some respects the post-colonial history of spoils politics in Nigeria. The effect of this multi-ethnic mobilization was the production of political and civic organizations and new forms of governable space; in short a veritable jigsaw of militant particularisms. The Kaiama Declaration in 1999 indicates that there is in the making a pan-ethnic solidarity movement, but its contours are at present limited⁹⁵ and often compromised by the explosion of communal violence. As the Ogoni case shows, much of this visibility and identification turned on the invention and reinvention of tradition and local knowledge, with an eye to the Nigerian constitution and international politics.⁹⁶ This is a case of the multiplication of governable spaces which stand in some tension or even contradiction with each other – they account in part for the explosion of inter-ethnic tensions in the delta – and within the national space of Nigeria, to which I now turn.

Space of Nationalism

One of the striking aspects of the governable spaces of indigeneity as they emerged in the delta is that they become vehicles for political claims, typically articulated as the need for a local government or in some cases a state. Indigeneity necessarily raises the question of a third governable space, that of the nation-state, an entity that pre-existed oil and came to fruition in 1960 at Independence. Oil in this sense became part of the nation-building process – the creation of an ‘oil nation’. Nature and nationalism become inextricably linked. But how did petro-capitalism as a state-led, and thoroughly globalized, development strategy stand in relation to the creation of the governable space called modern Nigeria? Much has been written on the political history of the Nigerian federation and on Nigerian nation-building.⁹⁷ My purpose here is to provide a gloss on a larger argument⁹⁸ that links oil development to nationalism, emphasizing the contradictory role of centralized oil revenues inserted into an already

deeply ethnic policy. On the one hand oil did keep Nigerians together (it purchased a sort of consent among the ethnic majorities). But on the other it has fragmented and destabilized the institutional and political practice of building an oil nation.

Here I want to start with the work of Mamood Mamdani and his observations on post-colonial African politics.⁹⁹ Colonial rule and decentralized despotism were synonymous says Mamdani. The Native Authorities consolidated local class power in the name of tradition (ethnicity) and sustained a racialized view of civic rights. The Nationalist movement had two wings, a radical and a mainstream. Both wished to deracialize civic rights but the latter won out and reproduced the dual legacy of colonialism. They provided civic rights for all Nigerians but a bonus 'customary rights' for indigenous people. The country had to decide which ethnic groups were indigenous and which were not a basis for political representation, a process that became constitutionally mandated in Nigeria. Federal institutions are quota driven for each state but only those indigenous to the state may apply for a quota. As Mamdani puts it:

The effective elements of the federation are neither territorial units called states not ethnic groups but ethnic groups with their own states ... Given this federal character every ethnic group compelled to seek its own home its NA, its own state. With each new political entity the non-indigenes continues to grow.¹⁰⁰

Once law enshrines cultural identity as the basis for political identity, it necessarily converts ethnicity into a political force. As a consequence in Nigeria clashes in the post-colonial period came to be not racial but ethnic, and such ethnic clashes, which have dominated the political landscape in the last three decades, are always at root about customary rights to land, and derivatively to a local government or to a state that can empower those on the ground as ethnically indigenous.

Into this mix – that Mamdani brilliantly outlines – enters oil, that is to say a valuable, centralized (state-owned) resource. It is a national resource on which citizenship claims can be constructed. As much as the state uses oil to build a nation and to develop, so communities use oil wealth to activate community claims on what is seen popularly as unimaginable wealth – black gold. The governable space of Nigeria is as a consequence reterritorialized through ethnic claims making. The result is that access to oil revenues amplifies what I call sub-national political institution making; politics becomes then a *massive state making machine*. The centralization of oil revenues – so-called fiscal centralism – permitted by the decline of derivation and the rise of the Distribution Pool Account meant that state creation was a precondition to gain federal revenues (the DPA accounted

for 66 per cent of all federally collected revenue).¹⁰¹ Only in this way can one understand how, between 1966 and the present, the number of local governments have grown from 50 to over 700, and the number of states from 3 to 36! Nigeria as a modern nation-state has become a machine for the production of ever more local political institutions, and this process is endless.¹⁰² The logic is ineluctable and of course terrifying.

