

# Political Ecology, the Silent Driver of Environmental Degradation in the Oil and Gas Producing Communities of Niger Delta: Can the Petroleum Industry Act 2021 Curb this Threat to Human Security?

Olufunmilayo Oju

Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS), University of Lagos Campus, Lagos, Nigeria  
Email: funmioju4@gmail.com

**How to cite this paper:** Oju, O. (2025). Political Ecology, the Silent Driver of Environmental Degradation in the Oil and Gas Producing Communities of Niger Delta: Can the Petroleum Industry Act 2021 Curb this Threat to Human Security? *Journal of Geoscience and Environment Protection*, 13, 443-464.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/gep.2025.1312023>

**Received:** November 20, 2025

**Accepted:** December 20, 2025

**Published:** December 23, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.  
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

---

## Abstract

Environmental degradation, has been the bane of the oil and gas producing communities of the Niger Delta (OGPCND), right from the inception of the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in 1958. The Petroleum Industry Act (2021). Official Gazette of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 108(142), A121-370 (hereinafter referred to as PI Act 2021), was enacted as a panacea to the problem of environmental degradation in the OGPCND and other challenges associated with oil and gas production and development. The PI Act 2021 was intended to reform Nigeria's petroleum sector by strengthening regulatory oversight, enforcing environmental protections, and establishing community development frameworks, through the incorporation of the Host Communities Development Trusts. But, four years after the enactment of the Act, environmental degradation persist in the OGPCND. This paper applies Political Ecology Theory to the environmental crisis in the OGPCND, plagued by oil-induced degradation, socio-economic marginalization, and violent conflict. Political Ecology offers a multidimensional framework that links environmental degradation to power relations, historical inequalities, and global capitalist structures. Through this theory, the paper argues that environmental degradation in the OGPCND is not merely a technical or ecological issue but a deep-rooted political issue, shaped by elite resource control, global energy demands, and community resistance. The paper adopted the doctrinal research methodology, with primary sources of information derived from PI Act 2021 and other related legislations, and secondary source distilled from textbooks, journal articles and other scholarly periodicals, sourced from the interment. Drawing on

---

scholarly literature and empirical evidence, the study highlights how power, scale, and agency define the environmental struggles in the OGPCND, and proposes reforms grounded in justice, decentralization, and participatory governance.

### **Keywords**

Environmental Degradation, Political Ecology, Oil and Gas Producing Communities, Niger Delta, Human Security

---

## **1. Introduction**

The discovery of oil in commercial quantity in Oloibiri, in 1958 was a revolutionary period in the economic history of Nigeria. With the discovery, oil and gas became a major revenue earner for the Federal Government (Ukiyedeikimie & Daniel, 2024). According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, about N8535.61 billion was generated from crude oil exports in the third quarter of 2023 (Jaiyeola, 2023) and N450bn between December 2023 and January 2024 (Elewomawu, 2025). In the first six (6) months of 2025 alone, the Federal Government generated N5,21tn from the oil and gas sector (OGS) (Erondu & Nwakanma, 2025). However, activities associated with the extraction and development of oil and gas engendered oil spills and gas flare which have caused extensive pollution, severe degradation of the environment, social inequalities, and a threat to the livelihoods and health of the people dwelling in the Oil and Gas Producing Communities of Niger Delta (OGPCND) (Okonkwo et al., 2022). These problems taken together compromise the security and welfare of the people (Akinlabi et al., 2025). Using the doctrinal research methodology, this paper adopts Political Ecology Theory to examine the environmental crisis in the Niger Delta, arguing that environmental degradation is inseparable from political and economic structures that prioritize profit over people and the environment. Through its primary sources of data collection, this paper explored the provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act 2021, and other relevant legislations. The specific focus was on the relevant provisions of the PI Act on environmental degradation, and the provisions for the host community's development trusts (HCDTs). The focus on these Sections of the PI Act is based on the contents' direct relevance to the subject matter of discourse in this paper. The Sections of the Act that were not directly relevant to the subject were discarded. Consequently, a content analytical process was employed to derive significant insights from the PI Act 2021, in line with the objective of the paper. This paper is divided into 6 parts. The first is the introduction, second literature review, third is the theoretical framework, the fourth part highlight the criticism of the theory and how it has been addressed the fifth part is the recommendations, while the sixth, is the conclusion of this paper.

### Literature Review

The reviewed literature reveals that environmental laws in Nigeria, including 1999 Constitution (as amended), the Petroleum Act 1969, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act, and National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) Act, 2006 amongst others, have historically aimed to address the negative impacts of industrial activities (Ite & Ufot, 2016). However, as pointed out by Akinlabi et al. (2025), the effectiveness of these policies remains limited due to weak implementation and insufficient political will, which Ite & Ufot (2016), argues resulted in huge environmental degradation in the OGPCND. Environmental degradation in the OGPCND has many devastating negative impacts on the Nigerian economy, the environment, health, and economy of the residents of the OGPCND. It is estimated that Nigeria economy lost about N28.8 billion (USD\$94 million) annually to gas flaring (Ite & Ufot, 2016). Apart from the negative impact on revenue, Chizoba Chinweze and Gwen Abiola-Oloke et al. (2012), argued that environmental degradation has enormously impacted the biodiversity and ecosystem services of the OGPCND with its socio-economic consequences, while Olusola et al. (2022), argued that environmental degradation, as a result of gas flaring, is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions which is responsible for climate change. Onibere et al. (2018) also posited that decades of oil and gas exploration have left the people of the OGPCND dispossessed of their land, land fertility, delta forest, water resources and their livelihood. Scholars, such as Bruederle and Hodler (2015) pointed at the health implication of environmental degradation on children and estimated that, in 2012 alone, 16,000 babies died within the first month of life because of oil pollution in the Niger Delta. This makes Ugboma Paul Peters (2017) describe environmental abuse and degradation as the greatest threat to the survival of the people in the OGPCND. On her part, Adekola et al. (2017) argue that the state of the degradation of the OGPCND's environment, is a classic case of environmental injustice where the region disproportionately bears a much higher burden of air, land, and water pollution in comparison to other parts of the country. As argued by the Niger Delta Journal.Org (2024), environmental degradation in the OGPCND is not merely a technical failure but a consequence of political and economic exclusion. Supporting this argument, Peekate and Duson (2025) argued that despite the fact that the OGPCND accounts for over 90% of Nigeria's export earnings and contribute substantially to the socio-economic development of Nigeria, there appears to be a conscious and deliberate policy geared towards the marginalization of the OGPCND, as the people of the communities are excluded from the enjoyment of the oil proceeds derived from their land and from assuming important leadership position at the federal level. Oil wealth is controlled by multinational oil corporations and the Nigerian state, while host communities suffer environmental harm. This, Cyril I. Obi (1999) argues, makes the multinational oil corporations a central player in the global accumulation of capital, in the context of a global political economy that simultaneously concentrates wealth and energy both in certain locales and at cer-

tain social levels by extracting and dispossessing from other locales and social levels. Political Ecology reveals how this elite capture of resources perpetuates inequality and environmental degradation (Ajl, 2023). Oil extracted from the OGPCND fuels global markets, while environmental costs are localized. This reflects ecologically unequal exchange, which Ajl (2023), argues creates ecological debt, with regions like the Niger Delta paying the price for global energy consumption.

