

EXPLORING THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OIL EXPLOITATION, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND CONFLICTS IN THE NIGER DELTA

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Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted to the Degree of Master of Science to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other University.

.....

(Signature of Candidate)

.....day of year

Day

Month

Dedication

This is dedicated to the Almighty God for his guidance and providence and to My Parents Dr. and Mrs Victor Akujuru and Alabo and Mrs Nathaniel Fisisi for their endless support and encouragement to further my education.

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I thank God Almighty for the strength and courage to carry out this research.

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Abstract

Nigeria has earned huge revenues from the exploitation of oil resources in the Niger Delta since the discovery of oil in 1956. These huge economic gains have however, not been translated into sustainable growth and development. The Niger Delta is characterized by poverty and squalor which has been attributed to environmental degradation from the activities of oil exploitation by the Nigerian government and multi-national companies in the area and also poor governance. This study adopts an exploratory case study method to explores the interrelationship between Oil Exploitation, Environmental Impacts and Conflicts in the Niger Delta and tries to answer the question what is the nature of and inter-relationships between conflicts associated with oil exploitation in the Niger Delta Area?

The Niger Delta area has experienced a lot of oil related conflicts over the decades, which have manifested in the form of peaceful protests, violence, combat with Nigerian military forces, rise of youth militia groups, illegal oil markets, vandalism of oil pipelines, hijacking of offshore and onshore oil vessels, hostage taking, kidnapping of expatriates and oil company workers in the region. Conflicts have also taken the form of inter-communal conflicts, intra-communal conflicts, inter-state conflicts and conflicts between the Nigerian Government Oil Companies and the affected communities.

The root causes of conflicts include; the high dependence of the Niger government on oil revenue for economic growth, marginalisation and underdevelopment of the Niger Delta region, struggle for resource control and derivation formula, existing systems of neo-patrimonialism, corruption, land decrees and poor governance. The major findings include; the presence of crude oil in the Niger Delta is strongly linked to conflicts experienced in the area, rent seeking practices such as oil theft and bunkering, political thuggery, corruption and the struggle for economic and political power by political elites characterise the Niger Delta region.

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Abbreviations

CEHRD - Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development

DRC - Democratic Republic of the Congo

DPR - Department of Petroleum Resources

EBA - Egbesu Boys of Africa

IYC - Ijaw youth Council

LGA - The Local Government Area

MEND - Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta

MOSOP - Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People

NEMA - National Emergency Management Agency

NDDF - Niger Delta Defence Force

NDV - Niger Delta Vigilante

NDPVF - Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force

NDPF - Niger Delta Patriotic Force

NDCBP - Niger Delta Citizens and Budget Platform

NNPC - Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

NCDMB- Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board

NIDPRODEV - Niger Delta Professionals for Development

OMPADEC - Oil Minerals Producing Development Commission

OPEC - Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries

SND - Stakeholder Democracy Network

SPDC- Shell Petroleum Development Company

Chapter One

Background to the Study

1. Introduction

Nigeria is enriched with natural resources such as coal, iron ore, gas, crude oil etc. (Ejibunu and Tuschl, 2006). According to Ebegbulem et al. (2013), the exploration of crude oil can be traced back to when a German company started looking for crude oil in Nigeria in 1908. The Nigerian Bitumen Corporation also began searching for oil in this period in the western part of the country. The Shell Petroleum Development Company however continued with this search and discovered oil firstly in Oloibiri, a community in the Delta Area in 1956 (Ebegbulem et al., 2013) and in 1958, discovered oil in commercial quantity in the same community of about 5100 barrels per day (Akhakpe, 2012; Ebegbulem, et al., 2013).

According to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigeria is the largest oil producing country in Africa and is ranked 6th in the world with the maximum production capacity of 2.5million barrels per day with a reserve of crude oil that stands at 28.2 billion barrels (NNPC, 2015).

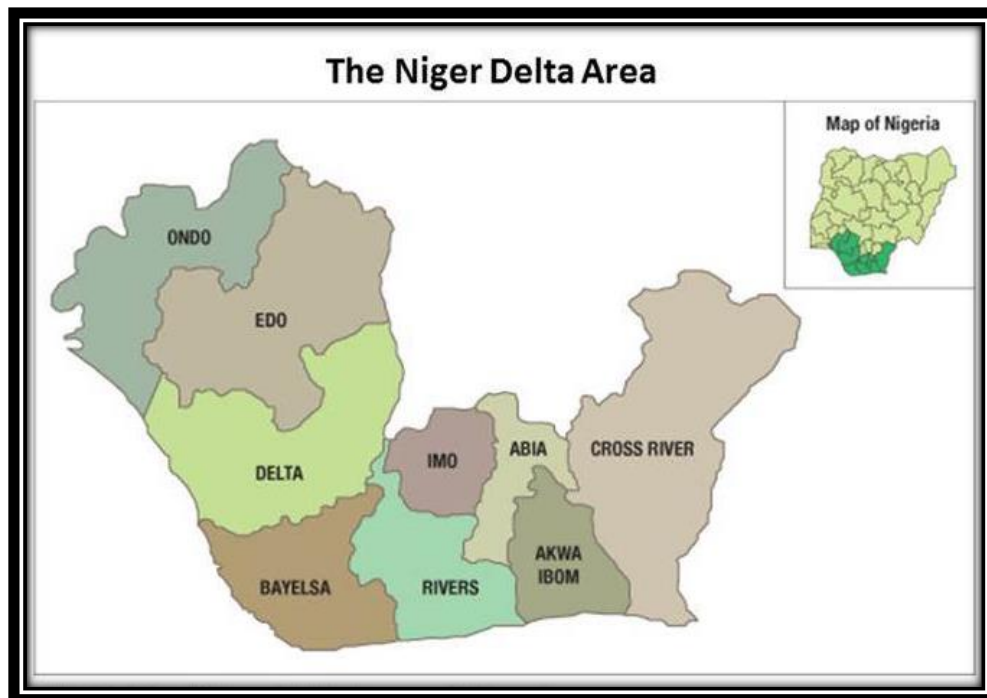
The oil industry has been continuously dominated by foreign multi-national companies like Agip, Shell, ELF and Chevron, which represent the five big multi-national companies in the area and they have taken up key roles in determining the trends in the industry over the years. Their activities have resulted in both positive and negative impacts on the country and the Niger Delta Area over the years such as wealth generation, oil pollution characterized by contamination of streams and rivers, destruction and biodiversity loss (Ejibunu and Tuschl, 2006). This chapter aims to give a brief description of the Niger Delta Area and a background on the origin of oil exploitation in Nigeria and the Niger Delta Region.

1.1 The Niger Delta

“Nine states” make up the Niger Delta Area of southern Nigeria which consists of: Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers State shown in Fig. 1 below.

According to the 2006 Nigerian Population and Housing census, the Niger Delta area is made up of about 21,044,081million people who make up about 15.9% of Nigeria’s population (NPC, 2010). With about 40 ethnic nationalities spread over about 6000 communities with about 1500 of them as host to both local and multinational oil companies (Kadafa, 2012; Agho and Uyigue, 2007).

Fig 1. The Niger Delta Area



Source: Niger Delta Working Group, 2015.

The Niger Delta represents the second largest delta amongst the deltas in the world with its coastline covering over 450 kilometres ending at the entrance of the Imo River. It is found on the “Atlantic coast of southern Nigeria” at the area where the “River Niger” splits into different branches (Ayodele, 2010: 110). The resources from this area are oil and gas which accounts for over 90% of the total value of exports of the country (Akhakpe, 2012; Agho and Uyigue, 2007: 5; Ejibunu and Tuschl, 2006; Ebegbulem et al., 2013).

Fig. 2 below shows the oil fields available in the Niger Delta region. And shows how an oil resource is distributed among the Niger Delta states.

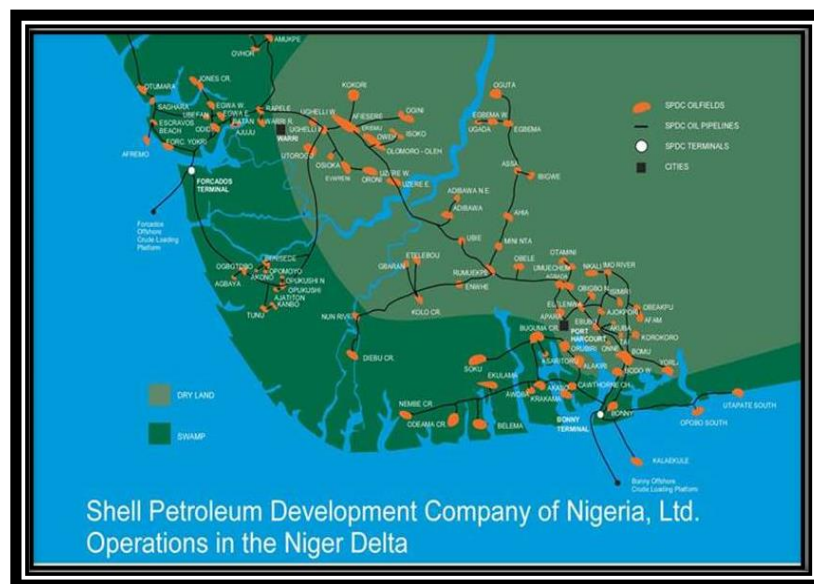
Fig 2. Oil Fields in the Niger Delta Region



Source: Stratfor Global Intelligence, 2015.

Fig. 3 below shows the oil wells, pipelines and terminals managed by the Shell Petroleum Development Company in the Niger Delta that aids the exploitation and transport of crude oil within and outside Nigeria.

Fig 3. Oil wells, Pipeline and Terminals in the Niger Delta



Source: Stratfor Global Intelligence, 2015.

The Niger delta has over 5 200 oil wells and produces crude oil that amount to over 2.5 million barrels daily that flows through about 275 flow stations being exported at ten terminals. Oil and gas pipeline installations in the area cover over 7000km, which aid in crude oil transportation to the rest of Nigeria (Ayodele, 2010 and Kadafa, 2012).

Although Nigeria has four refineries in the country, Nigeria remains a major crude oil exporting country in Africa due to consistent breakdowns and lack of maintenance from the Nigerian government. For example, the performance of the Port Harcourt refinery has been consistently poor for decades with its production only rising above 50% on 4 occasions. From 1993 to 1998, the refinery has been “plagued by technical malfunctions and breakdowns”, and has suffered a major short down since 2002. This also applies to the other three refineries in Nigeria (Mbendi, 2016).

The production of crude in this region is largely dominated by Transnational oil companies like Chevron, Texaco, Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon Mobil, Total and Agip who operate a joint venture with the Nigerian Government through the National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and its subsidiaries in which the Federal government owns in average, about 60% of its equity shares (SDN, 2015; World Bank, 2008; Okumagba, 2012).

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the huge benefits of oil exploitation in Nigeria, which are evident in economic growth in terms of huge foreign exchange earnings, the presence of multi-national companies, foreign nationals and businesses in the nation, and the employment opportunities it has provided for citizens, the Niger Delta people have not derived much benefit from the economy since the 1970s. The economy in the Niger Delta region, though rich in oil, is characterised by high levels of inequality, unemployment, poverty, corruption and lack and decay of infrastructure and services such as clean water, sanitation, good roads, schools, hospitals, etc., high levels of illiteracy, misery and loss of livelihood by the majority of the rural population of the Niger Delta people, who depend on farming and fishing as a source of livelihood (Ejibunu and Tuschl, 2006; Agho and Uyigue, 2007; Akhakpe, 2012).

The activities of oil exploration have resulted in social and environmental costs to the Niger Delta people and have led to the degradation of the environment through oil spillage and gas flaring. This is because little or no regard is given to the development of the people and the environment on whose land the oil is acquired. Oil spillage has continuously been one of the major sources of environmental degradation and pollution in the Niger Delta environment. A continuous blast and discharge of harmful effluents into rivers, and other sources of water, loss of marine life and the loss of bio-diversity are common occurrences in the area (Agho and Uyigue, 2007; Akhakpe, 2012 and Ogu, 2006).

All this has led to the grievances from the Niger Delta people that the proceeds that comes from the production of crude oil are not used to develop their region and people who suffer from the degradation caused by the exploitation and production of crude oil (Agho and Uyigue, 2007; Oyefusi, 2007; Ogu, 2006).

This study is significant because it explores the relationship of oil exploitation, its impacts in the environment and conflicts in the Niger Delta and also explores the different types of conflicts and the understanding of the relationships between them, its causes and effects in the Niger Delta Area.

This study is significant in that it highlights the contradiction of the wealth and mystery that natural resources in the region create in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

1.3 Objective of the Study

- To explore the interaction between oil exploitation, environmental impacts and oil conflicts in the Niger Delta.
- To unpack the different types of conflicts and understand the relationships between them

1.4 Research Question

What is the nature of and inter-relationships between conflicts associated with oil exploitation in the Niger Delta Area?

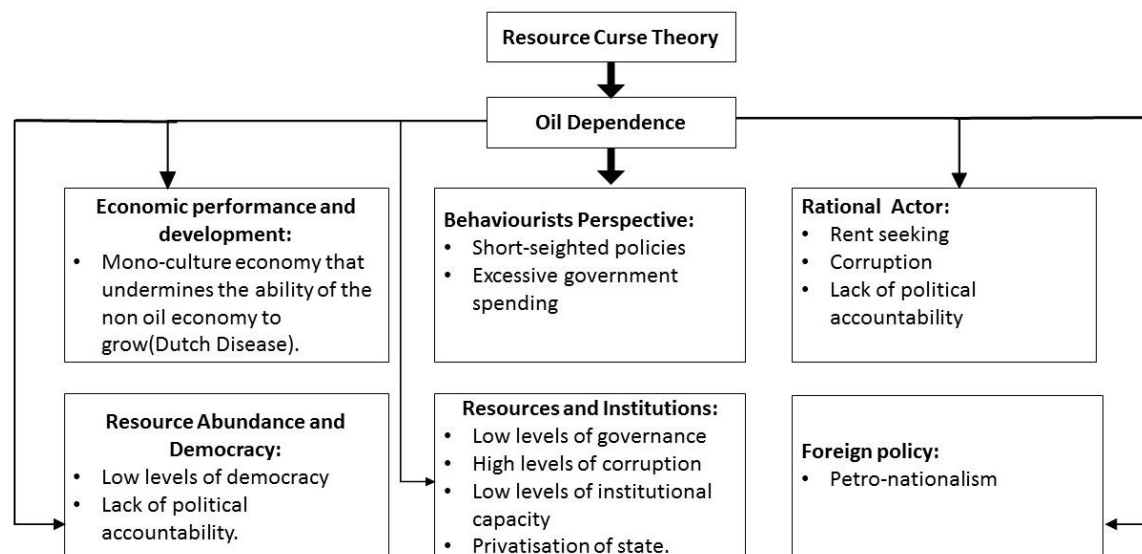
- What are the kinds of Conflicts associated with oil exploration in the Niger Delta?
- What are the underlying causes of oil conflicts and the effect of oil exploitation and conflicts in the Niger Delta Area?
- Who are the actors behind the various oil conflicts in the Niger Delta?

1.5 Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by time, distance and money. Therefore, the study was designed to be a case study and a desktop research approach was adopted; data and information was gathered through secondary sources.

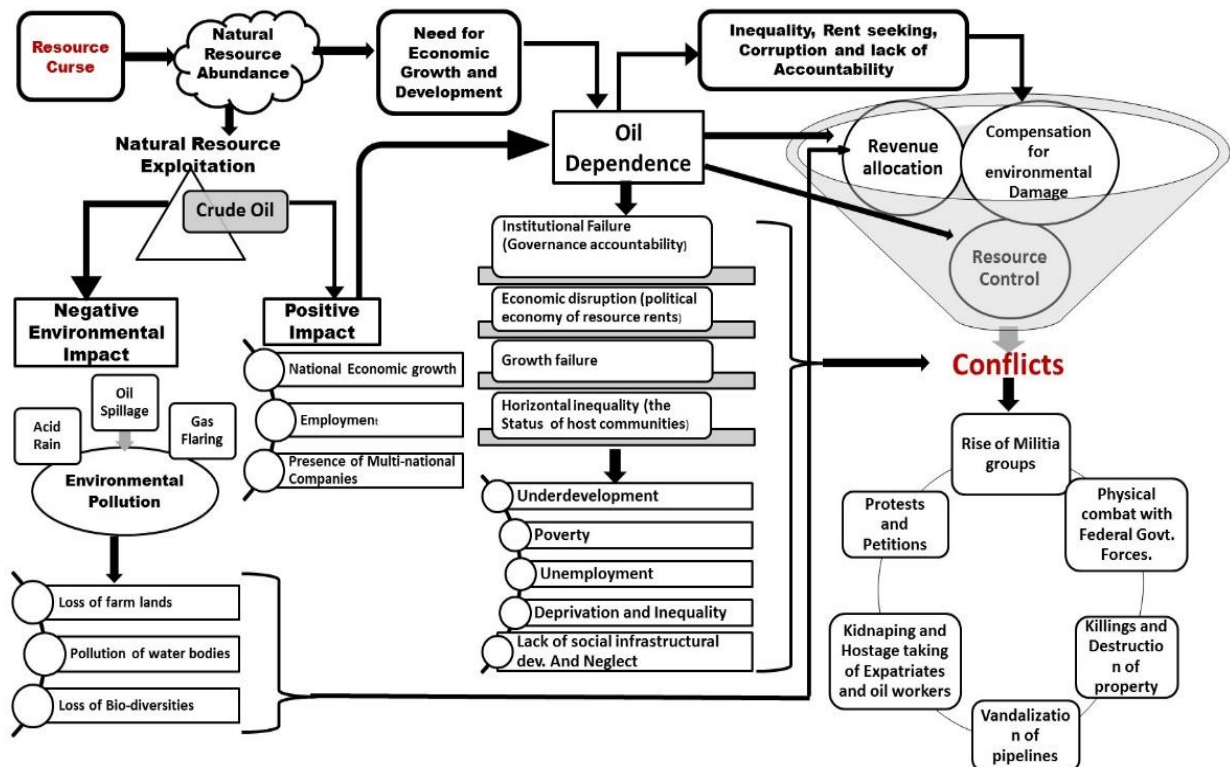
This study was also limited by the difficulty of accessing accurate information and the complexity of collation, reviewing, synthesising and interpretation of information to arrive at a conclusion. Therefore, specific databases were used to help control the quality of information. These databases were chosen purposively based on how relevant the content of their information was to the study (Operario, 2008 and MSG, 2015).

1.6 Conceptual Framework



The resource curse theory was adopted to demonstrate the relationship that exist between oil exploitation, environmental degradation and conflicts in the Niger Delta. This theory indicates that abundance in natural resources such as crude oil will likely lead to curse rather than a blessing as it is expected. The abundance of crude oil in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has led to high dependence on oil, which has resulted in inequality, rent seeking, corruption, lack of accountability, environmental degradation, tension and conflicts at different level of government. Below is a summary of the relationship between oil exploitation, environmental impacts and conflicts in the Niger Delta.

Fig. 4 Inter-relationship between Oil Exploitation, Environmental Impacts and Conflicts in the Niger Delta



1.7 Research Methods

This is qualitative research that is explorative and seeks to explore conflicts that are linked to oil exploitation in the Niger Delta region, in order to identify the interaction and intersection with environmental degradation in the area. This study made use of only secondary data through a

desktop review which involves an extensive literature search, review and synthesis of material relevant to oil exploitation and oil conflicts in the Niger Delta Area (Tellis, 1997 and Yin, 1994).

Data and information was drawn internally through the extensive use of library materials and externally through extraction from online databases like Web of Science, Science Direct, Sage Premier Online, Research Channel Africa, African Portal, Ebsco Host and World Newspaper Archive; collation of newspapers, reports, Nigerian Government publications, statistical releases, conference material and presentations, etc. that relate to the objective and research question of this study. These databases provided me with a pool of information that helped in the understanding of the different conflicts in the Niger Delta, the root causes and in exploring the interrelationship between oil exploitation, environmental degradation and the conflicts the Nigeria Delta region has been experiencing over the years.

This method is relevant because it gives provides insight into the past and current issues of the Niger Delta region. It gives a pool of relevant data, some as description, analysis, synthesis and others as presentations of case studies that helps in description, classification of data and the comparison, analysis and summarising of findings that provides a better understand complex situations like that of the Niger Delta conflicts (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

1.7.1. Case Study Research

This is a qualitative approach to research that enables the exploration of a subject within its context using a pool of data sources (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

This type of research ensures that the topic of research is not explored from one point of view; rather it uses variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of a particular phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter and Jack, 2008). It also seeks to ensure that the topic of interest is well explored, and that the essence of the phenomenon is revealed. The type of case study research used in this study is the Exploratory Case Study. An exploratory case study was used because it helps in seeking answers to question that attempts to explain a presumed causal links in real life interventions in complex situations like that of the Niger Delta Oil Conflicts (Yin, 1995; 2003).

1.8 Ethical Considerations

During the course of this research, the intention and objective of the study was made clear to every source of information, whether individuals or organisations (Booth, et al., 1995).

Another ethical issue considered during this study was around proper acknowledgement of every resource of data used during the course of the study and not misreporting in any way the sources of data or inventing results or findings. This was done by keeping proper records of the sources of data and obtaining the necessary permission in line with the ethical standards of research (Booth, et al., 1995).

Since this study will not be making use of interviews, the ethical issues of confidentiality and getting the interviewee's permission did not arise.

1.9 Chapter Outline

This research has been structured into six chapters. Chapter one introduces the study and gives a background to the study. Chapter two provides an in-depth review of the literature. Chapter three gives a background and in-depth analysis of the different conflicts in the Niger Delta, Chapter four discusses the factors behind oil conflicts in the Niger Delta, Chapter five presents and in-depth analysis of the conflicts and explores its link to oil exploitation and environmental impacts in the Niger Delta using different lenses. Chapter six concludes and give recommendations.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2. Introduction

This chapter aims to review relevant literature on the relationship between oil exploitation, environmental impacts and conflicts in the Niger Delta. It also seeks to define the major terms associated to and as used in this study.

- **Oil Exploitation**

The Oxford dictionary defines exploitation as “the action of making use of and benefiting from a resource and it involves the use of land, oil, minerals.” Therefore, exploitation of oil refers to activities of mining or drilling crude oil from the land or sea using available technology. “The Nigerian Environmental Study Action Team” explains that the exploitation of fuel minerals which include crude oil, has to do with the exploration, the extraction, processing, the transportation, storage and the consumption of crude oil and petroleum products (Bayode et al., 2011:112). Exploitation of oil in the Delta is therefore seen in the activities of multi-national corporations in extracting oil for various uses.

- **Environmental Impacts**

These are possible consequences, (either positive or negative), caused by industrial activities, development, infrastructural projects and/or the introduction of harmful substances to the environment and extraction of natural resources. In relation to this study, the effects of exploiting oil on the Niger Delta environment are examined.

- **Oil Conflicts**

Oil conflicts are struggles over the ownership and control of valuable oil supplies. This type of struggle has been a recurring feature in international affairs since the 20th century. These conflicts manifest in different ways such as territorial disputes over ownership of oil laden borders or struggles between leaders of oil rich nations. The connection between oil and conflicts comes from two factors that characterise petroleum products. Firstly, it is an important resource to the economy and as a resource of military power. Secondly, it is usually distributed in an uneven manner geographically (Klare, 2015).