What sort of national governable space emerges from such multiplication, in which incidentally the political entities called states or LGAs (local government areas) become vehicles for massive corruption and fraud – that is to say the disposal of oil revenues? The answer is that it works precisely *against* the creation of a national imagined community of the sort that Ben Anderson saw as synonymous with nationalism.¹⁰³ Nation building, whatever its imaginary properties, whatever its style of imaging, rests in its modern form on a sort of calculation, integration, and state and bureaucratic rationality which the logic of rent seeking, petro-corruption, ethnic spoils politics, and state multiplication works to undermine systematically. Lauren Berlant has said in her study of Nathaniel Hawthorne that every nation – and hence every governable national space – requires a ‘National Symbolic’; a national fantasy which ‘designates how national culture becomes local through images, narratives and movements which circulate in the personal and collective unconsciousness’.¹⁰⁴ My point is that the Nigerian National Symbolic grew weaker and more attenuated as a result of the political economy of oil. There was no sense of the national fantasy at the local level; it was simply a big lie (or a big pocket of oil monies to be raided in the name of indigeneity). At Independence, Obafemi Awolowo, the great western Nigerian politician, said that Nigeria was not a Nation but a ‘mere geographical expression’; 40 years later this remains true but more so.

What we have then is not nation building – understood in the sense of governmentality – or a particular style of imagining but perhaps its reverse; the ‘unimagining’ or deconstruction of a particular sense of national community. Nicos Poulantzas noted that the national or modern unity requires a historicity of a territory and a territorialization of a history.¹⁰⁵ Oil capitalism and its attendant governmentality in Nigeria has achieved neither of these requirements. The governable space called Nigeria was always something of a public secret; 40 years of post-colonial rule has made this secret more public as ethnic segregation has continued unabated and undermined the very idea of the production of governable subjects. The double movement of petro-capitalism within the frame of a modern nation-state has eviscerated the governable space of the nation, it has compromised it and worked against a sense of governable subject. The same incidentally might be said of the impact of oil on the Muslim communities of Nigeria.¹⁰⁶

Oil and identity – people and things – have produced an unimaginable community on which the question of Nigeria's future hangs.

Reflections

The entire history of the petroleum history is, as Daniel Yergin details in his encyclopedic Whig account of the industry *The Prize*, replete with criminality, violence and the worst of frontier capitalism.¹⁰⁷ Graft, autocratic thuggery, and the most grotesque exercise of imperial power are its hallmarks. And it is to be expected in an age of unprecedented denationalization and market liberalization – to say nothing of the horrific rise of the gas-guzzling sports utility vehicle in the United States – the mad scramble to locate the next petrolic El Dorado continues unabated. Eastern Russia looks ever more like a slice of Mafiosi sovereignty. Petro-violence is in any case rarely off the front pages of the press. The Caspian basin reaching from the borders of Afghanistan to the Russian Caucuses is a repository of enormous petro-wealth; Turkmenistan, Kazakstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the southern Russian provinces (Ossetia, Dagestan, Chechnya) have however become, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, a 'zone of civil conflict and war', as the *San Francisco Chronicle* puts it.¹⁰⁸ The oil companies jockey for position in an atmosphere of frontier vigilantism and what the Azerbaijani President calls 'armed conflict, aggressive separatism and nationalism'.

My account questions some of the scholarship – particularly emerging from political science and economics – on the links between conflict and oil. Many of the dynamics noted by Collier and Ross emerge not from oil *per se* but from centralized resource revenues typical of many extractive industries. Both authors tend to steadfastly ignore how oil's contribution to war or authoritarianism builds upon pre-existing (pre-oil) political dynamics. And while oil can and does generate rents, and can and does enhance the military and security budget, and may generate limited employment and linkage effects, the sorts of conflicts and politics that emerge from what I have called the oil complex are spatially heterogeneous and not readily encompassed by the idea of predation, looting or rebellion. My entry point into these economies of violence has been through the governable spaces that emerge from, and are associated with, the oil complex and petro-capitalism – from the coupling of state, company, community and profit. Each governable space is marked by differing sorts of rule in which the oil complex has contributed directly to a restructuring of pre-existing forms of governance. Oil has been a sort of idiom in which new social forces are unleashed, overturning traditional power structures and in some cases generating violent conflict, albeit along a series of rather

different vectors (age, class, ethnicity, and so on). A striking aspect of contemporary development in Nigeria is the simultaneous production of differing forms of rule and governable space, each the product of similar forces, which work against, and often stand in direct contradiction to, one another. Oil may indeed be a curse but its violent history – and its ability to generate conflict – can only be decoded if we are attentive to the unique qualities of oil itself, to the powerful corporate and state institutions for which it becomes a bearer, and not least to the ways in which oil becomes an idiom for doing politics as it is inserted into an already existing political landscape of forces, identities, and forms of power.