The Petroleum Industry (PI) Act 2021 is a comprehensive legal framework enacted to provide legal governance, regulatory, and fiscal framework for the Nigerian Oil and Gas Sector (NOGS), the development of the Host Communities, and for related matters, (see the preamble to the PI Act 2021). According to Olaniwun Ajayi (2021), the PI Act 2021 is a landmark reform of Nigerian Oil and Gas Sector (NOGS), intended to provide a stable, transparent, and efficient legal framework by replacing outdated legislations and addressing issues like overlapping responsibilities and corruption. Dennis Naku (2023), also observed that prior to the enactment of the PI Act 2021, broken promises, environmental degradation, and underdevelopment fueled resentment between the host communities, and the oil and gas producing companies (OGPC), across the OGPCND. The writer argued however that, since the enactment of the PI Act in 2021, a quiet transformation has begun, one that placed communities at the center of oil-funded development and emphasised accountability, transparency, and mutual benefit, as a result of the Host Community Development Trusts (HCDDTs). Countering this argument, Promise Agunia (2023) argued that despite the innovative provisions for host community development under the PI Act and other legal frameworks, host communities still face the problem of underdevelopment due to issues such as excessive control of the HCDDTs Fund, non-compliance with host community obligations, excessive power of the settlor in constituting the Board of Trustee of the HCDDT, and communal clashes among host communities. Supporting this argument, Adebisi and Ezebuio (2023) argues that political interference, and lack of institutional independence may undermine regulatory effectiveness and implementations of the PI Act.

All of the above literatures have contributed immensely to this paper. Some have documented the devastating health and ecological effects of oil pollution, and alluded to the PI Act 2021 as a regulatory reform, the gap in effective implementation is noted. However, the literatures have offered little strategic reforms grounded in justice, decentralization, and participatory governance, that can stratagem the implementations of the PI Act 2021. This paper aims to fill this gap.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

The whole gamut of the Federal Government policy on oil and gas exploration, and degradation of the environment in the OGPCND, can be explored through the lens of political ecology. Political ecology emerged in the 1980s as an interdisciplinary field to address land degradation and development/environmental issues (Neumann, 2009). Political ecology, seeks to understand the complex relations

between nature and society through a careful analysis of the forms of access to, and control over resources and their implications for environmental health and sustainable livelihoods (Neumann, 2009). Central to the theory of political ecology is the notion that environmental modification cannot be understood without consideration of the political and economic structures and institutions within which it is embedded (*Encyclopedia of Political Ecology*, 2020). Thus, political ecology examines the relationship between political, economic, and social factors and how they affect environmental issues and resource distribution. It highlights how power dynamics influence access to natural resources, leading to inequalities in order to reveal disparities and injustices in the distribution of environmental costs and benefits (Neumann, 2009). Essentially, political ecology studies how human power struggles and environmental changes are interconnected, and emphasised the key role of outside forces, like international development and economic modernization schemes in the restructuring of local lives and environment (Watts, 2017). Political ecology focuses on the power dynamics that influence who benefits and who suffers from environmental change (Perlego, 2025). For example, it investigates how governments and corporations control land and resources, often displacing local communities and disrupting traditional livelihoods, as seen in fishing and palm oil cultivation in the OGPCND (Jack, 2025).

At the inception of the development of the concept of political ecology, Marxian political economy provided the initial primary theoretical influence (Neumann, 2009). Marxian political economy is a framework developed by Karl Marx that analyzes how economics, class structure, and politics are intertwined, particularly critiquing capitalism through concepts like class struggle, surplus value, and worker alienation. It posited that the economic system determines social organization and that capitalism exploits labor, leading to inherent contradictions and inequality, and suggests that political systems and social relations are shaped by the underlying mode of production (Ngo, 2025). According to Karl Marx analysis, the Capitalist society is divided into two opposing groups, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (*The Big Thinkers*, 2023). The bourgeoisie are the landowners who owns the means of production and derives income from it. The proletariat, or working class, comprises the majority of the population that lacks access to the means of production and are therefore induced to sell their labour power for a wage or salary to gain access to necessities, goods and services (*Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.*, 1957).

Economic exploitation is an essential element of the capitalist mode of production. Capitalism's quest for profits is satisfied through the extraction of surplus value from workers. Essentially, this means paying workers less than the value of the fruits of their labour. Surplus value is produced by the consumption of labour power (*The Big Thinkers*, 2023). The initiative, skill and intelligence of workers bring them no reward as they are turned solely to the advantage of the capitalists. Marx's critique of capitalism included the notion of alienation. Capitalism has alienated or separated workers from the process of production. Capitalism denies

humans the experience of free productive labour. Humans do not work to produce what they need; they work to produce commodities to be sold for profit. According to Marx, work is not a social process, work is not a fulfilling or creative experience (The Big Thinkers, 2023). Marx theorized that as economic power is concentrated in fewer and fewer hands and the impoverishment of the majority of people continues, a workers' revolution would be inevitable. Simply put, Marx's message is a revolutionary call to action to the working classes of society. 'The workers have nothing to lose but their chains, he said. They have a world to win. Workers of the world, unite' (The Big Thinkers, 2023), encouraged Marx.

The Marxian theory of the means of production and the theory of political ecology provide critical frameworks for understanding environmental degradation in the OGPCND as an outcome of power imbalances, resource control struggles, and the inherent contradictions of a capitalist system focused on profit over sustainability (Jike, 2014). The theory emphasises the relationship between the ownership of the means of production, such as land, oil infrastructure and social class dynamics (Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., 1957). In the context of the OGPCND, its relevance lies in the Federal Government ownership and control of oil and gas resources; exploitation and profit motive; and collusion between the Federal Government and oil and gas corporations.

## 2. Ownership and Control

Significantly, the oil and gas deposits of Nigeria are concentrated OGPCND, with a large portion of the world's oil and gas reserves, over 159 oil fields, 1481 oil wells, 606 on-shore oil fields, and a network of pipelines crisscrossing across the communities (Bayelsa State Oil and Environmental Commission, 2023; Nazmuz Sakib, 2021; Kadafa, 2012). However, it is the federal Government of Nigeria that solely owns and control all the oil and gas deposits, extraction, production, and development in Nigeria. Section 44(3) of the 1999 Constitution specifically provides:

...the entire property in and control of oil minerals, mineral oils and natural gas in, under or upon any land in Nigeria or in, under or upon the territorial waters, and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria shall vest in the Government of the Federation and shall be managed in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.

This constitutional provision is emphatically restated in Section 1 of the PI Act 2021, which provides:

The property and ownership of petroleum within Nigeria and its territorial waters, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone is vested the Government of the Federation of Nigeria.

As a result of the above provisions, the host communities do not have any control or right over the petroleum resources that are found within their territory. The Federal Government exercise its control over oil and gas deposits and operations through its appointed agencies, such as the Ministry of Petroleum Resources,

the Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), established to regulate the upstream petroleum operations (*The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 4(1), s. 6(a)*), the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), established to regulate the midstream and downstream petroleum operations (*The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 29(1), s. 30(a)*); and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited (NNPC Limited) (*The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, ss. 53 and 54*), amongst others. These agencies are empowered to issue operating licenses to oil and gas companies (OGCs) or Settlers, to extract and develop the oil and gas deposits of Nigeria, as well as monitor and regulate the activities of the OGCs companies (*The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 4, s. 32, s. 71, and 81*), The OGCs are required to pay rents and taxes to the Federal Government (*The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 100*). Clearly, the Federal Government and OGCs, the multinational oil corporations (MOCs), are the Capitalist Class or Bourgeoisies who own and control the means of production, which is the oil and gas deposits, oil wells, pipelines, refineries, etc. The laws, regulations, implementations, enforcement, and all appointments, relating oil and gas regulation, and of everything concerning the oil and gas deposits of Nigeria, is the exclusive preserve of the Federal Government. The

The exclusive ownership of oil and gas deposits by the Federal Government, has led to severe environmental degradation in the OGPCND, occasioned by oil spills, gas flaring, and lack of proper maintenance of oil and gas infrastructure (*Eregha & Irughe, 2009*). The problems associated with environmental degradations, as a result of oil spills and gas flaring in Nigeria, affects mainly the communities in the OGPCND. This has resulted in the destruction of local livelihoods, damages to the ecosystems, and damages to environmental and human health. The OGPCND continue to suffer from the environmental damage, while often receiving little of the economic benefit, a situation described as the resource curse (*Onyema, 2018*). It is widely considered inequitable and a form of environmental injustice for the OGPCND to bear the severe environmental consequences of oil and gas extraction without having ownership or control over the resources in their communities (*Oladele & Austen, 2015; Owhoko, 2022; Opuowei, 2024*). The issue of whether the people of the OGPCND should bear the environmental and social costs of oil and gas extraction while not holding ownership of the resources themselves, has been a subject of significant and long-standing debate (*Ojakorotu et al., 2025*). That debate is not the focus of this paper. However, it is pertinent to state that other communities in Nigeria, where several other minerals resource are located, suffer the same fate as those in the OGPCND. Although, the level of degradation they have to contend with, paled into insignificance when compared with that of the OGPCND.

