Why would essentially local, and in some ways parochial, movements be construed by those in power, and by those holding the reins of state power in particular, as a threat to the Nigerian state? What is there about the site-specific character of such irreducibly local social movements that explain in some way the mass violence which surrounds the efforts by the state to limit their appeal, their legitimacy, their goals? How can one explain the particular geography of intolerance? The paper provides an account which explores the weakness of nation-building in Nigeria (its “public secret”), weaknesses and tensions that were deepened by the contradictory impact of petro-capitalism. [Ethnicity, nationalism, violence, Islam, Nigeria]

Minor Differences

Every space of daily life, every site at which women and men bodily engage in everyday practice, every meaning-filled location of the quotidian, is riddled with the unspeakable. Every local and wider geography of human activity has its counterpart geographies of the unspeakable. Every conjunction of situated practice, circulating discourses, and power relations is one with the (re)production of the unspeakable. The unspeakable is, in short, a constant presence. A constant presence that in one way or another bespeaks an absence, a silence, an invisibility. [Allan Pred 2001:119–120]

The unspeakable as the taboo-laden, as the forbidden word, as that which absolutely may not be said. Under any circumstances! In any situation! Or at least beyond the earshot of those in power. As that which ought be totally unmentionable, universally unnameable, fully silent. As that which is verbally completely out of line,
out of place, off the map. As power speaking by way of the gag and the muzzle, by way of the openly wielded stick and the glove-hidden brass-knuckled fist, by way of the tied tongue, the locked lip, and the stilled statement, by way of subjecting individuals to (self)discipline, (self)control, (self)censorship. [Allan Pred 2001:120]

THE SUBJECT OF THIS ESSAY is violence and to approach that subject from the vantage point of a geographer, that is to say with a geographer's sensitivity to territory, location, to mapping and to processes of confinement and exclusion. Indeed, I want to start from the idea, taken from Edward Said's marvelous book *Culture and Imperialism*, that violence might be understood as struggles over geography, where these struggles involve not only guns and bullets but also symbols, imaginings and meanings (1993). My purpose is to go some small way toward a geography of intolerance, toward, in short, a reasoned account for that which seems beyond reason: the perpetration of mass violence, even genocide, in the name of purity, or some mythical and imaginary form of community or peoplehood. To try, as a geographer, to shed some light on why these crimes and abominations happen in some places and at some times, and not at others.

Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, his remarkable book, written on the eve of the Nazi accession to power, represents in some respects a necessary starting point for any discussion of violence in the twentieth century, seeing as it does aggression and its normalization as central to the very creation of the modern and the civilized (1961). Freud's oft-cited pessimism should not obscure the prescience of his elegant account of how libidinal and death-drives are incompatible with civilization. As he put it:

The element of truth behind all this, which people are so ready to disavow, is that all men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at most defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose institutional endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result their neighbor is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. Homo homini lupus. [1961:111]
But even Freud the famous pessimist might have been shocked by the violence which has attended the 20th century, the “age of extremes” as British historian Eric Hobsbawm has recently dubbed it (1995). According to Michael Mann, the century's death-toll through genocide is over sixty million and still rising (1999:18-35). In the wake of the Cold War, amidst much talk of peace dividends and a new world order, the atrocities in the Balkans, the genocide in Rwanda, the civil war in Algeria and the communal violence in India must represent something like a return of the repressed. These forms of violence are markers of what Nancy Fraser, in her book *Justice Interruptus*, refers to as “politics of recognition” (1996). As such, they reveal that the politics of community—a word which as Raymond Williams noted long ago is never used unfavorably—can turn very sour indeed (1973:76).¹ Civil society and community typically suffer from a sort of Manicheanism in which the state is afflicted with coercion while society is enriched through freedom (Keane 1998).

The fact that the community figures so centrally in contemporary violence itself warrants some scrutiny. What is this community whose handmaiden can be an intolerable, and intolerant, form of identity politics? Why is it, Michael Ignatieff lamented, that the common humanity is so often of such little consequence (1994:94)? In *Keywords*, Raymond Williams famous meditation on the subtle historical metamorphoses of the English vocabulary, every word is distinguished by a complexity of meaning which is inextricably bound up with the problems it is being used to discuss. Community—“that difficult word” as he dryly noted—is an almost archetypal keyword: it is a “binding” word which sutures certain activities and their interpretation, and it is also what Williams calls an “indicative” word in certain forms of thought (1973:23). Deployed in the language for at least five hundred years, community has carried a range of senses denoting actual groups (for example commoners) and connoting specific qualities of social relationship (as in communitas). Community spoke to membership and identity in which interests, property and shared meanings were at issue. There were signs, however, from the seventeenth century of a sort of rupture in its usage—which was to become especially important with the advent of capitalist industrialization—in which community was felt to be more immediate than society. By the nineteenth century, of course, community was invoked as a way of theorizing modernity itself. Community—and its sister concepts of tradition and custom—stood in sharp contrast to the more abstract, instrumental, individuated and formal prop-
erties of state or society in the modern sense. Tönnies (1887) and Durkheim (1893) formalized this distinction but a number of other theorists of modernity—Marx, Weber, Simmel among them—to say nothing of a long line of populist thinkers, provided an account of the modern precisely in terms of what Williams sees as central to the complexity of community: the tensions between issues of direct common concern and forms of common organization and sociability.

A comparable shift in usage has occurred in the twentieth century—also noted by Williams—in which community is invoked as a way of discussing a particular sort or style of politics distinct from the formal repertoires of national and local politics. Here the reference is direct action, direct community participation and community organization embracing, typically, a populist notion of working with and for "the people." Much of what now passes for grassroots initiatives, or the new sorts of anti-systemic or social movements, would fall within the circumference of this more polemical notion of community. Richard Sennett’s powerful new book, The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism, provides an exemplary case of one expression of this distinctively twentieth century deployment of community (1998). In his account of capitalist work, post-war Fordism—rigid, routine-bound and hierarchical forms of work organization—has been displaced by flexible, transient, uncertain, risk-driven forms of short-term teamwork, networking and corporate re-engineering. Today’s new economy is constituted by discontinuous invention, flexible production, and concentration of power without centralization. Confronted with a destructive erosion of common purpose, of integrity, and trust in others, Sennett’s deracinated workers must look, in the face of the new political economy, to a "shared fate," to the "we" of placed-based community (1998:139). The nemesis of community is not a culture of individualism as such but rather the market, the locus classicus of the individual and the private. It is striking that the great theoreticians, and praisesingers, of the
Violent Geographies

Olympian virtues of the market such as Adam Smith, Joseph Schumpeter and Karl Polanyi, all saw untrammeled markets (and the self interested individualism which their functioning presumed), as destructive of civility and sociability. The “creative destruction” of the market could only be restrained by the “discovery of the society.” As Karl Polanyi famously pointed out in *The Origins of Our Time*, markets cannot create social order—that is to say community. They can only colonize and ultimately destroy it (Polanyi 1945).

