

# DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNMENTALITY\*

Michael Watts

Institute of International Studies, University of California,  
Berkeley, California, USA

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The subjectivity of individuals, the so-called speakers and hearers of political discourse, who actually, or even ideally, populate a state, needs to be understood in terms of enunciative modalities – the statuses, sites, and positions – of their existence as political subjects. Enunciative modalities refer to the ways a discursive practice is attached to bodies in space (Clifford, 2001:56).

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 (Rose, 1999:34-36)?

An invitation to celebrate a birthday – the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Singapore Journal of*

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\* I have deliberately retained the spoken character of the lecture which I delivered at the Los Angeles Association of American Geographers Meeting.

*Tropical Geography* in this case – is inevitably an enticement to return to the museum, always disorganised and incomplete, that is our memory of the past. To reflect upon the achievements and the complex genealogies of a journal now a half-century old, born within the British imperium in 1953 as *The Malayan Journal of Tropical Geography (MJTG)*, is to conjure up, for me at least, the name of Paul Wheatley, a founding editor of *MJTG* and a teacher of mine at University College London in the late 1960s. Recollecting the first occasion on which I heard him speak – a characteristically vivid account of the historical geography of Malaya – is to relive my own fascination with the tropics and to revisit Wheatley's own scholarly luminosity, a lecture laced with words I did not understand, delivered in a wonderful west country brogue with which I could identify (that originated not far from my own village) and, above all, exuding a theoretical and historical *élan* that registered his own cosmopolitan intellectual biography. In his own way, Wheatley was a central figure in the genesis of the very idea of a “tropical geography” – one could of course add other names such as Pierre Gourou, Keith Buchanan, Benny Farmer, Dudley Stamp – the genealogy of which has hardly begun to be unravelled (Driver & Yeoh, 2000). Wheatley's brilliant career – he died in 1999 after completing his magisterial book on the Muslim city – embodies, more than anything else, an enduring concern with other models: of the

city, of space, of economy and society. And it is to this question of other models, of the endless search for alternatives – in my case alternative models of development – that I have been asked to speak today (Victor Savage timidly suggested in his invitation that I should dilate on the small problem of “the decentring of geographical discourse from its Anglo-American centre”).

To pose the question of development alternatives in the contemporary moment is, necessarily, to confront the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. The indelible images of aircraft plunging into the Twin Towers, and of their horrific, vertiginous collapse, has brought the development realities of the West Bank, Egypt, West Asia and the Indonesian archipelago to the American heartland with a terrifying bonus: namely, an anti-globalisation, anti-imperialistic resistance movement armed with all the knowledge and weaponry of twenty-first century “cybercultural” modernity. Political Islam or Islamism – by which I mean quite specifically a social movement to reappropriate a collective Muslim identity that simultaneously breaks with religious tradition and challenges assimilative modernism as a basis for an alternative sociopolitical project (Gole, 2002; see also Halliday, 2002; Ruthven, 2002) – can, indeed must, be read as a sort of *alternative* yet distinctively modern vision of development. September 11<sup>th</sup> in all of its horror cannot be fully understood outside of the crisis of the modern and the crisis of development.

All of this was brought home powerfully to me in the wake of the New York attacks as I received emails from friends in Nigeria – where I have worked for three decades – who took heart from the fact that many Muslims could be seen driving around Kano and other centres in the Muslim north with Osama bin Laden posters plastered in the rear windows of their cars. None of these engineers, doctors and academics was planning to sign up for Florida pilot-training schools, nor did they exalt in the carnage and horror of September 11<sup>th</sup>. But the

multiplication and reproduction of popular Osama imagery across the “Qur’an Belt” speaks powerfully to why September 11<sup>th</sup> is as much a “problem of development”, and the failings of secular nationalism and the postcolonial state in particular, as it is a national security concern.

The political field of which the likes of *Al-Qaeda* or *Hib al-Tahir al-Islami* are part, represents a cultural and political movement that contains universalistic aspirations and yet remains resolutely particular and local (Lapidus, 2001). Islamism is a sort of articulation – the language is from Stuart Hall (1996) who refers to the simultaneous process of the interpellation of an identity (i.e. Muslim) and of a political project (i.e. the return of the caliphate) – that has produced a militant Muslim vanguard that must be located on a larger landscape of global Islamic revival. In a universe marked by locality and diversity, generalisation about Islam is always treacherous, but there surely are important discursive shifts and debates within what has been called the Qur’an Belt and its 1.2 billion Muslims. One aspect of this revival is Islamism, a series of movements of modern, educated and urbanised groups rather than the *ulema* and Sufi brotherhoods, typically male-dominated and seeking to reinstitutionalise their conception of Islamic laws, institutions and other imagined practices of the first Muslims (Ruthven, 2002). Like other movements, there are a variety of political and strategic tactics employed, from armed insurrection (jihad) to building a parallel civil society (virtually everywhere), to the voting booth (e.g. in Malaysia). Islamism is concentrated among urban youth caught, as Lubeck and Britts (2001:6) put it, in the “miasmatic webs of multiple post-colonial crises”. Political Islam, then, represents a shift in popular consciousness from a secular nationalist vision to an Islamic one. As Olivier Roy (1994:4) says, Islamists received their training not in religious schools but in colleges and universities “where they rubbed shoulders with Marxist militants whose ideas they borrowed and injected with

Qur'anic terminology". The huge increase in urban unemployed graduates provided a fertile ground from which such radical and militant anti-imperialist ideas could draw sustenance. Islamism, of course, operates at many levels: the global *ummah*, reform of the territorially defined nation state, the moral economy of the urban neighbourhood; this in part explains its appeal, its reach and its robustness (Lubeck, 1999).

Islamism, one can say, has seized the imagination of sections of urbanised youth by throwing down the gauntlet of anti-imperialist populist nationalism (Lubeck, 1999; Halliday, 2002): it is what Immanuel Wallerstein (1990) calls an "antisystemic movement" opposing US-led globalisation. It is another sort of anti-globalisation movement on the same ground, but with a very different political disposition, as the battles of Seattle, Prague and Genova, in other words. To grasp Islamism's appeal and dynamics requires, however, an understanding – in my account, of four key vectors – of the crisis of the secular nationalist development project within Islamdom, and within the Middle East and West Asia in particular. First, the political economy of the oil boom produced rentier capitalism of a decrepit and undisciplined sort as well as a profound sense of moral decay and state delegitimation prompted by the 1970s commodity booms. Second, vast financial resources that flowed to the Saudi and Gulf states exposed immigrant labour to *Wahabbi* and other Islamist doctrines and, in turn, funded global networks of associations, charities as well as, in some cases, militant cells. Third, the intersection of the 1990s petrobust and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank-led austerity and neoliberal reforms further pulverised already crippled Middle East and West Asian states, throwing millions into poverty and further eviscerating state services and welfare provision (in which Muslim civic organisations came to play an enormous role as the state contracted and withdrew). And fourth, geopolitics – the Cold War struggles in Afghanistan, the US support

of Israel and of West Bank settlements, and the collapse of the Soviet-socialist bloc – provided a setting in which Islamist ideas flowered in the rich loam of US hegemony that included financial and military support as much as political abandonment and cultural imperialism. The historical confluence of these powerful forces – all saturated with an American presence in the form of oil companies, global regulatory institutions, foreign investment and military commitments – crippled, one might say destroyed a secular nationalist project that was, in any case, of shallow provenance.