The conflicts experienced by the Niger Delta area are about ownership of land, appropriation and compensation for such land, compensations for damages made to the environment from the operation of oil companies. At the national level, conflicts are centred on oil revenue sharing and the allocation of public goods among the various regions and ethnicity. Also, the inability of the government to put in place adequate steps towards mitigating environmental impacts of oil production on local communities, providing substantial development and compensations for such damages suffered in these areas (Akhakpe, 2012 and Oyefusi, 2007).

2.1. History of Oil exploitation in Nigeria

Oil exploitation in Nigeria started in 1958 with the discovery of oil in large quantity by the British Shell Corporation in Oloibiri, a community in Bayelsa State in the Delta Region (Ejibunu and Tuschl, 2006; Agho and Uyigue, 2007; Akhakpe, 2012). Following this discovery, the rights to explore and exploit oil were extended and given to other multi-national corporations like Total, Chevron, Mobil, etc. This discovery displaced agricultural activities as a major contributor to the growth of the Nigerian economy. Over 90 per cent of the economic wealth of the nation today comes from oil produced from the Niger Delta area, which amounts to millions of barrels of crude oil daily (Ebegbulem et al., 2013).

Although crude oil which is the backbone of the Nigerian economy all comes from the Niger Delta, the region is ranked among regions that are greatly marginalized in Nigeria. The Niger Delta people are mostly without electricity, lack basic water to drink, experience high level of poverty and live far below levels of subsistence (Ebegbulem et al., 2013). The predominant occupation for the Niger Delta rural population is farming and fishing. The rural people therefore engage in fishing and farming activities as a means of supplementing their diet and income. However, forests, farmlands, rivers and streams are continuously being destroyed. The level of poverty in the Niger-Delta is made worse by high living cost and lack of basic necessities. (Akhakpe, 2012).

2.2 The Effects of Oil Exploitation in the Niger Delta

The effects of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta can be seen in environmental impacts and social impacts experienced. The environmental problems like oil spillage and gas flaring, have impacted on the environment through the contamination of streams and other water bodies, oil spills, flaring of gas, deforestation and loss of bio-diversity, disposal of untreated waste, etc. and social problems like social and economic underdevelopment, poverty, communal conflicts and conflicts between multi-national companies and the communities, etc. (Achi, 2003).

Oil spillage has been identified as a major source of pollution of the environment in the Niger Delta. The continuous blast and discharge of harmful effluents into rivers, and other sources of water are common occurrences in the area. Kadafa, (2012); Agho and Uyigue, (2007) notes that, over the period of 50 years, the estimated number of oil spillage in this area accounts for about 1.5 million tons of crude. A lot of these oil spillages occurred on land, swamp and off shore environment (Kadafa, 2012). An average of 221 oil spillages per year were recorded by The Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) since 1989 in the areas it operates in, which accounts for over 7350 barrels annually with impacts such as loss of vegetation, contaminated streams and rivers, etc. (Kadafa, 2012).

Fig 5: Impact of oil spillage on Ogoni land of the Niger Delta



Source: Kadafa (2012:43)

The figure above shows the show some of the impact of oil spillage on the Niger Delta environment. These images from the left shows contaminated stream, river, split oil cover and loss of vegetation cover in Ogoni land of Niger Delta.

For many decades now, gas flaring has been practised in the Niger Delta (Uyigue and Agho, 2007). The Energetic Solution Conference (2004) indicates that the Niger Delta region has over 123 sites where gas is flared (Kadafa, 2012; Uyigue and Agho, 2007). It is also indicated that over 45.8 billion kilo watts of heat is realised into the air from about 1.8 million cubic feet of gas on a daily basis. This has led to extreme temperatures that have made a huge part of the area unliveable (Kadafa, 2012). This makes Nigeria one of the major emitter of greenhouse gases in Africa (Uyigue and Agho, 2007; Kadafa 2012; Agbola and Olurin 2003). Its impact includes the incidence of acid rain, loss of vegetation around gas flaring area, destruction of “mangrove swamps and salt marshes”, it “suppresses the growth and flowering of some plants”, and diminishes agricultural productivity by inducing soil degradation (Kadafa 2012: 45).

Table 1. Top 20 Flaring Countries in 2004

2004 Rank	Country	Reported Flaring 2004*	2004 Rank	Country	Reported Flaring 2004*
1	Nigeria	24.1	10	Indonesia	3.5**
2	Russia (total)	14.7	11	USA	2.8
	<i>Khanty Mansiysk (KM)</i>	6.4	12	Kazakhstan	2.7
	<i>Russia (excluding KM)</i>	8.3	13	Libya	2.5
3	Iran	13.3	14	Azerbaijan	2.5
4	Iraq	8.6	15	Mexico	1.6
5	Angola	6.8	16	UK	1.6
6	Qatar	4.5	17	Brazil	1.5**
7	Algeria	4.3	18	Gabon	1.4
8	Venezuela	3.7**	19	Cameroon	1.1
9	Equatorial Guinea	3.6	20	Canada	1.0
	Total Top 20	107.5			

*Source: GGFR

**These figures, expressed in billion cubic meters (bcm) may include some venting as well, due to unavailability of segregated data.

Source: Gervet (2007): 4

The table above indicates that Nigeria is ranked top among the 20 top flaring countries in the world.

2.3 Oil conflicts in the Niger Delta.

The rate of natural resource export, especially the wealth from nature has been linked to conflicts and the onset of civil wars. This wars and conflicts are strongly linked to the struggle for gaining control over such resources therefore increasing the risk to violence and conflicts (Ikelegbe, 2005).

Development Economists at the beginning of the 1950s, proposed “according to the Staple theory of growth that natural resource abundance would help developing states to overcome their capital shortfalls and provide revenues for their governments to provide public goods and lift citizens out of the doldrums of poverty.” A lot of research in the 1990s however shows that there is a link between “resource-abundance and a number of socio-economic problems.” (Oyefusi, 2007: 2).

This is because; the abundance of natural resources has also been accompanied by poverty and great inequality in a country, slow growth, corruption of political institutions and importantly the risk of conflicts (Collier and Hoeffler, 2001; Gravin and Hausmann, 1988; Lane and Tornell, 1999; Oyefusi, 2007; Sachs and Warner, 1995; Ross 2004b; Ross, 1999, 2001). Also the link between resource led conflicts and the collapse of economies has been established (Collier et al, 2003; Skaperdas 1992; Deininger, 2003; Oyefusi, 2007). Moreover, it has been indicated that amongst all the natural resources, crude oil has proven to have a highest tendency to lead to conflicts because of the huge revenue it generates and the extent to which governments and national economies depend on oil (Collier and Hoeffler, 2005; Fearon and Laiton, 2005; Oyefusi).

An in-depth analysis of the relationship between the exploitation of natural resource and conflict by looking at the rise of rebel movements and conflicts in Africa shows the relationship between the exploitation of natural resources and conflicts. These conflicts demonstrate how the exploitation of natural resources can lead both poor and rich nations to war like the civil wars in Liberia, Angola and Sierra Leone. It was argued that conflicts originated basically as a result of the greed, bitterness and grievances over the exploitation of natural resources (Ayodele, 2010; Cilliers 2009; Holmberg, 2008).

Increased industrial activity and the search for natural resources from the environment has increased the rate of conflicts and has led to conflicts tied to revenue allocation, lack of employment, deprivation, underdevelopment, resource control and the continuous degradation of the environment through the exploitation oil in the Niger Delta area, therefore, the need to understand the link between oil abundance, environmental degradation and conflicts in the Niger Delta. It was argued that the exploitation of natural resource impacts on the environment adversely and can lead to volatile conflict eventually (Ayodele, 2010).

In the same way, the exploitation of oil in the Niger Delta Region of Southern Nigeria has had strong environmental impacts which has desecrated and degraded the environment. The consequence of the exploitation of crude oil in the Niger Delta has resulted in poverty and misery which has led to “a considerable level of disquiet in the Niger Delta to the extent of threatening the economic livelihood of the nation and by implication its existence as a state” (Akhakpe, 2012: 82). This is because; oil production remains a major source of economic growth in Nigeria. Also, these impacts have led to conflicts in the region over resources control and development of the area. “The lack of infrastructure, drinkable water, electricity, road, hospital, etc. in spite of the huge revenue derived from its bowels has led to conflictual relations between the inhabitants and the Federal Government of Nigeria” (Akhakpe, 2012: 82).

Although experiences in so many oil producing countries have shown that depending on oil is often dangerous and unsafe due to the effects that exploitation of oil has on the environment and on the people, countries like Norway for instance have proven that the negative outcome of oil exploitation can be avoided and has made use of the benefits of oil. According to United Nations Human Development rankings (2013), Norway is ranked first among countries with a very high human development index. Mexico and Malaysia have also have developed to attain high levels of human development according to the United Human Development Index (2013), Malaysia and Mexico is ranked 71 and 62 respectively in the category of countries with high Human Development Index among oil rich countries in the developing world (Gary and Karl, 2003; Oyefusi, 2007).

Conflicts in the Niger Delta result from the combination of poverty, underdevelopment, corruption and violence (Stakeholder Democracy Network (SND), 2014). The high levels of agitation and conflicts observed in the area today are rooted in the desire to access basic needs

that are essential to life. Oil is not a renewable resource and as such the exploitation of oil from a particular location will not remain permanent. Therefore, the continuous demand for social amenities like primary health care system, educational facilities, employment opportunities and substantial developments by host communities is to make sure that they are able to maintain their socio-economic relevance and protect their environment by regulating the activities of oil exploitation in the area (Omofonmwan and Odia, 2009).

As noted in the literature, the high level of negligence experienced in the Niger Delta towards their environment and the gross marginalization of their people in the way of not having the basic social infrastructure and the lack of adequate compensation has been the point of contention in the Niger Delta and has continuously mired the relationship between the oil companies and their host community (Aghalino, 2001). This negligence from the Nigerian Government and the oil companies alike towards the oil producing communities in Niger Delta in developing and providing social services in the area has made the oil producing area dependent on oil firms as substitutes and their only source of consolation that they even employ violent measures like kidnapping of expatriates and oil workers, blowing up of pipelines, physical combat with the Nigerian forces, etc. as a means of getting the required attention they desire (Aghalino, 2001).

Also, the use of capital intensive technologies developed to generate high wage employment for only few workers and existing inequalities experienced in the region also contribute to conflicts in the area (Omofonmwan and Odia, 2009). For example, it was highlighted that the vandalism of pipelines has its roots in youth restiveness and economic hardship of the south-south people (Agho and Uyigue, 2007). In 1996, 1998 and 1999, 33, 57, and 497 cases of oil vandalism were reported respectively.

This number has increased between 1999 and 2000 to about 600 cases of vandalism reported; this excessive increase in the cases of pipeline vandalism indicates that the more the level of deprivation experienced by the people, the more the restless and the more cases of vandalism that will be recorded (Agho and Uyigue, 2007). In most cases, the vandalism of pipeline has led to the outbreak of fires that destroy lives and properties, deforestation, pollution, loss of revenue and the loss of vegetation and bio-diversities (Agho and Uyigue, 2007).

Over the years, communal crisis has increased in the Niger Delta area. These conflicts are either inter-ethnic, intra-ethnic, between the state and the community or between the multinational companies and the community. Conflicts at the community level either within or between two communities have their roots in land disputes. The conflicts between multinational companies and the Niger Delta youth is illustrated by the rise of militancy groups which operate through kidnapping and hostage taking of staffs from multinational companies requesting that ransom be paid for their release (Agho and Uyigue, 2007, Oyefusi, 2007).

Communities and civil society groups in this area are still very engaged in different levels of opposition in form of demonstrations, petitions, protests, etc. with the aim of drawing the attention of the National Government and International organizations to the problem of oil exploitation in the area and the problems of inadequate development, poverty, unemployment and hunger in the region (Agho and Uyigue, 2007).

2.4 Inequality and Conflicts in the Niger Delta

Although Nigeria has made some significant progress economically and politically in the past years, a large proportion of its population still live in poverty. World Bank (2005; 2007) and DFID, (2005) indicate that over 70 million people in Nigeria live below US\$1 per day. UNDP 2006 reports that the number of Nigerian citizens that live below the poverty line accounts for 54% of the Nigerian population. Also, the UNDP (2006) indicate that Nigeria is characterised by poor Human Development Index of (0.448), ranking 159 out of 177 countries (Higgins, 2009).

The level of inequality in Nigeria is high and also on the increase, poverty and inequality in Nigeria is highly concentrated in certain regions and as such there are huge regional disparities of poverty and inequality. The National Bureau of Statistics (2005) and Higgins (2009) indicate that poverty is highly concentrated in the Northern and Southern region of Nigeria. The increase in oil wealth in Nigeria has not led to an increase in the standard of living. It has been argued that the rise in poverty and inequality in Nigeria corresponds with the discovery and export of crude oil (Higgins, 2009).

Comparing oil revenue and GDP of Nigeria in 1965 and 2000 shows that oil revenue in 1965 was US\$33 per capita and GDP per capita was US\$245 and in 2000, when oil revenue was US\$325 per capita, GDP per capita remained at this level as in 1965. Although the Niger Delta region is responsible for sustaining the economy of the Nigerian federation, there is a huge disconnect between the income generated and the human development of the Niger Delta. An analysis carried out by the UNDP (2006:15) shows that poverty incidence in the Niger Delta increased between the period of 1980 and 2004. It went further to state that the Human development index of the Niger Delta is 0.564 which is slightly higher than that of Nigeria which is 0.448. When compared to other oil producing regions and countries with similar oil and gas reserves like “Venezuela (0.772) and Indonesia (0.697)”, Nigeria and indeed the Niger Delta are far below the ladder of Human development.

2.5 The Resource Curse Theory

The phrase natural resource can refer to different commodities which can be measured in different ways. Natural resources have been categorised into three: The World Bank classification, classification according to the characteristics of resources and the classification according to quality and quantity of production. The classification of natural resources by the World Bank (2001) includes: petroleum, other minerals and agricultural products as primary commodities. The second category looks at the important characteristics of resources, mostly in terms of the quality and quantity of production, the value of exports and the returns on production. The final category is used to normalise the value of resources so they can be compared across regions and countries. This is usually expressed as a fraction of the GDP, total export, of total government revenue, on the basis of per capita income or by land area. These three categories can be combined in different ways to measure a country’s natural resource base or endowment (Andrew, 2006).

Rarely are agricultural products regarded as part of the resource curse because they are not extracted but produced and so do not meet the standard definition of natural resources and as such, are not linked to unfavourable outcomes. Two types of resources have been constantly linked to outcomes that are distressing; petroleum, which has been identified to lead to some type

of curse in literatures; oil and diamonds, which has been linked to civil conflicts in Africa in the literature (Andrew, 2006).

Table 2. African Conflicts Fuelled by Natural Resources

Country	Date	Estimated Deaths	Resource
Algeria	1992–date	71 000	gas, oil
Angola	1975–2002	>800 000	diamonds, oil
Chad	1980–1994	300 000	oil, uranium
Congo-Brazzaville	1993–date	9 000	oil
DRC	1993–date	200 000	copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium
Liberia	1989–1996	250 000	diamonds, iron, rubber
Sierra Leone	1991–1999	85 000	bauxite, diamonds, rutile
Sudan	1983–date	>1 500 000	oil

Source: Lwanda, nd.

This table indicates that oil and diamonds represents two major natural resources that are strongly linked to conflicts in Africa. The civil war experienced in Angola, Sudan and The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that led to the destruction of life and properties has been associated to economic factors which are mostly tied to natural resource abundance for nations enriched with the abundance of natural resources like oil (Lwanda, nd). This is not different from what is experienced in the Niger Delta. The conflicts are associated to the exploitation of crude oil which is strongly tied to the Nigerian economy. Conflicts in the Niger Delta have taken the form of violence which has involved youth gangs, and the Nigerian military forces and has resulted in deaths of civilians.

Before the late 1980s, the relationship between the abundance of natural resources was perceived to be advantageous to development. However, literature suggesting that the abundance of natural resources or the endowment of one natural resource increases the tendencies that such country will experience negative social, political and economic outcomes which include civil war, low levels of democracy and poor economic performance became prominent (McNeish, 2010).

The “Resource Curse” has been used to describe how countries that are rich in natural resources are unable to make use of the wealth they derive from the extraction of natural resources to boost their economy and foster development and how they have been characterised by lower outcomes of economic growth and development (McNeish, 2010: 3).

The resource curse has been used to refer to a range of economies that rely on renewable and non-renewable resources such as cocoa, oil, timber, diamonds, etc. the development of the theory and debate around resource curse presents two notable and vital non-renewable natural resources to the world economy (Minerals and oil) which have attracted more influence and focus over the years (McNeish, 2010).

2.6 Economic performance, Development and Resource Abundance

Instead of achieving economic growth and development as expected, the discovery and exploitation of oil and gas has been always linked with high incidence of conflicts and poverty. The exploitation of crude oil has been identified to affect the poor at different levels. At the national level, the disruptive effect of oil exploitation and investment has been identified to have the ability to undermine the growth of the “non-oil economy” what is referred to as the “Dutch Disease” (McNeish, 2010: 4). The Dutch Disease is used to explain “the effect of natural resource booms on non-resource economic activity.” This is a situation when a particular sector of the economy generates so much revenue (oil boom), and results in the rise of exchange rate and so, reduce the ability for other sectors of the economy to compete and so, reduce innovation and diversification of the economy (Bromley et al., 2006: 6). For instance, the “oil price boom” that was experienced in the 1970s and the “subsequent bust” experienced on “non-oil economic activity” in countries that were dependent on oil. At the time of the oil boom, manufacturing value added and exports increased significantly relative to non-oil dependent countries, along with wages, employment and investment. A decrease was however experienced in these measures although at a lesser rate during the bust, “displaying a positive relationship with oil prices.” (Smith, nd: 1).

It has also been identified that such investment in oil can weaken governance and democratic structures. This is because; although oil producing countries are different, they are made up of similar social class and “pattern of collective action” and networking for political gains. The dependence on oil in these countries creates a “disproportionate fiscal reliance,” public spending and “petrodollars” in place of “statecraft.” The growth of oil revenue creates an illusion of prosperity and development and destabilises administrations by strengthening oil-based interest which leads to a weakened state capacity (McNeish, 2010: 4).

2.7 The Behaviouralist Perspective on the Resource Curse

The Behaviouralist perspective draws from the work of political and economic theorists who proposes that the abundance of natural resources can lead to different types of irrational and emotional behaviour from political elites which in turn results in institutional deterioration and poor economic policy making. Literature indicate that boom in resource revenue creates short-sightedness and over-exuberance in political elites and produces tendencies that countries will become optimistic which might lead to excessive spending from the government. Also, oil boom can create wishful thinking among policy makers in countries that are rich in oil and so, lead to policies that are not proactive, well thought through and realistic (Andrew, 2006).

For the Niger Delta Area and Nigeria, the dependence on oil revenue has led to short-sighted and excessive spending by the government and among political elites. The budgets of the oil producing states of Nigeria are huge with little or no substantial development and improvement in the daily lives of citizens. In 2008, Rivers State alone spent N367 billion which amounts to over \$3 billion excluding budgets at the local government councils. Despite this huge budget, this spending has not been transformed into higher standard of living and improved amenities. They have only been mere wishes that have raised the hopes of citizens with little or no results (Niger Delta Citizens and Budget Platform, 2009).

Table 3. Budget Highlights for the Niger Delta States in 2008

States	Total Budgets (2008)
Akwa-Ibom	N153. 525 billion
Bayelsa	N180.1billion
Delta	N150.574 billion
Rivers	N377.081 billion

Source: Niger Delta Citizens and Budget Platform (2009).

2.8 The Rational Actor Perspective on the Resource Curse

The Rational actor perspective on the other hand, presents political actors as rational individuals that seek to maximise utility. This perspective argues that the abundance of natural resources does not lead to irrational behaviour as the behaviouralists suggest but rather, creates the opportunity for political leaders to line their pockets through rent seeking and corruption. It has been indicated that political elites constitute the problem. This is because, when governments receive revenue from resource boom, political elites will either use the opportunity to get hold of revenue generated from the extraction of natural resources for personal interest or gain control over the right to allocate them referred to as “rent seizing” (Andrew, 2006: 15).

It is also indicated that the behaviour of rent seeking by political elites can lead to negative economic results especially when political elite perceive resource boom to be temporary because the focus will be given on maximising the revenue they can get in the short term (Andrew, 2006).

On the other hand, when resource boom is perceived to be permanent, it has been argued that political elites will focus more on how to retain and stay in power and using the rents generated from resource boom through promoting long term-economic development in which case, may likely result to be negative because political elite will still seek for incentives to engage in

inefficient redistribution of economic resources to be able to influence elections (Andrew, 2006). Torvik (2002) suggests that social actors should be blamed for high rates of rent seeking. Natural resource “abundance increases the rewards that social actors can gain from rent-seeking, and in turn provides them with greater incentive to engage in such behaviour” (Andrew, 2006: 15).

In the Niger Delta Area, Oil wealth has been used to fulfil and achieve political and programmatic objectives of politicians and have created avenues for political leaders to line their pockets through rent seeking. The Corruption perception index, according to Transparency International (2014), presents an alarming picture of corruption. On the scale of 0 (high corrupt) to 100(very clean), Nigeria scores 27 and is ranked 136 out of 175 countries assessed in the world. This indicates that Nigeria is among the most corrupt countries that is characterised by poorly equipped schools, counterfeit medicine and incredible elections, bribes, backroom deals amongst other consequences of public sector corruption (Transparency International, 2014).

It was further indicated that these practices do not only steal and deprive the vulnerable groups of basic resources but it has also contributed in undermining justice, social and economic growth and development and has destroyed public trust in the government and political leaders. This level of dissatisfaction forms a major factor behind the conflicts and struggle experienced in the Niger Delta. High levels of corruption in Nigeria indicate that, bribery and corrupt practices are not being punished, and public institutions are unable to respond to the needs of citizens (Transparency International, 2014).

2.9 The State-centred Perspective on Oil Abundance and Resource Curse

The State-centred perspectives propose that the natural abundance of natural resources results in poor economic outcomes, not by influencing the behaviour of political elites or social actors but rather, by impacting on the state’s ability to promote and achieve economic development (Andrew, 2006). The “problem associated with so-called rentier states” has been identified by this line of thought. Governments regularly get a “substantial amount of unearned income” in the form of taxes, royalties or export on the production of natural resources. “Because these states have large amounts of unearned income to spend; it is argued that, they tend to develop greater

capacity in distributive functions such as social welfare, education, and health and productive functions” (Andrew, 2006: 15).

The huge amount of revenue that accrues in the National treasury referred to as the “Federation Account” (Niger Delta Citizens and Budget Platform, 2009: 2) from crude oil. This only centralises power and money at the National level, therefore, the National government have increasingly become skilful in the allocation of oil wealth among states of the federation with little or no accountability for how these huge revenues are spent and allocated (Niger Delta Citizens and Budget Platform, 2009).

In a statement from the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Mr Denzil Kentebe, he stated that Nigerian oil and gas industry lost over 300 billion dollars in its first 50 years of operation. He explained that there was no substantial investment made by the industry and no attention was given to the oil producing communities and region. Therefore, people were forced to violence and militancy which impacted on the production of crude by reducing production by million barrels per year (Nigerian Tribune, 2015).

