

Oil Exploitation, Environmental Injustice and Decolonial Nonrecognition: Exploring the Historical Accounts of Host Communities in South-Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract : This research explores the environmental justice of host communities in south-eastern Nigeria whose source of livelihood has been destroyed due to oil exploitation. Environmental justice scholarship in the area often adopts Western liberal ideology from a more macro level synthesis (Niger Delta). This study therefore explored the sufficiency or otherwise of the adoption of Western liberal ideology in the framing of environmental justice (EJ) in the area which neglects the impact of colonialism and cultural domination. Mixed archival research supplemented by secondary analysis guided this study. Drawing from data analysis, the paper first argues that micro-level studies are required to either validate or invalidate the studies done at the macro-level (Niger Delta) which has often been used to generalise around environmental injustice done within the host communities even though the communities (South-eastern) differ significantly from (South-south) in terms of language, culture, socio-political and economic formation which indicate that the drivers of EJ may differ among them. Secondly, the paper argues that EJ framing from the Western worldview adopted in the study area is insufficient to understand environmental injustice suffered in the study area and there is the need for environmental justice framing that will consider the impact of colonialism and nonrecognition of the cultural identities of the host communities which breed environmental justice. The study, therefore, concludes by drawing from decolonial theory to consider how the framing of EJ would move beyond the western liberal EJ to Indigenous environmental justice.

Keywords : environmental justice, culture, decolonial, nonrecognition, indigenous environmental justice

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