In reflecting upon community, capitalism and violence at this moment of the seemingly endless long march to the new millennium, I am struck by two sad facts. First, what himself Freud called “the narcissism of minor differences,” an appellation which, he lamented, does not explain very much (1961:72). It refers to the ways in which insignificant differences among people “who are otherwise alike” form the basis of “feelings of strangeness and hostility between them” (1961:72). Narcissism ensures that cohesion is made easier between the members of a community. In Freud’s account in *Civilization and its Discontents*, he described the often “harmless” form of ridiculing and feuding among north and south Germans or Portuguese and Spanish. But the incontrovertible fact is that we live in a world saturated by violent even genocidal struggles between parties (Hutu and Tutsi, Hindu and Muslim, Serb and Croat) who are distinguished more by what they share—language, marriage, residence and so on—than by their radical dissimilarities:

the Serbs and Croats drive the same cars; they’ve probably worked in the same German factories as gastarbeiter; they long to build exactly the same type of Swiss chalets—Modernization—to use a big ugly word—has drawn their styles of life together. They probably have more in common than their peasant grandparents did. [Ignatieff 1994:95]

Freud notices how larger cultural groups often see minorities as social intruders who then become the foci of their innate aggressions. It is the Jews, notes Freud, who have historically “rendered most useful services” who have been the collective targets of majoritarian violence (1961:114). It is, then, the process by which an essential commonality, a shared point of reference, a minor difference as Freud would have it, can be construed as a major, indeed a fundamentally unbreachable “otherness” that demands explanation. At the heart of Freud’s account is the Janus-faced idea that
excessive violence occurs through the re-externalization of aggression and through a failure of ethics and morality, that is to say through inadequate superego formation. Yet it is striking how little there is, in contemporary accounts of the violence surrounding the Balkans or Rwanda, by way of reference to the relations between the psyche and massive "cultural" violence of the sort witnessed in Vukovar or Gitarama.

At the heart of this cultural narcissism is a fundamentally modern paradox. Globalization, in its myriad of forms, generates a sort of turbo-charged vectoring typified by commonality, confluence and sameness ("they drive the same cars"), and yet simultaneously global integration is attended by ever more bitter and violent forms of division, fragmentation, and communal strife (Appadurai 1996). To return to Michael Ignatieff, an especially astute diviner of these modern paradoxes, "real differences between groups diminish, symbolic and imagined differences become more salient (1999:95).

The second observation is that the narcissistic construal of minor as major, or perhaps more accurately, irreconcilable difference is so often attached to what one might call a "drive to extinction," by a compelling need to eliminate and extinguish the other. It is as if difference must be constructed through an ineluctable logic of denial, refusal and exclusion: identity as a zero-sum game. The recognition of the other amounts to a sort of threat, to the prospect of hideous retaliative violence; a threat which can only be "acknowledged" through elimination. Difference must somehow be converted, perhaps one should say perverted, into the refusal to recognize, an inability to see others in and for themselves. To do otherwise is to court disaster for oneself:

The differences between Serb and Croat are tiny—when seen from the outside—but from the inside they are worth dying for because someone will kill you for them. [Ignatieff 1999:96]

It is here that mass violence and genocide make their appearance, something that Freud, in passing, refers to in terms of the "atrocities committed during the racial migrations" (1961:112). In our own recent history, the almost unimaginable slaughter of 800,000 Tutsi in Rwanda in less than three months (the most efficient killing since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima) so graphically depicted by Philip Gourevitch in We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families, is simply one horrifying example of this drive to exterminate (1998). The Rwandan
genocide is an especially instructive case because it is not, as the popular press would have it, an instance of pre-modern tribal conflict driven by essentialist or primordial identities but rather is a type of quite modern fascist movement.³

To continue with my psychological reference, the genocidal expression of mass violence appears as a radical, indeed a schizoid, instance of what Melanie Klein calls “splitting”:

\begin{quote}
A Kleinian perspective would suggest that the extremes of destructive aggression reflect paranoid-schizoid functioning, when the other is seen as a part rather than a whole object and the self is also fragmented. In paranoid-schizoid fantasy, the paranoid element involves the persecutory anxiety—feeling attacked by the object and wanting to retaliate or attack first. The schizoid element involves the splitting of different aspects of self and object so that neither self nor object is whole. Such splitting may also include a derealization—an absence of depth of feeling in oneself and one’s perception of the other, so that neither seem real or alive. [Chodorow 1998:28]
\end{quote}

Chodorow is acutely sensitive to the gendered nature of this violence and seems to suggest that challenges to ethnicity or nation threaten individual or collective selfhood, which in turn overdetermine masculine violence. In any event, the enemies, she says, are “constructed as part-objects without subjectivity” (1998:36).

**Fictive National Space**

\textbf{WANT TO EXAMINE TWO} instances of violence in which the narcissism of minor difference and the construction of part objects figure quite centrally. My case studies are almost textbook examples of the politics of recognition taken from post-colonial Africa, a continent seemingly mired in civil strife, and typically constructed in the western media as a site of terrifying anarchy and the “new war” (Kaplan 1997). More precisely, my work refers to Nigeria—arguably the most important and certainly the most populous African state containing close to one quarter of all Africans in sub Saharan Africa (Watts 1998:67–102).⁴ Nigeria is a big, brash and vital country standing in relation to the continent as
might Brazil to Latin America. It is a major oil producer—an "oil nation" in common parlance—and a country which has experienced in the period since Independence in 1960 a civil war (the Biafran war between 1967–1970), a major economic boom and rapid industrialization triggered by the rising oil prices between 1973 and 1980, and a major bust and economic recession associated both with the collapse of oil prices in the 1980s and the attendant structural adjustment and austerity programs imposed by the IMF and the World Bank. As many of you know, Nigeria has recently undergone an important democratic transition—a democratically elected President assumed power on May 29th 1999—and a return to civilian rule after a long night of military darkness characterized by despotism, terror and brutal, personalized rule.

