



Demystifying Ijaw and European Foreign Trade Relations, in the 19th Century

T.S ABEJIDE

Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract. This paper examines the ways in which the Europeans' quest for trading ventures across the Atlantic Ocean necessitated their contacts with the Ijaw people along the Niger Delta coast since sixteenth century. It discusses the initial trading transactions between the Europeans and the Ijaws, and specifically casts light on the participation of the Ijaw merchants in the Atlantic Slave Trade. The paper concentrates on the nineteenth century and the impact the transition from slave trade to legitimate commerce, in particular the palm oil trade, had on the Ijaw and how these changes led to greater involvement by Britain in the region by the end of the century. Using both primary and secondary sources for data collection, this study further explains the fact that palm oil trade lured the Ijaw people into the nexus of capitalist economic system. It argues that the Ijaw's were skillful and blessed with favourable environmental condition required for the growth of palm tree and then, the production of palm oil in large volumes. Their ability to meet the number of volumes required by European merchants brought massive income and revenue to the Ijaw merchants. It concludes that palm oil was the main thrust of foreign relations between the Ijaw people and European traders. Also, the resuscitation of palm oil production by the government is imperative in the Niger Delta region, as it required a re-direction of government policy through proper funding as well as provides low interest loan for the farmers to ensure increase production and supply. It is only when this is done that additional income would accrue to both the local people, government and for the economic development of Nigeria at large.

Keywords: Ijaw, Palm Oil, European, Economy, Relations.

1. Introduction

The first external contact of the Niger Delta Ijaw people with the Europeans was with the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. By 1841, the Portuguese had already established strong trading contacts along the Niger Delta River where they exchanged trading items such as pepper, ivory, coral beads, iron, tools, weapons, clothes, horses, hardware, guns and manilas for slaves in Benin, and with the Ijaw people. The Portuguese dominance of the region and monopoly on trade with West Africa was challenged and broken by other European nations, such as the Dutch, French and the British, in the course of the seventeenth century. Together with the Portuguese, the Dutch, British and French, and to such a lesser extent the Danish, became actively involved in the slave trade at the ports of the major city states of Bonny, Kalabari, Okrika and Nembe.

It is noted that the emergence of the overseas trading between the Ijaw and the Europeans are closely associated with the topographic nature of the River Niger. The Niger Delta environment particularly the Creeks that provided many natural harbours along the Atlantic Ocean had influenced the beginning of the early trading contacts between the Ijaws and the European merchants. Other factors such as existence of a vibrant internal trade between the Ijaws and the inland ethnic group, dynamic trade routes, and experienced professional merchants largely fuelled the growth and development of the overseas trade in the central and eastern Delta. The scene was thus set for the Ijaws' active involvement in the Atlantic slave trade with the Europeans between the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

Historians such as Crowther and Horton believed that the coming of the European slave trade into the Ijaw territory stimulated the growth of a number of trading stations. Wariboko specifically affirmed Alagoa's claims that the 'internal long-distance trade laid the foundations for the emergence of the canoe-house trading system', especially in the pre- Atlantic slave

trade. Alagoa's suggestion is therefore, subject to more debate, because Cooley C.J.S disagrees with both Alagoa, Horton and Crowther claiming that the canoe-house trading unit of the eastern delta was engendered by indigenous means of transportations, and that the internal long-distance trade not the European

trade, influenced the overseas trading in slaves. This signified that the new development in the age of the slave trade was built on what existed before. This is in contrast with Crowther and Horton's view that many if not most of the Ijaw institutions developed as a result of the Atlantic slave trade.



Figure 1.1: Location of the Ijaws and their neighbours in the Niger Delta
Source: Image Europa Technologies

2. The Ijaw and Europe in the Age of Exploration and Trade

2.1 Ijaws' Participation in the Atlantic Slave Trade

Before the commencement of the Atlantic Slave Trade in the late fifteenth century, the Ijaw people survived on the sale of dried fish and sea salt to the hinterland communities. From the sixteenth century onwards, however, the overseas trade in slaves dominated Ijaw economic activity. Most Ijaw trading houses had representatives who served as middlemen on the coast that facilitated the trade in slaves between the European slave traders on the one hand, and the Aros and the hinterland slave traders on the other hand. These sites became the entrepôts where Ijaw middlemen sold slaves to the Europeans. Clearly, slaves were exported from the Ijaw ports of Bonny, Okrika and New Kalabari into Europe and the Americas.

