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Conflicts in the Niger Delta: Analysis of Causes, Impacts and Resolution Strategies

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Abstract

Conflict in the Niger Delta holds profound implications for the democratic and developmental transformation of Nigeria. The analysis of the causes and impacts of the oil conflict in the region, and of strategies to resolve it, requires an understanding of the traditionally and constitutionally enshrined resource rights of the marginalised inhabitants. Patterns of resource appropriation by multinational oil companies and the mismanagement of resource revenue by federal government, and the associated environmental pollution, remain a legacy of the top-down approaches that have been employed in an attempt to resolve conflicts in the Niger Delta. These approaches have largely failed to effectively address the complex issues affecting the indigenes and have even triggered further dissention amongst various local communities. Using grounded theory as a research method, this thesis explores the grassroots approach to conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region as a socio-political paradigm for developing substantive content for the resolution of conflict in this oil-rich region of Nigeria. Drawing on history and using social and conflict theories, the paper investigates the potential for the bottom-up approach to be applied to the conflict resolution paradigm, in order to advance a sustainable peace process and promote economic, political and social transformation in Nigeria – and, in particular, the Niger Delta region.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mum, Maryam Isa Mele, and dad, Dr. Musa Ahmed Musa, for their enshrined love and amazing patience expressed to me throughout the completion of this work.

Acknowledgements

Most importantly and number one praise is due to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala Alhamdulilah.

Words alone cannot express my gratitude to my sister, Memuna Sherif Lawan. I thank her for being my best friend, someone I can always confide in, a person who shares my problems and is always ready to lend a helping hand. Many thanks to her husband, Abba Lawan, and their children, Ammah and Musliu, who always bring a smile to my face. The same gratitude is also extended to my brothers and sisters Isa, Umar, Amina and Khadija (big mummy) for their support and wise words. I am also grateful to all my friends and family members for their prayer supports and to Coventry University for giving me the opportunity to study at the institution and for the institutional support during my academic stay in the UK.

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List of Abbreviations

AETR	Average Effective Tax Rate
AG	Action Group
ANPP	All Nigeria People's Party
bbl	Billion barrels
bpd	Barrels Per Day
CAST	Community And Shell Together
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CDB	Cluster Development Boards
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (USA)
CNL	Chevron Nigeria Limited
CORDAID	Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EEPNL	Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited
EPNL	Elf Petroleum Nigeria Limited
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FNDIC	Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMOU	Global Memoranda of Understanding
GNI	Gross National Income

HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INC	Ijaw National Congress
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
IUCN-NDP	Union for the Conservation of Nature-Niger Delta Panel
IYC	Ijaw Youth Congress/Council
JTF	Joint Task Force
JV – NAOC	Joint-Venture Nigerian Agip Oil Company
JV –TEPNG	Joint-Venture Total E and P Nigeria Limited
JV- TOPCON	Joint-Venture Texaco Overseas Petroleum Company Nigeria
JV- TUPNI	Joint-Venture-Total Upstream Petroleum Nigeria Ltd
JV-CNL	Joint-Venture-Chevron Nigeria Limited
JVMPNU	Joint Venture-Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited
JV-NLNG	Joint Venture-Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas
JV-SPDC	Joint Venture-Shell Petroleum Development Company
LGA	Local Government Area
LGAs	Local Government Associations
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MNCs	Multinational Companies
MNDA	Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
MNOCs	Multinational Oil Companies
MOSIEND	Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality of the Niger Delta

MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
NAE	Nigeria Agip Exploration
NAOC	Nigeria Agrip Oil Company
NCNC	National Congress of Nigeria and Cameroon
NDBMG	Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group
NDDB	Niger Delta Development Board
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDDC MD	Niger Delta Development Commission Managing Director
NDDC-NTAC	Niger Delta Development Commission- Niger Delta Technical Aid Corps
ND-HERO	Niger Delta Human and Environmental Rescue Organisation
NDPVF	Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force
NDRDMP	Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan
NDV	Niger Delta Vigilante
NDVF	Niger Delta Volunteer Force
NGN	Nigerian Naira (currency)
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NLNG	Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Company
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NSRP	Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Programme
OMPADEC	Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission
PAO	Presidential Amnesty Office
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PSC –SNEPCO	Production Sharing Contract-Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company
PSCAENR	Production Sharing Contract Nigeria Agip Energy and Natural Resources

PSC-NAE	Production Sharing Contract Nigeria Agip Exploration
PSCs	Production Sharing Contracts
RENA	Remediation by Enhanced Natural Attenuation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNEPCO	Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company
tcf	Trillion Cubic Feet
TEPNG	Total E and P Nigeria Limited
TOPCON	Texaco Overseas Petroleum Company Nigeria
TUPNI	Total Upstream Petroleum Nigeria Ltd.
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
USIP	United States Institution of Peace

Chapter One: Studying Conflicts in the Niger Delta: Analysis of Causes, Impacts and Resolution Strategies

1.1   Introduction

This research explores conflicts in Nigeria, specifically the on-going violence in the region of the Niger Delta. By looking at the fundamental causes of the protracted conflict in this area, the study mainly focuses on proffering conflict resolution strategies that would bring sustainable peace and foster development in the region, as well as the country as a whole.

Following the 1960s wave of independence that swept over several African countries, the African continent is still struggling to identify and confirm its true social, economic and even cultural identity. This can be partially explained by the maxim that 'after colonisation equates to during colonisation' (Gimba 2014); meaning that the international emancipation from colonial masters has not brought any significant positive change to the people. Rather, the current socio-economic situation in these countries looks even worse than it was prior to, and during colonial times. From within, as from without, Africa is still perceived as the most backward continent on earth, with its economy far removed from its full potential. A few flaws, including a rapid population growth, corruption, poor leadership, external debt, diseases, illiteracy, high rate of poverty and conflict, are still being underlined as causes intensifying this stationary situation. For example, Bekoe (2002:232), one of the prominent scholars with an extensive knowledge of African issues, stated:

> Each passing year reinforces Africa's grim statistics of a continent in which many states are overtaken by poverty and conflict. In 2001, to cite just one statistic, 75% of the countries in Africa (39 of 54) were classified as low income-meaning that [Gross National Income] GNI was below USD 745 annually. Equally dismal conflict and instability in all the sub-regions continue to spread refugees.

Ghani et al. (2008:22) concurred with Bekoe, being of the view that:

> [I]n the past twenty years, for example, USD 300 billion has been spent in Africa alone (in aid), yet the continent is still rife with weak and collapsed regimes – two

million people a year die of AIDS, three thousand children die every day of malaria, and forty million received no schooling at all.

Although Africa is the world reservoir of natural resources, which could be seen as a potential to drive the world economy to an unprecedented level, however, media and news have been repeatedly reporting that many of its countries are characterised by several problems, including authoritarianism and insecurity, weak institutional structures, corruption and poor governance, human rights deficits, high mortality rate, poverty, environmental pollution, in addition to high and low-intensity conflicts. The continent delivers enormous and diverse economic resources including energy minerals, metallic minerals, non-metallic minerals and agricultural resources. Its gigantic population serves as source of human capital and a large market to be served. However, it is also incongruous that amidst these rich natural resources and human capital, Africa is ensnared in a malicious web of profound and persistent poverty and violence caused by its rich natural resources. Central to this problem is the contention concerning the issue of ownership and control of natural resources; a problem which finds its root-causes from the interplays of historical, political and social factors. Although several efforts have been made, in different ways and levels, to tackle this issue, little success has been achieved, however. In my own opinion, it seems to be that in order for Africa to achieve its full potential, thereby contributing immensely to its people's wellbeing and the world economy, there is a need to address the problem pertaining to the reign of violence and abject poverty which holds the continent hostage. This requires a better understanding of the contemporary conflicts in the continent in order to find and apply more suitable solutions and development management plans which could bring long-lasting peace and development to the continent. This idea has been useful in shaping the conception and elaboration of this research.

1.2   Setting the context

1.2.1 Nigeria

Nigeria is a federal state in West Africa, with its southern coast laying on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. It has four borders; Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east and Niger in the north. Administratively, Nigeria is composed of 36 states, of which the Niger Delta is the subject of this study. With a territory of 923,768 km² and a population of 186 million, Nigeria is Africa's most populated country, with oil and gas playing a predominant role in the national economy (Michael Peel 2011:23). The country's oil reserve is estimated at

approximately 30 billion barrels (bbl) of crude oil and 180 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas (Fidelis Allen 2014). It is Africa's second largest economic power following South Africa and hydrocarbon resources alone have brought to the country an income estimated at USD 340 billion over the past 40 years (Obi 2010: 224), making it Africa's largest oil producing and exporting country and the sixth in the world (Omolade Adunbi 2015). However, the sharing of the hydrocarbon income has not been done in an efficient way for the betterment of the whole nation and for the Niger Delta region in particular. As the 2006 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Report on the region summarised:

> Some amazing paradoxes have come from the development of the Niger Delta region. Ordinarily, the Niger Delta should be a gigantic economic reservoir of national and international importance. Its rich endowments of oil and gas resources feed methodically into the international economic system, in exchange for massive revenues that carry the promise of rapid socio-economic transformation within the Delta itself. In reality, the Niger Delta is a region suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructure and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty, filth and squalor, and endemic conflict. Enormous possibilities for industrial development abound in terms of the abundance of raw materials in the region, but these remain unrealised. Beyond vast oil and gas deposits, the Delta is blessed with good agricultural land, extensive forests, excellent fisheries, and a large labour force. But juxtaposed against the potential for economic growth and sustainable development are deteriorating economic and social conditions that have been largely ignored by contemporary policies and actions. With local inhabitants subjected to abject poverty and suffering in the midst of plenty, some view the oil and gas endowments as a curse and a double-edged sword (UNDP 2006:25).

Figure 1.1 Map of the Federal State of Nigeria
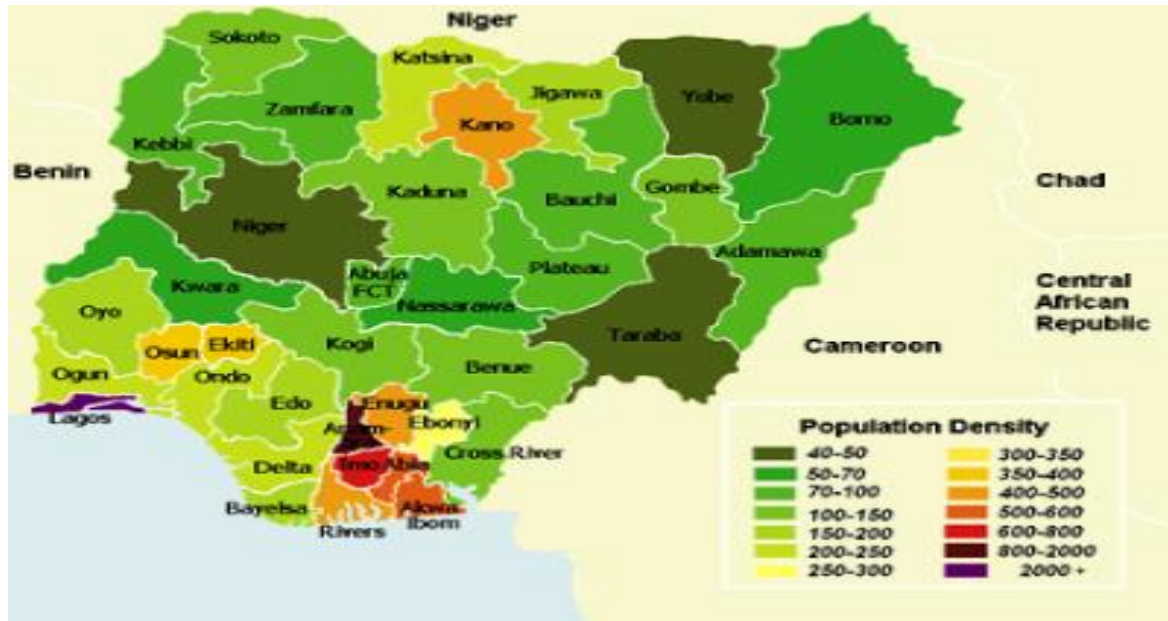
Source: Courtesy of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Masterplan.

In the early 1990s, the country had sunk into violent crisis, as the armed insurgency in the Niger Delta region surfaced with elemental fury. Since then, the Niger Delta has been portrayed as the Nigerian epicentre of not only militant actions against the exploitation of oil, but also as an example of the indigenous struggle over resource rights in the country. The 1990s violence resumption in this region had reached an unprecedented level in 2007 and caused massive waves of assaults on oil and gas installations, as well as the kidnapping of foreign oil companies' workers in the country. Violent actions against oil companies in the Niger Delta have been depicted as a mass consciousness-raising and arming of youths against the discriminatory exploitation of oil by the federal state and multinational oil companies. These actions have stimulated a radical revolution leading to grave consequences for the stability of the state and that of the region of the Niger Delta.

1.2.2 The Niger Delta

The Niger Delta is one of the federated states in the federal republic of Nigeria. It is a territory of 70,000 Km^2 (27,000 sq. mi.) located in the South region of the country and makes up 7.5% of Nigeria's land mass (Obi 2010). As a federated state, the Niger Delta is administratively made of nine entities namely; Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Port Harcourt (Rivers) which are all located in the south south geopolitical zones; Ondo situated in the south west geopolitical zone, and Abia and Imo which both belong to the south

east geopolitical zone. The Niger Delta is a multi-ethnic federated state with some 31 million people of more than 40 ethnic groups, speaking about 250 different dialects (Alao 2007:162; Michael Peel 2011).

Figure1.2   Map of the Niger Delta
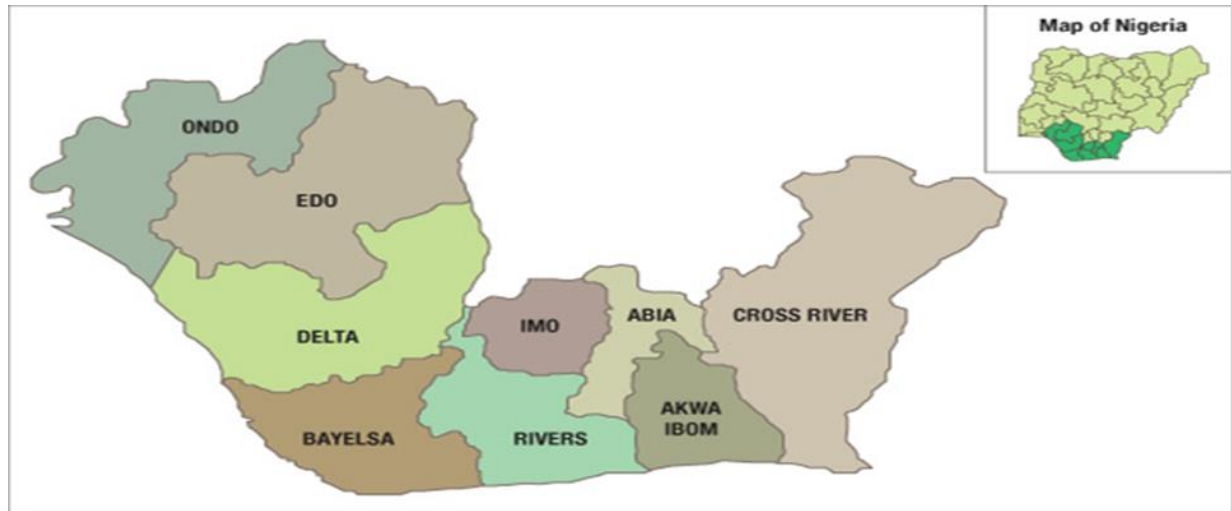
The Niger Delta region covers a very dense rain forest and most of the people in this region traditionally work in fishing and farming. The region also produces and supplies abundant food made available for trade and consumption all year round. Formerly described as oil Rivers because of its palm producing potential, the rain forest in this region opens up into the Atlantic Ocean and makes the Niger Delta one of the most important wetlands with a rich, complex, but fragile, ecosystem (Kingsley Kuku 2012). Internationally known as the region with the richest petroleum reservoir, the Niger Delta is also a terrain conducive to conflicts, with the more prominent ones being the 1966 revolt, the 1990 peaceful protest and the recent widespread militancy attacks (Alao 2007). It is also home to several popular social movements and groups, including the Ijaw National Congress (INC), the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Chikolo Movement (FNDIC), that have all been fighting for indigenes' rights over their natural resources in this region. Likewise, it has been a region of international controversy over pollution, corruption and human rights violations based on oil and gas operations ongoing for the last fifty years (Orbach 2011). Neglected by successive Nigerian governments and the oil companies operating within the region, the Niger Delta has become a poor region with widespread poverty, underdevelopment, and environmental degradation (Obi 2010).

The history of this federated state demonstrates that, even before the discovery of oil, the indigenes of the region had been in struggle with external domination over their environmental resources. For example, Kingsley Kuku (2012) states that there were cases where natives of the region clashed physically with British traders over palm oil produce. However, the discovery of oil at Oloibiri (a town currently in Bayelsa state) in 1958, shortly before the independence of Nigeria, changed the dimension of the conflict, switching the mode of struggle from palm oil to crude oil, which placed the Niger Delta in a strategic spot nationally as well as internationally (Obi 2010). Hydrocarbon discovery metamorphosed the region into an oil hub in the black continent, housing 600 oilfields and over 300 oil production and storage facilities scattered within its wetlands, mostly run by foreign oil companies including Shell, ExxonMobil, Total, Chevron, Agip, Elf and Texaco, in joint partnership with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (World Bank 2011).

As stated above, the Niger Delta oil potentials make Nigeria the largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, if oil has contributed to some extent to the consolidation of prosperity of a few countries in terms of poverty alleviation and strong economic development, as is the case with Norway and Alaska to mention just two examples (Kingsley Kuku 2012), it is also noteworthy to point out that the presence of hydrocarbons has also been the source of a high incidence of corruption, violent conflict and poor economy in several other oil-rich countries including Nigeria (Obi 2010). The abundance of hydrocarbons in the region of the Niger Delta, offers an obvious example of resource paradox, portraying the region as one of the classic patterns of a resource-rich country where people are experiencing abject poverty. The non-involvement of the local people in the management of their resources and their marginalisation from a fair sharing of the oil revenue have created a social malaise which has given rise to a generalised social frustration and an aversion against the oil companies and state authorities. According to Omolade Adunbi (2015), the crisis in the Niger Delta has been thought to be due to the government's inattentiveness to the concerns regarding the development of the region where the bulk of oil revenue is generated; the nonchalant conduct of the oil multinationals who dedicate insignificant means towards corporate social responsibility (CSR); the poor oil production policies applied by oil companies associated with the environmental disasters triggered by oil spills and gas flaring, as well as the demands of the peoples of the Niger Delta for increased participation in the administration and allocation of resources.

All of these are believed to have triggered the agitation amongst the Niger Deltans. Olatunde (2009:8), for instance, offers that:

> from the earliest forms of protests, the pioneers of the social movement such as Isaac Adaka Boro, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Ogoni and Christopher Okigbo had one thing in common; the genuine liberation of their people…. These gallant men, particularly Okigbo and Ken, organised protest rallies in civilized manner not minding the bashing and injustice meted out to them and their kinsmen by the Nigerian state. Their relentless spirit never gave up and their protest was always devoid of violence.

Social movements led by Isaac Boro and Ken Saro-Wiwa (Cyril Obi 2010) activated the call for fair dealing in the Niger Delta. Ken Saro-Wiwa, in the spirit of restoring justice for his people, formed the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) which increased the tempo and publicity of the agitation for environmental justice. In 1966 his powerful speech delivered an insightful and tragic summary of the injustice in the Niger Delta, stating that:

> The present structure reinforces indigenous colonialism-a crude, harsh, unscientific and illogical system. Twenty years after the civil war, the system of revenue allocation, the development policies of successive Federal administrations and the insensitivity of the Nigerian elite have turned the delta and environs into an ecological disaster and dehumanized its inhabitants. The notion that the oil-bearing areas can provide the revenue of the country and yet be denied a proper share of that revenue because it is perceived that the inhabitants of the area are few in numbers is unjust, immoral, unnatural and ungodly (Ken Saro-Wiwa 1996:63).

The MOSOP claim was for the people to have rights of political autonomy, as well as their access to, and control of, their economic resources for Ogoni development (Crisis group 2006). The uprising of the MOSOP was a sign of awareness for indigenes and set out an era which has been characterised by protests and subsequent repression. However, it is of note that although the MOSOP advocated non-violence, conflict broke out all over the region along many axes; between ethnic groups, within ethnic groups, within communities, between generations, between the state and communities, and between oil companies and communities (Karl Maier 1998). There has been widespread violence in the region, which has paved the way for the stakes to be raised, as weapons became more accessible. As more state-armed

forces have been deployed and as demands for local ownership of land and oil resources grew amongst the ethnic groups in the region, security conditions and instability grew worse. From 2005 to 2007, between 120 and 150 cases of violent conflicts have been recorded annually in the Niger Delta region, prominently in Rivers and over fifty armed groups with over 20,000 armed youths have been fighting in the oil region (UNDP 2007:3). With the emergence of MEND in December 2005, violence involved hostage taking and attacks on oil facilities. In the period between January 2006 and February 2007, 33 cases of kidnapping were recorded with over 200 victims being oil workers (Africa Masterweb 2007). In addition, between 2000 and 2007, 12,770 cases of sabotage of oil pipelines and installations mostly in the Niger Delta region have been documented (Nwankwo and Ezeobi 2008).

