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Natural resources and the crisis of nation-building in Africa: the case of oil and violence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Violent conflicts tend to be synonymous with Africa and worse still in natural resource rich states. Cases in Angola, Sierra Leone, Chad, Sudan, and indeed Nigeria tend to point to the destructive nature of natural resource wealth that ostensibly is meant to propel socioeconomic growth. Nigeria's Niger Delta region has over the years shown that this trend has remained a huge challenge to national cohesion and nation-building. The region has most recently been transformed into a militant zone where different agitations tend to point to the drive towards state capture or natural resource (rent) capture. This has evolved through many stages of state oppression, repression, exploitation and regional agitations and has now metamorphosed into a situation of national concern. The region tends to have degenerated into a state of anarchy since militant activities have virtually made the region uninhabitable for foreign investment because of the quest for regional emancipation by these forces that have developed through the less than effective state mechanisms.

It is against this background that this work is focused on the Niger Delta region of Nigeria which is made up of seven oil producing states and many indigenous but minority ethnic nationalities. These states include Abia, Bayelsa, Delta, Imo, Ondo, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers and Rivers states while the ethnic groups include Ijaw, Ogoni, Nembe, Itshekiri, Ikwerre, Etche, Efik, Ibibio, Urhobo, and many others (see Orogun, 2009). These states and ethnic groups have been in a tug of war with the federal government of Nigeria over the control and (re)distribution of oil (revenue) that accrues from the natural resource sector. This chapter therefore examines the research question and how it fits in to the overall scholarship of explaining conflicts in natural resource rich but poor and dependent states that are ostensibly affected by the resource curse. It is in this light then that this research begins its quest towards explaining this crisis in the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

At the end of the cold war and the fall of the Berlin Wall, there was a momentous drive towards liberal democracy in many parts of the world, especially in South America and Africa. This was the end of state-extension or godfather states that hitherto supported repressive governments in the bid to protect either Western or Communist interests especially within Africa. It was birth of the trend referred to as the third wave of democratization. It also

saw a drastic reduction in the wave of interstate conflicts, but was bedevilled by intrastate conflicts since many states grappled with issues of groups that tended to secede (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a). In Africa, it appeared that this new trend opened up vast avenues for struggles for state control, thus eliciting many conflicts. In this light, intrastate conflicts have become rampant (especially) in Africa – being attributed to different causal mechanisms.

It is clear that a plethora of these conflicts are propelled by the fact of natural resource abundance; the redistribution of the wealth accruable through them; and the forms of governance that this abundance elicits. These tend to be sources of grievance and drives at state capture and the control of socio-economic and political power. When the latter appeared unfeasible, it led to cases of secessionist drives, most of which have led to bloody civil wars that together claimed millions of human life and destroyed property worth billions of dollars.

Critical analyses of these incidents show that issues ranging from ethnic differences and social stratification; bad governance, greed and grievance; and foreign interference are latent in these conflicts. The abundance of natural resources that are easy sources of revenue – rents – like minerals resources (such as oil, gold, copper, coltan, diamonds and so on) have appeared to exacerbate the conflict situation in these states. Thus, it is argued that the abundance of natural resource wealth leads to Dutch disease[1] in primary commodity dependent states – a syndrome of the resource curse, the view that natural resource abundance and dependence hinders development, diminishes good governance, and ultimately leads to the outbreak of violent conflicts (most times civil wars). This view however appears to neglect the question of causation since it appears to insist that natural resources have the capacity to independently retard economic growth and also cause conflicts.

As this research begins its inquest into the role of oil (and other natural resources) in the violent conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (and briefly in some other states affected by the resource curse), it pays particular attention to the resource curse debate with special reference to the Collier-Hoeffler (C&H) *greed and grievance* model. This model explains resource related violent conflicts (in Africa) in terms of the economic incentives for

[1]The Dutch Disease is said to emerge due to the abundance of these resource wealth. Over-concentration of an economy on a primary commodity sector results in the neglect of other sectors of a country's economy. Due to the high rate of export revenue and rent accruable from the primary commodity, there is no effort to develop other sectors of the economy that increase the internal revenue. As "... a condition whereby a resource boom leads to appreciation of real exchange rate and in turn damages manufacturing and other tradable sectors," the Dutch Disease has remained closely linked to the resource curse hypothesis (Rossier, 2006:14).

a rebellion. This means that greed defined in terms of opportunity cost of a rebellion better explains rebellion in resource rich but poor states than grievance related issues like political exclusion, social stratification, ethnic hatred and marginalisation. In this light therefore, this research tries to critically scrutinize this position using the Nigerian case of violence in the Niger Delta region. This indeed forms the major interrogative focus of this research work which goes thus:

Does the Collier and Hoeffler greed and grievance theory adequately explain the conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

The resource curse theory and the greed and grievance theory gives a lot of detailed explanation on crisis in natural resources rich states. Its analysis has been used to explain issues underlying cases in Africa such as Sierra Leone, Angola, Sudan, the DRC, Equatorial Guinea, and even Chad republic. The resource curse has thus been used to predict conflicts following the experiences in these states as well as others outside Africa. This makes it significant in this study as we apparently compare their examples in relation to the Nigerian case study so as to decipher the uniqueness of this particular case as opposed to the analytic stance propelled by the case studies presented in the C&H model. This is the relevance of the brief examination of natural resource abundant states (in Africa) affected by these conflict traps in the theoretical analysis in the next chapter of this research. Hence it becomes germane to ask further: Are war torn resource rich (African) states affected by the resource curse; and how and why does the endowment of natural resources ostensibly heighten the risk of violent conflicts and brutal civil wars in these (African) states?

More importantly, the return to the case study elicits broader questions especially as the research engages with the contemporary Nigerian state and the crisis of nation building therein. In this light then, it will attempt to answer questions related to the trends of violence in the region, the drives towards conflict resolution/management, and indeed the role and impact of oil in all of these. It therefore poses the following questions thus:

How does conflict over (lootable[2]) natural resources disrupt the drive to solidify the idea of unified Nation-States in Africa?

[2]Lootable here describes the natural resources that can easily be extracted, stolen and sold illegally without intense labour. They are high-value natural resources with low economic barriers to entry and provide the means and motives for rebellion since they are easily stolen (Dunning, 2005:452). From this point oil may not easily qualify as a lootable resource, but experience (in the Niger Delta) has shown that militants have got unbridled

Do conflicts over oil prevent nation-building in Nigeria and how does it contribute to disunity in Nigeria?

What is the relationship between the Collier–Hoeffler greed model and the most recent trends in the region? And,

How has oil impacted the conflicts/resolutions in the Niger Delta region?

1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study of intrastate conflicts (in Africa) lies within the framework of two traditions, namely: Path dependency approaches (structural causes in terms of institutional continuity) and rational choice approaches. These frameworks are very relevant in explaining identity-based conflicts to which natural resources are key elements.

1.3.1 Path Dependency and Institutional Continuity

Path Dependency or historical institutionalism explains conflicts in terms of historical events and choices that constrain choices in the present political situation of a state. It emphasizes that past political events hugely constrain the future in a state (Mahoney, 2000:510). It involves processes that are highly sensitive to events that take place in the early stages of an overall historical sequence [of a country] and "… self reinforcing processes in institutions that make institutional configurations, and hence their policies, difficult to change once the pattern has been established" (Peters et al, 2005:1276). By showing that political developments are linked to institutional changes "and conceiving political choices as intermittent interruptions in path-dependent policies, historical institutionalism tends to identify the chosen policy options as the logical, and generally the most rational … choice at any given time" (Peters et al, 2005:1277). Indeed, this theory implies that a minor or fleeting action or a seemingly inconsequential lead for technology or public policy can have important and irreversible influences and/or constraints on the institution of a state (Liebowitz and Margolis, 1995). These influences or constraints may be formal or informal, but deal with structures and institutions that set precedents which affect political and economic decisions in the future. They are referred to as historical accidents that impact actual technological and political developments within a political terrain since the start of a particular path in a specified type of socio-political situation which is called a 'critical juncture' can be those small events capable

access to oil and thus engage in stealing – "oil bunkering" – it in high quantity and selling to some countries in east Asia and other parts of Africa (Collier and Hoeffler, 2005:632). Thus, it also enters this category.

of great after effects. An example is the experience and exploits of colonialism in Africa. This serves as a historical constraint on the present states in Africa because the decisions taken in the 1884-85 Berlin conference sealed the fate of Africa forever – colonialism, economic exploitation, marginalisation, oppressive and repressive governments, neo-patrimonial and prebendal governments and so on. In the present, socio-economic underdevelopment and ethno-regional violence have kept Africa seriously besieged with series of deadly conflicts.

1.3.2 Rational Choice Theory

The rational Choice approach focuses on how individuals and groups act rationally to realise their goals and desires (De Jonge, 2005). This approach is "… based on methodological individualism and assumes that individuals compare expected benefits and costs of actions prior to adopting strategies for action" (Ostrom, 1991:243). In assuming that human actions are guided by individualism, optimality (the best that can be achieved from the individual or social action) and self-regard (individual or group welfare), this theory proposes that the "choices that people make (especially in terms of conflicts) tend to maximize total utility …" (Herrnstein, 1990). This approach also involves social action evident in the game theory (of international relations) which extends rational individual actions to situations where actors take other actors' actions into account when acting. Thus, an action or a social action sometimes depends not only on the preferences of individuals or groups but also upon the actions of others, and the set of possible outcomes, is generated by one or more actors. In this way it explains how individuals and groups transform non-rational factors into issues that create incentives for group mobilisation along different motivational lines (Lake and Rothchild, 1996). Thus apart from strategic dilemmas that account for rational choices to mobilise according to group interests, these non-rational factors like emotional sentiments, political myths, history of marginalisation and so on, are employed by people to fan the flames of political antagonism within the state.

1.4 EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP AND ITS LIMITATIONS

Many scholarly works have been focused on crisis in Africa with special reference to natural resource rich but poor states. Narrowing it to the Nigerian question, there is a plethora of works focused on the crisis of nation-building that lie within the struggle for socioeconomic and political emancipation of the region. This crisis has been explained in terms of colonial legacies (Ekeh, 1975) as well as the issue of ethno-regional politics riddled with marginalisation and frustration of the minorities (Welch, 1995, Osaghae, 1995). These have

relatively enabled an understanding of the crises, but fall short in terms of theoretically establishing the motives behind the different drives at resource control by the conflicting parties – the Niger delta, exemplified in the militant groups, and the state, exemplified in the federal government.

This is where this research is located – theoretical analysis of motives behind the drives in the whole struggle for resource control. To facilitate this position, the research interrogates Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler's *greed and grievance* theory to ascertain its adequacy in explaining the trend of violence in the region. This research however argues that contrary to the hypothesis of this theory that dependence on primary commodity increases the propensity of civil war in resource rich but poor states in Africa, the Nigerian case differs significantly. Hence, the likelihood of a civil war after that of 1967-70s appears very bleak, and that greed – the financial incentives for rebellion – is largely insufficient, though relevant, in explaining the reason(s) behind the incessant crisis in the Niger Delta region. It is in this light therefore that our research focuses in the dynamics of violent conflicts in the region in comparative distinction with the analysis of resource based conflicts in other (African) countries that have suffered from and may be currently suffering from the purported effects of the resource curse.

1.5 AIM OF STUDY

This research aims at examining the capacity of natural resources – in our case, oil – in impeding nation-building and national integration within Africa states in general and in Nigeria in particular. This is with special reference to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, their agitations and the incessant crisis in the region.

It is also instructive to note that though the dynamics of many of the resource based conflicts in the world are not fundamentally different, Africa has proved a volatile environment in recent times with regards to civil wars and internal conflicts. Indeed, other regions have conflicts – even resource based – but they remain relatively scanty incidents when compared to the burgeoning incidents as noted in Collier and Hoeffler (2002a: 13), citing the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) findings that "Africa is the most conflict ridden region of the world and the only region in which the number of armed conflicts is on the increase."

1.6 RATIONALE

The foundation for this research is the fact that the past few years have recorded incidents of marginalisation and oppression which culminated in violent uprisings within the Niger Delta region by aggrieved youth/militant groups. The end-result of this is a serious impasse in the drive to consolidate on, or solidify the idea of national unity. In this light then, we seek to examine the extent to which this degenerating trend may culminate in a collapse of the idea of a unified nation-state called Nigeria especially in the wake of the tension between the state and the Niger Delta region.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

Our approach to these contemporaneous conflict issues in the Niger Delta shall be more analytic and theoretical in line with the qualitative approach. The research focuses mainly on (primary and secondary) literatures that deal extensively with natural resource-related conflicts in (Africa and specifically with) Nigeria's Niger Delta. These will involve thorough studies of conflict mechanisms that emerge from ethnicity and strategic dilemmas, weak state capacity and bad governance, foreign interference and most importantly the greed versus grievance theory. All these are to be examined within the light of the resource curse hypothesis and its links to conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the crisis of nation-building in the state.

In terms of the case study, we shall theoretically analyse already existing data-set with regards to the Niger Delta crisis. This will be in line with – but an extension of – the *greed and grievance theory* propagated by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. It is also within the context of the resource curse and its effects on resource-dependent but poor states. This (discourse) analysis will allow us to evaluate the changing legal, constitutional and regulatory trends in the Nigerian state since independence as they relate to the Niger Delta and issues of resource control. These are animated by the *propaganda* bordering on ideologies of *nation-building and national integration* because language and discourse has been used in many ways to argue for this national quest. Hence, the result of this research will enable a better grasp of the foundation of the ideology of national unity, national integration and/or nation-building within the Nigerian state – the level of greed content for oil wealth in the state's discourse or a genuine call for oneness in Nigeria for all Nigerians (minority and majority alike). It will also show if the state of affairs agree with the theoretical and statistical position of our proponents in this research.

The research also involves the scholarly opinions of experts in the field of political studies and international relations especially with regards to these issues of resource cum identity-based conflicts especially in Africa.

In summary, this research entails an in-depth study of the relevant secondary sources – academic journals, newspaper articles and editorials, official government publications and policy documents within the ambient of our research – since our research is primarily literature-based. All these will be within the context of existing data on the Niger Delta and the conflicts within the Nigerian state within this same context of resource struggle.

1.8 ROADMAP OF RESEARCH

This research work is divided into five chapters beginning with the research question(s), the aim and rationale of the research as well as existing research and its limitations with regards to the case study. The second chapter is basically a literature review dealing with the resource curse and its conflict mechanisms in natural resource rich but poor and dependent states (especially in Africa). The greed and grievance theory will emerge as the last theory to be examined as it leads the research into the third chapter which spotlights the issues inherent in the Niger Delta struggle and the conflict mechanisms that emanate therein. The third chapter thus takes an in-depth analysis of violence in the Niger Delta and its underlying issues. It is designed to show the relationship between the Collier-Hoeffler *greed model* and the dynamics of conflicts within the state as well as the role of discourse in the pursuance of particular goals – by state or militants – all within the struggle for nation-building. The fourth chapter deals with the contemporary trend of militancy and the drives towards crisis resolution mainly undertaken by the federal government at different times. This is also examined in line with the C&H model. It is meant to enable an understanding of how oil (revenue) impacts the resolution of the crisis in terms of different developmental institutions. Finally, the fifth chapter evaluates and assesses the entire crisis and research findings with regards to conformity with the C&H *greed versus grievance* model. It will also make brief recommendations with regards to drives towards resolving the Niger Delta issues while clearly noting its own (the research's own) limitations especially with regards to time constraint and the overall scope of the work.

CHAPTER TWO: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INTRASTATE CONFLICTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explore different attempts made to explain conflicts in natural resource rich states (in Africa) in relation to the resource curse debate. Accordingly, these conflicts are said to follow patterns such as ethnicity and the strategic dilemma, especially in situations weak state capacity and activities of external and/or foreign agents. The greed versus grievance theory emerges as a major model to be examined since it explains how natural resources impact conflicts by means of certain overriding factors – greed or grievances. It has to be stated that although these models or theories can also be applied to conflicts in general, this research however examines them in terms of their links with resource based conflicts. This aims at understanding the dynamics of violence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the challenges that it presents to the nation-building strive of the Nigerian state.

2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THE RESOURCE CURSE

The issue of the existence of a curse based on the abundance of natural resources in a country remains a paradox in economic and political discourse. Ross (2004:328) avers:

> *Many of the poorest and most troubled states in the developing world have paradoxically, high levels of natural resource wealth. There is a growing body of evidence that resource wealth itself may harm a country's prospects for development.*

It is viewed that the curse is manifest in states that derive a majority of their income from primary commodities through export of such natural resources as oil, natural gas, diamonds, gold and copper, coltan and even agricultural products like timber etc. These developing countries also face the risk of authoritarian regimes, civil conflicts and low rates of development. The evidence of some exceptions to the rule therefore gives more momentous impetus to the question of the factors that explain this resource curse if it really exists.

Sachs and Warner (2001: 828) show that empirical support for the curse is strong, ranging from low levels of GDP in most of the resource-rich developing countries (despite the initial economic boom due to the resources in the Mid 1970s), to an ever increased rapid economic underdevelopment in these extremely resource-abundant countries like Nigeria, Mexico or Venezuela. Despite this seemingly obvious reality, it remains difficult to conclude that natural resource-abundance is a curse since some natural resource-rich countries have attained sustainable economic growth overtime. The cases of Botswana, Indonesia, Chile and many others tend to vigorously challenge the very foundation of the resource curse

hypothesis. But the fact remains that from a quantitative observation, many *rentier states* tend to grow more slowly than their not so blessed counterparts.

Another related dimension here is the risk of civil conflicts and wars. The fact that conflicts are rampant among resource rich countries is no speculation, since empirically observable instances prove its reality. However the issue of drawing a link between these two variables has remained the crux of the matter especially since these natural resources themselves are mere natural endowments whose usefulness depends on human exploitation. Furthermore, these natural resources have accounted for some really socio-economically and politically powerful states. Hence the question: what links natural resources to civil conflicts or even civil wars?

The fact that few resource-rich countries are striving positively and the implicit issues of geographical, climatic and the bias of non-researched cases do not necessarily mean that the curse is non-existent since a curse can take different dimensions when contextually examined. Thus in some sense, it may not be too wrong to state that the resource exists, is affecting many developing countries in terms of socioeconomic and political development.

2.3 EXPLAINING THE RESOURCE CURSE: CAUSAL MECHANISMS

The resource curse hypothesis encompasses many issues as scholars have shown. It deals with unfavourable terms of trade (market volatility) – a view championed by Raul Prebisch in the 1950s (Rossier, 2006; Alence, 2005) – Dutch Disease, short-sightedness of state actors, the role of patronage-client networks, the weakness or non-existence of (state) institutions to enforce property rights (Ross, 1999; Mehlum et al, 2006; Wenar, 2007), and the idea of rent-seeking (Wick and Bulte, 2006; Ross, 2004). Natural resources are also linked with intrastate conflicts as the wealth they provide creates incentives for unhealthy struggles for state control or secessionist agitations in but poor states. Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2002a, 2002b), Ross (2004a, 2004b), and Humphreys (2005) show the extent to which natural resource dependence can culminate in civil conflicts – most times civil wars.

2.3.1 Natural Resources and Underdevelopment: Economics of the Resource Curse

Natural resources have appeared to impact negatively on socioeconomic development in a plethora of primary resource-dependent states. Scholars link this slow economic growth evident in many *rentier* states to the existence of the resource curse when they are compared to non-resource dependent economies. This trend is said to follow through a symptom of the

curse known as the Dutch Disease. Beside this, these states are also said to suffer from the effects of market volatility, short sightedness of state policies as well as poor bureaucratic and institutional structures that encourage internal revenue away from rents from point-resources or primary commodity. These make up our first exploration of the resource curse hypothesis.

Dutch Disease

This is a case whereby "... resource boom creates incentives that draw factors of production out of sectors (like Manufacturing) with better prospects of long term productivity growth" (Alence, 2005:4). It is a situation whereby the windfall that emerges out of the period when export revenues from a particular economic sector favour an economy highly resulting in gross neglect of other sectors of the economy. According to Sachs and Warner (2001) this involves the 'crowding out' of other sectors like manufacturing, agriculture and other entrepreneurial activities. "The mechanism through which the 'disease' is transmitted is the exchange rate. The resource boom swells export earnings causing the exchange rate to appreciate …" (Alence, 2005:4) thereby making it very difficult for the non-resource industries to compete favourably in the international market.

Natural resources thus possess the tendency to crowd out the manufacturing sector of the economy because of its high export value that leads to increased export prices that make it difficult for other sectors to compete favourably in the international market (Sachs and Warner, 2001). This crowding out of other sectors – equated with the status of enhancing internal economic growth – therefore implies that natural resources impede economic growth in the state. It is characterized by an overconcentration of human and mechanised work-force in the booming resource-based sector to the sheer neglect of all other necessary developmental sector.

Since primary commodities (like oil) increase currency values due to their high export value, it becomes too high for the manufacturing sectors – local or international – to participate, thus culminating in low export growth in these other sectors that propel GDP growth. This is also interpreted in the light of the crowding out of other innovative and entrepreneurial activities through rent-seeking, government capture of resource wealth for corrupt practices and the gross neglect of important developmental sectors that can lead to long term development – like education (Sachs and Warner, 2001:835).