2.10 Resource Abundance and Democracy

From the early 2000s, literature that analysed the effect of “resource wealth”, in particular “petroleum wealth”, on the accountability of the government began to emerge indicating that oil wealth makes autocratic governments more stable which makes it difficult to transition to democracy (Ross, 2013: 6). The relationship between petroleum wealth and autocratic rule have been explored by Ross (2001) who identified a negative relationship between the level to which a country depends on oil exports and their level of democracy. This has been supported by Aslaksen (2010); Werger (2009).

2.11 Resources and Institutions

The resource curse literature also looks at the link between resource wealth and how effective government bureaucracy, the occurrence of corruption, the capacity of the state to promote economic growth or development, the rule of law (in general, the quality of institutions). It was noted that, a state with weak institutions when hit by a positive fiscal shock (oil boom) may

experience the “voracity effect” where political power is used “solely to transfer wealth from the private sector to powerful interests” which results to excessive spending on the economy in which political elites scramble for oil wealth and squander it (Ross, 2013: 11; Deacon, 2010: 13). Robinson et al. (2006) gave a similar argument that when government institutions are weak, perceived resource booms will be spent through massive public patronage and employment. It was also indicated that the consequences of natural resource abundance on the performance of the economy are conditional on the ex-ante quality of state institutions. A situation where institutions are “grabber friendly” (and more prone to corruption), resource wealth tends to lower aggregate income; where they are “producer friendly” (and less prone to corruption), it will raise aggregate income (Ross, 2013). The desire of political elites therefore, is to secure oil wealth through threat and violence and to maintain an environment that allows for “predatory accumulation” of wealth which has resulted in the “privatisation of the state” by political elites at all spheres of government and the pursuit of personal interest instead of common interest of the public good. These practices characterise a rentier state (Emuedo and Abam, 2015: 10 or 11).

A rentier state is a state that depends on rents from extractive resources, royalties and taxes paid by Oil companies. In oil producing countries like Saudi-Arabia, Venezuela and Nigeria, this accounts for over 80% of revenue received. They also depend on the profits earned from the equity stake they have with Oil Company’s investment. Rentier states are characterised by a “Unique Fiscal Centralism.” The wealth received from oil production goes directly to the state. This centralises “money and authority” in the centre, the government becomes dominated by the flow of revenue and the political mechanisms which absorbs rent, distributes and spends revenue (Emuedo and Abam, 2015: 10). The ruling elites also ensure that the oil sector remains “constricted and autocratic” thereby making it difficult for such countries to achieve “local autonomy” (Emuedo and Abam, 2015: 10).

2.12 Foreign Policy

Oil has been at the centre of foreign policy and international relations since the second half of the 20th century. This has been illustrated by “The Suez Crisis in 1956, the 1973 Arab oil embargo, the consequences of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, and the two Gulf Wars in 1990 and 2003”. Countries that depend on export of oil (developing countries like Nigeria) are concerned with

securing, maintaining sustainable access to oil at lower prices, while countries that export oil (developing countries) are concerned with the desire to maintain prices, revenue generated and market share. “This relationship between importing states and Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) states has been highly strategic and political” (Bromley et al., 2006: 4).

The countries that make up OPEC are able to collectively bargain for prices and the level of production. The politics of oil has therefore become a “strategic game with strong implications for foreign policy.” Developing countries like Venezuela and Libya have used the presence of resource abundance (oil) in their country to avow authority in world politics through what is referred to as “petro-nationalism.” The system of quotas and collective bargaining practiced by OPEC has empowered a lot of the member countries to “leverage political capital in other areas through their strategic significance as supply or transit routes” (Bromley et al., 2006: 4).

Developed countries and more powerful states like China, United States and France uses diplomatic relations and military power most times as a way to ensure that they gain and maintain energy security for example the foreign policy of the “United States during and after the Cold War in the Middle-East, parts of Latin America and, increasingly, the Caucasus and Central Asia has been consistently linked to the political economy of oil” (Bromley et al., 2006: 4).

Bromley et al., (2006) indicate that the oil industry has influenced the United States’ foreign policy because the “hegemonic strategy to uphold the capitalist system has driven United States foreign policy in the Middle East.” Bromley et al., (2006) identified that the interest of the oil industry and the need for energy security have been peripheral to the United States Middle-East policy making although the United States relations with countries like Russia, Iran and Venezuela to have a significant, and often negative, impact on the oil industry (Bromley et al., 2006: 5).

Although Nigeria has achieved political independence for several decades now, Nigeria is yet to achieve economic independence. This is because Nigeria remains a raw material producing nation that supplies raw materials such as crude oil to the western world. Since the discovery of crude oil, Nigeria economy has increasingly depended on revenue that accrues from the sale of oil.

What this means for Nigeria is that, Nigeria cannot make foreign policy decisions that will injure or offend countries that buy her crude oil. “If for reasons beyond her control she has to take injurious decisions affecting such countries, the aftermath will be a devastating economic crunch, which could cause serious threat to national peace and stability at home.” (Nweke, 2010: ix-x). The state of refineries in Nigeria further worsens the situation in that, Nigerian refineries are undergoing major problems of maintenance and as such has suffered major breakdowns for decades. The country therefore depends largely on the export of crude oil and the import of refined petroleum products. This is a major contributor of fuel scarcity experienced in the country over the years.

2.13 Development and Conflicts

The biggest exporters of crude oil are from the developing world while the major importers have been from the economically developed countries not until recently that China and India emerged and become one of the major oil importing countries. The relationship that exists between the importing and exporting countries of crude oil has structurally placed the exporting countries that are mostly developing countries at the periphery of the global economy. The economy of most developing countries like Algeria, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Venezuela and Angola greatly dependent on the income derived from the export of crude oil (Bromley et al., 2006).

From the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Index (2013), it is clear that the benefit of resource abundance and being rich in oil for the developing countries is ambiguous (Bromley et al., 2006). It has been argued that depending on a single sector of the economy for economic growth is not a sustainable path to development because of unforeseen fluctuations in trade that may occur. Politics has been used to better explain the argument of the resource curse. It was argued politically that the negative effect of depending on resource abundance for development is to be dependent on the nature of the state for example “without the need for accountability to the wider population, the state can survive on rents captured from the oil industry” (Bromley et al., 2006: 6). This can result in a government that is subject to corruption and systems that allow and maintain patronage networks that undermine democratic accountability. In this context, it has been argued that the competing interest for control over natural resources has been a cause of conflict. Therefore, depending on primary resources is an

important risk factor that can lead to internal conflicts in a nation. Therefore, in understanding the relationship between the exploitation of oil and conflicts, the historical and political context needs to be fully articulated (Bromley et al., 2006). Although recent oil price slump affects the economy of all oil exporting countries, the impact of this on countries that depend solely on oil exports is however more severe. Nigeria is one of the five countries most affected by the fall in oil price. Nigeria is particularly going through “difficult economic challenges” and the present government is undergoing huge economic challenges (Agarwal et al., 2015: 1).

2.14 Environmental Justice and Human Rights Violations

The notion and movement of environmental justice has been encouraged by different actors around the world. Although environmental justice can be traced back to the struggles of local communities and coloured communities against uneven distribution of environmental burden in the United States of America in the 1970s and 80s. The term environmental justice has been used to describe racial and ethnic inequalities in the terms of environmental hazards and the exclusion of minority groups in decision making and the application of environmental policies at the National level of government (Finger and Zoril, 2013).

Three broad areas are considered in most movements of environmental equity; procedural equity, geographic equity and sociological factors. Procedural equity deals with “non-discriminatory manner or fairness,” on how rules and regulations that govern the environment are enforced and evaluated. Geographic equity concentrates on how industries are located and how close communities are to hazards from industries and land uses that are unsafe to human existence. Sociological factors such as race, ethnicity, class, culture, life style and political power in environmental decision making constitutes the third area considered in most environmental equity movements. This category of environmental justice has led to movement from minority groups and has attracted global attention since the 1990s. This is not different from the case of the Niger Delta where several movements and protest has been carried out against the activities of oil exploitation from minority groups agitating for the right to self-determination and compensations for damages made to their environment due to the exploitation of crude oil. Most prominent among this protest is the Ogoni Movement of the 1990s (Finger and Zorzi, 2013: 222).

Environmental justice upholds the principles that everyone has the right to a healthy environment that is free of contamination due to a fair distribution of environmental benefits and opportunities and to adequately get involved in decision making that relates to their environment (Greylet al., 2013: 13). Environmental Justice Principle emphasis that hazards should be tackled before damages happens. It is identified as a work in progress; a process in achieving a situation where environmental hazards, risks, benefits and investment will be shared equally without discrimination in order to satisfy the human needs that are fundamental to life (Mc Donald, 2002).

Environmental Justice Principle has been associated with concepts such as “distributive justice, participative justice, inter- and intra-generational justice, procedural justice (decision making and judicial power) and social, economic, political and cultural justice” (Greylet al., 2013: 13). Agyeman (2005) argued that environmental justice should be looked at as a proactive tool that is vital and enables the assessment and distribution of environmental benefits which promotes and are necessary in building sustainable societies characterized by high quality of life instead of being seen only from a negative perspective.

It is noted that an economy that is oil-based increases the frailty experienced by “less-industrialised” countries by weakening democracy and through the creation of “intra and infra generation inequality” (Teran, 2007; Greyl et al., 2013: 13). It was further identified that environmental justice principles recognises that in a situation of spatial displacement and uneven distribution of environmental damages, a higher degree of environmental risk is felt by the poor and minority groups. Soja (2001) and Greyl et al (2013: 13) highlights that “Material wealth, opportunity, health outcomes, educational attainment, job creation, and virtually none of the metrics of quality of life are ever equally distributed across space”.

Sach (1993) established a link between environmental issues and social justice and indicates that not everyone is subjected to equal impacts of environmental degradation. He went further to indicate that environmental problems and spatial displacement might over burden marginal people, neglected areas and lower income countries. Also the results of environmental problems are not randomly distributed; instead they strengthen existing inequalities (Sach, 1993).

These marginalised groups and ethnic minorities are exposed to more environmental because they lack economic and social power so they have access to fewer opportunities to counteract the poverty and social discrimination they experience (Greyl et al., 2013).

Dryzek (1987) established a strong link between environmental problems and poverty. He further associated social justice to displacement which he explained as process of shifting environmental risks and damages to places and people that lack the ability to counteract them. This socio-economic disadvantage influences the educational level and also limit the ability of affected groups to shape their own identity and voice in taking collective action (Greyl et al., 2013).

Environmental justice emerged as a means of fully understanding the theory of social justice theory, especially in recognising the different dimension in which social justice can be explored as societies make claims for “a fairer redistribution of oil-generated gains.” Through systems that recognise and accepts cultural differences and establishes procedures for participation and inclusion politically (Greyl et al., 2013: 14).

“The spread and severity of such damage on the environment and local livelihoods are usually more extensive in developing countries that often have lack strong environmental laws, social justice systems, and access to curtailment technology which are more advanced in developed countries”(Greyl et al., 2013: 18).The effect of oil exploitation has a significant impact on the natural environment upon which the poor Niger Delta communities depend on for example the effect of oil spill in the Niger Delta include polluted drinking water, significant impact on fishing and farming and a degraded ecosystem (Greyl et al., 2013).

The environmental degradation experienced in Nigeria is mainly caused by the multi-national oil corporations supported by the European and North American national governments during the extraction of crude oil. This export-based system of natural resource extraction can be traced to history of colonial relationship that has being maintained till now. This form of relationship

creates a similar picture in all developing countries that still maintains periphery-core relations with their former colonial masters (Greyl et al., 2013).

In Nigeria, after Nigeria became a nation state, in order for Britain to maintain its grip on the resources in the Niger Delta, the first mineral act known as “the Mineral Oil Act, Laws of Nigeria, 1914” was enacted by Lord Lugard (Greyl et al., 2013: 18). This act conferred the right to grant licenses and leases for mineral oil on the Governor General “under the condition that no lease or license shall be granted except to a British subject or to a British company.” This law later granted the also exclusive rights of oil prospecting to British Shell now known as Royal Dutch Shell in 1937 (Ikein, 1990: 2).

The majority tribes in Nigeria continue to dominate the political and economic agenda since after independence with little or no respect for the rights, needs and demands of the minority groups. Therefore, cries of marginalisation and neglect are continuously heard in community protests and violence. A southerner from the Niger Delta was only able to ascend the presidency in 2011. President Goodluck Jonathan has served Nigeria for seven years. Yet, the problems of the Niger Delta have not experienced any significant change. Poverty and inequality in the region remains high this is an indication that “whoever governs the country will require significantly more mettle to rise above the thicket of business and bureaucracy” (Greyl et al., 2013: 20).

2.15 Sustainability

Sustainable Development as defined by the Brundtland Commission 1987 is “the ability of the present generation to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (UN, 2010). According to Goodland (1995: 4), “Sustainable development should integrate social, environmental and economic sustainability.” These three aspects of sustainability should be used to achieve sustainable development. Environmental sustainability is basically concerned with the maintenance of natural capital. This considers the two basic function of the environment as a source of natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable resources and as a sink for waste in terms of pollution and assimilation of waste and as a total life support system (Goodland, 1995). The main aim for sustainable development is the achievement of a “long term of stability” of the economy and the environment. This can only be

achieved through the combination of environmental, economic and social considerations in decision making (Emas, 2015: 1).

A lot of academic and policy literature concerned with articulating and understanding the principles that forms the core of sustainable development emerged after the announcement of the Brundtland commission of 1985. Two basic ideas were used in the early debate on sustainability which is strong and weak sustainability (Scottish Executive Social Research 2006).

Strong sustainability maintains that the ecological and environmental limits of the planets must be maintained and that “natural capital (minerals) can be depleted but the ecosphere must be protected absolutely –there is no substitute to the planet”. Weak sustainability on the other hand maintains that humanity will substitute the natural capital used by human-made capital (technology). (Scottish Executive Social Research 2006).

It has been identified that weak sustainability has been widely accepted by theorists as a conceptual basis for sustainable development in line with ideas of neo-classical economies. This line of thinking argues that “intra-generational and inter-generational equity can only be achieved within the confines of economic growth” (Scottish Executive Social Research 2006: 2).

Principles of environmental conservation and sustainable development have received international attention and are recognised world-wide by the United Nations. Although several efforts have been made in the recognition of the need for a safe and healthy environment for mankind, issues of environmental protection and the impacts of industrial activities on the environment in Nigeria was never given the appropriate attention it required until toxic wastes were released in a town called Koko in Delta State in 1988. This lack of commitment on the part of the Nigerian government in ensuring that the environment is protected led to the continuous destruction of the environment that sustains its people (Obagbinoko, 2009).

Literature notes that the hope of attaining a balance between social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability is increasingly being regarded as unrealistic. Rather it has been argued that the developed world is placing so much emphasis on environmental protection and therefore undermine the social and economic development of developing world (Scottish Executive Social Research 2006: 2).

Since 1998, the need for policy integration and in extending sustainable development concerns to non-environmental policy area has been widely recognised as a holistic approach in policy making. Also issues of human rights and environmental justice have been incorporated in the approaches to sustainable development (Scottish Executive Social Research 2006: 2).

2.16 Patrimonialism and Political Clientelism

The practice of preferential treatment and patronage are part of the occurrences in our everyday lives. These practices are not always perceived to be harmful both in intent and practice rather they are often seen as justified or honest actions. Clientelism has been considered by some “to be humanizing and personalizing all manner of assistance to those in need”, while others see it as a process that links citizens to their political representatives. Muller (2006) and Hopkin (2006) and Clara, 2010:1). Understanding clientelism is important because of how it has been always associated with the “accountability relationship” that links citizen and their elective representatives in a democratic society (Clara, 2010: 1).

The negative effects of clientelistic practices have been identified to revolve around electoral, economic and institutional. It has been argued that clientelism distorts electoral competition by generating incumbency and reduces the chances for contestation of the opposition. It implies that although people might be discontent or disillusioned with the performance of their elected representative, they will most likely be inclined to vote and support those representatives the second time due to the network and conditions of resource and benefit distribution and so becomes difficult to change the status quo which impacts on the accountability relationship and reduces the strength and ability to impose sanctions (Clara, 2010).

The economic implications of clientelism include economic inefficiency and the inability of the government to pursue growth (Medina and Stokes 2007). It was arguing that economic has the ability to enhance the role of a party as the only channel to access resources. And as the multiplier effect of the economy diminish, resources become scarce and more citizens become dependent on informal channels of resource distribution. This type of resource hoarding may

include jobs in the public sector, public contracts for entrepreneurs, or simple distribution of goods, food, cloths etc. (Clara, 2010).

(Hopkin 2006a), notes that corruption and clientelism is interlinked because clientelism incite corruption. The principle that sustains the clientelistic relationship primacy to the distribution of individual, selective benefits to citizens, to the detriment of the provision of collective goods is itself a prescription for venal use of state resources. It was stated that high scores of corruption are a good indicator of the prevalence of clientelism. Clientelism is “intimately linked to poverty and inequality, of which it is probably both a cause and a consequence”. (Clara, 2010: 2).

The history of patron-client relationship can be traced back to the 1970s and 80s as a concept that characterises preindustrial societies and described as a primitive form of organization that would be destroyed by democratization or strengthening of states. Scott (1972: 92) defines patron-client relationship as: “a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron.” (Clara, 2010).

This definition shows a lopsided relationship between patrons and clients. It involves only two individuals based on mutual and general social trust. This system of social organisation has been described as trust networks (Clara, 2010).

The thinking the clientelism will be defeated by democratisation has been proven to be false because clientelism has persisted in less developed countries as well as developed ones irrespective of the system of rule either democracy or authoritarianism (Clara, 2010).

The falsehood of this thinking was expressed Piattoni (2001) supports this line of thinking by exploring how democracy has strengthened the bargaining leverage of clients through patrons or brokers. Clientelism has therefore not been wiped out by democracy but has rather transformed into a “complex pyramidal exchange network of client-broker-patron exchange” (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007:8).

Hopkin (2001) tries to make a distinction between what he refers to as the old and new clientelism. He argues that the new clientelism has to do with “parties distributing state resources to groups, areas or individuals in exchange for their votes, and is less unequal, less personalized and more explicitly materialistic relationship than the old clientelism” (2001:3).

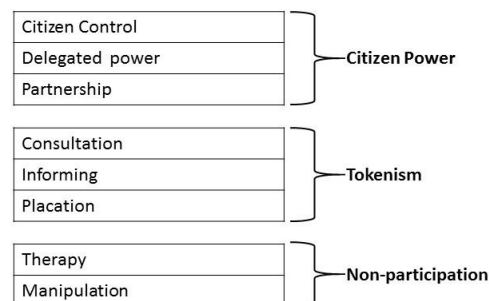
Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2001:4) further made the distinction that “clientelism thus evolves into a more symmetrical (rather than asymmetrical), instrumental-rational (rather than normative) and broker-mediated (rather than face-to-face based) exchange relationship” in line with this new form of clientelistic dominance, clientelism has been described as a form of transaction that involves “the direct exchange of a citizens votes in return for direct payments or continuing access to employment, goods and services”. (Clara, 2010: 3).

2.17 Participatory and Collaborative Planning

Participatory and collaborative planning is a process that brings different groups and interests together to engage concerning a subject matter and getting a consensus towards a plan and its implementation (Hague et al., nd).

Participation is the involvement of the governed in their government and it is regarded as the corner stone to democracy (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein’s Ladder of 1969 was developed in the late 1960s and was been used to describe the degree and kinds of participation looks at participation at from the perspective of those at the receiving end (Cornwall, 2008).

Fig: 6 Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation



Source: (Cornwall, 2008: 269).

At the top of the ladder is citizen power, with non-participation at the bottom. Citizen power involves therapy and manipulation. For Arnstein, citizens' being at the receiving end of projects or programme is her point of departure (Cornwall, 2008).

Cornwall (2008) noted that development agencies who promote participation like the World Bank uses both giving information and consultation as forms of participation and equates the availability of information with empowerment. More so, consultation has been used widely as a means of legitimating already taken decisions and as a means of giving the process a moral authority.

Another typology that has been used to define participation is the pretty's typology. Unlike the Arnstein's focuses more on the user of participatory approaches. His typologies start with inclusion with no real power exercised which is referred to as manipulative participation and passive participation to the participation by consultation and participation for material gain moving to functional participation where organisations involve in participation as a means of achieving project goals and as a means of reducing cost. In functional participation, people participate to meet pre-determined objectives and most get involved when major decisions have been made by external agencies (Cornwall, 2008).

The next level of participation is interactive participation where participation is regarded as the people's right and not merely a means of achieving goals. This form of participation seeks for multiple perspectives through the use of systematic and structured learning process and enjoys inter-disciplinary methodologies. Here social decisions are controlled by groups and resources are controlled by the people. The last level of participation is self-mobilisation. Here people take decisions independent of external organisation (Cornwall, 2008).

Both Arnstein and Pretty in their typologies describe participation using the ideal of power shift from control by authorities to control by citizen (Cornwall, 2008). Participation can be initiated by any of the parties involved; what is referred as invited (ward meetings, community meetings, public meetings) and invented spaces (petitions, lawsuits, protests). It has been indicated that the initiator of the process determines the form such process will take in invited spaces, most times the people are at the receiving side what Arnstein identified as the level of tokenism, on the other

hand if the citizen initiates the process, they might be able to better express their needs (Arnstein, 1965; Cornwall, 2004; Mira tab, 2006).

In the Niger Delta, participation falls mainly in between the level where participation is used as a therapy (non-participation) and where it is used as a way of giving information or consultation (Tokenism) in relation to the Arnstein's ladder of participation. Participation has also most taking the form of invited spaces which has manifested in lawsuits against oil companies and the Nigerian Government, protests (violent and non-violent), petitions, etc.

2.18 Conflict Management

Conflicts are a major occurrence in different human interactions. It can occur at a micro level between family members, colleagues, workers, etc. and at a micro level within and between communities, states, regions and nations. This is because people have different interest, perceptions, goals, values viewpoints and experiences. The paradox however is that conflicts can be both the force that can tear relationships apart and the force that binds them together. This implies that conflicts can either be "healthy (constructive) or unhealthy (destructive)" (Bayer and Schernick, nd: 5).

Conflicts on itself is not necessarily bad, however, it is important that conflicts are resolved effectively because it can "lead to personal and professional growth." This means that how effective a conflict resolution process is impacts there will be positive or negative outcome (Blimling et al., nd: 1). Successful resolving of conflicts can bring solutions to all problems that has arises and sometimes attracts benefits that are not expected because effective conflict management increases understanding about the actual issues behind each conflict which helps in providing insight on how to achieve specific goals. (Blimling et al., nd).

Secondly, effective conflict resolution increases group cohesion because team members can develop stronger mutual respect, and a renewed faith in their ability to work together. Thirdly, effective conflict resolution produces an improved self-knowledge as it inspires individuals to examine their goals and interests in a bid to identify and understand the issues important to them, focus and enhance their effectiveness (Blimling et al., nd).

On the other hand, if conflict is not handled effectively, it can lead to damaging and conflicting goals which can result into personal dislike, disrupt team work and disengage people from their work and daily lives. It can be even more damaging because it can lead to a “vicious downward spiral of negativity.” (Blimling et al., nd: 1). Five styles for dealing with conflicts that vary in degree of cooperativeness and assertiveness has been identified. It was further noted that different styles are most useful in different situations. The five main styles include;

Competitive Style: here people know what they want and take a firm stand towards achieving it. This style is usually practiced from a position of power derived from things rank, expertise, position or persuasive ability. This system can be adopted comfortable in a situation where there is an emergency and when there is a need to make an urgent decision, “when the decision is unpopular; or when defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly. This system can however leave people feeling bruised, unsatisfied and resentful when used in less urgent situations.” (Blimling et al., nd: 1).