The Niger Delta, as an oil-bearing region of Nigeria, is of strategic importance to the country's economic survival and to global energy stability. This appears to be undeniable as the Nigerian economy is heavily dependent on crude oil and gas, most of which is in the reservoirs concentrated in the Niger Delta, which in turn accounts for 80% of the government's revenue, 95% of export receipts and 90% of foreign exchange earnings (Kingsley Kuku 2012). The consequences of the Niger Delta crises are too enormous to be ignored. At the local level, the conflict has a significant impact on the indigenes in terms insecurity and continual environmental problems in the region. At the national level, the Nigerian state is incurring the loss of revenue amounting to over N150.5bn in eight years (Nwankwo and Ezeobi 2008). At an international level, the global energy market has been hit by the upsurge of the crude oil price which rose to USD 100 per barrel in January 2008 (Arowolo 2008) and later to about USD 120 a barrel in April 2014 (Fidelis Allen 2014). However, since late 2014 up till today, oil price is still struggling to hit the cap of USD 60 per barrel.

Due to the economic strategy of the Niger Delta, the government has developed various mechanisms of response to different conflicts that are rooted in this region. These mechanisms, in most cases, have been heavy-handed repression led by security forces. On the other hand, in some cases, new states, local government associations (LGAs) and special institutions were created with the intent to develop the Delta, while at the same time constant but indecisive renegotiation of oil revenue has been retained by oil-producing states (USIP 2011). These various responses that the government embarked on provided avenues for enriching political actors at both local and federal levels, while the ordinary Niger Deltans were receiving few benefits or even nothing. Although the 2017 recent Amnesty offered to

former Niger Delta militants has brought some level of peace to the region, this approach, however, still seems to be a cosmetic solution to the problem, since different factors driving and sustaining the conflicts are yet to be addressed. Responding to the root-causes of the conflicts in the Niger Delta remains vital to checking the resurgence of instability in the region. This is what justified the essence of the questions that this research seeks to answer.

1.3   Research: Problem, Objectives and Questions

The Niger Delta has the prospect of being a massive economic powerhouse for Nigeria, and also one of international significance, but a few noticeable inconsistencies have come from its development. Endowed with rich oil and gas resources, the Niger Delta region connects into international economics, receiving huge revenues that could lead to swift socio-economic changes within the Delta itself. Perversely, however, the region is still bound by many issues ranging from governmental neglect, decaying social infrastructure and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, extreme poverty and internal conflict. Huge potential for industrial development exists: there is wealth of raw materials in the region, but this potential has yet to be realised (UNDP 2006:25). Crises in this region have been described as the result of the unfair use of resources by the multinational oil companies (MNOCs) in collusion with the federal government. The nonchalant attitude of the oil multinationals to dedicate substantial resources towards corporate social responsibility, the substandard oil production practices engaged by oil corporations – with oil spills and gas flaring damaging the environment, and the lack of adequate responses to demand of local communities for increased participation in the administration and allocation of resources have all accrued frustration and anger among different local communities within the region. This has resulted in the rise of animosity, militancy and violence as the indigenes' means of claiming a fair share of resources from the MNOCs and government. Local communities' demands suddenly turned into political autonomy and the demand for the use and control of their economic resources (Crisis group 2006). This fuelled a deadly conflict that has spilled all over the region. The level of violence in the region also intensified as weapons became more accessible, more state-armed forces were being deployed and as claims for indigenous proprietorship over lands and oil resources grew high amongst the ethnic groups in the region (UNDP 2007:3; Africa Masterweb 2007; Nwankwo and Ezeobi 2008). This is one of the complex situations, which complicates our efforts to understand conflicts in the

Niger Delta – including our analysis of causes, the impacts and possible resolution strategies.

The purpose of this study is to enhance understanding of the factors that have contributed to the violent conflict in Niger Delta so that the most appropriate conflict resolution strategies will be adopted in this vast and severely deprived region rich in oil and gas. Overall, the aim and objectives pursued in this research are:

➢ To review other existing and unresolved issues driving and sustaining the Niger Delta conflict moving beyond economic and factor endowments.

➢ To analyse the past trends of conflict resolution adopted in the region in order to highlight the weaknesses and potential pitfalls, and find why they failed to address the issue.

➢ To evaluate the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies and reflect on what might help with bringing sustainable peace and preventing another cycle of violence in the region.

Therefore, the overarching question that this research aims to address is: in what ways and to what extent do the responses of different actors to conflict in the Niger Delta contribute to its resolution?

Similarly, the research aims to address the following specific research sub-questions:

1. What is the relevance of resource curse and rentier state theories to conflicts in oil-bearing settings?

2. What are the background and other causes of the conflict?

3. In what ways has the state responded to the conflict in the Niger Delta? How successful have its initiatives been?

4. In what ways have the companies engaged with the state and communities in their oil operations and production? What are relevant factors that influence conflict management initiatives of oil companies in the Niger Delta?

5. In what ways have the communities been affected by and responded to the issues of governance in the Niger Delta?

Conflict management initiatives directly relate to the conflict resolution process. Drawing on the reviews and the analysis of the fieldwork, the range of conflict management initiatives by the oil companies, local communities' responses to these conflict management initiatives, state-sponsored management initiatives and the analysis of the past and present conflict in the Niger Delta have all been used to frame this thesis. Conflict resolution and/or its management entails a process of change and transformation occurring at three levels; namely, personal, collective and relational (Luckham 2007). Therefore, to understand these conflicts, an investigation of how the aforementioned dimensions have (or have not) impacted on local communities, on all these three levels was undertaken. From an economic view, the resource curse is examined with an emphasis on oil-conflict. By studying the conflict-resolution initiatives of the MNOCs in relation to state-sponsored-conflict resolution initiatives, one can relate oil-conflict theory to rentier theory and, in turn, relate this to resource curse theory. Equally, this research also examined the history of the conflicts in the Niger Delta region in order to bring together economic, social and political aspects that have built themselves around the current oil-based conflict. By looking into local communities' responses to conflict management initiatives by MNOCs, the implementation of the conflict resolution approaches was explored. At this point, it is argued that conflict management initiatives by the MNOCs are driven by the assumption that the bottom-up approach is indispensable for successful conflict resolution following decades of violence in the Niger Delta region. Finally, this thesis considered local communities' responses to conflict management initiatives by the government and MNOCs.

1.4   Limitation of the Study and Contribution to Knowledge

In the upcoming sections, challenges regarding methodology are discussed. This section however reflects on other limitations such as the accessibility of literature with regard to the topic being explored. This research looks at a case which arises from ongoing violence in an oil-rich setting. Its results may not be extrapolated for application in other settings where the conflict resolution process emerges from a local community's involvement. Yet, there are nevertheless lessons to be drawn from each case. Also, whilst the path and type of the conflicts in the Niger Delta indicates a conflict with consequences and root-causes that have been neglected since colonial times,[1] its resolution and management however implicate a

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[1] See Chapter 5 for more details.

holistic and comprehensive approach. One suggestion in this regard was to consider the local community's opinion in the conflict management and resolution plan, which in the long-term would lead to the implementation of a grassroots-up approach to conflict. Hence, dismissing this aspect from the research seems to be a necessary limitation to me because the focus in this research is on analysis of causes, impacts and resolution strategies of the conflicts in the Niger Delta. Therefore, it makes sense to focus only on the conflict resolution initiatives by the MNOCs and the local communities' responses to them rather than including all aspects of the Niger Delta oil conflict.

Studying conflicts in the Niger Delta, analysing their causes and impacts, as well as investigating their resolution strategies in particular, are crucial for a sustainable and successful peace-building. Although connections between the aforementioned concepts, the post-conflict recovery and peace-building could obviously be established in a number of post-conflict countries (Nwankwo and Ezeobi 2008), in the Niger Delta situation, however, conflicts-oil have been proven to be true, but their resolution and management initiatives by the MNOCs, and the local communities' responses to them, are largely less studied. It is this gap that stimulated this research and thus is the main objective pursued throughout this study. Following the succinct backdrop as set out earlier, including the context outlined in the introduction in this Chapter, conflict management and its resolution by the MNOCs and the local communities' responses to the MNOCs actions, as discussed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, constitute the core theme of this research.

1.5   Organisation of the Research

This thesis comprises nine Chapters which includes this introduction (Chapter 1) and a conclusion (Chapter 9).

Chapter One offers the context of the study and its framework. It sets out the research aim, objectives and questions, as well as the gaps in the literature. It also provides the contribution to knowledge and the organisation of the research.

Chapter Two describes the research methodology and different approaches that have been used for the collection and analysis of data which assisted in the development of this research. It also provides the initial experience and motivations that prompted the author to conceive and work on this particular subject.

Chapter Three reviews the literature on the paradox of plenty and oil curse theory, providing an account of the economic motivations and opportunity created by oil and weak governance in fuelling armed conflict. It particularly focuses on resource curse theory, rentier state theory, reality of mineral-based development, role and engagement of corporation in oil development, conflict prevention, resolution and management.

Chapter Four studies the dynamics of the conflicts in the Niger Delta region by exploring the factors triggering different conflicts in this setting. The chapter principally majors on the early history of Nigeria, colonial rule and the creation of Nigeria, modern Nigeria and the Niger Delta region.

Chapter Five exclusively focuses on the analysis of the conflicts in the Niger Delta region. It contextualises all the multi-layered conflict motivations that underline the on-going violence in this region. It primarily explores structural factors causing conflict in the Niger Delta region and factors driving violence in the Niger Delta region.

Chapters Four and Five complement each other since the understanding of the dynamics of the conflict implies the knowledge of motivations underlining these dynamics.

Chapter Six investigates the state-sponsored conflict management initiatives. In particular, this chapter presents and analyses the state's attempts towards managing the conflicts in the Niger Delta region. This chapter mainly focuses on the establishment of development intervention agencies, revenue allocation, use of military force and amnesty programme.

Chapter Seven examines conflict management initiatives by the MNOCs. It discusses various approaches developed and adopted by the MNOCs to respond to the concerns of local communities. It emphasises on various conflict management initiatives adopted by the MNOCs, mainly the use of violence and the divide and rule principle as a conflict-settlement approach.

Chapter Eight substantiates the local communities' responses to conflict management initiatives carried out by the government and MNOCs. It sheds light on the perception of indigenes vis-à-vis the government and MNOCs attitudes towards their concerns. It expands on succinct overview of the adverse effects of oil and local community opposition in the Niger Delta.

Chapter Nine presents a synthesis of, and conclusion to, this study. This is done based on the research questions raised at the beginning of this study. The analytical framework applied in this thesis is also re-examined. It explains and throws up ideas for future research paths

regarding conflict resolution and/or its management in the Niger Delta region. It presents main research findings, revising the analytical framework and research key recommendations.

Chapter Two: Methodology and Research Design

2.1   Introduction

This chapter explains the research process used in this study including the problems, objectives and questions. It starts with a succinct discussion of the theoretical basis to the research, presenting the research design as well as the ontology and epistemology underlying this study. The research methodologies are also defined, including the field study setting, sampling, data collection tools, data analysis and ethical considerations. The researcher's personal reflection on the fieldwork and the limitations of the study are presented in the last sections.

2.2   Qualitative Research Paradigm

The overarching objective of this thesis is to study the conflicts in the Niger Delta. Therefore, to analyse the causes, impacts and resolution strategies, the investigation and results of this study are grounded in the experiences, narratives and opinions of participants and respondents, including the MNOCs' representatives, government, local communities and academic analysts. To complement these findings, the paper also provides a cross-cultural review.

In this research, terms such as 'conflict-resolution' and 'conflict-management' are defined as 'concepts', hence, they are subject to misunderstanding due to the fact that they are generic terms that cover various and different nuances; moreover, their meaning and understanding depend on the way they are being used in the field by various researchers. This alerts researchers who should be clearly demarcating concepts that are meant to be used within their research, whilst they are determining their case study. Searching on the conflicts in the Niger Delta – analysis of causes, impacts and resolution strategies is one field covering several other fields and disciplines. I am exploring a cross-cut topic which not only involves issues such as; conflict-resolution, conflict management, peace-building and political economy to name a few, but also would require a build-up of cross-cut approach to the subject Druckman (2009:119). Druckman's support to the use of cross-cut approach in this particular context is well justified by the complex nature of the subjects being explored and

the overlap between the various grounds (Ibid). In the same way of thinking, Della-Porta and Keating (2008a:34), supporting a cross-cut approach to a cross-cut research study, advises that the cross-cut analysis involves 'triangulation' when a researcher puts in place an analytical framework which encompasses various analytical approaches that allow verification and comparison between different analytical approaches that have been used. In order words, there are several ways of examining a situation and, similarly, numerous likely explanations. In the words of McCandless (2007:140):

> Data gathering obtained by the use of several methods guarantees that results are not skewed from coming from a single data source. It is therefore arguable that using cross-referring or cross-cut approach would be significant to validate, explain and extrapolate the research data collected from a case study.

The case study being looked at uses the qualitative paradigm as the research methodological approach. Defined as a social fact encompassing thoughts, beliefs, methods and goals set around common tools that guide the actions of human beings, a paradigm is a blend of ontological, epistemological and methodological principles (Guba 1990; Della-Porta and Keating 2008b). In qualitative research, data have a subjective and interpretive nature and the analytical approach to interpret concepts involves a lengthy process, while in quantitative approach the numerical variables constitute their findings (Flick 2007; Della-Porta and Keating 2008b). Merriam (2009:5) corroborates with Flick, Della-Porta and Keating's and asserts;

> Qualitative researchers are often interested in discovering the signification of a phenomenon of those involved…[by] understanding how people appreciate their experience, how they build their worlds, and what explanation they offer to their experiences rather than defining cause and effects, forecasting or telling the distribution of some attribute among a population…

An individual's explanation of conflict resolution depends on the subjective views that they have about these concepts: thus, what one person considers to be conflict resolution or management could mean something else to another. Also, as the emphasis of this research is on individuals' experiences and perceptions about the conflicts in the Niger Delta; analysis of causes, impacts and resolution strategies, qualitative analysis seems to be an appropriate

technique which might be used in handling and understanding the information delivered by the informants and participants involved this research.

This research lies within a social constructivism methodological approach. Sarantakos (2005:37) defines as "neither objective reality nor objective truth…, but a constructed reality". As the groundwork of qualitative methodology, Social Constructivism is therefore presented as a 'Ping-Pong' process or an interaction between one who knows and the knowledge and aims to understand a social reality (Gergen 1994). In social sciences, particularly in conflict-resolution and/or –management studies, practice is reflective. This implies that the building of understanding of the meaning of conflict-resolution and/ or conflict-management in these disciplines would be the result of what has been drawn from the people's understanding and knowledge about how they interconnect in the construction of social phenomena (Lederach et al. 2007). Hence, due to its significance in approaching issues of a subjective nature, Social Constructivism philosophy seems to be relevant to conduct research on conflict-resolution and/ or conflict-management -related activities such as the conflicts in the Niger Delta; analysis of causes, impacts and resolution strategies, which comprises a number of players including the MNOCs, government and local communities.

2.3   Pre-Field Preparations and Literature Reviews

My pre-field preparations were preceded by a substantive review of the literature in the field of my research for several reasons. Firstly, I had to be in conformity with Coventry University's requirement in line with the examination process in order to confirm my registration; secondly, it was important that I familiarise myself with the key concepts to be used in my research; thirdly, it was compulsory for me to locate my research within the field of conflict resolution and management in the Niger Delta. I conducted further literature reviewing, and wrote the thesis after data gathering and analysis; the combined process was directed by the update of the review and the fieldwork's information. Although the first literature reviews completed before the fieldwork were regarded as secondary data, the reviews done more recently, after the fieldwork, helped to evaluate and draw the line between the empirical results obtained from the field and the existing published articles.

2.3.1   Research Setting and Fieldwork

The research location of the study originally should have been in the Niger Delta Region. However, due to insecurity problems in this region, the University ethics committee advised

me against travelling to the Niger Delta because it was considered a high risk location. I had to lessen this challenge by starting the fieldwork in Abuja, Ibadan and Lagos. The choice of these cities was guided by the fact that they are safe and home to several MNOCs regional offices and it was less difficult for me to meet potential respondents and participants, including some Niger Deltans who have chosen these cities as their new settlement. Notably, conducting interviews from Abuja, Ibadan and Lagos also enabled me to locate some of the Niger Delta's community leaders who helped me with interviewing local communities' leaders, by telephone, email and Skype. During my first round of interviews in Abuja, Ibadan and Lagos, it was possible to identify and liaise with potential participants and respondents both within and beyond the country. I thus started my first round of fieldwork between June and August 2014. In this round, fieldwork was conducted in Abuja and by remote interview with participants in the Niger Delta region. However, a second round of fieldwork was conducted between October 2015 and March 2016 in Lagos, Ibadan and London.

The choice of the fieldwork areas also considered the geographical balance between regions. Apart from these three Nigerian cities, I also had some informal contacts with the Niger Deltan Diaspora in London. Whilst it is true that the settings that involve conflict-oil between the MNOCs and indigenes are located in the Niger Delta region, I could not cover fieldwork in these particular environments due to security reasons. This difficulty arose as a limitation to the research setting of the study. However, this limitation was minimised by conducting remote interviews – email discussions and telephone calls, with a few individuals living in the Niger Delta region.

2.3.2   Two Rounds of Fieldwork

The conflict in the Niger Delta is very dynamic and unpredictable, as the context of violence continuously changes. When I first imagined the idea of this research in 2012, the Nigerian government and MNOCs' conflict resolution blueprint was to offer a period of amnesty during which most of the militants surrendered their arms to the government. During that same time, oil-communities had high expectation that their locally born president, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, would improve socio-economic and environmental issues that they were facing. In reference to the conflicts, it was decided to explore mechanisms towards preventing the conflicts in the Niger Delta region. However, following the conclusion of the first round of the fieldwork from June to August 2014 in Abuja, the situation changed entirely. In November 2014, local communities became agitated, accusing the MNOCs of not meeting the agreed CSR regarding development schemes for the local communities. As a

result, there was an uprising of criminal activity, oil bunkering and the kidnapping of MNOCs' foreign employees. In these changing contexts and in agreement with my supervising team, it was decided to incorporate the different attempts at conflict resolution and management made by the MNOCs and the responses of local communities to them, whilst retaining the overall aims and objectives of the research. I also sensed the need to take into account the new context and its inferences in order to understand not only the conflict management initiatives by the MNOCs, but also the local communities' responses to these initiatives and the federal government's posture vis-à-vis this situation. Consequently, a second fieldwork study was conducted in Lagos, Ibadan and London between October 2015 and March 2016 in order to be updated on the situation adjustment from oil company representatives, government agency officials, academic experts, civil society organisations and Niger Delta indigenes based in these cities but directly involved in the peacebuilding developments in the region. This thesis is constructed using both primary and secondary data.

2.3.3 Recruitment of Participants

The selection of participants was primarily done based on the sampling method used in Constructivist methodology. The selection of other respondents was done through a partial use of purposive sampling, since the results in the field are not mismatched with the Constructivist approach. Sampling in Constructivist Theory is a process which is conducted together with data gathering and analysis. It draws away from determining participants prior to data collection and is a strategy which easily determines respondents using the common trend emerging from data analysis (Bryant and Charmaz 2007). Coined as a "theoretical sampling" process by Glaser and Strauss (1967:45), the Constructivist approach gives the researcher the opportunity to select the people to be interviewed and to decide on the content of the interview questions, on the grounds of the emerging concepts from the continuing interviews and analysis. Applied to my research, I commenced my fieldwork by interviewing some oil company representatives, government agency officials and academic experts in Abuja. At this stage of my fieldwork, the choice of my research's participants was planned already, for the simple reason that this has been set as an initial access point for my fieldwork. Information I gleaned from my prime literature review undertaken before my fieldwork helped me in the selection of potential respondents during this initial phase of the fieldwork project. The interview further helped me in the collection of primary information on the whereabouts of participants and respondents. Hence, when I began the fieldwork, the choice of research interviewees was based on purposive sampling; which is also known as a

selected method through which the choice of interviewees is directed based on the basis of the need expressed by the researcher and the specific topic being examined. Purposive sampling suits a case study where the researcher already has some ideas and knowledge of the people being explored (Brewer and Hunter 1990), as in my own case.

In my first fieldwork trip, I undertook interviews with four individuals working for oil companies, six government officials, four academics and one member of civil society in Abuja. During my second fieldwork's trip, my interviews were held with one government official, six members of civil society organisations, ten Niger Delta indigenes, two ex-militants based in Lagos, four academics in Ibadan and two oil company employees in London. Apart from the two ex-militants, most interviews were conducted with the Niger Delta indigenes, academics, civil society members and oil employees because I could easily reach out to them and because they are acquainted with the developments of the conflicts in the Niger Delta region. It is likewise significant to equate and compare the witnesses of the respondents mentioned above with supplementary information gleaned from militants and even other opposing groups (Barrett 2011). At this point, I conducted further semi-structured interviews with ex-militants and a few oil-communities' leaders. By doing this, I was convinced that in order to have a credible analysis of conflict resolution and conflict management, it is critical to take note of what the participants in violence think about the crisis in their region (Graham 2007). I was assisted by local and national facilitators in building a network of contacts, in recording notes in the field and in collecting information supplied by interviewees.