Short sightedness of state policies and lack of bureaucratic institutions

The effect of the Dutch disease appears to snowball into state economic policies that are fatally myopic. It reduces emphasis on structures and institutions of internal revenue – like tax. The abundance of rents from the primary commodity elicits reckless spending from state actors who embark on white elephant projects that actually have no long term goal. In Nigeria the period of oil boom and the windfall of the mid and late 70s led to so many projects that until date have not been accomplished, but for which millions of dollars have been wasted and borrowed from international monetary organisations like the World Bank and the IMF (Peels, 2009). Policies like the nationalisation of primary resource sectors and the lack of property rights regimes in many African countries have also been said to increase the level of underdevelopment (Ross, 1999: 301-302). In this way, the level of corruption and unaccountability is increased, thus portending economic doom for these states.

In this vein, low savings and investments, income inequality between sectors of the economy, and the use of resource wealth to pursue white elephant projects, are also linked to natural resources. Thus natural resource dependence has cursed unrestrained states because apart from the rare cases of countries like Botswana in Africa "... most resource-abundant countries have stagnated in economic growth since the early 1970s ..." (Sachs and Warner, 2001: 837).

Market Volatility

Other empirical evidence show slow economic growth in oil rich countries (like Nigeria, the Gulf states) due to fluctuation in market prices of primary commodities in the international market. It is also a noted fact that after the fall in oil prices in the 1970s, the next two decades saw no rapid economic development recorded in most of these oil-rich cum natural resource dependent states (Sachs and Warner, 2001). Alence (2005) elaborates on the fact as he draws from the critique of specialization in primary commodity production (posited by Raul Prebisch). He notes that the unstable nature of prices of commodity in the international market on the long run does not favour these developing *rentier* states. This therefore points to the retrogressive nature of primary-commodity export-led specialization and the Dutch disease. Thus market volatility – sometimes known as terms of trade – explains how economic revenues experience sharp fluctuations (Weinthal and Jones, 2006:37; Ross, 1999: 301). At some points the international market favours these primary commodities and the export revenues or resource rents for the exporting countries. But since these markets are unstable, sharp price falls in the fluctuating international market implies serious economic

consequences for these single resource economies. According to Rossier (2009) many of these occur because of the major Western powers and the lack of bargaining power on the part of these developing economies, hence the view of Raul Prebisch that market fluctuations are conditions generally unfavourable to the developing countries (Alence, 2005).

2.3.2 Natural Resources and Bad Governance: The Politics of the Resource Curse

This shows the impact of natural resources on all aspects of life in the state. The curse is explained in the light of the types of government, governance and policies; rent-seeking and corruption; and indeed the end product of which is civil war or other conflict.

Ross (1999) ascribes a threefold character to the resource curse – the cognitive, societal and state-centred theories. At the cognitive level, resource boom creates myopic disorders in state actors; disorders that culminate in projects that lack long term goals of sustainable development through economic diversification. The societal level is characterised by socio-political elitism and patronage networks that exert pressures on the state to maintain the status quo of stampeding economic diversification. It also shies away from encouraging development at the grassroots since it focuses on using the resource wealth to strengthen its internal security networks in the bid to stifle all forms of opposition and public pressure (Ross, 2001). Moribund state bureaucratic institutions that enable long term economic development by means of increasing the local revenue base through local tax and other economic sectors of the state also affects these states as well as an over-concentration on the state as the source of income (Ross, 1999: 324).

In this light, these natural resources such as oil appear to impede democracy and foster authoritarian and rent-seeking governments that shut out all democratisation processes with the greedy aim of controlling the resource base of the state (Ross, 2001). These are evident in the rentier, repressive and the modernisation effects of natural resources that point to the state's capture of the natural resource sector. This sector messes up politics, (Collier, 2007) by eliciting gullibility within the polity and reducing chances of free and fair elections in the process of democratisation by means of elections. Collier notes thus:

> *Some of the rules of democracy do indeed determine how power is achieved, and that is where elections come in. But other rules of democracy limit how power is used. These rules are concerned with checks and balances on government abuse of power. Both sets of rules get undermined by resource rents.* (Collier, 2007:44)

This implies that the presence of oil wealth creates dangerous incentives for bad governance within the state, and being a major reason for authoritarian regimes, it therefore leads to a conscious inhibiting of democratic processes.

Many times states tend to avoid the immediate responsibility of providing plans geared towards sustainable development while focusing of welfare packages. These make them to turn a blind eye towards institutions of internal revenue, and with the *omni-presence* of these unearned rents, unaccountability burgeons. In other words, this tendency towards *welfarism* tends to demoralize even those who really have the mandate to push on developmental strategies because of the quest for welfare states.

Alence (2005: 5) defines political governance as "… the ways public authority is organised and exercised with special attention to responsiveness, accountability, and transparency …" He goes on to describe economic governance as the "... capacity and performance [of this public authority] in carrying out functions essential for economic development, such as coherent policy formulation, public-service effectiveness, and the control of corruption ..." This implies that a negative approach of governance over a state, especially in the abundance of natural resource rents, can lead to huge developmental catastrophes within such a state. The activities of the state actors in resource rich countries affect the life of the state and natural resource wealth tends to create incentives for state capture of rents, corrupt leadership, lack of accountability and laxity with regards to creating institutions that ensure an effective internal revenue mechanism for the state.

2.4 POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND VIOLENT CONFLICTS: IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESOURCE CURSE

From the foregoing, it is quite obvious that economic and political instability, and indeed conflicts, can be direct or indirect end products of the resource curse. This body of literature shows how the economic life of the state can suffer a great deal and how myopic and repressive governments further exacerbate the problem, thereby bringing about unwanted repercussions for the state. These spring up like grievances and most times culminate in armed conflicts over resource wealth. Thus as opined by Alence,

> *Perhaps the most troubling manifestation of the resource curse is resource-dependent countries' greater susceptibility to violent political conflict. This is partly due to more general economic inequities and governance – and their tendency to be concentrated in specific geographical areas – appears also to contribute more to violent rebellion* (Alence, 2005, 6).

Since some of the natural resources that constitute a state's rent are strategically located and apparently non-lootable, and since their extraction (which goes with a minimum level of environmental problems) is accompanied by neglect and repression, the tendency therefore is a mobilisation of people along grievance lines – though some are coloured by greed. This is responsible for the emergence of rebel groups and the birth of intrastate conflicts (whether civil war or any other identity-based conflict in the state).

2.4.1 Strategic Dilemmas

In line with major rational choice theories of conflicts, Lake and Rothchild (1996) proposed that the major factor responsible for civil conflicts in general is fear which builds upon certain strategic dilemmas and heightened by political and ethnic activists. This fear is built upon series of incidents that are absorbed and transformed into rational sentiments that engulf groups as they interact within the political society which they co-inhabit. The feeling of insecurity and mutual suspicion becomes very dangerous in this rapport. Thus:

> *As groups begin to fear for their safety, dangerous and difficult-to-resolve strategic dilemmas arise that contain within them the potential for tremendous violence. As information failure, problems of credible commitment, and the security dilemma take hold, groups become apprehensive, the State weakens, and conflicts become more likely. [Also ethnic] ... activists and political entrepreneurs, operating within and between groups, build upon these anxieties, driving groups further apart. [Hence, together] ... these between group and within group strategic interactions produce a toxic brew of distrust and suspicion that can explode into murderous violence* (Lake and Rothchild, 1996: 41-42).

This is a general situation with regards to issues of group antagonism and the fear of the future.

2.4.2 Weak State Capacity

One of the modalities of resource-related conflict is the issue of rent-seeking aspects of a *rentier* state (Humphreys, 2005). Natural resources have the capacity of hindering democracy and creating incentives for authoritarian and oppressive governments. By means of capturing resource rents, states become *rentier*, dependent heavily on heavy taxes imposed upon primary resources and thus failing to impose taxes on citizens. This *forgetfulness*, due to the abundance of natural resource wealth culminates in gross unaccountability and utter neglect of other means of internal revenue. This state is also characterised by lack of respect for the rule of law; low bureaucratic and institutional quality to protect the property rights of citizens

by both local and international state apparatus (Wenar, 2008; Mehlum et al, 2006; Ross, 1999); prebendalism and patronage networking; and corrupt leadership.

However, as this manifestation of the Dutch disease continues, it gradually leads to repressive governments that use resource wealth to enhance patronage lines and build strong internal security networks to stifle any form of opposition that refuses to be co-opted. This repressive effect also manifest when leaders tend to identify with ethnic groups like in the case of Mobutu in the DRC, Charles Taylor in Liberia and many others. Again, this wealth also prevents "… social and cultural changes that facilitate democratization such as rising educational level and occupational specializations" (Rossier, 2006:20). It means that the necessary foundation needed to strengthen the process of democratization is thus hindered by means of the resource wealth. In this way the re-emergence of aspects of greed and grievance from state down to the grassroots creates tension, mutual suspicion and antagonism within the polity.

This kind of state may be referred to as a weak state because, apart from its undemocratic nature, it lacks the capacity to create institutions that ensure smooth and equitable distribution of the wealth of the country among its citizens. The non-existence of strong institutions of property rights regimes, financial institutions, structures of internal revenue, an effective manufacturing sector – all sum up its weakness. Consequently, political leaders try to make up for their loss of legitimacy among the citizenry by being repressive; aligning themselves along patronage and clientele networks – that sometimes include foreign countries and international companies operating within the state – to acquire immense economic power and internal security. More still, they employ certain ideologies of nation-building to delegitimize agitations from certain 'disgruntled' groups within the state (Collier and Hoeffler, 2005) to legitimise their repressive and oppressive governance. Thus, the fact of state weakness really creates enormous incentives for violent struggles within the state – especially among groups that feel marginalized, exploited and oppressed.

2.4.3 The Role of Foreign agents (Foreign Interference/Greed)

Rossier (2006) shows the extent of the impact of foreign agents in the conflicts within many resource rich but poor states (in Africa). The cases of Sierra Leone, DRC, Angola, Chad, and even the Nigerian civil War of 1967, bear witness to this ever present fact. According to Rossier (2006) many authors of the resource curse debate have failed to look at the role played by foreign countries in the underdevelopment of the socio-economically poor

resource-rich cum dependent countries. He notes that dependency theorists uphold that many of these Western superpowers have ensured that these poor countries – especially in Africa – remained dependent on their 'benevolence' by making it difficult for them to trade equally in the international market. Besides that, they have been actively and/or indirectly involved in majority of the resource based conflicts in Africa because of their capitalistic intensions. Hence they fuel and finance wars according to their economic interest, and assist groups – state or Rebels – with arms and military personnel with the long term goal of having a share in the resources depending on the faction that is victorious at the end of such civil conflicts or wars (Rossier, 2006: 19; Ross, 2004).

2.5 THE GREED VERSUS GRIEVANCE MODEL

This view argues that two major factors are responsible for violent civil conflicts in resource-rich and dependent countries: *grievance* over political marginalization and exploitation and the quest for economic gains in the event of natural resource wealth *(greed)*. The latter – purely economic-driven – has greater capacity to increase the propensity of civil conflicts and wars since the wealth accruable through these resources creates incentives for different groups to vie for state control to enhance its quest to control the wealth of the country (Welsh, 1996:485; Young, 1982:170). Defining *greed* in terms of "… the ability to finance rebellion …" and *grievance* in terms of ethnic and religious divisions, political repression and inequality …" Collier and Hoeffler (2002b: 1), sets a paradigm for discourse into the dynamics of violent intrastate conflicts especially in Africa's natural resource rich states. For them, wars or civil conflicts have the propensity of occurring "… if the incentive for rebellion is sufficiently large relative to the costs" (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998: 563). This view thus portrays rebellion as a drive towards state capture or secession – "… the incentive for rebellion is the product of the probability of victory and its consequences." (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998: 564)

In this vein also, poor countries that depend on primary commodities appear to have lower conflict risk since a rentier state has the capacity of using the wealth accruable through them for internal security and repression of all opposition as well as insurgency (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a; 2002b). In the 'economic causes of civil war,' they concluded thus:

> *The effect of natural resource endowment is non-monotonic. Initially, increased natural resources increase the risk of war. … However, at a higher level, natural resources start to reduce the risk of war. We interpret this as being due to the enhanced financial capacity of*

> *the government, and hence its ability to defend itself through military expenditure, gradually coming to dominate …* (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998: 571)

In this way, the abundance of natural resources creates incentives as well as risks of civil wars as evident in cases of Angola, the DRC, and even Sierra Leone. But whatever the case may be, they insist that explaining conflicts – especially resource based conflicts – is more consistent when it is taken from the greed model which focuses on the sources of finance of civil war (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a; 2002b). Hence, though grievance may account for certain low level conflicts, the economic opportunities for rebellion compel groups more easily towards violent conflicts. This view argues thus:

> *… social fractionalization, measured as religious and ethnic diversity, lowers the risk of conflicts. Typically rebel organizations recruit their members from similar backgrounds and diversity may make it more difficult to generate a large rebel force and to maintain cohesion during war."* (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b: 1)

By examining conflicts from this greed model, it becomes logical to understand mobilization along rebellious lines since it will be easier to mobilize people when the state is relatively weak; when the opportunity cost for rebellion is lower than having peaceful negotiations; and more especially when funds are really available (through rebel extortion from companies, looting of natural resources and funding from aggrieved Diaspora citizens) to acquire arms and personnel in the quest to capture the state – even economic power.

It is difficult, they aver, to mobilize enough rebellious forces against the state based on ethnic grievances. Since these grievances are based on ethnic hatred, political marginalization, repression and exclusion, the multiplicity of ethnic groups within a polity will definitely imply differences of opinion, motives and political affinity – a trend bad for cohesion against the state. In this light therefore, it becomes obvious that violent civil conflicts (in terms of a rebellious movement against the state) can be more explicitly explained in terms of the economic drives that motivate groups to engage in civil wars.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The curse is manifest among countries that derive a majority of their income from primary commodities through export of such natural resources as oil, natural gas, diamonds, gold and copper. These developing countries also face the risk of authoritarian regimes, civil conflicts and low rates of development. Indeed, stunted economic growth, and myopic and repressive government further exacerbates the problem and brings about perilous repercussions for the state in terms of grievances that most times culminate in armed conflicts over resource

wealth. In states like Venezuela, DRC, Sudan, Columbia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Chad and even Equatorial-Guinea, these trends of underdevelopment, repressive and authoritarian governments and violent conflicts are clear within the polity. They are viewed to be deeply affected in the curse of natural resources (Wenar, 2008; Dunning, 2005) especially as the resources provide rooms for greed of all kinds and grievances that also accompany them.

In relation to the resource curse hypothesis, it becomes glaring that despite the fact that some conflicts explained above may apply to non-resource based conflicts, the existence of natural resources and the wealth accruable through them have accounted for a plethora of conflicts in Africa. It is based on the fact that the existence of natural resources creates all the incentives for a *rentier* state, marginalisation, exploitation and repression, foreign interference and/or interventions, the existence of the Dutch disease and all other explanatory variables engaged in grasping the trend of violent conflicts in Africa. In this light then, it remains appropriate to note that natural resource abundance really creates room for these grievances and is also strong foundation upon which greed of all kinds can emerge (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998, 2002a, 2002b).

These views, together, enhance a clearer grasp of the complexity of the Nigerian case, and it is against this background that this work engages with the dynamics of violence in the Niger Delta and the crisis of nation-building – the hub of the next chapter into which we now turn.

CHAPTER THREE: OIL AND THE CRISIS OF NATION BUILDING AND THE NIGER DELTA: DYNAMICS OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a state that requires serious socio-political transformation in the face of inherent internal crisis and conflicts that are pointers to weakness. Its reaction to these challenges portrays *weakness or strength.*[3] A strong state is able to manage (both) endogenous and exogenous pressures. It remains stable despite all institutional and structural constraints, although this character is basically lacking in the Nigerian state which has in many occasions failed to positively impact on the life of its citizens. The challenges, posed by the Niger Delta crisis[4] and its response, thus point to this gross state weakness despite its ostensible capacity to repress rebellions.

The contemporary crisis in the Niger Delta poses a huge challenge to nation-building and the discourse of national integration in Nigeria. In fact, the region appears to have been on the wrong end of the stick in terms of the socio-economical and political impact of its relationship with the federal government and the Multinational oil Corporations (MNOCs). This relationship also includes the Western powers and the global political economy since the oil that is drilled from the region remains at the heart of global politics. Indeed, successive administrations – military and civilians alike – have appeared to have neglected the region in the face of environmental hazards, infrastructural decay and the socio-economic underdevelopment. The state appears to have lost the trust of majority of the people of the region with its resort to repression and/or excessive use of force as a reaction to the agitations of this minority region. This culminated in the mutual loss of loyalty and authority; the resurgence of violent agitations; and in fact the birth of the trend of militancy within the region which has become an issue of its own.

This chapter thus examines the place of the state in this crisis where the shattered rapport between the marginalized people and the MNOCs has become a huge national problem. It also involves certain contradictions that emerge from different orientations, thus culminating in activities like illegal oil-bunkering, kidnap, and related militant activities – all in the name of the Niger Delta struggle. These contradictions appear analogous to the C&H greed versus

[3]Stability is based on the extent to which a state has the capacity to affect its citizenry positively, commanding respect and loyalty by means of its autonomy, legitimacy, sovereignty and authority.

[4]This crisis is on account of Oil, and is hinged on marginalization and neglect, thus culminating in various struggles for resource control and socio-political and economic emancipation

grievance model since this model highlights the choices open to all actors in line with the economic incentives and constraints to the Niger Delta rebellion. However, this chapter shows how historical and structural issues can metamorphose into cumulative grievances that in the long run engender conflicts. In this way, the socio-political and economic marginalisation of the Niger Delta minorities becomes a major source of accumulated grief that led up to the choice of violence.

Therefore, this chapter interrogates the C&H model following these *historico-sociological* issues latent in this struggle. An examination of the C&H model follows the patterns of issues around resource control and revenue allocation; socio-economic and infrastructural marginalisation and repression; and ecological and environmental neglect. These together open up the role of accumulated grievance in the conflict. This shows that this usurping of the (property) rights of the Niger Delta minorities has heightened grievance levels to the point that current violence and greedy-bent to the struggle appear to have been accepted as part of the struggle (Ikelegbe, 2006:25). Thus we briefly examine worrying issues of Nigerian federalism and the national question as they relate to the Niger Delta. We also examine this crisis with regards to the drive towards national integration. However these have an underlying historical background, hence the precedence given to the history behind the Niger Delta struggle. It is worthy of note at this juncture that all these issues are examined against the background of the C&H model which practically hinges internal conflicts on rational choices of actors in line with economic incentives above justice-seeking.

3.2 HISTORY AND THE NIGER DELTA STRUGGLE

The struggle for self determination by the people of the Niger Delta against imperialism, marginalization, exploitation and oppression is older than the geopolitical entity (today) known as Nigeria. In history this region is reckoned as the first to encounter the Europeans along its shores. Douglas and Okonta (2003) shows that the plundering of this region can be traced back to 1444 when Lancarote de Freitas – the Portuguese trader – alighted on the shores of West Africa.[5] Slave trade thus became very lucrative and superseded all other occupation in the region including the major occupation of trading and fishing between the people and their hinterland neighbours. Britain emerged in 1807 with the abolishment of slave trade and acquired monopoly of trade in and with the region. The importance of oil

[5]Arikpo (1967:26) explains that Portuguese explorers alighted on the coast of the region at about 1472 and were hugely involved in trade relationships – mainly slave trade and also gold (also see. Peel, 2009:35) – with the people of the region.

palm in this era of European Industrial Revolution precipitated the huge drive to establish British hegemony in the region (Peel, 2009:32, 37). As the rapport with British traders and the region grew, "... the terms of trade became more unequal, as the European powers came into the Niger Delta in support of their traders..." thus making resistance imperative for the people and their leaders (Wangbu, 2005: 3; Alagoa, 2004). This resistance is exemplified in the rise of three notable leaders – King William Dappa Pepple of Bonny, Jaja of Opobo and Nana of Itsekiri (Alagoa, 2004:131).

King Pepple established a court of Equity in 1854 (run by a joint committee of the British traders and coastal middleman under his supervision) because of the high-handedness of greedy British traders. The heavy fines imposed on defaulters by this court helped to curb exploitation. However, he was deposed in 1852, accused of sponsoring attacks on British ships (Douglas and Okonta, 2003:9). King Jaja of Opobo also posed a huge challenge to European capitalist exploitation and imperialism – represented in the British 'supercargoes'. He exemplifies the protracted struggle by the people of the region to "… protect their environment and its natural resources from the grasping hands of European Mercantilists and their patrons in London …" (Douglas and Okonta, 2003:10). But he was also deported to the West Indies in 1887 by the Local consul H. H. Johnston and eventually died in 1892 on his way back home after many years in exile. The Nana Olomu, a merchant prince, led the Itsekiri and controlled Oil trade on the Benin River. He was also notorious for resisting ploys by Britain to extend the powers of the Oil Rivers Protectorate over Itsekiri. This resulted in a British attack on the town. Thus, by September 1894, a British military expedition was launched on Nana's headquarters in Ebrohimie, and his city was ransacked until he had to surrender (Douglas and Okonta, 2003:12). Indeed he was the last formidable obstacle to the entrenchment of British imperialism and hegemony in the Niger Delta to be removed and colonialism and ultimate exploitation and oppression was established.