According to Crowder, the Ijaw traders could not meet the high demands for large numbers of slaves made by the European slave traders. As a result, slaves had to be sourced from the interior, and were provided by hinterland traders who raided the numerically larger hinterland Ibos, and Ibibio communities. Hundreds of thousands of slaves were therefore transported from hinterland market centres such as Ohambele, Azumini, Uzuakoli, Aboh and Ikot Ekpene to the European agents at the coast,

where the slaves were exchanged for European goods such as cloth, guns, gun powder, salt and dried fish. According to Eltis, Lovejoy and Richardson more than 450, 800 slaves were exported from the Ijaw trading centres in the Niger Delta between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is noted that the numbers only refers to actual identified slave departures. Because according to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Database, 1,594,560 slaves were shipped from the Bight of Biafra between 1501 and 1866. Of that total, more than 50% of the slave would have come from the Niger Delta.

In addition, the nearness of the Ogbia district of Ijawland occupied by the Olobiri people, Kolo Creeks, Anyama in the Niger Rivers largely precipitated their participation in the Atlantic slave trade. The Olobiri traders were involved in the slave trading before the abolition by the British. They equally acted as agent or middlemen between the city states of Brass (Nembe) and the European through constant raiding and selling of slaves.

The 'Amanyababo' managed and controlled trading activities within Ijaw territory. The intermediary position of the 'Amanyababo' brought immense wealth and fame to the economic and political fortunes of the Ijaw chiefs. His functions that had been largely ritual was according to Crowder, 'transformed him into the hereditary monarch and leading trader of the state' This pointed out that the title of 'Amanyababo' was retained, and was the

continuation between the old and new structures of the house, and the fact that the new trading system required stronger centralized control than the old one.

The function of the 'Amanyanbo' was transformed in order to exercise more control over the economic interest of the Ijaw people than before. More significantly, the centralized control of trade by the 'Amanyanbo' shows the fact that instead of assemblies of all adult male exercising power and headed by the 'Amanyanbo', the new city states much rather were organized into house systems where the heads of houses preferred the function of the earlier assemblies and the 'Amanyanbo' were elected from the head of houses especially in Bonny. The Ijaws' central and eastern Delta thus served as one main trading centres for the Atlantic Slave Trade until the start of the nineteenth century.

At the peak of the trade in slavery by the eighteenth century, some Ijaw villages had experienced internal socio-economic transformation. Their population grew from small villages of 1,000 into towns of between 5 000-10 000 inhabitants. The slave trade brought changes in the economic fortunes of the traders that redefined and determined their political status rather than traditional one. This was consistent with the increasing populations of the Ijaw fishing villages that was linked with the importation of slaves from the Ibos and Ibibio not sold to the European. This according to Alagoa was the 'quickest way of increasing the labour force' into the trading houses.

As a result of the participation of the Ijaw traders in the slave-trading activities, hundreds of thousands of the able-bodied men and women were exported from their communities in the Niger Delta hinterland, and transported across the Atlantic Ocean as labour for the plantation economies in the Americas. Thus, the productive forces required for the acceleration of the socio-economic advancement of the Ijaw's hinterland Ibos and Ibibio were exported to Europe. This pointed to the role played by the Ijaw intermediaries in the Atlantic slave trade that undermined the development of other ethnic group in the hinterland, while they defended the economic interest of the city states. The Ijaw people therefore, did not loose their productive forces, and thus shared in the blame for their role in under-developing their neighbours. It must be pointed out that several related sources have extensively dealt with the issue of slavery in the Ijaw area, therefore my main focus in this paper is more on the palm oil trade between the British and the Ijaws. This will particularly examine the exploitation

of palm oil product and its impact on the environment as well as the ordinary Ijaw people during this period.

2.2 The Ijaw in the Age of Legitimate Commerce

The British ban on the slave trade in 1807 ushered in massive changes for West Africa in general and the Niger Delta in particular. Cash crop production in palm oil became the main thrust of the British trading activities with the Ijaws. The Ijaws traders thus viewed this as legitimate trade.

Historians like Hopkins suggested that the change from slave trade to legitimate commerce created a crisis of adaptation for the Ijaw middlemen in the eastern Delta of Bonny and Elem-Kalabari. The introduction of the legitimate commerce in palm oil at Bonny and Elem-Kalabari had encouraged the traders and producers to believe that the transition from slave trade would become very easy. The eventual change from the slave trade to the trade in palm oil by the Ijaw traders, was a continuation of the same pattern of credit or trust system, that was expanded to accommodate the ordinary Ijaw traders and the hinterland oil producers.