Table 2.1: Statistics of respondents[2]

	Participants	1st round of fieldwork	2nd round of fieldwork	Total	%
1	N. Delta Indigenes	0	10	10	25
2	Ex-militants	0	2	2	5
3	MNOCs Reps.	4	2	6	15
4	Government Officials	6	1	7	17.5

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[2] Appendix1 gives the details of the fieldwork plan and various interviewees and participants.

5	Academics	4	4		8	20
6	Civil Society	1	6		7	17.5
	Total number				**40**	**100**

<div align="right">Source: Fieldwork, 2014-2016.</div>

2.3.4   The Semi-Structure Interview

Also known as in-depth interview, the semi-structure interview is a collective and interactive technique of communication which is used as the main data gathering tool in this study. I have used semi-structured questions during my in-depth interviews. Semi-structured interviewing includes questions that facilitate dialogue and debate and allows the interviewer to explore specific subjects or responses further. It allows interviewees to go beyond specified responses. Questions from semi-structured interview are used to appreciate how inputs work and how they could be improved. It is a technique whereby participants and respondents can feel free to discuss with the researcher and to voice issues that might not be taken into account in the researcher's agenda during the planning stage of the fieldwork (Neuman 2003). The process is also a useful and appropriate tool for gathering data in various stages. In the context of this thesis, in-depth semi-structure interviews were elaborated around three different themes namely; conflict analysis, conflict resolution and management, as well as community involvement. After that, I coded each respondent based on the reference number given to each interview.

To assess the preliminary stage of my interview, I structured open questions set in three different themes. They were concisely phrased in order to avoid the effect of prearranged proofs which could have some impacts on the interviews. Rather, semi-structured questions were asked in a way harmonious with the situation in order to elicit further information. All respondents were asked the same questions, but according to their knowledge regarding the theme.[3] For example, I always started interviewing respondents using open questions which offered them the opportunity to express their opinion about their understanding of the immediate causes of the conflicts. Once a respondent answers this question, further correlated questions were asked including: what is your opinion about the ongoing amnesty programme

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[3] See annex 2 for the open questions used in the fieldwork.

in the Niger Delta? What do you think is the main reason why militants are participating in the programme? In your opinion, to what extent do you think issues surrounding the conflicts have been adequately addressed? What does peace in the Niger Delta mean to you? What roles do you think the MNOCs have in achieving sustainable peace in the region? The in-depth interviews with some oil-community's members were principally used to collect data and cross-verify the responses gathered from the MNOCs' and government's officials.

Interviews were undertaken in English and sometimes in the local dialect, later translated into English. The English version is provided when citing. In a few cases, terms in the indigenous language were used to highlight the original meaning, though their translation into English was given. Once I felt that no further information was transpiring from the conversation, I would then end the interview.

2.3.5 Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)

Focus group discussion is another tool that this research used for data collection. It is different from the in-depth interview which includes a private and individual conversation. Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2008:375) define a focus group discussion as a "collective conversation." Liamputtong (2011) suggests that focus group method is often mistaken for a group interview or a focus group interview. In reality, explain Fontana and Frey (2000), it is more formal than the group interviews. However, Morgan (1997) argues that the formality criteria might be a problematic concept for it is not often likely to differentiate formal from informal interaction in focus group discussions. Indeed, this difficulty or confusion could emerge from within the preference of the researcher and the background of a focus group discussion.

When a FGD sides with in-depth interview, a quandary as for the pre-eminence of preference, in terms of which of both needs to be used first, emerges. However, for myself, I drew on Morgan's (1997:22-23) model; my fieldwork started with in-depth interviews. They were of much help in increasing information, learning and understanding the process of the study phenomena, of which in turn I have had more insights, e.g. selecting population cluster, environment, venue and time for the FGD. I conducted three focus group discussions during the two rounds of the fieldwork (see the list of FGD in Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Details of FGDs

FGD No.	Date	Number of		Location	Comments
		Male	Female		
1	2014	4	2	Abuja	Discussion facilitated by a member of the civil society.
2	2015	5	3	Ibadan	Discussion facilitated by a member of the civil society.
3	2016	4	6	Lagos	Discussion facilitated by a member of the civil society.

Source: Fieldwork, 2014-2016

Gender debates regarding FGD participants are still topical (Morgan 1997; Liamputtong 2011). In my research, I have drawn from Morgan's (1997) model in selecting homogenous groups of participants, as I supported his opinion that homogeneity may assure open and flowing discussions amongst participants. Additionally, lessons learned from in-depth interviews suggest that respondents from the Niger Delta indigenes and independent associations were more open and even available to communicate with me than others, particularly those from MNOCs and government.

Below is detailed the way the FGDs were conducted:

- In terms of the time: one and a half hours were allocated to each FGD.

- In terms of organisation: there was an agreement between the local facilitator and the researcher: the former was organising the FGDs whilst the latter conducting discussions.

- In terms of procedure: each FGD started with a succinct induction to inform participants and clarify the objectives of the discussion and the expectations placed on them.

- In terms of communication: English was used as the discussion language during the FGDs.

It is noteworthy that more than three respondents have been able to link me with other participants who have been of much help in terms of supplying information. This process, also known as the snowballing technique, consisted of one participant linking the researcher to another potential respondent, whereby the latter in turn connects the researcher to a third or more

participants (Gimba 2014). The snowballing approach in the context of my research also aimed to exploit the social system of the individuals who were able to offer me a good number of knowledgeable participants for my fieldwork (Vogt 1999; Faugier and Sargeant 1997; Thomson 1997). Here it is important to emphasise the fact that the case under study falls under qualitative research and is of a subjective nature. Thus, the use of the snowballing technique particularly through interviews is justifiable (Hendricks et al. 1992). On the other hand, due to security problems existing within the region of the Niger Delta, I was compelled to limit my fieldwork within secured areas. As a result, I could not be in the Niger Delta in order to have direct conversations with the Niger Deltans. The snowballing technique in this context functioned as a formal method of reaching a cluster of people who would not have been easy to meet using other sampling methods (Snijders 1992; Faugier and Sergeant 1997); in particular, the identification of the Niger Delta indigenes in the areas that I was safely able to access.

On my first fieldwork trip I went to the Ministry of Petroleum and the Ministry of Environment in Abuja. These Ministries have allegedly been working on new policies regarding conflict management and environmental clean-up in the Niger Delta. It was during those visits that I met four key government agency officials. There was the opportunity to have interviews with them, after which they connected me with other environmental experts of Shell and ExxonMobil who helped me to conduct remote interviews with some oil company-based environmental engineers in the Niger Delta region. Following my interviews with them, they were able to give me referrals for further insights regarding the topic being studied with their colleagues in London. Similarly, there were visits to academic experts in Ibadan. Finally, I went to a research institute based in the University of Lagos. Here I carried out focus group discussions with officials, researchers and specialists. Owing to the conflicting and political orientation of the topic under study, referrals made by links through the snowballing technique assisted me in developing trust with different individuals selected to participate in the research. I could get hold of more research participants most of whom were not known to me.

2.3.6 Secondary Data

The use of secondary sources of data in qualitative research is usual in social science research (Neuman 2003). In this thesis, I have used secondary sources to substantiate and support the analysis and arguments. The findings gleaned from secondary sources mainly encompassed published and unpublished documents, technical reports and agreements from the government and various United Nations (UN) agencies. In addition, reports and news coverage in a range of newspapers and news magazines published in Abuja have been used. These secondary sources of information were employed as 'aged review' or 'grey literature'

at the thesis writing time so as to supplement information from the field. Such data are referenced to as, or incorporated in, footnotes, where applicable.

2.3.7 Data Analysis

This research and its data analysis techniques fall within the constructivist approach (Charmaz 2000; 2006). The analysis of findings involves an epistemological approach based on two aspects: Firstly, the interpretation and understanding of the significance of the participants' knowledge regarding the subject under study and, secondly, the contextualisation of the subject, in terms of its conflicting and political orientation, particular time, environment, place and culture (Ghezeljeh and Emami 2009). In the constructivist approach, data analysis goes along with data collection (Ezzy 2002) in an integrated way. The integrated research method enables the researcher to have a desirable number of regular exchanges with participants (Gimba 2014), useful as a guidance when the researcher develops the theoretical framework from emerging theoretical implication (Charmaz 2000; Ezzy 2002; Gimba 2014). Figure 2.3 below shows the change from a traditional disconnected approach, in which data collection and analysis are separate processes, to that of an integrated approach in which data collection and analysis are interrelated.

Figure 2.1: Relationship between data analysis and data collection.

Some materials have been removed due to 3rd party copyright. The unabridged version can be viewed in Lancester Library - Coventry University.

Source: Ezzy (2002:62).

In the constructivist method, data coding remains the entry-point toward analysis. According to Charmaz (2006), coding is a bipartite constituent composed of open coding and focused coding. Open coding is a word-naming process that helps the researcher to think of the meaning which might be related to the data (Charmaz 2000). Focused coding, however, is the

identification and categorisation of more recurrent concepts from the data by the researcher (Charmaz 2006). Selective focused coding assists the researcher in choosing themes that are the groundwork of the analysis and theory which arises directly from the analysis of the data (Gimba 2014: 55-56).

During my research fieldwork, I concurrently collected and analysed data after the coding process. First, the results categorising the respondents were clustered into themes or subjects: Theme A (conflict analysis), Theme B (conflict resolution and management) and Theme C (community involvement). After that, I coded each respondent based on the reference number given to each interview. For example, different interviews undertaken under different themes were coded as TA1, TA4, TA6 and TA8. The same applied to interviews under Themes B and C.

The record of data was carefully kept for each theme. Interview résumés, comments and copies were reviewed closely on a regular basis to identify key ideas. The choice of 'open codes' during interviews remained the prime point of analysis. This technique applied equally to all responses to different open questions from interviews and focus group discussions. After the selection of open codes, the most repeated ones arising out of interviews were the subject of comparison and contrast. These codes are called focus codes in the constructivist approach (Charmaz 2006), which I call 'concepts' in this study. Concepts are wider samples drawn from the open codes that have produced some large subjects considered as 'themes' in this research. Chapters in line with analysis in this thesis are grounded on the concepts or themes that fit together. Since themes are constituents of results and the analytical basis of this thesis, chapters in connection with analysis are presented in a way that explains different interlaced main themes and concepts.

2.4   Ethical Consideration

Ethical authorisation for this study was approved by the Research Ethic Committee at Coventry University after the processing of proposed research.[4] For anonymity and ethical reasons, as set out in the research ethical approval, and based on most of the participant's wishes, respondents and some of their direct quotations have been kept anonymous. However, a pseudonym was provided where it happened to be necessary. Each respondent

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[4] See annex 3 for the approval of ethical process by Coventry University.

was given a briefing sheet[5] before each interview and before obtaining an interviewee's consent.[6] Moreover, I explained the rationale of the research to each respondent and participant and what I expected from them. I also told them that it would be possible for them to cancel an interview for any reason at any time they desired to. At the conclusion of an interview, I gave each interviewee an opportunity to ask questions about me and my research, or to request for any explanation of any worry or issue which could transpire. I have guaranteed that all participants were adults of over 18 years of age and that any kind of discrimination was rigorously avoided.

2.5   Personal Reflection on the Fieldwork

My research is parastatal-funded under the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources. Several years before my doctoral reading, I worked for a state's oil company for a few years where I have some networks. During my fieldwork I have used these networks to access potential participants that I needed for my research. It should be noted at this stage that initially these potential participants were reluctant, as they were not convinced about the educational purposes of my research. I needed to provide academic documents, such as ethic approval, in order for them to accept any conversation with me. Before answering questions, some interviewees even admitted to Googling my centre and myself, just to be certain. I would say that the oil company representatives were more professional, but were obviously not too eager to respond honestly to my interview questions. During my conversations with them, they always had politically correct answers with a very defensive undertone. Maybe this was because they were tired of the bias and blame they received from the media, the International Community, Niger Delta Communities and Nigerians at large. Most oil company representatives and government agency officials in the field approached interviews as an attack. I was able to change my strategy, putting their mind at ease and engaging in conversation about policy and current events. My fieldwork concomitantly coincided with the outbreak of the Ebola virus, while at the same time Boko Haram insurgency was at its peak. These two events made me cautious with the respondents who often showed themselves to be reserved in responding to some questions.

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[5] See annex 4 for the interview briefing sheet used in the fieldwork for this study.
[6] See annex 5 for participants' consent.

Niger Delta indigenes were the most difficult to interview from my experience in the field. These respondents reminded me of what it meant to be a young female from the north of the country. It was through their eyes that I realised Nigeria has serious cultural and religious issues. They bear a lot of resentment towards the Muslim north and still hold a grudge against the political power blocs that had been created by the colonial administration. Niger Delta and Igbo ethnic groups believe the British favoured the Northern, predominantly Muslim, part of Nigeria. The three dominant ethnic groups in this area are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa/Fulani; these groups regard the colonialists' favouritism as the root of their political and economic marginalisation. Most times I felt like a prey; they saw me as entitled and took a lot of convincing, but they were adamant that being a female Hausa/Fulani Muslim Northerner, as they call us, I would never understand the struggle and challenges they faced.

Niger Delta indigenes are tough and very pessimistic, so I understand why there is a high risk for a researcher to travel to the Niger Delta State. Niger Delta oil resource conflict is a sensitive issue, so not all questions will be perceived well by Niger Delta indigenes. Being from another tribe, or white oyinbo, as they call white people, is not an advantage. They are angry and guarded. They also see themselves as different to every other Nigerian citizen because they believe that anything to do with oil belongs to them. They were suspicious that I wanted to interview to take advantage and capitalise on them as is their usual experience. However, indigenes agreed with my research objective to tackle the problem: they understood the need for accurate information sharing, so it was on that basis that they gave their inputs.

Travelling in Abuja was easy although I did face challenges contacting lecturers to arrange appointments in Lagos and Ibadan due to busy schedules. My interviews with the academics were most insightful: the lecturers were involved with peace and conflict studies programmes. They gave me tips and a lot of relevant materials. They felt encouraged by the prospect of dialogue; something which convinced me that my research could help as a tool for conflict resolution in the Niger Delta. Focus group discussions and observation with civil society organisations were entertaining as well as useful, and overall very informative. It was a learning experience for me. The youth groups were inspiring: they believe in their activism and their mission and are hopeful that one day their voices will be heard by the Federal-State's Government and Multinational oil companies. Civil Society also believed that their continued activism highlights the responsibilities of the multinational oil companies, the State and Federal Governments. Their campaign lists the demands of the people for self-

determination, social justice, environmental protection and the end to senseless killings by the government's joint task force. They raise awareness of the abject poverty in the Niger Delta communities, the polluted environment and lack of development in the region that is earning Nigeria billions of dollars in oil revenue.

I did face personal setbacks in the field: adjusting to the weather conditions (it was very hot in the field); lack of electricity and poor Internet service. There were also difficulties in movement due to security challenges in the capital because of the Boko Haram insurgency. Ironically, another minor challenge to my study of the Niger Delta was the relative peace achieved through the amnesty programme, which meant that respondents were instead more concerned about the Boko Haram Insurgency and the Ebola epidemic. Overall, the account of my fieldwork experience shows that holding interviews with women was easier because they were more encouraging and eager to answer questions. Women were impressed by my study and were excited at the prospect of contributing any information that could potentially help with conflict resolution in the Niger Delta. I did not experience any trust issues with them: most women wanted to wander off from the topic and talk about the importance of girls' education; maybe I served as a reminder to them of a cause dear to their heart. Ultimately the female participants provided useful information and answered questions willingly and efficiently.

Chapter Three: The Curse of Oil for Hydrocarbons-Rich and -Producing Countries

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature in reference with the subject being researched, namely the analysis of causes, impacts and resolution strategies for conflicts in the Niger Delta, and addresses the research questions pertaining to the background and other causes of the conflict. It casts some light on the relevance of resource curse theory and its implications including; rentier state, social movements, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and conflict management etc., in order to examine and provide guidance in addressing the main research question of this study.

Resource curse hypothesis, also referred to as 'paradox of plenty' or 'adverse effect of abundance',[7] mainly claims that natural resources abundance in general encourages civil war for they offer motive and opportunity for conflict and create and enable indirect institutional and economic causes of instability. Going hand-in-hand with resource curse theory, the rentier state theory, however, suggests that mineral-dependent regimes rely on resources revenue, through the use of patronage, significant distributive policies and real violence, to buy off peace. Politically, it is arguable that such rentier states tend to be more stable and less exposed to conflict. Both theories thus imply ambivalent effects of resource abundance on conflict flare-up; something which would need further insight in order to understand the role of resources in the development of resource-rich and resource-dependent states. This chapter sets down part of a solution to this noticeable problem in the case of oil-/mineral-dependent countries. The main argument here is that in order to establish the link between mineral/oil and long-lasting conflict in resource-dependent states, there would be the need for factoring into both resource wealth per capita and degree of resource dependence, since only the availability of very high per capita revenues from oil and/or minerals allows governments to achieve internal stability. The substantiation of this argument is done through the review of the appropriate literature on mineral-based state development, elaborated in the following sections; resource curse and rentier state, reality of mineral-based development, role and

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[7] These concepts will be interchangeably used throughout the thesis.

engagement of corporations in oil development, and conflict prevention, conflict resolution and conflict management.

3.2   Resource Curse and Rentier State

Rentier state theory and the paradox of plenty thesis are the two main theoretical approaches that hinge around resource abundance (Mähler 2010) and might be seen as belonging to the same paradigm, since they both posit that the state-building process and the development of its institutions during the time of resource abundance are locked into development trajectories. This is a process which always yields negative development endings, including poor economic performance, growth failures, a great degree of corruption, ineffectual governance and higher political unpredictability (Poteete 2009). The following sections will shed light on the resource curse and rentier state theories for an appropriate understanding of mineral-led conflicts as they occur in the Niger Delta.

3.2.1   Resource Curse Theory

Countries with fewer or no resources have both opportunities and challenges: economic, political and social. When resource wealth is efficiently used, these resources may be a source of greater prosperity for present and forthcoming generations. However, when poorly managed, they may be a triggering factor of economic uncertainty, social conflict and lasting environmental damage. The resource curse theory alludes to the failure of resource-rich countries to use their wealth to fully benefit the development of their country and that of their people, (Burgis 2015) due to the failure of their institutions to effectively live up to public welfare needs. The resource curse as a concept refers to the significant social, economic and political challenges that are particular to minerals-rich countries. While it could be argued that after a country discovers natural resource wealth, better development outcome is expected, resource-rich countries however tend to have a great number of conflicts and authoritarian institutions, and high rates of economic instability and economic development, compared to non-resource-rich countries (Williams 2016). Drawing on political and economy theories about why some resource-rich countries do not do as well as expected, political scientists and economists put forward that mineral wealth, particularly hydrocarbons, is different from other types of wealth due to its large rents, scale price, production volatility, its non-renewable nature and the secrecy of the industry (Beblawi and Luciani 2016). On the grounds of resource curse theory, it might be held that many of mineral-rich countries are still struggling, or have failed to use their wealth to reach their full potential. In general, these

countries also appear to be more authoritarian, more disposed to conflict and economically instability compared to those without these resources (Williams 2016). While mineral-rich countries generally face unique challenges linked to oil, mining and gas extraction, governments might produce policy decisions that could help address the negative consequences of extraction, hence maximising the benefits. However, how could the special characteristics of natural resources revenues create additional challenges for countries? The following prominent observations and theories attempt to shed light on this question.

Political scientists in general have been of the view that when government expenditure is dependent on citizen taxation, they have to be more receptive to their populations and are more likely to transition to democracy. On the contrary, however, when large revenues of the country stem from natural resources, such as rents from oil (as explained later), they tend to be less reliant on levying taxes on citizens, thus the people feel less invested in the national budget. As a direct result, asserts Williams (2016), politicians and government officials are also less directly concerned with citizens' requests or demands. In addition, when resource revenues are undisclosed, citizens lack a clear sense of the resource revenues management and whether they are being rationally spent or not. Those who support this view (Downey, Bonds and Clark 2010; Okunola and Ikuomola 2012; Green and Otto 2014) hold that transparency and accountability of revenues builds up trust between government and citizens. Through these processes, citizens are directly involved in planning or the direct distribution of wealth; one way which could help to mitigate the tendency toward authoritarianism.

As regards to conflict, some studies (Picton-Turbervill 2014; Beblawi and Luciani 2016; Williams 2016) have proved that natural resources could trigger internal conflicts as different armed groups tend to fight for control of the resources, or use natural resources to fund their fighting. Since 1990, suggestions from political scientists (Alao 2007; Chidi 2010, Williams 2016) advise that oil-rich countries in Africa have been twice as likely as expected to have a civil war compared to non-oil-producing countries. Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Libya and Nigeria are examples which illustrate this tendency (Picton-Turbervill 2014; Williams 2016). In the Persian Gulf however, petro-aggression, the tendency of oil-producing states to instigate or be targets of international conflict, has been identified in some cases, such as Iraq's invasion of Iran and Kuwait (Picton-Turbervill 2014:102). But there is still an ongoing debate as to whether the data support the conclusion that resource-rich countries are exposed to conflict at a greater rate than non-resource-rich countries.