In the scramble for Africa Britain employed Sir George Goldie Taubman to secure this *priceless treasure* from France. He brought together a conglomeration of competing British firms into a powerful trading bloc which exercised monopoly of trade in the region. He also compelled the coastal Kings into signing treaties that accorded monopoly and control to Britain. As such, at the 1884-85 Berlin conference he had successfully secured British interest in the region since he brutally conquered those kingdoms that resisted Britain (Peel, 2009; Douglas and Okonta, 2003:12). Thus, Britain acquired absolute control of the territory and also granted the Royal Niger Company a Royal Charter of monopoly of trade as well as

political control over the territory. This company was momentous in what presently is known as Nigeria because the wealth accruing from palm oil enabled greater expeditions into the hinterland, crisscrossing the length and breadth of what is now called Nigeria as well as crushing any resistance on its way. It was high-handed in its dealings with the people, thus resulting in the Akassa uprising in 1895 when aggrieved people of Brass attacked the company's ports. This uprising was however crushed with impunity and brutality as the town was virtually raised to the ground and thousands of women and children were massacred (Peel, 2009:32, 35).

Frederick Lugard was also epochal in the establishment of Britain's hegemony in Nigeria. More so, the Royal Charter was withdrawn from the Royal Niger Company by Britain as it assumed total control of the territory and established its direct imperial control over the region. As such, by 1 January 1900, the new British administrative zones had been restructured into the Southern and Northern Protectorates and the colony of Lagos (Douglas and Okonta, 2003). The regions subsequently became the Southern and Northern Protectorates when Lagos was merged with the Southern Protectorate. In 1914 the Southern and Northern Protectorates were amalgamated under a single administrative unit with Frederick Lugard as the governor general. This was the origin of the colonial entity called Nigeria – the birth of the state that never (or should never have) existed save for the economic and administrative interests of the colonizers (Peel, 2009:41).

Indeed, colonialism created Nigeria through the amalgamation of two distinct colonial territories – separately administered and with different political orientations. The amalgamation was an arrangement towards conflict and tension; it propelled ethno-regional suspicion and the struggle for socio-political superiority among different groups; and also instituted a political structure that recognized three major ethnic groups which created avenues for the marginalization of the minority (ethnic) groups in the future. These groups – the Niger Delta, a major part of the group – had to fight to safeguard their rights prior to independence. This manifested in the institution of the Willink commission and its reports in 1958 wherein the fears of the minority groups were examined and discovered to be genuine. Though its recommendations called for the recognition of these groups as well as respect for their basic rights within the Federal Republic (The Willink Report, 1958), these were not transformed into the federal body politic since these groups as well as their rights to self-determination remained marginalised and their conditions, neglected. In fact, this issue was at the heart of the hiatus of pre-independence constitutional debates as well as the political

impasse of the post-independence era. It was also implicit in the matters that led to the 1967 - 70 bloody civil war.

Indeed, in the post-independence era, successive governments promoted laws that were adjudged to foster this marginalization especially as oil became the major source of revenue for the country. Pundits argue that these laws – from the 1969 Petroleum decree, 1978 Land Use Act and even the most recent 1999 constitution – were put in place to virtually steal the rights due to this region[6] despite the ecological and environmental problems faced in the region and the revenue that oil offers the state (Wangbu, 2005: 5-8; Oyebode, 2000:54-56). This appraisal of the status quo culminated in regional agitations in the late 1960s with the famous 12 days Revolution of Isaac Adaka Boro who declared independence for the Republic of the Niger Delta in 1967 (Alagoa, 2004:69, Olorode, 2000: 10). In the early 1990s, the Ogonis, led by the environmental activist and writer Ken Saro Wiwa and the Movement for the survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP) also began a huge struggle against perceived genocide by the state and the Shell Development Company (See Osaghae, 1995). Also, in the late 1990s and mid 2000s, there was the resurgence of violence in the region – mostly in the Ijaw region with the rise of the Ijaw Youth council (IYC) and the Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA) – following the Kaiama declaration. This was also the birth of the new trend of militancy and arms struggle; partly because of political activities of politicians and the proliferation of clandestine criminal networks. It was also facilitated by the repressive attitude of the federal government which was characterised by severe human rights violation (Human Rights Watch, 1995). These actions, that included the hanging of Saro-Wiwa and eight others, thus signalled the dawn of a new dimension to the struggle. It saw a drastic break away from mass protest to militarisation and violent resistance that have made the region ungovernable.

It is in the light of these issues and the cases of intrastate violent conflicts (as evident in the Niger Delta) that this chapter inquires into the role of oil in the violent conflicts. These conflicts over oil fall under issues of Nigerian federalism and the national agenda of nation-building. Thus, discussing this crisis in relation to Nigerian federalism becomes our starting point in this inquest into explaining this crisis of nation-building.

[6]It must be noted that the control of the Niger Delta region was at the heart of the issues underlying the Nigerian Civil war of 1967 to 1970. The region – then under the eastern region – was taken over Biafra who ensured that revenue did not go to Nigeria. The government of the day had to fight to control such revenue and thus created Rivers State (Wangbu, 2005:8).

3.3 NIGERIAN FEDERALISM AND THE DISCOURSE ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION VIS-À-VIS THE NIGER DELTA CRISES: ISSUES

The crisis of nation-building in Nigeria has become a cliché that many authors, scholars and journalists refer to as the *national question* in Nigeria. The National question, though not peculiar to Nigeria (Naanen, 2007) remains very important to the whole state considering the fact of its heterogeneous status. The question challenges the whole discourse of national integration in Nigeria – the only Federal state in Africa.

Federalism was consciously adopted by the pioneers of Nigeria to keep these diverse 'nations' together within one political entity (Ayua, 2000), though its present form of administration has notoriously stifled many features of federalism.

Although Ayua (2000) argues that federalism can take different forms, though it requires the devolution of power from the centre to the periphery – states and local governments – the fact remains that in Nigeria, the system practiced is anything like *true federalism*.[7] It is a *centralised* system of administration. It possesses military features even in the present state of civilian and ostensibly democratic governance. This is responsible for most of the crisis that have always engulfed the state.

With regards to the Niger Delta, this national question borders so much around poverty and the quest for socio-economic and political emancipation – resource control and self-determination (Naanen, 2007). It involves the crisis faced because of environmental degradation, unemployment, lack of basic infrastructure and amenities – healthcare, communication, electricity – and the fact that revenue allocation to the region does not trickle down to the periphery; to the ordinary Niger Deltan. These issues are latent in the whole discourse of national integration and Nigerian federalism. They form the basis of accumulated grievances that seem to have now exploded into murderous violence that constitute huge security threats. On this ground, scholars warn of an unknown future of secessionist drives and civil wars if these issues are left unchecked since the Niger Delta is possibly the most challenging dimension to the national question in Nigeria (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2009).

The changing dynamics of this agitation illustrates that it could pose more grievous threats to national stability and national cohesion contrary to the *C&H greed model* which insists that

[7]Ayua (2000:130) argues that there is not such a term or thing as "true federalism". Federalism can take different shapes in essence but of utmost importance is the need for the "distribution of political and financial powers … to permit each tier of government to remain viable in functioning within its assigned sphere of competence."

grievances cannot really lead to serious civil unrest because it does not create enough incentives for rebel mobilisation (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a; 2002b). We therefore examine issues that form the core of this crisis, beginning with the problem of resource control and revenue allocation down to the state's rather unfavourable responses that led to violent mass agitations. The cumulative grief that has been a shared experience in the Niger Delta region spans through the socioeconomic issues, infrastructural underdevelopment and repressive mechanisms of the state (apparently) in defence of the MNOCs and its economic interests. Hence, an understanding of this *historico-sociological* framework gives a clearer view to the onset of violent uprisings in the region and the current militancy trend. This is clearer than the rather simplistic linkage of the crisis to criminal extortion and looting mechanisms espoused by the C&H *greed model*.

3.3.1 Natural Resources (control and allocation) and the Niger Delta

The control of the wealth that accrues from natural resources and the mode of allocating same are as old as the colonial era in Nigeria's history. It was a major issue during negotiations for independence and has remained a major issue in Nigerian politics (Wangbu, 2005). It is the nitty-gritty of the question that faces the state's discourse of national integration especially with regards to the case of the Niger Delta, the goose that lays the golden egg but remains grossly underdeveloped. For Naanen (2007:199), the "... national question is ... perceived in the Niger Delta mainly in the delivery of social justice, equity and equality." The region identifies conditions ranging from rapid development, resource allocation, states and local government creation, self determination, resource control and environmental protection as the core issues that relate directly to them in line with the national question. Hence, the entire discourse on national integration based on the federal structure of the state, must thus relate to these issues if they are to be relevant to the region.

In essence, this crisis points to a failure by the state to respond adequately especially to the issues of resource allocation and resource control. This has led to an unpleasant frenzy over the control of the resource wealth as Ayua comments:

> *The sharing of revenue resources between the federal government and the state **inter se** is ... 'almost like a matter of life and death, exciting their deepest concerns and their strongest emotions....' The situation has been exacerbated of recent by the Niger-Delta crisis manifesting in unspeakable atrocities and the chorus of disapproval from the States about acute inadequacy of revenue resources transferred to them from the federation account for the running of their governments. The implications of this ... for National Unity and cohesion as well as National Security and Welfare cannot be underestimated.* (Ayua, 2000: 126)

It implies that the strategic nature of the revenue accruing from oil thus accounts for the unbridled drive towards rent capture by both state and regional actors. This appears to give credence to the C&H averment that natural resources tend to create avenues for different drives at state capture and rentierism (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998). This trend vividly accounts for the staggering changes in revenue allocation since the colonial era down to the fourth republic when president Obasanjo was elected into office. It follows that different constitutional arrangements have been applied and different derivative formulae, designed by successive governments though the post-civil war era witnessed a huge turn in the discourse on revenue allocation and resource control when oil became the major revenue earner for the state, accounting for over 95 per cent of all national income and 40% of GDP (Ikelegbe, 2006). In this light, revenue allocation and resource control was designed to favour the state above (the) region(s) that produced (these) natural resources. To highlight this changing trend of revenue allocations, Dibua (2005:8) explains:

> *The first attempt at devising a formula for revenue allocation ... was in 1946, with the setting up of the Phillipson-Adebo Commission, which accompanied the Richards constitutions. However, the Hicks-Phillipson Commission of 1951, was the first attempt to clearly spell out the criteria on which revenue allocation should be based, namely, derivation, needs, national interest, population and even development, among other things. The Commission gave great weight to derivation by providing that 100 percent of mineral rents and royalties and the proceeds from cash crops, be retained in the regions from where they were derived. The Chick Commission ... set up in 1954 with the introduction of the federal constitution of that year and the Raisman Commission of 1958, essentially followed the criteria of the Hicks-Phillipson Commission, but the percentage for derivation was reduced to 50 percent. The postcolonial 1963 republican constitution equally granted 50 percent to derivation.*

It is worthy to note here that during 100 percent era, oil had not acquired its current status even when it was discovered in 1956 and became a commercial commodity in 1958. Thus the changes in derivation started gradually as oil began to gain grounds within Nigeria and the international market. Therefore, revenue allocation changed drastically and resource control shifted tremendously with the ascension to power of military elites especially as the civil war and post-civil war era noted the abolition of the regional governments, the creation of states, and the centralisation of the polity.[8]

The civil war and the desire of the military administrator to secure the wealth of oil led to the end of the regionalisation of Nigeria. Regions were thus replaced by states – partly to undermine the strength of the secessionist Biafra and to strengthen the centre economically. Thus with the end of the civil war early in 1970, the Gowon-led administration promulgated

[8]Regions were autonomous and the centre was relatively weak to give each region its space and autonomy.

the Petroleum act (Decree No. 13 of 1970 (backdated to April 1 1969)) which centralised the country's fiscal system. This decree "... provided that the federal government retains 55 per cent of the royalty and rents from crude oil while 45 per cent would be paid to the oil producing states on the basis of derivation ..." (Dibua, 2005: 10). This was to be the genesis of the centralisation of the fiscal system in Nigeria as the Gowon administration later on promulgated more decrees that abrogated, totally, the rights of states to the mineral resources in their region. It can be said that the decree No. 9 of 1971 which abrogated the rights of states over resource revenue and vested all ownership titles of the territorial waters, royalties, and rents was a drive by the state to capture all rents and strengthen its political base.

In 1975 a new constitutional arrangement for revenue allocation and resource control emerged. The first of its kind was the 1978 Land Use Decree, promulgated by the Obasanjo-regime, which vested on the state all the land and resources therein. Hence the federal government had all lands and only paid compensations for the crops or products on the land. This was followed by the 1979 constitution which entrenched total control over offshore and onshore natural resources to the federal government despite the agitation from many of the (oil-producing) states. However, increased socio-political pressure from the oil-producing states led to a review of the revenue allocation, hence the Shehu Shagari government's (1979 –1983) 1.5 per cent increase and the 3 per cent increase by the Babangida regime (1985-1993). The latter also established the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) to take charge of development in the oil-producing communities. The Abacha regime also established the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF), all in the bid to show that the state responds to the agitations of the people. With the return to civilian rule in 1999, the constitution gave 13 per cent to the oil producing states, but "... these minor concessions were not enough to mitigate the adverse effects of oil exploration [and exploitation] ..." (Dibua, 2005:11).

It therefore follows that resource control and revenue allocation play(ed) a huge role in the Niger Delta crisis since the perception is that oil exploitation has left the region with little or no positive socio-economic development. The downward turn of revenue allocation between 1960 to 1999 – 100%, 50%, 45%, 20%, 1.5% and 13% (Orogun, 2009:28; Wangbu, 2005: 11) – point to a political resolve to tilt revenue allocation and resource control along lines favourable to the central government and the majority ethnic groups. It thus shows that revenue became a contested ground for the Niger Delta especially as the federal government took over the property rights of the region – an action that contravenes the principles of fiscal federalism.

This contest has its momentum rooted on the fact that the derivative principle prior to 1960 – full control – was accepted by the Northern and Western regions; it was even the criteria for Nigerian independence (Wangbu, 2005). However, since the oil boom (in the 1970s), the fact that the region is a minority region and that many leaders hail from the majority ethnic groups, the revenue formula has been altered so as to satisfy these majority ethnic regions/groups. Based on this situation, Orogun laments

> *At the height of the oil boom, 60 percent of oil production came from Rivers State, but it received only 5 percent of the statutory allocation (roughly half of that received by the Kano and Northern states and by the Ibo heartland states). Between 1970 and 1980 it received only in revenues one-fiftieth of the value of the oil it produced* (Orogun, 2009:32).

This marginalization triggered different feelings of anomie and mistrust for the state by the marginalised people, and this is also basic in the quest for the implementation of the principles of a federal state and the call for a Sovereign National Conference. Thus, the region's resource control agitation involves ownership of resources by the minorities of the Niger Delta, an issue that the C&H model refers more to as economic issues that lead to the looting mechanism as opposed to justice-seeking. It can also been said that the changing revenue allocation formulae and the state control of all resource wealth shows a double standard agenda in the state against the minorities to which the Niger Delta is an intrinsic part of. Hence one can argue that this perceived double standard and hypocrisy by the federal government (itself adjudged to be an instrument of the ethnic majorities in Nigeria) becomes a rallying point for the aggrieved. It forms a basis for cohesion contrary to the C&H model that grievance hampers adequate cohesion in natural resource based conflicts (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b).

Indeed, usurping the property rights of the region to the revenue that accrues from the petroleum industry by the federal government goes against the principles of true federalism; it creates more incentives for a drive towards state capture and violence that the C&H model refers to as economic incentives for a rebellion. In fact resource control and revenue allocation remain major crisis issues in the region. It is also accompanied by other serious issues – social and infrastructural marginalisation and environmental degradation in the Niger Delta.

3.3.2 Social and Infrastructural Marginalisation

Besides being politically marginalised due to its minority status in the state, the Niger Delta is also one of the poorest in terms of social and infrastructural development in the country. Despite contributing over 40 per cent to the annual GDP of country by means of the oil exploited from the region, it still remains trapped in poverty; neglected by successive regimes.

The poverty rate increases by the day while the oil revenue is used to develop other regions and (re)distributed along various clientele and patronage networks (Wangbu, 2005).

There is the preponderance of dilapidated roads and social infrastructure. The reality of insecure drinking water and the lack of communication and electricity also constitute major issues. These are worsened by the high unemployment rate which is also exacerbated by the high illiteracy rate due to insufficient inputs by the government to improve the educational capacity of citizens. This situation has compelled the people to demand a sovereign national conference that can address the developmental issues related to the Niger Delta since the state has been perceived as a biased arbiter in a case that it is also engulfed in – oil politics (Naanen, 2007:199).

It is indeed an irony that the state refuses to allocate sufficient funds into the education sector. This is an unfortunate legacy as universities remain on strike for over a whole academic year because politicians would rather divert public funds into the patronage and clientele networks instead of improving education. This is even worse still in the Niger Delta region, which "… despite its vast oil resources … still remains poor, with its GNP per capita and educational levels below national average, and 70 per cent of its people living below the poverty line" (Uwafiokun and Uwem, 2006: 397; NDDC, 2004). This is indeed the height of social impoverishment of the region and the state at large, and can thus be described in line with the C&H model that low education rate increases rebel mobilisation (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b:10).

Poverty is entrenched even more in this region as many people remain unemployed and the region remains socioeconomically neglected. Oyefusi adumbrates thus:

> *While the Nigerian economy showed promise of prosperity in the first two decades after independence, this rapidly evaporated in the years that followed. Despite receiving net revenue of over $300 billion from oil between 1980 and 2005 (Gary and Karl, 2003, p.26) and a combined revenue of $31 trillion between 2000 and 2008 (The Guardian, 2009), the country remains underdeveloped and was among the bottom 20 in the Human Development Index ranking. State neglect and underdevelopment is even more pronounced in the Niger Delta.* (Oyefusi, 2009: 486)

Unemployment remains rampant in the region and indigenous graduates even find it very difficult to gain employment, even in the MNOCs. Ibeanu (2002) argues that unemployment among youths is at its zenith point in the Niger Delta, a situation that creates alienation and disgust for the country among them. At times job opportunities in the MNOCs follow patronage networks and along the ethnic majority paths, irrespective of the affirmative action

type of legislation that requires a certain quota for 'indigenes.' Thus the alarming rate of unemployed indigenes shows the rate of marginalization meted out on the region. This particular case has led to a massive struggle for the emancipation and empowerment of the youths of the Niger Delta, and the indigenization of corporations within the region to ensure that more indigenes are employed.

The lack of basic infrastructure and amenities required for relative comfort is evident in the very bad or no road networks (at all) within the region while communication and electricity are luxuries to ask for even in the cities. Health care provision is neglected as hospitals lack the needed facilities and personnel to perform the jobs. Since the people lack political power, they cannot turn their situation around for the better, hence their struggle for socio-economic and political emancipation. Indeed, the fact that the major players in this crisis have either been dishonest or have been too exploitative and negligent to the plight and agitation of the people has resulted in the crisis that today engulfs the nation. This negligence and subtle collusion between the state and the MNOCs emerge vividly in the response to the ecological problems associated with oil extraction – another major point of grievance for the Niger Delta.

3.4 MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND ECOLOGICAL DISASTER

The entire mechanism of violence in the Niger Delta has been traced to the a much larger developmental issue of failed public policies and the exploitative tendencies of the MNOCs that have mildly plundered fossil fuel and truncated the sustainability of the indigenous environment (Jike, 2004: 686). In other words the social problems in the Niger Delta are intrinsically linked to the environmental disasters that spring from oil exploration in the region. The state's and MNOC's betrayal of the people's trust culminated in resistance. In this light Oyefusi (2009) avers:

> *… apart from introducing legislations that transferred property rights to mineral resources from the communities to itself, [the federal government] failed to create and invest in the needed institutional capacity required to regulate the activities of Multinational Oil Companies in the area of environmental practices, social responsibility and compensations for land alienation and environmental damages. Rather the government has been willing to grant exemptions to companies for non-compliance with environmental regulations while setting up a fine structure that encourages firms to continue to pollute [the environment].*(Oyefusi, 2009: 486)

It means that despite the place of the Niger Delta in terms of contribution to the federation (account), its rewards have paradoxically been ecological devastations in the likes of oil spillages, indiscriminate gas flaring, water pollution and the destruction of wild and aquatic life

in the region, thus rendering the land desolate. Gas flaring in Nigeria is said to be (about) the highest in world (Bisong, 2005). Ibeanu (2000: 22) thus affirms this as he avers that in "1991 Nigeria exceeded the world average of natural gas flaring by seventy-two percent. In that year, while the world average…was four percent, Nigeria flared seventy-six percent of that total production." In fact, statistics tend to show that between 1976 and 1999, about 3,000 oil-spill incidents were reported by the oil companies operating in Nigeria leading to the spill of more than 2 million barrels of oil along the country's terrestrial, coastal and offshore marine environment (Omotola, 2009:77, Agbu, 2005:82-83; Ovwasa, 1999:90). This shows the great danger that the irresponsible environmental practices pose to living beings – plants and animals including humans alike – that inhabit the region, hence the view by Saro-Wiwa that the state and the Oil companies were embarking on genocide against the Ogoni people, and by extension the people of the Niger Delta (Osaghae, 1995).