Collaborative Style: in this style, effort is made to meet the demands of all people and groups involved. Here people effectively cooperate and acknowledge that everyone is important. This style is useful when you need to bring together a variety of viewpoints to get the best solution when there have been previous conflicts in the group; or when the situation is too important for a simple trade-off (Blimling et al., nd: 1).

Compromising Style: in this style, people seek to find a solution in a way that everyone gets a partial satisfaction to their needs. This is because everyone is expected to relinquish something. Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming (Blimling et al., nd: 1).

Accommodating Style: people who adopt this style are willing to meet the needs of people at the expense of their own personal needs. Here the accommodator understands and knows when to

yield to the desire of others and can be easily persuaded to succumb to the needs of people even when it is no warranted.

Accommodation is appropriate when the issues matter more to the other party, when peace is more valuable than winning, or when you want to be in a position to collect on this “favour” you gave. However, people may not return favours, and overall this approach is unlikely to give the best outcomes (Blimling et al., nd: 2).

Avoiding Style: Avoiding: People tending towards this style seek to evade the conflict entirely. This style is typified by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decisions, and not wanting to hurt anyone’s feelings. It can be appropriate when victory is impossible, when the controversy is trivial, or when someone else is in a better position to solve the problem. However, in many situations this is a weak and ineffective approach to take (Blimling et al., nd: 2).

2.19 Conclusion

A strong link has been identified in literature between conflicts in the Niger Delta and oil exploration by multi-national corporations. It has also been noted that these conflicts have manifested in different forms and are caused by underling issues around resource control, deprivation, poverty and under development of the region which is worsened by the advert effects of oil exploitation activities on the environment.

The high level of degradation and pollution experienced in the Niger Delta and the continuous neglect from the Nigerian Government towards the development of the region has resulted in conflicts which has manifested in form of illegal oil markets, hostage taking and kidnapping of expatriates and oil company workers in the region, the rise of youth militia groups and disruption of activities of oil production, physical combat and cross fires between the Nigerian military and Niger Delta youth militia groups, hijacking of offshore and onshore oil vessels and deaths in the region (Aghalino, 2001).

Chapter Three

Oil Conflicts in the Niger Delta

3. Introduction

3.1 History of Conflicts in the Niger Delta Region

In order to understand the nature and characteristics of the Niger Delta conflicts, there is need to understand the forces that define these conflicts by looking briefly at an overview of the Niger Delta history of oil conflicts. Oil conflicts in the Niger Delta started in the mid-1960s after oil was found in a community in the then Rivers State in commercial quantity and after Nigeria's independence. The Niger Delta conflicts started with the beginning of the "Isaac Adaka Boro Revolution" of mid-1960s (Anugwom, 2011: 7).

In the modern struggle of the Niger Delta people, Ken Saro-Wiwa can be regarded as the face of the Niger Deltans who is against oil companies and the Nigerian government for the degradation of the Niger Delta environment, the social and economic marginalization of the Niger Delta people. Ken Saro-Wiwa took the struggle of the Niger Delta people beyond just a mere political struggle led by what is regarded as a "disgruntled rag-tag army of youths" to a more popular and well-articulated and focused struggle for emancipation in the end of the 1980s to the beginning of 1990s (Anugwom, 2011: 7).

More so, memorable events in the history of the Niger Delta struggle also gave it prominence and also shaped the dimension of the struggle. Events like, the "Ogoni Bill of Rights; the Kaiama Declaration of Ijaw Youths in December, 1998; the Odi massacre; and the rise of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)" which represents the broad mobilization of youth militia groups across the region (Anugwom, 2011: 7).

3.2 Isaac Boro Revolution of 1966.

Isaac Boro is the pioneer of the Niger Delta struggle against the National Government and multinational companies. During his life, he burned with the desire to address the injustice the Niger people experienced as a minority group in the Nigerian State (Siollun, 2008; Tare- Out and Lugard, nd).

Boro, as he is popularly known, left teaching and joined the police where he served for some time before he was enrolled to study chemistry at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Thereafter, Boro left for Ghana in search for Samuel Owonaru an indigene of the Niger Delta Area who hails from the same town as Isaac Boro (Siollun, 2008 and Osun Defender, 2015).

During his time, he was very vocal about the frustration that the Niger Delta youths were experiencing due to marginalisation and neglect from the Nigerian Government and stated that the Niger Delta people were ready to take any action led by a leader who is outstanding and ready to fight for the liberty of their land. Emphasising how the Niger Delta people are living as strangers in their lands and are clinched to the chains of tyranny and are continuously experiencing social and political deprivation. Hence the need for them to fight for their right to self-determination they have been denied. He went on to state that the state of economic development in the Niger Delta is not appealing (Siollun, 2008; Osun Defender, 2015).

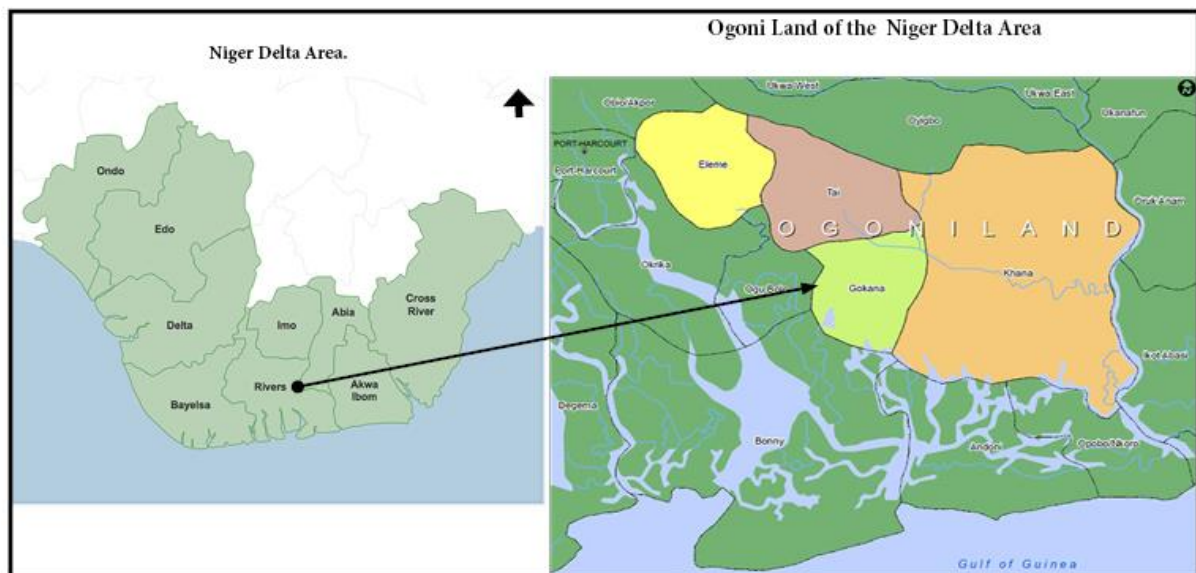
Isaac Boro, with the help of Samuel Owonaru sought financial aid for his mission of liberating the Niger Delta people for self-autonomy in Ghana at the Cuban embassy in Ghana which was not successful. On their return home, Boro, with the help of Nottingham Dick started recruiting young men under the organisation called the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF). The total recruit was 150 men divided into three divisions (Siollun, 2008; Osun Defender, 2015; Tare- Out and Lugard, nd).

On 23 February, 1966, the three divisions of trained armed men moved out of their camp in Touton with the call: "Today is a great day, not only in your lives, but also in the history of the Niger Delta. Perhaps, it will be the greatest day for a very long time. This is not because we are going to bring the heavens down, but because we are going to demonstrate to the world what and how we feel about oppression.... Remember your 70-year-old grandmother who still farms to eat, remember also your poverty stricken people and then, remember too, your petroleum which is being pumped out daily from your veins, and then fight for your freedom" (Siollun, 2008: 1).

With Boro, Onwonaru and Dick as the commanders of the divisions, NDVF men aggressively challenged a police station in Yenagoa, the armoury was raided and some officers kidnapped along with the officer in command of the station. Oil pipelines were blown up and they engaged the police in a gunfire fight and Isaac Boro and his men declared the Niger Delta area as an

independent Republic with a raised flag. This revolution was however subdued by the federal government of Nigeria after 12-day fight with the Nigerian Army (Anugwom, 2011 and Siollun, 2008).

In the mist of the conflicts and crisis in Nigeria, the sentence was suspended and he was later pardoned by General Gowon in 1967 at the beginning of the civil war in Nigeria. Isaac Boro joined the Nigerian army and fought against the Biafra troops (Siollun, 2008).



The Shell Corporation started operating in the Niger delta area since the discovery of oil in 1958. However, the conflicts over oil in Ogoni land a tribe in Rivers State of the Niger Delta Region started in 1970 when the chiefs of the Ogoni people for the first time wrote a petition against the activities of Shell Corporation in their land to the local Military Governor stating that the activities of Shell Corporation in the Niger Delta and especially in Ogoni land was “seriously

threatening the well-being, and even the very lives” of the people of Ogoni (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015: 1).

Prior to this petition, there was a major explosion at an oilfield in Bomu in Ogoni land. This explosion lasted for three days with a lot of pollution and damage caused to the environment. Mangroves and other resources obtained from the seascape are destroyed during oil spills for example mangroves produce fuel woods that are highly caloric and this is used by the people to support their energy needs. More so, mangroves are a naturally productive ecosystem that serves as a habitat for many biodiversity, the mangroves serve as a breeding ground for many fish stock which the people depend on for livelihood and they inhabit the mangroves during their larva stage of development. Acknowledging how dependent the people are on the environment for livelihood, the Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD) (2008), indicated that oil spillage will largely undermine food security in the community where they occur.

By the 1980s; many other communities began the crusade and protest against the activists of oil companies in the Niger Delta. One of such protests is the petition written by the Iko people to Shell demanding that compensations and restitution should be made for their right to clean water, air and a liveable environment (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015).

The Ogoni Bill of Rights was signed by Ogoni elders in August 1990. The bill called for the control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people politically, the control and the use of economic resources derived from Ogoni land for the development of the Ogoni area and the direct and adequate representation of the rights of the Ogoni people in all Federal institutions protecting their environment from more degradation. That same year, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), which is a non-violent group, was launched (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015).

Ken Saro-Wiwa is a key player in the birth of the “Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)” and the prominent “Ogoni Bill of Rights” that was brought before the Nigerian government in 1990. Ken Saro-Wiwa who was an author and a businessman in the 1990s sought the help of international community and started travelling often to the United States and Europe seeking support for the plight of his people (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015: 1).

By August 1991, the Ogoni Bill of Rights was amended that empowered MOSOP to be able to make appeal to the international community for help in their struggle since they had not received and reply from the Federal government (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015).

The United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples was addressed by Saro-Wiwa in July 1992 in Geneva, stating “I speak on behalf of the Ogoni people. You will forgive me if I am somewhat emotional about this matter. I am Ogoni ... Petroleum was discovered in Ogoni in 1958 and since then an estimated 100 billion dollars’ worth of oil and gas has been carted away from Ogoni land. In return for this the Ogoni people have received nothing” (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015: 1).

The Ogoni Bill of Rights was tendered at the conference as evidence along with a book authored by Ken Saro-Wiwa titled “Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni Tragedy.” In the book, Ken Saro-Wiwa wrote about the oppression and deprivation the Ogoni people and the Niger Delta people are experiencing and how they have been helpless watching multinational companies and the Nigerian government exploiting their resources and destroying their environment constantly and destroying their livelihood without any substantial development in the region. Ken Saro-Wiwa went ahead to write about the double standard of the Shell Corporation in Nigeria compared to its Operation in European countries and accused Shell of racism and the federal government of genocide (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015).

The demands of the Ogoni people were presented to the Federal Government through the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and oil companies operating in Ogoni land including Chevron and Shell Corporation demanding that compensations and royalties be paid to the Ogoni people or quit their land in 30 days (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015).

At the expiration of the 30 days, what has been regarded as the largest demonstration ever in Niger Delta against oil companies took place. On the January 4, 1993, about 300 000 Ogoni people were mobilised in the celebration of the Ogoni day with a peaceful protest against the activities of oil companies on their land that has destroyed their environment. “We have woken up to find our lands devastated by agents of death called oil companies. Our atmosphere has been totally polluted, our lands degraded, our waters contaminated, our trees poisoned, so much so

that our flora and fauna have virtually disappeared” one of the Ogoni leader addressed the crowd and declared the 4th of January as the Ogoni Day (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015: 2).

Knowing the risks involved in the struggle, Ken Saro-Wiwa gave all he had to the struggle as a peaceful advocate. Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other leaders of the Ogoni people died after being detained and charged by the military government for conspiracy. After the death of these nine Ogoni leaders, the struggle translated into a violent struggle involving youth militias from the region in a combat with the Nigerian armed forces (Anugwom, 2011). During this period, a lot of lives were lost and many fled from their homes with about 5 400 refugees reported by the United Nations High Commissioner (Pavšič, 2012).

Similar protests from communities in the Niger Delta continued to spread. Another community that rose up to the problems of environmental degradation and deprivation is the Umuechem community of the Etche people that indicated that the operations of multi-national companies like Shell Corporation has adverse environmental effects on the people of their community who are predominantly farmers because their farmlands has been destroyed by oil spillage. Other communities followed suit in the protest against the effects of activities of multinational companies in the environment such as Ogbia, Igbide, Izon, Irri, Uzure and Ijaw (Remember Saro-Wiwa, 2015).

One of the most prominent protests was led by the Ijaw people with the emergence of the Kaiama Declaration in December 1998 requesting that the oil companies and the Federal Government should leave their land by the beginning of 1999. (Pavšič, 2012).

3.4 The Kaiama Declaration of 1998

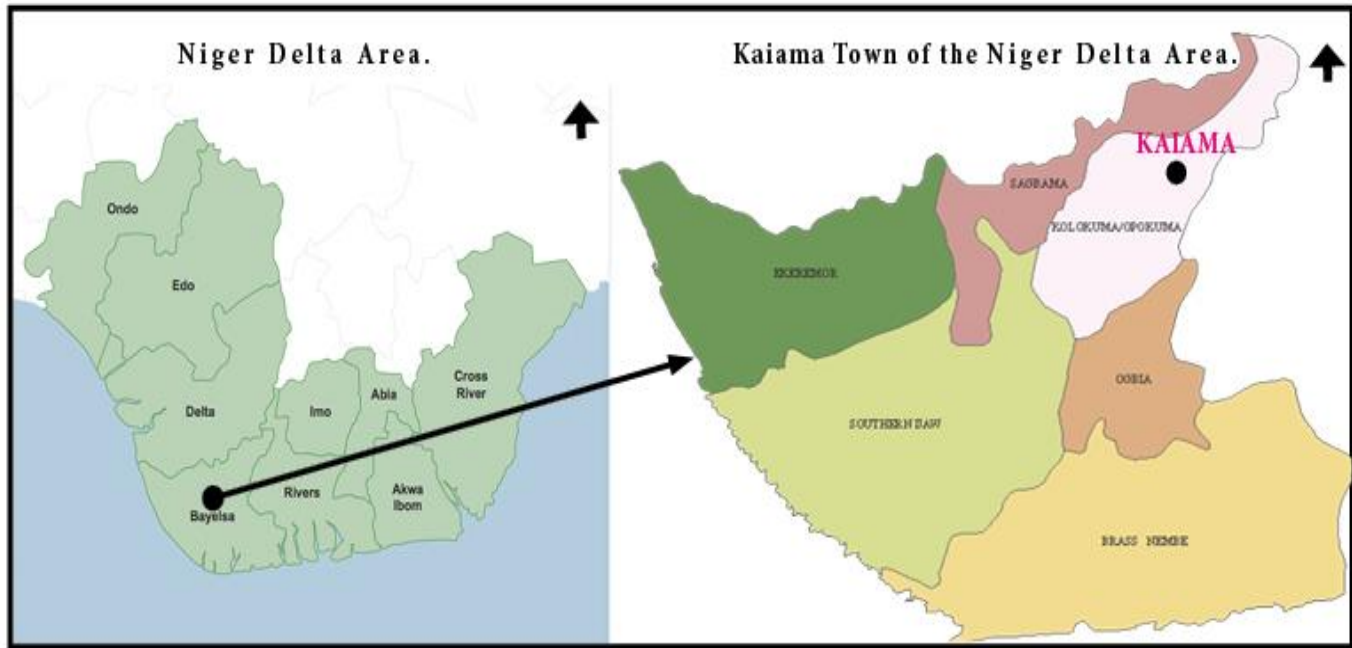


Fig.8. Kaiama Town of the Niger Delta Area. Sources: pind foundation, 2015 and sun news online, 2015.

After the death of General Sani Abacha in June 1988, who during his administration suppressed MOSOP protests, General Abdulsalami Abubakar came into power as the new military head of state and released a lot of prisoners and began the process to restore a civilian government back to Nigeria. This improvement gave activists in the Niger Delta area an opportunity to make a case and placed demand on the incoming civilian government to address their problems because the administration of General Abdulsalami Abubakar created the atmosphere that gave room and respect for the freedom of expression and association. The Ijaw people were the most vocal of all the tribes as the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria and the occupants of most of the lands where oil is produced in the riverine, and dry land areas of Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States of Niger Delta (Courson, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 1999).

The Ijaw youth Council (IYC) was formed on December 11, 1998 in Kaiama during a youth meeting. The IYC adopted the Kaiama declaration that represented the political crisis over the struggle for the control of oil resources in the Niger Delta and maintaining that the reason why the Niger Delta environment is being continuously destroyed by oil companies and the Federal

government is because the Ijaw people do not have any form of control of their land and resources from their land (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

Some resolutions were made in the Kaiama declaration among which, it was stated that all land and all resources which include oil in the Niger Delta land belongs to the Niger Delta people and that all decrees that has been enacted by the federal government without involving and the consent of the Niger Delta people is no longer recognized by the IYC (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

These resolutions were set to be implemented from December 30 1998 by youth in all communities, especially in the Ijaw clans of the Niger Delta area. Oil companies were threatened and ordered to leave the region by that date in order to avoid being caught unaware by youth from the region, stating their displeasure with how their environment has been destroyed with gas flaring, blowouts, oil spills and being addressed as terrorists and labelled as saboteurs (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

Youth in support of the Kaiama declaration all came out in mass for a peaceful demonstration on December 30, 1999 from all communities in the Ijaw land. The response from security forces in Yenagoa the capital of Bayelsa State and the neighbouring communities during the protest led to a confrontation that lasted for five days. Many youths lost their lives and three soldiers also died in the process (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

3.5 The Odi Massacre of 1999

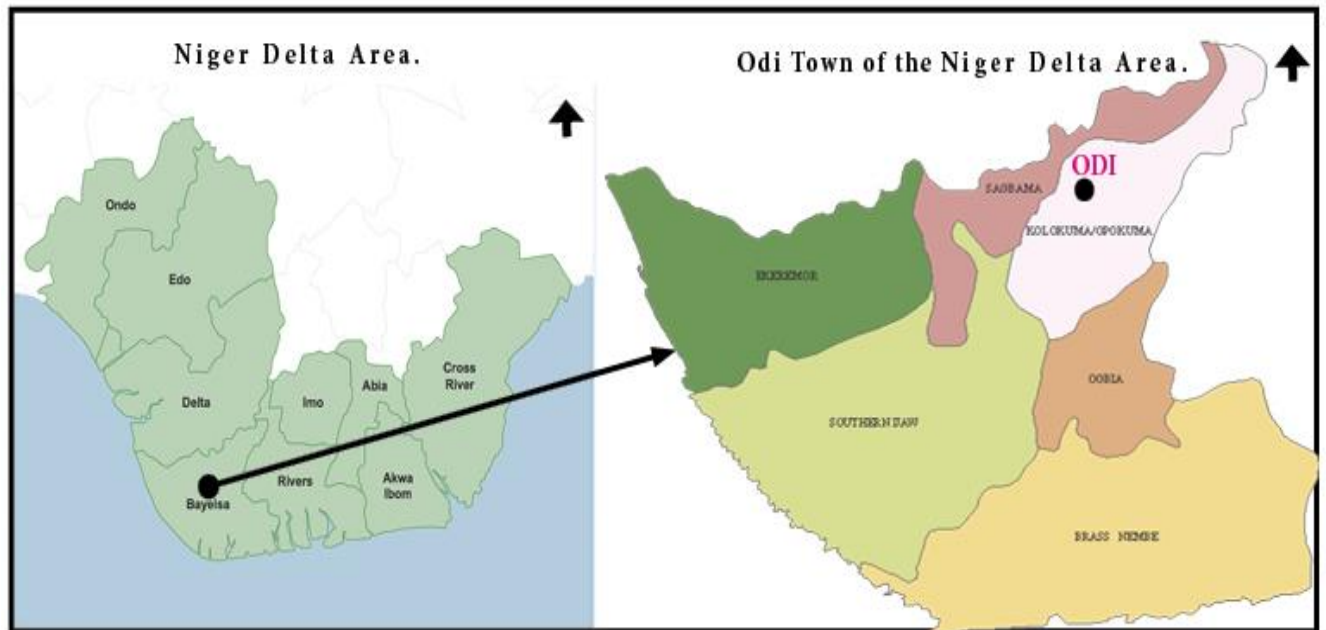


Fig.9. Odi Town of the Niger Delta Area. Sources: pind foundation, 2015 and sun news online, 2015.

This massacre took place on the 20 of November, 1999 in Odi, a community in Ijaw land of Bayelsa State months into Olusegun Obasanjo's administration as a civilian president of the Republic of Nigeria. This massacre was a military raid in response to the kidnap and killing of 12 policemen by a criminal youth gang in the area Odi community (Anugwom, 2011).

The Human Rights Watch of 1999 revealed that dozens of defenceless civilians including women and children were killed by the soldiers sent by the Nigerian Government by order to Odi. It was reported that there was large scale killing and arson by the military force to a level that the community was left with only three buildings ("a bank, the Anglican Church, and the health centre") standing in the town at the end of the massacre (Anugwom, 2011: 8).

Few days after the operation of the military in Odi, the government deployed soldiers in response to a protest in Choba community of Rivers State to disperse protesters at the gate of a subsidiary of an American pipeline construction company Wilbros Nigeria Ltd. It was reported by community members that four people were killed by the soldiers and a large number of woman raped. Photographs captured during the event shows Nigerian soldiers raping women. The

Federal government however, out rightly denied its deployment of soldiers and the rapes reported. And no one was ever held to account for the crimes against women and the Niger Delta people (Ekine, 2013 and Ransome-Kuti, nd).

3.6 Militancy- Militia Youth Groups

Along with these events, popular and strong militia youth leaders like “Asari-Dokubo, Tom Polo, Ateke Tom, Boy Loaf” amongst others emerged who organised their fellow youths as soldiers under the platforms of the “Niger Delta Defence Force (NDDF), Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), Niger Delta Patriotic Force (NDPF), Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA)” amongst others who have strongly kept the cause alive and have been committed to the struggle and all the violence experienced in the late 1990s. One of the most popular and influential militia groups is the “Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF),” is headed by Asari-Dokubo is regarded as being dominant at the beginning of 2000s and launched the violent and well-known Operation Locust Feast in 2004 that targets the workers of Transnational oil corporations in the region (Anugwom, 2011: 8).