Inefficient expenditure and borrowing are one of the prevailing characteristics of resource-rich countries. A few researchers in the field have been of the consensus that the amount of resource revenues collected by mineral-rich governments could fluctuate greatly from year to year owing to changes in commodities prices and production (Downey, Bonds and Clark 2010; Okunola and Ikuomola 2012; Green and Otto 2014). In essence, these scholars are of the view that in resource-rich countries, a governments' tendency is to overspend on things such as government salaries, inefficient fuel subsidies and large monuments, while health, education and other social services are allocated meagre budget. In effect, spending fluctuations and unpredictable revenues are problematic. One of the endemic concerns in most of mineral-rich countries is that during boom-bust cycles governments often get trapped as they tend to spend on legacy projects, including airports and monuments, when revenues are increasing and then have to make painful cuts or impose austerity when revenues drop (Picton-Turbervill 2014). This lack of discipline in public finance often goes together with over-debt. That is to say that when governments have enhanced credit-worthiness at the time of revenue growth, they often over-borrow. This type of management ends in debt crises when revenues decline, as was the case in Mexico, Nigeria and Venezuela in the 1980s. The private sector can equally be affected, as it might over-invest in boom times and then face widespread bankruptcy during busts (Schubert 2006; Okunola and Ikuomola 2012).

A large increase in natural resource revenues could have a negative impact on other sectors of the economy by triggering inflation or exchange rate appreciation and changing labour and capital from the non-resource sector to the resource sector (Beblawi and Luciani 2016). Dutch disease offers a perfect illustration of this stance. In the same vein of thinking, some (Schubert 2006; Downey, Bonds and Clark 2010; Okunola and Ikuomola 2012) have held that while inflation and exchange rate appreciation could deteriorate large swathes of the economy within a few years, their impacts can last for decades. This argument concurs with the documentation of the disadvantageous effect of natural resources on other economic sectors and/or industries as occurred in Iran, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela, all of which have either underdeveloped manufacturing sectors or have experienced a rapid deterioration in manufacturing (Bonds and Clark 2010). However, these impacts could be reduced, provided that the country develops the absorptive capacity to transform resource revenue inflows into palpable investments, namely roads and electricity. To this end, the government would need to spend resource revenues investing in the economy that yields growth for the non-resource sector; or to invest a share of its resource revenues in foreign assets (Picton-Turbervill 2014; Beblawi and Luciani 2016; Williams 2016). Chile, Indonesia,

Norway and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have successfully overcome Dutch disease over the last 25 years by investing oil revenues in the parts of the economy that produce non-resource sector growth.

Mineral-rich countries tend to experience patriarchy and gender-based challenges. The political economy of resource curse as developed by Beblawi and Luciani (2016) and Williams (2016) suggests that mineral-endowed countries tend to have a very limited number of women in the workforce and their representation in the government is also smaller. The impact of natural resource wealth on women is disproportionate compared to men. One reason could be that industries such as export-oriented manufacturing, that usually offer work opportunities to women, are less likely to thrive in resource-rich countries due to Dutch disease (Beblawi and Luciani 2016). Furthermore, a few studies (Beblawi and Luciani 2016; Williams 2016) have established that in resource-rich regions women are highly prone to HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases. It has also been shown that the large inflow of male individuals to communities surrounding mining zones significantly increases the rates of gender-based violence. This tendency is particularly frightening as a continual set of studies note that gender reform is crucial to long-term poverty reduction (CORDAID 2014). As a panacea to this, researchers advise countries to initiate policies that protect manufacturing so as to avoid Dutch disease. Also, the development plans of governments surrounding resource-rich areas would need to incorporate gender perspectives (Beblawi and Luciani 2016).

In most mineral and hydrocarbon-producing countries, governments have a limited capacity to amass resource benefits. In some cases, just a little portion of the production value of the resource remains in the country (Alao 2007). One reason is that the existence of several fiscal regimes and the rules regarding the share of profits between companies and governments always fails to recompense the state and communities for exhausting their wealth and the related environmental destruction or loss of livelihood (Johnston 1994; Gordon, Paterson and Usenmez 2011). These unorthodox and bad arrangements may often occur when countries are so keen to promote resource extraction that they reduce the rates for taxes and royalties with little knowledge of the real worth of their resources. Mazeel's (2010) work suggest that countries such as Argentina, Canada, the United States and South Africa have less than 50 per cent of the average effective tax rate (AETR) on many oil projects, while Cameroon, DRC, Peru and the Philippines have 40 per cent of the AETR on many mining projects. In comparison, Angola, Libya, Norway and Timor-Leste have more than 70 per cent of the

AETR on many oil projects. Furthermore, in capital-intensive (but not labour-intensive) extractive industries, few non-tax benefits, such as jobs, go to local people. Even though mineral-producing countries could often have very high prospects for employment, inland business development and enhancement of workforce skills (also referred to as local content), the real number of opportunities might remain few. One explanation of this is that the industry has a very small employment rate relative to the scope of investments and those jobs seem to be tremendously specialised, while the appropriate equipment required to implement them is commonly imported from abroad, (Picton-Turbervill 2014).

Beblawi and Luciani (2016) put forward that in mineral-producing countries, leaders are unlikely to invest in industrious enterprises, such as job-creating manufacturing industries. Instead they fight for control of resources. Furthermore, this elites' rent-seeking pursuit always results in weaker institutional development. It might be argued that the high weakness of institutions in resource-rich countries is the result of the ease with which elites can access large sums of money for themselves (Williams 2016). Those who support this theory further submit that large single-point sources of revenue, like an oil project, can be managed outside the required budget practice, hence making it relatively easy to be seized by potent elites. Sovereign wealth funds, national oil companies and contractors for extractive operations are often used as examples of tools utilised to capture revenues. In a few circumstances, politicians or state officials have also been using what is termed 'rent-seizing' which consists of purposefully dismantling societal checks or developing new regulations to access these resources or to provide access for friends or family (Green and Otto 2014, Burgis 2015). The main argument in this theory is that the pursuit of rent-seeking and rent-seizing by elites in mineral-rich countries encourages corruption and is harmful to institutional development. Those countries whose elite are rent-seekers and rent-seizers end up having weaker institutions and lower levels of public service delivery. The data supporting this theory are hotly debated, even though Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Tunisia offer well-documented examples as evidence (Burgis 2015).

Sharing and compensating for resources such as land, water and minerals could be source of conflict between the extraction companies and the communities. Social and environmental problems arise when the extractive industries attempt to balance their needs against those of the community and the protection of the environment. Kadafa (2012) advises that the point-source nature of extractive industries frequently goes together with conflicts when attempting to balance people's needs with those of the mining environment. Kadafa's statement concurs

withDowney, Bonds and Clark's (2010) view that extraction projects often entice great arrivals of people, whether or not supplementary employment is really available. Failure to reconcile both needs could be a source of grievance as mining minerals always involves disturbance on economic, social and cultural relations (Downey, Bonds and Clark 2010; Kadafa 2012). It is also worth underlining that many of the political and economic problems described above result in the violation of human rights. On this point, the contract between the government and the extraction company could set out these issues and elucidate who would be accountable for managing these impacts. This is where the greediness of those in power and the grievance of local community, as developed further, collide and would often end in open conflict.

3.2.2 Rentier State Theory: Oil Rents

Political and international relations scientists define a rentier state as a state which draws its revenues from the rent of local resources to external clients (Omeje 2006:11; Basedau and Lay 2009). Rents are usually defined as revenue received from exported natural resources (Beblawi 1990:85). The theoretical basis of the rentier state model draws its source from Hussein Madhavy's work (Madhavy 1970). The rentier state concept was formulated in the study of the patterns and economic problems associated with oil-producing states in the Middle East, particularly in Iran and the Gulf Monarchies. Subsequently, the theory was used to study the source of institutional instability within resource-rich countries in Africa and South America (Basedau and Lay 2009; Beblawi and Lucianai 2016). Rents are believed to be exterior to the economy because they are not derived from internal productive structures but are externally derived, courtesy of global capital. Drawing from this view, a rentier state could be defined as a state that depends highly on taxes and royalties paid by multinational companies (MNCs) and on profits from its equity interests in MNCs' investments (Forrest 1993:142; Karl 1997). In the World Bank classification of a mineral economy, rentier economy or rentier state is alluded to as a country in which mineral production contributes to at least 10 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while its exports represent at least 40 per cent of total exports (Nankani 1979). Most African resource-rich countries, including Nigeria, could be classified as a rentier state as their economies largely derive from the mining, oil and gas sectors which constitutes 80% of its revenue (GDP) and 90% of its export earnings (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011).

The main point that rentier theory holds is that the rents generated by rentier states are inevitably controlled by the governing elites who mainly redistribute the rents to their benefit

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rather than the welfare of the society in general. The state elites lack incentives to develop sets of reciprocal obligations with citizens through the nexus of domestic taxation by depending on 'unearned' income (in the form of mineral rents). Consequently, the state is free to distribute the rent the way it deems fit especially in a manner that will buy off peace and stability. While dependence on rents thus may destroy institutional value, development and democracy, rents also afford ruling elites with enormous resources, hence compensating for the indirect effects on stability (Beblawi 1987; Luciani 1987:7; Karl 1997: 21-22). The following mechanisms have been pointed out as the possible means through which the ruling elites distribute rent in a rentier state.

Firstly, the state could spend the rents in acquiring a repressive security apparatus to keep any form of rebellion at bay. Collier and Hoeffler (2004: 567) have explained the fact that resource abundant states such as Saudi Arabia have been able to avoid conflict by using oil resources to keep every potential upheaval at bay. Secondly, rentier state elites might decide to distribute the rent in a proactive way to buy off democratisation pressures. This could be in the form of engaging in extensive distributive or 'populist' policies (Le Billon 2001: 565), which involves free basic services (healthcare and education), distributing subsidies and large public sector employment. Thirdly, state elites could decide to create clientist networks whereby a selective and small group of leaders benefit from the rent distribution. In this case, rent is distributed among a trivial part of the population which includes potential political rivals. This is equally a strategy used to maintain political stability (Le Billon 2003; Basedau and Lay 2009). Alliances could be formed with external support, especially in the case of major oil producing countries, to help deter any form of rebellion. Major powers might help to ensure political stability in order to secure their supply of energy or other vital commodities (Humphreys 2005:533).

A state's elites could use any of the mechanisms mentioned above as long as the state does not have further tax or the domestic economy for revenue (Luciani 1990). The case being studied shows that Nigeria's ruling elites use heavy security apparatus and clientist network mechanisms as a means to achieve stability. Clientist networks emphasise the link between the rentier state and neopatrimonialism. Meanwhile, neopatrimonialism provides the apparatus to distribute and manage resource wealth among the ruling elites to sustain the regime.

All regimes involve leaders and a small cartel of important elites who negotiate with others to build extensive elite networks that will support the regime, strengthen customary forms of

privilege, and build new elites as circumstances dictate. However, the particular style adopted in the rentier state is one in which the head of state is at the centre of all, requiring absolute submission from its subordinate elite (Beblawi and Luciani 2016). These subordinate elites further create their own patron-client networks down the neopatrimonial system, extending into organisations and social components which serve as a conduit for resources and political control to these components, in return for political and other information as requested by the higher elite.

There is a blurred distinction between public and private domains which results in inefficiency of institutions as well as uncertainty and irregularity about the behaviour and role of both institutions and agents (Basedau and Lay 2009; Erdmann and Engel 2006), something which hinders institutional quality and growth (Karl 1997: 21-22). Nevertheless, rentier state elites adopt expenditure policy rather than a well-articulated economy diversification policy (Luciani 1990), something which often results in prevalent economic inefficiency. The two fundamental effects of dependence on economic rents include economic inefficiency and, as a consequence, the impediment of socioeconomic development (Beck 2007: 46). Undeniably, this is inevitable since the rents are spent in building a network (a bloated public sector) that will sustain the elite's political power rather than pursuing economic development agendas. Basedau and Lay (2009) support Beck's stance and add that resource wealth is connected to poor economic growth, inadequate economic diversification, susceptibility to external shock and other economic problems such as Dutch disease effect.

Applied to the case being studied, one might argue that the proportion of the annual budget that goes into recurrent expenditure in order to patronise the state clients and to maintain law and order in their interest indicates that there is, to some extent, a link between oil abundance and authoritarianism, and therefore the appropriateness of the rentier theory to understanding the crux of conflict in the Niger Delta. Whilst the application of the rentier theory appears valid to the case, it however fails to provide an explanation for the instability experienced in this region. Furthermore, data from contemporary studies depict that resource-rich countries such as Botswana, Chile and Norway, to name but a few, experience economy prosperity and the existence of democracy (Brunnschweiler and Bulte 2006; Hegre and Sambanis 2006; Di John 2007; Basedau and Lay 2009). Thus, there is a need for an additional theoretical separation of the debate, as suggested by some scholars. To them, the impact of certain conditions is responsible for the presence or absence of prosperity and stability in resource abundant countries (Boschini, Peterson and Jesper 2004; Snyder and Bhavnani 2005). Therefore, it could be put forward that understanding the historical and social context of a

rentier state would be imperative in explaining the link between resource and violence. Di John (2007) and Rosser (2006), for example, hold that understanding rentier state involves taking into account external, social and historical forces at play. In my opinion, however, I might argue that the view that rentier state leads to political stability, as developed earlier, remains debatable as the resource management model applied by each country differs from one to another, depending on whether one is an authoritarian state or a democratic one. Thus, despite the criticisms in the thesis, it remains undoubtedly useful in explaining the conflict and behaviour of the state elites, particularly in some African oil, gas and mineral-producing countries.

Conversely, rent-seeking authoritarian rule and political instability are recorded as principal characteristics of resource curse, for resource revenues in these types of countries are destined for increased expenditures rather than for investments, undermining positive development outcomes (Karl 1999; Sachs and Stiglitz 2007; Torvik 2009; Bridge and Le Billon 2013). It behoves each state to use its discretionary power to allocate its resources. This is also relevant to a state's power vested into its leaders. This power, however, has often been a tool of individual interests' acquisition in mineral-endowed countries (Bridge and Le Billon 2013). Compared to non-mineral-endowed economies, Bridge and Le Billon (2013) believe that oil economies are set to be exposed to a higher level of rent-seeking and corruption. This stance was contested by William (2016) due to its limitation in explaining why mineral abundance would not be central to the development of manufacturing, while countries such as Botswana, Angola and Nigeria have been pointed out as some good examples regarding the long run variation and change in growth of mineral economies. On the other hand, Bridge and Le Billion were criticised for not explaining economic growth in non-mineral economies countries, such as China, Malawi, Tanzania, or the recent growth accelerations in aid-dependent economies, such as Uganda, Mozambique, Tanzania and Ghana. Furthermore, corruption is a general issue and would not only be pointed out in mineral-abundant economies, for even in non-mineral-abundant economies with a liberal policy, corruption matters more than the levels of rents (Di John 2010). Overall, the adverse effects of resource abundance and its corollary, rent-seeking theory, are weak and limited due to their lack of comparative or historical evidence. Moreover, the extent to which resource-rich countries manage their resource outcomes, i.e. 'resource-based development', will largely depend on the nature of the state, politics, authorities and the structure of ownership in the export sector (Basedau and Lay 2009; William 2016). Therefore, since some countries were able to effectively manage their rent productively, applying resource curse and rent-

seeking theories to all resource-rich countries would be analytically limited and weak, partly because not all resource-bearing countries have the same socio-political realities and experience. Furthermore, these countries, particularly those of Africa, are still shaped by colonial legacies, where the state's authorities are more predatory rather than state accountants.

Broadly, discussion on rentier state and conflict tells us that in most of resource-rich countries resources present a horrendous absurdity. Resource is source of enormous wealth and means of patronage to the rentier state and multinationals. However, to the local resource-bearing communities resource remains a source of anxiety and misery. A resource management model put in place by the state prohibits indigenous communities from asserting or holding any consequential stakes in their wealth. Many a time the state uses policies that privilege authorities and business partners, leaving the local oil-bearing communities with no rights to their resource, hence, they turn to violent protest.

3.3   Importance of Resource Governance: Reality of Mineral-based Development

Natural resource governance is a major source of conflict. Transforming resource curse into blessing would require reflecting on the efficiency, transparency and accountability of authorities in the management of resources for the public good. Most of developing countries, particularly resource-reliant ones, access to, and use of natural resource often result in significant governance issues. In many countries, natural resources have been nationalised, but of paramount importance to the livelihoods of resource-bearing communities. Laws, rules and regulations that apply to their governance and use are often restrictive, incomplete, vague or discriminatory (Alao 2007). This is where confusion and even conflict, abuse of power and discrimination happen to emerge. Stakeholders such as indigenes and peasant communities, small farmers and other people often have fewer opportunities to partake of decision-making processes related to the governance and use of the natural resources on which they depend. It is believed that it is of prime importance to define and improve such governance issues in order to ensure equitable and fair distribution and use of natural resources, as most of the communities that directly rely on natural resources are often the poorest in the region. Hence, improving management of resource is an important factor in securing livelihoods and encouraging sustainable natural resource use and preservation (Alao 2007; Williams 2016).

Sustainable natural resource use as a result of a new resource management paradigm makes innovative demands on governance arrangements, whose design would require normative

guidance. However, even though governance principles have been developed for various situations, their accessibility for sustainable natural resource governance is very limited. In response, a set of governance principles for natural resource governance, that has general applicability and significance at local, subnational, and national scales, has been suggested (Alao 2007). These principles could serve as a guide for the design of governance institutions that are legitimate, transparent, accountable, inclusive, and fair and that also show functional and structural integration, capability, and adaptability. Together, they can also be used as a platform for developing governance monitoring and evaluation instruments, crucial for both self-assessment and external audit purposes for sustainable governance of natural resource (Williams 2016).

Kaggwa (2014) advised that the system of the governance of natural resource is expected to be fair and equitable in the exercise of the authority conferred onto the authorities in charge of its management, principally in reference with the share of power, the treatment of participants, recognition of varied values, respect of existing and forthcoming generations, and the improvement of mechanisms to share costs, benefits and responsibilities of decision-making and action. The principle of competency refers to the acknowledgement of new problem and challenges which usually require attention to the appropriateness of available institutional, organizational and human resources. In this context, key resources would comprise leadership, access to knowledge, organisational systems, and sufficient financial and human resources. Figure 3.1 below depicts Slunge and ÖlundWingqvist's natural resource governance chart which encapsulates various actors indispensable for the efficiency of a good management of natural resources.

Figure 3.1   Good natural resource governance involves multiple actors.

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Source: Slunge and ÖlundWingqvist 2011

In that in oil-bearing nations, the existing resource managerial model, as translated through oil contracts, plays a significant role in determining economic development. This section discusses the real impacts of the development of resource governance, looking at share of revenue and burden as relevant initiatives towards understanding and addressing these impacts.

3.3.1   Share of Benefits

Revenue-sharing and decentralisation

In oil-rich countries, intended or unintended socio-economic benefits arise from the oil business. For instance, individual or collective compensation payments for the loss of land have been viewed both as benefits and measures to substitute what was lost. Revenue-sharing and decentralisation in oil-dependent states are determined and set by the assessment team responsible for guaranteeing local members' interests following oil exploitation agreements. The assessment team is often assigned the role of ascertaining potential benefits and

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determining positive side effects of the oil business (Zimmer 2009; CORDAID 2014). As for employment opportunities for local community's members, it is of note that oil companies offer indigenes only very limited access to employment. One reason could be that as a highly capital-intensive industry, the multinational oil corporations are not interested in many domestic employees. Their trained staffs are expats or highly skilled people coming from outside the countries. Those few community members employed by oil companies are mostly on short-term work contracts (CORDAID 2014). However, this issue could find a sustainable solution if the country has embarked on a revenues decentralisation process which gives heed to local development.

Mineral revenues decentralisation in oil-dependent states could be approached through three ways, namely: tax levying (on the resource industry), direct transfer collection (from a central defined share of revenue) and indirect transfers (from the national budget where preferential treatment for producing regions is given). However, the degree of decentralisation of these three approaches varies, depending on certain criteria such as population, equity, needs and the national interest (Mazeel 2010; Gordon, Paterson and Usenmez 2011; Ticton-Turbervill 2014). In the more decentralised approaches, collection of tax from the mineral industry is done directly by local governments, while the collection of transfers from defined shares of the central government's resource revenues are done on the basis of a set formula (Ticton-Turbervill 2014). However, these two decentralised approaches have limitations; firstly, when sudden changes of price occur in the international market, domestic economy, which is extremely dependent on its resource base, may barely be insulated from the affects. Secondly, in the case of post-conflict settings where institutions are weak, local institutions are often even weaker and would run the potential risk associated with unstable resource revenues (Williams 2016). In this context, local governments may not be able to implement countercyclical fiscal policies; neither could it be fit to balance the budget which enables income and expenditures to balance over time (Mazeel 2010).

In a decentralised system, to competently absorb the new investments made possible by resource revenues, local governments have a greatly inferior capacity than do national institutions. This happens because they do not really have the managerial capacity to enforce taxes and are less capable to run complex types of taxation, or to tax large foreign firms (Paterson and Usenmez 2011). Some scholars, such as Mazeel (2010), Gordon, Paterson and Usenmez (2011) and Ticton-Turbervill (2014), are of the view that when local governments enact their own taxes or royalties, they may provoke inadequacies by intersecting with

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national taxes. However, indirect transfers from the central government, which is the least decentralised approach, offer some advantages. Firstly, the duty of dealing with the transfers could be delegated to a particular department which had its capacity built up to handle this specific assignment. Secondly, local governments are not compelled to be involved in budgeting, to manage spending, or create or reinforce local taxation capability. Thirdly, tax payments would be constant and able to resist vacillations in commodity prices (the payment for instance, could be set as a fixed annual fee that is adjusted for inflation). Fourthly, in post-conflict environments particularly, transfers could be exchanged with schools or other infrastructure projects, thus serving as peace payments.