Adding to the above, the Ijaw intermediaries were believed to have developed the palm oil trade earlier against an anticipated decline in the slave trade. This was the case of Opubu the King of Bonny when in the 1820s, he decided to open a palm oil market in the Ibo hinterland area, when he perceived that the British were determined to end slave trade in the world and particularly in the Delta Rivers. Dike however agreed that "The determined attack on the slave trade by the British Naval Squadron had greatly undermined it, and the Delta middlemen eager to maintain their position, turned to the new trade" It explained how the insistence of the British Naval patrol impact on the Ijaw traders who were reluctant to accept the new trade. Though they had the options of not adapting to the new trade in commerce, but the economic benefits attracted them to switch into palm oil trade with the European traders.

The resistance of the Ijaw slave merchants to the change-over to palm oil export trade, was linked to the status many of them had attained in the slave trade. They were famous, wealthy and relied on the profits accruing from the sale of slaves in building their socio-political, cultural and military institutions, particularly in Bonny, Nembe and Elem-Kalabari as well as in Oloibiri village. The Ijaw slave traders before the switched to palm oil trade perceived that the British Naval patrol at the coast was inimical to their immediate source of income, wealth and

political fortunes. It took the British traders a long time in persuading the Ijaw slave intermediaries to play along in the palm oil export. Clearly, the British determination through its naval patrols hindered further trade in slave in Bonny.

2.3 Growth of Palm Oil Export in the Ijawland

The growth of palm oil export trade in West Africa, and particularly in the Ijaw area, began as a result of the availability of palm trees that grows naturally in the Delta environment. The Niger Delta area especially Bonny and Elem-Kalabari, became an important entrepot partly due to the abundance of palm tree in its hinterland, and because the Niger River provided easy transportation for oil across the Atlantic. Northrup argue that the preparedness of the Delta's hinterland region for the palm oil trade dated to centuries of old internal development. The hinterland oil producers had the knowledge of extracting oil from palm front; the existence of a desire for commerce; established trading links between the coastal people and the inland areas, which all facilitated the rapid growth of palm oil export in the early 19th century.

The growth in the palm oil export trade could therefore be said to have responded to the immediate and indirect effect of the overseas slave trade, and not to the decline of slave export but to its growth that was already started in the Niger Delta. The internal factors mentioned were directly responsible for the growth of palm oil trade in the coastal area. The Ijaw middlemen were conversant with the trade techniques and had traded in palm oil commerce locally before it became a valuable commodity demanded by the British traders.

The increasing demand for soap in Britain became the driving force behind the growth of palm oil export and the British involvement in the trade. Palm oil commodity also served as lubricants for the British industries in the age of the Industrial Revolution as well as the increasing need for personal cleanliness by the Europeans, largely necessitated the growth of palm oil export demands.

Consequently, the British merchants by the mid-nineteenth century had exported large numbers of palm oil products from the eastern Delta, Ibo, Ibibio and other hinterland areas into London and Liverpool. The Ijaw traders had on the other hand maintained constant supply of palm oil to the British merchants largely as a result of the availability of palm trees and producers in the hinterland.

The Elem-Kalabari and Bonny city states in the central Delta became centres of palm oil export in the Niger Delta and the whole of West Africa between 1840 and 1855. Lynn remark that palm oil was the centre of the relationship between the British traders and the Ijaw people, 'because as far as the Ijaw people were concerned, they bought and sold what the British traders demanded' Bonny was the richest part of the Ijaw Delta in the palm oil trading, and had by 1855 exported palm oil worth about 15, 000 to 20,000 tons to Europe. New Kalabar and Brass the rival city states to Bonny had exported 4, 000 and 2, 280 tons of palm oil to Liverpool respectively. This signify the importance of palm oil as the most valuable export commodity amidst other product such as palm kernel and groundnuts that became export trade articles in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Despite the unprecedented growth in the export of palm oil commodity in the nineteenth century, it did not end the trade in slave in West Africa and Niger Delta. Lovejoy had asserted that the "shift to palm oil and palm kernel product and export trade in the legitimate trade-resulted in the use of many slaves in the local economy" It was evident that internal slavery continued side by side with the trade in palm oil since 1807 despite the British Naval patrol along the sea. Scholars like Crowder and Abdullahi claimed that twenty six years later, more European slave ships were seen in the port of Bonny and Brass. Expansion of palm oil export trade thus led to massive expansion of the internal trade in slaves.