Another militia group with high prominence is MEND which sprang from the NDPVF at the end of 2005 with a goal “to destroy the ability of the Nigerian government to export oil.” At the inception of this group, they placed two demands on the Nigerian Government as a condition to stop its plan to bomb oil facilities that belong to the Nigerian government and oil companies and the kidnap of oil workers as a means to see that they gain control over oil resources in the Niger Delta; the release of Asari-Dokubo and Diepreye Alamieyeseiya a former governor of Bayelsa State arrested and on trial for money laundering and corruption. This request is an indication that youth militia groups have political support from highly placed politicians in the region and establishes the claims that these militia groups were used as political mercenaries in the 1999 general elections (Omotola, 2009). These two people are regarded to be key players in the struggle for the control of resources in the region in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Anugwom, 2011: 9).

The activities of these militia groups include stealing, refining and selling of crude oil which is known as oil bunkering in the Niger Delta. They have been the masterminds behind kidnaps of oil company workers, expatriates and top executives of the government and ransom taking.

Table 4. Summary of Conflicts in the Niger Delta from 1967-2008

Dates	Events
1967 and 1970	<i>During the civil war in Nigeria, the newly declared Republic of Biafra demands rents and royalties from oil.</i>
February 23, 1966	<i>Isaac Adaka Boro with his fellow youth from the Ijaw operating under the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) openly avowed the “Republic of the Niger Delta” with a raised flag.</i>
1990	<i>The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and the prominent Ogoni Bill of Rights that was brought before the Nigerian government.</i>
October 28, 1999	<i>The Nigerian Military deployed to Choba in response to a protest on Wilbros gate. An American pipeline construction company.</i>
December 1998	<i>Kaiama Declaration</i>
November 20, 1999	<i>The Nigerian Military deployed to Odi in response to the killing of 12 policemen and massacred lots of civilians.</i>
March 22, 2003	<i>A group of Youth attacked the Total-Elf Fina tank farm in Oponani village. Five soldiers were killed and properties that worth several billions of Naira destroyed.</i>
April 7, 2004	<i>A boat carrying nine persons travelling along the Benin River, west of Warri was attacked and Five persons including two Americans who are staff of Chevron Texaco were killed by militants.</i>
April 14, 2004	<i>Four children and a 90-year-old community leader in Koko the headquarters of the Warri North Local Government Area of Delta State were killed in an attack from Ijaw Youths.</i>
April 23, 2004	<i>Nine members of the Joint Security task force in charge of security in Warri, Delta State were killed by militant Ijaw youths.</i>
November 18, 2004	<i>A protest led by Ijaw youths from Odioma</i>

	<i>community in Brass Local Government council in Bayelsa state for alleged violation of a Memorandum of understanding by the SPDC shut down and occupied its 8000-barrel flow station.</i>
December 24, 2004	<i>16 oil workers including a Yugoslav at Amatu community in Ekeremoh Local Government Council in Bayelsa State Militant Youths kidnapped at an oil vessel owned by an oil-serving firm that partners with Shell known as Seabuk.</i>
January 12, 2006	<i>Four expatriates were taken hostage.</i>
January 19, 2006	<i>Federal Government asks militants to negotiate.</i>
January 29, 2006	<i>Militant threatens oil workers to pull out of the Niger Delta.</i>
May 10, 2006	<i>An executive of the United States based oil company, Baker Hughes, was shot and killed in the south-eastern city of Port Harcourt. At the time of the shooting, it was not immediately known if MEND had any involvement or not. Witness say the attacker appeared to be specifically targeting the American executive.</i>
June 2, 2006	<i>A Norwegian rig offshore Nigeria was attacked and 16 crew members were kidnapped.</i>
August 20, 2006	<i>10 MEND members were killed by the Nigerian military. The members were working on releasing a Royal Dutch Shell hostage.</i>
October 2, 2006	<i>10 Nigerian soldiers were killed in their patrol boat off the shore of the Niger Delta by a MEND mortar shell. Earlier that day a Nigerian/ Royal Dutch Shell convoy was attacked in the Port Harcourt region resulting in some people being wounded.</i>
October 3, 2006	<i>A militant group abducted four Scots, a Malaysian, Indonesian and a Romanian from a bar in Akwa- Ibom State.</i>
October 4, 2006	<i>Nigerian soldiers attacked military camp; in the ensuing battle 9 Nigerian soldiers were killed.</i>
November 22, 2006	<i>Nigerian soldiers attempted a rescue of kidnapped oil workers which resulted in one soldier being killed.</i>

May 1, 2007	<i>MEND seized six expatriate workers from an offshore oil facility owned by Chevron. The group of six consisted of four Italians, an American and a Croat. On the same day, MEND published photos of the captives seated on white plastic chairs in a wooden shelter around the remains of a campfire.</i>
May 3, 2007	<i>MEND seized eight foreigners from another offshore vessel. The hostages were released less than 24 hours later, stating they had intended to destroy the vessel and did not want more hostages.</i>
May 8, 2007	<i>Three major oil pipeline (one I Brass and two in the Akasa area) were attacked, shutting down oil production and cutting power to facility run by Italian oil company Agip, part of the ENI energy group. An email statement from a MEND spokesman said Fighters of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) attacked and destroyed three major pipelines in Bayelsa... we will continue indefinitely with attacks on all pipelines, platforms and support vessels.</i>
September 23, 2007	<i>A MEND spokesperson named JomoGbomo announced through a communiqué to the Philadelphia Independent Media Centre, that media reports of his arrest and detention were false; and then further informed through the letter, that MEND had officially declared war, effective on September 23, 2007 and that they would be commencing attacks on installations and abduction of expatriates.</i>
May 3, 2008	<i>MEND militants attacked Shell operated pipelines in Nigeria forcing the company to halt 170,000 barrels a day of exports of Bonny Light crude.</i>
June, 15 2008	<i>Militants from Egbema community in Delta and Edo States struck at Iyera village in Azaka community bombing an NNPC pipeline.</i>
June 17, 2008	<i>A major oil spillage occurred at shell Bomu Well 18 in Kpor headquarters of Gokana Local government area. Members of the community were aggrieved.</i>

June 20, 2008	<i>MEND naval forces attacked the Shell-operated Bonga oil platform, shutting down 10% of Nigeria's oil production in one fell swoop. The oil platform Shell's flagship project in the area capable of extracting a massive 200, 000 barrels of oil a day, was widely assumed to be outside the reach of the militants due to its location 120km off-shore. This attack has demonstrated a level of prowess and sophistication never before seen by the rebels and it is now known that all of Nigeria's oil platforms are with range of MEND attack.</i>
July 19, 2008	<i>Over three soldiers were killed in Bayelsa State by militants on rampage.</i>
July 26, 2008	<i>Two civilians were reportedly shot and eight expatriates abducted when heavily armed men believed to be militants stormed the Liquefied Petroleum Gas tanker at Bouy 38-39 in Bonny Rivers State.</i>
July 28, 2008	<i>MEND militants bombed oil pipeline belonging to Shell in Rivers State.</i>
August 2, 2008	<i>Militants seized two military gunboats in a deadly duel with Nigerian soldiers around its Bomadi base on the Forcados River.</i>
August 2, 2008	<i>Militants under the name Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) kidnapped nine chieftains of the People's Democratic Party in Ondo State.</i>
August 4, 2008	<i>The Nigerian security forces (Joint Task Force) allegedly searching for some militants devastated Agge community in Bayelsa State.</i>

Sources: Najibo and Omukoro, (2009: 37-39); Human Rights Watch, (1999); Pavšič, (2012).

From 2008 and beyond, the Niger Delta conflicts have persisted although an amnesty programme was put in place by the government under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, cases of kidnapping, oil bunkering, conflicts over oil well boundaries has persisted and in fact increased.

3.7 Conclusion

The Niger Delta Conflicts began with the Isaac-Boro revolution of 1967 when he declared the Niger Delta a Republic. Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni people took the Niger Delta struggle further and gave it prominence nationally and internationally.

After the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa, other communities in the Niger Delta furthered the struggle against oil companies and the Federal Government for the exploitation of oil in the region and the effects and negative impacts of oil exploitation activities.

The Ijaw youth under the umbrella of the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC) took the struggle further through the Kaiama Declaration that demanded oil companies and the Military forces sent to the Niger Delta Region to leave and quit its operations in the Region and then the massacre in Odi. The Massacre at Odi was as a response to the activities of youth gangs that resulted to the death of two police men in Odi community.

This and more incidences led to the rise of youth militias under the platform of MEND, NDVF, Egbesu Boys, etc. led by youth leaders like Asari Dokubo, Tom Polo, etc. Their activities in the region include pipeline vandalism, kidnapping of oil company workers, oil theft and bunkering and political thuggery.

Chapter Four

Causes of Oil Conflicts in the Niger Delta

4. Introduction

The Niger Delta is enriched with a proven crude oil reserve of 37,070 (million barrels) and a proven natural gas reserve 5,111(billion cu. m.) according to the organisation of petroleum exporting countries (OPEC) (2015). In spite of this, the area is experiencing huge deprivation and is mainly underdeveloped. This situation remains a paradox and has played an important role in the Niger Delta since 1960s (Francis, 2008). The national economy of the country Nigeria depends greatly on the sector, which produces over 95 % of the total revenue earned from export and 80% of the National revenue is derived from oil. All onshore production of oil in Nigeria, takes place in the Niger Delta Area. Despite the presence of natural resources in the Niger Delta, the area lacks social infrastructures and has to live with the negative environmental impacts of oil exploitation on their environment. There is a high level of poverty, youth unemployment and poor performance on social indicators like health, education and poor quality of natural environment (Francis, 2008).

Since the 1914s, the Minerals Act accords the sovereign rights over oil resources in Nigeria to the National Government and with the power to distribute oil revenue. The rule for revenue sharing was put in place by the colonial authorities before Nigeria's independence. The revenue was set to be shared as "50% for the state, 20% to the federal Government and 30% for the Distributive Pool, where regions of oil origin were represented. " (Pavšič, 2012: 1).

The first dispute over oil ownership started during the Nigerian civil war between 1967 and 1970. The leaders of the new declared Republic of Biafra on the eastern region demanded that taxes, rents and royalties be paid to them. The Nigerian Federal Government responded by imposing a naval blockade on the two main oil outlets. After the civil war and over the years the importance of oil as the source of national revenue has been rising (Pavšič, 2012).

4.1 Environmental Degradation

One major reason for “political and social rebellion” in the Niger Delta region is the environmental degradation of the region. One third of the Niger Delta Area is made up of mangrove forests, with high bio-diversity comprising different plants and animal species (Pavšič, 2012: 1).

“The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” in recent years declared Nigeria as a hotspot for climate change. It was predicted that Nigeria will experience increased shifts in temperatures, storms, rainfall and particularly rise in sea level which will be experienced in the riverine areas of the country which includes the Niger Delta in the Twenty first century (Pavšič, 2012: 1). It was also indicated that the initiation of oil exploitation and drilling in an environment like that of the Niger Delta, which is ecologically sensitive will have devastating effects on the environment. Currently the Niger Delta is regarded to be one of the five most “petroleum-polluted environments” in the world (Pavšič, 2012: 1).

The Niger Delta has become highly polluted due to intensive exploitation of oil for decades. The effects of oil exploitation are experienced through oil spills, gas flaring, bush burning and the discharge of carbon monoxide (Achi, 2003 and Pavšič, 2012).

The flaring of gas is one major activity that poses a problem and contributes to change in climate and the degradation of the environment in the Niger Area. Over the years this problem has not been adequately addressed and gas flaring is still a major practice in the region. About 24 billion cubic metres of gas are in the atmosphere annually from over 70 per cent of the oil fields in the Niger Delta Area daily releasing huge amounts of carbon dioxide. This continuous flare of gas contaminates the air and has a negative effect on human beings and wildlife (Kadafa, 2012)

The flaring of gas produces high temperatures that make it almost impossible to live in many communities in the Niger Delta (Pavšič, 2012). Oil companies in the area are expected to comply with policies that require them to reduce flaring and the production of greenhouse gases by 2004 or 2008. However, about 84.60% of the total gas production are still been flared with only about 14.86% are being used locally. The total of 125.5 cubic meters of gas has been

produced in the Niger Delta area from 1970-1986. Over 102.3million cubic meters accounting for about 81.7% is flared, about 2.6 million cubic meters are used as fuel the oil companies and over 14.6 million cubic meters are utilized domestically (Kadafa, 2012).

The Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas pipeline running through the mangrove forest of Kala-Akama, Okirika leaked out and was cut in fire which lasted for three days and destroyed the local plants and animals that inhabits the area. This is just one example amongst the several fire incidences that has been experienced in the area that has led to huge loss of lives and resources (Kadafa, 2012). Another problem that has been experienced in the Niger Delta area as a result of gas flaring is acid rain which has also led to the loss of bio-diversities with economic and forest crops being destroyed (Uyigue and Agho, 2007).

The Niger Delta appears to have the greatest concentration of acid rain and this concentration reduces as one move away from the area. Heat produced through gas flaring destroys vegetation around areas surrounding the sites where gases are flared; it destroys mangrove swamps, leads to the destruction of soil nutrients and reduces agricultural production. The study carried out on the impact of oil exploitation on agriculture by Salau (1993) and Adeyemo (2002) indicated a strong relationship between gas flaring and agricultural productivity (Kadafa, 2012). This is the industrial waste produced during the production of oil and gas and the practice of flaring gas in the Niger Delta noxious gases like nitrogen oxide, sulphur oxide in sufficient amounts and intensity enough to lead to air pollution which affects the environment, land through acid rain which results in the loss of nutrients and impacts negatively on agricultural productivity (Salau, 1993). Also, Adeyemo (2002) indicated in the study carried out by in Okirika land of Rivers State that the production of food crops produced has decreased between 1992 and 1993 by 41.7% and in 1995 by 15%. This decrease was identified to have been caused by oil spills on farmlands and the appropriation of land for oil exploitation activities (Adeyemo 2002; Abam and Emuedo, 2015 and Salau, 1993).

Another major form of environmental degradation in the Niger delta is oil spillage. For example, it has been indicated that over 5334 cases of oil spillage that resulted in the discharge of 2.8m

barrels of oil into swamps, coastal waters and land was recorded by the “Nigerian Petroleum Industry” between 1979 and 1997 (CEHRD, 2008: 1).

Habitats have been damaged, bio-diversities lost and huge deforestation has been experienced, the loss of land and sources of water supply due to the exploration and the exploitation of crude oil in the Niger Delta Region. About 60 per cent of the population of the Niger Delta Region depend on the natural environment for their livelihood because the major activities in the communities are farming and fishing (Pavšič, 2012).

Pipelines that aid the distribution of oil and gas to other parts of the country have been installed in the area covering over 7000km of rainforests and mangroves. In order to install these pipelines, huge areas of habitats are cleared to construct tracks that these pipelines will occupy. Problems such as leakages and rupture of pipelines that leads to accidental discharges are caused by improper integration of pipelines, vandalism, along with problems of aging pipelines and lack of maintenance. A lot of the oil spillages recorded in the Niger Area has occurred in the mangrove swamps forest which represents the most reproductive ecosystem rich in fauna and flora (Kadafa, 2012).

The continuous spill of oil now makes it difficult for the Niger Delta people to make a living for themselves. This condition has led to resource shortages which in turn have other negative impacts on the people such as sickness, hunger, poverty, etc. (Akhakpe, 2012; Agbo and Uyigue, 2007; Kadafa, 2012).

4.2 Resource Control and Oil Resource Derivation Principle

The derivation principle was the basis for resource sharing and revenue allocation before the discovery of oil in large quantities in Nigeria (Ransome-Kuti, nd). This principle adopted by the federal government to distribute or allocate revenue derived from natural resources like crude oil in a way perceived to be equitable and gives particular preference to the oil producing states on the Niger Delta Region (Rodrigo, 2012).

This principle was introduced during the colonial era and the formula has undergone so many alterations which gave the centre (federal government) so much access to oil wealth since oil was

discovered (Rodrigo, 2012). It was argued that 100% of resource allocation goes to the region that produces such resource according to the “Bins Commission in the 1950s.” This was changed to 50% by the “Independence Constitution of 1960” and the “Republican Constitution of 1963.” So under these constitutions, the region that produces a particular resource is entitled to 50% of the resource allocation for that resource, 30 per cent to all regions including the region where such resource is derived from and 20 percent to the Federal Government (Ransome-Kuti, nd: 1).

In the 1960s, the major resources of Nigeria were cocoa, groundnut, hides and skin, cola and palm oil. These resources were produced by the three major ethnic groups the Hausa and Fulani produced groundnut, hides and skin, Yoruba produced cocoa and Igbos produced cola and palm oil. When crude oil however became dominant, the derivation was reduced to zero percent for the Niger Delta region from 50% (Ransome-Kuti, nd). This Changes, led to the revolution led by a student leader “Issac Adaka Boro” when he and his fellow Ijaw youths of the Niger Delta Region declared the Republic of Niger Delta which was later suppressed in 12 days (Ransome-Kuti, nd: 1). The changes in the derivation principle of revenue allocation has been strongly linked to the Niger Delta conflicts over the years.

Also, one of the root causes of the Nigerian civil war had the element of resource control of the oil wealth in the Niger Delta. These Agitations led to a 1% increase of the Derivation formula which was subsequently increased to 3% and then 13 % by the military government. However, the money goes directly to an Oil Minerals Producing Development Commission (OMPADEC) a development agency for the Niger Delta Area established and controlled by the military and the National Government (Ransome-Kuti, nd).

The Federal Government is viewed as “a one armed bandit” to the people in the Niger Delta area that takes their waters, land and oil, which is their natural resources, and also they get killed by armies sent in by the Federal Government. (Ransome-Kuti, nd: 1).

4.3 Deprivation and Lack of Substantial Development and Infrastructure

As noted earlier, the Niger Delta is enriched with oil reserves which play a vital role in the Nigerian economy. However, the region has also experienced neglect for decades (Ejibunu and Tuschl, 2006; Agbo and Uyigue, 2007; Akhakpe, 2012; Ransome-Kuti, nd).

Table 5. Unemployment levels in the Niger Delta.

Unemployment and Underemployment Rates 2006 (Youth unemployment)

State	Unemployment	Underemployment
Akwa Ibom	11.3 (33)	33.7 (24)
Bayelsa	6.8 (19)	19.4 (16)
Cross River	1.8 (5)	12.0 (9)
Delta	9.3 (21)	29.2 (27)
Edo	8.0 (22)	30.9 (37)
Rivers	11.4 (29)	25.3 (20)
South-South	8.8 (24)	26.2 (22)
Nigeria	5.3 (14)	20.2 (17.2)

Source: Nigeria Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire 2006

Source: Francis et al., 2011:30

The rate of unemployment and underemployment experienced in the Niger Delta area is higher than in any other region in Nigeria (Akhakpe, 2012 and Francis, 2008; Francis et al., 2011). Fig. 5 above indicates that the Niger Delta area is characterised by high levels of unemployment and underemployment. The average of unemployment in the region is higher than that of Nigeria as a nation. Unemployed youths in particular pose a major concern in the region because these are the groups that are recruited as militants in the area (Francis, 2008).

Table 6. The level of poverty in the Niger Delta

Poverty Statistics for the Niger Delta

State	Poverty Incidence (%) ¹²	Core Poor (%) (quintile 1) ¹³	Self-assessed poverty level ¹⁴	Very Poor (%) (self-assessed)	Gini
Akwa Ibom	35	27	66	17	0.50
Bayelsa	20	22	95	62	0.47
Cross River	42	33	77	22	0.50
Delta	45	23	81	25	0.47
Edo	33	16	79	35	0.46
Rivers	29	19	67	15	0.48
South-South	35	23	77	29	0.51
North-East	72	35.4	81	26.5	0.46
Nigeria	54	21.3	76	21.37	0.49

Source: Francis et al., 2011:30

With the condition of unemployment and no industries together with lack of infrastructure, the Delta Region has become a region with mass poverty and squalor (Akhakpe, 2012 and Ransome-Kuti, nd). Fig. 6 above, indicates high levels of poverty and inequality in the Niger Delta Region. The protection of the Niger Delta environment is important in protecting the economic wellbeing of the Niger Delta people. The same way the destruction of the Niger Delta environment through the activities of oil exploitation leaves poor communities at the risk destruction their traditional livelihood (Francis, et al., 2011).

“The Niger Delta Environmental Survey” indicates that high levels of poverty in the Delta Region can be strongly linked to the destruction of fishing waters and agricultural lands by oil exploitation activities. The people affected are made poor and either move to urban areas and become urban poorer or stay back in their communities and struggle with lands that produce low yields and deal with contaminated sources of water (Ransome-Kuti, nd: 1).

Perhaps, the Niger region is the most under-developed part of Nigeria despite the exploitation of its non-renewable oil wealth for several years (Akhakpe, 2012 and Ransome-Kuti, nd). The Niger Delta region can be described as a region that is “rich and poor” at the same time. Rich in the endowment of natural resources (crude oil) but yet made poor by the federal government and the oil companies that strips it of its resources daily (Ransome-Kuti, nd: 1).

The current condition of Oloibiri, the community where crude oil was first discovered in the Niger Delta in 1956 best represents the condition of what most communities are experiencing in the Niger Delta. Over 75 per cent of the Niger Delta people who live in the rural areas do not have access to electricity, piped water, good roads. Yet their lands are destroyed and their water polluted continuously by oil spillage and air polluted by the continuous flare of eternal gas. With this condition the people are bound to react. The root causes of the Niger Delta conflicts are found in these conditions they are faced with daily (Ransome-Kuti, nd).

4.4 The Structure of the Federal Government

The structure of the administration in Nigeria has gone through some change since after independence in 1960. In 1960, Nigeria was made up of three regions which are dominated by the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo the three major ethnic groups. In 1966, a federation of twelve states was established; the Niger Delta Region and its ethnicities were offered some level of autonomy because two states Rivers and Bendel states were created in the Region. Subsequently, more states have been created over the years. The Local Government Area (LGA) was created as one of the sphere of government in 1979 by the military government with an initial number of 300 LGAs (Francis et al, 2011).

Nigeria is currently made up of 36 states and 774 Local Governments of which 9 states and 185 LGAs make up the Niger Delta Area. Yet, the level of autonomy the Federal Government inherited from their military predecessors has remained. The Federal Government is structured in a way that makes the centre strong while the periphery weak. When the civilian rule was brought back in 1999, it came with more autonomy. (Francis, 2008 and Francis et al, 2011).

The “hybrid centralized/federal political structure of the country still remains” and this has led to tension between the state and the centre that still rely on resources and decisions made at the federal level. Also because the political economy of oil continues to shape the system of federation practiced in Nigeria, and the way oil revenue is being allocated from the national government. This has given rise to tensions between the National Government and the people of the Niger Delta (Francis, 2008 and Francis et al, 2011: 27).

In practice, the States and local authorities have the responsibility to carry out all public functions except “defence, the police, external relations, and customs.” Despite this huge responsibility on the State governments and Local governments, they still remain fiscally dependent on the National Government (Francis et al, 2011: 27).

Also, the 1999 Constitution limits the autonomy of the State and Local government because it prevents other levels of government having legislation that contradicts the National legislation. The concentration of too much power at the centre has increased “ethno-regional competition” in the country and for the Niger Delta Region; it has resulted to the sense of dependency and marginalisation (Francis et al, 2011: 27).