Islamism, then, reflects a failure of postcolonial development but, paradoxically, represents a peculiar sort of *challenge* to what has emerged in the last decade or so as the "alternatives to development" or "post-development" school – those for whom development is a catastrophically failed enlightenment project (see Rahnama, 1997 for a review). Critical and culturally informed work on development during the 1980s and thereafter turned, in large measure, on seeing the development project itself as a form of modernity (Parajuli, 1991; Escobar, 1992; Sachs, W., 1992; Ferguson, 1999; Mills, 1999; Rofel, 1999). Development "rehearses, in a virtually unchanged form", says Akhil Gupta (1998:36) "the chief premises of the self-representation of modernity": progress, science, reason, universal history. This self-representation of modernity by the West via the Other travels in a variety of colonial and postcolonial modalities, and in so doing becomes "an inescapable feature of everyday life" (Gupta, 1998:37) in the Third World. An archaeology of development demands a full grasp of location, situating it *historically* (in tracing its complex genealogy and meanings, particularly to the eighteenth century), *geographically* (in relation to sites of productions, routes of movement and patterns of reception), and *culturally* (in relation to the West's self-representation, of reason and the Enlightenment). Associated with a number of public intellectuals and activists largely but

not wholly from the South, it is a variegated community that has marched under the sign of alternatives to development.

The intellectual field which constitutes these radical critiques of development – one thinks of the work of Arturo Escobar, Gustavo Esteva and Wolfgang Sachs, and the *Post-development Reader* (Rahnema, 1997) as its compendium – is replete with the language of crisis, failure, apocalypse and renewal, and, most especially, of subaltern insurgencies which are purportedly the markers of new histories, social structures and political subjectivities (Pieterse, 1996). The Delhi Centre for Developing Societies – to invoke one such important and visible cluster of erstwhile anti-development Jacobins, latterly referred to by Fred Dallmayr (1996) as a “Third World Frankfurt School” – includes among its pantheon the likes of Ashis Nandy, Rajni Kothari and Shiv Visvanathan, who in their own way represent a veritable heteroglossia of alternative voices from the South, encompassing a massive swathe of intellectual and political territory on which there is often precious little agreement. Much but by no means all of this critique draws sustenance from the idea of the third leg of modernity – the dark side of modernity and the Enlightenment which produced the new human sciences and the disciplines – more than the Marxian leg of capitalist exploitation and the Weberian (and Habermasian) leg of the colonisation of the lifeworld by monetisation, rationalisation, calculation and bureaucratisation. This tale of disenchantment carries the timbre of earlier critiques of development – most vividly of the 1960s, but also of the 1890s and earlier, as Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton (1996) have admirably demonstrated in *Doctrines of Development* – readily apportioning blame to the multinational behemoths (corporate and multilateral) of global capitalism. Running across this body of work is the notion of development as an essentially western doctrine whose normalising assumptions must be rejected: “it [development] is the problem not the solution”

(Rist, 1997). The sacred cows – for Esteva and Prakash (1998) they are “the myth of global thinking”, “the myth of the universality of human rights” and “the myth of the individual self” – must be substituted by “grassroots postmodernism”. By the late 1990s, much of this discourse and activism morphed into, or met up with various anti-globalisation movements and the proliferation of transnational activism and virtual organising, what the Rand Corporation dubbed “NetWar” (see Routledge, 1994).

Escobar’s (1995) book *Encountering Development* is the most developed account of thinking about the development industry in grand poststructural terms, offering a vision of subaltern and indigenous social movements as vehicles for other ways of doing politics (non-party, non-mass, cultural and self-organising), and of doing postdevelopment (decentralised, community-based, participatory, indigenous and autonomous). Interestingly, this postdevelopment movement met up and cross-fertilised with a largely western academic development community energised by what was dubbed the “impasse in development” debate of the 1980s and 1990s (Schuurman, 1993; Booth, 1994). In effect this was a debate within the circumference of Marxist development theory, between its “neo” and “structural” schools, over the extent to which Third World socialism suffered from many of the trappings of industrial capitalism (and many others unique to it!), and a theory captured by economic essentialism, class reductionism, and teleological thinking. One can argue whether this characterisation of Marxist development theory is plausible, or indeed an adequate account of marxism itself in its panoply of guises (Watts, 1989). But the impasse debate spawned important new intersections between postcolonial and postmarxist thinking, providing a fertile ground on which development could be refigured by a careful reading of Ranajit Guha, Gyatri Spivak or Edward Said (see Gupta, 1998). There is little theoretical coherence in the impasse work – actor-network approaches, a focus on

identity politics and the cultural construction of class, a shift to “responsible politics” (Booth, 1994) – but Corbridge (1998:95) is nonetheless right to emphasise that it (like the postdevelopment work) reinforces the need to see “the ways in which the West represents its nonwestern others” and forces us to ask “What is development? Who says that is what it is? Who aims to direct it and for whom?”.

Much of this critical work – which represents precisely an effort to decentre development and geographic knowledge from the Anglo-American centre (see Slater, 1993) – harkens back in its invocation of crisis to the 1960s, but radically questions the state as a necessary and appropriate vehicle for national aspirations; and the universalistic (and anti-imperialistic) claims for liberation are no longer axiomatic and taken for granted. Locality, culture and authenticity are the forms of identification which stand in opposition to states, and the very fictions of the nation state and nationalism are supplanted by what Lehmann (1997:670) calls “multi-national populist subcultures” in search of cultural difference (“cultural difference is at the root of post-development” as Escobar (1995:225) says). One might say that the practical and strategic content of this vision is rooted firmly in the soil of civil society rather than in the state or market. But it is civil society of a particular sort: of grassroots movements, of subaltern knowledges, of cultural economics, of hybrid “indigenous” politics, of the defence of the local, of cybercultural posthumanism. As Gibson-Graham and Ruccio (2001:178) put it:

It recognizes that predevelopment models of economy persist in hybrid form through their transformative engagement with modernity, and advocates creating conditions conducive to local and regional experiments that do not necessarily conform to a single, overarching development scheme.

It is incontestable, of course, that the growing clamour to “provincialise Europe”, to see outside and beyond the hegemony of the

West, to abandon the myth of development, and so on, were forged – and perhaps reached their apogee – in the crucible of what Perry Anderson (2000:15) calls “the neo-liberal grand slam”, that is to say, the disappearance of the entire political horizon of the 60s generation and of massive political defeat for the Left.

But what has all of this to do with September 11<sup>th</sup>? It seems to me that September 11<sup>th</sup> is part of an extraordinarily powerful (transnational and global) decentring of discourse from an Anglo-American centre (if I may return to my brief), much deeper and more compelling than what passes for postdevelopment or grassroots postmodernism. It is global yet anti-imperialist, universal yet particular, historically framed yet unequivocally modern. And, relatedly, political Islam seems to meet all of the preconditions of hybrid forms of alternative development, and would fit quite comfortably in Gibson-Graham and Ruccio’s frame of reference. If development, as Gupta (1998) says, is orientalism transformed into a science for action in the contemporary world, is not Islamism a vivid exemplar of “post-development”, a case of religion transformed into cultural politics? If development has its theoreticians, its institutions and apparatuses, Islamism has its organic intellectuals (e.g. Sayid Qutb), its Islamic banking and charities, its legal framework (*shari’a*) and a model of corporatist social and economic transformation. None of this is to endorse political Islam (I most certainly do not) or to tag postdevelopmentalists as no different from “Islamic fascists” (to deploy Christopher Hitchen’s (2002) ugly appellation) but, rather, to acknowledge that there *has been* a tectonic anti-development shift – that is to say, an alternative development involving a decentring of certain sorts of discourse and practice away from secular nationalism; a global and transnational set of movements, often hybrid, modern and cosmopolitan in character, and anchored in the cultural, historical and local. At the very least one needs to view the questions of alternatives, and development’s failures, through the optic of the catastrophe of the Twin Towers. Is not

Islamism a radical provocation for the way we think about alternatives?