However, a case can be made for the two most decentralised approaches to revenue distribution, mainly in the post-conflict situation. Local governments have the rights to access revenues that would provide compensation for the social, environmental and infrastructure costs associated with extraction. In some cases, they could even access compensation for damage caused by conflicts over resources (Mazeel 2010; Gordon, Paterson and Usenmez 2011; Ticton-Turbervill 2014). Besides, centralised distribution speaks for the issues of self-determination and resource control that pertains to the inhabitants of some regions, as is the case in the Niger Delta (Alao 2007). In the short term, the more decentralised approaches could politically be advantageous in helping to sustain a peace agreement, as occurred in Sudan (Beblawi and Luciani 2016). No matter what type of decentralisation method is put in place, it is vital to ensure that the agreed-upon sums are in fact transferred and that the beneficiary local government is liable for their use. In mineral-bearing nations, whereby much of the development relies on resource revenue, corruption, as referred to later, is a means of enrichment for the people in office. In light of the review above, one could infer that revenue-sharing and decentralisation would depend on the capacity of a state to delegate its authority to decentralised entities. The more that local entities are vested with power to be involved in local governance and development, the more a strong state and bottom-up state's development would emerge; something which would favour a fair revenue-sharing. All stakeholders thus have a significant role to play, particularly in making the revenue distribution successful in the areas of transparency and trust building.

Corruption

In resource curse literature, corrupt behaviour refers to the use of state office by legitimate authorities to satiate own interests to the detriment of the public interest associated with the sharing of resource rents (Karl 2004). Believed to be the result of bad institutions, corruption may harm a resource-rich country's efforts to improve its economic performance. Al-Kasim

et al. (2013), for example, contend that poor oil management could negatively affect the provision of healthcare in oil-producing countries. As a result, corruption between authorities and petroleum companies is set to be a substantial stumbling-block to optimise hydrocarbon production. Seen under this lens, corruption could take different forms including, bribery and cash or payments in kind by oil multinationals to state authorities to protect access to the national resources.

The involvement of a state in the production of oil in oil-producing countries via national oil companies might be an influential factor for increased corruption amid officials associated with the hydrocarbon or mining sector. Arezki and Bruckner (2011), at this point, advise that the ownership arrangement of oil companies has a pivotal role to play in the incidence of corruption in the mining and resources sector. Additionally, rent-seeking or rentier states are offered larger power over resource thriving, and consequently oil rents directly happening to the state budget could lend more opportunities for corrupt state leaders associated with petroleum production due to bad institutional practices and a dearth of transparency. Subsequently, rentier states' efforts to decrease political rights in order to encourage their individual profits are the most likely reasons for violence and civil war (Ross 2001).

Equally, Angola and Venezuela case studies, as developed by Hammond (2011), suggest that high political control over oil industries and state participation in hydrocarbon production have stimulated corruption. Nigeria is another often-quoted case of a corrupt country related to oil revenues (Osoba 1996; Watts 2004). General corruption in Nigeria has culminated in ineffectiveness in terms of national investment and low-quality projects, both of which are believed to negatively impact on economic development; something which would call for transparency and accountability.

Transparency and accountability

A dearth of good institutional structures within mineral-rich or mineral-producing countries has been pointed out as the main root-cause of resource curse. On the contrary, (mineral)-producing-friendly institutions could be a panacea to the rise of the resource curse and encourage wealth creation within resource-rich countries (Mehlum et al. 2006). These producing-friendly institutions would need transparency and accountability, a useful back-up which might offer considerable opportunities to raise productive activities that would stimulate long-term economic development. One stance from Kolstad and Wiig (2008) suggests that transparency is the principal factor in stopping the negative effects of the resource curse. Enhancement of institutional quality through transparency, disclosing

resource revenue information and that of its public spending may decrease corruption and patronage. Kolstad and Wiig are of the view that the rise of various international initiatives could make extractive countries improve the quality of their institutions, thus encouraging transparency. Good institutions could boost human resource development, which is central to economic growth. This concurs with Butkiewicz and Yanikkaya's (2010) view that producing-friendly institutions could heighten human resource capacity in resource-rich nations.

Transparency and accountability application could produce an increase in public trust, something much needed for conflict resolution in resource-producing and -exporting countries. Herringshaw (2004), for instance, puts forward that the poor economic performance of resource-rich states could be the result of a lack of transparency and accountability in resource revenue management. The governments of various African resource-rich countries, for example, are unable to handle resource income efficiently in order to improve the wellbeing of their people, primarily because of poor institutional quality. In such situations, social contention is highly likely.

3.3.2   Share of Burden

Environmental degradation and Loss of livelihoods

Oil production has a twofold result; revenue production and environmental changes. In terms of eco-system degradation, as far as this section is concerned, the production of hydrocarbon always results in the destruction of large zones of the eco-system. The eco-system has always been the key source of livelihood to the indigenous people. Ndubuisi and Asia (2007), for instance, suggest that at the occurrence of oil spills or gas flaring, toxic substances from the oil are released over a wide zone of the environment damaging both land and marine resources. Kadafa (2012) agrees with Ndubuisi and Asia (2007) adding that in certain circumstances, some spills or flaring would result in fresh water contamination, a change of ecological system, loss of forest and farming land, obliteration of fishing surroundings and decline of fish species that are the main survival source for resource-bearing communities. This would often compel local communities to completely leave the contaminated lands. A community's migration often then leads to the loss of archaeological monuments and ancestral heritages. Environment degradation and its impacts on the population generally cause massive immeasurable fatalities to a local community's members and would create new risks of diseases to people (Ukoli 2005). Oil-led activities contribute to the growth and

development of the oil-bearing countries. Tolulope (2004) and CAB (2009), for instance, tell that all over time, oil has always been a source of great benefit for oil-producing states and their peoples as a whole. However, the environmental pollution resulting from oil production has massive negative effects on the eco-system, fishing and agricultural activities. It is of note that without proper clean-up and remediation of the affected environment, oil pollution and its effects would last longer in the environment. Kadafa (2012),for example, warns that following remediation, the eco-system takes up to 15 years to recover. However, geological factors of the affected zone, the type and quantity of oil spilled, as well as the type of clean-up method will also have a major role to play in determining the recovery period (Ndubuisi and Asia 2007). Anifowose (2008) concurs and adds that the occurrence of oil spillage in Ogoniland before the early 1990s was not remediated. There have been other recent ones that have turned the region into a wasteland and have serious effects on the environment and the people, causing social movements in the communities.

Social Movements

Social movements are large, sometimes informal, clusters of peoples or associations that convey, resist, or undo a social change. They are continually and continuously believed to be closely associated with democratic political systems. Some (Freeman and Johnson 1999; ILO 2009; Yashar 2005), for instance, argue that social movements do not have a clear definition, but are in between a political party or interest group and a mass fad or trend. Being mainly characterised by their involvement in conflicting relations with clearly identified opponents, suggestions from De la Porta and Diani (2006: 20) tell that social movements are connected by solid informal networks and share a distinct collective identity. Considered as structured yet informal social entities (Westra 2008; Fischer 2009), social movements play an important role in extra-institutional conflict that is oriented towards a goal, such as explicit and narrow policy or cultural change.

Some of the initial works on social movements were focused on understanding collective action of people and determining necessary conditions to incite social movements (Macionis 2001; Gilbert 2007). These works hinged on mass society theory, in which the emphasis was on the growing industrialisation of society. However, they were blamed for raising a sense of alienation among peoples as ancestral social organisations and support networks were disregarded (Colechester 2010; Orbach 2011). Social movements as specific social processes with specific patterns, as studied today, broke forth from this perspective and gradually evolved through four stages, known as social movements' lifecycles, including social

ferment, popular excitement, formalisation and institutionalisation (De la Porta and Diani 2006:150). Nowadays, these stages have been refined and renamed as emergence, coalescence, bureaucratisation and decline (Rice 2012); yet they still keep themes relatively the same. However, although the concept 'decline' could sound negative, it does not translate with a negative meaning, rather marking the end of the objective assigned to the movements. To this point, the social movements decline stage could result from several reasons including success, organisational failure, co-optation, repression, or establishment within mainstream society (Laplante and Nolin 2014; Acuña 2015).

The confrontation between multinationals and social movements in resource-bearing societies has largely been shaped by the globalisation of capital. Saurin (1996: 42), for example, argues that international firms are the heart of a 'global system of material amassing which concurrently accumulates fortune and energy in certain locales'. The emergence of local militancy within resource-bearing communities is generally triggered by indigenes' frustration at being deprived of their resource control and ownership (Rice 2012). Additionally, many internal policies propounded by the governments and multinationals that gave rise to dehumanisation, associated with outside factors like the globalisation of the international structure, also play a strong role in creating social movements (Laplante and Nolin 2014). The interchange between the internal and external factors therefore sets down a strong nexus between local NGOs, social movements and international NGOs, and enables the environment for the internationalisation of conflict (Laplante and Nolin 2014; Acuña 2015). Therefore, local militancy takes shape and becomes locally grounded.

It is important to note that in some oil-endowed communities, particularly in Africa, multinationals are making profits from the oil exploitation, yet the environment is ruined as a result of oil production without any remediation and clean-up plan (Acuña 2015). There is a lack of basic infrastructure, while resource owners are constantly repressed by both oil companies and the authorities (Rice 2012). Within these states, contends Giddens (1990: 18), the state legislation referring to resources does not confer control of the land to the people; the land and all the resources laying under it have been co-opted into the globalised capitalist economy. The transformation of this grievance into a mass social movement may find expression in the presentation of the Bill of Rights to the state authorities who need to be clear with the multinationals on their role and engagement for oil-communities' development.

3.4   Role and Engagement of Corporations in Oil Development

In reflecting on the role and engagement of corporations in oil development, it is arguable that social performance analysis of major infrastructure and projects initiated by oil companies in local communities has crossed traditional boundaries of ethical funds and socially responsible investors (Dobrynskaya and Turkisch 2010). Tabata (2012), for instance, suggests that mainstream investors and companies which advise on fiscal services to oil companies are having more consideration to the social performance of companies anywhere that they run their activities not only for ethical reasons, but also because they are of the view that environmental and social performance can influence a project's delivery on time and on budget, overall operational success and long term financial sustainability (Ereibi 2011). The Equator Principles and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standards set main provisions for (financed) project compliance such as applying impact assessments and building appropriate impact management systems. They also comprise specific guidelines for company-stakeholder interaction (Abdullah Auzer 2017). As local well-established clusters, NGOs could be of help for companies in terms of understanding local communities' problems, something which would help them in identifying developmental sectors that they could prioritise when working with the community.

In most oil-producing countries, NGOs and civil societies give ample feedback to companies as the latter attempt to improve and fine-tune the environmental and social aspects of their projects. However, sometimes the feedback from NGOs and civil societies differs considerably in quality, from timely and valuable, to deplorably ignorant and lacking in suitable comprehension (King, Deng and Metz 2012). Abdullah Auzer (2017), however, is of the contrary view that sometimes the degree to which NGOs present communities or local stakeholders as being affected by suggested project activities is exaggerated. Nevertheless, well-expressed oil companies-NGO collaboration quite often begins during recognised public discussion activities, and sets a starting-point transparency tool for company and civil society. When NGOs and civil society approach the discussion in a productive way, they may influence decisions affecting the environment and society (Aghalino 2009). In oil communities, NGOs and civil society could also play a crucial role in helping community members to understand the location of project activities, and whether those activities would positively or negatively impact on their lives (Abdullah Auzer 2017). However, this important and useful interaction between NGOs-civil society and oil companies could place

the latter in challenging positions, mostly when it is to do with corporate influence, revenue and transparency (Eno-Abasi 2011).

As mentioned above, NGOs and civil society have an important role to play in helping communities and company representatives understand each other's plans, interests, concerns, expectations and priorities (King Deng and Metz 2012). This understanding is vital to oil-sponsored community development programmes. Abdullah Auzer (2017) argues that in oil-communities, effective delivery of development projects regularly rests on both exceptional engineering and project management, and the social licence to operate granted by host communities. A social licence to operate deeply relies on the degree to which companies cope with their impacts, handle their obligations and contribute to the development of the community (Aghalino 2009; Eno-Abasi 2011). Indigenes often have substantial expectations as regards to company-sponsored community initiatives, whose management may fall beyond the expertise and/or resources of oil and gas project staff. This is where NGOs and civil society are most needed to play important roles in helping development projects initiated by the Oil Companies in order to meet community development goals. In doing so, they become implementing partners and may contract directly with companies to deliver development projects. They may also play an advisory role; assisting both companies and community groups in the understanding of how to best use the Oil Company's resources and skills in service of sustainable community development (Reider and Haastrup 2013). They could also advocate with local government and business community members to become part of the Oil Company's community project initiatives and help construct development economies of scale. NGOs and civil societies could even enable dialogue between company and community about the roles that business can and cannot take on, helping to manage expectations (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011), playing the role of partner to community and company.

Numerous examples can depict how NGOs, civil society and oil companies have graduated from hostile interactions to models approaching partnership. Here are several examples: 1) NGOs and civil society taking on crucial financial and human rights consultations with land owners in a major pipeline project (Reider and Haastrup 2013). 2) NGOs lending their expertise to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) development efforts specifically tuned to oil and gas supply chain requirements (Eno-Abasi 2011). 3) Cultural heritage partnerships being formed between oil company projects and NGOs to enable companies to more efficiently implement their projects without causing harm to archaeological or cultural

artefacts (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011). 4) Microfinance projects subsidised by oil companies but fulfilled by NGOs and civil society, which have provided useful elements in investment exit strategies (Reider and Haastrup 2013). 5) Environmental NGOs assisting in impact management planning and implementation in host communities, and community NGOs helping to deliver information about safety and environment on behalf of, and alongside, oil companies.

Without any doubt NGO-civil society and oil company relationships have always been contentious, but the tension of balancing interests can be fruitful to those who understand and manage it well. The confrontational watch-dog role favoured by many NGO representatives and community members has a significant place in public discourse. Multinational Oil Companies have begun to understand how to assess and make use of the valuable inputs that a few NGOs deliver to their projects. There are growing opportunities for NGOs and civil society to act as local partners, able to have real input and meaningful influence as major oil company projects in local communities fail and prove non-productive.

3.5   Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Conflict Management

Conflict is a disagreement which transpires from thoughts, process, attitudes, understanding, interests, requirements and even perceptions. Conflict could erupt among individuals, countries, political parties and states. It would often result in loss of peace and harmony, and if not settled at the appropriate moment and in the appropriate way, would lead to a large war or rifts among antagonists leading to major unrest and disharmony (Ackermann 2003; Carment and Schnabel 2003). This research examines and utilises the concept 'conflict resolution', but would also endeavour to define conflict prevention and conflict management to draw the line between these different concepts which are often misused and misunderstood.

Conflict prevention does not have a single definition. This concept alludes to different things according to different people. During the Cold War, for instance, preventive actions were regarded by a few practitioners and academics as identical to pre-emptive strikes (Berkovitch 1991). After the Cold War preventive measures have received a new meaning and the focus has switched to the peaceful prevention of disputes (Boutros-Ghali 1992:11; Wallensteen 2002). Conflict prevention involves direct prevention and structural prevention. Carment and Schnabel (2003) indicate that direct conflict prevention aims to avert short-term, often imminent, escalation of a potential conflict. Structural prevention, however, deals with more

long-term measures that speak for the fundamental root-causes of a potential conflict along with possibly rising and triggering factors (Rupesinghe 1998; Ackermann 2003). Carment and Schnabel (2003) argue that conflict prevention is a medium and long-term pre-emptive operational or structural strategy used by actors to identify and create positive conditions for a stable and more predictable international security setting. It primarily entails diplomatic or non-constraining measures. In a more all-encompassing definition of the concept, prevention refers to any structural or intercessory which could relieve intrastate or interstate tension and disputes from rising into substantial violence and use of armed forces, to reinforce the abilities of potential parties to violent conflict to settle disputes peacefully, and to progressively lessen the fundamental problems that create these issues and disagreements (Lund 2002; Carment and Schnabel 2003). This definition covers any measures that avoid violent conflicts and reinforce the ability of concerned actors to act organisationally to decrease the likelihood of violent conflict.

Conflict management however provides the restriction, alleviation and/or containment of a conflict without necessarily solving it. It involves a change in the mode of interaction from destructive to constructive. It means eradicating violent and violence-related actions and leaving the conflict to be dealt with on the political level (Wallensteen and Möller 2003; Lund 1996). This definition has been somewhat criticised following the emergence of NGOs, academic institutions and others as important actors which now influence the conflict management process. The process of conflict management is the foundation for more effective conflict resolution. A difference between conflict management and conflict resolution is, however, needed as a starting point as the concepts often are confused or integrated in an inappropriate manner.

Conflict resolution refers to the resolution of the fundamental incompatibilities in a conflict and shared acceptance of each party's existence (Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999:99), while conflict management refers to measures that limit, alleviate and/or encompass a conflict without necessary solving it (Wallensteen 1998). Conflict resolution can be both formal and informal and can either aim at settling or ending conflicts in an open and foreseeable process in line with legal principles (Michael Lund 1996), or focus on efforts to increase cooperation among the parties to a conflict and develop their relationship by addressing the conditions that led to the dispute (Deadly 1997), fostering positive attitudes and allaying distrust through reconciliation initiatives, and constructing or reinforcing the institutions and processes through which the parties interact (Reychler 1994). Conflict

management and conflict prevention have, in a similar way, been argued to be different sides of the same coin. Conflict management is required in order to permit the initiation of preventive measures aiming at settling the dispute. There is a slight difference in theory although both concepts are involved in the practical implementation process (Deadly 1997: xvii). Preventive measures are intended to resolve, contain and manage conflicts in order to prevent the eruption of violent conflicts (Wallensteen 1998). This makes conflict management an important part of conflict prevention. It is important to underline that conflict management can be applied at all levels of a conflict spiral and that it is broadly used in crisis management and war situations.

3.6   Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the reviews on the resource curse of oil for hydrocarbons-rich and hydrocarbon-producing countries. It contended that in order to establish the link between mineral/oil wealth and long-lasting conflict in resource-dependent states, there is a need to factor in both resource wealth per capita and resource dependence, since only the availability of very high per capita revenues from oil and/or minerals allows governments to achieve internal stability. The chapter has mainly browsed through the literature on the challenges that oil-dependent states face in their development process; particularly it focused on resource curse theory and its implications; rentier state thesis and other adverse effects of resource abundance as developed in various studies, as well as some concepts relating to the prevention, resolution and management of conflict.

Broadly, the literature has established that the resource curse theory with all its corollaries is a controversial subject (Di John 2009; Basedau and Lay 2009; Williams 2016), since the socio-economic performance in resource-bearing countries, particularly the oil sector, strongly depends on the existing resource managerial model and the administrative design already in place. In light of the literature, it has been established that when resources are poorly managed by corrupt officials, state resource revenue is shared among the minority in power (or a cluster of elites) at the detriment of the majority of the people. Conversely, when authorities use an effective model of management, resources and/or the oil sector become the vector of national economy development, whereby resource revenue is effectively channelled to, and shared among, the people, with the national economy being supported (Heller and Marcel 2012; Lahn et al. 2009; Thurber et al. 2010a, b; 2011; Luong and Weinthal 2006). The curse or blessing of oil for hydrocarbons-rich and -producing countries in this context

would be a result of whether the model of governance for resources is effective or not, which in turn would influence the efficacy of the management of resources and revenues.

As alluded to in the preceding chapter, this thesis explores conflicts in the Niger Delta region and analyses their causes, impacts and their resolution strategies for sustainable and successful peacebuilding. It addresses the question related to the background and other causes of the conflict. The review of literature on resource curse, rentier state, social movements, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and conflict management in this context, would not only contribute, as secondary data, to understand various meanings of these different concepts used in this research, but mostly would serve as a roadmap which would help with analysing primary data collected from the fieldwork. Thus, chapter's main contribution to this thesis is to appraise various scholarly opinions pertaining to the subject being studied and to identify research gap in the existing literature in order for it to be addressed further in this study. It also helps usher the subject of study into its historical settings for a better understanding of the research settings.

Chapter Four: The Niger Delta Conflicts

4.1   Introduction

The Niger Delta region abounds with large mangrove forests and is the source of Nigeria's oil wealth. It is also known as the cradle of the operational bases of a kaleidoscope of ethnic militia and insurgent organisations devoted to the socio-economic freedom of the Deltan indigenes. These operational bases of a series of ethnic militia and insurgent organisations have turned this into a region of anarchy and chaos: a hot bed of violence, insurgency, kidnapping, hostage-taking, oil pipeline sabotage, crude oil theft, gang wars and internecine struggle. This instability has become so rooted in the region that it has become a *modus vivendi* which has supplanted the traditional mechanism of conflict-solving and managing, simply because of the negligence of the rights of aborigines over their resources and lands. Thus, this chapter provides detailed context for the research, specifically on the history of the conflicts in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta. It engages with the evolution of the current conflicts in the region from the perspectives of the Nigerian State and Nigerian Nation, with a more particular regard to the relationship between the Niger Deltans and the oil resources. In doing so, the chapter identifies and analyses the links existing between ethnic groups, land and resources, and conflicts; a major challenge, which, if not dealt with in a fair way, would persist for longer and threaten any attempts to sustainable peace in this region. Hence, the argument developed in this chapter is that conflict in the Niger Delta might still be agreeably managed and resolved, if the modern legal system governing the federal state and federated states worked in harmony with the indigenes' customary rights. The chapter finally responds to the first sub-question regarding the background and other causes of the conflict in the region of the Niger Delta.