### **3. Exploitation and Profit Motive**

The primary goal of the Federal Government's control of oil and gas deposits of Nigeria, is to maximise profit. This objective is clearly stated in Section 2(b) of the

PI Act 2021, which provides that one of the objectives of this Act is to “establish a framework for the creation of a commercially oriented and profit driven national petroleum company”. This inherent drive for profit, creates a lack of political will to stringently regulate the oil and gas companies, as doing so might reduce the income that has been defining Nigeria’s economy for decades (Osuyi, 2012). This often leads OGCs to prioritize cost-saving measures, such as the cheapest possible methods of waste disposal, like gas flaring, and insufficient investment in infrastructure maintenance, leading to environmental disasters like oil spills and pollution (Durodola, 2025).

#### **4. State-Corporate Collusion**

Political ecology reveals how the Federal Government often conspire with oil OGCs, and formulate policies that facilitate exploitation and environmental mismanagement. As argued by Taylor Andre (2022), the Government does this through weak regulatory framework, failure to enforce and implement environmental regulations, and failure to address mounting ecological catastrophe, which allows unchecked pollution that threaten the livelihood of millions in the OGPCND. For example, Section 66(1) (m) of the PI Act stated that one of the objectives of Chapter 2 of the PI Act, is to ensure that petroleum operations are conducted in a manner that protects the health and safety of persons, property, and the environment. In pursuance of this objective, Section 105 of the Act prohibits flaring and venting of natural gas, with certain exceptions, and imposed penalties for unauthorised flaring or venting. Strangely, Section 104(c), provide a leeway to the OGCs to continue to flare gas regardless of the prohibition in Section 105, by making provision for a payment of a prescribed fine for OGCs who flare or vent gas unlawfully, thereby water-down the anti-flare provisions of the PI Act. Also, Section 103 of the PI Act makes provision for a licensee or lessee to contribute toward environmental remediation, to management negative environmental impact. Despite these laudable provisions, 4 years after the enactment of the PI Act, gas flaring continues unabated, and the environment in the OGPCND, remains degraded and unrehabilitated, thus exacerbating environmental degradations and the dangers it poses to human security in the OGPCND.

Furthermore, Section 128 of the PI Act stipulated several grounds for the withdrawal of operational licence from an OGC, amongst which is failure to comply with applicable law, or failure to comply with environmental regulation as required by the law. Section 3 of Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Revocation of Licences and Leases Regulations, 2023, highlights the procedure for such revocation. Despite the monumental environmental degradations in the OGPCND, and the flagrant disobedience of environmental regulation by the OGCs, the recorded case of revocation of operating licence by the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, was for “several Non-Productive Time (NPT)” (NUPRC, 2025). In fact, the Commission has rolled out a new policy which emphasised that oil and gas companies must either begin production within a specified timeframe or re-

linquish their licenses. The aim of this policy to revitalize the oil and gas sector, ensure optimal use of assets, and boost government revenue (Olawin, 2025), not to prevent disobedience of environmental regulations or degradation of the environment.

Environmental degradation in the Niger Delta is not due to a lack of environmental laws but rather the result of weak enforcement, inadequate regulatory framework, and a lack of political will to ensure compliance (Lugar, 2013). Over the years, the Federal Government of Nigeria have at different times enacted environmental related policies and legal instruments, such as the Petroleum Act 1998, Oil Pipelines Act 1958, Environmental Impact Assessments Act 1990, and EGASPIN 1990 etc., to address the problem of environmental degradations in the OGPCND. However, as observed by scholars, Nigerian Government is known for formulating good public policies, but lacks the capacity to enforce or implement them (Offiong et al., 2018). The important role of enforcement and implementation of environmental regulatory policies, in curbing environmental degradations in the OGPCND cannot be over emphasized (Zephaniah et al., 2023). Yet, implementing government policy on environmental degradation in the OGPCND is difficult due to a combination of factors, such as:

1. The federal government's overwhelming reliance on oil revenue created a system that prioritize production efficiency and profit over environmental stewardship and community well-being, directly resulting in extensive degradation of the OGPCND (Wenibowei, 2018)
2. Federal Government development plans initially focused on rapid development through resource exploitation with scant regard for resource conservation or the environmental and social consequences (Wenibowei, 2018).
3. The Federal Government has historically permitted oil companies to flare associated gas, a major source of air pollution and greenhouse gases, because it was seen as more economically viable than developing infrastructure to capture and market the gas. This practice contributes to climate change and releases toxic chemicals into the air, causing health problems and damaging crops (Wenibowei, 2018).
4. Agencies established by the Federal Government to mitigate environmental and socio-economic issues, have often been hampered by corruption and poor implementation, resulting in minimal impact on the environment (ClimateJusticeCentral, 2024).
5. Widespread poverty in the communities, led some local individuals to engage in illegal activities like pipeline vandalism and illegal refining (known as "backyard refining") as a survival strategy, which further exacerbates environmental degradation through uncontrolled spills and burning (ClimateJusticeCentral, 2024).

Pollution, as a result of gas flaring or oil spillage, has harmful implications on human health and the environment to an inestimable proportion. The adverse effect of this activity could have been minimised through effective monitoring and

enforcement of environmental regulatory provisions. The failure of the Federal government to prevent the unabated pollution of the environment of the OGPCND constitute a severe breach of environmental rights of the inhabitants of the OGPCND (Lugar, 2013; Opuowei, 2024), and a threat to human security. The failure of the Federal Government to enforce and implement environmental regulation, is tantamount to a denial of their fundamental human rights of the people of the OGPCND, and a violation of their right to an adequate standard of living and enjoyment of physical and mental health, guaranteed under Articles 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Right, 1967 (Taylor, 2022).