My account of the geography of intolerance turns on two popular movements, two expressions of subaltern identity politics. One is an exemplary case of what is customarily referred to as Islamic fundamentalism, a term I dislike and indeed shall not employ in this talk. The Maitatsine movement, named after its highly charismatic and idiosyncratic leader Maitatsine (meaning roughly "he who damns or condemns"), grew strength in the 1970s in the historic Muslim city of Kano, a sprawling metropolis of some 2 million. It was a movement of revival and renewal. Political Islam or Islamic revanchism—terms which I shall employ—are always distinguished by the call for renewal, and can best be grasped as an attempt to secure an orthodox or literal interpretation of key texts upon which a political order appealing to the rectitude of the era of the prophet is constructed. In short, we could say it is, in keeping with many other Muslim movements, an effort to articulate both an identity and a political subjectivity, to deploy the language of Stuart Hall, around the notion of a "true or orthodox" Muslim, which has in some way been compromised, by a process of decay and corruption (1996:131–150). The leader built a community of some 10,000 within the heart of the old city of Kano which, at the height of the oil boom and during the civilian regime of President Shagari (1979–1983), culminated in an escalation of conflicts between government forces and the movement's largely young and lumpen—one might say Fanonite—followers, the so called 'yan Tatsine. Finally, and crucially, the intervention of Federal military forces in December 1980 resulted in the killing of the leader and the aerial bombardment, and destruction, of the community. According to the official Government Tribunal—which determined incidentally that Maitatsine was a
heretic, a purveyor of magic and all manner of esoteric practice—5000 people were killed. The actual figure is probably closer to twice the official estimate.

The second movement—marked by the acronym MOSOP, the Movement of the Survival of Ogoni People—was arguably one of the most internationally visible African social movements of the 1990s. Like Maitatsine it was, indeed it continues to be, a popular movement, but its ideological reference point is ethnicity and the Enlightenment rather than religion, shari'a or the Muslim umma. The Ogoni are an indigenous people, an ethnic minority to employ the Nigerian parlance, of some 400,000 people who occupy a Lilliputian territorial homeland in Rivers State, in the heart of the oil producing Niger Delta. MOSOP, too, was led by a charismatic leader, Ken Saro-Wiwa, a popular Nigerian poet, novelist, soap opera writer and former high-ranking government civil servant. The Ogoni Movement articulated a more recognizably modern set of political demands: environmental compensation, recognition of human rights, political decentralization. The mobilization turned on the efforts by a small and marginal oil-producing community almost wholly excluded from the benefits conferred by the $30 billion of “black gold” pumped from its native territory since 1958. At stake were royalties, corporate compensation from the oil companies (notably Shell, the major company active in the region) for gross environmental damages, and new political rights and entitlements from the Nigerian state, not the least of which was control over “their” (i.e. Ogoni) oil, and a greater degree of local political autonomy within a new Federal architecture.

MOSOP, the political wing of the movement, and the Ogoni political economy more broadly, can be understood in many
Why would such essentially local, small-scale, and in some ways parochial, movements be construed by those in power as such a threat to the Nigerian state? Respects as a sister movement to the much-lauded Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico who dramatically appeared on the world stage in 1994. Subcommandante Marcos emerged sphinx-like on the very day of NAFTA's inauguration, leading an excluded and marginalized Indian community out of poverty and disenfranchisement from their heartland in a resource rich but materially impoverished region of the "new" Mexico. Ken Saro-Wiwa was certainly no masked "post-modern" revolutionary (he was a pipe-smoking modern democrat!), but his rhetoric, and the plight of his people, exhibit marked similarities to the Mayan peoples for whom Marcos spoke (Saro-Wiwa 1992; 1995). MOSOP garnered international recognition and support in Germany, UK and the USA, stimulated a worldwide "Boycott Shell" campaign, and projected Saro-Wiwa into a role as a sort of global public intellectual. The movement grew strength in the 1980s, sharpened by the oil bust and the subsequent economic recession of the 1990s, and reached its zenith in 1995. Saro-Wiwa and eight others were hanged in November 1995 after being found guilty by a Military Tribunal in Port Harcourt of murdering other Ogoni leaders. Ogoniland was subsequently occupied by military and special security forces under then President Sani Abacha. At least 2000 Ogoni were subsequently killed in the violent efforts by the state security force to suppress, indeed to extinguish, the democratic sentiments expressed in MOSOP's Bill of Rights (Soyinka 1996). The true extent of the state violence, gross human rights violations, and the complicity of the oil companies has come to light since the death of Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues, most powerfully in a report entitled "The Price of Oil" by Human Rights Watch (1999). 6

In sum, two essentially local movements from below, both led by charismatic leaders, both addressing questions of recognition and identity, both attempting to articulate forms of identity and political subjectivity during a period of disruptive post-colonial modernization lubricated by oil—what I have elsewhere called "petrolic capitalism" or petrolic-modernization (Watts 1994:406-445; 1997:33-67). Each ended in bloodshed and mass violence, perpetrated in both cases by the state in its military and civilian guises.

I want to suggest that there is something paradoxical about the violence which attended these movements of recognition. Both were distinctively local, small-scale, and community oriented. Why would such essentially local, and in some ways parochial, movements be construed by those in power, and by those holding the reins of state power in particular, as such a threat to the
Nigerian state? What is there about the site-specific character of such irreducibly local social movements that explain in some way the mass violence which surrounds the efforts by the state to limit their appeal, their legitimacy, their goals? How can one explain the particular geography of intolerance?