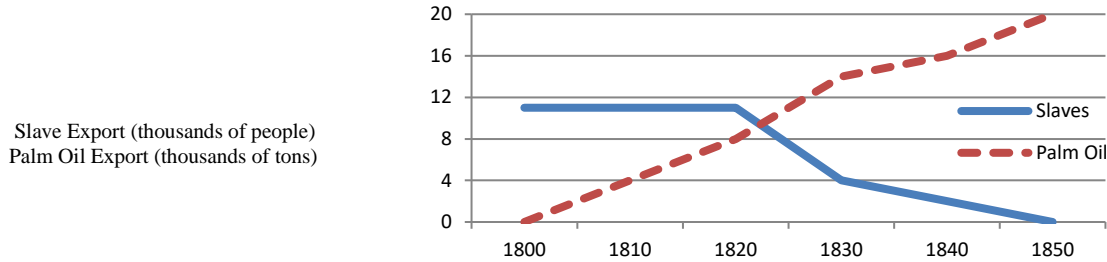
Supporting the above, Ade Ajayi and Austen believed that trading in slaves internally was required in order to sustained human labour by the Ijaw traders and to carry palm oil to the river port. Slaves became the largest component in the labour force as they served as porters and pullaboy in the canoe transportation of palm oil to the market. This significantly revealed that the used of slaves had continued despite the location of the British navy along the coast. David Northrup agreed that the 'rise in palm oil did not brought the decline in the export trade, but the two trade expanded in tandem until 1830' As the British merchant were determined to ensured transition from slave trade to palm oil commerce, the Ijaw traders in both Bonny and Elem-Kalabari were engaged in the two trades. This was linked to the large numbers of slaves waiting along the coast.

Evidence found in Bonny at the peak of palm oil export showed that, most Bonny traders sought to supply palm oil to the British and at the same time

want to supply slaves to the Europeans. This occurred as a result of the expansion of plantation in the America, Brazilian and Cuban as well as the increase in the price of slave. On the other hand, the palm oil

traders could not effectively compete with the slave traders, as oil ships were found on the coast for 18 months waiting for a cargo.

Table1.1: Statistical data on the continuation of Atlantic slave trade and palm oil commerce in Bonny between, 1800 -1850



Source: Long term variation in the trade in slaves and palm oil from the Bight of Biafra 1800-1850 (Year-to-year fluctuation not shown) cited in Northrup David, p.358.

The table above cast light on the growth of palm oil trade and slave trade despite the abolition of the latter in 1807. It was found that from 11,000 a year between 1801-10, slave trade rose to some 15, 500 in 1820, with an average of about 13,000 through that decade. It is noted that export of slaves further increased between 1821-1830 to the tune of 20,000 or more in 1826, and with an average of 15,000 for that period. The downward trend in the export of slaves began from the mid-1830s to zero point up to 1850. Palm oil export base on the table had by 1819 rose to 30,000 tons, and in 1929, it was 13,600 tons. The total palm oil exported in the Bight of Biafra by 1850 was 25,000 ton yearly.

Additionally, the above statistical data revealed that the growth in palm oil trade was not responsible for the decline of the slave trade, but could argue that the two trade increased side-by side up till 1840s, because the Ijaw middlemen had continued with both trade despite the British switch to palm commerce.

Lovejoy has captured the continuation of slave export trade vis-à-vis the legitimate commerce in West Africa and the Delta as follows:

The fight against the slave trade, the shift to legitimate commodities and the consolidation of European outposts in Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, at Lagos and the Niger Delta, and at Fernando Po were elements of the shift from exporting slaves to exporting other commodities, but the transition from slave exports to other commodities did not result in the decline of slave trade and slavery within the coastal zone.

Based on the above, it was clear that slave labour was necessary in order to increase the production of palm oil, kernels, food crops like rice and yams. The internal slaves made it possible for the owners to

direct their labour force into the development of local trade, particularly in Aro, Efik, Elem-Kalabari, Igbo and the Ijaw area.

Hence, the main reason why prominent Ijaw city states like Bonny and Elem-Kalabari had to completely change from external slave trade to palm oil trade was the presence of the British Naval patrol that made this coastline impossible for the slavers to continue with the Trans-Atlantic Trade in slaves after the 1860s. Bonny for example could not continue in the slave trade, because it was located directly to the open sea, and the British Naval patrol could easily watch the slave ship or took over the ship. Slave trade was however diverted to the Brass area because it was surrounded by maze of creeks and the slave ship could not be noticed by the British navy until 1860s. The increase in palm oil production and export thus led to the massive growth in internal slave trade since it became cheaper to work a slave to death than to treat him/her humanely.

