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THE RENTIER STATE STRUCTURE AND ITS EFFECTS ON VIOLENT
INTERNAL CONFLICTS -NIGERIA AS A CASE OF STUDY

-بنية الدولة الريعية وتأثيراتها على النزاعات الداخلية العنيفة -نيجيريا نموذجاً

LA STRUCTURE DE L'ÉTAT RENTIER ET SES EFFETS SUR LES CONFLITS
INTERNES VIOLENTS - LE NIGÉRIA COMME EXEMPLE -

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Abstract :

The study discusses the effects of the rentier state structure on the violent conflict in Nigeria in general and the Niger Delta region in particular, the study focuses on four basic elements, namely the theoretical discussions about the relationship between wealth and conflict, especially those that emerged after the end of the 1980s and coincided with new discussions in the field of international conflicts regarding the nature of conflict and its main actors. Furthermore, the study highlights the geopolitics of resources and the intersections of wealth and identity in Nigeria, as we review the ethnic, religious composition of Nigeria and how the rentier state structure has affected the ethnic tension. In the third part of the study, we focus on the levels of authoritarianism and the nature of the ruling elite as an outlet for the rentier state structure, while in the last part the study deals with the governance and distribution of resources and how the rentier state structure produces unstable and fragile economic systems.

Keywords : Rentier state, Intra-conflict, oil, Nigeria

الملخص:

تناقش الدراسة تأثيرات بنية الدولة الريعية على النزاع العنيف في نيجيريا عموماً و منطقة دلتا النيجر خصوصاً، يركز المقال على أربعة عناصر أساسية وهي النقاشات النظرية حول العلاقة بين الثروة والنزاع خاصة تلك التي برزت بعد نهاية الثمانيات ، والتي تزامنت مع نقاشات جديدة في حقل النزاعات الدولية حول طبيعة النزاع، مستوياته وفواعله، بعدها تتطرق الدراسة لجيوبوليتيك الموارد وتقاطعات الثروة والهوية في نيجيريا، إذ نستعرض التركيبة الإثنية والدينية والعرقية لنيجيريا وكيف أثرت بنية الدولة الريعية في تحريك النعرات الإثنية والهوياتية. في الجزء الرابع من الدراسة نركز على مستويات السلطوية وطبيعة النخبة الحاكمة كمخرج لبنية الدولة الريعية، أما في الجزء الأخير تتناول الدراسة حوكمة الموارد وتوزيعها وكيف تفرز بنية الدولة الريعية أنظمة اقتصادية هشة وغير مستقرة .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدولة الريعية، النزاعات الداخلية، النفط، نيجيريا.

Résumé

L'étude examine les effets de la structure de l'État rentier sur le conflit violent au Nigéria en général et dans la région du delta du Niger en particulier, l'article se concentre sur quatre éléments de base, à savoir les discussions théoriques sur la relation entre richesse et conflit, en particulier celles qui ont émergé après la fin des années 1980, et qui ont coïncidé avec de nouvelles discussions dans le domaine des différends internationaux sur La nature du conflit, ses niveaux et ses acteurs,

puis l'étude traite de la géopolitique des ressources et des intersections de la richesse et de l'identité au Nigéria, alors que nous examinons la composition ethnique, religieuse et ethnique du Nigéria et comment la structure de l'État rentier a affecté le mouvement des conflits ethniques et identitaires. Dans la quatrième partie de l'étude, nous nous concentrons sur les niveaux d'autoritarisme et la nature de l'élite dirigeante en tant que débouché pour la structure de l'État rentier, tandis que dans la dernière partie, l'étude traite de la gouvernance et de la distribution des ressources et de la manière dont la structure de l'État rentier produit des systèmes économiques fragiles et instables.

Mots clés : État rentier, conflits internes, pétrole, Nigéria.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union new form of conflict emerged, within new theories and different assumptions and perceptions. The main change was related to the level of conflict, which transformed from inter-state to intra-state and from the state as an actor to non-state actors. Besides that, researchers have observed the rise of new conflict agenda like identity, ethnicity, and resources, that affected the political and social structure of the state, and influenced its stability. Therefore, scholars had a curiosity towards this new phenomenon and tried to find new tools that enable them to understand this transformation with suitable theoretical frameworks. One of the significant arguments that resulted from conflict literature and debate was the relationship between wealth and stability in the African countries, and the impacts of oil revenues on intra-state conflicts.