Naturally, I am not suggesting a naive horror at the very fact of state violence. States obviously monopolize the means of violence and frequently act upon this monopoly. There is no paradox within the deployment of state violence per se. Rather it is not clear why these two movements should have prompted such a violent, hyper-aggressive reaction, often in the face of international opposition, and in so doing of running the grave danger of being seen to inflict harms upon communities which represent the core constituencies of the ruling Nigerian elites themselves. Maitatsine claimed to be Muslim—he and his followers were part of a wide-ranging debate on questions of Muslim orthodoxy in the North—and in fact garnered tacit support from certain influential and well-connected constituencies. And yet his self-consciously Muslim community was bombed by a government that was indisputably Muslim in character and political disposition. Why would a government dominated by the so-called "Kaduna Mafia"—a congerie of northern elite Muslims with strong connections to commerce and to the brotherhoods—entertain the idea of killing other believers and run the risk of incurring harsh foreign criticism? Ken Saro-Wiwa had served in the Federal government, had fought against the Biafran secessionists, and was very much the successful well-connected public servant (with, it needs to be said, rather strong connections to some sections of the military). Ogoniland was admittedly a strategic region, a sort of ground zero of the oil industry insofar as petroleum had been first pumped commercially from Ogoniland during the late 1950s and MOSOP explicitly exposed the “slick alliance” between the Nigerian military and the transnational oil companies. And yet it is equally true that by the 1990s Ogoniland produced less than 1% of Nigerian oil; the primary and most strategic fields, in other words, lay outside of Ogoniland. If the Ogoni were a marginalized minority, they were nonetheless in a much better material and political position than many other oil-producing communities.
In interceding in the Ogoni crisis and in exhorting military tribunals to punish the Ogoni, the Nigerian government itself faced substantial external pressures from the likes of Nelson Mandela, Amnesty International and the Commonwealth States, to settle the disputes and not to hang the alleged killers.

It might be argued, of course, that the violence was an inept, agitated “overreaction” on the part of a fragile and insecure civilian government (the Shagari regime in 1980) or that the stigmatization of the Ogoni was the product of an irrational, a despotic, and psychopathic military mind (President Abacha).7 But both explanations are deficient, not least because each regime failed to react in the same way to other lesser and greater threats (strikes, student movements and so on) during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

Violence has been the subject of much analysis and speculation in Africa as civil strife and unimaginable brutality has proliferated on and among civilian populations in Sierra Leone, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and elsewhere. For some this marks a “new war” driven by grave economic recession, the emergence of warlordism, and the collapse of patrimonial or clientelist politics, and the rise of a culture of everyday violence associated among other things with alienated youth, the criminalization of the economy, and the proliferation of a second-hand arms market (Allen 1999:367–385). All of these developments represent important transformations in Africa which, in varied ways, unquestionably shape the complexities and diversity of violence on the continent. But I want to suggest that in the two Nigerian cases at hand they do not shed too much light on the paradox of state violence which resides in what one might call state disproportion: the fact that the Nigerian state felt compelled to eradicate, to literally snuff out, two parochial and in many ways minor popular expressions of local dissent.

I would like to pose the following question: how can we explain the disproportion of the state violence dispensed against Maitatsine and his rag-tag followers and against the MOSOP activists armed only with a Bill of Rights? To invoke Benedict Anderson’s magisterial book Imagined Communities, why would the “style of imagining” of raggedy-arsed urban Muslims and Ogoni patriots represent such a challenge to the apparatuses of the Nigerian state? Why might the narcissism of national elites representing an imagined entity called Nigeria, take such violent exception to the recognition of other minor differences and particular identities?
I wish to argue that what each movement exposed—that is to say revealed to Nigerians of any political stripe—was Nigeria’s “public secret.” I employ this appellation to convey the paradoxical notion of something widely understood but yet not spoken; a secret that everyone knows (Taussig 1992). And the content of this secret, I shall suggest, is the very fiction of Nigeria as a Nation. Both movements—each linking territory and place to identity—represented not only a challenge to the state and its ruling classes (Maitatsine railed against the corruption of the state and the moral degeneracy of the Muslim imams, Saro-Wiwa lambasted the military who were colonizing and ethnic cleansing), but also dare to speak the public secret of Nigeria’s weak sense of national identity, its thoroughly incomplete and shallow history of nation-building. In both cases their sense of community and politics challenged the very idea of Nigeria which rested, as Abdul Mustapha rightly noted, on the fact that “there is an intangible line beyond which nobody is expected to cross” (1999:18). Nigeria, said Obafemi Awolowo, one of the most important of the first generation of post-Independence leaders, is a “mere geographical expression,” and it is this fundamental lack (“merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not” to quote Awolowo once more) which both local movements exposed (1947:135). Put differently, each movement had transgressed an unspoken threshold—Mustapha’s intangible line—beyond which the government and the state forces could, in their eyes, legitimately act in order to maintain the very integrity of the Nation upon which their class power naturally rested.

To put the matter starkly, the advent of petrolic capitalism as one specific expression of globalization, unleashed a number of contradictory forces within Nigeria. Central in my view was the production of new sorts of spaces within and outside of that space called Nigeria, and indeed standing at odds with national space. These new spaces were naturally attached to and constitutive of new sorts of political identities which themselves were at odds with the fragile notion of Nigerian nationhood and citizenship. What two ostensibly local movements from below represented in this regard, particularly on the larger historical canvas of secessionist tendencies and a brutal civil war, was an alternative that was unspeakably horrifying to ruling elites of any shape or form. So much so that the violent powers of the state were harnessed and deployed with brutal effect.
I shall obviously return to this theme, but let me now leave you with two ideas, or perhaps two reference points, which I shall refer to in my subsequent remarks. The first is from the great Greek Marxist theoretician Nicos Poulantzas. He noted that:

> a national unity or modern unity becomes a historicity of a territory and a territorialization of a history. [1978:81]

The second is from a literary theorist, Lauren Berlant, taken from her book on Nathaniel Hawthorne. The nation she says:

> [R]equires a National Symbolic [NS] through which the historical nation aspires to achieve the inevitability of the status of a natural law, a birthright through the production of a national fantasy which designates how national culture becomes local through images, narratives and movements which circulate in the personal and collective consciousness. [1991:61]

What both of the movements reveal, in light of these two provocations, is how weak is Nigerian national unity and how brittle is the National Symbolic. Indeed there is no national fantasy in any meaningful sense at the local level; only a big lie. Maitatsine and MOSOP reveal this clearly—they highlight how the national had not become local, and how much of a fiction national unity really was. I shall show how the contradictions generated by petroleum and petrolic capitalism in the post-colonial period further unravelled and mortally weakened this national unity. In authoring an alternative unity or communitarian vision—the Muslim community, or Ogoni nationalism—these two identity struggles carried an exceptionally weighty political freight.