The federal system operated in Nigeria is continually shaped by its political economy and it forms the basis for revenue sharing and allocations from the centre. The struggle and contentions on how revenue is redistributed has always and continues to be a source of debate in the Niger Delta Region. Considering the huge oil revenue, the region is generating for the Nigerian government and the important role the region occupies and plays in the Nigerian economy, the struggle to control oil resources forms the basis for political struggle for stakeholders in the Niger Delta and the great call for resource control at different levels of government and in the Nation at large and has contributed to violence in the Niger Delta Region (Francis et al, 2011).

The 1999 Constitution therefore, ensures that a minimum of 13% of the federal government revenue derived from the oil production be allocated to the oil producing states of the Niger Delta Region (Francis et al, 2011).

4.5 Existing Systems of Neo-Patrimonialism and Corruption.

One way to look at the conflicts in the Niger Delta is to relate it to the neo-patrimonial school of thought that illustrates how corruption, conflicts and poor governance has been rationalised within the African social, cultural and historical environment. This school looks into how political and administrative disorder has been used by political elites in Africa to weaken the state in favour of their personal interest in ways that has led to the failure of the state and conflicts (Chabal and Daloz 1999; 2006; Obi, 2009).

Bayart, Ellis and Hibou (1998) and Obi (2009), also made a connection between oil conflicts in the Niger Delta and the activities of political elites that “criminalize the state, subvert it and enrich themselves.” Combining the weak, personalised state and patrimonial politics, creates a context for a context for misrule, corruption, state failure or collapse and conflicts over the state, power (Obi, 2009: 108).

Neo-patrimonialism also links to personal ties and networks of power. In the Nigerian System, family, communal ties, ethnicity and religion has been used as basis for and access to power and resources, political mobilisation and the political relations of inclusion and exclusion. The conflicts in the Niger Delta Region has also been explained in connection to the existing communal, ethnic terms that determines access to oil resources, power and blames the conflicts on the failure of the state and grievances have been based on injustice and insecurity (Obi, 2009).

The collapse of the state, corruption and the patrimonial political networks all produces and nurtures the feeling of violence and injustice. The struggle for oil resources and corruption has been identified as the main causes of conflict in the Niger Delta (Obi, 2009). This is because the patrimonial system of political god- fathers that exists in the Nigerian system makes it difficult for the government to manage conflicts and also makes room for high levels of corruption and rent-seeking. It is indicated that the bureaucracy was created as a means to reward clients politically and economically and this has been one factor responsible for the failure in the delivery of public services in the Niger Delta Area (Francis, 2008).

In the Niger Delta Region, extended family or clan structures, headed by traditional chiefs form the basis for group identification. Traditional authorities are custodian of group assets like “land and fishing grounds.” These traditional socio-political organisations were incorporated during the colonial rule through the “system of indirect rule” where traditional chiefs were used to administer the country by colonial leaders (Francis et al, 2011: 31). This system was adopted by oil companies upon their arrival in the Niger Delta Region. Traditional chiefs and preferred community elites were used as the middlemen in community relations. This traditional patrimonial system placed resources and powers in the hands of a selected few who are less accountable to the people. These systems still make up the social and economic life of the Niger Delta communities and the quest for oil assets and rents (Francis et al, 2011).

Up until now, traditional systems of patrimonialism still exist as traditional chiefs have been embedded in the political economy of the Nation Nigeria. Therefore, a complex, powerful, and deeply entrenched networks of patronage and political alliance underlie the outward appearance of a modern administration with its formal institutional structures (Francis et al, 2011).

The poor delivery of public services in the Niger Delta is due to the inability of the federal system to meet its objectives and also as a result of the neo patrimonial system of patronage that has been used to obtain and maintain political alliance and support. The inability of the Nigerian state to establish a boundary between the public and private sphere constitutes a problem and impacts on the delivery of public services. For example, public employment is first seen as a means for the advancement of personal or group interests rather than a service for the public good. Political elites and leaders at every level of government are constantly under pressure to pursue the interest of their clients and supporters and as such “the management and allocation of resources may follow the lines dictated by patronage rather than policy” (Francis et al, 2011: 31).

In line with the principle of patrimonialism and political clientelism, government jobs and other resources that are for public use are being distributed by political leaders as a means of maintaining and reinforcing political support. “These practices in Nigeria have led to an extremely bloated public sector with widespread duplication of agencies and responsibilities” (Francis et al, 2011: 32).

“Patrimonial resource allocation and bloated public bureaucracy compromise the quality of public services, distort the allocation of revenue, and consequently inhibit social provision and economic growth” (Francis et al, 2011: 32). This system weakens and destroyed legitimacy and the effectiveness of the government in the delivery of services and concentrates resources in few hands and so resulting and promoting inequality. The political elites most times spend these resources outside of Nigeria while they satisfy them by distributing resources meant for the public and so promote and reinforce corrupt practices and also maintain their “*patron-client networks*” (Francis et al, 2011: 32). The powerful, neo-patrimonial structures that exists in the Niger Delta Region, and the country at large, reinforces existing traditional political systems and continue to contribute to social unrest and conflict (Francis et al, 2011).

4.6 Land Decrees

Right from the agricultural period to the period of industrialisation, land remains essentially valuable to mankind and so, the wellbeing of the Niger Delta people. Land represents a “source of wealth” to its owners and is represents the “mother of all properties.” This implies that the existence of the Niger Delta people is dependent on land. Looking at the usefulness and importance of land to development of societies and the wellbeing of man, it is not out of place that generally every individual want to be able to take on and own a parcel of land in a bid to meet the various goals for which land is needed for (Rasak, 2011: iii).

The Nigerian government, during and after the colonial period and put in place laws to regulate how land is used and administered as a way of ensuring that land is acquired and used appropriately for development of the country (Rasak, 2011).

Before the advent of colonisation, customary laws in place were used to regulate the administration and use of land in Nigeria. The customary laws vary in every locality due to the diverse customs and ethnicity that exist in Nigeria. As a result, the existence of multiple land laws administered in different regions before the “Land Use Act of 1978” (Rasak, 2011). The multiplicity of land laws makes it difficult to administer land in different parts of the country and brought about problems of land tenure. Also problems with land racketeering and speculation, exorbitant compensations demanded by landowners from government whenever land is acquired for development (Rasak, 2011).

This made it difficult for individuals and the government to acquire land for development purposes. Problems of land acquisition and availability of land for the development of the project was identified as one of the stumbling block to the implementation of the second development plan of 1975-1980. The Nigerian government introduced the Land Use Act of 1978 that confers the right and ownership of land on the government as an intervention to the monopolies of land by land owners (Rasak, 2011).

In the Niger Delta, the question; “whose land?” constitutes a major factor behind conflicts over the exploitation of oil resources in the region. This is a question in which the government, multi-national corporations and the community groups always differ in their response to. The Niger

Delta Region represents an example of this kind of clash of perspective in regards to land ownership and control especially when it comes to oil resources. It is also the question that determines how much landowners and communities received as compensation for the expropriation of land for oil exploitation activities (Apan, 2005; nd: 1).

The oil conflicts in the Niger Delta are not only rooted in the fact that the government owns land and the mineral resources but it is also rooted in questions about what makes an adequate and equitable compensations to affected communities and the Niger Delta region when land is expropriated from communities and corporate groups for petroleum operations (Apan, 2005; nd).

The legislation that deals solely with the ownership and control of petroleum is the 1969 Petroleum Act (which was formerly known as Decree 51). This piece of legislation explicitly defines the issues of petroleum resource ownership and control. The act entrusted the rights to land and petroleum resources to the Nigerian Government and was enshrined in “Section 4.4(3) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution” with the Petroleum Act providing the enabling details (Apan, 2005; nd:).

Communities in the Niger Delta feel marginalized by the land decrees passed by the Federal Government in that the people lost the right to have direct negotiations over access to land and how compensation should be paid. Oil companies therefore work in collaboration with the Federal Government in gaining access to lands and oil wells (Francis, 2008)

4.7 The Status of a Host Community

Conflicts between communities are rooted in disputes over how compensation and oil benefits are to be shared between communities in the Niger Delta Area. Oil companies for so many years have designated certain locations where oil companies operate from as host communities as a standard practice. This entitles the residents of such communities to some sort of payment for the use of land by oil companies to situate oil facilities (Francis et al, 2011).

The status of host communities is usually accompanied with benefits such as development, jobs on local oil facilities, compensations and contracts for individuals who are successful with claims

laid on the use of their land or fishing grounds where drilling and oil production activities are carried out. The designation of host community has led to competition over land and territories between communities and the feeling of inequality in relation to the access to social services and resources.

The relations between neighbouring communities hardened with time and the struggle for resources became deadly. When this happens, relationships between communities begin to suffer. Within a community, conflicts sometimes “arise along generational lines” when traditional rulers use or are assumed to be using the position they occupy in a community as a medium of controlling rents and compensations received from oil companies. Community members the youths in particular view traditional rulers with suspicion (Francis et al, 2011: 35).

These kinds of grievances are nurtured and released within communities when the youth accuse local leaders and elders of “garnering land payments, social investments, or other forms of compensation for themselves rather than sharing them for the benefit of the community at large.” The erosion of the legitimacy and effectiveness of chiefs is particularly challenging to the local social order, since the settlement of disputes is one of the customary responsibilities of traditional leaders (Francis et al, 2011: 35).

When “the legitimacy and impartiality of traditional authorities are compromised” due to distrust of community leaders and local chiefs, the ability to resolve conflict in a non-violent way is further weakened in communities. “In this way, a growing sense of distrust has eroded the social capital of many Niger Delta communities and in some cases has led to a complete breakdown of social order” (Francis et al, 2011: 35).

Also the categorisation of some communities as host communities has come with the perception that services and opportunities will not be evenly distributed and has led to increased competition over land and boundaries of oil wells. An example, the boarder conflicts over boundaries for oil well between Akwa-Ibom State and Cross River State. Although Cross River and Akwa-Ibom are two different states in the Niger Delta Area, their people share a common geographic area, heritage, history, marriage, family and economy. However, since the creation of Akwa-Ibom from Cross Rivers State, communities clash over boundaries between the two states has

emerged. These border tensions “are mainly due to competition over an area of land believed to contain oil reserves”. Also, this status is used as a basis for receiving and sharing of compensations from oil companies and so has also led to division within a community and has also turned communities against each other (Francis, 2008: 28).

A lot of disputes have emanated from the sharing of compensation from oil companies between and within communities which has also had an effect on the level of social trust and capital. Chieftaincy positions have been used as a medium to have control over compensations paid by oil companies and so traditional chiefs and leaders have lost their credibility and legitimacy before the people because they are being looked at with suspicion. This has also impacted on issues about social order in local communities (Francis, 2008).

4.8 Illegal oil Refinery and Sale of Oil (Oil Bunkering)

Oil theft, also referred to as illegal oil bunkering, involves activities of hacking into pipelines to steal crude oil which is later refined or sold abroad. This is an illicit form of business that involves stealing crude oil and other petroleum products through different means (Boris, 2015). Oil theft has also been described as the illegal taking of crude oil from flow stations, “vandalism of pipelines and the unauthorised shipping of crude oil” and all activities that involve stealing, “smuggling and diversion of crude oil, scooping, illegal refining” (Asuni, 2009 and Boris, 2015: 565). Although oil bunkering is required in the maritime sector for shipping of oil, it however becomes illegal when it is done without the required statutory licenses and documents that violate the Nigerian maritime sector (Boris, 2015).

Oil theft occurs at different levels and different methods have been adopted in the stealing of crude oil (Boris, 2015). Asuni (2009); (Boris, 2015) and Katsouris and Sayne (2013) identified 3 methods of oil theft and illegal bunkering in the Niger Delta Area; the minor and small-scale stealing of petroleum products to be sold locally; hacking directly “into pipelines or tapping with a hose from wellhead” and excess extraction of crude oil more than the licensed amount “using forged bills of lading” (Boris, 2015: 565).

The first is done by local people and is less significant because it is done under the cover of violence and grievance from the Niger Delta. The second involves the use of sophisticated

technology to extract crude oil from pipelines and flow stations and shipped in exchange for weapons used to sustain militancy and the Niger Delta conflicts while the third is a system adopted by officials who are corrupt through the use of forged bills of lading that will be issued and acknowledged (Boris, 2015).

Although the grievances of the Niger Delta people towards oil companies and the Nigerian government over environmental degradation and the activities of oil exploitation can be regarded as legitimate, certain groups have taken advantage of the situation “to profit economically by involving in criminal activities and violence” in the Niger Delta Region. Some of such activities include: “the usurpation of legitimate social protest for factional or personal ends; the proliferation of criminal activity, especially theft of oil on an enormous scale; the gains from contracts with oil companies, and the use of gangs and violence in electoral campaigns” identified by Francis et al. (2011: 57).

These factors have contributed to the instability the Niger Delta Region and have been profitable to certain groups who have derived certain dividends from the conflicts in the Niger Delta. Militia groups for instance, have been encouraged by the benefits they have derived from instability in the Niger Delta Area and so they have become involved in getting rents through violence such as pipeline vandalism, hostage taking and kidnapping (Boris, 2015).

The stealing of oil in the Delta Area is a well organised business that has become very lucrative and the benefits of this business are distributed among the pool of individuals involved in the bunkering trade like law enforcers, politicians, military officers, businessmen at local, state, national and international levels. This illegal business has also funded militant groups with resources to purchase weapons used to attack oil companies, the government and even each other (Francis, 2008).

4.9 Electoral Violence

Politicians have played a key role in arming youth groups to rig elections in their favour. Violence during elections in turn has contributed to vicious attacks and has been a means through which militia groups get arms and political support for their struggle for resource control (Francis, 2008). Omotola (2009) indicated that most militias in the Niger Delta have political

roots emphasising how they transformed from political thugs to militias and how they have been able to sustain both status.

Understanding the politics involved in the transition from military rule to democratic forms of government in Nigeria from 1999 presents an important window because this was the period in which most of the prominent and well-known militia groups like “Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)” and militia leaders like Asari Dokubo, Tom Polo, etc. emerged in the Niger Delta Region (Omotola, 2009: 92).

It was indicated that the major actors and leaders of these militia groups, were electoral mercenaries (militia groups hired to pursue political interest) for top politicians during the transition period to civilian rule in the Niger Delta (Omotola, 2009). These political mercenaries played sensitive and delicate roles before and during the election and so they were well paid and equipped with arms and offered para-military training during the course of their services. However, soon after the elections of 1999, the corporation and relationship that existed between these political mercenaries and their allies the politicians ended. The end of this relationship represented a major disruption of a “reliable source of income” (Omotola, 2009: 93).

The transformation to militia groups was an alternative to continue to secure security contracts from both politicians and oil companies as a way to protect their interest and this gave these militia groups the opportunity to venture into other illegal businesses like “oil bunkering and kidnapping for ransom payments” both of which has been used to sustain the militia groups and their activities (Omotola, 2009: 93).

The key players in the Niger Delta Struggle

- **The Federal Government:** The Federal Government gets oil revenue from the oil companies and makes the decision on how it is shared amongst the different spheres (National, State and Local) (Francis, 2008).
- **State Governments:** there are 9 states that make up the Niger Delta region and they get 13% of allocation of oil revenue in addition to the set allocation that every state receives

from the Federal government. Although there is a substantial increase in oil revenue that goes in the region due to rise in oil prices, this revenue has not been translated into substantial development that will benefit the people (Francis, 2008). Although the region receives and enjoys 13% derivation from the federal government apart from the other federal allocation given to all other state as initiated by the revenue sharing formulae based on the derivation principle and as stated by section 162 (2) of the 1999 Constitution, due to corrupt practices in the Niger Delta, the effect of the 13% special allocation to the Niger Delta is not being felt by the people.

- Regional Development Organisations:** Regional Development Organisations were established, one of such development organisations in the Niger Delta Area is the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) which was established in 2000 by President Olusegun Obasanjo with the sole aim of developing the Niger Delta Area. The NDDC was put in place to replace the Oil Minerals Producing Development Commission (OMPADEC) in place during the military regime. The NDDC seeks to achieve its mandate by building “a strong and progressive society in which no one will have any anxiety about basic means of life and work; where poverty and illiteracy no longer exist and diseases are brought under control; and where our educational facilities provide all the children of Niger Delta Region with best possible opportunities for the development of their potentials.” This is implemented by executing relevant projects in the Region (NDDC, 2015: 1). This organisation is funded by both public and private sources. Its operation has been held back by poor funding, inadequate planning and corruption (Francis, 2008). Indicated that a major drawback in the NDDC is that successive Managing Directors and Boards of the Commission have flouted and brazenly violated the Act establishing the Commission such as “non-implementation of the Board's decisions, awarding of contracts without due process and undue interference with the statutory function of state representatives to creating due process unit, which is used as an excuse to perpetuate huge financial crimes in the Commission”. Corruption in the Niger Delta is massive and it cuts across every sector including the activities of the NDDC. Hence most of the cases of abandoned projects in communities are as a result of embezzlement of funds assigned to such contracts and its misappropriation (Aghalino, nd: 46).

- **Oil Companies:** Community development policies of the 18 oil companies operating the Niger Delta area have evolved to emphasise the involvement of communities. However, this has not been successful because community development plans in the Niger Delta remains unorganised and short sighted and the people are not engaged during projects to design projects that will meet the needs of the people and to have substantial and sustainable benefits on the people (Francis, 2008)
- **Militant groups:** Given the injustice of not benefiting from their own resources yet having to face the negative consequences of extraction, a variety of militant groups have emerged. Many are political in nature though use violent tactics to demand greater local control, more transparent management of oil revenues and adequate compensation to those affected by oil extraction. Other groups have taken advantage of the situation to operate as criminal gangs resorting to activities such as kidnapping foreign oil workers for ransom, oil theft, etc. The two groups are not water-tight categories and lines between them often blur (Francis, 2008).
- **Communities:** People of the Delta feel powerless, distrust leaders and are frustrated as they cannot legitimately benefit from the oil resources. Conflict occurs both among and within communities over access to oil company development projects. Being designated as a host community comes with benefits; this has led to jealousy and fighting among communities and on disputes over boundaries (Francis, 2008).

4.10 Conclusion

The alliance of the Niger Delta youths against the Nigerian Government and the struggle of the Niger Delta people are highly influenced by certain factors. One of such causes identified is pollution and destruction of the Niger Delta environment as a result of oil exploitation in the form of oil spillage, gas flaring, deforestation, etc. this is basically because the Niger Delta environment is ecologically sensitive and is made up of mangroves forests with high biodiversity comprised of different plants and animal species.

Gas flaring in the Niger Delta Region contributes to air pollution and discharge of carbon dioxide in the region which results to acid rain which has negative effect on human beings and wildlife (Kadafa, 2012).

Oil spillage has also negatively impacted on the Niger Delta environmental in so many ways such as the destruction of farm land, contamination of water bodies, loss of bio diversities, etc. and this has formed one of the main sources of grievances from communities in the Niger Delta Area. This is because the Niger Delta people depend on farming and fishing for subsistence, oil spills destroys their source of livelihood and contributes to poverty in the region.

Other factors behind the Niger Delta conflicts involves Resource control and derivation principle, deprivation and lack of substantial development and infrastructure, the structure of the federal government, existing systems, issues of land degrees, the status of a host community, illegal oil refinery and sale of oil (oil bunkering), electoral violence

Chapter Five

The Inter-relationship between Oil Exploitation, Environmental Impacts and Conflicts in the Niger Delta

5. Introduction

The mobilization of ethnic communities against the alliance made between the Nigerian Federal government, the military and the oil companies in the Niger Delta region began in the 1970s and 80s. Isaac Boro is the father of the Niger Delta struggle because his revolution marks the beginning of the Niger Delta struggle (Pavšič, 2012).

In the Niger Delta region, oil production was almost put to a halt as youth groups in the seized oil wells, flow stations and terminals belonging to oil companies and took hostages for ransom (Pavšič, 2012).

A resident was reported to have used the term “oil blood and fire” to describe the tension that was going on between the oil companies that were backed up by the Nigerian Government and the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta Area (Pavšič, 2012: 1).

The return of Democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999 was expected to reduce tension between oil companies, ethnic communities and the Federal government and demilitarise the Niger Delta region. However, when some policemen were killed by a criminal gang in Odi, a community in Bayelsa State, the Federal government ordered the army to invade the community, which led to the death of thousands of lives and left others homeless (Pavšič, 2012).

In recent decades, the Nigerian Government has been operating a mono-economic system that depends greatly on revenue from crude oil because of the abundance of oil resource in the Niger Delta. This contributes to the environmental injustice experienced in the Niger Delta Region, because crude oil exploitation has become a necessity for the Nigerian economy although it is done without proper compensation of the host communities for the environmental damage that is caused by oil exploitation (Barry and Shapiro, 2010).

The objective of the Ogoni struggle was to put an end to oil production in the Niger Delta area if the people do not have access to a fair share of the revenue generated by oil production and have a fair share of development. The Federal Government has always responded to this struggle with violence. For example, Ogoni leaders were arrested, detained and were put under surveillance and became a victim of security agencies for standing up and demanding that the government should develop their area (Pavšič, 2012).

According to the video “Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni struggle an introduction,” recorded in 1995, the Movement of the Survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP) was a fight for the rights of the minority group in the oil producing area and a campaign for the end of 35 years of oil pollution in the area. Ken Saro-Wiwa who became president of this movement in 1993, reading from an extract from his book on short stories based on the Ogoni, describes the state of the Ogoni land, emphasising that Royalties from oil exploitation ought to be sent to the people who farmlands and environment are ruined (Remember Ken Saro-Wiwa, 2015: 1).

It was rightly stated by Ken Saro-Wiwa in his last interview in 1994 that, “to deny a people the right to self-determination is to subject them to slavery, to take away the resources of a people and give them nothing in return is to subject them to slavery, to take away the land of a people who depend solely on land for their survival and refuse to pay them some compensation is to subject them to genocide” (Remember Ken Saro-Wiwa, 2015: 1).

Ken Saro-Wiwa, under the platform MOSOP further accused the Federal Government and the ethnic majority of Nigeria of practising genocide on the Ogoni people. Shell and Chevron were accused of encouraging the practice of genocide on the Ogoni people and racism because “Oil companies do in Ogoni land, what they do not practice in other parts of the world where they prospect oil. The devastation of the Ogoni countryside and the destruction of their ecosystem, dehumanisation of the Ogoni people, denial of education, health facilities and other infrastructure which have contributed and led the Ogoni people down the way of extinction” (Remember Ken Saro-Wiwa, 2015: 1).

An appeal was made to the international communities and other countries of the world who buy oil from Nigeria, to rise up against the injustice the Niger Delta region is experiencing as an ethnic minority from the Nigerian government ruled by the ethnic majorities (the Hausa, Igbo

and Yoruba). Apart from the issues of environmental injustice on the Niger Delta environment, Isacc Boro, Ken Saro-Wiwa and others strongly fought against the violation of the human rights of the Niger Delta people by the Nigerian Government and the multi-national companies. (Anugwom, 2011; Remember Ken Saro-Wiwa, 2015).

The event of military invasion and massacre in Odi can be regarded as a message from the Nigerian government and shows how important oil production is to the government and how they can do anything to maintain its control and production. Since 1965, oil production has been the major source of revenue for subsequent governments in Nigeria with the people in power as major beneficiaries (Anugwom, 2011; Ramsome-Kuti, nd). In order to maintain oil production, the Nigerian government is ready to go to any length even if it will require them to “drown the country in blood”. Bloodshed has always been part of the government’s way of responding to the Niger delta struggle (Ramsome-Kuti, nd: 1).