Oil-conflict in the Niger Delta region is complex and is related to both national politics and communal conflicts. The corollaries of the latter are complex and their implications on ethnic groups in the oil-bearing communities of the country have been of negative impacts. Alao (2007:195-198), for example, identified 16 multi-layered nature of conflict in the Niger Delta namely; among different oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta, between the federal government and oil-producing communities, between the federal government and the state

government, between the state government and oil-producing communities within the state, between oil multinational companies and oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta, between federal government and oil companies, between youths from the Niger Delta and youths from other parts of the country working with oil companies in Niger Delta, among ideologically opposed groups within the same ethnic group of the oil-producing communities, between youths and the traditional rulers, between militant youths and older leaders of the Niger Delta struggle, between local employees and their foreign counterparts, between state governments and oil multinational corporations, between militia groups in the Niger Delta and other Niger Delta indigenes working for Shell and other oil multinational companies, among different oil multinational companies, between foreign MNC and indigenous companies going into oil exploration and between militant youths and elected politicians of the Niger Delta origin. However, for the purpose of this research, these multi-layered natures of conflict in the Niger Delta have been analysed under historical and ethnological perspectives, looking at four different stages of the development of Nigerian nation, as presented in the following four main sections; the early history of Nigeria, the colonial history of Nigeria, the current Nigeria and the Niger Delta state.

4.2   Early History of Nigeria

Conflict in the Niger Delta is partially linked to the Nigerian nation- and state-building. This would portend that in order to understand the root-causes of conflicts in this region and come up with appropriate resolutions and management approaches, it would be important to trace back and know the socio-historical processes that have led to the building of the current Nigeria. In order words, Nigerian nation-and state-building has an impact on the current conflicts thriving in the region of the Niger Delta. This section hence endeavours to throw some light on the developmental process of Nigerian nation and state for a better understanding of the genesis of conflict in the Niger Delta.

The current Nigeria is what was home to diverse autonomous nation states and communities independent of one another prior to colonial rule. At that time, this geographical space was composed of kingdoms such as Opobo, Bonny, Sokoto Caliphate, Brass, Calabar, Lagos and Oyo. A few ethnic groups including Fulanis, Hausas, Yorubas, Itsekiris, Urhobos, Igbos, Ijaws and Idomas to name a few, were considered to be the inhabitants of the land, but were not recognised as aborigines or Nigerians (Sagay 2008). Research by Usman (1979) tells that the Hausa-Fulanis population, in the North, could be historically linked to the Uthman Dan

Fodio's Fulani-Jihadist movement in the 19th century. The Fulanis were predominantly nomadic herdsmen who, due to their incessant travelling, came across Islam before the Hausas. The Uthman Dan Fodio 'Holy War' islamised the region and led to the conquest of the Hausas by the Fulanis. As documented by Onwubiko (1982), beside the religiousness of the war, there was a racial undertone to it. Ayoob (1996) reported that over 1,500 leaders of Fulani communities rallied round to support Uthman to conquer Hausa states such as Kano, Gobir, Katsina and Zaria between 1805 and 1809. Thus, through the Holy War, a caliphate state, called Sokoto caliphate, was established comprising of over 20 emirates.

In the western part of Nigeria, the Yoruba land and Oyo grew from a small town located at the northern part of the current Oyo state to an empire. By the mid-18th century, the empire territory was bordered by Benin in the East, Togo in the west, Nupe in the North and to the swampy south (Onwubiko 1982). Yoruba land and Oyo rose to be West Africa's biggest forest state with well-designed political institutions. Similarly, in the mid-west, the Benin Kingdom, the current Edo state, rose from a small town to a vast empire hosting several tribes. By the 17th century, at the peak of its influence, the Benin Kingdom stretched from Idah in the North to the Coast in the South and from Lagos in the west to the Niger river (Fearon and Laitin 1996; Bercovitch 1997; Falola and Heaton 2008).

In the Hinterlands of the eastern part of Nigeria is the Igbo tribe. It is argued that the tribe has occupied this region since the 9th century A.D. Onwubiko's (1972) account of the Igbo says that the region was the most densely populated in West Africa, with a particular tribal political organisation. Unlike other existing kingdoms with centralised political structures, the Igbos maintained small villages as republics where every adult had a say in governance. The political organisation embodied their environmental settings, livelihood, family life and culture, and performed well in coordinating the social life and order of the Igbo tribe (Falola and Heaton 2008). However, in the Niger Delta area, there were well structured states where the people were autonomously ruled (Bercovitch 1997). The Niger Delta states sprung from the increasing trade in slaves and palm oil with the Europeans in the 19th century. The emergence of city-states in the Niger Delta was predominantly as a result of migrants from the Hinterlands who came to the coastal lands to benefit from the trade with the Europeans (Onwubiko 1982; Oloruntimilehin and Ayoade 2002). They had city-states such as duke and creek towns presently known as Akwa-Ibom state (occupied by the Efiks), Bonny town in the present day Rivers state (occupied by the Ibeno), Buguma and Bakana towns in the current Rivers state (occupied by the Ijaws), Brass and Nembe towns in the current Bayelsa state

(occupied by the Kalabaris and Ikwerres) and Sapele and Warri towns in present day Delta state (occupied by the Itsekiris and Urhobos) (Oloruntimilehin and Ayoade 2002).

4.3   Colonial Rule and the Creation of Nigeria

In 1885, a conference was held in Berlin where the control over independent African states was shared among the European powers. Empowered by the Berlin conference treaty, the British invaded and conquered the independent states of the modern Nigeria. Subsequently, after the conquest, the British faced certain challenges which included limited administrative personnel coupled with insufficient financial resources, difficulties with the existing political institutions in the territories and obtaining legitimate recognition of their authority from the native people (Onwubiko 1982; Oloruntimilehin and Ayoade 2002). Due to all these challenges, the British colonial power decided to implement what was referred to as the 'indirect rule system'; a system, they believed, which would allow them to manage and overcome these challenges (Oloruntimilehin and Ayoade 2002; Falola and Heaton 2008; Sagay 2008). On the contrary, this system permitted the traditional authorities to rule under the control of the British officials (Sagay 2008). The indirect rule system was adopted initially in the Northern part of Nigeria during the early 1900's which was successful due to the existing centralised caliphate in this region. The Fulani emirs were used to administer the emirates and also to supervise the collection of taxes on behalf of the Europeans (Falola and Heaton 2008). However, the adoption of the system in the west was not as successful as in the north. Coalman (1958), for example, revealed that the indirect rule system could not succeed in the west due to the fact that the British imposed the supremacy of the Alaafin of Oyo, whose power over the Yoruba land at that time had waned. Hence, the autonomous Obas agitated and rejected such authority. The British mistakenly believed that the political structure was as autocratic as the Emirs of the North, whilst at the same time in the East, the indirect rule system failed woefully (Falola and Heaton 2008).

As discussed in the previous section, the eastern part of Nigeria was characterised by highly fragmented autonomous family units that are egalitarian in nature. Regardless of this ethno-political particularity, the British nonetheless created chiefs by warrant to preside over the Igbo society which eventually became unpopular and tyrannical (Mba 1982). The creation of these chiefs provoked what was called the famous Aba women's riots of 1929 against the collection of taxes by the chiefs (Mba 1982; Van Allen 1971). Theoretically, the indirect rule system was meant to preserve the native political institutions, but the materiality and nature

of the institutions were significantly distorted (Mba 1982;Sagay 2008), as the British primary motive was to promote their economic agenda by manipulating the local communities and their institutions to their advantage (Falola and Heaton 2008). As the result of indirect administrative system, a class of wage workers was created, a precursor to the present day civil servant, to administer their economic interest. Ultimately, new middle-class elites sprung up which were empowered by the British who at that time were frustrated by the political dominance of the local chiefs-colonialist alliance (Sagay 2008).

Some scholars, including Oloruntimilehin and Ayoade (2002), Falola and Heaton (2008) and Sagay (2008), offered that the initial series of social and political changes started specifically in 1849 by John Beecroft who was appointed as a British consul in Nigeria. It draws from their views that Beecroft formulated policies that gradually subsumed the territory into what is now called Nigeria. Falola and Heaton (2008) and Sagay (2008), for instance, assert that in 1813, Benue and Lokoja were both included in the Niger Coast protectorate. They went further saying that the Oil Rivers Protectorate was established in 1815, whilst Lagos colony was formed in 1861 with the southern part of the present Ilorin joining the colony in 1896. In 1897, added Sagay (2008), Benin came under the Niger Coast Protectorate. This protectorate merged with the protectorate of Lagos in 1906 to eventually become the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, he concluded. Finally, in 1914, the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Northern Protectorate were amalgamated to form the Nigeria protectorate under the governorship of Lord Lugard (Oloruntimilehin and Ayoade 2002; Falola and Heaton 2008; Sagay 2008).

4.4   Modern Nigeria

Following a cursory socio-historical, even political, review of the process of Nigerian nation- and state-building, it is worth understanding the pre-colonial and colonial legacy to the current conflicts in the country. Bordered by four countries as elaborated in Chapter One, Nigeria is a vast country with a land mass covering an area of which arable land constitutes 37.33% and forest and woodland 12%. Its resource potential in African and world affairs is internationally acknowledged, considering the vast resource endowment of both human and natural capital that lies within it. Nigeria is known as the most populous country in Africa with over 170 million people spread over the continent and the rest of the world; "one out of every two West Africans, one out of every four Africans and one out of every five persons of African origin is Nigerian", claims Kuku (2012). Its heterogeneous population is made up of

more than 250 ethnic groups, however just some tribes such as the Ibo, Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani emerge as the major ethnic groups in the country. As alluded to in Chapter One, the country is enormously rich in natural resources, mainly petroleum – reservoirs of which cover the Niger Delta underground, but also in other resources such as manganese, titanium, coal, fluorite, Iron ore, gold, diamond and tin. However, the country has only been able to fully harness oil and gas resources and has neglected the exploitation of other ores (Evoh 2009). Lapin and Rossiasco's (2011) research suggests that Nigeria is currently ranked as the sixth largest oil producer in the world. The country earns over 90% of its export revenue and 80% of its total revenue from crude oil, recording over USD 400 Billion as revenue from oil resource between 1956 and 2010 (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011). However, despite the country's natural resource wealth and human capital, the country has failed to utilise the resources to eradicate poverty, establish a strong economy or ensure stability in the state. Seemingly, Nigeria still struggles to achieve sustainable peace in the Niger Delta region of the country which has been embroiled in crises for a long period of time.

4.5   Niger Delta Region

As developed in the previous sections of this chapter, the ethnography and history of the aborigines in different parts of what is currently known as Nigeria is worth noting, as it would help to understand the existing links between resources, conflict, land and the people. In the context being explored, it must be underlined that conflict in the Niger Delta is caused by the exploitation of oil. However, even though this declaration is true, it would be more than accurate to also highlight that the bedrock of the conflict lies in the lack of respect for indigenes' resource rights. This justifies why this chapter continually refers to the different nations that constitute the current Nigeria.

The Niger Delta region is located in the south-south zone of Nigeria, which centres on the natural delta of the Niger River and lies "within the Ibo plateau and the cross river valley" (Willinks Commission Report 1957:9). The geographic coordinates are; latitude 3°N and 6°N, and longitude 5°E and 8°E which covers approximately 70,000 kilometres (Ndubuisi and Asia 2007:18). The Niger Delta comprises a waterlogged labyrinth of complex marshland, creeks, tributaries and lagoons that drain the Niger River into the Atlantic at the Bight of Biafra (Ibeanu 2000). It is the leading wetland in Africa and the second largest in the world (Nseabasi 2005:165). The region's ecology is greatly diverse in nature and serves as a habitat for several species of land-dwelling and marine flora and fauna. Due to its delicate

environment, it is vulnerable to adverse environmental change. Politically, the Niger Delta is a panoply of geographically attached regions spanning across nine states in southern Nigeria, namely: Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross rivers, Edo, Delta, Rivers, Imo, Abia and Ondo, but the core oil producing states are Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, in the south-south geopolitical zone of the country. It also includes 185 Local Government Areas (L.G.A.s) divided into more than 2,000 communities (Tamuno 2000; Chinweze and Abiola-Oloke 2009). Furthermore, the Niger Delta has quite a number of distinct minority ethnic groups which includes the Ijaws, Urhobo, Itshekiri, Efik, Ibibio, Ogoni, Ilaje, Kalabari, Ikwere, Isokos and Ndokwas. The region has a population of over 40 million people; 62% of which are below 30 years of age, representing over one fifth of the national total (NPC 2006). This region has one of the highest population densities in the world, with 265 people per square kilometre (Nyananyo 2007; Balouga 2009). Considering the terrain, it is difficult to navigate and establish large settlements. The local people of the region live in small, scattered hamlets of 50 to 500 persons, some maintaining links with larger towns such as Port Harcourt and Warri (Nyananyo 2007; Balouga 2009; Lapin and Rossiasco 2011). They depend solely on the environment for their means of livelihood because farming and fishing is their predominant occupation. However, beside its ecological uniqueness and ethnic diversity, it is rich in natural resources. The Niger Delta is Nigeria's richest region; it yields the crude oil which makes Nigeria the largest petroleum producer in Africa and the sixth in the world. Besides oil and gas resources, the region has the potential to produce other mineral resources and cash crops, but only crude oil has been fully exploited. The region holds an estimated reserve of 30 bbl of oil and 180 tcf of gas, generating 80% of revenue and supplies 95% of Nigeria's export earnings (Fidelis Allen 2014). Clearly, the oil and gas rents from the region are the main sources of revenue in Nigeria.

4.4.1 History of Niger Delta Crises

The struggle for relevance in the Niger Delta dates back to the pre-colonial period. This region has always been exploited of its resources with little or no compensation for it. History has a profound effect on the Niger Deltans perception of themselves and also their peculiarities. These peculiarities include a long term external exposure, originally derived from trade; active, fragmented and competitive authority and a hostile sense of independence towards any attempt at domination by outsiders (Nyananyo 2007; Balouga 2009; Lapin and Rossiasco 2011). The Niger Delta has been exposed to traders from the west long before the British colonial era. Alao (2005) traces back this contact with the external world from slave

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export and subsequently, after the abolishment of the slave trade, it went on during the period when palm oil became the next commodity for export. The people of the region have demonstrated a sense of hostility towards external domination. Among these cases could be listed the Jaja of Opobo's clash with the British; leading to his eventual exile in 1886, King Koko of Nembe's famous Akassa raid on the depot of the Royal Niger Company in 1895 and the crisis between Nana Olomu, the then Itsekiri Governor of Benin River, and the British in 1895 (Balouga 2009). Alao (2005), for example, contends that the colonial ruler virtually controlled all the resources of the colonised people. As a reaction to that, the Niger Delta people contested the control of their resources by those they saw as imperialists, as they accused them for not taking into account their need for basic infrastructural amenities. The British elimination of the Niger Delta people as middlemen in commercial trades diminished their relevance in Nigeria's economy. Also, the cash crops emanating from other regions of the country, such as groundnuts in the north and cocoa from the west, further lessened the economic relevance of Niger Delta (Nyananyo 2007).

The amalgamation of 1914 divided Niger Delta people into various provinces; then the southern protectorate, for convenience sake, was administered on the basis of provinces. The western Ijaws were in Delta while the eastern Ijaws were in Owerri and Calabar provinces (Ikalama 2006). This, consequently, created a discontent among the Ijaws who demanded a separate province for themselves. However, in 1947, their demands were met with the creation of Rivers Province. Furthermore, there was another struggle for a separate state which was taken to the constitutional conference in London. As stated by Alao (2005), the Niger Delta people requested a separate state within the federation, proposing the argument that there was:

> No other area in the whole of West Africa with a physical configuration like that of Rivers area. It was unfair that such an area should not have its own separate government to harness the energies of the Rivers and develop its unique resources in the interest of the people who live there. (Alao 2005: 57).

There was a further argument that the administrative headquarters of various regions overseeing the Niger Delta region failed to appreciate their particular needs as these headquarters were too distant from them. However, their demands were declined. Arguably the colonial master could have feared losing control over such a resource-rich region which in long-term would increase the prospects for early independence due to their resources and their proximity to foreigner merchants.

Soon after Nigeria's independence in 1960, conflicts between local communities, oil companies, and the federal government started to emerge in the region. In February 1966, the first incident of violence occurred in the region. A militant group called Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) was formed and led by Isaac Boro, an Ijaw born in Oloibiri. Boro was a student of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This group of students declared the independence of the republic of Niger Delta, which comprised the present day Rivers and Bayelsa state, and called on the oil companies to deal with their own government rather than the federal government (Ukiwo 2004; Obi 2009). However, although the rebel movement was crushed by the federal government, it however brought consciousness to the minds of the Niger Deltans. Additionally, the rebellion anticipated the Biafra civil war. Ukiwo's (2004) writings, for instance, ascertain that in May 1967, the eastern region declared itself the Republic of Biafra, setting the country into civil war. This was the period during which the federal government broke the eastern region into three states, of which Rivers state was home to many minority groups and the major oil bearing areas (Obi 2009). Moreover, the federal government passed new legislation; the 1969 Petroleum Decree and the 1978 Land Use Decree, which centralised the ownership and control of petroleum resources in the country, placing it under the custody of the federal government (Ukiwo 2004). As asserted by Obi (2009), any hope for greater control of the resource by the region was shattered. The centralisation of resources reduced tensions between the dominant ethnic groups of the federation, the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. At the same time, it exacerbated tensions between those large groups and the numerous minorities, especially those in the Niger Delta, who became increasingly marginalised from the political and economic systems (Ukiwo 2004; Obi 2009).

It is worth underlining that although Nigeria is constitutionally a federation, the system as practiced falls short of true federalism principles, exhibiting an absence of fiscal and political autonomy at federating units (the states) as they depend on the centre for resources. By definition, federalism is a strongly decentralised administrative model whereby the central government, known as federal government, delegates much of its competences, except in finance, foreign affairs and security, to the local or regional entities, also known as federated states. With this principle of governance, the state's power and authority are shared between two units and each unit should observe the limits of its power spheres (Obi 2009). In the case of Nigeria, it is worth noting that power and authority that are supposed to be shared between the Nigerian government and the Niger Delta has been simply confiscated by the federal government which exercises them for individual and strategic ends (Ukiwo 2004; Obi 2009).

Similarly, considering the fact that oil is the mainstay of the country's economy, its exploitation by multinationals and the misuse of its revenue by the federal government created a sense of deprivation and exclusion in the Niger Delta region since the centre is mostly occupied by the major ethnic group. Works by Lapin and Rossiasco (2011) advise that the government further reduced the revenue allocation formula to the region from 50% in early 1966s to 1.5% in late 1980s. This growing sense of alienation and deprivation in the minds of the Niger Delta people was further worsened by two others concerns; the prolonged degradation of their environment triggered by oil exploitation and the neglect of the government in developing their region. As will be discussed further in the upcoming chapters, oil spillages in the Niger Delta region has wiped out an estimated 5 to 10% of Nigerian ecosystem. It is reported that the rainforest which was previously circumscribed in a 7,400 km² area of land has disappeared and oil spillages in settled zones have contaminated the groundwater and soils and destroyed crops and aquacultures (Okonta 2006; Ngomba-Roth 2007). People in the contaminated areas complain about health and livelihood issues, constantly holding the government accountable for condoning the careless nature of oil operations in the Niger Delta (Akinjide 2000).

The reduction of the allocated formula referred to earlier by Lapin and Rossiasco (2011) instigated the agitation pioneered by the Kenule Saro-Wiwa Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in the 1990s. Through non-violent protest, the group demanded resource benefits and compensation for environmental damages from the state and oil multinationals. However, the Federal Government responded with violence. In 1995, Saro-Wiwa and eight other leading member of the organisation were judicially killed (Maier 2000). The Saro-Wiwa movement saga also raised the awareness of the people that they were being alienated by the government. Although MOSOP opted for a non-violent approach, its actions however, led to the emergence of a violent dimension of the Niger Delta struggle, which was also coupled with the return of the country to democratic rule in 1999 (Okonta 2006; Ngomba-Roth 2007). Conflict opened throughout the region along many axes: between ethnic groups, within ethnic groups, within communities, between generations, between the state and communities, and between oil companies and communities. All of these avenues of conflict became increasingly polarised and militarised, as stakes were raised and weapons became more accessible. Even after the 1999 return to democratic rule, the region was still heavily militarised with the state security operatives often resorting to force as a means of dealing with protests (HRW 2002:2). The government under the leadership of President Obasanjo ordered the military forces to raze Odi village in Bayelsa state and other

communities such as Olugbobiri, Liama and Gbarantoru on November 20, 1999 (Human Rights Watch 2002). As of 2005, violence has spread over many communities in the Niger Delta region, most especially in Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta states. As reported by UNDP (2007:3), by 2005, the cases of violent conflicts were numbering over 120 per year and the existence of over 50 armed groups with an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 armed youths were operating in the Niger Delta region. Kidnapping of oil expatriates and attacks on oil facilities became a regular event, predominantly with the appearance of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in December 2005. The emergence of MEND escalated the conflict to a crisis level. They repeated the calls of their predecessors for greater 'resource control' and 'self-determination' (Okonta 2006:9). By the middle of 2009, the crisis reached its peak. This period was marked by low intensity war between the Joint Task Force (JTF) and the militia groups. There were various occasions of attacks and counter-attacks between the two groups leading to loss of life and property (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011). However, after a major defeat of the armed groups in 2009, President Yar'adua offered amnesty to all combatants who agreed to submit their weapons and surrender. The Amnesty programme has bought some level of stability in the region. This stability is occasionally interrupted by outbreaks of violence, so there is a need to find a more sustainable peace solution to the conflicts in the Niger Delta region. The following sub-sections will discuss ethnic, security, political and oil dimensions to the conflicts in the Niger Delta.

