

# **Demystifying grievance, greed, and rent-seeking in oil communities' conflicts in Nigeria.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This article analyses oil resource-fuelled grievances, greed, and rent-seeking in Nigeria's local oil communities, articulating that such political behaviours are ubiquitous in natural resource conflict societies. As defined by Claude Ake "Political stability is the regularity of the flow of political exchanges. The more regular the flow of political exchanges, the more stability" (1975: 273). Grievance is mainly dominant within the latent to emergency stages of oil conflicts, while greed and rent-seeking most often lead to escalation, conflict negotiation and settlement, and in most cases, the re-escalation of the conflicts. The paper will draw on empirical data (qualitative) to be generated in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria, and literature to illustrate that although grievance, greed and rent-seeking in oil conflicts are seen as interlinked and acting within the same continuum, they are determined by different opportunity structures, and each produces a different type of political stability or instability. This paper in reviewing the three explanations, concludes that the above political behaviours are driven by the age- long primitive accumulation of the state, while the power relation between oil communities and the Nigerian state determines the approach and response (political behaviour) use by the former in accessing oil resource benefits. One of the contributions of this article is that it builds a matrix that explains the practicability of greed as a theory.

**Keywords: Grievance, greed, rent-seeking, conflict stages, oil resources, political stability, political behaviour, primitive accumulation, and opportunity structure**

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