The impact of environmental degradation on the OGPCND and the unfair distribution of oil and gas revenues, strained the relationships between OGPCND and the federal government on one hand, and between the OGPCND and multinational oil companies (MOCs) on the other hand (Ukiyedeikimie & Daniel, 2024). Thus, as predicted by Karl Marx in his theory of the means of production, there were agitations by the people of the OGPCND against the threat that environmental degradation pose to their livelihood and existence, against the activities of the MOCs and the regulatory failure of the agencies established to address environmental degradation, and the crisis of underdevelopment in the in the OGPCND. The agitations which began inform of protests and litigations, (for example, Morocco-Clarke, 2021; Ogale and Bille Communities v. Shell, 2024), were largely ignored by the Federal Government (Akpan, 2021). The Federal Government choose to support and sided with MOCs, and resort to the use of military force to subdued the people of the OGPCND and their agitations. This move on the part of the Federal Government eroded whatever confidence the people of the OGPCND reposed in the Federal Government's ability to provide adequate solution to their plight. Thus, the agitations and resistance against the MOCs and Federal Government intensified and gathered momentum, inform of protests, community conflicts, and pipeline disruption by local groups, which led to a loss of operational days and production for oil companies. These went on, till the FG arrested Ken Saro-Wiwa and 8 other Ogoni activists and eventually executed them in 1995 (Ojajorotu, 2008)

Rather than suppressed or subdued the people of the OGPCND and their agitations, the repressive measures adopted by government led to the emergence of new militant groups, like Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), with renewed waves of violence and insistence on resource control or the bombing of oil and gas installations (Ibaba et al., 2018). MEND demands a restoration of the oil polluted environment of the OGPCND, local control of oil resources and improved standard of living for the people of OGPCND (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2022). MEND insurgency actions sometimes caused production shortfalls, in crude oil production, of up to 40% of Nigeria's national output, cutting down daily output, to as low as 380 barrels per day (Bpd) as against its potential of 3.2 million barrels per day. Thereby affecting Nigeria's position as Africa's

largest producer of crude oil (Ukiyedeikimie & Daniel, 2024). Consequently, there was a huge loss of revenue to the FG (Otto, 2020). This unprecedented crisis vibrated globally, as Nigeria Government could no longer meetup with its daily crude oil supply, and the MOCs had to shut down their operations. The Presidential Amnesty Program introduced by the Federal Government in 2009, to a large extent; restored relative peace to the OGPCND; enables the MOCs to resume their business operations; give the Federal Government a peaceful atmosphere to embark on a complete reform of the entire Nigerian oil and gas sector (NOGS); address wholistically, the problems of environmental degradation, and other inherent problems in the NOGS (Otto, 2020). The reform efforts took a 20 years period and resulted in the enactment of the Petroleum Act 2021.

The novel provisions of the Act, especially the inclusion of the Host Communities' Development Trusts, amongst others, sought to pacify the OGPCND, who are often at the center of the negative impact of oil and gas exploration and exploitation (Alex et al., 2022), ordinarily should curb environmental degradations and foster sustainable development in the OGPCND. For example, prior to the enactment of the PI Act 2021, environmental laws and policies on environmental degradations focused on post-impact remediation rather than preventive regulation, and mitigation of environmental degradation was often treated as a corporate social responsibility (CSR) issue, not a legal obligation. However, by Sections 102 and 103 of the PI Act 2021, environmental protection is incorporated into operational licensing. The PI Act 2021 mandate OGCs to conduct Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) before commencing operation (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s.102); submit environmental management plan (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 102(1), (b)); and pay a prescribed financial contribution to an environmental remediation fund (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 103). There is now a legal linkage between environmental performance and operational rights. Also, Section 235 of the Act, which creates the Host Communities Development Trust (HCDTs), makes community engagement and development a statutory requirement, by mandating 3% of the operating expenses of the oil OGCs to be allocated annually to the HCDTs (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 240(1), (2)).

Section 235(1) of the PI Act provides for the incorporation of the HCDTs. The objective of the Host Communities Trust Fund is to ensure that the OGCs support the sustainable development of host communities (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 239(3)(a)), by funding projects in infrastructure (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 239(3)(b)); education (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 239(d)); healthcare (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 239(3)(e)); and economic empowerment (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 239(3)(c)). Some of the objectives of the HCDTs to: improve the socio-economic conditions of these communities (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 239(f), (g)); foster peaceful coexistence between the communities and oil companies (The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 234(c)); and provide direct social and economic benefits from petroleum

operations ([The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 234\(b\)](#)). The main framework for the setting up and administration of the HCDTs Fund, is contained in Sections 235 to 257 of the PI Act 2021, and in the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Host Communities Development Regulations, 2022.

Section 235(1) and (4) of the PI Act, mandates the OGCs or settlors to incorporate HCDTs for the benefit of host communities, within the time frame specified in Section 236, which is within 12 months from the commencement of the Act, and to appoint and authorize a Board of Trustees, in consultation with the host communities. By virtue of Sections of 242 of the PI Act, Settlor is empowered to; to set up the Trust; determine its membership; set the criteria for selecting those members; remunerate, discipline, disqualify, suspend, and remove a member of the Board of Trustees ([The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 242\(3\)\(b\)](#)). Section 7 of the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Host Communities Development Regulations, 2022 (hereinafter referred to as [NUPHCDR, 2022](#)), set out the requirements for the registration of the HCDTs, amongst which is; (a) a copy of the proposed constitution of the trust to be registered, which shall be in compliance with sections 239(1), 239(2), 240(1), 241, 242(1), 247(1), 249(1), 254 and 255 of the PI Act and section 827 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act; (b) the details of the proposed trustees of the trust, intended to form the Board of Trustees as stipulated in regulation 13(2) of these Regulations; (c) the criteria for the selection of the trustees, subject to regulation 13(2) of these Regulations; (d) a copy of the applicant's licence or lease, with a map identifying the settlor's area of operations annexed to it; (e) the list and location of host communities to be covered by the trust; (f) the host community development plan specifying matters described in regulation 20 of these Regulations; and (g) a fund matrix specifying matters described in regulation 22(1) of these Regulations.

Section 247 of the PI Act provides for the establishment, composition, and powers of the management committee, to be set up by the Board of Trustees, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution of the HCDT. The function of the committee include the general administration of the host community's development trust on an ad hoc basis ([The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 248\(1\)](#)); preparation of HCDT budgets ([The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 248\(a\)](#)); management of contracting processes including determination of project award winners, supervision of project execution ([The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 248\(d\)](#)); nomination of funds managers for appointment ([The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 248\(e\)](#)); and reporting on activities of various actors to the Board of Trustee ([The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 248\(f\)](#)), amongst others. Section 18(2) of the [NUPHCDR 2022](#), further provides that; the management committee shall comprise (a) a representative of each of the host community, nominated by the relevant host community as a non-executive member; (b) executive members, who shall be Nigerians of high integrity and professional standing—1) a person, who is qualified to practice as an accountant in Nigeria, with not less than 10 years' experience as a practicing accountant in Nigeria, 2) a person, who is a member of

the Chartered Institute of Project Managers of Nigeria, with not less than 10 years' experience as a practicing project manager in Nigeria, 3) a person with at least 10 years working experience in the finance sector in Nigeria, and 4) a legal practitioner with not less than 10 years post call experience.

It is important to note the gap, both in the PI Act and in the [NUPHCDR \(2022\)](#), in not stating clearly, who occupies the position of an executive members of the management committee, and their respective role, as different from the that of the non-executive member. One thing that is clear in Regulation is the fact that, the members representing the host communities in the committee, are non-executive members. Executive members of the Committee, are to be Nigerians of "high integrity and professional standing" who may not be members of the host community. This is an anomaly. One would have expected that members of the host communities, who are the primarily beneficiaries of the HCDTs, should be at the helms of affairs in matters concerning the development of their communities. It has been observed ([Coset, 2024](#)), that in some corporate settings, non-executive members of committees are given very minimal responsibilities, and are sometimes not permitted to vote on critical issues. That is why is it important that the PI Act and its Regulations define the functions of each category of members of the management committee. Also, the power to remove a trustee, is solely vested arbitrarily in the Settlor. There is no provision in the enabling laws, for operation of the rule of law, or due process, before a trustee is removed. This clearly gives the settlor an overreaching power that can be counterproductive, other gap has to do with the requirement that members of the Board of trustees be appointed by the Settlor in consultations he the host communities. This requirement appears vague, especially going the provisions of section 318 of the PI Act which defines host communities as communities situated in or appurtenant to the area of operation of a settlor, or any other community as a settlor may determine. Going by this provision, any community, regardless of its geographical location, can be a host community and be a trustee of the HCDTs, if a settlor designates it as such, while the actual communities in the OGPCND, risked being excluded.