In the remainder of my remarks I shall endeavor to accomplish two things. The first is to examine the genesis and development of of a particular sort of space and its associated politics, that is to say of Nigeria as a nation, and the peculiar and contradictory role of oil in it. The second will be to show briefly how and why each movement initiated in quite different idiomatic forms a sort of public debate about the need to move from subject to citizen, but paradoxically in doing so exposed the weak underbelly of Nigeria as a nation; these movements spoke the unspeakable and in so doing held out the prospect of moving beyond Nigeria as such precisely to achieve a sense of belonging and citizenship broadly
LET ME BEGIN WITH A brief and necessarily incomplete account of Nigeria as a national space. Nigeria was of course created under British imperial auspices through the amalgamation of a series of protectorates between 1860 and 1914. Over a half century of so-called indirect rule, the British administered the colony through three regional administrations, corresponding to three ethnic majorities, which collectively constituted 70% of the population (the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the West, and the Ibo in the East). Each region was economically self-contained, constituted by a dominant regional congerie of ethnicity, religious identification and export commodity production (i.e. specifically rubber/palm oil in the east, cocoa in the west, and cotton/peanuts in the north). The 250 or so ethnic minorities were largely excluded from political power and were subject to the authority of other ethnic majorities. Colonial rule took the form of what Mamood Mamdani calls “decentralized despotism,” that is to say Lugardian indirect rule in which the despotic powers of local rulers or warrant chiefs was enhanced in the service of creating tax collecting Native Administrations (1996). The result was not a Nigerian federation as such—there was no federal center as such until the 1950s—but what we might called ethno-regionalism, and complex mosaics of ethno-politics. As Nigerian political scientist Abdul Mustapha says “any community wanting access to the state had to speak the language of chieftancy and community,” which is to say that the political conditions of colonial rule encourage communalism and hence the perpetuation, indeed the invention, of communities (1999:22).

At Independence there were marked geographical inequities between for example the Western region which was relatively rich and “modern” and a backward but ideologically integrated Muslim North. The British stage-managed a political transition in the late-1940s and 1950s, in which the Muslim northerners dominated the federation but regional competition and “spoils politics” deepened. The fissiparous tendencies were heightened as oil, located in the old East, came on-line commercially after 1958. In

Deep is the well of the past.
[Thomas Mann]
It needs to be said at the outset that the entire history of petroleum is one that is replete with violence of brute power from its very genesis. And this is no less the case in the Niger Delta today. Cities like Warri and Port Harcourt are hard-scrabble towns that seem saturated by pollution, gas flaring, and phalanxes of contractors all dependent on the oil and gas sector. Oil was first commercially exploited in 1958 in Ogoniland and output has grown over forty years to roughly 2 million barrels per day. Since Independence oil has been a national resource controlled and regulated through the Nigerian National Petroleum Company, an entity which embarks upon joint ventures with some 14 transnational oil majors. (Shell, the most important, accounts for close to 50% of all oil pumped). By the late 1960s, oil had displaced the colonial export crops—cotton, groundnuts, cocoa and palm oil—and by the 1970s (like today) accounted for 95% of revenues, 80% of state revenues, and almost half of Gross Domestic Product. Nigeria assumed the mantle of an oil nation. In effect it became a much more profoundly mono-cultural economy than it had ever been in the colonial period. As state property, oil royalties flowed directly to the national exchequer (in dollars) with the result that...
the oil boom of the 1970s vastly expanded state revenues seemingly overnight (Lewis 1996:79–104).

Flush with money, Nigeria embarked upon, as indeed did other OPEC members, an heroic effort to modernize rapidly through state-led industrial import substitution (Karl 1997). Nigeria became a rentier state of a peculiar sort. The state through its fiscal linkages—road building, electrification, infrastructure development, industrial promotion and so on—entered upon a massive industrialization program including autos, iron and steel and so on. Oil unleashed a developmental ambition of the most grandiose, some would say grotesque, sort. El Dorado had been discovered and it was an oil well. A massive import boom followed close on the heels of the oil-driven industrial program. In their wake followed an urban construction explosion, hyperinflation, preposterous Stalinist-scale industrial schemes to produce iron and steel thousands of miles from any useful raw material inputs, and not unexpectedly a heavy dose of economic and social disruption. Cities like Warri and Kano doubled in size in a decade as thousands were ineluctably drawn into sprawling shantytowns. This was the stuff of Bladerunner.

Money abounded, and the lucky few made enormous wealth through contracting, tenders and privileged political access to the state. By the mid-1980s, however, the oil boom had lost its luster. Petroleum prices had collapsed, Nigeria carried a vast debt burden, many projects lay in tatters, and the government faced brutal austerity measures. The culture of boundless wealth of the 1970s had become the material misery of the 1990s. As Le Monde put it, the oil fortress had been breached.

Perhaps the most dramatic and enduring impact of petroli modernization was political. Oil revenues were allocated through a complex and shifting statutory revenue allocation process to the states (the so-called “derivation principle”). Petro-dollars were in effect taken from the oil producing areas (largely ethnic minorities in the Niger delta) and redistributed to the non-oil producing ethnic majority estates, especially in the North (Hausa-Fulani) and West (Yoruba). But equally oil permitted the massive expansion of state bureaucracies and the support of a huge public sector wage
Oil, then, had a centralizing effect: revenues flowed to the state which was ever more visible and significant in size, and yet the oil became the political idiom so to speak by and through which political consent was purchasing in the regions. State multiplication represented both a way of local communities getting access to “their” oil, and for the federal powers to buy off, to purchase, regional and local dissent. In acquiring their cut of the oil revenues, the logic of politics as ethnic community was further deepened and validated. When I say therefore that Nigeria became a rentier state—irrigating oil revenues to key constituencies as a sort of ethnic spoils politics—in effect it became, as the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe put it in his novel *Anthills of the Savannah*, “one big crummy family.” Public offices were turned into prebends to employ the language of Max Weber, compromising state rationality and economic efficiency. State contracts (“the bigger the better”) were the vehicles for targeting key political constituencies. The state degenerated to the most rank corruption—the monitoring agency Transparency International typically ranks Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world—and government became, as a consequence, a major blockage to capitalist accumulation. It is not without good reason that the National Electric Power Authority, or NEPA, was (and is) popularly assumed to stand for “Never Expect Power Again.” The depth of graft and bribery reached, perhaps appropriately, its apogee in the nefarious activities of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company. As one disillusioned Nigerian commentator put it, “Nigeria is not a country, it is a profession.”

