

ABSTRACT

The thesis focuses on the protracted tripartite conflict within and between local oil-bearing communities of the Niger Delta on the one hand, and between them, the state and foreign oil multinationals in the region, on the other hand. The focus also centers around how this has attracted international attention and the impact of internationalization on the conflict itself. The series of crises have been underpinned by tortuous issues on the ground for over four decades. There was a new dimension to the struggle in the early 1990s, which redefined the focus of the crises, when organized pressure groups protested against the inhuman and environmental hazards in the region. The thesis therefore examines the interest(s) of the main actors involved in the crisis in the period between 1993 and 2003 in order to establish the issues that accounted for the involvement of the international civil societies.

The thesis makes three significant arguments: one, that the differences in interests among the actors in relation to the issue of oil production and its impact on the local people laid the basis for the persistent struggle between the social movements/militant youths on one side and the state and oil multinationals operating in the region on the other.

The second argument the thesis advances is that the age-long crisis in the region became an agenda for the international community in the 1990s because of the trend and impact of globalization. This invariably allowed international Non-Governmental Organizations to intervene in exerting pressures on oil companies and the state to re-examine their policies in the region.

Finally, the recent internationalization of the crisis has not impacted enough to significantly address the demands of the people with the locally based pressure and, later, INGOs. This approach is intended to establish a pattern of alliances in the Niger Delta crisis. It might be healthy to state, *ab initio*, that there was a convergence of interests between the state and MNOCs on the one hand and between the social movements, local NGOs and INGOs on the other hand.

The thesis employed a multivariate form of data collection from primary sources like Multinational Oil Companies in the area especially, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), interviews with local people, NGOs and some government officials, with extensive use of secondary data on the Niger Delta.

The study's findings suggest that the internationalization of the crisis has engendered new approaches and attitudes on the part of the key actors in the Niger Delta. For its part, the state has adopted the agency approach in dealing with the issues confronting the region. Shell has increased its direct intervention efforts in addressing the demands of the local communities. However, these new approaches and attitudes have yielded minimal results in view of the militarization of the Niger Delta through the continuous deployment of troops by the state and the oil multinationals under the guise of security imperatives in response to the people's agitations, which are poverty driven.