The paradox of natural resources and conflict in Africa has been the basis of many researches, as the past two decades have

witnessed an increase in theoretical debates about the relationship between natural resources and conflict. The resource factor assumed a central position in understanding conflicts in Africa, especially with the increase of conflict intensity within and between countries. The relationship between conflict and resources in Africa was described as a complex, especially after independence and the formation of the national state, where new dimensions appeared in the nature of conflict over resources such as the identity component, rentier state, grievance narratives, and ecological degradation. One of the most relevant samples of the oil-conflict hypothesis is Nigeria, a regional power in West Africa, and one the world biggest exporter of natural resources.

Thus, the study focusses on the rentier state productivity of intra- conflict, Niger Delta case of study, and deal with the following research questions: to what extent the structure of rentier state produces internal conflict in Nigeria? Does the abundance of natural resources particularly

oil, motivate Intra conflicts? To dismantle the research question, the study has been divided into four main parts, the first one highlights the theoretical discussion that elaborates on the relation between resources and conflicts. The second part deals with the geopolitics of oil in Nigeria and the intersections between wealth and identity. The third part focuses on the authoritarianism and the political conflict in the Niger Delta. The fourth part clarifies the mismanagement of oil revenues, poor economic governance, and its impact on conflict in Niger Delta.

Theoretical Debate on Resources and Conflicts:

Before the late 1980s, there was a conventional wisdom linking two variables, which are - natural resources and development, many researchers argued that resources positively influence development paths. For example, the geographer Norton Ginsburg argued in the 1950s that “owning natural resources is an advantage for any country that embarks on rapid economic growth.” Many economists have expressed similar views. Development expert Walter Rostow went (Walter Rostow) in the 1960s and even further, argued that endowments of natural resources would enable developing countries to move from underdevelopment to industrial takeoff, such as Australia, the United States and Great Britain.¹

However, with the beginning of the nineties, various literature and studies reviewed the effects of resource abundance and the increasing dependence of the state on resources, and they were linked to three basic dependent variables: the low level of economic growth, the low level of democracy, and the high probability of civil war and conflict.²

Literature deduces a relationship between resource abundance and important political-economic outcomes. Rentier state theory claims that resource abundance causes weak state institutions. It argues that oil rent causes different structural problems like authoritarianism, corruption, and conflict. More specifically the study adopts the rentier state and conflict approach, Fearon and Laitin, Collier, and Hoeffler illustrate the statements of the relationship between resource abundance and internal conflict. Theories of grievance: take ideology, and injustice more seriously. It sees conflict as a result of exploitation, social injustice and the distribution of wealth between people. Also, the conflict is considered by this theory as an attempt to restore the gap by violent tools, because weak states are unable to protect the rights of its citizens, and sometimes the state is being part of the problem and an actor in the conflict.³

Johan Galtung's theory explained more the relation by making a clear difference between three kinds of violence which are: structural violence, cultural violence, and direct Violence. Structural violence occurs when some groups, ethnicities, citizens, etc. are supposed to have, and in fact do have, access to different gains like resources, goods or opportunities. etc. This injustice creates an unequal system where its parts are not the same. Structural violence theory examines how structures (political, economic and cultural) produce the lack of basic human needs. Moreover, the theory tries to connect two main factors, which are, personal suffering and the structure options. Johan Galtung's argues that violence “conflict” is not a direct

personal act but an outcome of unjust distribution of resources and goods.⁴

Political economy researchers also presented a different perspective and explanation to the relation between resources and conflicts such as the works of Paul Collier and Anke Hoffler, or what is known as the World Bank's perspective - the hypothesis of greed and grievance - which emphasize on the behavior and motivation of armed movements, and their effect on internal stability. In this regard, political economy studies can be divided into two main parts, namely: micro studies that focus on armed groups, and the macro studies that focus on different analytical aspects such as the state and the international system. Interior based on studying the impact of capitalist wealth distribution on the path of political and economic modernization in the third world countries.⁵

The macro-analyzes of the political economy of conflict is one that focuses on a structure completely different from the international system, namely the state. It is concerned with studying the impact of the rentier nature of the African state on the internal security equation and internal stability, also known as the rentier approach and conflict, which is concerned with state behavior and addresses intermediate variables between resource and conflict. Where a group of researchers studied the impact of oil wealth on policy formulation, and research efforts began to analyze the relationship of rent with democracy and institutional effectiveness, but scientific efforts developed to monitor the impact of the institutional repercussions of rent on internal stability. This approach will be used to understand how the rentier nature of

Nigerian states produced conflict specifically in Niger Delta.⁶

Nigeria as a Rentier State:

Understanding the rentier nature of the Nigerian state leads us to the Nigerian oil capabilities and the structural political and socio-economic problems that are linked to rent. According to Hassan Mahdawi, the "rentier state" is the country that "earns money from abroad. " The rentier state in this sense depends on the income that is not obtained through production but from foreign income. This approach considers the income from oil as a rent from oil companies, which are unearned external rents that are not generated from production processes, meaning that the state subsists or depends on its income on the foreign economy.⁷

In this regard, Dr. Saleh Yasser also argued that "the rentier state is the one that relies in its management of state affairs on revenues from abroad, whether it obtained these revenues through selling raw material (a rentier state) or meeting the provision of strategic services or by imposing taxation. It is noteworthy that these revenues are not obtained through large labor in the local economy. What distinguishes this type of countries is that they impede the democratic transformation and prevent the development of society."⁸

Researchers elaborated the nature of the relationship between rent and the form of governance, and many of the findings argue that the rentier state often fall into the disease of authoritarianism through a set of mechanisms, namely: the mechanism of rentier dependency, the mechanism for imposing repression, modernization mechanism. These three factors mean

dependence on non-tax and non-productive incomes, and when the modernization and concentration of income are in the hands of the state, that leads to the denial of public opinion participation and the concentration of power in the hands of a small group of controllers.⁹

The Nigerian government's reliance on oil production as an economic pillar and its reliance on international oil companies has plunged Nigerian economy and politics into a rentier trap. The rentier nature of the state greatly affected democracy, as it led to an imbalance in the fairness of the distributional of wealth, furthermore, the rent contributed to strengthening the authoritarian control of power by the successive military, which produced a closed political system that posed a direct threat to the unity of an ethnically diverse state. This tyrannical control the distribution of wealth in the country, based mainly on the lack of transparency in distribution, coinciding with special treatment for oil companies operating in the oil sector, and enhancing the centralization of revenue distribution through an unequal system. The tyrannical control has its effect on state-society relation as well, it established a "one-waydirection" where the state has a distributive function and society has a receiver of state donations.

Geopolitics of oil in Nigeria; Wealth and Ethnicity Intersections

Geographically, Nigeria is located in southwestern Africa, with an area of 923,768 squares kilometers, almost four times the size of the United Kingdom - the old colonialist -. The country has borders with Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon

in the east, Niger in the north and the Gulf of Guinea in South, Nigeria has a population of 200 million (according to United Nations statistics in 2019), making it the seventh most populous country in the world. Hausa, and Igbo, and the number of ethnic groups in Nigeria is estimated at about 250 different ethnic and linguistic groups. The name Nigeria is taken from the Niger River, which runs through the country. It is alleged that this name was given by British journalist Flora Shaw, wife of Frederick Lugard (British governor), in the late nineteenth century.¹⁰

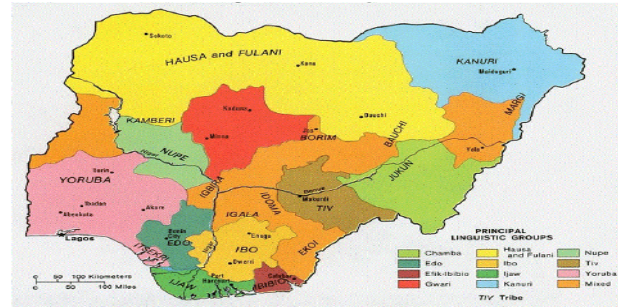
Politically, Nigeria is a federal republic with a presidential system consisting of 37 states in addition to the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Each state has a (unicameral) legislature and an elected governor appointed by the executive council. The head of state is the head of government and supreme commander of the armed forces. The Constitution of Nigeria provides for the separation of powers of the three branches (the executive, legislative and judicial branches). The National Assembly is bicameral, consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The country has a legal system consisting of English common law, Islamic law (in 12 northern states) and traditional law, and Sharia law has been established as the main source of civil and criminal laws in 9 Muslim-majority states and in some parts of 3 Muslim pluralistic states since 1999.¹¹

Economically, Nigeria is a natural resource abundant country ; it has the world's tenth largest proven reserves and one of the top ten producers in the world and the first in Africa. Oil is very significant aspect of the Nigerian economy, that is why both production and exports increased

enormously. Furthermore, oil revenue increased from 26.3 percent in 1970 to 85.8 percent in 2005.¹² The revenue from oil approximately accounts for 92 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).¹³