## DEVELOPMENT AND THE MODERN

The problem of poverty is centered around two closely related subjects; pauperism and political economy... they formed part of one indivisible whole: the discovery of society (Polanyi, 1957:103).

My brief here is not to explore the relations between Islamism and alternative development but to deploy Islamism as an entry into the crises of the postcolonial state, to locate them on a larger landscape of developmental political economy and to explore them under the sign of governmentality and rule. The backdrop for this rather limited excursion into contemporary development is a growing acknowledgement of the limits of economism – the so-called post-Washington consensus. Former World Bank Vice President Joseph Stiglitz's (2002) new book, *Globalization and its Discontents*, is simply one highly visible questioning of the worst of market utopianism. Karl Polanyi is very much back in vogue – indeed, a new edition of *The Great Transformation* has a foreword penned by Stiglitz himself (Polanyi, 2001). But the questioning of economism and market utopias has a number of critical iterations. One is *the resurgence of geography*. A major proponent is none other than economist Jeffrey Sachs, formerly of Harvard and now of Columbia University, a widely-applauded figure in the debates over economic reform in the post-socialist bloc (as a fearless advocate of “shock therapy”), a sometime critic of the World Bank and IMF austerity programmes, and latterly a tireless promoter of the idea that geography causes poverty. Virtually all of the tropics remain poor, says Sachs (2000:9), because climate “accounts for a quite significant proportion of cross-national and cross-regional disparities of world income”. Global production is “highly concentrated in the

coastal regions of the temperate zones” (Sachs, J. *et al.*, 2001:73), the “proximate countries”, to employ his lexicon. As his former Harvard colleague (and ex-Marxist), Ricardo Hausman (2001) puts it, underdevelopment is a case of “bad latitude”. The “new” geography of development – bestsellers *Guns, Germs and Steel* by Jared Diamond (1997) and *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* by David Landes (1999) both extol the virtues of advantageous geography in the long march of economic development – endorses what the then US Treasury Secretary (and now President of Harvard University) Lawrence Summers dubbed in the summer of 2000, “the tyranny of geography” (cited in Hausman, 2001:45). Isolation, poor soil, erratic climate, inaccessibility, low agricultural productivity and infectious disease mutually reinforce one another in a vicious cycle of destitution and backwardness. Geography need not be destiny, they say, but for much of the world it simply is. For the geographically challenged, the prognosis is a good dose of globalisation (Hausmann, 2001:53). If geography has a new cachet in economics, political science cannot of course be far behind. Princeton political scientist Jeffrey Herbst (2000:156-169), for example, sees in the weakness of African postcolonial states more or less “favorable geography”. It is the size and shape of inherited national territories, coupled with population density – space and human fecundity once again – that determine the “broadcasting” of political authority and political stability. In its “national designs”, Herbst argues, Africa leaves much to be desired.

For the geographer, the “return” to the role of geography in human affairs – or more properly to nature, location and topography as determinants of growth and welfare – simply recapitulates ideas of great genealogical complexity and historical depth (Glacken, 1967). Not surprisingly, then, the Sachs/Harvard/Columbia model, in its emphasis on ecology, disease and isolation, takes us back rather than forward, indeed it carries a pungent,

late-Victorian imperial odour. So, one might well ask, is this not the Dark Continent all over again? Well, yes and no. In the Sachs account, nature and geography take pride of place, but unlike the discourses of a century ago, the role of culture is for the most part invisible. Hausmann, Sachs and friends do indeed refer to “social institutions” and markets as necessary building blocks for growth, but the tropes of sloth, fecundity, racial inferiority and an irredentist anti-market mentality – the hallmarks of the Victorian imperium – are largely absent. Geography is, rather, a vast wrecking ball, its biophysical powers capable of social havoc: “It is no accident” says Sachs (2000:15), in an astonishing *aperçu*, “that genocide took place in Rwanda”! Central African ethnic bloodletting, produced by a lethal combination of organic nationalism and fascist politics, is here read as the product of “geographical disadvantage”. Running through the “new economic geography of development” is a bow to Ellsworth Huntington (1972), a cavalier ratification of economics and economic growth as the *sine qua non* of development, and an unquestioned hymnal to the Olympian powers of “modern science and technology”.

A second critical reflection on economism is *the resurgence of culture*. Samuel Huntington (2000), in *Culture Matters*, sees culture, understood as values, attitudes and beliefs, as a “key variable” in the determination of democratisation and economic growth. Bad attitude (not latitude) is growth-inhibiting. Others reject the cultural dispositions argument of Huntington and rather see culture in Weberian terms, as a way of addressing how institutions are embedded (Castells, 1998). Indeed, the focus on institutions and on path-dependency is precisely an attempt to grapple with the lack of political economic convergence within so-called emerging markets. Postsocialist transitions are heterogeneous in form, and this diversity matters because of culture and history and the place-specific path dependencies it generates (Stark & Bruszt, 1998). A concern

with Polanyi, embedded institutions and multiple (and often non-optimal) capitalisms has produced a now large body of work on governance and development, much of it concerned with trust, self-organising networks and social capital (see Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Governance here refers to the structure or patterns of relations between various political actors, that is, “the outcome of all these interactions and interdependencies; the self organizing networks that arise out of the interactions between a variety of organizations and associations” (Rose, 1999:17). In this sociological view, governance in the modern sense is about the intersection of the public, private and voluntary, in which there is no clear sovereign authority, and in which trust, conventions, networks and non-formal obligations and reciprocities figure centrally.

Questions of governance, and sensitivity to multiple paths of capitalism, are powerful antidotes to the absurdities of high economism. But there is a danger, as Hart (2002) has signalled recently, that one loses sight of the interconnection across divergences, ignores the ongoing struggles and processes by simply reading path-dependency from history, seeing power in institutions as exercised *only* through rules and norms (culture). It is against these lacunae that I wish to return to governance, but from a Foucauldian perspective, deploying some of the recent work by Nikolas Rose (1999) and Michael Clifford (2001). Development practices can, in this framework, productively be construed as forms of what Michel Foucault called government. To understand development is to grasp how “the possible field of action of others” (Foucault, 1982:221) is structured through a variety of technics and micropolitics of power (from the map, to the national statistics, to forms of surveillance) to accomplish, or attempt to accomplish, stable rule through certain sorts of governable subjects and governable objects (Scott, 1995; Li, 1996). Escobar embarked precisely upon this project of course, but his study was empirically weak, insensitive to the multiple

trajectories of peripheral capitalist development, and inattentive to what Polanyi (1957) called the “double-movement”, the struggles and countermovements around forms of rule; what Foucault (1982:220-21) calls “the conduct of conduct”. In *Encountering Development* (Escobar, 1995), it is the claustrophobic closure of the development project – its singular character and its oppressiveness – that is so striking, not the singular complexities, and frequent failures, of securing rule, producing governable subjects and governable spaces. I want to try and ground such spaces within the circumference of a specific style of imagining (Anderson, B., 1983), and within the logic of a particular form of capitalism associated with a very particular resource, namely, oil.