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NOTES

1. P. Collier, *The Economic Causes Of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy* (Washington DC: The World Bank 2000).
2. M. Ross, 'Does Oil Hinder Democracy?', *World Politics*, Vol.53 (2001), pp.325–61.
3. <<http://www.state.gov/s/c/rls/pgtrpt/2000>>.
4. Central Intelligence Agency, *Nigeria: Environmental Stresses and Their Impacts Over the Next Decade* (Langley, MD: Central Intelligence Agency, DCI Environmental Center, 2000).
5. US Department of Energy. See <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/nigeria.html>>.
6. J.-C. Servant, *Le Monde diplomatique*, 13 January 2003.
7. <<http://www.iasps.org>>.
8. J. Anderson, 'Blood and Oil', *The New Yorker*, 14 Aug. 2000, pp.46–59.
9. J. Anderson, *New York Times*, 14 Oct. 2001: III, p.1.
10. R. Kapucinski, *Shah of Shahs* (New York: Vintage 1982), p35.
11. R. Vitalis, 'Black Gold, White Crude', *Diplomatic History*, Vol.26, No.2 (2002), p.186.
12. In a long running battle over onshore/offshore oil, the Obasanjo government asked the Supreme Court to intervene to support its position that all resources in territorial waters are derived from the federation. In a compromise the Dichotomy Bill has been sent back to the legislature with new language in which all offshore oil refers a 200 metre isobar limit (most producing fields are located within water depths of 200 metres or less).
13. Economists typically distinguish direct (so-called Dutch Disease) effects in which resource booms lead to recession, and indirect effects through rent seeking and institution building.
14. J. Sachs and A. Warner, *Natural Resource Abundance and Economic Growth*, NBER Working Paper 5398 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research 1995).
15. C. Leite and J. Weidmann, *Does Mother Nature Corrupt?*, IMF Working Paper (Washington DC: IMF 1999) p.29.
16. M. Klare, *Resource wars* (Boston: Beacon Press 2001); T. Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1999). P. Le Billon, 'The Political Ecology of War', *Political Geography*, Vol.20 (2001) pp.561–84; idem, 'Angola's Political Economy of War', *African Affairs* Vol.100 (2001), pp.55–80, provided a compelling critique of the resource abundance and scarcity arguments, and belatedly of much of what passes as environmental security, and explores the vulnerabilities resulting from resource dependence in

- the case of Angola. For an elaborate critique of Homer-Dixon's position, see N.L. Peluso and M. Watts (eds), *Violent Environments* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
17. Ross, 'Does Oil Hinder Democracy?' (note 2) p.357. See also M. Ross, 'The Political Economy of the Resource Curse', *World Politics*, Vol.51 (1999), pp.297–322.
 18. F. Coronil, *The Magic of the State* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1997) p.49.
 19. D. Leonard and S. Strauss, *Africa's Failed Development* (Boulder, CO: Reinner 2003).
 20. Collier's work is an important contribution to the economics of civil war. But it is not clear that oil-dependent economies are any more prone to violence and rebellion than others – see B. Smith, 'Rethinking the Politics of the Resource Curse', paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 2001. Furthermore, there are a number of ways apart from rebellion in which oil politics can appear (and this is part of my concern). Collier tends to forget that the states into which oil revenues are inserted are already weak. What makes oil different is that it generates unearned income that is highly centralizable through institutional alliances between states and corporations.
 21. Le Billon (note 16).
 22. M. Dean, *Governmentality* (London: Sage 1999).
 23. N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom* (London: Cambridge University Press 1999).
 24. See A. Mbembe, 'At the Edge of the World', *Public Culture*, Vol.12, No.1 (2000), pp.259–84.
 25. M. Moore, 'Political Underdevelopment', paper presented at the Conference of the Development Studies Institute, LSE, London, 7–8 Sept. 2000.
 26. I cannot in this article cover all of these forms (this is the subject of a forthcoming book). I do seek to emphasize however that I am focusing on three sorts of territorial oil politics, recognizing that there are other important sites in which petro-coercion (and petro-consent) may emerge. On the latter, I am involved in a research project with Ike Okonta and Von Kemedi comparing the differing dynamics, for example, of six different local oil-producing communities across the Niger Delta.
 27. N. Smith, 'Geography, Difference and the Politics of scale', in J. Doherty, E. Graham and M. Malek (eds), *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences* (London: MacMillan, 1992), pp.57–9; Mbembe (note 24).
 28. Mbembe (note 24) p.280.
 29. Rose (note 23) pp.34–6.
 30. See M. Foucault, *Power* (New York: The New Press 1978/2000); M. Foucault and C. Gordon, *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon Books 1980).
 31. Foucault (note 30) p.211.
 32. Dean (note 22) p.16.
 33. See R.D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, New York 2000).
 34. Rose (note 23) p.21.
 35. 'Accordingly, we need to see things not in terms of the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a society of government; in reality one has a triangle, sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population, and as its essential mechanism the apparatuses of security ... I want to demonstrate the deep historical link between movement that overturns the constants of sovereignty on consequence of the problem of choices of government; the movement that brings about the emergence of population as a datum, a field of intervention ... the process that isolates the economy as a specific sector of reality; and political economy as the science and the technique of intervention of the government in that reality. Three movements – government, population, political economy – that constitute from the eighteenth century onward a solid series, one that even today has assuredly not been dissolved.' Foucault (note 30) p.219, emphasis added.
 36. Rose (note 23) p.21; Dean (note 23).
 37. Some of these Foucauldian ideas have already been productively deployed in the understanding of nature and resource management – what one might call green governmentality – and the relations between nature and nationalism. See B. Braun, 'Producing Vertical Territory', *Ecumene* (July 2000), pp.7–46.
 38. Foucault (note 30), pp. 208–209, emphasis added.