The final organ that makes up the Board of Trustees of the HCDTs, is the Host Communities Advisory Committee. Section 249 of the PI Act provides for the establishment and composition of the committee, while Section 250 of the Act makes provisions for the functions of the committee. Functions of the Advisory Committee include nomination of members to represent the host communities in the management committee, articulate development project to be transmitted to the management committee, and provide advisory services to the management committee, amongst others. From the foregoing, it can be argued that the legal framework for the HCDTs, gave enormous powers to the settlor in the setting up and administration of the HCDTs, as opposed to the members of the host communities, who have little or no statutorily defined roles. The governance structure tends to make the settlor, administrators of host communities in the context of the PI Act ([Coset, 2024](#)). This argument is based on the observation that the entire

governance structure of the Host Communities Development Trust tilts overwhelmingly in favour of the settlor.

The main objective of the HCDTs is to facilitate and fund development projects that will improve the life and socio-economic conditions of the people of the OGPCND. In furtherance of this objective, Section 251 of the PI Act and Section 21 of the 2022 Regulation require the Settlor to carry out host community Needs Assessment to determine the specific need of each affected community, from a social, economic, and environmental perspective (*The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 251 (2) (a), (b)*). The needs assessment will indicate the effect that a proposed petroleum operations might have on the host communities, and the strategy for addressing the needs and the effects identified (*The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 251(2)(c)*). The outcome of the assessment determines the development project to be carried out by the HCDTs in any given community. Needs assessment has become the basis for the host community development plan (*The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, s. 251(4)*). To some extent, The HCDTs has shown positive impacts, fostering peace by providing direct benefits through development projects, which have improved community livelihoods in the OGPCND (*Aina, 2025*). However, its effectiveness relies on transparent and equitable implementation. While it has helped reduce conflict and build trust between oil companies and communities, there are ongoing concerns about its role not replacing the government's responsibility for development and the need for better community participation in the process (*Adeniyi & Aleeto, 2022*). For the HCDTs to fully achieve its objective, the needs assessment has to be encompassing, consultative, participatory, and must touch all aspects of the critical development need of the OGPCND (*Adeniyi & Aleeto, 2022*). Despite the positive intention, the success of the HCTF hinges on its proper and equitable implementation to ensure that resources are used effectively for genuine community development (*Ovwoshokpite, 2025*).

#### **Limitations of the Theory Political Ecology**

Scholars have criticised political ecology as sometimes focusing too much on the political power dynamics between the state and the community, while potentially underestimating the role of other actors, such as the corporate sector, and their direct impact on the environment (*Penna-Firme, 2013*). Others have pointed out that while political ecology is good at analysing power relations, it can sometimes fail to fully capture the ways in which the costs of environmental degradation are distributed unequally among different groups, exacerbating existing social and economic inequalities (*Ajl, 2023*). Still, others critic, that the analyses of political ecology can sometimes become too abstract and detached from the lived experiences of individuals and communities, failing to adequately capture the nuances of their struggles for survival and security (*Ajl, 2023*).

#### **Addressing the Limitation**

The limitations of political ecology theories in addressing environmental degradation in the Niger Delta can be overcome by emphasizing the need for a strong,

assertive Nigerian state with the capacity to effectively enforce environmental laws and penalize corporate non-compliance, thereby moving from analysis to action. and by integrating indigenous knowledge and community-based initiatives, such as local remediation efforts, with the broader political-ecological analysis to ensure practical, locally relevant solutions are implemented (Antony & Basil, 2017) This can be done by; strengthen regulatory framework and remove ambiguities that makes the regulations difficult to enforce and implement; ensuring that persons of high integrity are appointed as regulators; holden regulators accountable for non-enforcement and implementations of environmental laws and regulations. If regulators are held accountable for their stewardship, this will move regulators to ensure that OGCs obey environmental regulations, and curb the tendency for corrupt practices, and weak enforcement. Weak enforcement is the primary reason for the extensive environmental degradation in the OGPCND, A strong enforcement culture ensures compliance by OGCs, which radically curbs environmental degradation and leads to the environmental sustainability. (Okonkwo & Ekekwe, 2017). A strong state capacity allows for the effective monitoring and supervision of clean-up operations in polluted sites by ensuring that environmental restoration is carried out to the required standards and is not abandoned due to corruption or negligence. It also encourages the adoption of sustainable development practices by industries, balancing economic growth with environmental protection. This includes exploring diversification of the economy away from oil dependency, which lessens the overall environmental pressure on the OGPCND (Okonkwo & Ekekwe, 2017). A strong, assertive state moves the focus from profit at all costs to environmental justice and sustainable management of the Oil and gas (Okonkwo & Ekekwe, 2017).

Also, it is important to create programs that initiate community-led environmental conservation projects. These grassroots efforts are crucial for sustainable development and environmental preservation (Egbedi, 2024). Communities possess invaluable, multigenerational knowledge about local ecosystems, including sustainable farming, fishing, and forestry practices that prevent resource depletion, Cultural beliefs and spiritual values often act as inherent conservation tools. Many indigenous practices, such as using specific plant materials to trap oil spills on water surfaces or using organic waste as manure, are simple, practical, and readily available, providing immediate, cost-effective responses to environmental problems (Egeruoh-Adindu, 2022). When communities lead conservation efforts, they develop a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for their environment, which is critical for the long-term success of any project (Egbedi, 2024).

### **Recommendations**

This paper recommends the following:

1. Promoting participatory governance: Shifting from state-centric management to a more democratic and participatory approach that actively involves local communities, traditional rulers, and NGOs in decision-making processes regarding environmental management and resource control. This can

be done by; Allowing communities to elect or nominate trustees, rather than relying solely on settlor appointments; Creating appointment panels, whose membership include settlors' representatives, community leaders, and regulators, to balance interests; Publish clear criteria for trustee eligibility, and eligibility into the various committees of the Board of Trustees; Where a settlor appoints a trustee, the trustee should be formally appointed from the vetted list. And communities should endorse the appointments through a public signing ceremony. This will promote transparency and accountability, and reduces suspicion of favoritism or elite capture; and Trustees should undergo mandatory training in governance, financial management, and conflict resolution.

2. Strengthening regulatory capacity through: Improve legal framework for the HCDTs, by including clear and unambiguous provisions, clear statutory functions for all actors, that is encompassing, consultative, and participatory; Engagement of adequately qualified and competent persons of integrity as regulatory agent; Provide continuous and adequate training for regulatory agencies; Provide adequate funding and monitoring equipment; Make the regulatory agencies truly independent; appoint independent body, like ombudsman, or NGO, to monitor the activities of the regulatory agencies; Hold regulatory agencies accountable for non-implementation and enforcement of the Regulatory laws; and Integrating indigenous knowledge and community-based initiatives, such as local remediation efforts, with the broader political-ecological analysis to ensure practical, locally relevant solutions are implemented.