To summarize, it is clear that the ethnic forms of decentralized despotism, and highly charged ethno-regionalism and competition without a strong federal center, which were the hallmarks of the colonial period, were curiously deepened by the petrolic modernization project. In oil lay a fundamental paradox. Petro-capitalism unleashed a sort of contradictory double movement: on the one hand, the radical centralization of the state, and on the other, political dispersion and fragmentation. The strategic and economic powers of oil actually heighten and amplify both the visibility
and presence of the state in public life (and therefore of claims over nation and citizenship), and the visibility of transnational capital (and therefore of questions of sovereignty and accountability). To the extent that the oil is state property, then to the same extent the relationship of oil producers (and citizens generally) to the state becomes an object of debate (Hausmann 1981). What Stuart Hall calls forms of articulation often become the basis for exercising these political claims over national patrimony ("the national oil body") (1996:131-150). Articulation carries a double-sense, namely as a way of rendering an identity [discursive coherence] and of linking that identity to a political subject and project [interpellation]. The unity between these two sorts of articulations, in Hall's view, encompasses the process by which an ideology finds its subject—rather than how a subject locates and articulates an essentialized set of ideas or thoughts—a task which always entails the positing of boundaries and edges in an always provisional and contingent way.17

Sharply put, oil as a subterranean, territorial resource and a highly centralized state property, necessarily channels claims over Nature ("our oil") into a sort of rights talk, where the rights speak to questions of local identity and territory, the relations between local political and territorial claims and forms of governance (i.e. decentralization, participation, autonomy), and the links between various identity politics and notions of citizenship ("what we are owed or entitled to"). Underlying all three is a notion of Nation on which discussions of state, community, citizenship, and rights ultimately turn. It is no accident that so much of the rhetoric of oil raises questions of the nation, or the social body, or of national development. Here is Fernando Coronil on another oil nation, namely Venezuela:

[petro]money throughout this century was the universal equivalent that embodied the promise of universal-ity. In exchange for the nation's money, the state promised to bring modernity to Venezuela "To sow the oil" condensed this aspiration: the exchange of the nation's subsoil for international money was justified in terms of the nationalist project The Faustian trade of money for modernity did not bring the capacity to produce but the illusion of production [1997:390-391]

Oil, then, simultaneously elevates and expands the centrality of the nation-state as a vehicle for modernity, or progress, or civiliza-
tion, and at the same time produces conditions which directly challenge and question those very same, and hallowed, tenets (the national development project). In Nigeria, the historical tension between nation and sub-nationalism moved irrevocably toward the latter.

Movements of Resistance

LET ME TURN BRIEFLY TO the two movements themselves, MOSOP and Maitatsine. Much could be said about both of these events and indeed I have in other places a more elaborate account than I am about to provide here (Watts 1998:67–102; 1999:85–108). Maitatsine was a self-proclaimed prophet who came up through the traditional Islamic schools that are endemic to the region. In some respects he represented opinions similar to some of the Muslim brotherhoods in Egypt who are anti-Western (though not necessarily anti-modern), drawing sustenance from lay clerics, community activism and a strong sense of social provision. Maitatsine articulated a millenarian vision rooted in a fierce critique of the ruling Nigerian Sufi brotherhoods who were very much part of the ruling constellations that I referred to earlier and which have dominated federal politics in Nigeria since independence. He was particularly concerned to expose the ways in which these ruling Sufi clerics had been corrupted both by the state and by capitalist materialism. His preaching was highly idiosyncratic—drawing anti-materialist conclusions from his exegetical readings of the hadith—but he spoke powerfully about corruption, the moral decay of the community, about exclusion and poverty. The social basis of his support was the urban poor, especially new rural migrants who confronted the horror of inflation, spiraling costs and erratic employment in Kano and other major northern cities.

In some respects this was a classically Fanonite or Jacobin movement. Maitatsine was in some quarters seen as crazy or heretical but insofar as many of his ideas, and his anti-Sufi sentiments were central to wide ranging debates within the Northern Nigerian Muslim community, and further afield, in the 1970s he was very much at the ground-zero of debates over what it meant to be a Muslim during a profoundly radical period of modernization. A wahabi’ite movement, the Yan Izala, which had a large popular following in Nigeria was in some respects on the same page as Maitatsine’s own critique of a community in decay. In a distinc-
tively Muslim idiom, Maitatsine fashioned a critique of petrolic capitalism and its consequences. His was an intervention in the public sphere which can be legitimately construed as a discussion about rights, however attenuated, about notions of citizenship, and about notions of the self. The state was of course a contemptible object—the police as state agents were referred to literally as dogs—but the Maitatsine movement, however limited its horizons in other regards, possessed a vision which transcended the state as such. Ultimately the community in question was not Nigeria but the Muslim umma. As Talal Asad says:

\[
\text{The Islamic umma} \quad \text{is not an imagined community on par with the Arab nation waiting to be politically unified but a theologically defined space enabling Muslims to practice the disciplines of din in the world. It is not ideologically a society onto which the state, or economy can be mapped. It is not limited nor sovereign because it can and eventually should embrace all of humanity. It is not therefore archaic} \quad [1999:189]
\]

Maitatsine as an exemplar of an admittedly curious form of political Islam, articulated an assault on the state (its venality, its corruption, its decay) and on the fictive nature of one particular imagined community, the Nigerian nation.

The Ogoni struggle was more recognizably modern, but it too spoke directly to questions of exclusion and marginalization in relation to petro-modernization. Ironically Ogoniland stood at the epicenter of oil production and yet remained one of the most impoverished regions in the Federation. In 1990 life expectancy was less than 50 years, and unemployment among the Ogoni youth was over 75%. By all the conventional measures of modernity—roads, hospital, schools—Ogoniland was a disaster. Furthermore, oil had brought massive ecological devastation across the Delta and the coastal fishing communities. Nigeria has the highest flaring rates and the highest spillage rates in the world. In Ogoni waters in the Niger delta, petro-hydrocarbons rates are 360–680 times the European Union recommended average (Greenpeace 1994).