39. Rose (note 23), p.32.
40. Ibid., p.37.
41. Ibid.
42. Rhein quoted in P. Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Cambridge: MIT Press 1989) p.142.
43. Rose (note 23), p.39.
44. I. Okonta, 'The Struggle of the Ogoni for Self-Determination', D.Phil., Oxford University, 2002.
45. T. Turner, 'Women's Uprising Against the Nigerian Oil Industry in the 1980s', *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Vol.14, No.3 (1993), pp.329–57.
46. *New York Times*, 13 Aug. 2002.
47. See O. Ibeanu, '(S)poils of Politics', paper delivered to a Conference on Oil and Human Rights, University of California, Berkeley, 24–26 Jan. 2003.
48. See M. Watts, *Struggles over Geography*, Hettner lectures (Heidelberg: University of Heidelberg 2000); T. Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital: The Growth of Nigerian Private Enterprise* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute 1994); T. Forrest, *Politics and Economic Development in Nigeria* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1995); S.A. Khan, *Nigeria: the Political Economy of Oil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for Oxford Institute for Energy Studies 1994); C. Obi, *The Changing Forms of Identity Politics in Nigeria* (Uppsala: Africa Institute 2001).
49. M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1996).
50. R. Haussman, 'State Landed Property, Oil Rent and Accumulation in Venezuela', PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1981.
51. The current constitutional debate over the onshore-offshore distinction is precisely about the maintenance of the state's ability to 'federally derive' all oil revenues.
52. Since the mid 1980s the Nigerian oil industry has been under pressure to privatize and in 1988 NNPC created 11 subsidiaries. In 1991 new memoranda of understanding were offered to the oil companies but calls to sell off NNPC have not transpired.
53. The derivation principle was first mooted by the Philipson Commission of 1946 which saw it as the principle through which a region would benefit from its non-declared revenue according to its proportional contribution to central revenue. In 1957 the scope of derivation was narrowed by setting up a Distribution Pool Account (DPA) for other taxes not declared regional or federal. From the 1960s onwards there was a progressive enlargement of DPA at the expense of derivation. As oil revenues increased as a proportion of national wealth so the share of derivation to the states has plummeted (from 50 per cent in 1960 to 3 per cent in the 1980s). See A. Adebayo, *Embattled Federalism* (New York: Peter Lang 1993).
54. In addition there are a number of special revenue accounts created by the state for specific development purposes for the Niger Delta deploying oil revenues; the Petroleum Fund (set up in the Abacha years), OMPADEC (Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission) and now the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) established by Obasanjo. All have been the source of spectacular corruption and waste, deployed to buy consent among increasingly angry Delta constituencies.
55. See Khan (note 48); G. Frynas, 'Legal Change in Africa: Evidence from Oil Related Litigation in Nigeria', *Journal of African Law*, Vol.43, No.2, 1999, pp.121–50.
56. See M. Watts, 'Oil as Money', in S. Corbridge, R. Martin and N. Thrift (eds), *Money, Power and Space* (London: Blackwell, 1994), pp.406–46.
57. Coronil (note 18), p.49.
58. Ibid.
59. Dean (note 22) p.209.
60. Nembe in its macro-usage refers to six towns (Bassimbiri, Ogbolomabiri, Okpoama, Odioma and Akassa) that are part of sixteen towns that comprise Nembe Kingdom. For the purposes of this article however Nembe town refers to Ogbolomabiri only.
61. See V. Kemedi, 'Oil on Troubled Waters', *Berkeley Environmental Politics Working Papers*, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 'The Bakassi Boys: The Legitimization of Murder and Torture', *HRW/CLEEN*, Vol.14, No.5(A) (May 2002), pp.1–45. See also Human Rights Watch, 'Testing Democracy', *Human Rights Watch*, Vol.15, No.9 (April 2003). The data for the case study was collected during a visit to the Niger delta in January and February 2001. I also rely on the assistance on Von Kemedi and his work (this note) and the Nembe Peace Commission,