2.4 Expansion of Trust System in Palm Oil Commerce

The palm oil trade like the slave trade operated on the trust (credit) system. On a general note, the slave trade in Africa depended on the capital goods of the British merchant, and principally in the form of credit given to local traders in return of slaves. The trust system in the legitimate commerce was however expanded and became more complicated and problematic than the Atlantic slave trade.

The expansion of ‘trust’ system by the British traders in Bonny and Elem-Kalabari in the nineteenth century was necessary to ensure prompt and sufficient supply of palm oil to their waiting agents

along the Niger coast. Goods from Liverpool traders such as spirit, cloth, guns, beads, lead and copper rods were advanced to trusted Ijaw traders in the river towns of the Delta and across the river estuary. These goods were in turn sent to the interior markets the same pattern adopted in the Atlantic slave trade in exchanged for palm oil product of the hinterland Ibos, Itsekiri, Isoko, Ukwani and the Urhobo producers. Dike, Alagoa and Crowder, claimed that credit goods worth of 5,000 pound sterling were entrusted to the Ijaw traders for a year or two. This pointed to the smooth trading relationship that transpired between the British traders and the Ijaw intermediaries before 1860s.

Similarly, the trust system in legitimate commerce was not only a source of strifes and conflict of interest among the traders, but also a weapon of commercial rivalry. The Europeans wanted African traders to remained loyal in paying back the goods entrusted in palm oil as at when due. Thus, the British traders in the Delta never wanted his trust totally repaid in order to keep other foreign rivals like the Dutch, French and Portuguese out of trade.

The British trust system built in an element of monopoly of trade in the Ijaw area. Initially, the palm oil trading activities were conducted only within the trading centres of the New-Kalabari and Bonny. However, in the 1870s, palm oil trading activities had been directed toward other communities outside the Delta coast, such as Whydah, Badagry, Cameroon and Gabon, as well as Angolan trade routes by the British. It must be stated that the British were not the only role players in the palm oil trade. Other foreign competitors such as the French, Dutch and the Portuguese equally participated in the trade. It was clear that the British had more trade links with the Ijaw traders than others. Based on the extension of trading networks across the eastern Delta, the British sought to monopolise trade in palm oil within the Ijaw Delta for onward transfer to Liverpool in England.

Clearly, the British, in carrying out their monopolistic tactics, started eliminating other foreign competitors from trading within the coast. They tactically entrusted the Ijaw middlemen with more European goods in order to bind them to their trading interests as against the French, Dutch and the Portuguese. Dike believes that the British monopoly over palm oil product clearly manifested in New-Kalabari and Bonny where credits were given extensively to the Ijaw middlemen. The Ijaws traders thus operated within the confines of the British trust.

3. Impacts of British Palm Oil Trade on Local Politics in Ijawland

The change from trade in slavery to a palm oil trading system brought certain changes into the existing political structure of the Eastern Delta, which aimed at ensuring the smooth running of the trading activities in palm oil. This largely informed the establishment of strong trading links by the Ijaw chief executive ('Amanyabo') with the British merchants, the local oil makers and its hinterland producers at maximising profits in the palm oil trade.

Also, the new trading activities in palm oil expanded the position occupied by the 'Amanyabo' or the king. He became the defender of the economic interests of the entire Ijaw land, the trading houses, as well as the people. Jones claims that the 'Amanyabo' controlled the funds of the house, investing the profits and using the capital in maintaining the war canoes by securing ammunitions from the white traders in order to protect its trading interests. E.J. Alagoa on the other hand, believes that the new trade afforded the king and its middlemen the opportunities of having a very strong hold over the palm oil product.

Hence, it is clear that the changing roles in the house system in the eastern Delta necessitated the fishing villages in naming the house the canoes house. Crowder agrees that this was so, because the house or wards required a war canoe in achieving its trading activities along the coast. The houses in the eastern Delta, however, had numbers of trading canoes carrying palm oil from the markets into the interior, the canoe house or war canoes were larger to take about 80-100 men warriors for maintaining adequate security within the Ijaw city states, especially in Nembe, Bonny and New-Kalabari which were the centres of palm oil trading.

It is equally important to note that the canoe house is a corporation which, according Wariboko, was a 'simple hierarchical arrangement that enabled merchants to internalise transactions that were previously made across market boundaries'. The chief was known as the head of the house and the controlling power over a number of people in a trading unit, with strict compliance to its customs and rules. It is argued that the canoe houses in line with the suggestion given by Jones were therefore not a lineage or descent group but a 'compact and well-organized trading and fighting corporation capable of manning and monitoring a war canoe'.