## GOVERNMENTALITY AND GOVERNABLE SPACES

The *contact point* at which individuals are driven and know is tied to the way they conduct themselves and know themselves. This can be called *government* (Foucault, 1980:7; emphasis in original).

I am taking the idea of governmentality from the work of Foucault (see 1984, 2000; also Gordon, 1980; Barry *et al.*, 1996), for whom it implies an expansive way of thinking about governing and rule in relation to the exercise of modern power. 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 of 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 (2000:211) 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”.

At the centre of government lay a 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 on 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 (Foucault, 2000:201-22; emphasis added).

The new practices of the state, as Mitchell Dean (1999:16) says, shape human conduct by “working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs for definite but shifting ends”. Unlike the new governance literature of Putnam (2000) and others, for whom governance is the self-organising networks that arise out of the interactions between a variety of organisations and agencies, governmentality for Foucault refers not to sociologies of rule but, to quote Rose (1999:21), 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.

It was the task of Foucault 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 (classically feudal in character), as disciplinary (the institutions of subjection from the prison to the school) or as biopower (the administration of forms of life). Modern governmentality was rendered distinctive by the specific forms in which the population and the economy were administered, specifically by a deepening of the “governmentalisation of the state” (see Foucault 2000) – 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:

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, 2000:219, emphasis added).

Governing, that is to say, what authorities want to happen, in relation to what problems and objectives, and through what tactics, can be assessed as the “analytics of government” (Rose 1999:21). Dean (1999: 20-27) has referred to such analytics as the processes by which we govern and are governed within different regimes, and the conditions under which they emerge, operate and are transformed. 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). The 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 the fourth, *forms of identification* (the forming of subjects, selves, agents and actors, in short, the production of governable subjects).

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 Braun, 2000; Drayton, 2000). I want to explore the relations between two aspects of governmentality. One is what Foucault (2000) explicitly refers to as

relations between people and resources (in my case people and oil in the Niger Delta). The other, taken from Rose's excellent exegesis on Foucault, is his notion of "governable spaces" as they emerge from the four analytics of government detailed above (see Li 2001, 2002; Moore 2000). For Rose (1999:32), governable spaces, and the spatialisation of government, are "modalities in which a real and material governable world is composed, terraformed, and populated". The scales at which government is "territorialised" – 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 (1999: 37) puts it (through systems of cognition and remodelled through government practice), in such a way that demands how such topoi have emerged: the social thought and practice that has territorialised itself upon the nation, the city, the village or the factory. 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" (Rose, 1999:37). But, in general, it was geography that formed "the art whose science was political economy" (Rhein, cited in Rabinow, 1984:142). 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 territorialising of governmental thought and practice but are simultaneously produced as differing scales by the "cold laws of political economy" (Rose, 1999:39).

I want to think about the genesis of differing sorts of governable spaces in Nigeria as part of a larger landscape of what Dean (1999) calls "authoritarian governmentality", that is to say, an articulation of generalised uses of the instruments of repression with biopolitics – "it regards its subjects capacity for action as subordinate to the expectation of obedience" (Dean, 1999, p. 209), as he says. I

want to root these spaces and forms of power in the logic of petro-capitalist development, that is to say a particular sort of extractive development which is generative of differing sorts of scale, or the politics of scale as Neil Smith (1992) calls it. Extractive politics has been the subject of some recent theoretical work within the field of development theory, most notably by Paul Collier (2000) and his World Bank project, and political scientists Michael Ross (2001) and Michael Klare (2001). The latter see oil as a dwindling resource – and a key strategic one – that will necessarily be generative of interstate conflict. For Ross, oil is a "resource curse" due to its *rentier effect* (low taxes plus patronage) and its *repression effect* via military power. Collier 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 GDP is dependent on resource extraction!). The commodity in these analyses possesses epic powers. My analysis conversely sees and charts the relations between oil and violence, but does so through examining how forms of governable (or non-governable) spaces are generated by the evil twins of authoritarian governmentality and petro-capitalism.

## ECONOMIES OF VIOLENCE

The "normal" exercise of hegemony is characterized by the combination of force and consent, in variable equilibrium, without force predominating too much over consent... [But] between force and consent stands corruption-fraud, that is the enervation and paralysing of the antagonist or antagonists (Antonio Gramsci, cited in Anderson 2002:8).

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 km<sup>2</sup>, 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, the Niger Delta is also endowed with very substantial hydrocarbon deposits. Crude oil production currently runs at almost two million barrels per day, roughly 90 per cent by value of Nigerian export revenues. Nigeria is not only the largest producer of petroleum in Africa and among the world's top ten oil producers but, in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the current Middle East crisis, is also being pursued by the Bush administration as a major supplier for the US market.

The contemporary geostrategic significance of the Niger Delta has emerged from an astonishing ethnic and linguistic complexity and, paradoxically, from a history of recent economic and political irrelevance. There are five major linguistic categories (Ijoid, Yoruboid, Edoid, Igboid and Delta Cross), but each embraces a profusion of ethnolinguistic heterogeneity. The history of the Delta is in some respects captured in this cultural complexity since precolonial trade patterns across the region reflected a rich and complex social division of labour rooted in occupation, ethnicity and micro-ecology. These commercial and exchange relations were radically compromised, however, by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, and subsequently by the French, Dutch and British slavers. The rise of the so-called legitimate trade under British auspices in the nineteenth century – the genesis of rubber and cocoa which displaced slavery after abolition – gave rise to an 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 marked an end to the brief period of commercial vitality. For most of the first half of the twentieth century the Delta was an economic and political backwater. In the gradual transition to independence in the

1950s, the so-called ethnic minorities voiced their concerns to the departing British administrators that their interests in a Nigerian federation dominated by three ethnic majorities (the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Ibo) were to all and intents and purposes invisible. What was true at the moment of imperial departure only became more so during the long march of the postcolonial period.

The onset of commercial petroleum production in 1956 in the heart of the Delta – discovered in Oloibiri in current Baylesa State – seemed to hold out the promise of rapid development for the ethnic minorities. But the presence of transnational oil companies in joint ventures with the Nigerian state (the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC)), instead, produced enormous environmental despoilation and a crisis of forms of traditional livelihood. By the 1970s and 1980s, a number of ethnic communities had begun to mobilise against the so-called “slick alliance” of oil companies and the Nigerian military. The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) led by Ken Saro-Wiwa (1995) challenged Shell for its environmental despoilation and human rights violations and the Nigerian state for its unjust control of “their oil”. Saro-Wiwa and the MOSOP leadership were hung by the Nigerian military in 1995, but since that time the Niger Delta has become a zone of intense conflict as more oil-producing minorities (e.g. the Adoni, Itsekiri and Ijaw) clamour for compensation and for the recognition of their claims for resource control. More recently, substantial coverage in the world press has been devoted to a group of Delta women who have occupied Chevron oil refineries, demanding company investments and jobs for indigenes (*New York Times*, 13 August 2002).