Indeed, the fact that the exploitation of mineral resources from the Niger Delta is not positively reflected in the life and domain of people in the region is an indictment on the oil extractive industry and government(s) of Nigeria – federal and state. It shows that both government and the MNOCs are negligent and/or exploitative towards the region. This argument flows from the fact the environment wherein oil is extracted is constantly degraded; the people suffer from its effects as well as their general health conditions due to incessant gas flaring activities. Saro-Wiwa metaphorically referred to these as 'the flames of hell' while exposing the environmental cost of oil on the Niger Delta people and their domain (Wangbu, 2005:12). Indeed, these hazards go against the basic rights of the people – an abuse of the people's right to life (Bisong, 2005: 39). They become far worse as oil destroys their farmlands and water ways – the people even die through wild fire that result from oil spillages. In this way, their major means of livelihood is destroyed while they are faced with the harsh reality of poverty, misery and disease. These are enormous grounds for grievances that can snowball into murderous crisis when they are not adequately addressed. It is therefore important contrary to the C&H *greed model* which gives less credit to the place of accumulated grief to the onset of violent conflicts.

Petroleum exploitation is the most pervasive cause of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta when compared in effect to the hazards that accompany it in contradistinction with other sources like bush burning, erosion, and indiscriminate waste (Jike, 2004:689). The hazard that emerges from the activities of these MNOCs, especially in terms of gas flaring and oil spillages, is too high a price for the people of this region to pay, because:

> *apart from physical destruction to plants around the flaring areas, thick soot [sic] are deposited on the building roofs of neighbouring villages. Whenever it rains, the soot [sic] are washed off and the black-ink like water running down the roofs and is believed to contain chemicals which adversely affect the fertility of the soil. (*Bisong, 2005:36)

This implies that the life of the people is virtually taken away from them by means of oil extraction. They experience huge soil toxicity, wild and aquatic life displacement and extermination, and massive reduction in crop production sizes and productivity. They face the abundance of acidic rains, polluted air that is hazardous to human health and many more associated health hazards and diseases. These effects also result(ed) in series of human diseases – the result of the chemical industrial waste, air pollution and their likes, as Jike explains thus:

> *... preliminary survey ... indicated that an emergent trend of carcinogenic diseases in the Niger Delta is traceable to the exposure of the people to the radioactive elements of gas flaring. These people are beginning to develop symptoms of bronchial and respiratory diseases....It is perhaps pertinent to highlight the point that for one to understand the problems of social disequilibrium in the Niger Delta, one must as a matter of chronological sequence understand the degraded environment of the people.* (Jike, 2004:692)

Despite the clarity of their social irresponsibility, many of these MNOCs refused to pay adequate compensation to the inhabitants who suffered from these ecological disasters. It has been argued that in many cases, Shell-BP has insisted that majority of the oil spillages in Nigeria are as a result of sabotage (Bisong, 2005:35). This argument is meant to dispense them from compensating victims. But many times too, it has been proved that the facilities and technology used by these MNOCs in the region are mainly substandard or worn out. This is the view that Oyefusi explains in his discourse on the failing trust between oil bearing communities and the state and MNOCs. He argues:

> *The failure of the Nigerian state … has provided incentives for opportunistic behaviour on the part of extractive firms. Rather than adopt environmentally friendly technology or operative procedures … firms opt for the less costly, but environmentally damaging socio-economically wasteful, option of paying fines. Also, because oil spillages often require large clean-up cost which the governments and extractive firms may not want to assume, firms avoid the liability … by making claims of sabotage, even though evidences suggest that spills are in many cases attributable to companies' negligence and sometimes careless management. Consequently, less than 50% of oil spills in the Niger Delta are cleaned up …* (Oyefusi, 2009: 486-487)

This kind of claim by the MNOCs and the many incidents of government's ostensible collusion with them have tended to make the people perceive a somewhat perpetuation of internal colonialism and the usurping of their rights due to their minority status. Claude Ake also argued that it was an irresponsible propaganda for the MNOCs to push the blames to the people instead of taking of full responsibility for their fatal capitalistic drives. He stated thus:

> *… nobody can say that most of the pollution are caused by sabotage. In fact, as far as I know, what the people tried to do is to put out the flares, which is something that importantly reduces pollution …. I think that this is the kind of irresponsible propaganda that the oil companies are putting out in order to discredit those who are trying to do something about the environment …* (Ake, 1994)

In all these, the state also remained unresolved against this sheer capitalistic and imperialist drives by the MNOCs. Thus,

> *Given the … environmental destruction and the deplorable human condition of the indigenes in this volatile region, the mounting evidence indisputably affirms that the root causes of militancy, sabotage, hostage takings, and oil bunkering cannot be summarily dismissed as frivolous attempts by economic opportunists to capture oil rents.* (Orogun, 2009:27)

This implies that the C&H greed model which pitches economic incentives as the motive for rebel mobilisation appears to be grossly insufficient in relation to the situation in the Niger Delta (although it emerges within the struggle itself). It was rather a situation of response to the socioeconomic and environmental crisis in the region, as well as a reaction against the repression of the state which supposedly was meant to fight their cause (Omeje, 2004). Hence it can be argued that if this is the lot of the people, then one can deduce the necessary repercussions that will follow especially along the path of the MNOCs that operate within the region – violence to press home what they want.

3.5 REGIONAL AGITATIONS AND REPRESSIVE STATE RESPONSE

At the height of socio-political and economic marginalisation; the sheer neglect of the region by the joint partnership of the state and MNOCs in terms of environmental devastation and social and infrastructural decay; and the urgency to save the region from perceived "extinction" and **socio-political *genocide,*[9]** groups resorted to different struggles for resource control and self determination (Osaghae, 1995; Bisong, 2005; Naanen, 2007). These groups included the MOSOP, the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and many other groups. According Naanen (2007: 203), "… MOSOP led to the radicalisation of the national question in other parts of the Niger Delta," while the "Kaiama declaration … represents the cutting edge of the radical tendency." Indeed, the current youth militancy "… is an expression of the frustration engendered by the slowness of change … regarding state policy and actions and the role of oil companies …"

[9]Ken Saro-Wiwa is quoted in Osaghae (1995) to have adjudged the situation as one of a planned ***genocide*** targeted at the Ogoni people and by extension, the Niger Delta. Although Osaghae disputes this view, he nevertheless agrees that the state and the MNOCs have acted in very suspicious manners due to the neglect of series of environmental hazards faced by the people and the use of military-killer squads against protesting indigenes. This was thus appraised by the Ogonis as planned in the drive towards exploiting the natural resources situated in the region.

(Naanen, 2007: 203). This averment comes against the backdrop of incessant repressive responses from the state to the mass actions undertaken in the struggle by the oil producing groups in the Niger Delta.

It has to be stated that the contemporary agitation for resource control had before now taken the shape of non-violence in all facets. The MOSOP agitation which brought the issues of the anomalies in the Niger Delta to the international stage was initially non-violent until the state's instrumentalisation of violence and repression against the struggle (Osaghae, 1995:338; Watts, 2003; Watts, 2009). In the 1990s different strands of agitation by different groups resurfaced. The prominent groups then were the MOSOP and the IYC (in the late 1990s) as clear in the Kaiama declaration of 1998. However, many of these agitations were met with brutal state response in terms of military crackdown on the region and protesting civilians (Ezon, 2001: 51).

Dibua (2005) noted four groups involved in the agitation in the early and mid 1990s. They comprised communal based groups, youth groups, pro-Niger Delta elite groups and NGOs, and the state governments (Dibua, 2005:13). However, of immediate importance to this study are the first two – the former represented in the workings of MOSOP while the latter consisted of youth groups that are mainly aggrieved by the perceived ecological warfare and economic deprivation targeted at their communities and the region at large. These groups bore the flag of the region in terms of cohesive civil organisational approach to the whole struggle – save from the political dimensions taken by the state governments and the NGOs.

Indeed as historical as these agitations were, various regimes responded both positively and negatively. The obsession with oil revenue had initially led to state legislations that deprived the region of oil revenues and even more repressive strategies of various military regimes are all part of government response to the agitation of this region. The creation of 12 states by Gowon in 1967 and the 12 days revolution of Isaac Adaka Boro that was repressed, the Umuechem massacre of 1992, the execution of Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni eight in 1995 by the Sani Abacha regime, and recently massacres of civilians as evident in cases of Odi massacre in Bayelsa State in 1999 (Dibua, 2005), Odioma in 2005 and Gbaramantu in 2006 (Obi, 2007: 27) by members of the Joint Military Taskforce (JTF) assigned to crush rebellions in the region, have all been different response to the crisis with the region. They were indeed very brutal (see Omeje, 2004:429). It can thus be said that the Nigerian state remained unpopular within the region and threatened mainly "because of the parochial interests it represents, its failure to

deliver development to the populace and its tendency to alienate and to oppress the subjects" by the use of military violence even against democratic threats (Omeje, 2004: 429).

In Ogoni land, the 1990s noticed the resurgence of massive civil disobedience and mass actions to drive home the demands of the people for a better deal (Dibua, 2005:14). Osaghae (1995) argues that, between 1991 and 1992, MOSOP held series of pro-democratic press conferences and wrote letters to the oil firms operating in Ogoni land. He highlights that

> *The significance of the letter to the companies was that it showed the peoples' loss of confidence in the state (which they accused of protecting the companies) to protect them against their oppressors: 'the poor peasants have no protection whatsoever and as long as the country is getting its money, that is alright by the rulers of the country'. It was time for 'the Ogonis to fight for their own salvation … because there is no government to deliver us'. Rather than respond to these demands the oil companies tightened their security and the federal government sent in troops to protect oil installation …* (Osaghae, 1995: 336)

The state's response to this lawful drive for social and environmental restitution was the deployment of the army and the ban of all public gatherings and demonstration in the region. This reaction from the government can be likened to the repressive mechanism of states against regions where natural resources are strategically located. The government does this by means of a propaganda which accuses these agitators of secessionist activities, hence justifying its repression against the people like the arrest and consequent hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the other eight Ogoni activists (see Ross, 2004; Collier and Hoeffler, 2005).

The Kaiama declaration took a cue from the Ogoni Bill of rights presented to the state and the international community, and this took place in December 1998 giving a nineteen-day ultimatum to the oil companies to stop production until the lingering issues between the federal government and the oil producing communities were resolved. This declaration by members of the IYC denounced the environmental degradation of the region as well as the ostensible conspiracy between the federal government and the MNOCs in terms of the exploitation and underdevelopment of the oil bearing communities in the region (Dibua, 2005: 18). However the state's response was also repressive, thus entrenching the legacy of military response to civil disobedience and the struggle for restoration and re-negotiation of the tenets of Nigerian federalism (Obi, 2007:26). It can thus be argued that this incessant use of repression to quell the struggles from the groups in the region led to violent agitations. It also concurs with the view that the quest for the control of natural resource wealth can lead to violence in a state because it creates incentives for repressive and authoritarian governments and also involves a frequent criticism against the state and multinationals for their perceived ignoble roles in the

marginalisation of a people (also see Ross, 2004). It can thus be said that although the MOSOP practically disappeared soon after the hanging of its leader Saro-Wiwa in 1995, the struggle continued in other parts of the Niger Delta especially in the Ijaw region. On this Obi (2007) opines:

> *In response to the Kaiama declaration in late 1998 the "federal government declared a state of emergency in the Niger Delta and flooded the region with armed troops. Ijaw protesters were arrested, and shot by anti-riot police during demonstrations in support of the Kaiama declaration. The Ijaw resistance was repressed, but … it survived, and regenerated itself particularly after the return to democratic rule in 1999 …"* (Obi, 2007: 26)

Other forms of military response to the crisis, which included the sacking of towns in the Niger Delta and massacre of civilians by the federal army sent to crush all dissent, gave an additional momentum to the trend that has turned out to become a huge menace to the Nigerian polity – youth militancy. This is indeed the new dimension to the Niger Delta struggle (even though state governments still insist on the struggle from the political angles). This trend has gained a life of its own in the Niger Delta, and indeed changed the whole mechanism of violent struggle to another level. This new trend constitutes the hub of our discourse in the next chapter as the work examines this trend and the contemporary approaches by the federal government towards resolving the crisis. This trend is examined in the light of the discourse of greed versus grievances within the context of the contest for resource control and self determination by the people of the Niger Delta. It thus portrays more of the challenges of nation-building in Nigeria.

3.6 THE DYNAMICS OF THE NIGER DELTA CRISIS VIS-À-VIS THE C&H GREED MODEL

Critically, our major research question interrogates the adequacy of the greed and grievance theory in explaining the crisis of nation-building in Nigeria as evident in the violence in the Niger Delta. It shows that from a historical and sociological perspective, the crisis in the region has a lot to do with the struggle for emancipation. Unlike many African natural resource rich states, the Nigerian political system was already in place and corrupt prior to the emergence of oil as the world's volatile natural resource. Thus unlike the C&H (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998) position that struggles such as this aim at state capture or secession, this crisis points less to the quest to capture the state in the struggle, but to acquire regional and political relevance in a multi-ethnic polity wherein the region is only a minority. This minority status has accounted for political inequalities among groups; hence the region can never muster enough political might to oppose the major ethnic groups. As such issues of revenue allocation, environmental security mechanisms, social and infrastructural development as well as employment opportunities, are

skewed in favour of the major ethnic groups to the detriment of the region that bears the brunt of oil extraction in the country. The situation becomes worsened when the state became repressive towards the region, crushing all forms of dissent against it. This exacerbates the feelings of anomie and heightens grievance levels especially among disgruntled youths, most of whom are tools in the hands of ethnic extremists, since they have no better means of survival. Indeed the motivation for rebellion was neither state capture nor secession, but rather to push for social justice and regional emancipation.

It has to be said that elements of greed still play(ed) a huge role in the aftermaths of the struggle, but they remain only accepted as part of the struggle – that is extortion from the MNOCs, kidnapping for ransom and oil bunkering. These however, cannot be said to have been the motive behind the struggle, but are rather products of the struggle as part of the bigger picture of a historical crisis that has lingered for ages, but that had been neglected and repressed to a point that it has exploded into the biggest issue in Nigerian politics.

3.7 CONCLUSION

Throughout the history of the crisis in the Niger delta, the region has had to endure series of negligent actions from the central/federal government. The Nigeria state represents a weak state since its responses to the struggle of the people were more repressive than positive in terms of positively impacting on and protecting its citizens. There were tyrants as well as dictators in the ruling of the state. In fact, the various military attacks on the Ogoni, Etches, Ijaws and the Itsekiris in 1993, 1995, 1999 respectively (Wangbu, 2005) portrayed the state to be concerned with the oil wealth above the lives of the citizens – no wonder the federal government declared war on Biafra when it seized control of the Niger Delta and its resources in 1967. Capitalism and Imperialism also come to the fore as the state seems to collude with the MNOCs even in their illicit and environmentally disastrous activities. Thus the Niger Delta was important only as far as it provides profit for the companies and the state's coffers. This attitude immerses the state in class struggle and leaves it with extremely depleted autonomy (Ake, 1985: 108). This partnership, formed to exploit natural resources and its gains to the detriment of the environment and health of people living there, is purely capitalist relation. This relation is thus responsible for the lack of political will to check the excesses of the MNOCs since the state appears to be enjoying so much economic benefits

from them (see, Omeje, 2004:428).[10] It also appears to be the reason for the different massacres of innocent civilians and execution of human rights activists, the justification of which was the ideology of nation-building and the protection of national interest.

Government's response to these struggles can thus be evaluated in the light of the legacy of greed, exploitation, patrimonialism and capitalist interests in the region. They serve as institutional constraints to the formation of a strong state in Nigeria. Its weakness lies in its quest to wield 'extensive powers and massive bureaucracy' – a feat that can only be achieved and legitimized through the provision of quality public goods to the populace. Thus, it appeared that the state degenerated "… into a conspiracy for oppression and extortion…" against the minorities of the Niger Delta since it made little genuine efforts to assert its legitimacy by creating a developmental atmosphere through which it could win the trust and respect of citizens (Clapham, 2002:779).

It therefore implies that the marginalised and exploited people will develop the capacity to mobilize and develop some form of nationalist interest since the feeling of anomie and suspicion towards the federal government is fermented. It follows that the fear of ever remaining suppressed minorities thus led to a stronger resolve by groups to fight and acquire the right to self determination and resource control (Lake and Rothchild, 1996). This therefore culminates in the huge crisis to the nation-building agenda of an apparently weak Nigerian state and also plunging it toward collapse.[11]

Extrapolating from all these, it becomes clear that an understanding of the conflicts in the Niger Delta demands a greater grasp of the historical, sociological and political context of the struggle. It involves the interplay of social and economic as well as political issues that are older than Nigeria as a state. It is also clear that the marginalisation of this region throughout history, the incessant ecological degradation and the loss of their means of livelihood, coupled with the constant use of repression and military action against the people whenever their agitations are voiced out, all have been accumulated into huge grievances that have culminated in the upsurge of militant response in these latter days. The position taken by the

[10]Omeje (2004:428) argues that "… Nigeria is a rentier state largely dependent on oil mining rents, taxes and royalties paid by 'transnational oil companies' (TNOCs), and on profits from its equity stakes in the TNOCs' investments …"

[11]Collapse here refers to the loss of the monopoly of the legitimate use of force, cohesion and violence to regulate and run a state. When the supposed institutions in the state collapse, it loses its legitimacy, and the fact that it can no longer control activities within its territory in a way that ensures peace implies that its institutions are moribund. Hence, the collapse-destination that the crises try to plunge the Nigerian state cannot be underrated.

C&H model shows that the economic cost of a rebellion and the mobilisation of forces for a rebellion play more important roles in the onset of civil conflicts, but it relegates to the background the fact of these accumulated grievances as is the case with the Niger Delta people.

In this light therefore, our exposition and analysis has shown that these accumulated grievances coupled with different political contradictions within the state and the imminence of corruption in high places, have made militancy to acquire a life of its own in the region. This has become the situation that the state faces now. It is a huge challenge to the discourse on national integration and nation-building since the state is being destabilised in all dimensions by the activities of these militant groups – activities that have made the country almost uninhabitable, especially, for foreign investment.

To curb this situation and respond more positively, the contemporary democratically elected civilian rulers (have) embarked on series of projects and developmental institutions and structures. But suffice it to say that many of these projects have failed because of the lack of political will to actually engage with the problem itself. It opens up two possibilities – the state does not seem to grasp the magnitude of the crisis or it lacks the will to tackle it because it is part of the bigger picture of ethno-regional and class politics or Northern hegemony in Nigeria. Thus, oil can be said to have impacted negatively on these strategies for the resolution of the crisis, hence the dilemma that the state continues to face as these militant agitations appear not to be ceasing in the near future. These are the issues that make up the next chapter wherein this work examines the current trend and how it is related to the *C&H greed model.*

CHAPTER 4: OIL POLITICS AND CONFLICTS/RESOLUTIONS IN THE NIGER DELTA: RESURGENCE OF GREED AND GRIEVANCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines recent trends of militancy in the troubled Niger Delta region. It falls within the purview of challenges to nation-building and national unity that necessitated "minimalist-incremental policy approach[es]" by the State (Orogun, 2009: 33). These developmental strategies/institutions however appear to be influenced so much by the politics of oil (revenue) as much as the militant groups. Here, the whole discourse of *greed versus grievance* within the new dimension to the crisis is strongly rejuvenated. It is averred that some of the militants appear(ed) so engulfed in fighting an endless war, till they forgot what they were fighting for, giving credence to the C&H argument that the economic incentive for rebellion is the major motivation for rebel mobilisation (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a; 2002b). The situation also reignites the argument that though greed may and does not account for the onset of civil wars and political instability, it is sufficient to maintain rebel mobilisation and sustain the duration of the crisis as well as its intensity (Ross, 2004). It also tends to agree with the position that where resources permit, opportunistic rebellions have the tendency to crowd out ideological (or genuine) agitators as far as the economic incentives for rebellion are concerned (Collier and Hoeffler, 2005:626).

These are the situations that this chapter examines in juxtaposition with current issues of militant activities in the region in the light of federal government's ostensible resolve to end the crisis. In short, it explores how oil has impacted (negatively and positively) conflicts/resolutions, and how different actors (affected by this same oil influence) have responded to the situation that faces the region and indeed the Nigerian state, beginning with the new dimension to the struggle – youth militancy.

4.2 THE PROFESSION CALLED MILITANCY: THE MANY FACES AND PHASES OF THE NIGER DELTA STRUGGLE

Ken Saro-Wiwa's final statement before his death appears to be a premonition of the current crisis in the region. His prediction that Shell and the Nigerian state are also on trial, for the ecological and socioeconomic warfare waged against the Ogonis as well as the entire Niger Delta region resonates today in the greatest socioeconomic challenges faced by the country by means of militant activities and sporadic attacks on oil installations and oil theft in the region. Saro-Wiwa stated that any "nation which can do to the weak and disadvantaged what the

Nigerian nation has done to the Ogoni, loses a claim to independence and to freedom from outside influence" (Bisong, 2005: 40).[12] Thus "… the decentralisation and democratization of the monopoly of violence and coercion machineries in the Niger Delta … unleashed a new deadly phase in the struggle for resource control and militarisation of the crude oil induced conflict." (Orogun, 2009:25). The relative peace experienced in the Niger Delta and the economic growth of Nigeria has suffered huge blows with the advent of (and revolutionary dimension to) the militant activities of different groups in the Niger Delta. Indeed the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the eight others brought an end to mass non-violent actions and agitation in the resource conflicts. This has since been replaced by violent and more militant forms of agitation involving both (legitimately) aggrieved groups and organised crime syndicates that have used the political instability in the country and the agitations as added incentives to unleash socioeconomic terror within the region.