Evidence has revealed that the changes in the houses of the eastern Delta were however not the initiatives

of the British traders, but were rather based on the transformation taking place in their lineage administration. In advancing this debate, Alagoa agrees that the canoe house was a response to the emerging European overseas trade in slaves and palm oil products. On the contrary, Horton argues that the European trading contacts with the Ijaws necessitated the adoption of the canoe house, because of the credit in British good made available to the Ijaw traders. In retrospect, Cookey claims that both Alagoa and Horton failed to note that the lineage of the eastern Delta adopted the canoe house in response to the 'indigenous means of transportation' He however agrees that, the internal long-distance trade claimed by Alagoa and not the European overseas trade influenced the transformation in the political and trading structure of the eastern Delta. It reveals that the trading houses in the eastern Delta extensively depended on the canoes house in maintaining adequate security and supply of palm oil to the British traders.

The slight changes in the House system also necessitated the incorporation of freemen and slaves under the King or the chiefs. This largely permitted the sharing of the trading power and control among the chiefs, sub-chiefs, freemen and the slaves. A successful slave in a particular house emerged as the head of such a house based on his performances in the palm oil trading activities at the Hinterland. The canoe house was thus sustainable, flourishing and profitable, though might have been integrated or merged with the more prosperous house whenever it became less successful. Therefore, the re-structuring of the house system significantly ensured a prompt and increasing supply of palm oil from the hinterland producers into the Niger coast for onward shipment to Europe.

Trading competition among the various houses engendered civil wars within the Ijaw city states. This was the case within New Kalabar, Brass and in Bonny, because Brass had by the 1860s lost out on its flourishing slave trading as a result of its total elimination by the British squadron. Therefore, Brass' decision and shift into palm oil trade brought sharp resistance from the other city states. Conflict and resistance through trading activities broke up the New Kalabar into three states, namely Abonnema, Bakama and Buguma. Alagoa and Dike agree that trading conflict in Bonny was also responsible for the founding of Opobo Town by King Jaja in 1869. This occurred as a result of the internal rivalry between the King of Bonny over Jaja's successful trading links in palm oil, which was very significant in the

emergence of Opobo Town as another trading centre of the eastern Delta.

Lastly, the modification which occurred in the Ijaws' local politics before 1880s, to a large extent enhanced the growth and development of Bonny, Nembe and the New-Kalabari as great trading centres. These trading centres agreed to end slave trading for palm oil commerce, believing it would spur a flourishing trade and the expansion of trading links. Most of the kings in the trading states therefore, had minimal control of resources, trade routes and articles of trade, because they had depended on palm oil supplied from the Ibibio traders at Ikpa across the River north of Old Calabar to compliment what they produced internally, as well as maintained a sovereign and sustainable political dispensation until the British colonisation towards the end of the 1890s.

4. Conclusion

This paper has examined the Ijaw and European Foreign Trade relations in the 19th century. Evidence presented however suggests that the initial contacts between the Ijaw people and the Europeans had no influence on their physical environment, because the British relied on the use of human labour. The palm oil trade was exploited by the Ijaw traders themselves and the British traders cannot be totally blame for the environmental exploitation of palm oil, because the local traders offered to produced and participated in the legitimate commerce in order to retained a fair share in the market. Palm oil trade was the main thrust of their relations, particularly when trade in slaves was abrogated in 1807. Oil palm became lucrative venture, but the Ijaws and other Delta eastern people were persuaded and convinced by the British merchants on the values and potentials of this product. It was found that the change in the structure of palm oil export began to manifest in the mid-1900. This occurred as a result of the influx of a new generation of traders who were not associated with slave trade. In Bonny, legitimate commerce paved way for the incorporation into the house, outstanding slaves to act as intermediaries and distribution of goods at the interior equivalent of palm oil.

The paper further revealed that the British Government was not willing to take over the Ijaw territory through the intervention of the Court of Equity, but rather to make peace between the traders. The United Kingdom's involvement in the Ijaw local politics only began in the mid-1850s through its Consular Authority and to a large extent the Royal Niger Company (RNC) by the 1860s. The RNC re-enforced the pattern of environmental exploitation in the Ijaw City States that favoured the British traders.

The unfair treatment and inefficient administration of the territory by the RNC was responsible for the suspension of its charter in December 31st 1899 and the reconstitution of the entire Ijaw and Delta under the United Kingdom by 1900.