Ethnically, Nigeria is a rich country in terms of ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity, it is described as an ethnic, racial and religious pluralism, as it is divided ethnically into a majority and a minority. The different ethnic groups in Nigeria are defined on the basis of kinship in terms of traditions, origins, their connections and cultural similarities. It constitutes a unique example of the dichotomy of wealth and identity. This feature has turned, through different stages of Nigeria's political and identity history, an obstacle in the way of development and national integration. After independence and with the discovery of oil, the economic and political situation became more complicated, as Nigeria gradually transformed from an oil-producing country to a rentier state affected by the negative impact of wealth. These outcomes were embodied in the way resources are managed, the imbalance in the variables of political power and wealth in the country, as well as the related ethno-political and socio-economic problems.¹⁴

*Ethnicmap of Nigeria



Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Nigeria-Map-showing-the-Ethnic-Groups-Constituents_fig1_290211693

Geopolitically, the wealth of Nigeria is situated in the south East of the country exactly in the Niger Delta, the main oil-producing region of Nigeria, the region is rich in both renewable and nonrenewable natural resources. 95 percent of the total revenue for the Nigerian government is generated from oil and gas exploration. The region is heterogeneous, multicultural, and ethnically diverse with a very high population of more than 30 million people.¹⁵ Despite the importance of oil in the Nigerian economy and wide revenues gained by the Nigerian state from its sales, oil production creates a huge structural problem and caused what is called paradoxes of the plenty. Rich land and poor people, high revenues but at the same time high levels of socio-economic inequality. Thus, oil exploration and the rentier nature of the Nigerian state caused a long-term conflict between the local communities, Nigerian government and oil companies.¹⁶

*Map Showing the Nine States Constituting Nigeria Niger Delta Region.



Source: <https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/nigeria-pro-biafrans-next-boko-haram-if-they-join-forces-niger-delta-militants-1521525>

Nigeria has faltered in transforming resource-rich and ethnic diversity into real development. Right after its independence from the British occupation in 1960, Nigeria faced many structural challenges. On the political level, Nigeria suffered for long periods of military rule and its repercussions. Economically, it transformed from a productive economy based on agriculture and fishing to a distributive economy based mainly on natural resources mainly oil and gas. Socially, ethnic, religious and tribal diversity has increased the distortion of social structures and the network of relationships between individuals within society, and accordingly Nigeria has known many years of civil wars and conflicts that stop once to break out again, perhaps the most dangerous conflicts in Nigeria were those that were intertwined factors of wealth, ethnicity, and religion, resulting in overlapping forms of conflict and high degrees of violence, for example, the conflict over natural resources in the Niger Delta region. The Niger Delta region is a strong example that proves the hypothesis based on two variables, namely resources and conflict, as the region suffers from high degrees of violence. It is home to 140 ethnic groups; this diversity has often

led to competition for economic and political benefits and the intensity of tensions, especially since the region benefits from only 13 percent of the national oil revenues. The Niger Delta region also represents a paradox or the model called by Michael Ross "resource curse." On the one hand, the region is considered one of the richest regions in Nigeria and the world in terms of wealth, and on the other hand, it represents the poorest regions if the per capita daily income is \$ 1.

Socioeconomically, The Niger Delta is facing developmental challenges, which are neatly convoluted with patterns of violent conflict and instability. Moreover, it was observed that those challenges are multi-dimensional, including different actors with up and down dynamics of conflict.¹⁷ Also the ethnological fractionalization of Nigeria, including, religion, ethnicity and language can be major aspects which will complicate the conflict more¹⁸ therefore there is an overlap between the ethnicity, resources and conflict in Nigeria.

Authoritarianism as An Outcome of The Rentier State in Nigeria:

One of qualitative rentier state theory argument is the connection between oil and democracy. Ross argues that oil wealth blocks democracy. He set up a strong argument that oil wealth makes political regimes less democratic. Furthermore, he claims that the main impact of oil is to secure and guarantee autocratic supporters in power, thus oil may minimize democracies by disrupting the electoral process, therefore building a weak and corrupted institutions.¹⁹

In this part, the article focuses on three main aspects the taxation and spending effect, elite, institutions and their impacts on conflict dynamics in Niger Delta.