This view is clarified in Ikelegbe's averment that:

> *An illegal, criminal, informal and underground economy exists in the Niger Delta, which has been engaged in resistance against the political economy of oil in Nigeria since the early 1960s. Resistance has intensified since 1997 and there is slowly emerging pockets of armed rebellion. But this economy has emerged only since 2000. This has been coincident with the intensification of armed resistance and the extensive proliferation of non-state institutions of violence and arms. Greed or opportunities did not cause the resistance. It came almost two decades into it.* (Ikelegbe, 2006:49-50)

It can be said that between years 2005 and 2006, the region noted a huge rise in militant activities. It has placed the federal government, the MNOCs and even the United States – the major consumer of the Nigerian sweet (crude) oil – in a precarious position due to the emergence of different groups within the region, representing the regional struggle for emancipation. Most of these are violent youth groups have acquired the ability to mobilize disgruntled youths within and outside the region to unleash waves and waves of terror within the region. These capacities for mobilisation are thus linked to the economic incentives that most of the leaders perceive. This is responsible for many incidents of kidnapping of foreign workers, extortion from oil companies as well as illegal oil bunkering. This is indeed close to the looting mechanism for which the *C&H* model argues that rebellion is best explained in resource rich states (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b). Indeed the "… insurgency across the Niger Delta, involving a welter of differing groups and interests it needs to be said, is inextricably wrapped up with the intersection of generational politics, a corrupt and violent petro-state, irresponsible and short sighted oil company practice, and the existence of a vast oil bunkering

[12] Saro-Wiwa's closing statement to the Nigerian Military Appointed Special Tribunal.

network" (Watts, 2008:28).

Many of these groups include the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Asari Dokubo. It later metamorphosed into the mostly recognised militant group in the region – the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Henry Okah in 2005. Another group worthy of mention was the Niger Delta Vigilantee (NDV), led by Ateke Tom.[13] Many other groups also exist(ed), all partaking in their own rights, in the regional struggle for resource control and/or a better deal in the revenue allocation that accrues to the states and communities of origin. These groups, however, are motivated by different goals, but spurred on by available incentives in terms of accumulated grief and shared experiences of government repression and abject neglect; hence the buoyancy of the *militancy sector in the Nigerian political economy.* Arguing along this line Jike states thus:

> *… part of the fulcrum for social activism today starts from the initial level of shared experiences and aspirations by those who find themselves in a deprived social condition. The objective condition of social deprivation provides a ready milieu for youth violence, activism, and rebellion. Youths in the Niger Delta have assumed all kinds of social coloration of primitive groupings, more or less approximating the categorizations … such as 'the picnic, the stampede, the strike, the riot, the popular justices, vigilante committee, the procession, cult and the revolt …. Most of these groupings represent variations of the crowd, each of these operates through the primitive mechanisms of collective behaviour.* (Jike, 2004: 694)

Indeed the society into which many of these youths were born has offered them nothing in terms of achieving their full human potentials. It rather exposed majority of them to the ills of socialization especially as most of them had to migrate from rural to urban areas in search of better lives due to the disastrous effects of oil exploration and exploitation in the communities. But the fact that even the urban areas had nothing to offer them also (in terms of jobs or better life) implies that their interaction and socialisation with other youths who have the same ill experiences will snowball into the feeling of anomie especially for the government and the agents that appear to have been responsible for their condition. In this way, it can be said that the militant groups in the region "provided alienated, unemployed and marginalised youth [some University and Secondary school graduates] with the platform to challenge the federal government hegemony over oil" – concomitant with the hypothetical stance of the C&H model of rebel mobilization. "This also allowed them to tap into a groundswell of anger against the state and the oil multinational drawing attention to their cause, and benefitting as individuals from their capacity to unleash violence capable of disrupting a critical transnationl energy resource flow" (Obi, 2007:25). All of these bring out the obvious fact that shared experiences

[13]Other groups include different cult groups affiliated to these umbrella militant groups as espoused in Joab-Peterside's work. See work for more names.

can be transformed into social actions; actions that are detrimental to societal well-being, in line with the game theory, especially as the state appears to have reneged on its side of the social contract (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2009).

The role of youths in this issue is thus clear as they are the tools in the hand of majority of the greedy and diehard politicians who run Drug and Crime cartels (Watts, 2009; Joab-Peterside, 2007). They constitute political private armies empowered to undertake political assassinations, election riggings and intimidation of opponents. These were accompanied by certain *privileges* like oil deals and huge sums of money – oil-bunkering, the illegal drilling and selling of petroleum products (Joab-Peterside, 2007: 13-14) since the activities involved personalities in high political and military places as well as foreign countries. Some of these groups entered into the struggle after falling out with their political godfathers, and with the acquired arms and skills they began to unleash grievous violence in the region, all in the name of the struggle. This is aggravated when these politicians tag the *freedom fighters* as enemies of democracy. These help to legitimize a lot of the groups since they return along the path of the struggle for regional emancipation within the socio-political space.

The result that followed thus was the new trends of kidnapping of expatriate workers and foreign nationals for ransom; the blowing up of oil wells within the region and the reign of terror within the region. There were huge cases of militant armed confrontation with the federal army on the event of the mobilisation of troops to stop these activities, thus, it must be said that the Niger Delta became war zone. It is in this situation that the Punch newspaper commented thus:

> *The struggle has snowballed into a full-blown armed conflict, sometimes coloured with criminality, where even septuagenarians and toddlers are not spared in the mad rush for ransom. The conflict has moved inexorably to its most dangerous stage – a predatory stage of organised and self-sustaining violence. It has become a booming business. With funds from about 200,000 barrels of crude stolen every day, the crisis has taken a life of its own because the criminal gangs have access to revenue with which they buy arms and finance their violent activities. The high-rate of poverty and unemployment in the beleaguered region also helps to create an army of idle and angry youths who are willing to join criminal gangs. (The Punch, 2009)*

It means that both genuine and criminal actions have been mingled with this struggle. The situation gives credence to the argument that political and ethnic entrepreneurs have the capacity to use the imminent strategic dilemma to political polarize the socio-political space thus creating some forms of ethnic dimensions to crisis within the state (Lake and Rothchild, 1996:54). Thus with a feeling of anomie and distrust towards the government, the mobilization

along ethnic lines – a u-turn to the primordial public ideology by these political extremists who can also fill in the role of African bourgeoisie in the two publics (Ekeh, 1975) – culminates in armed groups that aligned themselves too with the Niger Delta struggle and some of them are hailed heroes of the land.[14]

Between 2005 and 2009, when the amnesty deal was struck between the federal government and the different militant groups, it can be said that 'Nigeria lost a lot of oil revenue to illegal oil bunkering and sabotage' to a number of organised local and international crime syndicates as well as the leading Niger Delta militant group, MEND (Orogun, 2009). It has to be stated that MEND has persisted in the struggle and also insisted that the federal government should revert to the principles of fiscal federalism (International Crisis Group, 2009). Hence, it embarked on a cease fire between September 2009 and November 2009 to give the federal government time to return as such to dialogue, but refused the terms of the amnesty deal arguing that amnesty was meant for criminals and not those fighting a just cause. In this way it also legitimized its struggle and resumed hostilities in January 2010 since according to the group, the federal government has 'failed' to adequately respond to the crisis. This situation therefore heightened the dilemma that the Nigerian state continues to face on a daily basis as the militant struggle persists even within the atmosphere of great government (military) presence. These are huge setbacks for the nation-building mechanisms that the state advocates.

In the final analysis, it must be stated that these activities affect the generality of world oil consumers. The crisis goes beyond the Niger Delta because the different acts of sabotage, kidnap of oil expatriates, oil bunkering as well as institutionalized violence by means of other militant activities have led to the loss of and withdrawal of many workers of the MNOCs. It has led to a drastic reduction in oil production thus affecting the world (oil) market and United States who is the largest consumer of Nigeria's oil. The quests to amass wealth, even among the elites who are representatives of the people, go a long way in elucidating the contradictions within this struggle. These contradictions have constituted major setbacks to the struggle since they open up lee-ways through which both government and the multinationals can manipulate the gullibility of the people – elites, chiefs, rulers, and youths alike – and continue to perpetuate the irregularities within petroleum extraction.

[14]MEND remains the recognised militant group actually fighting the cause of the Niger Delta. It evolved from the IYC through the NDPVF down to its present state. However, the IYC remains a youth organisation and sometimes distances itself from the activities of MEND because it argues that the new dynamism is making the struggle to lose both international and local sympathy (See International Crisis Group, 2009)

It can thus be argued that the trends of mass protests, violent agitation by aggrieved groups as well as the contemporary (militant) dimension to the crisis created the imperative for new developmental institutions. These were ostensibly established to tackle both socio-economic and environmental crisis in the region; they were (developmental or political) strategies geared towards ending the crisis and answering the Niger Delta question, however, they have not proved to be as effective as projected. These strategies include the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPDEC established in 1992), the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000, the Ministry of the Niger Delta (MND) and the Amnesty deal in 2008 and 2009 respectively. These form the hub of our next heading. It is important to note that these strategies did and still do not appear to appeal to the militant group(s) hence the upsurge of militant activities in the Niger Delta and sometimes beyond.[15]

4.3 DEVELOPMENTAL INSTITUTIONS/STRATEGIES AND THE NIGER DELTA CRISIS

There is no gainsaying that the Niger Delta struggle is historical, and various regimes have responded both positively and negatively in that light. Nonetheless, some developmental institutions were and have been put in place to show government's ostensible interest to encourage development in the area, focused, though, outside resource control. These institutions were designed since previous ones like the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) and the like championed by different regimes all failed (Omotola, 2007). Thus, beside the repression and massacres perpetuated by many of these regimes – military and civilian alike – against region, developmental institutions like the OMPADEC, NDDC, MND and the 2009 Amnesty represent the most recent drives towards tackling the social, political, economic, environmental and developmental crisis in the region. But suffice it to say that these strategies have not ceased to be influenced by the oil politics which is intermingled with ethno-regional politics and the minority struggles, hence the contradictions discovered within them.

4.3.1 The Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)

In 1992, OMPADEC was established by means of the military Decree 23 of 1992 in the event of the failure of the NDDB and state creation strategies. The commission facilitated the rise of

[15]On the 1 October 2010 – Nigeria's 50th Independence Day – a twin bomb blast occurred in Abuja to which the MEND claimed responsibility. This is a sign of new dimensions to the militant activities. It had also blown up oil installations in Lagos in the later days of 2009, showing a change in the target of militants. The MEND argues that the federal government has refused to show commitment towards the principles of federalism, hence its persistence on violence and rejection of the amnesty deal. These cannot totally be linked to greed since a lot more lies behind this persistence.

revenue allocation to the oil-producing areas from 1.5% to 3% by the military regime led by General Ibrahim Babangida. It had the task of judiciously administering this 3% allocation that was about N13.6 billion to coordinate development projects in the oil-producing communities (Omeje, 2004; Orogun, 2009). Thus, it was to use the derived revenue to assist in developing the region. This commission acted as the middleman between the MNOCs and their host communities. It also had the responsibility to:

a) *Receive and administer the monthly sums from the allocation of the federation account in accordance with confirmed oil-production ratio in each state –*

i. *for rehabilitating and developing oil-mineral producing areas;*

ii. *For tackling ecological problems that have arisen from exploration of oil minerals;*

b) *To determine and identify … the actual mineral producing areas and to foster development of projects agreed upon with local communities in the oil-mineral producing areas.* (Omotola, 2007:79)

However, this institution appeared to be more of a cosmetic dressing than a real developmental stride as was evident in what characterised its operation in relation to the Niger Delta and the Nigerian political sphere – the tradition of unaccountability, corruption and predation. In essence, the OMPADEC soon collapsed because of bureaucratic corruption and lack of accountability. It was in fact riddled with wholesale corruption and gross ineffectiveness, vivified in Omotola's (2007:80) insistence that "… OMPADEC was known 'for its wastefulness, massive mismanagement and corruption'…. 'It was [indeed] a contract rather than developmental outfit.'"

It can also be argued that these problems were compounded due to loopholes in the regulatory mechanisms needed to monitor the activities of the commission. Omotola thus shows that "… in the first three years of its existence, the OMPADEC committed itself to projects worth over $500million but the bulk of the money paid out for the projects "completed" was to contractors whose addresses could not be traced"(Omotola, 2007:80). This was a major flaw of the commission – corruption – even though it was also bedevilled by other issues like financial inadequacies (Dibua, 2005) as well as the politicisation of the commission along the ethno-regional lines – re-echoing the political marginalisation of the Niger Delta region. In the initial case, the federal government refused to release adequate funds, and in terms of the politicisation, Omotola states:

> *The politicisation was evident by the fact that the commission was reorganised three times. Though the reorganisation could be said to be justified as remedies for corruption, the replacement of Opia from delta state, with Assistance Inspector General of Police … a*

> *northerner, was generally seen in political terms … in reflection of a general feeling among delta people that the OMPADEC was not representative of their interest, but merely another arm of the federal bureaucracy. Rather than reducing the discontent in the delta, the OMPADEC appears to have increased it.* (Omotola, 2007:80)

This viewpoint embodies the feeling of the average indigene of the region from experiences of the OMPADEC's abandoned projects in different communities, for which contracts had been awarded and paid for. Indeed, it became a situation of sheer negligence as contractors were never called into question because of the nature of contracts, the politics behind them as well as the major beneficiaries of the huge capital that had been siphoned to private accounts in the name of the OMPADEC projects. These were in themselves huge reasons for protest and lack of faith in government developmental institutions in the region.

The failure of the OMPADEC prompted a novel developmentalist drive in the nascent democratic dispensation and in the event of violent agitations in the region, hence the birth of the NDDC.

4.3.2 The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

In his presidential campaign, President Olusegun Obasanjo promised to make the Niger Delta issue a priority. He was sworn into office on May 29 1999, and in 2000, he succeeded with the NDDC Act. The commission, born by means of this legislation was another developmental institution mandated "… to conceive, plan, and implement, in accordance with set rules and regulations, projects and programmes for sustainable development in the Niger Delta area" (Dibua, 2005:20). Its funds came from a combination of statutory allocations, ecological funds and companies operational within the region, as stipulated by section 14 of the same act which stated that:

> *… all the stakeholders in the delta areas and oil companies should help finance the NDDC. … it mandated that the federal government would contribute the equivalent of 15 percent of the total monthly statutory allocation due to member states of the commission from the federation account. Oil-producing companies … operating onshore and offshore in the delta were mandated to pay 3 percent of their total annual budget to the commission.* (Omotola, 2007: 81)

In terms of checkmating corruption and unaccountability, the Act also provided that

> *"… the commission should always have the president present at its annual budgets to the National Assembly for approval and he should keep a proper book of accounts, which must be audited at specified intervals. It empowered the president to appoint a monitoring committee, whose main task would be to monitor the management of the commission's funds and the implementation of its projects, for which purpose it was to have unhindered access to the commission's book of account and other records; and it also ordered the committee to submit periodic reports to the president.* (Omotola, 2007:81)

One has to say that all these show(ed) a concerted resolve by the federal government to tackle the environmental and developmental crisis in the region as the NDDC had relative progress in terms of socio-infrastructural development (Table I below (appendix II) shows the projects undertaken and delivered between 2002 and 2003). These projects included the building and refurbishing of primary and secondary schools within the region, as well as the provision of portable drinking water to many villages.

However, despite the relative success recorded in the area – roads, schools and other basic facilities – this commission has had to grapple with various development issues and is also been tilted along patronage networks and bureaucratic mazes. In other words, it followed the path of many other structures within Nigerian politics. Abandoned projects are becoming rampant; there appears to be little structural plans for the emancipation of indigenes in terms of provision of employment opportunities; contracts are awarded along these clientele and patronage networks; and corruption and unaccountability remain serious issues as its officials are alleged to be involved in different fraudulent practices (Dibua, 2005).

More still, the failure of the federal government and other stakeholders – MNOCs and state (regional) governments – to honour the agreement to contribute to the NDDC has rendered the commission financially incapacitated. While Dibua (2005:20) noted that "… the federal government has been contributing 10 percent [out of the 15 percent due] while oil companies have been contributing two percent [instead of three] and some have defaulted [in toto]; Orogun (2009) notes that Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) is a major defaulter in this issue. There have also been incidents of state government interference in the activities and projects of the commission in their state, thus heightening the bureaucratic struggles for relevance within the states. These have been less than productive in different dimensions.

It thus points to the fact that though in principle the federal government (or rather the Nigerian state) professes concern for the plight of the region and appears ready to alleviate it; in reality this appears not to be the case. It is thus perceived by the agitators as part of the political rhetoric in Nigeria – lack of real resolve for development. This is also exacerbated by the fact that oil revenue provides enough security for the ruling elites and the political majority ethnic groups thus making it easier for them to rest on their oars in terms of the developmental issues of the region.

Following this line of thought, it becomes clear that the current trend of militancy will remain pervasive as leaders of these groups – genuine or criminal – have enough incentives to produce

discourse that remain germane in terms of the dehumanising and marginalised status of the region. These thus enable more local and international sympathy for the struggle and the resurgence of criminal acts of sabotage, kidnap, oil bunkering and state or nationwide (oil) terrorism. Indeed, this unabated spate of militant upsurge thus required another developmental institution to assist the NDDC to complete its task. This initiative by the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua-led administration was the establishment of a Technical Committee on the Niger Delta and subsequently the creation of the Ministry of the Niger Delta (MND), all in 2008.

4.3.3 The Ministry of the Niger Delta and 2009 Amnesty Deal

The Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (International Crisis Group, 2009) is a relatively new developmental strategy designed by the federal government in its bid to quell the latest trend of violence and militancy that have had devastating effects on the national economy and Nigeria's foreign image. Thus,

> *Created on 10 September 2008, the Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs has a twin mandate focusing on infrastructure development and youth empowerment. According to the government, it is to be responsible for development projects in the region, including roads, electricity and other utilities, previously executed by multiple ministries, in order to provide better focus and quick implementation and to demonstrate commitment to the Delta.*(International Crisis Group, 2009:9)

Through the instrumentality of the Ministry, it was projected that the problems of the people will be brought closer to the federal government and the people themselves will be part of the mechanism of development. It also has to be noted that prior to the creation of this ministry, there was a Technical Committee on the Niger Delta commissioned by the government to "review, investigate and make recommendations to the federal government on the feasible remedies and logistical mechanisms to foster peace-building, demobilization of ex-combatants and surrender of arms, weapons, and other deadly military arsenal in the volatile Niger Delta communities" (Orogun, 2009:33). This Committee, led by the MOSOP leader Ledum Mitee, recommended among other things that the federal government increases the revenue allocation to 17 percent until an agreed formula is attained. It also recommended urgent social and infrastructural (re)constructions in terms of dilapidated roads and structures in the region, electricity and water supply as well as effective mechanisms of ending environmental pollutions that emanate from gas flaring and other oil extractive activities (International Crisis group, 2009). Despite its ground breaking reviews and recommendations, this committee was

somewhat abandoned for the nascent ministry of the Niger Delta, which is even feared to render the NDDC redundant since, technically, they both serve the same purpose.

Thus the creation of the ministry brought about a new approach to the crisis, but seemed to neglect the tedious work already undertaken by the technical committee. It was also riddled with the federal government's bureaucratic designs as evident in the personnel appointed to run the affairs of the ministry, and their approaches. In the first place, the minister Ufot Ekaette is perceived in the region to be a representative of federal government's interest and not that of the people, while his deputy Godsday Orubebe is regarded as an enemy of the struggle. It is thus argued that

> *Militant leaders have no confidence in Ekaette or the ministry. His comment in February, that the detained MEND leader, Henry Okah, who is seeking specialist medical attention abroad, was playing tricks with his health to avoid justice, further alienated him. MEND said of Orubebe that 'this same man was always in touch with Henry to assist him build his political relevance, yet today he is acting as if he never knew the man. MEND cannot trust a man who betrays his friend.'* (International Crisis Group, 2009:11)

All these culminate in a feeling of suspicion within the region as to the interest of the state in creating the ministry despite its glorified image of bringing development down to the people and creating job opportunities for the citizens. It was in this light that MEND warned that the people of the region should receive this latest dish with apprehension. It will be yet another avenue for corruption and political favouritism (International Crisis group, 2009)

Another additional approach towards ending the crisis was the unconditional amnesty granted to all militant groups in the region in 2009. It was designed to bring about disarmament and surrender on the part of the militant groups operating in the region. This strategy seemed to work at the time with many militant groups surrendering and giving up their arms and embracing the amnesty deal which also proffered to rehabilitate these repentant militants and to pay them some amount of money for their monthly upkeep. It also saw the release of some detained persons ostensibly linked with militant activities in the region like Henry Okah (who was linked to the MEND and arrested and detained for militancy and arms trafficking), and for a few weeks there was relative calm within the region especially within Port Harcourt.[16] It may thus be inferred (from all these strategies) that the present civilian rule seems poised to tackle

[16]Port Harcourt is the capital city of Rivers State, which is one of the states in the Niger Delta. The state is also rated as the highest in terms of oil and gas production and revenue allocation among the league of oil producing states in Nigeria. It is instructive to note that most of the noted militant activities tend to be located within Port Harcourt metropolis, hence the focus. This does not imply that this trend does not occur in other states, on the contrary, there are other huge incidents in Bayelsa and Delta states. These are the most volatile states in the region.

the Niger Delta issues with as much developmental strategies as possible so as to restore peace. Thus the amnesty deal can be said to have been relatively effective since calm returned to the region during and after the period.