The coercive nature of the response of the Nigerian government towards conflicting issues in the Niger Delta even after the end of the military rule shows how willing the civilian government in Nigeria is in adopting the same system the military regime used in responding to the problems in the region (Ramsome-Kuti, nd).

5.2 Sustainability and the Niger Delta Conflicts

In the Niger Delta, the activities of oil exploitation have historically been the cause of environmental degradation that has threatened the social and economic lives of the habitants of the region. This can be ascribed to the neglect and lack of concern from the government to ensure a safe and healthy environment for her citizens (Akhape, nd; Obagbinoko, 2009).

The Niger Delta area is basically made up of rural communities who rely wholly on the nature and its resources as a means of survival. Over 70% of the Niger Delta people rely on the gifts of nature for their livelihood. The poor are defenceless against changes that occur in the environment. This is because they face exclusion politically, socially and economically, which gives them little or no choice to where they live or how they live. Therefore, they bare the adverse effect of environmental degradation and industrialisation via the exploitation of oil (Eregba and Irughe, 2009).

Oil exploitation impacts the aquatic environment in two major ways: firstly, impact through the disturbance of marine life or by the pollution of the aquatic environment. This disturbance is caused during the process of “seismic exploration which occurs when a ship or boat tows a sound source, usually an air gun to detect the presence of hydrocarbons.” The noise produced during this process negatively impacts on the aquatic environment by dispersing habitants and scaring them away therefore creating discomfort that may affect various species of aquatic lives, fish larvae and eggs may be destroyed in the process when this air gun passes very close to them (Obagbinoko, 2009: 174).

Also, the quality of both surface and underground water are affected because of the release of pollutants into the water at various stages of oil operation either through the discharge of produced water and other effluents or through oil spills and or blowouts (Obagbinoko, 2009).

These are the most obvious issues or problems of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta. Drilling mud (a mixture of clay and chemicals and water; pumped down the drill pipe to lubricate and cool the drilling bit and to flush out the cuttings and to strengthen the sides of the hole) is used by oil companies when drilling for crude oil. Although this drilling mud is said to be non-toxic, when introduced in high quantities, it could be harmful to the aquatic environment (Obagbinoko, 2009).

Another major source of water pollution in the Niger Delta is blowouts and oil spills. For more than 45 years of operation of oil companies in the Niger Delta, an enormous volume of oil spill has been recorded in the Niger Delta area. When oil is spilled on water, it forms a layer over the water that prevents the free flow of air and thereby leads to the death of fish and other aquatic life. Also, the water becomes dangerous and when this polluted water is ingested by fish which in turn becomes dangerous and poisonous when consumed by humans. The health of the people gets affected negatively also because they rely on this water to meet their domestic needs and as a source of subsistence (Obagbinoko, 2009; Kadafa, 2012).

In the same way activities like oil prospecting and the process of exploitation pollutes underground water. The level of damage and deprivation that multinational companies who are deeply involved in the exploitation of oil have caused most of the communities in the Niger Delta are numerous. The well-known ones include; “pollution, environmental degradation

leading to low agricultural yield, destruction of aquatic lives, home displacement ” (Iniaghe et al, 2013: 66).

The problem that comes from the pollution of the environment through oil exploitation is serious and severe because of the composition of crude oil. Crude oil is made up of various chemicals, of which a good number of these chemicals are toxic and dangerous without a known or safe threshold when exposed to humans (Obagbinoko, 2009).

Villages around the fresh water areas with oil installations in the Niger Delta are exposed to polluted water, even when there are no recent spills, because these installations produce an oily sheen that appear in water used daily by people for bathing, drinking and other domestic needs (Obagbinoko, 2009).

The delicate ecosystem of the Niger Delta area suffers an average of one oil spill every week. Communities are mostly accused by oil companies who have the backing of the Federal government and protection to be the cause of the problems they are faced with. For example, thousands of lives are lost in different incidences associated with oil conflicts. In all the cases of conflicts associated with the exploitation of oil, the Nigerian government has not devoted time to take stock of the number of lives and properties that has been destroyed in the Niger Delta area or has any effort made towards rebuilding communities that has witnessed devastation from the exploitation of oil in the Niger Delta (Obagbinoko, 2009).

In addition, pipelines are laid across waterways, fishing quarters and farmlands in the Niger Delta area and oil is been transported daily through these pipelines to Bonny and Forcados terminals where they are sold and distributed without adequate care given to the technical condition of these pipelines. So in the process corrosion takes place and pipeline burst and causes a flood of spills from oil that destroys livelihood for plants, animals and humans alike (Obagbinoko, 2009).

The Niger Delta area is regarded as “a danger zone of pollution ” that comes from harmful waste. The incidence of birth defects and cancer has increased in the Region over the years due to pollution from the flaring of gas by oil companies (Obagbinoko, 2009: 177).

The negative impact of oil exploitation on the environment can be said to be inevitable: the flaring of gas, acid rain, industrial waste, loss of mangrove all contribute to bring about physical deterioration of the Niger Delta environment. According to the United Nations, the oil spillage reported in Ogoni land; community rich in oil in the Niger Delta is the world's most reckoned oil spill. With an estimated 25-30 years long termed clean up exercise will be required for the lands, drinking water creeks and the important ecosystems are to restored to a productive state (UNEP, 2011).

The environmental impacts and social implications of oil exploitation have been identified as follows:

- *Contamination of streams and rivers*
- *Oil spills (destroying mangrove, marine lives, farmlands, etc.).*
- *Forest destruction and biodiversity loss*
- *Environmental effect of gas flaring*
- *Youth restiveness and hostage taking*
- *Effluent discharge and disposal*
- *Gross socio-economic underdevelopment*
- *Conflict between host communities and oil companies*
- *Army and police brutality*
- *Intra and inter community conflict, amongst others (Achi, 2003 and Iniaghe et al., 2013: 66).*

The effects of oil exploitation on the environment have created a breeding ground for conflicts and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta (Iniaghe et al., 2013).

In exploring the conflicts in the Niger Delta from the lens of sustainability, in considering the economic, environmental and social equity elements that make up sustainable development, in the Niger Delta, more focus has been on achieving economic growth at the expense of the environment and social equity. It is true that the oil industry in Nigeria has had various impacts on the country in different ways. Oil exploitation on the other hand has some significant negative impact on the environment, economy and social life and threatens the sustainability in the Niger Delta (Iniaghe et al, 2013).

If oil exploitation is therefore looked into from the perspective of its contribution to Nigeria's wealth, in terms of the foreign exchange, the production of oil is very successful and beneficial. However, from the negative effects of the social, economic and environment perspective it has led to social and physical disaster (Iniaghe et al, 2013).

The negative impact of oil exploitation on the environment of the oil rich region of Nigeria, the Niger Delta, is glaring. For over five decades, the exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the Niger Delta has impacted on social and physical environment of the Niger Delta region and has posed a great threat to the "subsistent peasant economy" and therefore the livelihoods of the people and their survival (Iniaghe et al, 2013: 66).

5.3 The Resource Curse and the Nigeria's Niger Delta Conflicts

The inter-relationship between oil exploitation, environmental impacts and conflicts in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria can be explored using the theory of resource curse. The discovery of oil in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria in 1958 was perceived to be advantageous for the region and for Nigeria as a country to promote economic growth and development of the region (McNeish, 2010). However, Nigeria and indeed the Niger Delta people have not been able to use this wealth and abundance of crude oil to boost and foster development. What have been experienced however; have been negative social, political and economic outcomes which have led to the conflicts experienced in the region (McNeish, 2010).

The conflict in the Niger Delta is strongly rooted to the discovery of crude oil amongst many other factors that has emerged with time. Mineral resources and hydrocarbons such as oil, diamond has been strongly linked to civil wars, poverty and conflicts in Africa by many literature (Andrew, 2006), this association and relationship is not different from what is being experienced in the Niger Delta Region and in Nigeria as a country.

Rivers state is one of the oil producing states in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. The table below shows the revenue and budget of the state as captured by the CIA World Fact book in 2009 and the Nigerian Finance Ministry reports comparing that of the Nigeria to other African countries.

Table 7. Rivers State Revenue and Budget compared to that of other African Countries in 2009.

	Population (millions)	2009 Budget (US\$)¹⁸	GDP per capita (US\$)
Nigeria	152.3	20.6 billion	2,400
Rivers State	5.2	2.9 billion	3,965 ¹⁹
Burundi	9.8	342.3 million	300
Togo	6.2	468.7 million	900
Eritrea	5.8	232.7 million	700
Central African Republic	4.8	334.0 million	700

Sources: CIA World Factbook (2009 est.);²⁰ Nigerian Finance Ministry, press reports.

Source: Francis et al. (2011: 44).

Oil wealth and the dependence on crude oil have created avenues for political elites in Nigeria and the Niger Delta for personal gains. For example, a lot of leaders in Nigeria and in the Niger Delta Region have been accused of corruption and embezzlement of public funds (Andrew, 2006).

High levels of corruption have been reported by the Transparency International Corruption perception index for Nigeria as reported by Francis et al. (2011). From the table below, it is noted that Nigeria has experienced high levels of corruption over decades among government officials, political elites, etc.

These findings follows the line of argument that countries blessed with abundant natural resources waste their natural resources mainly because political elites mostly use the revenues they generate to execute their political and programmatic objectives such as providing economic benefit for particular groups especially political supporters, seizing rents for government treasury, creating rent seeking avenues in a bid to secure the corporation of the private sector, gain control over the allocation of rent and avoiding accountability (Andrew, 2006).

Table 8. Levels of Corruption in Nigeria

Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for Nigeria 1996–2010				
	CPI Score (max = 10)	Ranking	No. of countries ranked	No. of countries ranking worse
1996	0.69	54	54	0
1997	1.76	52	52	0
1998	1.9	81	85	4
1999	1.6	98	99	1
1999	1.6	98	99	1
2000	1.2	90	90	0
2001	1.0	90	91	1
2002	1.6	101	102	1
2003	1.4	132	133	1
2004	1.6	144	146	2
2005	1.9	152	159	5
2006	2.2	142	163	13
2007	2.2	147	179	31
2008	2.7	121	180	59
2009	2.5	130	180	50
2010	2.4	134	178	44

Source: Adapted from Transparency International, CPI reports, 1996–2010¹⁶

Source: Francis et al. (2011: 44).

Oil wealth has created rent seeking opportunities for leaders in the state and national levels of government. The struggle for resource control, basis for the principle of derivation and revenue sharing has been at the centre of the prominent conflicts experienced in the Niger Delta region like the Isacc Boro Revolution led by Isacc Boro, the Ogoni struggle led by Ken Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni People, the Kaiama Declaration and the emergence of militia groups in the early 2000s.

The table below shows the perception of the people about what they dislike most about their region. Poor leadership and poor governance are ranked high by the Niger Delta people followed by corruption and environmental degradation. This indicates that the failure of the state, the institutional deterioration and the inability of the government to deliver economic and sustainable development in the Nigeria delta despite the oil wealth generated in the region is a root cause of conflicts. Simply, the Niger Delta conflicts and the grievance of its people are strongly linked to the failure of the state in delivery sustainable development and public services,

deepened by high levels of corruption and intense environmental degradation from the exploitation of crude oil.

Corruption remains a major challenge facing the Nigerian society and extends to every sector of the country including the NDDC. Most of all, the political leadership in the region is corrupt and this has serious implications for development (Isidiho and Mohammad, 2015).

The Niger Delta region Governors has contributed negatively to the development of the region. The Nigerian constitution of 1999 in Section 308 gives immunity against prosecution to state governors and their deputies, this protects state governors and have enable them to syphon and steal from state treasury (Isidiho and Mohammad, 2015). Babalola (2014) and indicated that the “former governors Peter Odili and late Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, James Ibori and of the Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states respectively were involved deeply with corruption that were enough to render the states bankrupt.

Although the region receives and enjoys 13% derivation from the federal government apart from the other federal allocation given to all other state as initiated by the revenue sharing formulae based on the derivation principle and as stated by section 162 (2) of the 1999 Constitution (Isidiho and Mohammad, 2015).

Vanguard newspaper (2006) reports that Late Mr Alamieyeseigha who was arrested in London and was impeached in 2005 for a lot of corrupt practices, was accused of hiding £1m in his London home, in addition to the sums of “£420,000 and £470,000 found in different accounts belonging to him, as well as assets worth £10m” (Vanguard, 2006: 1; 15).

The Nigeria's Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) also accused the ex-governor of approving several dubious contracts and payments totalling 1.7 billion naira and 667,258 million naira in favour of companies that were never in existence. The Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) exposed that 100 billion naira was moved into a private bank accounts during the administration Peter Odili as the governor of Rivers State (Isidiho and Mohammad, 2015).

The case against the Mr James Ibori the former governor of Delta State in London revealed that “huge sum of money was stolen including purchasing a house in Hampstead, North London, for £2.2m; a property in Shaftesbury, Dorset, for £311,000; a £3.2mmansion in Sandton, near Johannesburg, South Africa; a fleet of armoured Range Rovers valued at £600,000; a£120,000 Bentley; and a Mercedes Maybach for 407,000 Euros that was shipped to his mansion in South Africa” (Isidiho and Mohammad, 2015: 38).

Christine Ibori-Ibie, the sister of the former Governor of Delta State James Ibori was convicted for mortgage fraud and money laundering by the “United Kingdom (UK) juryat the Southwark Crown Court, London, in June 2010” and was accused of aiding her brother in the embezzlement of an estimated some of “\$101.5 million from Nigeria’s Delta state” into a UK Bank account (Isidiho and Mohammad, 2015: 38). The Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), indicated that Ibori stole up to \$292 million while in office as the governor in the oil-rich state in the Niger Delta (Agbibo, 2012).

Table 9. The Perception of the Niger Delta People about What they dislike most about their Region.

What People of the Niger Delta Dislike Most About Their Region	
Priority	% of respondents identifying it as most disliked
Poor leadership	17
Poor governance	16
Corruption	14
Environmental degradation	14
Unemployment	14
Low education	7
Insecurity	6
Lack of infrastructure	4
High cost of living	4
Poverty	3

Source: ERML 2005⁶

Source: Francis et al. (2011: 34).

This aligns with the findings of Ross (2001: 7) who identified a negative relationship between a “country’s level of dependence on oil exports and its democracy level.”

The political economy of oil has shaped the system of federalism practiced in Nigeria. More power lies with the Federal Government including the rights to land and Natural resources specifically the control of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta and the formula for revenue allocation is being controlled and administered by the Federal Government therefore, reducing accountability of the government to the people.

In recent times, political elites have made efforts to prolong their term of office in power beginning from the civilian government of Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999. This follows the line of argument that resource abundance that is perceived to be permanent may result to political elites focusing on retaining their stay in office and influencing election in their favour (Andrew, 2006).

The discovery of oil in the Niger Delta led to international relationship with countries such as The United States of America. The relationship however follows the manner identified by Bromley et al., (2006). Where countries that depend on import of oil (developed countries) are concerned with maintaining sustainable, secure and access to oil at lower prices while Nigeria that exports oil is concerned with the desire to maintain prices, revenue generated and market share (Bromley et al., 2006). This relationship between Nigeria who is a member state of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has been highly strategic and political and has helped create trade relations between Nigeria and the United States of America amongst other countries (Bromley et al., 2006).

The conflicts in the Nigeria Delta have a great impact on this foreign relationship. For example, it has been reported in the Oil and gas year magazine (TOGY), 2015 that a lot of international oil companies have experienced significant loss in Nigeria due to “theft, vandalism and infrastructure gaps” and so international companies have started di-vesting from their onshore assets into the Nigeria’s “offshore concessions,” where there are opportunities to make profit and where there is less risk for “theft and sabotage” (TOGY, 2015: 60).

Also, as a raw material exporter, with the associated importance of oil production to the Nigerian economy, there is a limit to which Nigeria can make foreign policies that will mire the relationship with countries that buy crude oil from her.

Table 10. Nigeria's Crude oil supply between 2001 and 2011

Nigeria's Crude Oil Supply 2001–2011



Source: International Energy Agency, August 2011

Source: Francis et al. (2011: 62).

The graph above indicates the fluctuations experienced in the supply of crude oil for one decade. This decade represents the period when violence ranging from: kidnapping, blow out of pipeline, physical combat with security forces, hostage taking, petroleum theft, etc. was experienced the most in the Niger Delta Region. These incidences greatly affected Nigeria's supply of crude oil to the world market which in turn impacts on the economy of the country.

5.4 Conclusion

The conflicts of the Niger Delta are rooted in issues around environmental justice and the violation of human rights in the Niger Delta Area. Environmental injustice is seen in the activities of oil exploitation that degrades land, contaminates water and ground water and pollutes air which has contributed to poverty, hunger, frustration and conflicts in the Niger Delta Area. The MOSOP led by Ken Saro-Wiwa gave the Niger Delta struggle prominence both nationally and internationally and is one movement that pushed for environmental justice and human rights violation in the Niger Delta Area.

Ken Saro-Wiwa under the platform of the MOSOP made some serious accusations against the Nigerian Government, the ethnic majority in Nigeria and the oil companies. The Nigerian Government has been operating a mono-economic system that solely depends on revenue from crude oil because of the abundance of oil resource in the Niger Delta for several decades. This therefore, contributes to the environmental injustice experienced in the Niger Delta Region because crude oil exploitation has become a necessity for the Nigerian economy although it is done without proper compensation of the host communities for the environmental damage that is caused by oil exploitation.

Also problems around issues of sustainability threaten the Niger Delta region. Looking at it from the mirror of sustainability, considering the economic, environmental and social equity elements that make up sustainable development, in the Niger Delta, more focus has been on economic growth, than it is given to the environment and social equity. No doubts that the oil industry in Nigeria has had various impacts on the country in different ways. It has on the one hand led and created a platform for economic growth and prosperity for the country. However, on the other hand, oil exploitation has negatively affected farming and fishing activities which are the traditional means of survival of the Niger Delta people (Iniaghe et al, 2013).

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

6. Conclusions

The presence of natural resource abundance (Oil wealth) is strongly linked to the conflicts experienced in the Niger Delta (Lwanda, nd). The discovery of natural resources like crude oil comes with hope for economic growth and development and as such may result in short-sighted and optimistic plans that lead to the tendencies of abandoning other sectors of the economy which results in dependence on oil revenue. Two basic realities exist for crude oil in Nigeria and the Niger Delta Region. Firstly, it is an important resource for the economy in Nigeria and as a source for military, political and economic power. Secondly, it is distributed in an uneven manner geographically (Hemisphere College, 2015).

The uneven distribution of oil by nature has contributed and stirred tension and conflicts especially between communities in the form of inter community clashes over boundaries and areas where oil wells exist (Francis et al, 2011). The communities that are referred to as host communities, where there are deposits of crude oil and who suffer from negative environmental impacts from crude oil are entitled to receive compensation from oil companies and are entitled to receive certain incentives also like scholarships, water projects, etc. this gives rise to conflicts among neighbouring communities who also suffer the effects of oil exploitation. Even within communities, conflicts in connection to who receives compensation and how the compensation and other incentives like scholarship is been shared among community members and groups rise.

Moreover, tension and conflicts arise between states over boundaries in the Niger Delta area for example the Soku oil field/boundary dispute between Rivers state and Bayelsa state of the Niger Delta Region in 2013. Traditional rulers and the primary members of Akuku-Toru Local Government Area in Rivers state filed a suit against the National Boundary Commission over the ownership of the oil fields bordering “Oluasiri in Nembe Local Government of Bayelsa state and Soku in Akuku-Toru Local Government of Rivers state” (The Sun, 2013 and Punch, 2013).

The most prominent conflicts in the Niger Delta have been strongly linked to the activities of oil exploitation by multi-national companies and the federal Government of Nigeria. These conflicts

have also manifested in different forms and have been caused by issues around resource control, deprivation, poverty and underdevelopment of the region, which is worsened by the adverse effects of oil exploitation activities on the environment (Akhakpe, 2012; SND, 2014; Agho and Uyigue, 2007; Oyefusi, 2007).

It is important to note that the failure of the Nigerian government to translate oil wealth into sustainable development in the Niger Delta area constitutes a major source of grievance in the Niger Delta. Issues of poor governance, lack of institutional capacity, the feeling of marginalisation, corruption and lack of political accountability especially on how oil revenue been spent is fundamental to the conflicts in the Niger Delta. Corruption in the Niger Delta region and in Nigeria have created and encouraged rent-seeking activities which have manifested in the form of oil theft, bunkering and political thuggery where political elites hire the expertise of youth militia groups for the purpose of election and as such these groups develop strong political links and funding for their activities in the Niger Delta Region (Anugwom, 2011; Omotola, 2009). Adequately explain the political cycle.

The high level of degradation and pollution experienced in the Niger Delta and the continuous neglect from the Nigerian Government towards the development of the region has resulted in conflicts which have manifested in the form of illegal oil markets, hostage taking and kidnapping of expatriates and oil company workers in the region. The rise of youth militia groups under the umbrella of MEND, NDVF, Egbesu Boys, etc. led by youth leaders like Asari Dokubo, Tom Polo, et al. and disruption of activities of oil production, physical combat and cross-fire between the Nigerian military and Niger Delta youth militia groups, hijacking of offshore and onshore oil vessels and deaths in the region (Aghalino, 2001).

Furthermore, the conflicts and the problems of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta are linked to the neglect from oil companies who claim their obligation were paying of royalty and taxes to the Nigerian Government and not concerned with developing the region together with the corrupt practices of governmental and political bureaucrats and personnel that continuously misspend huge oil revenue (Isidiho and Mohammad, 2015).

It has been argued that the position of the multinational companies might have legitimate claim in that, their legal responsibilities and obligations may be to the Government and not to the

communities. However, the failure of the state in delivering equitable and adequate distribution of resources and deliver rapid and sustainable development in the Niger Delta and the provision of effective security of property and lives puts oil companies on pressure to appraise communities where they operate as a way of ensuring the smooth operation and security of their properties and staff. Countries like Asia and Malaysia where crude oil is mined by multinational companies indicate that oil companies are only liable to the government and not to the communities (Isidiho and Mohammad, 2015).

Table 11. Classification of Conflicts in the Niger Delta

Kinds of Conflicts	Cause	Expressed through	Effects	Actors Involved
Inter-communal conflicts	The designation Host Communities puts some communities at advantage and entitles them for compensation and incentives from oil companies Tension over community boundaries especially areas with oil wells.	Petitions, Law suits, physical combat, protests.	Destruction of property, loss of lives, disruption in oil production activities	Community members and community leaders, oil companies and Regional Development Commission for example the NDDC.
Intra-communal conflicts	Tension among community members and groups over how compensations are shared and who gets access to incentives like scholarships, etc.	Protest, Kidnapping of community chiefs and Traditional leaders.	Destruction of properties, and disruption of the smooth working of the community	Youth Groups, Traditional rulers and chiefs, community members.
Inter- State Conflicts	Conflicts over boundaries and oil wells. This determines how much revenue states gets allocated with	Lawsuits, newspaper publications, petitions, press release	Disruption of social relations between states, loss of life and properties, tension and	State governments, Local Governments, Traditional Chiefs, National

	from the Federal Government		disruption of oil producing activities.	Boundary Commission, the Judiciary, Federal Government, oil companies.
Conflicts between Communities and the Nigerian Government.	Feeling of deprivation, grievances over the failure of the state, environmental degradation.	Attacking of oil vessels, kidnapping and killing of members of the Nigerian Forces, expatriates, etc. petitions, declarations, press release, press conferences	Destruction of life and properties, human rights violation	Youth groups, Community members and leaders, Nigerian Government
Conflicts between Oil Companies and communities	Over environmental degradation, amount of compensation received	Protests (Violent and non- violent), newspaper publications, press release, declarations and bills of right	Physical combat, Kidnapping and hostage taking, vandalism of oil pipelines, hijacking of off shore and on shore oil vessels	Oil companies, Host communities, Nigerian Government at Federal, state and local levels.
Conflicts Between Federal Government and Host Communities.	Over resource control, grievances of under development and the failure of the government, feeling of marginalisation	(Violent and non- violent), newspaper publications, press release, declarations and bills of right.	Vandalism of oil pipelines, hijacking of off shore and on shore oil vessels, physical combat with Nigerian forces, Disruption of oil producing activities.	Host communities, Nigerian Government, Youth Militias.