Founded in 1989, MOSOP forged a Bill of Rights in 1992 which referred explicitly to political autonomy, economic compensation, and new rights. Saro-Wiwa railed against the so-called “slick alliance” and the ethnic cleansing which the military junta, with the complicity and support of the oil companies, had effect-
ed. Saro-Wiwa's brilliance was to build upon an earlier history of what one might call Ogoni "proto-nationalism." There had been earlier mobilization in the 1920s, the founding of a Pan Ogoni group in 1947, and indeed the proclamation of a Delta People's Republic in 1957. This nationalist history was forged in relation to the domination by ethnic majorities not only at the level of the state but also locally in regard to Ibo and Ijaw communities in Rivers State who were widely perceived by minorities like the Ogoni to have systematically ignored their rights (Naanen 1995:46–58; Osaghae 1995:325–344).

It needs to be said that there is no simple or natural notion of Ogoni community. Indeed it is hotly contested. The Ogoni people consist of a number of differing clans and so-called sub-elements which are not held together by any founding myth or common rituals. Saro-Wiwa attempted to "construct" this unity amidst diversity, but the movement was, perhaps inevitably, unstable and fragile. Within the Ogoni community were quite differing visions of development and change: there were important fissures among and between the traditional chiefs, the local government officials (who were often in league with the military), the militant youth, and the Ogoni subgroups. MOSOP was in no obvious way a coherent community of interest, and hardly a single purpose movement either: it was green, human rights, indigenous, and federalist all at once. The important point of course is that Saro-Wiwa held out minimally for a new federal vision based on autonomy and an alternative revenue allocation principle based on ethnicity and on local production. At stake was citizenship and the very constitution of Nigeria itself. More ambitiously he encouraged a federation of oil producing minorities—a movement which has grown enormously since his death in 1995—which held out the prospect of a minimal attachment to Nigeria as such. In virtue of the secessionist history of the region, MOSOP must have appeared deeply problematic to an increasingly authoritarian and violent Abacha military regime compromised by deep economic recession and a crisis of oil. Ken Saro-Wiwa exposed Nigerian politics as the ruse of the ethnic majorities, and in its place offered, rather paradoxically, an alternative ethnic politics, that is to say ethnic minority empowerment. Ethnicity was the problem and the solution. At the limit, such ethnic empowerment embodied rights which seemingly did not require or rest upon the existence of Nigeria qua nation at all.
Thus organic nationalism, excluding to the point of murderous cleansing, has been one of Europe's contributions to modernity.
[Michael Mann 1999:42]

Nationalism is the transformation of identity into narcissism.
[Michael Ignatieff 1999:95]

Nations are built on great rememberings and great forgettings. Getting history wrong is an essential part of being a nation.
[Ernest Renan (Minow 1998:118)]

ANYONE WRITING AT THE DAWN of the millennium, surely a moment for reflection and reckoning, cannot escape the appalling costs of this long century of violence. It was no accident perhaps that one of the most important literary works of the twentieth century, Franz Kafka's The Trial, addressed violence, power, and brutality, and that it should end on a resounding note of shame and guilt. Violence, as John Keane has shown, is riddled with all manner of ambiguities and conundrums, not the least of which is the fundamental difficulty of grasping the brute facts, the hideous realities, of the perpetration of violence itself (1996). How do we understand the actions of those who perpetrated the violent acts, the torture, the extermination, and the "cleansing?" Against this complexity, I have done little to shed light on the myriad forms of violence which saturate the world which we inhabit. I have, rather, attempted to illuminate one set of connections—complex in themselves—between violence, the nation as a particular type of imagined community, and what Immanuel Wallerstein (1996) calls "peoplehood." Even this singular case drawn from recent Nigerian history exceeds any simple explanation. Violence in Nigeria certainly must take account of globalization, clientelist politics, cultures of violence, economic recession and so on. But I have chosen to emphasize the ways in which this diversity of causes of violence hinge on a particular relationship between nation (Nigeria) and political economy (petrolic-capitalism).

In providing an account of why the Nigerian state acted so violently, it needs to be said of course that I am not describing the sort of endemic violence or state collapse which characterizes the
recent strife in Sierra Leone, Somalia and Rwanda. What we are witnessing here is, I think, the extreme limit case of what I have described in Nigeria. It is a shift from what Chris Allen, in a memorable essay, refers to as the shift from a prolonged spoils politics—political office as self-enrichment—to “terminal spoils” (Allen 1999:367–385). Terminal is an appropriate appellation because violence turns on the simultaneous implosion and explosion of the state. In the former the state fails to exercise any administrative or legal authority and the elites engage in what Allen calls a “feeding frenzy of corruption.” In the latter the state viciously turns on its own populations and its apparatuses are replaced by warring factions and warlords. All of this is far removed of course from contemporary Nigeria but there is enough contained with the Nigerian state’s reactions to Maitatsine and MOSOP to appreciate how porous is the political membrane which separates prolonged from terminal spoils.19 The Niger delta is on fire, quite literally awash is growing inter-ethnic strife, partly occupied by military forces, and is largely ungovernable. By 1998, the region was as one Chevron executive told me “at war with us.” There are now some twenty ethnic and youth movements in the three delta states (Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta) and in the years since the death of Saro-Wiwa have grown in both militancy and organizational capacity. Ijaw youth have occupied large numbers of oil flow stations, and are involved in a running guerrilla war with the government. Violence has spilled over into neighboring oil-producing minorities—the Ilaje and the Itsekiri most notably—and the destruction of life and property in Warri and elsewhere has been appalling. At least 20,000 refugees are now in camps near Lagos. Many thousands of others are displaced from their communities. Indeed, one of the important political developments of this growing militancy—“youth restiveness” as it is called—is that the calls for self-determination and “resource control,” which emerged from the minority movements, have now been picked up by the so-called South-South Governors in the region, and have become the basis for a call for a sovereign national conference and for a review.
of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution. There is a great yearning for self-determination across the Delta," said Anyakwee Nsirimovu of the Nigerian Institute of Human Rights, "and what happens here will determine whether Nigeria continues to exist or not" (Manchester Guardian, 23 September 1999).