4.4.1.1 Ethnic Dimension

Several distinctive autonomous ethnic and cultural groups are currently living in Nigeria (Okonta 2006). However, to all intents and purpose, the British, Nigerian's colonial master, unified these autonomous ethnic groups in 1914 without proper consideration of the existing disparity in cultural value and preferences. As Akinjide (2000:13) puts it; "the British needed the railway from the North to the coast in the interest of British business. Amalgamation of the south (not of the people) became of crucial importance to British business interest." Ejibunu (2007), on the same note, but put more clearly, advises that the British discovered that the south was viable and more resourceful than the northern protectorate, so therefore merging both regions will bridge the professed existing gap. However, the British in their pretence of uniting the distinctive ethnic groups in Nigeria had an imperialist motive; they deliberately and systematically divided the various groups, thus generating the suitable conditions for conflict (Akinjide 2000).

During the period of colonial rule, the administration system adopted by the British supported communal sentiments among different ethnic groups, creating a suitable environment for them to exploit the economic resources. The British divided the country into three regions, North, East and West, giving undue advantage to some ethnic groups over others, especially the three major ethnic groups, suppressing the identity of the minority groups.[8] This created resentment and deepened divisions between the various ethnic groups. At the national level, a split was created, which still exists between the North and the South. Brunner (2002:132), for example, puts it the following way:

> The existing ethnic and religious differences between the north, dominated by the predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani people and the mainly Christian, ethnically heterogeneous south were exacerbated and politicised by the different forms of colonial rule.

At the regional level, there exists a deep division between the major ethnic groups and minority groups. An instance would be "the Ogoni people's fear of Igbo dominance; an unease which dates back to the colonial rule" (Brunner 2002: 252). However, the other dimension which was central to the violence in the Niger Delta region is the deep divisions existing among the minority groups in the Niger Delta region, between the largest minority ethnic group, the Ijaw, and other minority ethnic groups, especially the Itsekiri, Urhobo and Adoni, of which the issues are mostly related to the ownership of land and local power (Ngomba-Roth 2007:145). With the heterogeneous nature of the country, the tendency of the various nationals' leans towards parochial consciousness at the expense of national consciousness. The attainment of independence and the return of democratic rule testify to these facts: these periods witnessed resurgence of various minority groups clamouring for the recognition of their identity and autonomy. Zinn (2005:107), for example, observed that at the local level, "these cleavages are one of the reasons for the absence of broader and harmonious actions against the Nigerian government and the oil companies". However, the discovery of oil only intensified the ethnic lines giving rise to ethnic nationalism. Brunner (2002:132) is of this view, as his observation suggests that even before oil became the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, there was already an existing sharp internal division in the country.

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[8] The major ethnic groups were Igbo, dominating the eastern region; Yoruba, dominating the western region and Huasa/Fulani dominating the Northern Region.

The upsurge of ethnic-nationalism is responsible for the intense social identity and resource control agitations in the Niger Delta region. This has damaged the sense of nationalism and patriotism in Nigeria. Indeed, the Niger Delta people have resorted to ethnic patriotism rather than national patriotism by advocating for self-determination. Ikporuko (1998) concurred and stated that the causes of the Ogoni-Andoni and Okirika-Ogoni inter-communal conflicts are all related to the role played by resource control agitations against oil exploitation activities in the area based on ethnic identities from colonial times.

4.4.1.2 Security Dimension

Early in the 1990s, most local communities in the Niger Delta region started forming vigilante groups to secure their communities from external attacks and crime. Brunner's (2002) opinion, for instance, reveals that the Okrika community formed *the Bush Boys vigilante groups*; the Nembe Ogbolomairi community formed *the Isongofaro*, etc. These informal and somehow non-allowed security movement structures became a model of a longstanding protection and defence institution in many parts of the region. They consisted of their communities of origin arming the youths who made up these vigilante groups. However, observed Zinn (2005), these groups were used by the local elites beyond the aim of protecting the community to engage in conflict with their neighbours, especially over oil-related border disputes. Zinn (ibid.) further explained that in 1999, the Okrika community employed their vigilante boys to conflict with Eleme (its neighbouring town) over claims to land which yields compensations from oil companies. Drawing on Zinn's observations, one could argue that the '*Warri Wars*' incidents in 1997, 1999 and 2003 were the products of such acts. The Warri incident involved the constant clash between the Ijaws and the Itsekiri in the south-west LGA of Delta state over land claims. These incidents led to the availability of more arms to the youths. Consequently, these vigilante groups became a law unto themselves and practiced extra-judicial killings, seizure of personal property, and other serious human rights violations (Brunner 2002; Zinn 2005). This led to wide-scale intra-community conflict; struggles developed over claims to customary authority within communities; new power-brokers emerged to challenge traditional leaders. This was the case when Nembe youths questioned the authority of the traditional ruler in dealing with compensation payments. However, in time, these vigilante groups evolved into militia groups bunkering oil and kidnapping foreign workers (Brunner 2002).

4.4.1.3   Political Dimension

Since the attainment of independence in 1960, the state Constitution states that the political structure should always be characterised by over-centralisation of power and resources (Suberu 1996:67), a political structure which is called federalism. However, on the ground, and this in the light of what is happening, there seems to be a negligence of the application of federalist institutions and values. The structure has undergone changes since the country gained independence. In 1960, the country started off with three regions, each controlled by one of the major ethnic groups: Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. By 1966, twelve states had been created, of which Rivers and Bendel states were considered to be home to Deltan ethnic groups and were offered additional autonomy (Brunner 2002). As at 1976, the number of states created stood at nineteen and by 1996 the number of states created rose to 36 plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in Abuja. Equally, the Local Government Area (LGA) was formed in 1979, starting off with 300 governing units, but presently Nigeria has 774 LGAs, of which 185 are located in the nine oil-producing states (Zinn 2005).

However, regardless of the fragmentation of the regions into states and LGAs, the autonomy granted was limited especially during military rule. With the return of power to civil rule, the federal government allowed additional autonomy to the 36 states, but still they are very much limited in their autonomy. As has been defined in the previous section, in principle, the federalist system allows the central government to be decentralised in order to delegate some spheres of its competences and powers to regional units, with the exceptions of defence, external relations and finance (Ukiwo 2004; Obi 2009); yet, in Nigeria, federated states remained utterly economically dependent on the federal government. Quoting the Wilson Centre report on the conflict in the Niger Delta, Obi (2009) advises that the 1999 Constitution deters the states from having their own constitutions or enacting legislation that opposes national legislation. This legislation places regional revenues to the centre, revenues which are mainly derived from oil, and creates a new legal layer of dependent states relying in large measure on the decisions and resources of the federal government. Consequently, the federal government supremacy over the decentralised and autonomous entities has intensified the ethno-regional struggle across the country, whilst in the multi-ethnic Niger Delta, this legislation has contributed to a sense of dependency and marginalisation (Collier and Sambanis 2005). This 'extreme centralisation' brought back by this new law has resulted in intense struggles for the control of the central government machinery in Nigeria. As a result, it has established a central government machinery characterised by multifaceted, dominant,

and well-established networks of patronage and political alliance. This neo-patrimonial system of patronage which underpins Nigeria's political structure only delivers rewards, rendering the public sector ineffective in delivering it services. The defective public service delivery in the Niger Delta could thus be explained by the establishment of this political character largely responsible for the underdevelopment, environment degradation and insecurity that inflicts the region.

4.4.1.4   Oil Dimension

There has been total disregard for the Niger Delta's environment due to the substandard practices adopted by the oil companies operating in the region including Shell, Chevron, Agip, Total, Elf and Mobil. The environmental damages went unnoticed for several years. As documented by Soremekun and Obadare (1998), the havoc inflicted on the environment by oil multinationals was not recognised until thirty years after 1958, when commercial oil production commenced. There have been cases of pipeline leakages, oil-well blow-outs and spillages, having destructive impacts on the eco-system of the region. Owing to the Nigerian government complacency and, most importantly, connivance with the MNOCs, this destruction went on for many years. Between 1976 and 1990, the Niger Delta region recorded 2,676 cases of oil spills (CLO 1996; Uyigue and Agho 2007:15) and in 2010 the total figure recorded was 3,203 cases (Daily Independent 2010:7). These oil spills have destroyed farmlands, polluted surface and ground waters (Inoni et al 2006); subsequently displacing the basic means of the Niger Delta people's livelihood, since they are predominantly farmers and fishermen.

In addition, the gas flared by the oil companies has added to the Global warming process and the contamination of air, land and shallow ground water resources in the region. As documented in The Comet (2001:12), quoted by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report, 8 million cubic feet of natural gas is flared on a daily basis in the Niger Delta region. These elements of environmental degradation have subjected the Niger Delta people to untold inhumanities and injustices. It is important to note that although the Nigerian economy relies on oil export which is mostly extracted from the Niger Delta region, the revenue from oil production and sale does not benefit the indigenes. The region is deprived of basic infrastructure and its inhabitants do not have decent facilities. Furthermore, local communities' rights over their resources and lands which have often turned to protests have been violently repressed by authorities and the oil companies. All these put together: underdevelopment, environmental pollution and outright neglect by the federal government

and the oil companies, played a role in instigating fresh oil-related agitations in the region in an effort to oblige the state and MNOCs to address their suffering. Due to the negative effects of the operations of oil companies in the Niger Delta, the aforementioned crises in the region took up a new dimension.

According to Oloruntimilehin and Ayoade (2002:16):

> Most of the conflicts have arisen from complex environmental problems, and a long history of neglect and social development of peoples who have seemed helpless watching their land and water resources continually devastated by the intense exploitation for petroleum and gases without deriving any appreciable benefits by way of investment in their own development.

As will be substantiated further in Chapters Six and Seven, during the period of the 1970s and mid-1980s, the oil companies ignored court rulings that went against them. More so, even when they decided to pay compensation, little amounts were paid and it took very many years for those payments to be made. The oil multinationals supported repressive regimes in Nigeria by collaborating with the government to suppress the local communities in the Niger Delta (Ogbogbo 2004; Akinola 2008). The case of the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his other Ogoni comrades was linked with Shell being instrumental in, or at least supportive of, the military government of the late General Abacha in the executions, as is discussed in more detail in Chapters Seven and Eight (Adefemi 1998). The oil companies buy off individuals seen as a threat or have major influence in the Niger Delta communities. Edafejirhaye and Edafejirhaye (2008) cite an investigation which revealed that oil companies connive with some individuals in the oil industry and security outfits to promote illegal bunkering activities. There were also instances where oil companies funded armed groups to protect their business and also to fight against other militia groups. For example, in Bukuma community, where Shell was alleged to have supported the group called 'Port Harcourt Boys' to fight against another group called 'Occasion Boys' whose activities appeared to be a threat to Shell's business in the area.

4.6   Conclusion

This chapter browsed through the history of the conflicts in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta region. It especially focused on the evolution of the current conflicts in the region, particularly the development of the Nigerian State and Nigerian Nation, and the relationship

between oil-bearing communities and oil exploiters. It mainly argued that conflict in the Niger Delta could have been managed and resolved in a cooperative way, if the modern legal system governing the federal state and federated states had worked for the indigenes' customs and rights. The chapter then identified the existing links between ethnic groups, land and resources, and conflicts: concerns which would need to be taken into account if a sustainable peace solution is to be realised in this region.

Overall, the chapter summarises that the experiences of violence in the Niger Delta region showed that the historical and political atmosphere, from the pre-colonial, colonial, to post-colonial periods did not give the opportunity for a more cooperative approach between the indigenes and colonial authorities firstly, then the independent's and lastly the multinationals. There has not been equity, justice nor fair play in managing or resolving the conflicts in the Niger Delta. The history of Nigeria, from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era tells that the inhabitants of the Niger Delta went from requesting a fair share of the resource revenue to asking for their rights to have control over oil resources in their region which is the major reservoir and producer. The request for oil control could be subsumed in what local people call a cohabitation of custom rights with a true federalism; a challenge that these people are facing. In order words, their demand reads that the political economy of oil in the Niger Delta points to more deep national challenges which the federal government has to deal with, most particularly, issues of economic federalism, minority rights, resources apportionment and poverty mitigation. A modest start in recognising the rights of the oil-bearing communities over their lands and resources would be for the government and oil companies to give a favourable response to their desire, which is to have a more bearable life. However, as this desire could necessitate a huge flow of funds, which would prove expensive, the governments and the oil companies have decided to ignore these challenges or simply offer minimum effort. Shying away the indigenes' concerns or addressing them with tokenism has helped to develop a sense of contention and led to protests which have turned to open conflict, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Niger Delta Conflict Analysis

5.1   Introduction

Conflict in the Niger Delta has been blamed on a number of forces, ranging from political fissures to environmental challenges. One way to appreciate the performance of the current amnesty programme and other previous solutions to the conflict is to scrutinize pre-conflict conditions that paved the way for violence in the region, as well as those that ensure the conflict remains protracted. This chapter analyses and differentiates the structural factors that are embedded in the very fabric of the Niger Delta region from those factors that simply fuel violence in the region. The chapter posits that violence is not an isolated fact, rather, it is a result of payments for the resources in the oil bearing communities and/or countries that contribute to the safeguarding of the future of resources in the resource-rich communities – or countries – and should be considered as a developmental vector. Nevertheless, when these payments are made for purposes other than the betterment of the people, they become illicit and unlawful, and they can trigger violent contentions and conflicts in the communities. As in Chapter Four, this chapter also responds to the first research sub- question: What are the background and other causes of the conflict? It is divided into two main sections; the structural factors causing the conflicts in the Niger Delta and the factors driving violence in the region.

5.2   Structural Factors Causing Conflict in the Niger Delta

The factors responsible for the crises in the Niger Delta are multiple and operate at different levels, and together they generate violence in the region. As shown below in figure 5.1, it is the structural factors, at the most primary level, that constitute the mechanisms and fundamental conditions in which the political-economy, government and society engages in, which create the source of instability in Niger Delta. Basically, there are deep-rooted contradictions in the socio-political structures and cultural fabric that make the region vulnerable to conflict. Whereas, at the tertiary level, driving factors include those forces that manipulate the latent tensions in society by generating violence and crime, mostly for making profit. Their interaction, moreover, provides the needed cover for outright violence. The

complexity of their interactions poses a great challenge to the creation of sustainable solutions. Figure 5.1 below summarises the complex web of conflict in the Niger Delta region. It draws on Galtung's (Bishnu Pathak 2016) conflict transformation theory for peaceful World.

Figure 5.1: Complex Web of Niger Delta Conflict
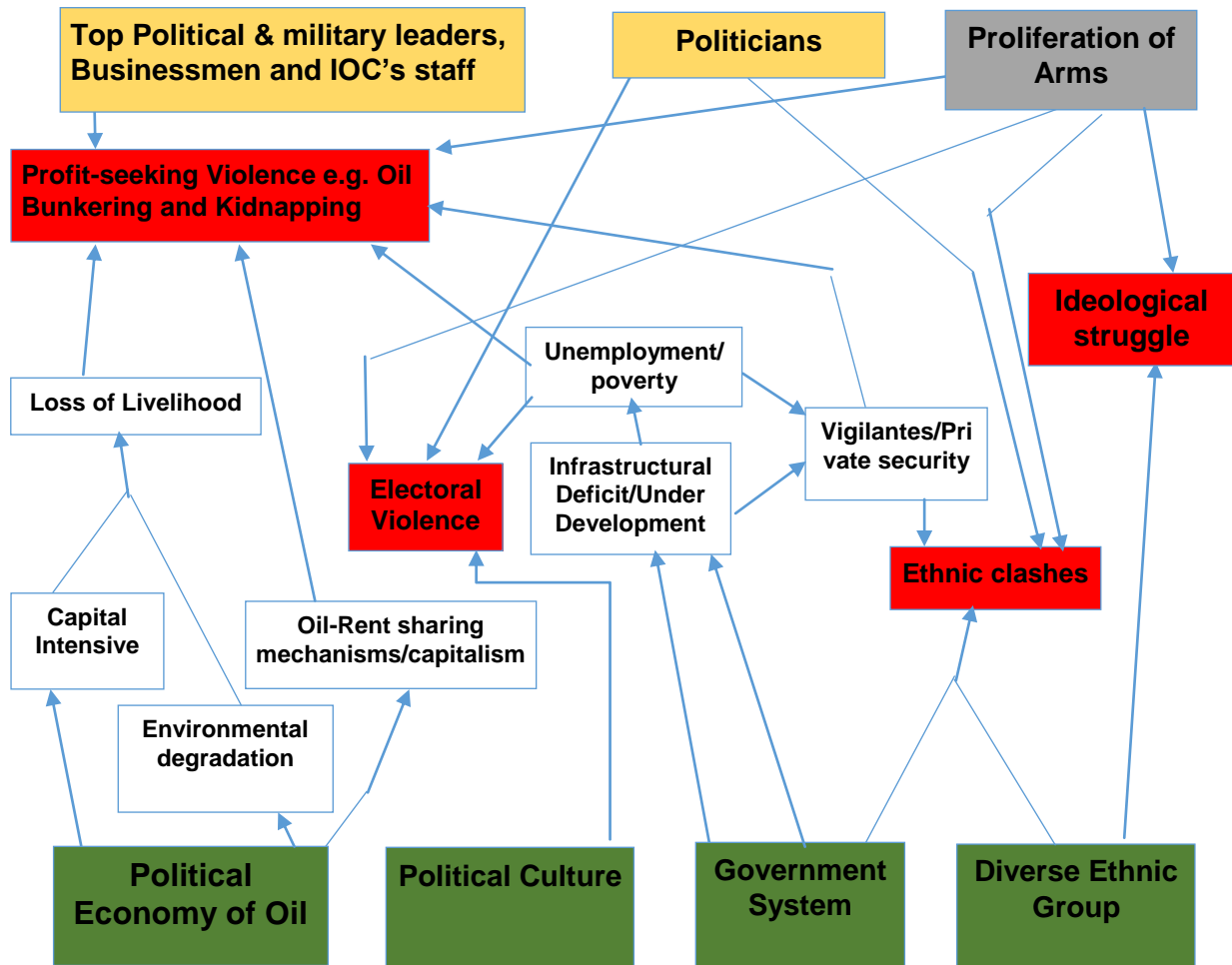
Source: Author

As shown in the different green rectangles of the chart above and as will be elaborated further in this chapter, the structural factors causing conflict in the Niger Delta region could be grouped under four titles, namely political culture, government system, political economy of oil and diverse ethnic groups.

5.2.1 Political Culture

The political culture and character of Nigeria state is deeply enmeshed or affected by the dynamism resulting from its colonial experience. This colonial legacy trickles down from the

top level of governance to the grassroots and requires a better understanding of the colonial rule in order to appreciate the culture embedded in Nigeria's political structure as well as its link to the Niger Delta conflict. During colonial administration, the British imposed colonial rule to protect their capital and to use the colonial state as the servant of imperialism. The colonial state, herein, refers to the colonial administrators who ruled the territory from 1900, when the Royal Niger Company surrendered its charter over the region, to 1960 when the Nigeria state gained flag Independence. The colonial state was more or less formed to serve as a tool for economic exploitation. As described by Ekekwe (1986) and Akinterinwa (2007), the formation of the society was restructured in a way to enable commodity production and surplus accumulation. The typical structure of African society adopts a communal mode of production, which is welfaristic. However, colonialists introduced a capitalist mode of production that emphasised the idea of private ownership of the means of production and profit maximisation. The colonial masters created a network of 'bourgeoisie' to facilitate the repression and exploitation of the people and their common wealth (resources) (Onimode 1983). The Bourgeoisie includes the native rulers (Obis, Chiefs, Emirs and Obas); those who served as intercessors between the indigenes and the imperialists, the merchants; those who acted between the local people and imperialist firms and professionals who later led the national struggle for independence (Hyden 2005). The imperialists manipulated existing social institutions or established new institutions in order to safeguard their economic exploits. Due to the affluence bestowed on them by the colonial masters, the native rulers chose to pursue personal interests rather than the interests of their people. They ensured that their people remained submissive to exploitation in return for the benefits promised by the colonialists (Ogomudia 2002). These circumstances gave rise to serious suffering and despair as well as cultural disorientation.

The nation's political leaders inherited a culture of established complex, powerful, and deeply entrenched networks of patronage and political alliance which continue to characterise the political structures of the country. This political culture shapes the pursuit for assets especially the control of rents from oil and gas. At the local level, in the Niger Delta region the traditional accountability of political systems has waned, as local chiefs have abused their positions for material gain. In addition, at the national level the same attitude is prevalent. Chabal and Daloz (1999), for example, point out that after fighting for independence, the political leaders, instead of focusing on nation-building, chose to concern themselves with selfish interests, seeking political office for the mere purpose of amassing absolute power and

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wealth. This argument has already been expressed by Nnoli (1980:145) when he affirmed that:

> The class character and interests of the nationalist parties were glaringly reflected in their activities when Nigerians assumed political positions of authority. They immediately embarked on the use of political machinery to pursue their class interests of amassing wealth and privileges against the interest of the majority of the country, the workers and peasantry.