References

- Abbassatai, M.B. (ed.). (1990) A History of the Cross River Region of Nigeria, Enugu and Calabar: University Press, p.56
- Aghalino, S.O. (2004) 'British Colonial Policies and the Oil-Palm Industry in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 1900-1960' African Study Monograph, 21(1), p.25
- _____ 'Pattern of Peasant Migration in the Hinterland of the Western Niger Delta Nigeria 1900-1930' *Trans African Journal of History*, 2(25), 1996, pp.57-59
- Ajayi, J.F. (1969) A Thousand Years of West Africa History: A Handbook for Teachers and Students, Ibadan: University Press, pp.109-119.
- Ade-Ajayi, J.F. Tradition and Change in Africa, Toyin Falola ed. African World Press, Inc. pp.50-61
- Alagoa, E.J. and T.N. Tamuno, eds. (1989) Land and Peoples of Nigeria: Rivers State, Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Riverside Communication, pp.54-57
- Alagoa, E.J. (1972) A History of Niger Delta, Ibadan: University Press, pp12-18, p.102.
- Alagoa, E.J. Anozie, F.N. and N. Nzewunwa (1988) The Early History of the Niger Delta, Harmbuge: Heint Buske Verlag, p.40.
- Alagoa, E.J. (1970) 'Long Distance Trade and the States of the Niger Delta' *Journal of African History*, 11 (3) pp.319-339, 25-36
- _____ (1971) 'The Development of Institution in the States of the Eastern Niger Delta' *Journal of African History*, 2(2), pp.269-279
- _____ (1971) 'Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta States and Calabar' *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 5 (4), pp.565-572.
- 'Paper Deliver as a Key Note Address at the 'Boro Day' Celebrations of the Ijaw National Alliance of the Americas (INAA)' at the Hilton, Woodbridge, New Jersey, May 24, 2003, pp.1-9.
- Ashton, J.N. (1998) The Human Eco-System in the Niger Delta, Benin City: ERA, pp.28-50.
- Anene, C.J. (1960) Southern Nigeria in Transition, 1885-1906, Cambridge University Press, p.40.
- Anene, C.J. (1969) 'Benue, Niger Delta, Ibo and Ibibio People in the 19th Century' J.F.A. Ajayi, ed. A Thousand Years of West Africa History: A Handbook for Teachers and Students, Ibadan: University Press, pp.109-119
- Austen, R. (1987) African Economic History: Internal Development and External Dependency, Portsmouth N.H: Heinemann, pp.51-55.
- Cherry, G. (1962) 'Relations between African and European Traders in the Niger Delta, 1880-1896' *Journal of African History* 3(2), pp.361-366.
- Cook, A. N. (1964) British Enterprises in Nigeria, London: Frank Cass, pp.18-21.
- Cookey, S.J.S. (1974) King Jaja of the Niger Delta: His Life and Times, 1821-1891, New York: Nok, pp.11-12, 42
- Cooper, F. (1997) Plantation Slavery on the East African Coast, New Haven: Yale University Press, pp.40-45
- Crowther, M. (1960) The Story of Nigeria, London: Faber and Faber, p70-89
- Crowther, M and G. Abdullahi (1971) Nigeria: An Introduction to its History, Hong-Kong: Longman
- Crowther, M. (1972) Colonialism and Imperialism in West Africa, London: Hutchinson Publisher, pp.72-74
- Curtin, P.D. (1969) The Atlantic Slave Trade, London: A Census Publisher, p.231
- CSO, Colonial Office 82/61. Fernando Po, Nicolls to Hay, 28/October, 1837.
- David, E, Lovejoy Paul E, and David Richardson. (1999) 'Slave-Trading Ports: Towards an Atlantic-Wide Perspectives, 167601832' Robin Law and Silke Strickrodt eds. Ports of the Slave Trade (Bight of Biafra), Centre of Commonwealth Studies, University of Sterling, Occasional Paper Nr, 6 October p21.
- Dike, K.O. (1956) Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria, London: Oxford University Press, p40-48, pp.101-108
- Encyclopedia of African History, Delta States in the Nineteenth Century; London: Taylor and Francis Ltd, 2005, p.216
- Encyclopedia of African History, 'Legitimate Commerce and the Export Trade in Nineteenth Century' Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2005, pp.10-12, 216.