- see M. Alagoa, *The Report of the Nembe Peace and Reconciliation Committee* (Port Harcourt 2001).
62. The war canoe houses were the units of the kingdom's defence forces. A war canoe house consisted of the head of the house and a formidable number of able-bodied men who were responsible for defending the house and the King.
 63. There is a long running dispute over kingly authority that has spilled over into the establishment of local government areas (LGAs). In this essay I do not address the conflicts between Bassambiri and Ogbolamabiri (two contiguous towns) over the authority of their respective paramount chiefs, and disputes over LGA territory (and hence access to oil rents). This has also been generative of conflict and violence and contributes to the ethos of violence that I describe here.
 64. Alagoa (note 61); Human Rights Watch (note 61).
 65. Human Rights Watch (note 61).
 66. Alagoa (note 61); NDWC, *Mediation and Conflict Resolution of the Crisis in Nembe* (Port Harcourt: Niger Delta Wetlands Commission 2000).
 67. A. Blok, *The Mafia in a Sicilian Village* (Waveland: Prospect Heights 1974).
 68. See Putnam (note 33).
 69. Foucault (note 30) pp.208–209.
 70. See A. Brysk, *A. From Tribal Village to Global Village* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press 2000); D. Nelson, *Finger in the Wound* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1999).
 71. B. Naanen, 'Oil Producing Minorities and the Restructuring of Nigerian Federalism', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol.33, No.1 (1995), pp.46–58.
 72. As constitutional preparations were made for the transition to home rule, non-Igbo minorities throughout the Eastern Region appealed to the colonial government for a separate rivers state. Ogoni representatives lobbied the Willink Commission in 1958 to avert the threat of exclusion within an Ibo-dominated regional government which had assumed self-governing status in 1957 but minority claims were ignored, see U. Okpu, *Ethnic Minority Problems in Nigerian Politics* (Stockholm: Wiksell 1977); M. Okilo, *Derivation: A Criterion of Revenue Allocation* (Port Harcourt: Rivers State Newspaper Corporation 1980).
 73. The Ogoni and other minorities petitioned in 1974 for the creation of a new Port Harcourt State within the Rivers State boundary (Naanen (note 71), p.63).
 74. According to the Nigerian Government estimates, Ogoniland currently (1995) produces about 2 per cent of Nigerian oil output and is the fifth largest oil-producing community in Rivers State. Shell maintains that total Ogoni oil output is valued at \$5.2bn before costs.
 75. Cited in T. Furro, 'Federalism and the Politics of Revenue Allocation in Nigeria', PhD Dissertation, Clark Atlanta University, 1992, p.282; see also O. Douglas and I. Okonta, *Where Vultures Feast* (San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club 2001).
 76. *Village Voice*, 21 Nov. 1995, p.21.
 77. J. Hammer, 'Nigerian Crude', *Harpers Magazine* (June 1996), p.61.
 78. A. Ikein, *The Impact of Oil on a Developing Country* (New York: Praeger 1990).
 79. The oil companies claim that sabotage accounts for a large proportion (60 per cent) of the spills, since communities gain from corporate compensation. Shell claims that 77 of 111 spills in Ogoniland between 1985 and 1994 were due to sabotage (Hammer (note 77)). According to the government commission, however, sabotage accounts for 30 per cent of the incidents but only 3 per cent of the quantity spilled. Furthermore, all oil-producing communities claim that compensation from the companies for spills has been almost non-existent.
 80. Rainforest Action Network, *Human Rights and Environmental Operations Information on the Royal Dutch/Shell Group of Companies* (London: RAI 1997); Human Rights Watch, *The Price of Oil* (Washington DC: Human Rights Watch 1999).
 81. Cited in Naanen (note 71), p.66.
 82. K. Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria* (Port Harcourt: Saros International Publishers 1992).
 83. K. Saro-Wiwa, *On A Darkling Plain* (Port Harcourt: Saros Publishers 1989) p.11.
 84. Human Rights Watch (note 80); Okonta (note 44).
 85. I. Okonta, 'When Citizens Revolt, unpublished manuscript, University of California, Berkeley, 2003.