6.1 Conflict Management in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

Conflict management in the Niger Delta requires the rethinking of power relations and partnership between experts, poor people, development agencies, oil companies and the government. It also involves further facilitation of negotiation between different stakeholders in projects and dialogue (Okoh, nd). The strategies employed in managing conflicts in the Niger Delta have been based on how the major stakeholders in the Niger Delta struggle, perceives and understand the conflicts in the Niger Delta (Okoh, nd).

The Regional Development Commissions for example the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is responsible for planning and drawing of plans that will promote sustainable development in the Niger Delta. This responsibility is enormous, especially in a conflicting context like that of the Niger Delta area and to be able to execute its functions adequately; Skills to manage and resolve conflicts needs to be mastered by its members of staff. Planning is an activity that involves interactive relations and some process of governance. Power relations embedded in ways in which people conduct behaviour in their daily discourse and practices and may in turn become embedded in institutionalised practices therefore, the need to develop skills for conflict resolution and the distribution of resources (Healey, 2003). The NDDC had an interim Action Plan used to embark on interventionist programmes that was aimed to have an immediate and direct impact on the people while the Master Plan was been crafted. This interim plan had what is referred to as Quick Impact Projects (QIP), which is intended to accelerate the rate of development in some aim sectors of the regional economy such as education, HIV/Aids and malaria control, institute of good governance and sustainable development, agriculture, micro and small business, sports development and power and energy (Aghalino, nd).

The appraisal of the commission at its ten years' celebration indicates that, the commission awarded a sum of 3,112 life enhancing infrastructural projects distributed across 112,110 kilometres that make up the region. However, amongst this figure, only 1,412 projects have been completed and commissioned (Aghalino, nd).

Host communities on one hand have resolved that their destiny is in their hands because for many years they have groomed the feeling of neglect from the federal government and the oil companies. Strategies that have been adopted by communities have revolved from peaceful resistance to “*reactive militancy*” since the beginning of the 2000s (Okoh, nd: 100). This has manifested through demands made by groups for empowerment politically, increase in fiscal allocation to compensate for environmental degradation and resource exploitation in the Niger Delta and for the general development of the Niger Delta area. The strategies adopted by communities which have increased the tension and conflicts in the Niger Delta has been summarised as follows;

- *Unorganised and organised verbal agitation;*
- *Community meetings;*
- *Sit-ins, vigils;*
- *Written petitions to oil companies and the government;*
- *Media interviews and newspaper publication;*
- *Delegations to oil companies and government;*
- *Vocal threats, communiqués, mass rallies and demonstrations;*
- *Temporary occupation of installations and oil premises;*
- *Adoption of oil company’s staffers;*
- *Blockades and disruption of company operations;*
- *Legal suits;*
- *Sabotage;*
- *Violent combat between the warring communities, and*
- *Political action* (Okoh, nd: 100).

On the other hand, oil companies see the basic needs of host communities to be poverty alleviation via the provision of economic and social infrastructure. As a way of carrying out their social responsibilities to communities, oil companies carry out community development projects such as construction of roads, jetties, health centres, electrification, science equipment, and employment and scholarship schemes for members of host communities as a way of bridging the gap for a mutual co-existence between the oil companies and communities. The communities however, see all this effort as paltry when compared to the value accrued by the National

Government and oil companies from the exploitation of oil resources and so violent conflicts have persisted in the Niger Delta region (Okoh, nd).

However, the Federal Government sees the Niger Delta struggle as an act of insubordination and treason against the Nigerian Government. The government style of managing the conflicts in the Niger Delta has therefore been aimed at controlling the conflicts, instead of dealing with the root causes of the Niger Delta Region, control measures such as the use of force, coercion and impatience has been employed during conflicts to control and manage conflicts. The responses to the Isaac Boro Revolution, the Ogoni Movement, Odi massacre, etc. further stress the point that the Nigerian government is reactive in its response instead of being proactive (Okoh, nd).

Military forces have been sent to communities to attack, kill and raid civilians. This was mostly the style adopted during the military regime. The present democratic administration had taken some recourse to the brutal control measures and now adopts a less coerce measure for conflicting communities to avoid or accommodate conflict (Okoh, nd).

Other measures used by the government include litigation, ad-hoc tribunals and judicial commissions of inquiry into; “conflicts, special ad hoc committees, militant declarations and ultimatums, hurriedly organised symposia, workshops and conferences, peace talks, elders forums, environment friendly publications and workshops organised by the government, oil companies, NGOs, communities, traditional rulers, print media, pseudo-environmentalists and an array of nascent groups and movements” (Okoh, nd: 101).

The second response to the Niger Delta conflicts by the National government is the shift to the provision of community development initiatives and projects which include the provision of economic and social infrastructure, youth skill acquisition programme, compensation for polluted land and scholarships for students who are Niger Delta indigenes (Okoh, nd). The Niger Delta Development Commission for example trained and equipped 11,000 youths and women in various skills and also offered free health care programme in the nine states and 1.6 million people have benefited from this programme. To ease the transport problem in the region, the Commission acquired 1,200 buses and 136 boats etc. (Aghalino, nd).

Also, the agitation and conflicts in the Niger Delta area led to an increase in the derivation formula to 13% to the states in the Niger Delta Area. Specialised institutions have been

established to cater for the needs of the Niger Delta. These institutions include the former OMPADEC and the current NDDC. “The basic mandate of NDDC is to further pursue the aims and objectives of the community development paradigm, that is, the provision of social and economic infrastructure” (Mähler, 2012; Okoh, nd: 102).

As part of its infrastructural development programmes, monumental works have been done in the areas of road construction and reconstruction and construction of modern jetties, shorelines protection, canalization and erosion control. It also includes massive efforts in rural electrification projects, water schemes renovation and construction of classrooms, dormitories/hostel blocks, hospitals/health centres, rice processing plants at Elele-Alimini and MbiabetIkpe (Aghalino, nd).

Despite these strategies employed for managing the Niger Delta conflicts, the violence and conflicts have persisted with consequences for the Nigerian economy, the Niger Delta communities, and the oil companies. The top down approaches that have been adopted, with the aim of dealing with the Niger Delta area have failed to properly deal with and provide results that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. This may be due to the lack of a development focus and framework. It therefore presents the need for an alternative approach that will address the conflicts and meet the needs of the people (Okoh, nd).

Therefore, participatory approach to development and planning is recommended. This is because this approach allows for the share and exchange of opinions and information from different range of stakeholders. It comprises of a bottom up approach in solving problems and making decisions. “Participatory methods use a diverse and flexible set of techniques for visual representation and stakeholder involvement characterised by a set of underlying ethical principles” (Okoh, nd: 104).

6.2 Implications of the Niger Delta Conflicts for Planning

The implication of the Niger Delta conflicts is that planning requires proactive measures. Participation is a concept that has been used to express and denote everything that involves people and has been used across institutions, government and the World Bank (Cornwell, 2008). Cornwell (2008) in unpacking the meaning of participation uses “Arnstein’s ladder” of participation the different kinds and degrees of participation. Citizen’s control (citizen’s power, delegated power, partnership) was identified to be at the top of the ladder with non-participation

(therapy and manipulation) at the bottom of the ladder. The control over oil resources in Nigeria lies with the Federal Government and decisions over the exploitation of oil are mostly taken without any form of consultation from the Niger Delta people. Also, the Niger Delta people do not have any control over the activities of oil companies in their region.

The point of departure in this ladder of participation however, is the level where citizens are at the receiving end of programmes and projects. The distinction between citizen's power and tokenism which involves informing, consultation and placation is that giving information and consultation are regarded as a form of participation and has been equated empowerment by the World Bank (Cornwell, 2008).

In the Niger Delta area, the level of participation has progressed from the level of non-participation and sits at the middle of the Arnstein ladder. These levels of participation however need to identify and differentiate the different types of participants involved in a conflict resolution process and in planning for development. In the case of the Niger Delta, it is important to identify the different stakeholders involved in the Niger Delta conflicts, and understanding of their specific needs. The stakeholders that have been excluded and the ones that exclude themselves due to fear and lack of voice (minority groups) from participating in the resolution process of the Niger Delta conflicts also need to be identified.

A clear definition of what level of participation should be employed should be defined in terms of depth and breadth, as this will indicate the level of inclusion, exclusion and the degree of involvement of the people. In practice, it is however difficult to achieve a participation process that is deep and wide and participatory process do not and literally cannot involve everyone due to how cumbersome and time consuming it is to capture the interest of everyone especially in a context of conflict.

Another aspect that is important to note, is the difference between being involved in a process and having an influence in a process. A difference exists between getting people involved in a process and having a voice. The ability for people to express themselves without any form of fear, appraisal or the feeling of not been listened to or taken seriously needs to be nurtured. To be

able to translate people's voice to influence requires not just the skills to effectively capture the wants of people, it requires efforts from both government institution and the people. On one side, government institutions need to be responsive to wider institutional changes and the political will translate its commitment to participation into action and results. The people on the other hand, need to cultivate strategies to build collectives and support that will keep exerting pressure on the government for change.

Therefore, participatory process of conflict management can be described as collaborative and problem solving. It is democratic and recognises the rights of the people and their responsibility to manage their own affairs (Okoh, nd). Stakeholders with different views and conflicting interests are allowed to participate in a collaborative problem solving. All stakeholders have equal opportunity to come up with options, engage and express their views and contributing effectively towards the final decision (Okoh, nd).

It has been identified that when people participate in decision making, they support it. Participatory and collaborative planning helps in the share of information, avoids fault finding by different parties. Future oriented attitudes and trust building among stakeholders is essential in a participatory and collaborative planning approach. "The procedures involve negotiation, a focus on the problem and not on parties or persons, a search for common ground, a search for a fair and objective basis on which to take decisions, and a search for options that may lead to mutual gains." (Okoh, nd: 103).

Similarly, participatory planning approach allows for innovation and creativity in decision making and in adapting planning practices to meet specific needs that are context bound in the Niger Delta region. More so, participatory approach is valuable because it will allow for all stakeholders to be brought together to contribute meaningfully towards creating favourable conditions that will facilitate and increase sustainable development in the Niger Delta and the Nigerian economy (Okoh, nd).

This participatory and collaborative planning should not only focus on the agency but also understand the broader structure and the forces that shapes and creates opportunities through

which agents function and the power relations that define and influence agencies (Healey, 2003) such as the political structure, existing systems, bureaucracy, etc. in the Niger Delta Region, existing systems such as political networks, family ties, ethnicity has been the basis for access to opportunities and power. This system has fostered rent seeking activities among political elites and political clientelism, which in turn has led to poor governance and failure of the government to promote sustainable growth and development.

Although planners and development agencies are expected to become skilful in advising the government and communities on ways to match their needs, the dynamics of governance and power relations that shapes governance also needs to be fully articulated (Healey, 2003). Planners are mostly cut in the middle of interdependent and conflicting parties in a context of inequality of power and political voice therefore, the need for planners to be reflective on their practices to promote learning from experience (Watson, 2002) and “politically deliberative” too to be able to learn from other practitioners in bridging the gap between practice and theory (Forester, 1999: 2). Inequality of power and voice exists in the Niger Delta region between the Government at different level, oil companies and communities. In respect to control over oil exploitation and revenue allocation much power lies with the Federal Government with little or no power with the community.

One of the criticisms of collaborative planning is that it undermines power relations. In the Niger Delta context, this should not be overlooked, because all social relations have a power dimension to them. Social relations operate on different levels at once, the same way power relations manifest in different interactions between different actors in the process of deliberation in manners in which some actors seek to dominate and control the way other actors do “(like in the deliberate structuring of governance processes, economic markets, cultural practices, etc.) and in the deeper level of cultural assumptions and practices.” The different dimensions of power, deals with how power is exercised over others and how power is used to execute personal interest. (Healey, 2003: 113).

The Niger Delta conflicts is linked to “structural conflict of groups and factional struggle for resources and the mobilization of power by political elite to advance intrinsic interest,” this has made the Nigerian government a medium through which public assets are converted in personal

interests in favour of the “extraverted neo-patrimonial state elites.” For the Niger Delta, it is a way of political domination through the export of unprocessed oil and gas and the acquisition of royalties and rents. This resulted to the relationship that exist between the Nigerian Government and the oil companies tied by “an economic mutuality underlined by the state’s dependence on oil rents for its revenues on one hand and the oil companies’ reliance on the state to ensure the necessary conditions for oil extraction on the other.” And so, oil companies operate with the intention to reduce cost and maximise profit. This kind of relationship between oil companies and the government strongly shapes the way political elites behave in that they develop strong interest in appropriation, sharing and utilisation of oil revenue (Emuedo and Abam, 2015: 10)

Table 12. Political Economy Typologies

Political inclusiveness	Credibility of intertemporal commitment	
	Less credible / weaker enforcement	More credible / stronger enforcement
Less inclusive / less collectively oriented	<i>Patrimonial Rule</i> Individualized political authority, built on a hierarchy of cronyism; emphasis on private (elite) goods; exploitation of public resources for private gain	<i>Hegemonic Government</i> Institutionalized one-party regime; either predatory or benevolent; emphasis on private (elite) goods with some particularist and public goods
More inclusive / more collectively oriented	<i>Clientelist Pluralism</i> Political competition based on extensive use of clientelism; provision of particularist goods; low horizontal accountability	<i>Programmatic Pluralism</i> Electoral competition based on programs geared toward collective welfare enhancement; provision of public goods; democratic accountability

Source: Rose et al., (2011: 10).

The Niger Delta and Nigeria sits in the third quadrant “(Clientelist Pluralism)” where there is high political completion for revenue and power which has been based on political networks with little or no accountability. There is therefore, the need to move towards “(Programmatic Pluralism)” electoral completion that is based on programs that are geared towards enhancement, the collective welfare, the provision of public goods and democratic accountability (Rose et al., 2011: 10).

Participatory planning is based on some underlying principles which are;

- It seeks to embrace complexities. This approach acknowledges complexities and diversities that may exist between stakeholders and seeks to understand these complexities and diversities, instead of dealing with conflicts based on predetermined solutions that may not necessarily deal with the root causes of conflicts. This is of particular interest to the Niger Delta situation, which is saddled with enormous complexities such as multiplicity of rival, tribal and ethnic groups with complex historical relationships (Okoh, nd; Forester, 1999; Healey, 2003). For example, the Niger Delta is made up of about 40 ethnic nationalities with different cultures and languages. The social and historical complexities that exist within the Niger Delta need to be fully articulated for the Niger Delta people to be able participate meaningfully towards the growth and development.
- It seeks to recognise multiple realities. Certain facts and realities that should be considered in analysis of the Niger Delta area and in decision making are accounted for in participatory planning approach. In the Niger Delta the realities and fact about high levels of poverty, unemployment, the continuous demand for resource control and continuous competition and tension between communities in the Niger Delta region for development are important issues that should be properly addressed (Okoh, nd; Forester, 1999; Healey, 2003).
- It seeks to prioritise the realities of the poor and the disadvantaged. The participatory approach perceives all stakeholders as equal and they have equal opportunities to contribute and be heard in the creation of knowledge and in problem analysis and decision making. The stakeholders in the Niger Delta conflict include the host communities, the federal government and the oil companies, institutions such as the NDDC, civil society groups and community based organisations (Okoh, nd).
- Grassroots empowerment and voice nurturing. The participatory approach does not only seek to gather information, but also seeks to make the assessment process a learning process that contributes to the empowerment and inclusion in policy making. In the case of the Niger Delta, the different stakeholders need to build the capacity to be able to contribute effectively in decision making and in conflict management (Okoh, nd and Healey, 2003). The NDDC and the present ministry of Niger Delta who represent the major institutions that seek to oversee and ensure sustainable development in the Niger Delta. These institutions should not be politicised, but rather encouraged and supervised to take up responsibilities to empower

communities and build its capacity towards achieving sustainable development (Idowu, 2012).

6.3 Land-Use Management and Environmental Protection

The increased need for food security, the dangers of oil exploitation to the environment and the implications of environmental degradation nationally and internationally in issues relating to climate change, the need to protect the natural environment and achieve economic growth at the same, and the need to resolve conflicts in the Niger Delta, promote and achieve development represents some of the challenges experienced in the Niger Delta and makes Land use planning important (GIZ, 2012).

Land use planning is one of the ways through which the above mentioned concerns can be met. Land use management emphasises the negotiation of future use of land and resources by all relevant stakeholders for the public benefit (GIZ, 2012; Samper, nd).

The continuous struggle and conflicts over oil resources and land in the Niger Delta and the need to adapt land use to global discourses like climate change, sustainability, and the high levels of income and power inequality, enhances the role of land use planning and makes it more significant in the Niger Delta region (GIZ, 2012).

This is because; land use planning has become a central prerequisite for any spatial development over the years and focuses on ecological, economic and social sustainability. Also, land use planning promotes a development approach that helps in preventing land use conflicts, it helps to put in place measures that will promote the physical and ecological environment, the protection of natural resources, helps to preserve and ensure the productivity of land and creates a balance economically, ecologically and socially (Sustainability) (GIZ, 2012).

According to GTZ (1995:7), “Land use planning creates the preconditions required to achieve a type of land use that is environmentally sustainable, socially just and desirable and economically sound. It thereby activates social processes of decision making and consensus building concerning the utilization and protection of private, communal or public areas.” The essence of

land use planning is to create a balance among competing land uses by all stakeholders (people who use or are affected by changes in land use) and the identification of such uses in which consensus has been reached or achieved with the main of promoting and achieving sustainability. To be able to achieve sustainable growth and manage the conflicts in the Niger Delta, the land use planning system in Nigeria should embrace and extend its contents to adapt and capture the needs of all stakeholders in relation to oil production and crude oil exploitation in the Niger Delta (GIZ, 2012 and Samper, nd).

One of the problems identified with land decrees in Nigeria is that although land resources now belong to the Federal Government according to the Land Use Act of 1978, the act does not set the procedure for compensation for appropriation of land and for the effect of oil exploitation on the environment. Before the introduction of the land use act of 1978, land transfer fees or rents were received by land owners directly from oil companies for land acquisition. This however, does not apply anymore according to the Land use act. These revenues are now being received by the government and its officials who are mainly made up of the political elites (Emuedo and Abam, 2015).

Also, the Land Use Act according to “Section 28” empowered state Government with the power *to* “revoke the right of occupancy to any land for reasons of overriding public interest”. In regard to oil activities, the most significant development following the introduction of the Land Use Act is its implication for compensation for land in the Niger Delta. This further creates rent seeking opportunity and an avenue that have contributed to the corruption and poor governance (Emuedo and Abam, 2015: 12)

Establishing guidelines for compensation for the appropriation of land, environmental damage and activities of oil companies in the Niger Delta area will be one way of addressing the conflicts in the Niger Delta region. (Apkan, 2005; Rasak, 2011).

More so, the introduction of “stringent measures” against oil companies that will not adhere to EIA procedures stipulated by the Environmental Impacts Assessment Decree No. 86 of 1992 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the National Policy on the Environment of 1999 should be

enforced. These measures was put in place to mitigate and preserve the environment and in ensuring that oil companies carry out their social responsibilities to their host communities and the adequate compensation of host communities for oil spills and other environmental damaged caused as a result of their activities should be strictly adhered to and be enforced by the Ministry of Environment, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) (Idowu, 2012: 109).

Other recommendations include diversifying the Nigerian economy through the introduction and development of other sectors of the economy like building of agro processing industries for agricultural products like cocoa, groundnut, hides and skin and palm oil. This will help to diversify the economy and will reduce the pressure of the exploitation of crude oil as a necessity for economic growth. One of the major factors behind the Niger Delta conflicts is the dependence of the Nigerian Government on crude oil exploitation since the 1970s for economic growth. Other sectors and resources that Nigeria is blessed has been gradually abandoned for crude oil production which has led to the over-exploitation of crude oil and increase in environmental impacts and subsequently conflicts, which have adverse effects on the Niger Delta area and the national economy (Iniaghe et al, 2013 and Ransome-Kuti, nd).

6.4 Promote Accountability and Transparency in Government

Accountability and transparency in the government can be achieved by the expanding and the promotion of citizen monitoring and reporting on governance and the political process in the Niger Delta Region. The Niger Delta people and the local communities occupy a good position and represent a good source of information on the aspects of governance whether service provision, expenditures, environmental quality, electoral practice, and the abuse of human rights that they are not satisfied with (Francis et al., 2008).

The voice of the community was previously presented by the media or by reports from national and international NGOs. However government should promote and encourage the emerging agencies and NGOs that pilot social accountability through structured reporting from citizens in the Niger Delta region like “the Niger Delta Professionals for Development (NIDPRODEV)” who actively engage Niger Delta citizens to appraise and score government performance on

“public services, good governance, and infrastructure development, cultural events, community empowerment, oil spills, gas flares, displacements, human rights abuses” (Francis et al., 2008: 108 and Niger Delta Watch, 2015: 1).

More so, “the Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN)” on the other hand solicits alerts and comments on local development projects and peace building efforts, as well as incidents such as oil spills, community clashes, or human rights abuses” from the Niger Delta people through social networking and website “the Niger Delta Watch” (Francis et al., 2008: 108 and SND, 2015).

“The Niger Delta Citizens and Budget Platform (NDCBP)” is another platform that has been conducting budget oversight in Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta and Akwa-Ibom states during the last few years, including the publication of state budgets and the preparation of budget analyses (Francis et al., 2008: 109).

Furthermore, transparency in electoral process can be an avenue to re-establish confidence on governance and the political process. The success and credibility of the 2015 election at the national, state and local level was endorsed by “hundreds of civic and community groups and individuals who monitored the process and results, many using social networking tools, and worked in cooperation with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), foreign partners and Nigerian Government” (Francis et al., 2008: 109).

This success was ascribed to, the “use of transparent and computer-based systems for voter registration and reporting of election results.” This system of “citizen feedback educates people about their civic rights and obligations; it ensures that voters’ registers are accurately compiled, and it promotes vigilance of authorities against election rigging and voter intimidation. Above all, it encourages individual freedom of choice in elections beyond local patrimonial authority” (Francis et al., 2008: 109).

In spite of the consequences that accompany the exploitation of oil, the Niger Delta Area and the Nigerian government are faced with the issues of poor governance. To be able to deal with the

oil conflicts experienced in the Niger Delta, it is therefore important to also address the issues of poor governance that has characterised the Nigerian system for decades. This is because; the complex nature of the conflicts experienced cannot be dealt with only from the environmental point of view. Other aspects such as good governance, accountability and assessment through effective engagement of citizens are important in the process of building peace and development in the Niger Delta.

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Appendix