Currently, the Niger Delta stands at the ground zero of contemporary Nigerian politics. Marginalised and excluded from the benefits of oil, it is located nonetheless at the crossroads of the four most pressing political issues in the federation. First, the efforts led

by a number of Delta states for “resource control”, which in effect means expanded local access to 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. Third, a crisis of governability in the region as a number of state and local governments are rendered helpless by militant youth movements, growing insecurity and state violence. And, finally, the emergence of what is called a South-South Alliance linking the hitherto excluded oil-producing states in a bulwark against the ethnic majorities.

Let me say a brief word about oil and its relationship to Nigerian political economy (see Khan, 1994; Forrest, 1995; Watts, 2000; Obi, 2001). Nigeria is a multi-ethnic state and was a British colony until 1960. Colonial indirect rule assumed the form of a “decentralized despotism” (Mamdani, 1996) orchestrated through regional rule by the three ethnic majorities. The backbone of each region was an export commodity and a government Market Board. At independence, the Muslim northerners held a fragile hegemony over the regions, and it was into this weak federal system that commercial oil was inserted. The break-up of the federation in 1967 following a sorry trail of military coups was precipitated by the secession by Biafra (the former Eastern Region), a conflagration in no small measure the product of the new politics of oil. A federal victory assured the integrity of Nigeria and the continued pre-eminence of oil. Indeed, within a few years of the end of the war, oil was firmly in the national driver’s seat. In the wake of the oil boom of 1973, Nigeria was awash in petro-dollars and embarking upon a ferocious programme of modernisation and ambitious state-led development. Nigeria, in short, assumed the mantle of an oil nation. But what began as a boom and untempered ambition in the 1970s ended with the bust in 1985 with military-led austerity and World Bank structural adjustment programmes. In 1999, after a terrifying period of military

authoritarianism under Sani Abacha, Olesegun Obasanjo became the first democratically elected President in 20 years. Over three turbulent decades, as civilian and military governments came and went, oil trickled further into the veins of the Nigerian body politic.

I want to make two important points about oil. The first is that it matters profoundly to the character and dynamics of Nigerian development. Oil is of course a biophysical entity (a subterranean fluid capable of being pumped and transmitted); it is also a commodity that enters the market with a price tag and, as such, is the bearer of particular relations of production. Not least, oil also harbours fetishistic qualities; it is the bearer of meanings, of hopes, of expectations of unimaginable powers: unprecedented wealth, avarice and power. Not unexpectedly, oil crops up constantly in the popular Nigerian imagination (see Watts, 1994), resplendent with all manner of brilliant and unctuous qualities. In virtue of the multifaceted thing called oil, we can come to appreciate Coronil’s (1997:49) claim that “oil illustrates the importance and the mystification of natural resources in the modern world”. The second point about oil is that Nigerian petro-capitalism contained a sort of double-movement, a contradictory unity of capitalism and modernity captured in the fact that oil production in Nigeria has always been a joint venture, currently with 14 transnational companies, in which joint operating agreements determine the distribution of royalties and rents. On the one hand, oil was a centralising force that rendered the state more visible and globalised, underwriting a process of secular nationalism and state building. On the other, a corrupt and undisciplined oil-led development, driven by an unremitting political logic of ethnic claims-making, was to fragment, pulverise, and discredit the state and all of its forms of governance. It produced a set of conditions which compromised and, I would argue, radically undermined the very tenets of the modern nation state. Coronil (1997: 390-391) refers to this conundrum as “the Faustian

trade of money for modernity”, which in Venezuela brought “the illusion of development”. In Nigeria, too, the double-movement brought illusion but, more importantly, produced forms of governable spaces that questioned the very idea of Nigeria, spaces that generated forms of rule, conduct and imagining at cross purposes with one another, antithetical to the very idea of a coherent modern nation state that oil, in the mythos of the West at least, represented.

On this petroleum-inspired canvas, let me now turn briefly to governable spaces, and to three in particular that I shall refer to as the space of chieftainship, the space of indigeneity and the space of the nation state.

### **Force and domination: The space of chieftainship**

Nembe community in Bayelsa State stands at the originary point of Nigerian oil production. In the 1950s, the Tennessee Oil Company (an American 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 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 NNPC and 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 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 customary system of governance and set the stage for further challenges to the traditional authority of chieftainship (see Kemedi, 2002; HRW, 2002).<sup>1</sup>

Oil became commercially viable in 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 customary rule and chieftainship in the Delta. Indirect rule in the colonial period certainly left much of the Niger Delta marginalised 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 was grafted onto a deep and complex structure of kingship and gerontocratic rule. To understand the dynamics of Nembe as a governable space, recall that land lay in hands of customary authorities (notwithstanding the fact that the 1969 Petroleum Law granted the state the power to nationalise 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 houses)<sup>2</sup> 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, that is to say, from the royal line. The current Nembe council of chiefs is the assemblage of the recognised chiefs of Nembe “chalked” by the king.

By the late 1980s, a widespread sense of malaise coloured Mingi rule. Accordingly, the Nembe monarch’s ineffectiveness in dealing with the oil companies led to a radical decentralisation of his powers in 1991 to the council of chiefs headed by Chief Egi Adukpo Ikata. Insofar 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 was 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 council members was a subtle process of “youth mobilisation”. In an age-graded society like the Nembe Ijaw, youth refers to persons typically between their teens and early forties who, despite 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, Mr. Nimi B.P. Barigha-Amage. He deployed his knowledge of the oil industry to organise the youths of the Nembe community into a force capable of extracting concessions from the oil companies, in essence by converting cultural organisation 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 organise the shutting down of flow stations, the seizure of equipment and sabotage (Alagoa, 2001; HRW, 2002).

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” who gradually, with the support of some members of the council of chiefs, intermediated 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, were able to invent 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 organise 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; a year later, in 1995, Mrs. Ituro-Garuba, wife of a well-placed military officer, established “Little Fishes” (*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 (HRW, 2002).

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, of occupations and closures of flow stations, and of tensions between the companies, 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 quasi-mafiosi was funded by the large quantities of monies that they commanded from the companies, and by the arms which they

controlled. This volatile state of affairs collapsed dramatically as local resentments and struggles proliferated. In February 2000, a “Peoples Revolution” overthrew *Isongofo*, ostensibly precipitated by the humiliation of the council of chiefs at the hands of Shell (backed by the intimidating *Isongofo* forces). The chiefs now orchestrated the occupation of flow stations and undermined the powers of *Isongofo* by recruiting and supporting other youth groups. By May 2000, *Isongofo* 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”, *Iseasawo/Teme*. *Teme* instituted a rule of terror and chaos far worse than their predecessors. It, too, proved unstable in the context of excessive youth mobilisation, and split into two factions producing, in short order, coups, 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 (Alagoa, 2001).

Much of this later violence (after 1996) was largely unregulated by the 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, the genesis of this power nexus bears striking resemblances to the genesis of the Mafia of nineteenth-century Sicily (Blok, 1974).