Taxation and spending effect: It indicate that when governments have high and enough revenues from the sale of oil, the taxes system will be very low or it might be canceled, which means that less demand and less representation in the parliament, also high revenues led to what we called spending effect which means high revenue high spending, therefore, less effort for democratization.²⁰ The oil revenues in Nigeria helped the government and local communities to build political networks, which guarantee their position in power. Moreover, the corrupted political system caused new challenges for resolving the conflict in Niger Delta, because it seeks for a self-interest more than seeking for the national interest.²¹

Another important aspect of understanding the impact of oil –democracy on conflict is what is called the group formation effect. Some scholars argue that the oil revenues hamper the formation of social groups, which might raise the political awareness and ask for civil and political rights. The absence of such social groups led to power centralization in which state became ruled by a small group that reproduce themselves by dominating oil revenues and state power. Politics in Nigeria is highly personalized and factionalized, in the absence of strong institutions, which after affected the conflict resolution and management, due to the absence of a coherent national ruling class.²²

In addition to analyzing the political dynamics and interactions it is necessary to know the main actors in the Nigerian political system and their nature, therefore

this part focuses on the elites which have the power and the influence through multiple levels the nature of elites (Military or civil) (national or international), (governmental or non-governmental?) ...etc. The Nigerian political elite is an output of Nigeria's troubled politics, its origins go back to the colonial educational and socio-political system, which adopts the western values against the Nigerian values. Furthermore, after the independence of Nigeria, the elite had a lack of vision and failed in building a common ideology and sense of belonging to the Nigerian nation. This was mainly caused by the politicization of ethnicity and religion. Therefore, these circumstances produced divided elite, which raised political opportunism.²³ The elite was not a part of the solution, but a part of the problem, which increased the intensity of the conflict in Niger Delta.²⁴ Another issue concerning the elite in Nigeria, which is "the militarized elite" In this concern, Ross argues that there are at least two reasons why resource wealth might lead to larger military forces elite. The first one is self-interest improving the self-defense and the capacity to respond militarily also get rid of the constant fear of the others and their pressure so this is what an authoritarian government will do so. The second reason is that resource wealth provokes ethnic conflict.²⁵ Therefore, from this theoretical perspective we can understand the militarization of elite in Nigeria and determine the relation between a Petro-state, militarized elite and conflict.

Babatunde A. Ahonsi mentioned an important factor which is governance and weak state, he says" It is legitimate to question whether the Nigerian state could lead and implement an effective response to the Niger Delta conflict. This is because

such a response clearly requires strong capacity to plan, implement and monitor a complex series of interventions over a sustained period, which the Nigerian state has increasingly shown itself to be lacking. Recently developed research-based indices of state weakness, constructed according to relative performance of the core functions of statehood, all classify Nigeria as a critically weak or fragile state”.²⁶

Rentier State/ Mismanagement of Oil Revenues and Socioeconomic Impacts

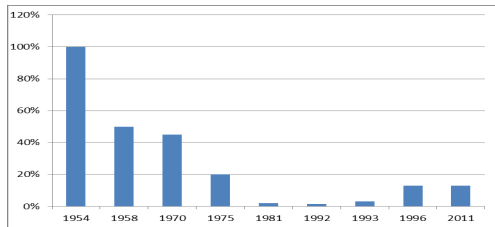
The connection between natural resource and conflicts are taken from the rentier economy debate. Its main predictions are that the challenge for more control on resource rents causes severe confrontations within groups in the state. So, many scholars argue that there is a strong connection between the pattern of resource management and distribution and political stability; moreover, states that are incapable of distributing the revenues equally will experience more conflicts and less development. For example, The Niger Delta's abundant natural resources might be an important factor for the region development and prosperity, nonetheless the Niger Delta is one of the poorest regions in the world so it represents the paradox of low development and rich resources,²⁷ the oil industry weakened development and ecological degradation.²⁸

There is an anger among people in Niger Delta because of the high oil production, which affected the environment and the daily life of people, the basic economic income was from agriculture and fishing, and other needs such as water, plants, animals...etc. scholars argue that this

situation has led to insufficiency, poverty and other socioeconomic challenges, which produced a conflictual situation in Niger Delta.²⁹ Another argument, which clarifies the economic problems in Niger Delta, is an outcome of the established connection of interest between the Nigerian state and oil companies, which push the state to use violent measures against communities. The multinational oil companies have an important place and influential role in Nigeria's political economy and sometimes have an advantage over the State, its economic power may exceed that of the state.³⁰

We note that the process of managing resources and revenues in Nigeria went through turbulent phases in which two main factors affected the ethno-political and socio-economic context, in addition to the nature of the actors in the governance equation and wealth management. The main problem of the revenue allocation system in Nigeria is how to develop an acceptable formula, including the rates and principles that help to achieve justice and equity. Consequently, the resource revenue distribution system has sparked controversy, dissatisfaction, and suspicion against the North, especially among the main southern ethnic groups and minorities in oil-producing communities.³¹ Southern groups claim that the revenue allocation was largely driven by ethno-political considerations. Dissatisfaction with the revenue distribution system has become so severe that some southern groups have called for fundamental restructuring of Nigeria, as the revenue distribution system is unfair and does not advance the achievement of national goals.