86. E. Osaghae, 'The Ogoni Uprising', *African Affairs*, Vol.94 (1995), p.334.
87. *Ogoni Crisis?* (Lagos, Ministry of Information, Nigerian Federal Government, 1996). Saro-Wiwa was often chastised by Gokana (he himself was Bane) since most of the Ogoni oil was in fact located below Gokana soil. In other words on occasion the key territorial unit became the clan or clan territory rather than a sense of pan-Ogoni territory.
88. *Ibid.*, p.14.
89. Obi (note 48).
90. The US State Department, for example, refers to the minority and anti-oil movements as 'terrorist' and to the youth movements as undemocratic; a recent CIA report sees the problems as a result of 'environmental stresses'. Even those who champion the role of civic associations have seen the events of the last decade in the Delta as 'negative' and 'perverse' (Augustine Ikelegbe, 'The Perverse Manifestation of Civil Society: Evidence from Nigeria', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol.39, No.1 (2001), pp.1-24). Such assessments misconstrue the history and dynamics of the relations between extraction, the environment and identity politics. But such judgements certainly do grasp the gravity of the crisis in the Delta.
91. C. Bob, 'Merchants of Morality', *Foreign Policy* (2002), pp.36-45.
92. See T. Li, 'Images of Community', *Development and Change* 27 (1996), pp.501-27.
93. See Human Rights Watch (note 80).
94. I have focused here on the making of community and the intra-communal (ethnic) conflicts that so often attended indigenous mobilization. But this in no sense exhausts the violence that has occurred in relation to ethnic mobilization around oil. Here the appalling record of the state security forces, the federal military and the private security forces of the oil companies have much to do with the brutality suffered by oil-producing communities and ethnic youth movements. This conflict has also contributed to the making of community, to the hardening of particular solidarities (however awful has been the record of the security forces in Ogoniland or the federal troops who slaughtered over 2000 in Odi in Baylesa State in 1999). I have focused here more on forms of governable space engendered by the intersection of oil and ethnicity – indigeneity examined from within so to say – and less on the state and company responses. See Human Rights Watch (note 80).
95. See Douglas and Okonta (note 75); Environmental Rights Action, *The Emperor has No Clothes* (Benin: Environmental Rights Action 2000).
96. Nelson (note 70).
97. See R. Suberu, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria* (Washington DC: USIP 2001).
98. See M. Watts, 'Economies of Violence', *Politique Africaine*, forthcoming.
99. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject* (note 49); M. Mamdani, *When Victims becomes Killers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2000).
100. M. Mamdani, 'When does a Settler become a Native?', Inaugural Lecture, University of Cape Town, manuscript, 1998, p.7.
101. E. Anugwom, 'Federalism, Fiscal Centralism and the Realities of Democratization in Nigeria', paper delivered to the Conference on Africa at the Crossroads, UNESCO, 2001, <www.ethnonet-africa.org/pubs/crossroadsed1.htm>.
102. At least three different states have been proposed for the broadly construed Ogoni area, for example.
103. B. Anderson, 'Nationalism, Identity and the World-in-Motion', in P. Cheah and B. Robbins (eds), *Cosmopolitics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
104. L. Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1991) p.61.
105. N. Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (London: New Left Books 1978).
106. M. Watts, 'Islamic Modernities?', in J. Holston (ed.), *Cities and Citizenship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1998), pp.67-102; Watts (note 48).
107. D. Yergin, *The Prize* (New York: Random House 1991).
108. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 August 1998, p.A8.