In Foucauldian terms, what I have described is the displacement of a specific form of pastoral power (chieftainship) by a governable space of civic vigilanteism, a sort of thickening of civil society that the likes of Robert Putnam (see 2000) would presumably *not* endorse. Civic powers have expanded by overthrowing a territorial system and a gerontocratic royal order. Youth mobilisations – whose political affiliations and ambitions were in any case complex because they reflected an unstable amalgam of clan, family and local electoral loyalties – had thrown up an identity and subject that was indisputably revolutionary, representing an unholy alliance between civic organisations (presenting themselves as cultural organisations) and private companies. Rule in Nembe is a realm of privatised violence; an unstable hegemony held in place by domination and force. The analytics of government here turn on what Foucault (2000) calls men in their imbrication with wealth and resources – institutionalised through forms of calculability, *techne*, visibility, and so on that emerge from the legal and company dispositions to regulate local populations, backed up by the forces of repression. The governable subject is *de facto* a sort of employee, and rule is a Gramscian War of Position (Gramsci, 1971). Culture serves as the form by which company rule is experienced (violent youth groups) but in a way that renders the space increasing *ungovernable*.

### **Persuasion and consent: 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. The ill-fated Delta Peoples Republic in 1966 was the forerunner of what is today a prairie fire of ethnic mobilisation by the historically excluded minorities – now tagged as “indigenous” in order to capture the political and legal legitimacy conferred in 1995 by the International Labor Organization of the United Nations (ILO Convention 169) (Nelson, 1999; see also Kinsbury, 1999; Brysk, 2000). The paradigmatic case in the Delta is the struggle by Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni/MOSOP. I shall concentrate here on their case simply as a way of revealing 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 subgroups and six clans dotted over 1,050 km<sup>2</sup> of creeks, waterways and tropical forest in the northeast fringes of the Niger Delta. Located administratively in Rivers State, a Louisiana-like territory of some 50,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Ogoniland is of one the most heavily populated zones in all of Africa. Indeed, the most densely settled areas of Ogoniland – over 1,500 persons per km<sup>2</sup> – 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 Kano in 1901. The Ogoni resisted the British until 1908 (Naanen, 1995) but, thereafter, were left to stagnate as part of the Opopo Division within Calabar Province. As Ogoniland was gradually incorporated during the 1930s, the clamour for a separate political division grew at the hands of the first pan-Ogoni organisation, 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 longstanding fears among the Ogoni of Ibo domination.<sup>3</sup> Politically marginalised 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 minorities felt little but contempt.<sup>4</sup>

During the first oil boom of the 1970s, Ogoniland’s 56 wells accounted for almost 15 per cent of Nigerian oil production,<sup>5</sup> and in the past three decades an estimated US\$30 billion 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” (Furro, 1992:282; see also Douglas & Okonta, 2001). 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 five per cent of the statutory allocation (roughly half of that received by Kano, Northeastern State, 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” (*Village Voice*, 21 November 1995:21). Burning 24 hours a day at temperatures of 13-14,000° C, Nigerian natural gas produces 31.75 million tonnes of carbon dioxide and 10.89 million tonnes of methane, more than the rest of the world (and rendering Nigeria probably the biggest single cause of global warming) (Hammer 1996). 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 the much publicised 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 (Hammer, 1996:61). Figures provided by the NNPC document 2,676 spills between 1976 and 1990, 59 per cent of which

occurred in Rivers State (Ikein, 1990:171), of which 38 per cent were due to equipment malfunction.<sup>6</sup> Between 1982 and 1992, Shell alone accounted for 1.6 million gallons of spilled oil, 37 per cent of the company’s spills worldwide. The consequences of flaring, spillage and waste for Ogoni fisheries and farming have been devastating. Two independent studies completed in 1997 reveal total petroleum hydrocarbons in Ogoni streams at 360 and 680 times the European Community permissible levels (RAN, 1997; HRW, 1999).

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 mobilisation and radical militancy which had commenced in 1989. The civil war had, as I previously suggested, hardened the sense of external dominance among Ogonis. A “supreme cultural organisation” called *Kagote*, which consisted largely of traditional rulers and high ranking functionaries, was established at the war’s end and, in turn, 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 (cited in Naanen, 1995:46), “genocide being committed in the dying years of the twentieth century by multinational companies under the supervision of the Government”. A watershed moment in MOSOP’s history was the drafting in 1990 of an Ogoni Bill of Rights (Saro-Wiwa, 1992, 1995). Documenting a history of neglect and local misery, the Ogoni Bill took head-on the question of Nigerian federalism and minority rights. 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” (Saro-Wiwa, 1990:11). In short, the Bill of Rights addressed the question of the *unit* to which revenues should be allocated – and, derivatively, the rights of minorities (HRW, 1999; Okonta, 2002).

In spite of the remarkable history of MOSOP between 1990 and 1996, its ability to represent itself as a unified pan-Ogoni organisation remained an open question. There is no pan-Ogoni myth of origin (characteristic of some Delta minorities), and a number of the Ogoni subgroups engender stronger local loyalties than any affiliation to Ogoni nationalism. The Eleme subgroup has even argued on occasion that they are not Ogoni. Furthermore, the MOSOP leaders were actively opposed by elements of the traditional clan leadership, by prominent leaders and civil servants in state government, by some critics who felt Saro-Wiwa was out to gain “cheap popularity” (Osaghae, 1995:334) and, not least, the youth wing of MOSOP, which Saro-Wiwa had made use of, and which the leadership were often incapable of controlling. What Saro-Wiwa did was to build upon over 50 years of Ogoni organising and upon three decades of resentment against the oil companies to provide a mass base and a youth-driven radicalism – and, it must be said, an international visibility – capable of challenging state power. Yet, at its core, the indigenous subject – and the indigenous space – was contentious and problematic. Ike Okonta (2002) has brilliantly showed how, in the Ogoni case, it proved unravelled into fragments of class, clan, generation and gender.

What sort of articulation of indigenous identity and political subjectivity did Saro-Wiwa pose? What sort of governable space did this 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 Ogoni-ness, no unproblematic unity, and no singular form of political subject (despite Saro-Wiwa’s (1995), ridiculous 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 increasingly divided “we”, as the open splits and conflicts between Saro-Wiwa and other elite Ogoni confirms (Ministry of Information, 1996).<sup>7</sup> 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 (Saro-Wiwa, 1992:14). His own utopia, then, rested on the recreation of Ogoni culture and suffered like all *ur*-histories from a quasi-mythic invocation of the past. Third, ethnicity was the central problem of postcolonial 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. And, the narrative of Ogoni exclusion and internal colonialism proved also to be partial, not least with respect to other ethnic minorities in the Delta. Compared to many Delta minorities the Ogoni have fared well (with 12 per cent of Rivers State population, the Ogoni accounted for one third of the state’s commissioners). The Ogoni produce none of Rivers State oil currently; while two other small minorities with no political representation account for 68 per cent (Okonta 2002).