It has to be noted that this period of amnesty also coincided with the ceasefire of the MEND who, though was reportedly part of the amnesty deal (as many of its purported leaders surrendered), rejected the terms of the amnesty deal. Its argument borders around the view that amnesty was meant for criminals who had no genuine interest in the struggle but rather saw it as a means towards their selfish and greedy interests. Thus, for the MEND, stopping the onslaught in the region demands meaningful dialogue and a reasonable revenue allocation or a return to the hitherto principles of fiscal federalism which existed prior to the emergence of oil in Nigerian politics (International Crisis Group, 2009). The MEND however extended its ceasefire until January 2010 to give room for the federal government to revert to the old derivative formula or rather the principles of federalism. In this way (peaceful) negotiations signalled a period of relative peace in the region.

However this peace was short-lived as the ceasefire was called-off for reasons related to the resource control deadlock and lack of commitment especially in the absence of the president who no one knew his where about due to an illness that took him out of the country for over three months (Orogun, 2009:32). The end of the ceasefire signalled the reopening of the flood gates to militant activities in the region and beyond. The MEND insists that its cause is the cause of justice against marginalisation. The MEND argues that the Nigerian state is an instrument of the major ethnic groups; an instrument used to deprive of the minorities of what rightfully belongs to them – oil (revenue). It contends that the long years of social, political, environmental and infrastructural neglect to which the region is subjected have not ceased even though it still provides the country with the resources that make its economy to boom. In this way then, the MEND insists the constitutional discourse and other legislations in favour of the current revenue allocation have remained negligent of the sufferings of the people and region that bears the social and environmental cost of oil extraction and exploration (See International Crisis Group, 2009). As such, justice requires that region which bears environmental and ecological costs of oil extraction should ipso facto have the bulk of the revenue channelled back to it. It thus argues that until the federal government shows genuine interest in improving the situation in the region and/or adheres to the real federal structure, the state will remain under the siege of incessant militant activities exemplified in the bombing of oil pipelines and

the sabotage of other facilities; kidnapping of (foreign) oil expatriates; attacks on government facilities and personnel; and other forms of the struggle.

In all these, it becomes crystal clear that the developmental institutions and strategies aimed at curbing the recent crisis seem to have been fatally ineffective, especially owing to the fact that the MEND has persisted in its agitation – despite both military and developmentalist response by the state. This deteriorating scenario tends to imply two things: it is either that the whole regional struggle (carried on violently by the MEND) is a cold blooded and greedy struggle that pays no attention to reason, or there is something fundamentally wrong with the developmentalist approaches and strategies towards ending the unrest. If the latter is the case, it can thus be argued that the omnipresence of oil (revenue) and the huge dependence of the Nigerian state upon this primary commodity has made it very difficult for the state to let go of this main or only viable source of (internal as well as external) revenue – considering that oil accounts for over 90% and 95% of Nigeria's annual foreign exchange earnings and revenue.[17] In this light, the desire to hang on to this sector of the economy makes it difficult to return to fiscal federalism; and the lack of resolve or lack of political will among the ruling elites; the corrupt and prebendal political structures and the lack of accountability among these political elites that make up the institution of the Nigerian state – all sum up the rationale for lack of genuine implementation of development policies within the Niger Delta.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Looking back at the C&H *greed versus grievance model* of explaining natural resource based conflicts (in Africa), it appears easy to link these spate of violent agitation(s) in the Niger Delta especially to the greed model which avers that the economic incentives for rebellion explains the phenomenon above the grievance factor. This is against the foundation that grievances may readily abound as is always the case with most cases where resources are located within specific regions of a country. It insists that, although there could be low level conflicts in response to marginalization, inequality, neglect and poverty because of the socioeconomic and environmental cost of resource extraction, grievances can only turn into full blown conflict when there is a viable means of rebel mobilization through extortions, rebel looting of resources and – ipso facto – rebel financing.

[17]Ross (2003) shows that in 2000 Nigeria received 99.6 percent of its export income from oil. This made it the world's most oil-dependent country.

However, the case study shows more than mere rebel looting and extortion, but the preponderance of historical and sociological issues that count as accumulated grievances. In this light, rebel mobilisation can be seen more in terms of an active response to the socioeconomic situation above a mere drive towards individual enrichment. It involves a rational choice by the people to safeguard their future against the background of lived experiences (for example that of Oloibiri) especially with the reality of the exhaustible nature of oil and the negligence that is characteristic of the Nigerian state (Uwafiokun and Uwem, 2006: 401). Though, as the dynamics of the conflicts has shown, greedy contents exist seriously in the struggle especially among militant groups with little or no affinity to the struggle but partaking in violence as well as other criminal activities like oil bunkering, kidnapping of foreigners for ransom and the likes. The situation can only be seen as something created by the omnipresence of grievances that have grown to a level and created enough incentives for other (rational) actors to cash into for their own selfish gain. In other words, greed remains very bleak in terms of explaining the root and onset of these incidents even though it has the capacity of intensifying it and changing the cause of the conflict in different directions.

These institutions have been largely ineffective because the state is riddled with issues deeper than militant activities in the region. The Nigerian state is fundamentally buried in the mire of corruption and prebendalism in high places; lack of accountability and burgeoning patronage links – local and international – as well as the lack of stable and independent democratic institutions that will ensure that the state abides by the rule of law – all culminate in an environment suitable for civil unrest and insurgency, and indeed the encouragement of greed of all kinds in relation to the oil wealth of the state. Indeed, the strategies for resolving these issues in the Niger Delta lack the *political will* needed to actually realise the dreams of an economically revitalised region, hence the unending spate of militancy that has continued to create enormous negative externalities for the Nigerian state – security and economy – and the global economy at large.

CHAPTER 5: EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter wraps up this inquest into the role of oil in the dynamics of the Niger Delta struggle for regional socioeconomic and political emancipation in the Nigerian polity. As a federal state, the country is bound by the federal constitution which upholds the principles of federalism, but only just, with regards to resource control and revenue allocation. This study has shown that this issue which is the hub of the national question (with regards to the Niger Delta) remains as old as the Nigerian state and even older than the political entity Nigeria. It therefore follows that this historical struggle, must have gathered momentum and changed according to different obstacles and developments. The struggle has also changed, from a mass protest-based model of the late 1980s and early 1990s to the most recent trend – militancy. This latest trend is linkable to the C&H *greed model* and remains the view of many political economy analysts from an empirical analysis of the motivation for rebel mobilization. However, a critical analysis of this historical struggle shows that factors beyond the greed model underlie this struggle. We therefore assess this greed model in relation to the findings of this research with a view to critically opening up the position of this study especially as it relates to the case study – Oil and Violence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

5.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE C&H GREED VERSUS GRIEVANCE THEORY

The resource curse thesis upholds that natural resources tend to be under developing and conflict driven in many natural resource rich states in comparative distinction with their counterparts that lack natural resource wealth. It argues that the latter develops all other available means of socioeconomic growth and are not dependent on any single market commodity unlike the former that depends so much on primary commodities that elicit *rentierism, authoritarianism, and civil conflicts*. Thus, beside economic retrogression, the resource curse theory also proposes that these natural resource rich but dependent states have the propensity of being engulfed in civil conflicts/wars and/or political instability because the natural resources or primary commodities tend to create incentives for different (rational) drives towards state capture and rent-seeking among different groups.

Therefore, as part of the resource curse hypothesis, the C&H *greed versus grievance model* argues that greed – the economic incentives for rebel mobilisation – is a stronger means of

explaining conflicts in these states. Hence, grievances over socio-political marginalisation, environmental degradation and social disequilibrium coupled with ethno-regional politics pose lower risks of high level civil conflicts for a number of reasons.

The C&H model argues that the feasibility of rebellion hinges on its ability to finance itself (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b). It purports that "… conflict reflects elite competition over valuable natural resource rents, concealed with the big leaf of collective grievance" (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2009:88). This is based on the idea that rebellion demands financial viability to which natural resource rents serve as a major anchor – rebel looting and extortion – as well as funding from the *Diaspora* and subventions from hostile foreign countries to destabilize a state. These occur in a natural resource rich state that has with low income levels and low economic growth because incentives for rebellion become rife especially with high poverty levels within the state. In this way rebel funding, the quest for state capture and secession with the long term goal of economic gain, can be said to be the motives behind rebellions in natural resource rich but poor and dependent states (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998, 2002a, 2002b). This greed is responsible for more conflicts because of these economic incentives of a rebellion. Feasibility of rebellion takes centre stage due to the availability of funds for the rebels. This happens mainly when the state is relatively weak to effectively clampdown on any form of dissent, and/or when they rebels are able to access funds through stealing or extortions from the natural resource sector – resources and multinationals. Their mobilisation is also enhanced by the low level of education among the youths (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a).

All these imply that the feasibility of a rebellion, through the availability of funds to prosecute this rebellion, becomes a more potent means of explaining resource-based conflicts. It is clearer in this sense than arguments hinging on grievances that emanate from ethnic hatred, inequality and political exclusion in a heterogeneous state where these differences only make the cohesion needed for a rebellion difficult (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a; Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2009). For the C&H model though, there is a relative conflict risk if the state is characterised by ethnic dominance of between 45% and 90%, since cohesion can more easily be feasible in the event of grievance-rebellion. But besides this, other grievance variables remain largely weak and rebellion oblique since ethnic differences and hatred rather work against cohesion against the state whose forces have been united for a long time with the powerful political rhetoric of nationalism (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b). Thus, rebellion can be viable only when there is a major point of cohesion (which ethnic

fractionalization inhibits, thus reducing the risk of civil wars) and that cohesive unit is most likely economic.

On the whole then, it is poverty that makes it easy for rebels to get recruits from low income societies and low education enrolment (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b). These make it easier for them to confront the state forces especially by means of funds acquired through looting, extortions as well as funding from the Diaspora. It is therefore this capacity to finance and maintain a rebellion that better explains conflicts as opposed to the historical issues of ethnic hatred, political repression, marginalisation and social and infrastructural marginalisation suffered by the rebelling region(s) or groups in a conflict.

This vantage point remains relatively tenable in certain dimensions of the cases reviewed, even in the Niger Delta, but it has also been criticised from other perspectives because it does not adequately appraise conflicts, more especially in the case of the Niger Delta. It is rather an exposition of a small part of the larger picture of the root causes and dynamics of the crisis. In this light, it is argued that conflicts in natural resource rich but poor states can be linked more to a case of the breakdown of the social contract within the state (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2009). It springs from the lack of credible commitment on the side of the state or groups involved in the conflict in terms of resolving the issues at stake. When the government does not really commit to adequately tackling the problems of the region, it shows that it cannot be trusted. This is also the case when the militant groups continue in different outrageous activities that are detrimental to development (even to the region) then they have all failed to commit themselves to conflict resolution. However, since the government is supposedly laden with the responsibility of providing for and securing the lives of its citizens, but in history has appeared to fail in that regard, it becomes obvious that recalcitrance will follow from the aggrieved groups. It is thus in this light that Ikelegbe (2006) avers that raising greed over grievance is dangerously simplistic because it pictures conflicts as if it is in-born in natural resource wealth to compel people into violent conflicts. For him then, it is "… rather the hegemonic struggle between superordinated and subordinated groups and the nature of management and appropriation of resources that engender conflicts" (Ikelegbe, 2006:29). Indeed conflicts proceed in a state when there are palpably perceived group differences or grievance which may have historical dimensions since it "…implies the absence of contract, and warring parties may enter into contracts that make their interaction more peaceful …. If they do not do so when it is clearly in their mutual self-interest … [then] misperceptions, mistrust or the lack of institutions that enforce contracts" may lead to

conflicts because conflicts in this line can be a result of institutional disintegration (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2009: 92). In this way, patronage and clientele networks, corrupt governance and control and sharing of the national cake, the non-existence or moribund nature of state institutions, poor economic performance, state collapse or failure, repression of marginalized minorities – especially resource located regions – account for the conflicts. These are the root causes of the breakdown of the social contract between the state and other stakeholders especially in a country like Nigeria and the Niger Delta region.

It is also averred that greed and grievance is invalidated by the fact that the looting and grievance mechanisms do not appear to contribute to the outbreak of civil wars in resource dependent countries. It follows that, affirming greed and grievance implies that

> *… case studies … should observe rebel organizations raising money before the start of the civil war, through extraction and sale of natural resources, or from the extortion of resource firms. [Or it should] "… observe the rebels criticizing resource firms or the resource sector in their propaganda; and one should see rebels make resource firms a target of their violence, apart from looting and extortion attempts."* (Ross, 2004:41)

In this vein, what follows is that other mechanisms come into play with regards to the onset of conflicts including those that may not easily be tested empirically. These according to Ross (2004) include foreign intervention; future contracts for resource booty – a close relation to the case of the sale of contract over the resources which has the capacity to either boost or shorten the duration of civil war depending on the more financially and armed capability through the sale of booty futures; and finally the issue of pre-emptive repression by government to protect the resources. This is done with some form of propaganda based on nation-building in a separatist civil war. These multiple mechanisms also animate Humphreys' position that conflicts follow paths of rent seeking, grievances, economic instability, conflict financing (including foreign greed) and peace spoiling (Humphreys, 2005).

From another perspective, the C&H model is criticised as mixing up so many things in its drive to ascertain that greed is adequate in terms of explaining conflicts beyond grievances. According to Nathan (2007) the model suffers from a lot of frightful inadequacies and faults. His view is that the model and its findings are unreliable and their conclusions unjustified; assigning too restrictive representation of variables and mixing them up so much that it is unclear to grasp what these proxies try to capture. Following these discoveries, Nathan concludes thus:

> *Because their analysis is confined to numerical data at the structural level, C&H's study is rendered apolitical and ahistorical. They disregard the actions and interactions of government and opposition groups, political parties and rebel organisations, the influence of political leadership, and the power of ideology as a means of cohesion and mobilisation by government and rebels. They observe ethnic demographics but not the politics of ethnicity; religious diversity but not religious ideology; economic inequality but not class politics; social categories but not social relationships. In short, in their study of the intensely political and historical phenomenon of civil war, C&H ignore the stuff of politics and history.* (Nathan, 2007:22)

5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

In spotlighting the Niger Delta crisis through the prism of the C&H *greed versus grievance model*, this research has been able to discover salient issues germane to the discourse about conflicts in natural resource rich but poor and dependent states (more still in Africa). In the first place we have to state categorically that true to the C&H model, poverty – economic performance – plays a huge role in the current crisis in the region, but the mechanism goes deeper than the viability of rebel financing since the crisis is as historical and sociological as it is economical. Hence it entails a number of issues latent in the Nigerian body politic. This means that the onset of the crisis in the region is linked immensely to issues related to socioeconomic and political marginalisation of the region (Obi, 2007). This is compounded by the repressive military mechanism employed by successive regimes to suppress protests against the state's negligence in the face of environmental devastation, poverty, unemployment, lack of basic amenities, and suspicious silence or collusion with the MNOCs and their mercantilist and capitalist tendencies in dealing with the oil producing areas (Omeje, 2004; Obi, 2007; Osaghae, 1995).

In other words, the findings of this research fall under political, economic, social factors that heightened the propensity for crisis in the Niger Delta. In the political realm, the region has remained under the cosh because of its minority status in the political organisation of the Nigerian state. This status ensures that it lacks sufficient political representation and bargaining power within the league of regions. Hence it becomes almost impossible to get what it wants and/or what rightly belongs to it because it can neither contest politically in terms of electoral votes or lobbying in the legislative arena. This political undertone also includes issues of corruption in high places, minority animosities and greed.

At the economic platform, the region had little or nothing to show for its economic contribution to the national economy in terms of the natural resource wealth that the state earns from oil exports. Despite the fact that oil is the major export commodity in Nigeria and

accounts for the majority of the national foreign and internal income, the region has had to be economically underdeveloped in all dimension – human and infrastructural development. These have been at the heart of the struggle.

On the social angle, the region has suffered gross neglect from both the federal government and the MNOCs operating in the area. This is evident in the high rates of ecological disasters that the region faces from the spate of oil spillages, industrial wastes, gas flaring and inadequate compensation and rehabilitation mechanisms that have resulted in the region's exposure to acidic rains, soil infertility and low agricultural productivity, danger to aquatic life, loss of their major sources of occupation – fishing and agriculture – unemployment and poverty in the region. Although Ross (2004) ostensibly invalidates the role of grievance in the onset of conflicts on grounds that case studies should show rebel groups criticising both state and resource companies, it is clear from the finding of this research that the Niger Delta region has always spoken out – through different groups (activists, mass protests, community based protests and violence) – against both the federal government and the MNOCs operating in the area because of issues of neglect – social, economical, environmental and developmental – as they relate to oil (revenue) exploitation in the region. In other words, grievance remains logically tenable in terms explaining the onset of crisis in the region contrary to Ross' (2004) argument that grievance does not appear robust in explaining the onset of violent crisis in natural resource rich states.

It is also clear from the research findings that although grievances led to these agitations, greed also explains a lot about the persistence of these conflicts. Trends like oil bunkering, extortions from the MNOCs operating in the region, kidnapping of foreign (expatriate) workers for huge ransom and there likes – all show greed contents, but can be and have been seen as part of the struggle. Hence it can be said that they are means of rebel funding in the light of sustaining the struggle and not necessarily because they are ends in themselves. It is on this ground that Orogun (2009:18) avers thus:

> *In some respects, the greed or grievance analytical perspective sheds insightful knowledge on the root causes of restiveness … However as the Niger Delta study illustrates, it is important to avoid mono-lined paradigms that seek to exclusively establish a direct causality and tight correlation between resource abundance and the spectre of armed conflicts.*

Following this line of thought, this research insists that the forms of greed notable in this crisis emerged only because of the incentives created by the state's inability to adequately and favourably respond to the genuine calls from the region. Its choice of force created an

atmosphere of distrust, and with the fact that the political system is messed up along patronage and clientele networks, it thus became quite a favourable ground for all sorts of groups and their motives in the share of the booty of oil

In the event of all these issues, the research also discovered that the fatal dependence on oil (revenue) appears to be the major reason for which the state clings on to the present revenue allocation formula. In fact, the discourse of national integration and national unity is founded mainly upon the centrality of oil, hence the argument that oil is a natural endowment which no region should claim to be its own, and being one nation, it is the wealth of the nation for which all must partake for the common good.[18] This position forgets about the regions and the price of oil extraction and gas flaring; it also forgets the fact that prior to the centrality of oil in the world economy, resource control held sway in Nigeria when the North and West had viable natural resource wealth (Wangbu, 2005). The overall fact is that there is now a scramble for oil wealth because it is in the minority region, but this is placed under the discourse of national interest and the idea of the common good.

Finally, the weak state syndrome remains a huge issue in Nigeria. The research showed that the Nigerian state neither has the capacity to adequately provide for its citizens nor impact positively in their overall development and safety. Its repressive approach to the agitation as well as the lack lustre developmental strategies that lack the political will and ethos needed to spur on development, point to the fact that the state is intrinsically weak.[19] This character of the state in terms of responding to the socio-political impasse in the Niger Delta thus culminated in the formation of new forms of identities, and a situation of socio-political unrest and economic sabotage within and (now) outside the region. It is a fact that once conflict begins, it is difficult to check mate its escalation, and in the case of the Niger Delta this research has also shown that the shared experiences of exploitation, poverty, repression, and executions have risen to a crisis point in the region. Since these issues were not adequately handled from the onset, the crisis thus escalated and curbing the consequent outcome appears to have become an almost impossible task.

[18]This is fundamentally the argument posed by the federal government and its progenitors who argue against resource control. Among those who propagated this discourse was Chief Obafemi Awolowo in 1969 when he was appointed by Gowon to draft a new revenue allocation formula. It is instructive though to note that he (Awolowo) had vehemently argued for regional control of revenue from natural resources when the western and northern regions accounted for more cash crop products in Nigeria prior to the rise of oil in world economy.

[19] Some authors, like Uwafiokun and Uwem (2006), refer to Nigeria as a failed state in terms of dealing with the Niger Delta crisis.

5.3 Limitations of research

At this juncture it is only pertinent to state that this research does not claim to be a consummation of an explanation of the issues underlying the Niger Delta crisis. It accepts that it remains open to further research since the crisis is dynamic and changing according to the socio-political and economic trends within the state. It is thus against this backdrop that the answers that this research offers can be said to have limitations and open for more scholarship.

In the first place it has to be noted that one particular theoretical and analytical approach to such a complex case study as Nigeria will be grossly inadequate. The research can thus be said to have started with an approach tilted towards the rational choice approach, but soon realized that rational choice is complemented here by path dependency since the choice of actors in the Niger Delta cannot be devoid of the socio-political setting of Nigeria.

Secondly, the research answers are limited within the answers extrapolated from academic works as well as scholarly opinions. Since no interviews or surveys were conducted and the research did not include fieldwork in the Niger Delta region, its answers are guided by a juxtaposition of the issues latent in the crisis with the C&H greed model.

Thirdly, the research answers are constrained by the thin line between greed and grievance in this conflict. This makes it difficult to channel a straight course in terms of argumentation, though it insists that greed exists but just because of the historical and socio-political issues that on the long run have made the greedy-bent to the crisis acceptable to the aggrieved actors – seen as an intrinsic part of the struggle.