## **5. Conclusion**

Environmental degradation in the OGPCND can be understood as both a multi-dimensional human crisis and a structural injustice. Political ecology exposes the systemic nature of environmental degradation in the OGPCND, linking it to the inherent logic of capitalist resource extraction and the political power dynamics that marginalize the people of the OGPCND, and their environment. The theory provides a holistic framework for policy reform, emphasising that sustainable solutions must address both human needs and structural inequalities. The PI Act 2021 introduces new regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to address environmental degradation, improve regulatory oversight, and empower host communities. Apart from its imprecise language and ambiguities in key definition, such as 'host community' which creates regulatory uncertainty, potential for litigation, and room for manipulation by stakeholders, successful implementation and enforcement of its provisions, remain its greatest challenge.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## References

- Adebisi, S. A., & Ezebuio, K. N. (2023). Analysis of the Petroleum Industry Act and Its impact on the Nigerian Oil and Gas Sector. *Gusau International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 6, 293-312.
- Adekola, J. et al. (2017). Health Risks from Environmental Degradation in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Environment and Planning: Politics and Space*, 35, 334-354.
- Adeniyi, A., & Aleeto, C. (2022). *Can Host Community Development Trust Resolve the Social Licence in the Oil Producing Communalities?*  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MhmpvaOEh7PKGf\\_GGQi7r3mjYY9ep-qj/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MhmpvaOEh7PKGf_GGQi7r3mjYY9ep-qj/view)
- Agunia, P. B. (2023). *Host Communities Development and Protection in the Nigerian Petroleum Industry: A Legal Appraisal.*  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384080848\\_HOST\\_COMMUNITIES\\_DEVELOPMENT\\_AND\\_PROTECTION\\_IN\\_THE\\_NIGERIAN\\_PETROLEUM\\_INDUSTRY\\_A\\_LEGAL\\_APPRAISAL#:~:text=Thus%2C%20this%20paper%20investigated%20host,community%20provisions%20under%20the%20PIA](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384080848_HOST_COMMUNITIES_DEVELOPMENT_AND_PROTECTION_IN_THE_NIGERIAN_PETROLEUM_INDUSTRY_A_LEGAL_APPRAISAL#:~:text=Thus%2C%20this%20paper%20investigated%20host,community%20provisions%20under%20the%20PIA)
- Aina, D. (2025). Host Community Fund Hits N373bn, 536 Projects Ongoing—NUPRC. *Punch Electronic Newspaper.*  
<https://punchng.com/host-community-fund-hits-n373bn-536-projects-ongoing-nuprc-2/>
- Ajayi, O. (2021). *The Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, Key Highlights.*  
<https://www.olaniwunajayi.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Petroleum-Industry-Act-2021-Key-Highlights-230821.pdf>
- Ajl, M. (2023). Theories of Political Ecology: Monopoly Capital Against People and the Planet. *Agrarian South Journal of Political Economy a Triannual Journal of Agrarian South Network and CARES*, 12, 1-39.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/367154288\\_Theories\\_of\\_Political\\_Ecology\\_Monopoly\\_Capital\\_Against\\_People\\_and\\_the\\_Planet#:~:text=Abstract,in%20the%20twenty%2Dfirst%20century.&text=twenty%2Dfirst%20century.,-Agrarian%20South:%20J](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/367154288_Theories_of_Political_Ecology_Monopoly_Capital_Against_People_and_the_Planet#:~:text=Abstract,in%20the%20twenty%2Dfirst%20century.&text=twenty%2Dfirst%20century.,-Agrarian%20South:%20J)
- Ajodo-Adebanjoko, A. (2022). *Towards Ending Conflict and Insecurity in the Niger Delta Region.*  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/towards-ending-conflict-and-insecurity-niger-delta-region>
- Akpan, M. J. D. (2021). Petroleum Industry Act in Nigeria: An Analysis of the Impact of the Novel Host Communities Development Trusts Provision. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 9, 30-46.  
[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3960752](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3960752)
- Alex, O. K., & Ebipumere, E. (2022). Petroleum Industry Act and the Host Communities Development Trust: Where are the Watchmen? *International Journal of Intellectual Discourse*, 5, 244-252. <https://ijidjournal.org/index.php/ijid/article/view/369>
- Bayelsa State Oil and Environmental Commission (2023). *Setting the Scene: Oil in Nigeria and Bayelsa State.*  
<https://report.bayelsacommission.org/chapters/setting-the-scene-oil-in-nigeria-and-bayelsa-state>
- Bruederle, A., & Hodler, R. (2015). Effect of Oil Spills on Infant Mortality in Nigeria. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 116, 5467-5471.
- Chinweze, C., Abiola-Oloke, G. et al (2012). Oil and Gas Resources Management and En-

- vironmental Challenges in Nigeria. *Journal of Environmental Science and Engineering B*, 1, 535-542.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296683543\\_Oil\\_and\\_Gas\\_Resources\\_Management\\_and\\_Environmental\\_Challenges\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296683543_Oil_and_Gas_Resources_Management_and_Environmental_Challenges_in_Nigeria)
- ClimateJusticeCentral (2024). *Impact of Oil and Gas Production on the Niger Delta*.  
<https://www.climatejusticecentral.org/posts/impact-of-oil-gas-production-on-the-niger-delta#:~:text=In%20summary%2C%20while%20the%20Niger,inadequate%20compensation%20from%20oil%20companies>
- Coset (2024). *The Governance Structure Among Other Roles or the Oil Companies Tends to make the Settlor 'Administrators' of Host Communities in the Context of the PIA*.  
<https://cosetng.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Host-Communities-and-Nigerias-Petroleum-Industry-Act-Position-Paper.pdf>
- Durodola, A. (2025). *Nigeria's Gas Flaring Dilemma: Constraints, Repercussions, and Policy Options*.  
<https://www.advokc.ng/blog-article/nigerias-gas-flaring-dilemma-constraints-repercussions-and-policy-options#:~:text=Gas%20flaring%20in%20the%20country%20has%20remained%20controversial%20not%20only,gas%20into%20the%20international%20market>
- Edo, Z. O., Etemike, L., & Clark, V. E. (2023). Exploring Barriers to Environmental Law Enforcement and Compliance in Nigeria Niger Delta Region. *Journal of Danubian Studies and Research*, 12, 235-257.  
<https://file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/JDSR121202223.03.2023-227-249.pdf>
- Egbedi, T. (2024). *Community-Led Environmental Conservation Projects in Nigeria*.  
<https://pachamamafoodsng.com/community-led-environmental-conservation-projects-in-nigeria/#:~:text=In%20the%20Niger%20Delta%2C%20the,increased%20awareness%20about%20environmental%20protection>
- Egeruoh-Adindu, I. (2022). Leveraging Indigenous Knowledge for Effective Environmental Governance in West Africa. *Beijing Law Report*, 13, 931-947.  
<https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=121949#:~:text=The%20use%20of%20IKS%20has,and%20helping%20combat%20climate%20change>
- Elewomawu, R. A. (2025). Environmental Degradation and Oil Spills in the Niger Delta: A Historical Analysis, 1956-Present. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities, and Management Studies*, 11, 1-14. <http://ijahms.com/upcomingissue/01.04.2025.pdf>
- Encyclopedia of Political Ecology (2020). *Political Ecology*.  
<https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/esd/political-ecology/>
- Eregha, P. B., & Irughe, I. R. (2009). Oil Induced Environmental Degradation in the Nigeria's Niger Delta: The Multiplier Effects. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 11, 160-175.  
[https://www.jsd-africa.com/Jsda/V12NO2\\_Winter2009\\_B/Pdf/Oil%20Induced%20Environmental%20Degradation%20in%20the%20Niger%20Delta.pdf](https://www.jsd-africa.com/Jsda/V12NO2_Winter2009_B/Pdf/Oil%20Induced%20Environmental%20Degradation%20in%20the%20Niger%20Delta.pdf)
- Erondu, C. I., & Nwakanma, E. (2025). Human Security and Environmental Crisis in Nigeria: Addressing Interconnected Threats to Sustainable Development. *African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, 8, 85-99.
- Ibaba, I. S., Ogban-Iyam, O., & Etekpe, A. (2018). *Nigeria and the Challenge of Domestic Terrorism*.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340967855\\_Nigeria\\_and\\_the\\_Challenge\\_of\\_Domestic\\_Terrorism](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340967855_Nigeria_and_the_Challenge_of_Domestic_Terrorism)
- Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. (1957). *Political Econ-*