Paradoxically, MOSOP surfaced as a foundational indigenous movement even though the significance of its oil-producing region was diminishing. By the late 1990s moreover, as a movement it had fallen apart and intergroup struggles deprived it of much of its previous momentum and visibility. But it gave birth to what one might call many Ogonis, as indigenous movements among oil

producing communities have proliferated. The same forces have spawned a raft of indigenous self-determination movements among the Egi, Ijaw, Ikwerre, Isoko, Itsekiri, Ogbia and Urhobo, among others (Obi, 2001).<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> The shock troops of many of these indigenous movements are youth, 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 governable space? My point is that particular “populations” have been constructed as indigenous; this construction, as I explain below, emerged from the nationalist struggle as customary rights were added to a discourse of citizenship. But the process received enormous energy as indigeneity as a political category garnered international support in the last part of the twentieth century, a resource that Saro-Wiwa deployed brilliantly (Bob, 2002). The emergence in Nigeria of a national debate over resource control in the late 1990s is precisely a product of indigenous claims-making on the state, a process by which ethnic identifications must be discursively and politically produced. The Ogoni case shows that there is no pre-given ethnic identity but, rather, complex and unstable genealogical histories of identification that have emerged in the last century. The indigene has to be made – interpollated – around a strong sense of territory and in the context of cultural,

economic and political heterogeneity. In Foucauldian terms, this was 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 huge political energies of ethnic minorities who recapitulate in some respects the postcolonial history of spoils politics in Nigeria. The effect of this multi-ethnic mobilisation was the production of political and civic organisations and new forms of governable space, a veritable jigsaw of militant particularisms. The Kaiama Declaration in December 1998 indicates that there is the making of a pan-ethnic solidarity movement in the works, but its contours are at present limited (see ERA, 2000; Douglas & Okonta, 2001). 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 (Nelson, 1999). This is a classic case of the articulation of differing forms of power that Foucault describes. What I have documented here, however, is the multiplication of governable spaces which stand in some tension or even contradiction with each other – only in this way can one understand the explosion of inter-ethnic tensions in the Delta – and with the national space of Nigeria, to which I now turn.

### **Corruption and fraud: The space of nationalism**

One of the striking aspects of the governable spaces of indigeneity as they emerged in the Delta is that they became 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, understood as a state-led and thoroughly

globalised development strategy, stand in relation to the creation of the governable space called modern Nigeria?

Here I want to start with the work of Mahmood Mamdani (1996, 2001) and his observations on postcolonial African politics. Colonial rule and decentralised despotism were synonymous, says Mamdani (1996). The Native Authorities consolidated local class power in the name of tradition (ethnicity) and sustained a racialised view of civic rights. The nationalist movement had two wings, a radical and a mainstream. Both wished to deracialise 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 (1998:7) puts it:

The effective elements of the federation are neither territorial units called states nor ethnic groups but ethnic groups with their own states... Given this federal character every ethnic group compelled to seek its own home, its NA [Native Administration], its own state. With each new political entity the non-indigenes continues to grow.

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 postcolonial period came to be not racial but ethnic, and such ethnic clashes, which 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 so brilliantly outlined by Mamdani enters oil, that is to say, a valuable, centralised (state-owned) resource, a source of unearned income that detaches the states from the financial task of securing revenue from its citizens. 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, reterritorialised through ethnic claims-making. The result is that access to oil revenues amplifies what I call subnational political institution-making; politics becomes, then, a massive state-making machine. Only in this way can one understand how, between 1966 and the present, the number of local governments have grown from 50 to almost 1000, and the number of states from three 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. 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 (Ikporukpo, 1996)? The answer is that it works against precisely the creation of an imagined community of the sort that Ben Anderson (1998) saw as synonymous with nationalism. Nation building, whatever its imaginary properties, whatever its style of imaging, rests in its modern form on a sort of calculation, integration and a state and bureaucratic rationality which the logic of rent-seeking, petro-corruption, ethnic spoils politics and state multiplication works to systematically undermine. Lauren Berlant (1991:61) 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". 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 remained true but more so. Any construction of a robust, meaningful, national identity requires, as Clifford (2001:114) says, a "rigorous survey of the social body" to determine its makeup and nature. A petro-state of the Nigerian sort, wracked by corruption-fraud in the Gramscian sense referred to earlier, is the very antithesis of surveillance, or indeed of rigour. It is as Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe (1988) called it, at best, a big crummy family.

What we have, in other words, is not nation building – understood in the sense of governmentality as a form of governable space – but perhaps its reverse; the "unimagining" or deconstruction of a particular sense of national community. Nicos Poulantzas (1978) said the national or modern unity requires a historicity of a territory and a territorialisation of a history. Oil capitalism and its attendant governmentality in Nigeria have achieved neither of these requirements. The governable space called Nigeria was always something of a public secret. Forty years of postcolonial 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 a governable subject. The same, incidentally, might be said of the impact of oil on the Muslim communities of Nigeria (Watts, 1998, 2000). Oil

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

A striking aspect of contemporary development in Nigeria is the simultaneous production of differing forms of rule and governable space – different politics of scale (Smith, 1992) – each products of similar forces, and yet, which work against, and often stand in direct contradiction to one another. The idioms are youth, indigene and oil nation, but their forms of identification and the robustness of their spaces are often incompatible. 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 of course an irony here, in that the Foucauldian project from which governmentality is derived is often chided for its panoptical sense of closure and overwhelming aura of domination, but my account of Nigeria reveals ragged, unstable, perhaps ungovernable, spaces and analytics of government that hardly correspond to the well-oiled machine of disciplinary and biopower. Such is, in my book, the heart of the so-called crisis of the postcolonial state in Africa. It is in this sense that I invoke the idea of economies of violence to characterise governmentality in contemporary Nigeria.

## **HYBRIDS, COSMOPOLITANS AND ALTERNATIVE MODERNITIES**

A cultural theory directs one to examine how "the pull of sameness and the forces of making difference" interact in specific ways under the exigencies of history and politics to produce alternative modernities at different national and cultural sites... Thus in the face of modernity one does not turn inward, one does not retreat; one moves sideways, one moves forward. All this is creative adaptation. Non-

Western people, the latecomers to modernity, have been engaged in these maneuvers for nearly a century (Gaonkar, 2001:17, 22).

I want to conclude with some reflections on whether these governable spaces that I have briefly outlined – some of which are highly unstable and violent – can be read, as some would have it, as illustrations of alternative modernities, hybrid cosmopolitans emerging within the interstices of global development. If development is a resolutely dialectical process – a self-representation of modernity that refers to the nondeveloped other, and in turn travels to, and is indigenised by, the local other, in a way that may come to shape, indeed destabilise, that very self-representation – it is no surprise that many of a poststructural inclination have come to see development on the ground as a sort of mixing, syncretism and cross-fertilisation rather than a crude mimicry or replication. Hybridity is the *nom de rigueur* (Bhabha, 1989; Gilroy, 1993; Canclini, 1996; Ferguson, 1999; Taylor 2001). The hybrid annexes a particular intellectual territory which sees postcolonial settings as borderlands and spaces of marginality, replete with instabilities for the West that emerge, in Said's (2000) view, from the exile and displacements of a global cultural and political economy. Gupta's (1998) account of agronomic knowledges blending humoral and scientific practices – a lived unity of the incommensurable – becomes constitutive, in fact of what it means to be postcolonial. As he (Gupta, 1998:232) says:

[P]ostcolonial settings provide the rationale for the idea of alternative modernities... where incommensurable conception and ways of life implode into one another, scattering rather than fusing, into strangely contradictory yet eminently 'sensible' hybridities... It is this unobtrusive intermingling and coexistence of incommensurable beliefs that makes it impossible to position... peasants as occupying a space of pure difference... As hybridized, syncretic,

inappropriate postcolonials they enter a disturbing presence that continuously interrupts the redemptive narratives of the West.