***The changes in the revenue allocation system in Nigeria from 1954-2011**



Source: Tantua, Ben, Oil Governance in the Niger Delta Exploring the role of the Militias, Bath University.

Looking at the role of the actors, we find two basic problems: the foreign actor and the military actor, as we note that the technical committees that are the legal and advisory reference specified for the principles and frameworks of the distribution process, most of their heads were from the colonial administration, while adopting distribution law and resolution they did not consider the national interest of the Nigerian federation in the first place, but they also had considered the colonial state interest and how to perpetuate the British influence in Nigeria, especially after the discovery of oil, and we also note that the problem of distributing resource revenues was mainly related to the committees' perception on the importance of wealth and the principles on which they relied for the distribution of revenues, the rules had been changed structurally as the nature of the resource changed from non-oil resources to oil resources,. This contributed to conflict erupt in the region, and successive committees have also failed to define the normative frameworks that should guide revenue sharing in an ethnocentric society.

It is also important to note that the revenue allocation approach has contributed to generating ethno-political conflicts and

threatening institutional stability in the country. However, it is equally important to mention two factors that helped the most in the already precarious situation: the rise of military rule that created a great opportunity for the army to govern for thirty-five years, and the period immediately following the civil war, which coincided with the era of the oil boom, which led to a deep institutional corruption crisis.³²

As a result of these developments, a controversial discourse emerged about the resource management within the Niger Delta region, which was based on three main arguments: the essence of federalism, land and resources ownership and the challenge of development. The defensive interactive mobilization approach explained the dynamics of the distribution of societal resources (wealth, power and status) within the state and argued that any defect in the distributional process of resources may lead to frustration and a feeling of inequality, which may lead also to the division of society into two opposing parts, the center and the periphery, as it represents the active center influencing and controlling the resource management process. As for the parties, they may be the communities that own the resource, but are not satisfied or not benefiting from the revenues. The pioneers of this trend believe that the continuation of an unfair policy may push the "parties" to change their behavior and move within a collective framework that may be violent, to correct the existing status-quo.³³

Finally, we conclude that resource management is a structural problem in understanding the conflict over oil in the Niger Delta, which cannot be separated or understood outside the framework of building the Nigerian state as a whole.

Interpretations of the causes of conflict differ in the Niger Delta region, but a large part of the population of the Niger Delta region tends to link the conflict in the distribution of oil revenues, as they see the problem of resource control as a structural factor. Cyril Obi points out that solving the problem of monitoring and distributing oil revenues is an indispensable condition for achieving peace and development in the region, because the revenue sharing formula adopted by Nigeria is the main reason for most Conflicts in the region, and conflict resolution is mainly related to the government's ability to solve the problem of resource distribution and control.³⁴

In recent years the complication, violence of the conflict has been increasing, especially, as communities of the Delta have become highly combatant, with armed and violent groups which started systematically organized movements against the government and oil companies to achieve their demands.³⁵ The international community also stands to gain a lot from local understanding about the Niger Delta environment and how its people have responded to ecological challenges over time.³⁶ Socio-economically, environmental degradation has produced other problems such as unemployment and poverty, as the oil spill caused the decline of some traditional jobs and changed the activity and socioeconomic status of the local communities in the Niger Delta, like agriculture and fishing, which is a symbol of economic strength and social prestige in local communities.³⁷

3- Conclusion:

The study concludes that the rentier state structure and the problems associated with it in Nigeria began since the British colonial era, which contributed to building the state on the basis of historical distortions, that resulted structural problems of an ethno-political, socio-economic nature. The study focused on understanding the set of political consequences mainly the nature of the ruling elites, the weakness of institutions and the absence of the spirit of federalism, economically, the study concluded that the oil was an obstacle toward economic diversification and empowered the corrupted client networks that benefit from the rentier system. Ethnically, the study found that the rentier state structure increases ethnic tension, especially when ethnicity is politicized and wealth distribution is based on an ethno political preferences. Therefore, the conflict in the Niger Delta has fed through many stages of these contradictions resulting from the rentier state structure, and violence gradually increased with demands for separatism.

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