- omy: *A Textbook*. Lawrence and Wishart.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Means\\_of\\_production#cite\\_note-14](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Means_of_production#cite_note-14)
- Ite, A. E., & Ufot, U. F. (2016). *Petroleum Industry in Nigeria: Environmental Issues, National Environmental Legislation and Implementation of International Environmental Law*.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304355407\\_Petroleum\\_Industry\\_in\\_Nigeria\\_Environmental\\_Issues\\_National\\_Environmental\\_Legislation\\_and\\_Implementation\\_of\\_International\\_Environmental\\_Law](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304355407_Petroleum_Industry_in_Nigeria_Environmental_Issues_National_Environmental_Legislation_and_Implementation_of_International_Environmental_Law)
- Jack, J. T. (2025). *(Mal)adaptation to Environmental Pollution: Oil and the 'Livelihood Dysfunction Trap' in Nigeria's Niger Delta*. Cambridge University Press.  
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/africa/article/maladaptation-to-environmental-pollution-oil-and-the-livelihood-dysfunction-trap-in-nigerias-niger-delta/E43579FB12A9183D6A5A64868F38E4C9>
- Jaiyeola, T. (2023). Oil Revenue Rises 83%, Hits N8.5tn—NBS Report. *Punch*.  
<https://punchng.com/oil-revenue-rises-83-hits-n8-5tn-nbs-report/>
- Jike, V. T. (2014). Environmental Degradation, Social Disequilibrium, and the Dilemma of Sustainable Development in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria. *Journal of Black Studies*, 34, 686-701.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249695435\\_Environmental\\_Degradation\\_Social\\_Disequilibrium\\_and\\_the\\_Dilemma\\_of\\_Sustainable\\_Development\\_in\\_the\\_Niger-Delta\\_of\\_Nigeria](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249695435_Environmental_Degradation_Social_Disequilibrium_and_the_Dilemma_of_Sustainable_Development_in_the_Niger-Delta_of_Nigeria)
- John, A. A., & Udochukwu, I. S. (2025). The Role of Environmental Policy in Nigeria's Climate Resilience: Evaluating the Impact of Political Will and Policy Implementation. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Social Sciences and Strategic Management Techniques, II*.
- Kadafa, A. A. (2012) Oil Exploration and Spillage in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. *Civil and Environmental Research*, 2, 38-51.  
<https://www.scribd.com/document/96678764/Oil-Exploration-and-Spillage-in-the-Niger-Delta-of-Nigeria#:~:text=Delta%20of%20Nigeria-,The%20document%20summarizes%20oil%20exploration%20and%20spillage%20in%20the%20Niger.oil%20spills%20and%20exploration%20activities>
- Lugar, S. B. (2013). *Environmental Rights (?) and Development in the Niger Delta: Incongruent Life Partners or Reconcilable Adversaries?*  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262487282\\_Environmental\\_Rights\\_and\\_Development\\_in\\_The\\_Niger\\_Delta\\_Incongruent\\_Life\\_Partners\\_Or\\_Reconcilable\\_Adversaries](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262487282_Environmental_Rights_and_Development_in_The_Niger_Delta_Incongruent_Life_Partners_Or_Reconcilable_Adversaries)
- Morocco-Clarke, A. (2021) The Case of Gbemre v Shell: A Catalyst for Change in Environmental Pollution Litigation? Suit No. FHC/CS/B/153/2005 (Unreported).  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361268457\\_The\\_Case\\_of\\_Gbemre\\_v\\_Shell\\_A\\_Catalyst\\_for\\_Change\\_in\\_Environmental\\_Pollution\\_Litigation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361268457_The_Case_of_Gbemre_v_Shell_A_Catalyst_for_Change_in_Environmental_Pollution_Litigation) accessed 10 November 2025
- Moses, U. U., & Daniel, O. (2024). The Impact of Insurgency on Oil Multinationals in the Niger Delta and Energy Security of Nations, 1999-2009. *International Journal of Humanities Social Science and Management*, 4, 982-990.  
[https://ijhssm.org/issue\\_dcp/The%20Impact%20of%20Insurgency%20on%20Oil%20Multinationals%20in%20the%20Niger%20Delta%20and%20Energy%20Security%20of%20Nations.%201999%202009.pdf](https://ijhssm.org/issue_dcp/The%20Impact%20of%20Insurgency%20on%20Oil%20Multinationals%20in%20the%20Niger%20Delta%20and%20Energy%20Security%20of%20Nations.%201999%202009.pdf)
- Naku, D. (2023). How PIA Turned Long-Standing Hostility into Growth in Niger Delta. *Punch Electronic Newspaper*.  
<https://punchng.com/how-pia-turned-long-standing-hostility-into-growth-in-niger-delta/>

[delta/](#)

- Nazmuz Sakib, S. M. (2021) The Impact of Oil and Gas Development on the Landscape and Surface in Nigeria. *Asian Pacific Journal of Environment and Cancer*, 4, 9-17. <https://waocp.com/journal/index.php/apjec/article/view/748#:~:text=The%20Niger%20Delta%20region%20is,hydrocarbon%20deposits%20Nigeria's%20Niger%20Delta>
- Neumann, R. P. (2009). Political Ecology: Theorizing Scale. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33, 398-406. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249872351\\_Political\\_Ecology\\_Theorizing\\_Scale](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249872351_Political_Ecology_Theorizing_Scale)
- Ngo, T. (2025). Marxist Political Economy: A Comprehensive Analysis Framework of Socio-Economic Changes. *Kalagatos*, 22, eK25028. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390642591\\_Marxist\\_Political\\_Economy\\_A\\_Comprehensive\\_Analysis\\_Framework\\_of\\_Socio-Economic\\_Changes#:~:text=ABSTRACT-,Marxist%20political%20economy%2C%20developed%20by%20Karl%20Marx%20and%20Friedrich%20Engels,policies%20in%20China%20and%20Vietnam%2C](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390642591_Marxist_Political_Economy_A_Comprehensive_Analysis_Framework_of_Socio-Economic_Changes#:~:text=ABSTRACT-,Marxist%20political%20economy%2C%20developed%20by%20Karl%20Marx%20and%20Friedrich%20Engels,policies%20in%20China%20and%20Vietnam%2C)
- Niger Delta Journal.org (2024). *The Nigerian State and Environmental Justice in Niger Delta: Evidence*. <https://nigerdeltajournal.org/wp-content>
- NUPHCDR (2022) *Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Host Communities Development Regulations 2022*. <https://www.nuprc.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Nigeria-Upstream-Petroleum-Host-Communities-Development-Regulations-2022.pdf>
- NUPRC (2025) *NUPRC Revokes Licence of Oritsemeyin Rig*. <https://www.nuprc.gov.ng/nuprc-revokes-licence-of-oritsemeyin-rig/#:~:text=12%20Sep%202025.and%20a%20forced%20well%20sidetrack>
- Obi, C. I. (1999). Globalization and Environmental Conflict in Africa. *African Journal of Political Science*, 4, 40-62. [https://file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/ajps004001004%20\(2\).pdf](https://file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/ajps004001004%20(2).pdf)
- Offiong, A. et al. (2018). Environmental Degradation in the Niger Delta Area Due to Petroleum Exploration: Are We Combating the Problems? *American Journal of Environmental Sciences*, 14, 266-273
- Ogale and Bille Communities v. Shell (2024). EWHC 2961 (KB), and [2024] EWHC 510 (KB). <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/THE-BILLE-AND-OG-ALE-GROUP-LITIGATION-JUDGMENT-1.pdf>
- Ojakorotu, V. (2008). The Internationalization of Oil Violence in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. *Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 7, 92-118. [https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/journals/tjir/v7i1/f\\_0007360\\_6313.pdf](https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/journals/tjir/v7i1/f_0007360_6313.pdf)
- Ojakorotu, V., & Njoku, I. K. (2025). Oil Governance and the African Union Silencing the Guns Agenda. In N. I. Erameh, N. B. Breakfast, & E. N. Ubi (Eds.), *Silencing the Guns* (pp. 93-112). Palgrave Macmillan. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-96-7159-5\\_6#:~:text=Although%20the%20Niger%20Delta%20is%20regarded%20as,the%20local%20population.%20\(Akindele%20et%20al.%2C%202002\)](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-96-7159-5_6#:~:text=Although%20the%20Niger%20Delta%20is%20regarded%20as,the%20local%20population.%20(Akindele%20et%20al.%2C%202002))
- Okonkwo, C. I., & Ekekwe, E. (2017). Environmental Management and Sustainable Development in the Niger Delta. *South East Political Science Review*, 1, 1-17.
- Okonkwo, U., Anuforo, H., & Chidi, A. (2022). Governance, Policy, and Climate Resilience in Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Environmental Policy Analysis*, 11, 56-78.