The ceaseless traffic in translation and mimicry (Bhabha, 1989) not only unsettles spatialised notions of culture, nation, and so on, but posits the existence of what one might call non-Kantian forms of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism, with its obvious reference to the European experience, is now deployed to identify both precolonial or premodern cosmopolitanism outside of the West (for example, the Asia-wide circulation of Sanskrit poetry in the first millennium) and contemporary nonwestern cosmopolitan capitalism (for example, Diouf's (2000) account of the global religio-economic network of the rural Mourides). Cosmopolitanism here refers to both the sense of an enthusiasm for customary difference (against a unified polychromatic culture) and to some sense of global citizenship (Brennan, 2001). This is the cosmopolitanism not of universality, rationality and progress but of the *victims* of modernity, what Pollock *et al.* (2000:582) call "minoritarian modernity". With good reason one might think that this is a terrifying case of turning adversity into advantage. The role of the nation state in these articulations is often ambiguous, but they obviously speak simultaneously both to globalised forms of governance outside of what Brennan calls "manageable nations" and to a recognition of local development that is, as Diouf notes, inexplicable outside of globalisation.

Does all of this work add up to, or confirm, the notion of alternative or plural modernities? And what might it imply for development? Doubtless there is a sort of ineluctable logic that has led from the posing of development as a form of modernity to the recognition that, in a world of globalisation and a global development industry, what is at stake is the making of alternative modernities. But to make such a claim is, on its face, far removed from some of the postdevelopment work. To think

of alternative modernities is to admit it is inescapable and, as Gaonkar (2001:1) says, to desist from speculations of its end. In the same way, when Diouf (2000) says that the cosmopolitanism of the rural Senegalese Mourides traders who now operate sophisticated global economic networks in Turin, Paris and New York is not simply informed by the western trajectory of modernity alone, he has done nothing but affirm the powers of non-western *capitalist* accumulation (indeed his article reads like African nationalism meeting the Chamber of Commerce!). All of which is to say the powers of capitalist modernity are undiminished. Could not Diouf be read as a variant of Weber's protestant ethic (the Muslim ethic and the rise of capitalism)?

Chakrabarty (2000), at the end of his postcolonial *Provincializing Europe*, says his task has been to create conjoined and disjunctive genealogies for European categories of political modernity, to keep in tension the necessary dialogue between the universal history of capital ("History I") and the diverse ways of being human ("History II"). But what exactly has this distinction yielded as regards the prospects for the on-the-ground hegemony of development practice? Not much I fear. In the same way Gibson-Graham and Ruccio (2001), in a critical "poststructural" rereading of my own work, desperately search for some spheres in which non-capitalism resides untouched by the overwhelming powers of capitalism (as they interpret my analysis). Whether their reading is right or wrong – and, I would say for the record that certain threads of Marxism have always been attentive to diversity and to the spaces opened within capitalism for non-capitalist production and, quite specifically, that their interpretation of *my* Marxism is totally wrong-headed – matters less than the fact that they do not seek to abandon progress and development, but rather to understand the possibilities for non-exploitative and just forms of produced wealth, which sounds like most of left-of-

centre conventional development theory. It is also striking that the cultural creativity and the "creative adaptation" (Gaonkar, 2001:22) that is emphasised in this work bears the hallmark of great familiarity. In Gibson-Graham and Ruccio's reading of my Gambia work (Watts 1992), the women's work gangs, and the struggles over the conjugal contract are (cultural specificity notwithstanding) very *familiar* stories. After reading Chakrabarty's (2001) account of Calcutta, it is not the sense of hybridity or the difference that remains, but the extraordinary resonances with Marshall Berman's (1982) account of (western) modernity. One wonders whether the renarrativising and the hybridities and the cosmopolitan capitalisms can really substantiate the astonishing claim that the "not-quite-modern" disrupts the complacent march of progress (Gupta, 1998:233) or unsettles "the representational efficacy of the relations of global inequality" (Gupta, 1998:231).

In some postcolonial and poststructural quarters, then, there is a reluctant admission of the *universality* of capitalist modernity and a much less explicit acknowledgement of the neoliberal grand slam, as Perry Anderson (2000) puts it. There is, it must be said, an obvious tension between those who stand at a critical angle to western enlightenment and who trumpet *grassroots postmodernism*, and those who, in acknowledging the inescapability of the modern, invoke a multiplicity of *other modernities*. In the former, there is a danger of the worst of populist myopia; in the latter, the vain hope that in the renarrativisation of western hegemony (the discovery of alternative modernities) resides a success story. Both tend to occlude the terrible realities of unprecedented global economic inequality and the crude violence of twenty-first century empire. I have tried to steer between these poles, by endeavouring to link governmentality and governable spaces to the hard edges of global capitalism of a very particular sort (the trajectory of Nigeria petro-

capitalism). Perhaps, as Gaonkar suggests, there is a creative adaptation in all of this – but one must surely resist the incursions of biology in its deployment. Perhaps one can see in Nembe, or in Ogoni, alternative modernities. But this, it seems to me, leaves the hard questions untouched. What is the environment, and its causal powers, within which adaptation occurs? What are the contradictions and tensions within this process that produce a modernity that is partial and incomplete? And what are the multiple ways in the name of adaptation that governable and ungovernable spaces and subjects are thrown up by the rough and tumble of the grand slam of liberal capitalism (Anderson, P., 2000). Whether the phenomena I describe are hybrid or cosmopolitan concerns me less than the forms of power and the forms of economy – the contours of hegemony – that they express. And this takes us I think, beyond the culturalism of much of the alternate modernities work to recognise, certainly, local history and local culture, but also what is familiar and general, that is to say, the great clanking gears of capital. And I would like to think that this is a project for which Paul Wheatley, for whom material circumstances and the culture of power were always central to his model of the pre-industrial city, would have had some measure of intellectual sympathy.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The data for the case study was collected during a visit to the Niger Delta in January and February 2001. I also rely heavily on the assistance and work of Von Kemedi (2002) and the Nembe Peace Commission (Alagoa, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> The war canoe houses were the units of the kingdom's defense forces. Each house consisted of the head and a formidable number of able-bodied men responsible for defending the house and the king.

<sup>3</sup> As constitutional preparations were made for the transition to home rule, non-Ibo 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 (Okpu, 1977; Okilo, 1980).

<sup>4</sup> In 1974, the Ogoni and other minorities petitioned for the creation of a new Port Harcourt State within the Rivers State boundary (Naanen, 1995:53; see also Whech 1995).

<sup>5</sup> According to the Nigerian government (Ministry of Information, 1996), Ogoniland currently produces about two 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 US\$5.2 billion before costs!

<sup>6</sup> 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, 1996). According to a government commission (Ministry of Information, 1996), however, sabotage accounts for 30 per cent of the incidents but only three per cent of the quantity spilled. Furthermore, all oil-producing communities claim that compensation from the companies for spills has been almost nonexistent.

<sup>7</sup> Saro-Wiwa was often chastised by the 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 rather than the pan-Ogoni territory (see Okonta, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Egi National Congress (ENC); Ijaw National Congress (INC), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Southern Minorities Movement (SMM); Council for Ikwerre Nationality (CIN); Isoko Development Union (IDU); Itsekiri National Patriots (INP); Movement for the Payments of Repatriation to Ogbia (MORETO) and the Urhobo Progressive Union (UPU).

<sup>9</sup> 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" (Ikelegbe, 2001). 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.

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