Fourthly, in terms of areas of further study, it would be interesting to see how the crisis pans out with an indigene of the Niger Delta at the helm of affairs in the state. The question thus follows: what is the possibility of an end to the crisis if an indigene of the region becomes a president of Nigeria? It is noteworthy to note that the acting president is from the Niger Delta, hence the importance of the question to the future of the state especially as the country heads to the polls in April 2011 to elect a new president.

Finally, the quest for resource control and revenue allocation has been dobbed as the reason for the deadlocked struggle. In this vein it would also be important to look at the possibility of resource control or an increase in the revenue allocation (up to 50%) in terms of an end to this pervasive militant trend in the region.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The limitations of the C&H greed model and indeed the resource curse hypothesis (which tries to turn natural resources into rational actors in themselves – having in themselves the innate capacities to lead to different negativities in resource-rich but poor and dependent countries) create an avenue for this study to make brief and succinct recommendations with regards to understanding the crisis with a view to reducing it to the barest minimum.

In the first place, the C&H model adequately shows that poor economic performance – poverty – is the reason for different rebellious attitudes on the part of the aggrieved. Thus it will be proper for state actors to genuinely try to improve socioeconomic institutions to foster economic growth. One way of doing this is by economic diversification to reduce the dependence on oil. This will open up more avenues for groups and individuals to be part of the planning of the development state. Orogun (2009) rightly mentioned that the non-oil sector is beginning to grow in Nigeria, but its growth is largely contemptible and remains overshadowed by the oil sector. This means that some form of liberal market policies also need to be employed within the region – though the mechanisms for checkmating their excesses must also be in place.

Secondly, corruption is a major problem in the socio-political and economic life of the Nigerian polity hence the yearly categorization of the country as one of the most corrupt in the world.[20] The oil factor seems to have heightened this trend since its revenues are easily appropriated by political elites in power. The non-existence of mechanisms for accountability thus increases this looting of the national coffers for patronage and clientele networks. This is no wonder the reason for which there appears to be a lack of genuine commitment on the part of the state elites to adequately grasp and tackle the Niger Delta crisis. There seems to be no moral and political ethos on their part to drive development. It is also the root of *rentierism* and *prebendalism* especially as oil remains a source of economic and political power for which they will rather not let go. In this situation, it is the rejuvenation of that ethos and the resurrection of the political will needed to drive socioeconomic growth that will enhance the steps towards a more peaceful region. This demands the potency of democratic institutions – civil society and other governance mechanisms – needed to checkmate the trends of political

[20] Transparency International Annual reports' Corruption Perception Index shows that between 2006 and 2009 Nigeria has been ranked 2.2 in 2006, 2.2 in 2007, 2.7 in 2008 and 2.5 in 2009. This position places Nigeria among the class of the most corrupt countries following its low points over this period (See, Transparency International Annual Report, 2006: 21; 2007: 27; 2008: 51; and 2009:49).

patronage networks. The emergence of the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), a derivation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to ensure that oil revenues are duly accounted for is a good step, but demands the political will and ethos to actually be efficient. Other mechanisms to checkmate elite looting like the Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the International move towards finger printing for oil in the world market to guard against the sale of bunkered oil from the region are all workable mechanisms if and only if they are grounded on genuine political will to do so.

Finally, it is important that all actors at the federal, state and other peripheral levels be positively active in the quest towards ending the spate of violence and improving the lot of the Niger Delta socioeconomically. It is important that there is a shift in dependence on the federal government by the states and local governments, and developmental drives in the region must of necessity take into account the needs of the people. Decisions about the welfare of the people cannot be taken outside of the consent and views of the people, hence the need for a people-oriented developmental strategy and participatory governance especially with regards to the needs of the people. It has to be noted that the MEND insists that the federal and state governments have continually used political rhetoric instead of genuine developmental drives to attend to the Niger Delta quest, hence its insistence on the return to fiscal federalism. So it is important that the state shows a real sense of duty with regards to ameliorating the plight of the people of the Niger Delta. With this the opportunity cost for rebellion will increase and rebel mobilisation will definitely reduce in congruence with the C&H hypothetical standpoint.

CONCLUSION: ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The main focus of this research has been the rising trend of violence in the Niger Delta region as a challenge to nation-building in Nigeria. It sought to understand the dynamics of this crisis under the rubric of the C&H *greed versus grievance theory* – an intrinsic part of the resource curse debate and a rational choice approach to the crisis. The research, however, observed that this approach needs to take note of other underlying issues since the Niger Delta case has historical and sociological undertones that demands more integrated analytical frameworks. It is thus in this vein that the inquest into the crisis of nation-building in Nigeria takes a cross sectional analysis of different social, political and economic situations with regards to the Niger Delta so as to facilitate a greater grasp of the crisis that the state is into.

Indeed, the situation in the Niger Delta crisis shows that rational choices play a vital role in the dynamics of conflicts within natural resource abundant states. Choices appear to be based on what seems most beneficial to people's quest, and in most cases the national cake that may be at stake – given the situations that they have to choose from – to keep fighting or to abandon the quest (Lake and Rothchild, 1996). Thus, Nigeria ostensibly appears to be risking a civil war in the future in the face of these conflicts as far as incentives for greed and grievance are still created because of commitment issues within the state – issues that have remained at the heart of the national discourse of integration: poverty, unemployment, revenue allocation, resource control, political marginalisation, exploitation and repression.

In this light, this research agrees that poor economic performance plays a major role in many of these conflicts (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a: 25). However, in restating the research question – does the Collier and Hoeffler greed and grievance theory adequately explain conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria – this research avers that the greed versus grievance theory has only partially explained these conflicts as they relate to the Niger Delta situation. This is the reason for which this research examined the resource curse to aid a better grasp of the dynamics of these conflicts in the Niger Delta in terms of the issues of the stifling of the property rights of the people under the pretence of nation-building and the consolidation of the nation-state in Nigeria especially in the implementation of the principles of democracy in Nigeria. The moribund nature of state institutions; the greed from foreign agents – MNOCs – the role of ethno-regional politics, corruption, prebendalism, patronage and clientele networks in the redistribution of oil revenues; and on the whole the pre-eminence of the oil factor in all of these with regards to the Niger Delta, all enable a clearer grasp of the crisis that its dynamism has remained as complex as Nigeria itself.

Indeed these issues, together, enhance a clearer grasp of the complexity of the Nigerian case. In essence, they exacerbate violent conflicts and have the capacity of turning into civil war, although the position of this research is that despite the ostensibly hostile and volatile nature of the Nigerian state, the possibility of a civil war (based on oil and its wealth) remains oblique in the near future. It also proposes that the Niger Delta militancy *may* continue, and the region *may* only be united in the quest for the implementation of the principles of federalism. However, mobilisation along regional lines in terms of secessionist or even non-secessionist civil war remains a mirage.

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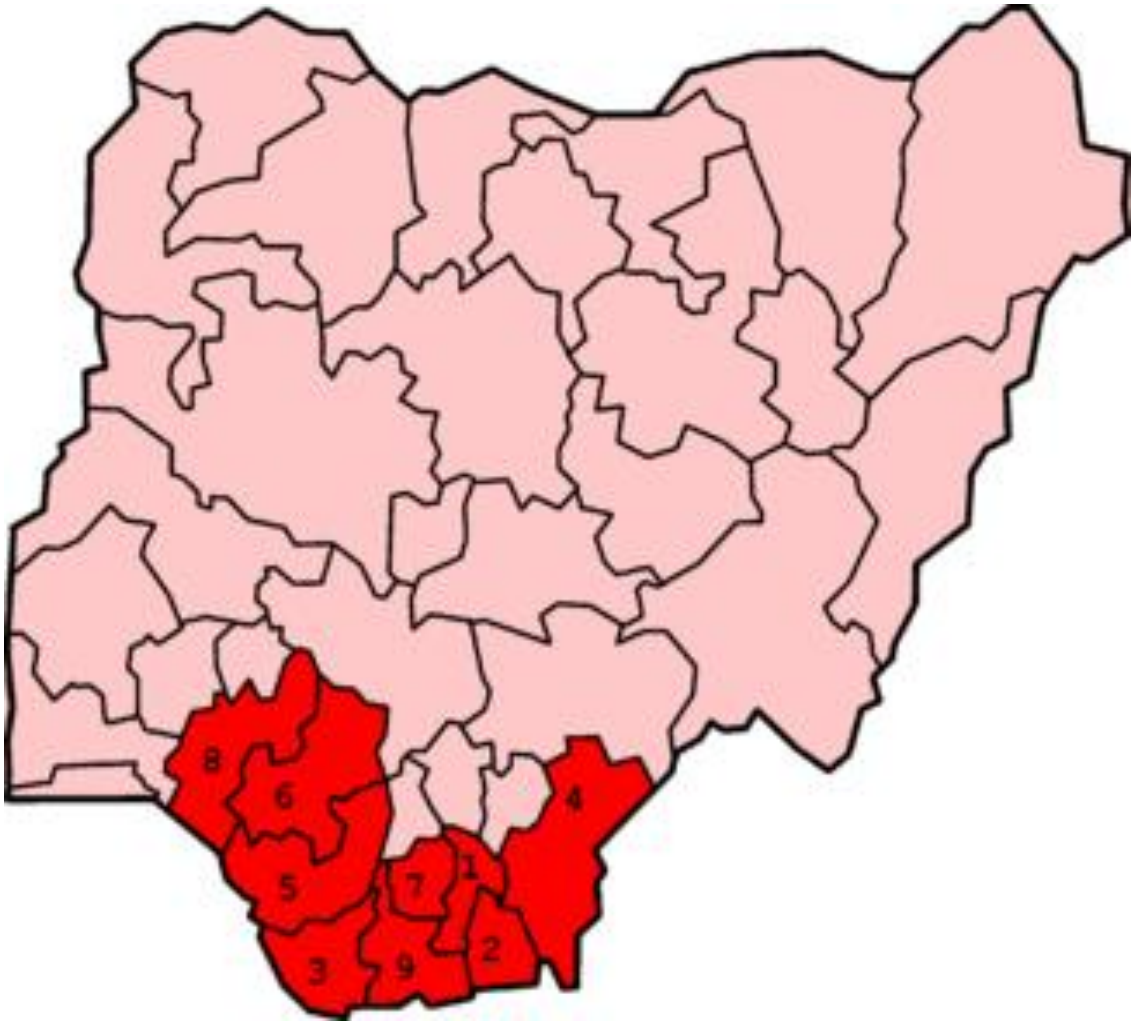
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APPENDIX I

THE MAP OF NIGERIA SITUATING THE NIGER DELTA STATES



Map of Nigeria numerically showing states typically considered part of the Niger Delta region: 1. Abia, 2. Akwa Ibom, 3. Bayelsa, 4. Cross River, 5. Delta, 6. Edo, 7.Imo, 8. Ondo, 9. Rivers *Click to view*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niger_Delta

APPENDIX II

TABLE I

SECTORAL SUMMARIES OF PROJECTS EXECUTED BY THE NDDC IN 2002 AND 2003

Project type	2002 projects	2003 Projects	Completed Projects	Commissionable Projects	Commissioned Projects	Total no. of Projects
Building	402	15	316	275	138	417
Canalization	9	9	0	0	0	18
Electrification	130	24	125	106	46	154
Flood control	1	0	1	1	0	1
Jetty	41	6	32	31	11	47
Roads/Bridges	40	18	20	12	4	58
Water	91	24	76	70	21	115
Grand Total	714	96	570	495	220	810

Source: Omotola, Shiola. (2007). "From the OMPADEC to the NDDC: An assessment of State responses to environmental insecurity in the Niger Delta, Nigeria." *Africa Today,* 7(1), 72-89.

APPENDIX III

The Ogoni Bill of Rights

The ***Ogoni Bill of Rights*** which was presented to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1990 called for, among other things, political autonomy to participate in the affairs of the Republic as a distinct and separate unit (by whatever name called), provided that this autonomy guarantees political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people; the right to control and use a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development; adequate representations, as of right, in all Nigerian national institutions, and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.

OGONI BILL OF RIGHTS

PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT
AND PEOPLE OF NIGERIA
October, 1990

WITH

AN APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

by

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
(MOSOP) December, 1991

Published by Saros International Publishers, 24 Aggrey Road, PO Box 193, Port Harcourt, Nigeria for The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) June 1992.

FOREWORD

In August 1990 the Chiefs and people of Ogoni in Nigeria met to sign one of the most important declarations to come out of Africa in recent times: the Ogoni Bill of Rights By the Bill, the Ogoni people, while underlining their loyalty to the Nigerian nation, laid claim as a people to their independence which British colonialism had first violated and then handed over to some other Nigerian ethnic groups in October 1960.

The Bill of Rights presented to the Government and people of Nigeria called for political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people, control and use of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development, adequate and direct representation as of right for Ogoni people in all Nigerian national institutions and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.

These rights which should have reverted to the Ogoni after the termination of British rule, have been usurped in the past thirty years by the majority ethnic groups of Nigeria. They have not only been usurped; they have been misused and abused, turning Nigeria into a hell on earth for the Ogoni and similar ethnic minorities. Thirty years of Nigerian independence has done no more than outline the wretched quality of the leadership of the Nigerian majority ethnic groups and their cruelty as they have plunged the nation into ethnic strife, carnage, war, dictatorship, retrogression and the greatest waste of national resources ever

witnessed in world history, turning generations of Nigerians, born and unborn into perpetual debtors.

The Ogoni Bill of Rights rejects once and for all this incompetent indigenous colonialism and calls for a new order in Nigeria, an order in which each ethnic group will have full responsibility for its own affairs and competition between the various peoples of Nigeria will be fair, thus ushering in a new era of peaceful co-existence, co-operation and national progress.

This is the path which has been chosen by the European tribes in the European Community, and by the Russians and their neighbours in the new Commonwealth which they are now fashioning. The Yugoslav tribes are being forced into similar ways. The lesson is that high fences make good neighbours. The Ogoni people are therefore in the mainstream of international thought.

It is well known that since the issuance of the Bill of Rights the Babangida administration has continued in the reactionary ways of all the military rulers of Nigeria from Ironsi through Gowon, Obasanjo and Buhari, seeking to turn Nigeria into a unitary state against the wishes of the Nigerian peoples and trends in world history. The split of the country into 30 states and 600 local governments in 1991 is a waste of resources, a veritable exercise in futility. It is a further attempt to transfer the seized resources of the Ogoni and other minority groups in the delta to the majority ethnic groups of the country. Without oil, these states and local governments will not exist for one day longer.

The import of the creation of these states is that the Ogoni and other minority groups will continue to be slaves of the majority ethnic groups. It is a gross abuse of human rights, a notable undemocratic act which flies in the face of modern history. The Ogoni people are right to reject it. While they are willing, for the reasons of Africa, to share their resources with other Africans, they insist that it must be on the principles of mutuality, of fairness, of equity and justice.

It has been assumed that because the Ogoni are few in number, they can be abused and denied their rights and that their environment can be destroyed without compunction. This has been the received wisdom of Nigeria according to military dictatorships. 1992 will put paid to this as the Ogoni put their case to the international community.

It is the intention of the Ogoni people to draw the attention of the American government and people to the fact that the oil which they buy from Nigeria is stolen property and that it is against American law to receive stolen goods.

The Ogoni people will be telling the European Community that their demand of the Yugoslav tribes that they respect human rights and democracy should also apply to Nigeria and that they should not wait for Nigeria to burst into ethnic strife and carnage before enjoining these civilized values on a Nigeria which depends on European investment, technology and credit.

The Ogoni people will be appealing to the British Government and the leaders of the Commonwealth who have urged on Commonwealth countries the virtues of good government, democracy, human rights and environmental protection that no government can be good if it imposes and operates laws which cheat a section of its peoples; that democracy does not exist where laws do not protect minorities and that the environment of the Ogoni and other delta minorities has been ruined beyond repair by multi-national oil companies under the protection of successive Nigerian administrations run by Nigerians of the majority ethnic groups.

The Ogoni people will make representation to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to the effect that giving loans and credit to the Nigerian Government on the understanding that oil money will be used to repay such loans is to encourage the Nigerian government to continue to dehumanise the Ogoni people and to devastate the environment and ecology of the Ogoni and other delta minorities among whom oil is found.

The Ogoni people will inform the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity that the Nigerian Constitution and the actions of the power elite in Nigeria flagrantly violate the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights; and that Nigeria in 1992 is no different from Apartheid South Africa. The Ogoni people will ask that Nigeria be duly chastised by both organizations for its inhuman actions and uncivilized behaviour. And if Nigeria persists in its perversity, then it should be expelled from both organizations.

These actions of the Ogoni people aim at the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Ogoni people as a distinct ethnic community in Nigeria, and at the establishment of a democratic Nigeria, a progressive multi-ethnic nation, a realistic society of equals, a just nation.

What the Ogoni demand for themselves, namely autonomy, they also ask for others throughout Nigeria and, indeed, the continent of Africa.

It is their hope that the international community will respond to these demands as they have done to similar demands in other parts of the world.

Ken Saro-Wiwa
Port Harcourt 24/12/91

STATEMENT BY DR. G.B. LETON, OON JP

President of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)

1. The Ogoni case is of genocide being committed in the dying years of the twentieth century by multi-national oil companies under the supervision of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is that of a distinct ethnic minority in Nigeria who feel so suffocated by existing political, economic and social conditions in Nigeria that they have no choice but to cry out to the international community for salvation.

2. The Ogoni are a distinct ethnic group inhabiting the coastal plains terraces to the north-east of the Niger delta. On account of the hitherto very rich plateau soil, the people are mainly subsistence farmers but they also engage in migrant and nomadic fishing. They occupy an area of about 400 square miles and number an estimated 500,000. The population density of about 1,250 persons per square mile is among the highest in any rural area in the world and compares with the Nigerian national average of 300. The obvious problem is the pressure on land.

3. Petroleum was discovered in Ogoni at Bomu (Dere) in 1958; since then an estimated US 100 billion dollars worth of oil has been carted away from Ogoniland. In return for this, the Ogoni have no pipe-borne water, no electricity, very few roads, ill-equipped schools and hospitals and no industry whatsoever.

4. Ogoni has suffered and continues to suffer the degrading effects of oil exploration and exploitation: lands, streams and creeks are totally and continually polluted; the atmosphere is for ever charged with hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and carbon

dioxide; many villages experience the infernal quaking of the wrath of gas flares which have been burning 24 hours a day for 33 years; acid rain, oil spillages and blowouts are common. The result of such unchecked environmental pollution and degradation are that (i) The Ogoni can no longer farm successfully. Once the food basket of the eastern Niger Delta, the Ogoni now buy food (when they can afford it); (ii) Fish, once a common source of protein, is now rare. Owing to the constant and continual pollution of our streams and creeks, fish can only be caught in deeper and offshore waters for which the Ogoni are not equipped. (iii) All wildlife is dead. (iv) The ecology is changing fast. The mangrove tree, the aerial roots of which normally provide a natural and welcome habitat for many a sea food - crabs, periwinkles, mudskippers, cockles, mussels, shrimps and all - is now being gradually replaced by unknown and otherwise useless plams. (v) The health hazards generated by an atmosphere charged with hydrocarbon vapour, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide are innumerable.

5. The once beautiful Ogoni countryside is no more a source of fresh air and green vegetation. All one sees and feels around is death. Death is everywhere in Ogoni. Ogoni languages are dying; Ogoni culture is dying; Ogoni people, Ogoni animals, Ogoni fishes are dying because of 33 years of hazardous environmental pollution and resulting food scarcity. In spite of an alarming density of population, American and British oil companies greedily encroach on more and more Ogoni land, depriving the peasants of their only means of livelihood. Mining rents and royalties for Ogoni oil are seized by the Federal Government of Nigeria which offers the Ogoni people NOTHING in return. Ogoni is being killed so that Nigeria can live.

6. Politically, the Ogoni are being ground to the dust under dictatorial decrees imposed by successive military regimes in Nigeria and laws smuggled by military dictatorships into the Nigerian Constitution which Constitution does not protect ethnic minorities and which today bears no resemblance whatsoever to the covenant entered into by the federating Nigerian ethnic groups at Independence.

7. Ethnicity is a fact of Nigerian life. Nigeria is a federation of ethnic groups. In practice, however, ethnocentrism is the order of the day in the country. The rights and resources of the Ogoni have been usurped by the majority ethnic groups and the Ogoni consigned to slavery and possible extinction. The Ogoni people reject the current political and administrative structuring of Nigeria imposed by the Military Government. They believe with Obafemi Awolowo that in a true federation, each ethnic gourp, no matter how small is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large.

8. The Ogoni people therefore demand POLITICAL AUTONOMY as a distinct and separate unit of the Nigerian federation - autonomy which will guarantee them certain basic rights essential to their survival as a people. This demand has been spelt out in the Ogoni Bill of Rights. The Ogoni people stand by the Bill and now appeal to the international community, as a last resort, to save them from extinction.

(Sgd) Dr. G.B. Leton
President, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)

OGONI BILL OF RIGHTS PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

We, the people of Ogoni (Babbe, Gokana, Ken Khana, Nyo Khana and Tai) numbering about 500,000 being a separate and distinct ethnic nationality within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, wish to draw the attention of the Governments and people of Nigeria to the undermentioned facts:

1. That the Ogoni people, before the advent of British colonialism, were not conquered or colonized by any other ethnic group in present-day Nigeria.

2. That British colonization forced us into the administrative division of Opobo from 1908 to 1947.

3. That we protested against this forced union until the Ogoni Native Authority was created in 1947 and placed under the then Rivers Province.