- Oladele, A. E., & Austen, I. (2015). Internal Factors on Resource Control Saga in the Niger Delta and Their Impact. *American Research Journal of History and Culture*, 1, 25-31. <https://www.arjonline.org/papers/arjhc/46/14.pdf>
- Olawin, D. (2025). FG to Revoke Dormant Oil Licences with New Policy. *Punch Electronic Newspaper*. <https://punchng.com/author/dare-olawinpunchng-com/>
- Olujobi, O. J., Yebisi, T. E. et al. (2022). The Legal Framework for Combating Gas Flaring in Nigeria's Oil and Gas Industry: Can It Promote Sustainable Energy Security? *Sustainability*, 14, Article 7626.
- Onibere, E. A., Egbokhare, F. A., Ekong, V. E. et al. (2018). Conflict Resolution in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: An Empirical Investigation. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 8, 140-146. <http://ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol 8 No 6 June 2018/16.pdf>
- Onyema, A. F. (2018). Environmental Degradation and the Niger Delta Crises. *International Journal of Education and Social Science Research*, 1, 207-215. [https://ijessr.com/uploads/ijessr\\_01\\_103.pdf](https://ijessr.com/uploads/ijessr_01_103.pdf)
- Opuowei, J. Z. (2024). Eco Injustice and the Niger Delta Question. *International Journal of Library and Information Technology (IJLIT)*, 6, 178-186.
- Osawe, A. I., & Ibebunjo, B. O. (2017). *The Impact of Environmental Security Threats in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria*. In *Sustainable Environmental Peace in the Niger Delta* (pp. 174-183). Delta State University Press. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379341899\\_THE\\_IMPACT\\_OF\\_ENVIRONMENTAL\\_SECURITY\\_THREATS\\_IN\\_THE\\_NIGER\\_DELTA\\_REGION\\_OF\\_NIGERIA](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379341899_THE_IMPACT_OF_ENVIRONMENTAL_SECURITY_THREATS_IN_THE_NIGER_DELTA_REGION_OF_NIGERIA)
- Osuyi, Z. (2012). The Challenges of Effective Environmental Enforcement and Compliance in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 14, 261-276. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369466732\\_THE\\_CHALLENGES\\_OF\\_EFFECTIVE\\_ENVIRONMENTAL\\_ENFORCEMENT\\_AND\\_COMPLIANCE\\_IN\\_THE\\_NIGER\\_DELTA\\_REGION\\_OF\\_NIGERIA#:~:text=Abstract%20and%20Figures,environmental%20enforcement%20in%20the%20region](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369466732_THE_CHALLENGES_OF_EFFECTIVE_ENVIRONMENTAL_ENFORCEMENT_AND_COMPLIANCE_IN_THE_NIGER_DELTA_REGION_OF_NIGERIA#:~:text=Abstract%20and%20Figures,environmental%20enforcement%20in%20the%20region)
- Otto, G. (2020). *The Niger Delta Crisis and Its Impact on the Nigerian Economy*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341513705\\_THE\\_NIGER\\_DELTA\\_CRIISIS\\_AND\\_ITS\\_IMPACT\\_ON\\_THE\\_NIGERIAN\\_ECONOMY](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341513705_THE_NIGER_DELTA_CRIISIS_AND_ITS_IMPACT_ON_THE_NIGERIAN_ECONOMY)
- Ovwoshokpita, O. D. (2025). The Host Communities' Development Trust under the PIA: A Trap or a Tool for Peacebuilding? *SSRN Electronic Journal*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/396310791\\_The\\_Host\\_Communities'\\_Development\\_Trust\\_Under\\_The\\_PIA\\_A\\_Trap\\_Or\\_A\\_Tool\\_For\\_Peacebuilding](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/396310791_The_Host_Communities'_Development_Trust_Under_The_PIA_A_Trap_Or_A_Tool_For_Peacebuilding)
- Owhoko, M. (2022). Oil Belongs to Niger Delta people, Not Nigeria. *The Cable*. <https://www.thecable.ng/oil-belongs-to-niger-delta-people-not-nigeria/>
- Peekate, K. L., & Duson, N. A. (2025). Taming Oil Conflict in the Niger Delta through the Petroleum Industry Act 2021. *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence*, 16, 26-34. [https://scholar.google.com/citations?view\\_op=view\\_citation&hl=en&user=T8mVBIEAAAAI&citation\\_for\\_view=T8mVBIEAAAAI:Zph67rFs4hoC](https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=T8mVBIEAAAAI&citation_for_view=T8mVBIEAAAAI:Zph67rFs4hoC)
- Penna-Firme, R. (2013). Political and Event Ecology: Critiques and Opportunities for Collaboration. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 20, 199-216. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281596229\\_Political\\_and\\_event\\_ecology\\_Critiques\\_and\\_opportunities\\_for\\_collaboration](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281596229_Political_and_event_ecology_Critiques_and_opportunities_for_collaboration)
- Perlego (2025). *What Is Political Ecology?* <https://www.perlego.com/knowledge/study-guides/what-is-political-ecology>

- Taylor, A. (2022) Oil Multinationals and the Fight for Sustainability in Nigeria's Niger Delta. *Human Rights Brief*, 25, Article 7.  
<https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/hrbrief/vol25/iss2/7>
- The Big Thinkers (2023). *Karl Marx (1818-1883)*.  
<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/e9d170e8-f347-4854-a265-8d86bfa6514a/Karl-Marx-V2.pdf>
- The Petroleum Industry Act (2021). *Official Gazette of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*.  
[https://pia.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/PIA-2021\\_compressed-1.pdf](https://pia.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/PIA-2021_compressed-1.pdf)
- Ugboma, P. (2017). Environmental Degradation in Oil Producing Areas of Niger Delta Region, Nigeria: The Need for Sustainable Development. *International Journal of Science and Technology (STECH)*, 4, 75-85.  
<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/stech/article/view/119190>
- Watts, M. (2017). *Political Ecology*.  
[https://docdrop.org/ocr/download/Watts-Political-Ecology-qixs3\\_ocr\\_force.pdf](https://docdrop.org/ocr/download/Watts-Political-Ecology-qixs3_ocr_force.pdf)
- Wenibowei, K. (2018). An Impact Assessment of the National Policy on Guidelines and Standards for Environmental Pollution Control in Nigeria, 1991: A Case Study of the Niger Delta. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, 5, 5155-5162. <https://valleyinternational.net/index.php/theijsshi/article/view/1644/1553>