- Encyclopedia of African History, 'Niger Delta and Its Hinterland Peoples and States to 1800' London: Taylor and Francis Ltd, 2005, p.216
- Flint, J.E. (1960) *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria*, London: Oxford University Press, pp.1-34,
- FO, Foreign Office 2//No1. Encls 3. Huntley to Craige 27, March, 1837
- FO, Foreign Office 2/1/Encl. 7 No 1, Super cargoes to Craige, 11 April, 1937, cited in K.O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Nigeria Delta* p.7
- Garvin, R.J. and Bartley, J.A. (1993) *The Scramble for Africa: Document on the Berlin West Africa Conference*, Ibadan: University Press, pp.10-20, 104.
- Greary, W.M.N. (1977) *Nigeria under British Rule*, London: University Press, p.82
- Hopkins, A.G. (1973) *An Economic History of West Africa*, London: Longman Group Ltd, pp.124-164
- Holders, B.W. (1969) *Markets in West Africa*, Ibadan: Heinemann Publication, p.273.
- Horton, R. (1969) 'From Fishing Village to City-State: A Social History of New Calabar' Douglas, M and Kabery, P.M. eds. *Man in Africa*, London p.26, pp.48-68.
- Isichei, E. (1977) *History of West Africa Since 1800*, London: Macmillan Education Limited., pp.114-124, pp.149-151.
- Jones' G.I. (1963) *The trading Stats of the Oil Rivers: A Study of Political Development in Eastern Nigeria*, London: Oxford University Press, pp.51-87, pp.105-120.
- Johnston, H.H. 'The Niger Delta' *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography Read at the Evening Meeting*, Nov 12th 1888, p.3
- Kathryn, N. (2005) 'Between Discourse and Reality: The Politics of Oil and Ijaw Ethnic Nationalism in the Niger Delta' *Cahiers d'Etudes Africanies*, 45(178), p474
- Lovejoy, Paul. E. (1983) *Transformation in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p58-59, 105-168
- Lovejoy, Paul E. and Richardson, D. (1999) 'Trust, Pawn-ship, and Atlantic History: The Institutional Foundation of the Old Calabar Slave Trade' *American Historical Reviews*, 104(2), pp.334-338.
- Lynn, M. (1981) 'Change and Continuity in the British Palm Oil Trade with West Africa, 1930-55' *Journal of Africa History*, 22(2), p.332
- Lynn, M. (1994) 'Law and Imperial Expansion: The Niger Delta Court of Equity C'1850-1885' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1(2), pp.46-48
- Mbeayi, P.M. (1978) *British Military and Naval Forces in West African History 1807-1874*, London: NOK, p.121
- Mcphee, A. (1926) *The Economic Revolution in British West Africa*, London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd, pp.40-61.
- NAE, (National Archive Enugu) CSO, 26/file 28003, Intelligence report on the Ijaw group of Warri Province.
- NAE, War Prof, 440/180, Gbaramotu clans intelligence report, 1944/57.
- NAE, War Prof, 1234/4091, 89 Intelligence report on the crisis between the Ijaw trading houses.
- NAI, (National Archive Ibadan) Warri Prof/1909/384, Traditional crafts of the Ijaws.
- Northrup, D. (1972) 'The Growth of Trade among the Igbo Before 1800' *Journal of African History*, 13, pp.217-36.
- Northrup, D. (1976) 'The Compatibility of the Slave and Palm oil Trade in the Bight of Biafra' *Journal of African History*, 17(3), pp.359 - 360.
- Obaro, I. (1977) *Niger Delta Rivalry*, London: Longman, pp.113-167.
- _____ (1977) *The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest*, London: Heinemann Education Publisher, pp.15-33.
- Obaro, I. (1973) 'Colonial Conquest and West Africa Resistance in the Niger Delta' *Tarikh*, 4(3), pp. 50-61.
- Phillip, E.L. (1964) 'Palm Oil, Illicit Gin, and Moral Order of the Ijaw' *American Anthropologist*, 66(4), pp.828-838
- Robin, L. (ed.), (1985) 'The West African Palm Oil Trade in the Nineteenth Century and the Crisis of Adaptation' *From Slave to 'Legitimate' Commerce: The Commercial Transition in the Nineteenth Century West Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p104.
- Tasie, G.O.M. (1997) *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864-1918*, London: Brill, 1978, pp.27-35
- Vogel, J.O. 'History of the Ijaws and Neighbours in Southern Nigeria' *Encyclopedia of Pre-Colonial Africa, Archaeology, History, Languages, Cultures and Environment*, p172-174
- Wariboko, N. (2007) *Pattern of Institutions in the Niger delta: Economic and Ethnological Interpretations of History and Culture*, Port

- Harcourt: Onyoma Publications, pp1-25,
pp.146-177.
- Webster, J.B, Boahen, A.A. and H.O. Idowu, (1967)
The Growth of African Civilization: The
Revolutionary Years of West Africa Since
1800, London: Longman, pp.193-199.