4. That in 1951 we were forcibly included in the Eastern Region of Nigeria where we suffered utter neglect.

5. That we protested against this neglect by voting against the party in power in the Region in 1957, and against the forced union by testimony before the Willink Commission of Inquiry into Minority Fears in 1958.

6. That this protest led to the inclusion of our nationality in Rivers State in 1967, which State consists of several ethnic nationalities with differing cultures, languages and aspirations.

7. That oil was struck and produced in commercial quantities on our land in 1958 at K. Dere (Bomu oilfield).

8. That oil has been mined on our land since 1958 to this day from the following oilfields: (i) Bomu (ii) Bodo West (iii) Tai (iv) Korokoro (v) Yorla (vi) Lubara Creek and (vii) Afam by Shell Petroleum Development Company (Nigeria) Limited.

9. That in over 30 years of oil mining, the Ogoni nationality have provided the Nigerian nation with a total revenue estimated at over 40 billion Naira (N40 billion) or 30 billion dollars.

10. That in return for the above contribution, the Ogoni people have received NOTHING.

11. That today, the Ogoni people have:

(i) No representation whatsoever in ALL institutions of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

(ii) No pipe-borne water.

(iii) No electricity.

(iv) No job opportunities for the citizens in Federal, State, public sector or private sector companies.

(v) No social or economic project of the Federal Government.

12. That the Ogoni languages of Gokana and Khana are underdeveloped and are about to disappear, whereas other Nigerian languages are being forced on us.

13. That the Ethnic policies of successive Federal and State Governments are gradually pushing the Ogoni people to slavery and possible extinction.

14. That the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited does not employ Ogoni people at a meaningful or any level at all, in defiance of the Federal government s regulations.

15. That the search for oil has caused severe land and food shortages in Ogoni one of the most densely populated areas of Africa (average: 1,500 per square mile; national average: 300 per square mile).

16. That neglectful environmental pollution laws and substandard inspection techniques of the Federal authorities have led to the complete degradation of the Ogoni environment, turning our homeland into an ecological disaster.

17. That the Ogoni people lack education, health and other social facilities.

18. That it is intolerable that one of the richest areas of Nigeria should wallow in abject poverty and destitution.

19. That successive Federal administrations have trampled on every minority right enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution to the detriment of the Ogoni and have by administrative structuring and other noxious acts transferred Ogoni wealth exclusively to other parts of the Republic.

20. That the Ogoni people wish to manage their own affairs.

NOW, therefore, while reaffirming our wish to remain a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we make demand upon the Republic as follows:

That the Ogoni people be granted POLITICAL AUTONOMY to participate in the affairs of the Republic as a distinct and separate unit by whatever name called, provided that this Autonomy guarantees the following:

(i) Political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people.

(ii) The right to the control and use of a fair proportion of OGONI economic resources for Ogoni development.

(iii) Adequate and direct representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions.

(iv) The use and development of Ogoni languages in all Nigerian territory.

(v) The full development of Ogoni culture.

(vi) The right to religious freedom.

(vii) The right to protect the OGONI environment and ecology from further degradation.

We make the above demand in the knowledge that it does not deny any other ethnic group in the Nigerian Federation of their rights and that it can only conduce to peace, justice and fairplay and hence stability and progress in the Nigerian nation.

We make the demand in the belief that, as Obafemi Awolowo has written: In a true federation, each ethnic group no matter how small, is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large.

We demand these rights as equal members of the Nigerian Federation who contribute and have contributed to the growth of the Federation and have a right to expect full returns from that Federation.

Adopted by general acclaim of the Ogoni people on the 26th day of August, 1990 at Bori, Rivers State and signed by: (see under).

ADDENDUM TO THE OGONI BILL OF RIGHTS

We, the people of Ogoni, being a separate and distinct ethnic nationality within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, hereby state as follows:

(a) That on October 2, 1990 we addressed an Ogoni Bill of Rights to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida and members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council;

(b) That after a one-year wait, the President has been unable to grant us the audience which we sought to have with him in order to discuss the legitimate demands contained in the Ogoni Bill of Rights;

(c) That our demands as outlined in the Ogoni Bill of Rights are legitimate, just and our inalienable right and in accord with civilized values worldwide;

(d) That the Government of the Federal Republic has continued, since October 2, 1990, to decree measures and implement policies which further marginalize the Ogoni people, denying us political autonomy, our rights to our resources, to the development of our languages and culture, to adequate representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions and to the protection of our environment and ecology from further degradation;

(e) That we cannot sit idly by while we are, as a people, dehumanized and slowly exterminated and driven to extinction even as our rich resources are siphoned off to the exclusive comfort and improvement of other Nigerian communities, and the shareholders of multi-national oil companies.

Now therefore, while re-affirming our wish to remain a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we hereby authorize the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) to make representation, for as long as these injustices continue, to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the African Commission on Human and Peoples rights, the European Community and all international bodies which have a role to play in the preservation of our nationality, as follows:

1. That the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has, in utter disregard and contempt for human rights, since independence in 1960 till date, denied us our political rights to self-determination, economic rights to our resources, cultural rights to the development of our languages and culture, and social rights to education, health and adequate housing and to representation as of right in national institutions;

2. That, in particular, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has refused to pay us oil royalties and mining rents amounting to an estimated 20 billion US dollars for petroleum mined from our soil for over thirty-three years;

3. That the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria does not protect any of our rights whatsoever as an ethnic minority of 500,000 in a nation of about 100 million people and that the voting power and military might of the majority ethnic groups have been used remorselessly against us at every point in time;

4. That multi-national oil companies, namely Shell (Dutch/British) and Chevron (American) have severally and jointly devastated our environment and ecology, having flared gas in our villages for 33 years and caused oil spillages, blow-outs etc., and have dehumanised our people, denying them employment and those benefits which industrial organizations in Europe and America routinely contribute to their areas of operation;

5. That the Nigerian elite (bureaucratic, military, industrial and academic) have turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to these acts of dehumanisation by the ethnic majority and have colluded with all the agents of destruction aimed at us;

6. That we cannot seek restitution in the courts of law in Nigeria as the act of expropriation of our rights and resources has been institutionalised in the 1979 and 1989 Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which Constitutions were acts of a Constituent Assembly imposed by a military regime and do not , in any way, protect minority rights or bear resemblance to the tacit agreement made at Nigerian independence.

7. That the Ogoni people abjure violence in their just struggle for their rights within the Federal Republic of Nigeria but will, through every lawful means, and for as long as is necessary, fight for social justice and equity for themselves and their progeny, and in particular demand political autonomy as a distinct and separate unit within the Nigerian nation with full right to (i) control Ogoni political affairs, (ii) use at least fifty per cent of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development; (iii) protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation; (iv) ensure the full restitution of the harm done to the health of our people by the flaring of gas, oil spillages, oil blow- outs, etc. by the following oil companies: Shell, Chevron and their Nigerian accomplices.

8. That without the intervention of the international community the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the ethnic majority will continue these noxious policies until the Ogoni people are obliterated from the face of the earth.

Adopted by general acclaim of the Ogoni people on the 26th day of August 1991 at Bori, Rivers State of Nigeria.

Signed on behalf of the Ogoni people by:

BABBE:

HRH Mark Tsaro-Igbara, Gbenemene Babbe; HRH F.M.K. Noryaa, Menebua, Ka-Babbe; Chief M.A.M. Tornwe III, JP; Prince J.S. Sangha; Dr. Israel Kue; Chief A.M.N. Gua.

GOKANA:

HRH James P. Bagia, Gberesako XI, Gberemene Gokana; Chief E.N. Kobani, JP Tonsimene Gokana; Dr. B.N. Birabi; Chief Kemte Giadom, JP; Chief S.N. Orage.

KEN-KHANA:

HRH M.H.S. Eguru, Gbenemene Ken-Khana; HRH C.B.S. Nwikina, Emah III, Menebua Bom; Mr. M.C. Daanwii; Chief T.N. Nwieke; Mr. Ken Saro-wiwa; Mr. Simeon Idemyor.

NYO-KHANA:

HRH W.Z.P. Nzidee, Genemene Baa I of Nyo-Khana; Dr. G.B. Leton, OON, JP; Mr. Lekue Lah-Loolo; Mr. L.E. Mwara; Chief E.A. Apenu; Pastor M.P. Maeba. TAI: HRH B.A. Mballey, Gbenemene Tai; HRH G.N. Gininwa, Menebua Tua Tua; Chief J.S. Agbara; Chief D.J.K. Kumbe; Chief Fred Gwezia; HRH A. Demor-Kanni, Meneba Nonwa.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD:

1. Prevail on the American Government to stop buying Nigerian oil. It is stolen property.
2. Prevail on Shell and Chevron to stop flaring gas in Ogoni.
3. Prevail on the Federal Government of Nigeria to honour the rights of the Ogoni people to self-determination and AUTONOMY.
4. Prevail on the Federal Government of Nigeria to pay all royalties and mining rents collected on oil mined from Ogoni since 1958.
5. Prevail on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to stop giving loans to the Federal Government of Nigeria; all loans which depend for their repayment on the exploitation of Ogoni oil resources.
6. Send urgent medical and other aid to the Ogoni people.
7. Prevail on the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity and the Commonwealth of Nations to either get the Federal Government of Nigeria to obey the rules and mores of these organisations, face sanctions or be expelled from them.
8. Prevail on European and American Governments to stop giving aid and credit to the Federal Government of Nigeria as aid and credit only go to encourage the further dehumanisation of the Ogoni people.
9. Prevail on European and American Governments to grant political refugee status to all Ogoni people seeking protection from the political persecution and genocide at the hands of the Federal Government of Nigeria.
10. Prevail on Shell and Chevron to pay compensation to the Ogoni People for ruining the Ogoni environment and the health of Ogoni men, women and children.

Source: http://www.mosop.org/ogoni_bill_of_rights.html **(accessed on 9-02-2011)**

APPENDIX III

Declaration of Niger Delta Bill of Rights

We the ethnic nationalities of the Niger Delta Region [inhabitants of present day Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers States] with a population of over 30 million people, being culturally different and with unique problems not peculiar to, or, with any other nationality within the framework of the Republic of Nigeria, do conscientiously present to the people and government of Nigeria, the following established facts:

1. That, the Niger Delta People comprised of independent nationalities with their own traditions, customs and forms of government before the Berlin Conference of 1884, in which the continent of Africa was partitioned into spheres of influence by European imperialists.

2. That it was the aftermath of the Berlin conference that Nigeria [amalgamation of nationalities] became a British dominion and the Niger Delta people coerced into the colonial State of Nigeria in 1914 against their wish, fundamental rights and beliefs.

3. That the ethnic nationalities of the Niger Delta have been in existence independently for over 300 years before the Nigerian State was created in 1914.

4. That Niger Delta people were callously merged with other nationalities in 1939, when the British divided the Southern Protectorate into Eastern and Western Regions.

5. That the protest to the forced union was made in testimony before the Willink Commission of Inquiry into Minority Fears in 1958.

6. That the aforementioned protest led in part to the creation of the Mid Western Region in 1963; Rivers and Cross Rivers in 1967; Akwa Ibom and Delta States in 1994 and the State of Bayelsa in 1996.

7. That exploration and exploitation of crude oil from the lands and seas of the Niger Delta people commenced in 1937 by Shell D'Arcy, and commercial quantities of oil for export was struck at Oloibiri [Bayelsa State] in 1956; Ogoni [Rivers State] in 1958, and from various oilfields of the Niger Delta Region. That the following companies are on record to have prospected for oil in this Region: Mobil, Gulf [Chevron], Elf, Agip, Texaco, Total, StatOil, British Gas, Teneco, Deminex and Sun Oil.

8. That in over 40 years of oil exploration, the Niger Delta nationalities have provided the Nigerian State with a total revenue estimated at over $300 billion, but our people still live in abject poverty.

9. That even with such sacrifice and magnanimity aimed at promoting unity and national cohesiveness, the Niger Delta people have been plagued by State sponsored terrorism; wanton neglect; ecological catastrophes; deliberate destruction of historical villages; sacred institutions; farm lands, fishing settlements; constant inundation of air, water and river pollution by hydrocarbons.

10. That the dubious and nefarious policy alliance between the Nigerian State and multi national companies aimed at suppression and deprivation of the fundamental Rights of the

Niger Delta people is the source of their political marginalization and the degradation of the quality of human life in this region.

11. That the people of the Niger Delta are faced with unbridled destitution, generational poverty, oil spillages, oil pipeline fire disasters, ecological degradation of human habitat and illiteracy but no equitable remedy.

12. That the Niger Delta people are deprived of the control of their own resources for development in a Unitary Republic due to the promulgation of the following exploitative decrees and shadow legislations:

i) The Petroleum Act of 1969 and 1991

ii) The Land use Act of 1978 and 1993

iii) The National Waterways Decree of 1997

13. That we have watched with utmost disgust, the deliberate annihilation of the derivation principle of the Revenue Allocation Formula enacted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria from 100% in 1953; 50% in 1960; 45% in 1970; 20% in 1975; 25% in 1982; 1.55% in 1984; 3% in 1992; to 13% in 2000[read 7.25% due to the onshore/offshore decree]. We hereby state that this allocation formula is unacceptable and an affront on the intelligence of our people.

14. That we want to put on record that we sympathize with the recent declaration of the Shari'ah Islamic legal system in some northern states of the Federation as it is their religious right and obligation., but, we unequivocally insist on not being part of a Federation that elevates a religious law above the constitution.

15. That in view of the aforementioned insensitive and callous developments within the Nigerian State, we the officials of the Niger Delta Congress hereby make this binding resolution on November 10, 2000 on the anniversary of the judicial murder of Ken Saro Wiwa, to be known as the NIGER DELTA BILL OF RIGHTS and filed with the United Nations in New York as follows:

i. *The Niger Delta people hereby seek self determination and the right to religious and economic freedom with 100% control of our resources. Or, failing which, the Niger Delta people hereby request for political autonomy similar in status to other oppressed indigenous people e.g. East Timor.*

ii. The Niger Delta people insists on the right to develop our political structures, languages and cultures.

iii. That the oppressed people of the Niger Delta be recognized as people of distinct nationalities.

iv. We resolutely demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the Niger Delta Region of all forces of occupation controlled by the Nigerian State.

v. We urge the United Nations to summon the Nigerian State into question and conduct a Plebiscite for the nationalities of the Niger Delta to vote for self determination as guaranteed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Sgd

Chief Mpaka Princewill

President, Niger Delta Congress

Source: http://www.nigerdeltacongress.com/darticles/declaration_of_niger_delta_bill_.htm**. acessed on 9-02-2011.**

APPENDIX IV

The Kaiama Declaration:

"Introduction.. We, Ijaw youths drawn from over five hundred communities from over 40 clans that make up the Ijaw nation and representing 25 representative organisations met, today, in Kaiama to deliberate on the best way to ensure the continuos survival of the indigenous peoples of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality of the Niger Delta within the Nigerian State. After exhaustive deliberations, the Conference observed:

1. That it was through British colonisation that the IJAW NATION was forcibly put under the Nigerian State.
2. That, but for the economic interests of the imperialists, the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality would have evolved as a distinct and separate sovereign nation, enjoying undiluted political, economic, social, and cultural AUTONOMY.
3. That the division of the Southern Protectorate into East and West in 1939 by the British marked the beginning of the balkanisation of a hitherto territorially contiguous and culturally homogenous Ijaw people into political and administrative units, much to our disadvantage. This trend is continuing in the balkanisation of the Ijaws into six states - Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa-Ibom States, mostly as minorities who suffer socio-political, economic, cultural and psychological deprivation.
4. That the quality of life of Ijaw people is deteriorating as a result of utter neglect, suppression and marginalisation visited on Ijaws by the alliance of the Nigerian state and transnational oil companies.
5. That the political crisis in Nigeria is mainly about the struggle for the control of oil mineral resources which account for over 80% of GDP, 95% of national budget and 90% of foreign exchange earnings. From which, 65%, 75% and 70% respectively are derived from within the Ijaw nation. Despite these huge contributions, our rewards from the Nigerian State remains avoidable deaths resulting from ecological devastation and military repression.
6. That the unabating damage done to our fragile natural environment and to the health of our people is due in the main to uncontrolled exploration and exploitation of crude oil and natural gas which has led to numerous oil spillage's, uncontrolled gas flaring, the opening up of our forests to loggers, indiscriminate canalisation, flooding, land subsidence, coastal erosion, earth tremors etc. Oil and gas are exhaustible resources and the complete lack of concern for ecological rehabilitation, in the light of the Oloibiri experience, is a signal of impending doom for the peoples of Ijawland.
7. That the degradation of the environment of Ijawland by transnational oil companies and the Nigerian State arise mainly because Ijaw people have been robbed of their natural rights to ownership and control of their land and resources through the instrumentality of undemocratic Nigerian State legislation's such as the Land Use Decree of 1978, the Petroleum Decree of 1969, and 1991, the Lands (Title Vesting etc.) Decree No.52 of 1993 (Osborne Land Decree), the National Inlands Waterways Authority Decree No.13 of 1997 etc.
8. That the principle of Derivation in Revenue Allocation has been consciously and systematically obliterated by successive regimes of the Nigerian State. We note the drastic reduction of the Derivation Principle from 100% (1953), 50% (1960), 45%

(1970), 20% (1975) 2% (1982), 1.5% (1984) to 3% (1992 to date), and a rumoured 13% in Abacha's 1995 undemocratic and unimplemented Constitution.

9. That the violence in Ijawland and other parts of the Niger Delta area, sometimes manifesting in intra and inter ethnic conflicts are sponsored by the State and transnational oil companies to keep the communities of the Niger Delta area divided, weak and distracted from the causes of their problems.
10. That the recent revelation of the looting of the national treasury by the Abacha junta is only a reflection of an existing and continuing trend of stealing by public office holders in the Nigerian State. We remember the over 12 billion dollars Gulf war windfall, which was looted by Babangida and his cohorts. We note that over 70% of the billions of dollars being looted by military rulers and their civilian collaborators is derived from our ecologically devastated Ijawland.

Based on the foregoing, we the youths of Ijawland hereby make the following resolutions to be know as the Kaiama Declaration:

1. All land and natural resources (including mineral resources) within the Ijaw territory belong to Ijaw communities and are the basis of our survival.
2. We cease to recognise all undemocratic decrees that rob our people/communities of the right to ownership and control of our lives and resources, which were enacted without our participation and consent. These include the Land Use Decree and Petroleum Decree etc.
3. We demand the immediate withdrawal from Ijawland of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigerian State. Any oil company that employs the services of the armed forces of the Nigerian State to "protect" its operations will be viewed as an enemy of the Ijaw people. Family members of military personnel stationed in Ijawland should appeal to their people to leave the Ijaw area alone.
4. Ijaw youths in all the communities in all Ijaw clans in the Niger Delta will take steps to implement these resolutions beginning from the 30th of December 1998, as a step towards reclaiming the control of our lives. We, therefore, demand that all oil companies stop all exploration and exploitation activities in the Ijaw area. We are tired of gas flaring; oil spillage's, blowouts and being labelled saboteurs and terrorists. It is a case of preparing the noose for our hanging. We reject this labelling. Hence, we advise all oil companies, staff and contractors to withdraw from Ijaw territories by the 30th December, 1998 pending the resolution of the issue of resource ownership and control in the Ijaw area of the Niger Delta.
5. Ijaw Youths and peoples will promote the principle of peaceful coexistence between all Ijaw communities and with our neighbours, despite the provocative and divisive actions of the Nigerian State, transnational oil companies and their contractors. We offer a hand of friendship and comradeship to our neighbours: the Itsekiri, Ilaje, Urhobo, Isoko, Edo, Ibibio, Ogoni, Ekpeye, Ikwerre etc. We affirm our commitment to joint struggle with the other ethnic nationalities in the Niger Delta area for self determination.
6. We express our solidarity with all peoples organisation and ethnic nationalities in Nigeria and elsewhere who are struggling for self-determination and justice. In particular we note the struggle of the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Egi Women's Movement etc.

7. WE extend our hand of solidarity to the Nigerian oil workers (NUPENG and PENGASSAN) and expect that they will see this struggle for freedom as a struggle for humanity.
8. We reject the present transition to civil rule programme of the Abubakar regime, as it is not preceded by restructuring of the Nigerian federation. The way forward is a Sovereign National Conference of equally represented ethnic nationalities to discuss the nature of democratic federation of Nigerian ethnic nationalities. Conference notes the violence and killings that characterised the last local government elections in most parts of the Niger Delta. Conference pointed out that these electoral conflicts are a manifestation of the undemocratic and unjust nature of the military transition programme. Conference affirmed therefore, that the military are incapable of enthroning true democracy in Nigeria.
9. We call on all Ijaws to remain true to their Ijawness and to work for the total liberation of our people. You have no other true home but that which is in Ijawland.
10. We agree to remain within Nigeria but to demand and work for Self Government and resource control for the Ijaw people. Conference approved that the best way for Nigeria is a federation of ethnic nationalities. The Federation should be run on the basis of equality and social justice. Finally, Ijaw youths resolve to set up the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) to co-ordinate the struggle of Ijaw peoples for self-determination and justice.

Signed for the entire participants:
Felix Tuodolo…….. Ogoriba, Timi Kaiser-Wilhelm……”

www. Ijawland.com ▸KAIAMA DECLARATION
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