I hope it is clear that the two movements employed quite different idioms to instigate a discussion of citizenship and its meanings in post-colonial Nigeria. The power—or threat—in these movements certainly lay in part in the ways in which they engaged with the legitimacy of the Nigerian state and its ruling classes. In both were the seeds of something else, however: a questioning of the idea of Nigeria itself. Nigeria's public secret is that as a Nation it is, at best, a weak reed. Nation building was compromised by colonial rule itself but post-colonial petro-capitalism and its decrepit politics further weakened any sense of national integration and nation-building. The authentication of a national project must, as Poulantzas intimated, involve the construction of an ethno-historical project, and the creation of a sense of "natural-ness." There has been, in this regard, little in the way of authentication in Nigeria, and paradoxically post-colonial development has seemingly involved a sort of recession rather than an advancement in the long march to national unity. Fernand Braudel, the doyen of the French Annales school of historiography, once noted that any nation can have its being only at the price of forever being in search of itself. Nigeria has barely begun the search. In Nigeria, Braudel's claim carries a particular poignancy because post-colonial development worked systematically against not only any sense of state legitimacy but against social mobilization and integration, against rationalization, and against a national ideology—that is to say against the very pre-requisites of a national identity and of nation-building. To return to Laurent Berlant, there is no National Symbolic nor a national fantasy worth its salt in Nigeria. Maitatsine and Ken Saro-Wiwa revealed, and more crucially acted upon, this lack, this tear within the national fabric.

It has been said that African ruling classes are powerful but not yet hegemonic. They dominate, as Robert Fatton says, through force or violence rather than leadership (1992:20). What I have tried to show is how this weakness in class hegemony is linked to the nation and nation building. Michael Ignatieff has remarked that all elites find ethno-nationalism and calls for ethnic self-determination "frightening because it implies that there is no longer, if there ever was, a national consensus" (1999:96). How classes deal with this fright is very much bound up with their own
powers, with the sense of nation and nationalism, and with their willingness to admit that “groups will no longer allow themselves to be spoken for” (Ignatieff 1999:96). My concern has been to show, to use Ignatieff’s language, why two such movements might have frightened the elites to the point that violence—the state devouring its people—seemed necessary and perhaps inevitable.

Let me conclude with two final observations. The first is that these two instances of the geography of intolerance derived from post-colonial Africa unquestionably affirm, in a most dramatic fashion, Edward Said’s insight that violence is about struggles over geography. In my account the geographical content of these struggles is nothing less than the nation, and the imaginings of territory and community. Nation building is an institutional, political and cultural process that involves a particular style of imagining to construct a collective identity which sutures territory and history. Only in this way can one understand Nigerian Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka’s lamentable question posed in his deeply troubling book The Open Sore of a Continent. “What has a geographical space such as Nigeria come to mean,” he writes, “when a leader speaks of national sovereignty” (1996:9). And secondly, and relatedly, in their quite different registers, a Nigerian soap opera writer and a Nigerian self-proclaimed Muslim prophet each posed the question enunciated sharply by Aimé Césaire many years ago when he noted that the coming of political independence in Africa should not imply that decolonization is complete. In this sense, two popular movements in Nigeria may have a much greater resonance with the terrible events that have unfolded across the now desolate landscape of the Balkans over the last decade.

Notes

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“Community can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships. What is most important, perhaps, is that
Unlike all other terms of social organization, it never seems to be used unfavorably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term" (Williams 1973:73).


3Work on this question is currently in train by Scott Strauss of the University of California, Berkeley.

4I have described events in more detail in other published work. The interested reader can refer to my book *Reworking Modernity* (with Allan Pred 1992) and to my article "Collective Wish Images" (1999).

5See for example Esposito (1992).

6See also by the same organization "The Ogoni Crisis: A Case-Study of Military Repression in Southeastern Nigeria," (1995). Since the Ogoni mobilization in the 1980s there has been a vast proliferation of such movements across the delta by oil producing communities culminating in the Kaiama Declaration of December 1998. By May 1999 Ijaw youths had closed virtually all of Texaco's production operations in Delta and Bayelsa States, and growing violence between communities and the military and between ethnic communities in and around Warri threatened the stability of the new Obasanjo government (Manchester Guardian 23 September 1999, p. 3); (The Economist 13 February 1999, p. 44).

7None other than President Obasanjo described Abacha as "mentally deranged" (1998:55) and the new evidence released surrounding the so-called trial of the assassins (his death squads) reveals also his psychopathic tendencies (The News [Lagos] 27 September 1999). There are also those who believe that Abacha harbored a special animus against Saro-Wiwa who may have refused to serve in the Abacha government. Yet none of this should alter the extent to which the mobilization of oil communities was seen as a radical provocation. Obasanjo himself within months of his election had sent 5000 troops to the Delta, and bombed Odi community.

8See also Bayart, Ellis and Hibou (1999).

9The literature on nation and nation-building is of course vast. Important interventions in the debate over nationalism and the nation are Anderson (1983,1998 and 1999); Hobsbawm (1990); James (1996); Hall (1998); Nairn (1997) and Chatterjee (1993).

10For further details on Nigerian colonial political economy see Watts (1983) and Forrest (1995).

11"Mustapha puts it this way: "Starting from the colonial state we can see a highly fragmented, mercantilist administrative state which created a single socio-political space but at the same time kept its constitutive units apart" (Mustapha 1999:18).

12Between 1948 and 1958 Nigerian constitutional development revolved around efforts of each of the [three] political blocs to consolidate its hold on the home region while simultaneously capturing power at the federal center. The result was an unsteady triangulation. " (ibid., p. 13).
These quotations are taken from Ken Saro-Wiwa (1991:129).

The costs of oil are a constant theme in much of the work of Nigerian Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka; as he put it in his play Shuttle in the Crypt, “it casts an evil shade.”

See Khan (1994) and Forrest (1995) for full accounts of the politics of oil revenue distribution.

Between 1960 and 1990 the proportion of oil revenues received by Rivers State fell from 50% to 1.5% (Owugah 1999).


There was for example no detailed plan for the management of a complex economy or for the running of the state apparatuses.

In the first six months of 1999 more than 500 people were killed in various communal conflicts across the country leading The Economist to pose the question: “Does the spreading violence in Nigeria presage a wider social breakdown?” (31 July 1999, p. 36). See also Falola (1998).


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