Nnoli's (1980:145) view is supported by the historical analysis of the development of political parties in Nigeria as previously discussed in Chapter Four. It is important to bear in mind that the Nigerian political landscape is ethnic-based with political leaders working first for their tribes' interests rather than the nations; an attitude which has led many of them to use their public offices and positions to benefit their own ethnic groups.

After independence, another factor that characterised the political culture in Nigerian society was the tendency to form political parties along ethnic lines. For example, the political party called National Congress of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), created in 1944, was considered as an Ibo Political Party. The Action Group (AG) formed in 1948 was regarded as a Yoruba political party. Likewise, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), formed in 1950, was a political association for the people of the North (Chabal and Daloz 1999). The political leaders promoted the politics of ethnicity to sustain their political powers and advantages. Ethnicity, in this context, is referred to as the exploitation of ethnic sentiments in political and economic competitive struggles involving different ethnic groups (Nnoli 1980:147). Under such conditions is created mutual distrust and suspicion which hinders national development at every stratum of the society. More worrisome is the fact that destructive elements like thuggery, assassination, arson, rigging and bribery are products of such a political culture. At the national level, the politics of ethnicity creates tension between the Niger Delta people and the federal government, occupied mainly by the major ethnic groups, while at local level, it also creates tension among the various micro-ethnicities, and often when manipulated by other factors this has led to violence.

Narrowing the focus on the Niger Delta, prior to imperialism, collective identity in the region was formed around clan structures or extended family having native authorities who were custodians of communal assets such as land and fishing grounds. However, with the advent of imperial rule, the colonialists distorted the system, changed the distribution of power and

authority, and reshaped the community relations both internally and externally (Hyden 2005). Even after independence, the oil companies adopted similar tactics to ensure an uninterrupted flow of business. Francis *et al* (2011), for example, states that the oil companies adopted practices related to those used by the colonialists in their dealings with the local people. They utilised the established traditional authorities, placing more power and resources in the hand of a selected few, who can be termed 'interlocutors', to ensure that pressures from the local populace were minimised. Nowadays, such prevailing culture continues to have a strong hold on the socio-economic life of the Niger Delta communities. The mind-set of using public positions as a means of acquiring wealth further intensifies the struggle for political office; this most often ends up in violence. This culture has led to a defective public service delivery system, a system where public resources are used to advance group or personal interests (Chabal and Daloz 1999). In order to sustain their affluence, the ruling elites distribute the common wealth, rewarding their cohorts for their loyalty and support, and as a result, says Hyden (2005), the resource-sharing follows the lines dictated by patronage rather than a policy that serves the populace. The direct consequence of Nigerian political culture is poor infrastructure and service delivery which gives rise to other anomalies in the Niger Delta region. According to reports by the World Bank (2003) and UNDP (2006), the infrastructure and social services in the region of the Niger Delta are generally appalling. This includes a lack of basic services such as security, education, healthcare, water and jobs. As shown in figure 5.2 below, the most appalling effect of the lack of schools in the region is the low level of youth education.

Figure 5.2: Education distribution of a selected sample of the Niger Delta
Some materials have been removed due to 3rd party copyright. The unabridged version can be viewed in Lancester Library - Coventry University.

Source: Okonofua 2011

The infrastructural deficit is either attributed to the obstinacy of local communities or the challenges of the difficult terrain. However, in any case, it unlawfully denies the Niger Delta people access to fundamental social services. Edeho, a town in Rivers State, was surveyed by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in 2007, which reported that it had no police post, a primary school without tables and chairs, a hospital that lacks medicine and equipment and is twenty kilometres distant (ICG 2007). Figure 5.3 illustrates the deficiency of infrastructure in the Niger Delta.

Figure 5.3: Effect of Infrastructural Deficit/Poor Service delivery
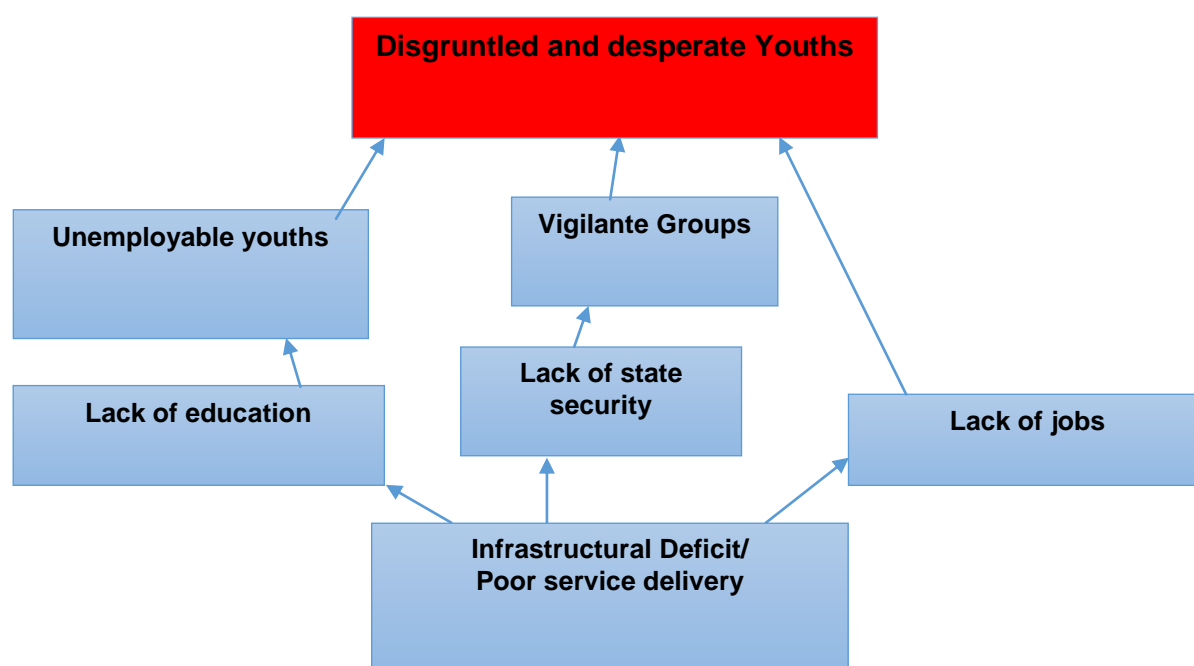
Source: Author

The lack of policy plan on the Niger Delta security provision gave rise to the formation of various vigilante groups by the local communities. As put by a senior military officer (Ogomudia (2002), the capability of security agencies needed substantial upgrading; police stations were absent in most of the oil-producing communities. Most local communities engaged their youths to organise vigilante groups to secure their community: these communities armed the youths to protect the community. However, beyond the provision of security, community and political leaders most often use the vigilante groups to assault perceived enemies over land issues or compensation claims from the oil companies. These 'enemies' could be neighbouring communities or political opponents. As a result, such local clashes have led to the death of many and the destruction of homes. These incidents were

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responsible for the Warri wars in 1997, 1999 and 2003 and also for some conflicts that occurred in other areas mentioned above (Ukeje 2001). This situation further led to the increased availability of arms to the youths, which, over time, encouraged criminal activities among vigilante groups that later developed into the militia groups bunkering of oil and kidnapping of foreign workers.

5.2.2 Government System: Flawed Federalism

The idea of federalism in Nigeria can be traced back to 1914 when the southern and northern protectorates were amalgamated. Subsequently, the federal system was moulded by various constitutions pre- and post-independence. Sir Bernard Bourdillion's 1939 Constitution divided the southern protectorate while the Richards and Macpherson Constitutions of 1946 and 1951 only created a decentralised unity system of government. The constitution created under Lyttleton introduced true federalism, after the upheavals generated by the idea of self-government, which indicated that a true federal structure is the only way to keep the diverse nations together (Ukeje 2001).

Figure 5.4: Effect of a Flawed Government System
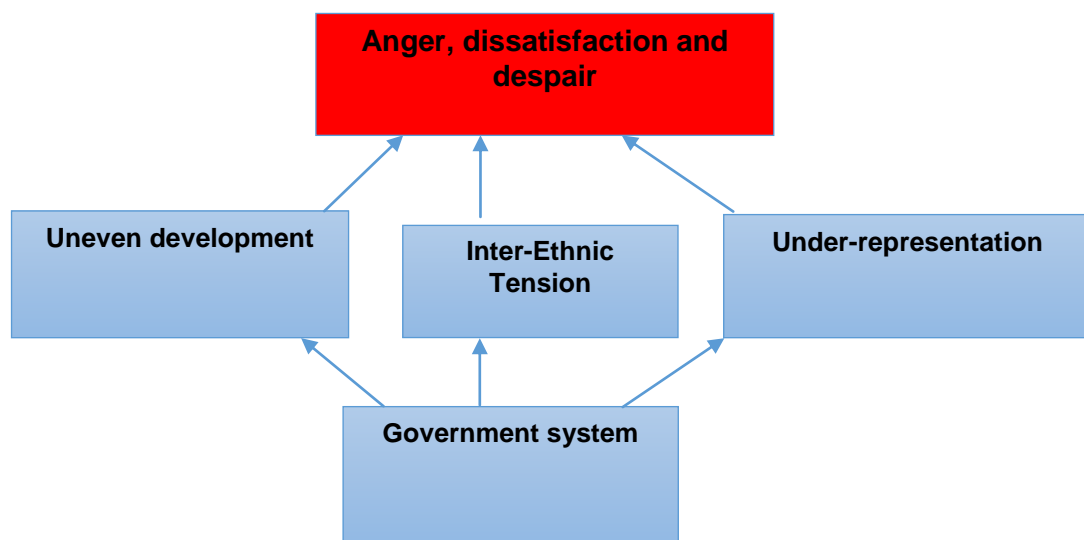
Source: Author

However, the Post-independence period has witnessed various alterations made to the structure of the country. Since 1960, the federal structure has wavered between the excessive regionalism of the first republic (1960-1966) to the over-centralisation of the military. In 1960, the three regional components of Nigeria's federation were transformed to a four-region structure in 1964 and finally to its present 36 states structure plus the FCT in Abuja

and 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Although these changes were driven by the intention of granting self-actualisation and fulfilment to various ethnic groups in the country, however, as is discussed further in the following section, it succeeded in creating more imbalances and amplifying the concentration of power at the centre. Similarly, Barkan *et al.* (2001) observed that there was a tendency to grant administrative rights to various minority ethnic groups to satisfy their quest for self-determination while, on the other hand, the tendency to consolidate the power of the central government and weaken the federating units by increasing the number of states and LGAs. Gofwen (1994 and Mohammed (2008) point out that the present structure tilts favourably towards the north. Despite the creation of new states, the structure gives the northern region a domineering position over the south, coupled with the fact that the terms of resource allocation and federal appointments are based on the size of the geopolitical zone. For example, the seats in the National House of Assembly are allocated according to the population size of the various ethnic groups, which ultimately makes the enactment of legislation favourable to the ethnic majority. Consequently, the resulting structure has been a source of heightened tensions and established a dichotomy between the north and the south at the highest level.

Beyond the north-south competition, as posited by Collier and Sambanis (2005), the usurping of so much power by the federal unit over the federating states has intensified widespread ethno-regional competition across Nigeria, and among the minority groups, particularly in the Niger Delta region where it has generated a sense of marginalisation and dependency. These tensions are inevitable since the hybrid centralised/federal political structure is designed in such a way that the resource distribution and revenue allocation is controlled and directed by the federal government. Since the access to power at the federal level is obviously the key to control over revenue allocations, any group that controls the power at the centre controls the wealth of the country. Thus, considering the political culture of the country, any group that has the advantage can divert larger shares of the rents to the disadvantage of the wealth producers. This is evident by the constant and systemic relegation of the principle of revenue allocation since 1951. Furthermore, such advantage was demonstrated when these two pieces of federal statute; the Petroleum Decree of 1969 and the Land Use Decree of 1978, were passed into law. These legislations were specifically designed to undermine local control over their resources, monopolising the resource ownership and control into the hands of the federal government. Prior to the advent of those legislations, Ebeku (2001) reported that the local communities in the Niger Delta negotiated directly with the oil companies over access to land and compensation.

Considering the dominance of oil rents in the country's national income, contention over its distribution has generated much political debate inside and outside of the Niger Delta. Watts (2004) puts it in this way: this has been a source of agitation for the Niger Delta people whose region produces the resources that enriches the country. By any standard, the federalism in Nigeria is flawed. Among scholars, there is general consensus that the federal system has been unable to manage countless religious, ethnic, sub-ethnic and regional differences (Osaghae 1998; Suberu 2001; David-West 2002; Akiba 2004; Sagay 2008). Additionally, there is also an agreement that the federal structure has been exploited or distorted by the three major ethnic groups; Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo, to their advantage. The federal structure is short of equity, justice and fairness. As documented by David-West in his work, Nigerian federalism bears the appearance of federalism, but its content and purpose reflect unitarism. Consequently, it has created a fertile ground for cultivating political instability, conflict and violence. The Ogoni bill of Rights in 1990 and the Kaiama declaration by the Niger Delta people both demanded true federalism where local regions are granted full autonomy (Sagay 2008), however it was met with government repression whose intents was to ensure that they (the major ethnic groups) retain full control of the resources (Akiba 2004). Such structure, if not revised, will always remain a source of contention in the Niger Delta region.

In an interview with a political analyst, it has been claimed that the disproportionate amount allocated to the federal government has intensified mistrust and tensions among ethnic groups. This analyst further added that the federal structure with an allocative rather than derivative revenue-sharing formula is partly responsible for the lack of economic and infrastructural development in the Niger Delta region and the political marginalisation of its people.[9] In other interviews with a Niger Delta indigene and an official of the Niger Delta Ministry, it was acknowledged that the sense of marginalisation and political under-representation is a product of Nigeria's federal system that is highly centralised in practice giving little autonomy to the states. This has left the region's natives with a common feeling of relative inequality.[10] These opinions were supported by a NGO worker who I interviewed: he pointed out that the feelings of exclusion among the Niger Delta people are usually manipulated by different actors to justify the use of violence in order to reinstate the

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[9] Interview conducted with a political analyst, Abuja, 05 December 2015.

[10] Interviews conducted with two Niger Delta community members, Lagos, 14November and 08 December 2014.

equilibrium between the centre and the oil-producing regions which were politically marginalised. However, he added, the then president of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, of Ijaw extraction from Bayelsa, a core Niger Delta state, has restored some sense of political representation to the Niger Delta people.[11]

Broadly, these various views show that there is a lot of expectation from the people that the situation for the region will improve for the better. These expectations can easily turn to disappointment or violence if the promise of development for the region is not delivered, if future elections intensify ethnic tensions through manipulation by political interests, or if general perceptions of marginalisation remain the same.

5.2.3 Political Economy of Oil

The advent of the oil business in Nigeria has transformed the country's political economy into a resource-reliant economy and also generated much wealth for the country. Yet, the oil business has worsened the economic and social-political plight of the Niger Delta people. In fact, the region typifies a land blessed with enormous riches but yet is immersed in poverty. Many observers and scholars (Offiong 1980; Olorode 1998; Iyayi 2000; Ukeje 2001; Watts 2009) have pointed out that the disparity which exists between the wealth derived from the region and the economic ostracism of the Niger Delta people has been a source of instability. Figure 5.5 below encapsulates the political economy of oil as applied to the context being analysed.

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[11] Interview conducted with an NGO worker, Abuja, 06 December 2015.

Figure 5.5: Effect of the Political Economy
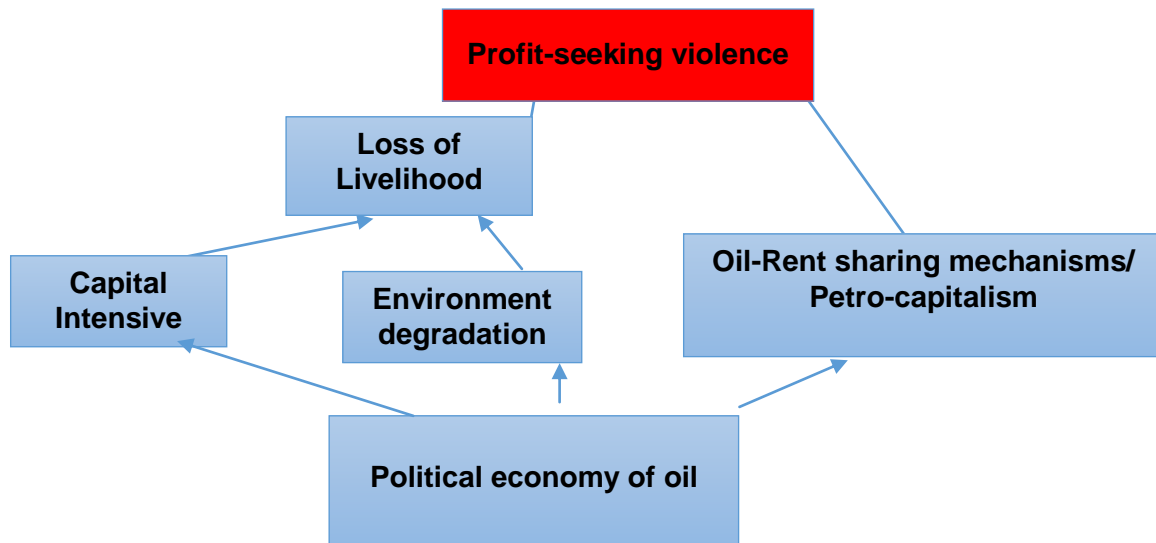
However, putting into perspective the nature of the oil business, Watts (2009) argues that there is little employment opportunity for local indigenes who are mostly unskilled. The oil and gas business is highly capital intensive which creates little demand for the unskilled labour which is mostly prevalent in the region. Despite the huge investment in oil and gas, there are little investments in manufacturing and agriculture to compensate for the capital intensive nature of the oil business. Furthermore, the environmental effect of oil production damages the source of livelihood or employment for the people in the region. This is evident in the level of unemployment in the region which is worse off when compared with any other region in the country. As presented in Table 5.1, in 2006, official statistics revealed that youth (aged 15 to 24 years) unemployment in the region stood at 24%. Similarly, Brown (2006) reported that in the first oil producing town, Oloibiri in Bayelsa state, the unemployment rate stood at 50% in the region while a more recent report by the World Bank puts the unemployment rate at 70% in the region.

Table 5.1 Unemployment and Underemployment Rates 2006 (Youth unemployment)
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Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2006)

Observing the statistics presented by the table above, unemployment and underemployment[12] in the oil-bearing states in the Niger Delta surpasses the rates obtainable in any other region in Nigeria, and they are more evident in metropolitan areas. Unavailability of jobs restricts the aspirations for the youths to move out of poverty. It is also makes them vulnerable to violent forms of struggle and criminal activities (Oyefusi 2007). In an interview with an employee of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), it was claimed that the high rate of unemployment in the region, particularly among the youths, has helped to drive and sustain high levels of violence and criminality throughout the delta region.[13] This is further evidence of the damage from oil exploitation which particularly differentiates the Niger Delta from other poor regions in the country. The issue of environmental deterioration has always been in the centre of the agitations of the local communities against the slick alliance of the state-oil companies (Ukeje 2001). The degrading of the Niger Delta's environment is as a result of continuous erosion, shoreline flooding, gas flaring and oil spills. In the wake of the 1990s, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) based its campaign on the environmental situation in the region, using it as a rallying point for their grievances against oil exploitations in the area. Ever since then, the environmental

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[12]Unemployment is a case where a skilled working-age individual who would like to work as full-time employee is unable to find a job. Underemployment is a way of determining employment and labour utilisation in the economy that examines the best way the skills of the labour force are being used.

[13] Interview conducted with an official of NNPC, Lagos, 10 December 2015.

issue has intricately connected to the broader fight for social and political change. It gets worse considering these people are mostly farmers and fishermen, so the destruction of their environment has also taken away their livelihood which has not been replaced by the creation of new jobs in the oil industry.

Conflict in the Niger Delta is largely a product of petro-capitalism or patterns of economic exploitation (Offiong 1980; Okonta 2000; Ukeje 2001; Watts 2009). Saro-Wiwa (1992) refers to the situation as 'a slick alliance' with the Nigerian state to produce an oil-enclave economy that shuts out the local populace. The petrol-capitalism, over the 50 years of oil production, has advanced a precise economic logic fixed predominantly on the capture and control of state and cultural influence that in return serves their antagonistic economic motives. Inherently, the petrol-capitalism logic adopted by the agents of the state-oil company's alliance wages an internal war against any form of resistance from the local people in the region. For the logic to be sustained, several degrees of repression are instituted to protect the unjust system of oil exploitation and profit-sharing (Ukeje 2001). Such strategies facilitate repressive legislation that legitimises unjust oil exploitation, aggressive repression of legitimate opposition, severe environmental damages, ineffective environmental laws and discriminatory revenue allocation. Moreover, it also accounts for the 'divide and rule' tactics employed by the oil companies to stimulate inter- and intra-community conflict. Such conflicts are encouraged with an ultimate motive of ensuring undisrupted oil production through forestalling any possible united actions against it (Ukeje 2001; Watts 2009).

5.2.4 Diverse Ethnic Groups

The issue of ethnicity has been a bane to the unity and development of the country. Basically, there are two divisions that exist between ethnic and religious groups. The apparent ethnic and religious differences between the North, dominated by the Hausa-Fulani Muslims, and the South's ethnically-diverse Christians were exacerbated, exploited, magnified and politicised by various arrangements of imperial rule (Brunner 2002). These divides still exist in present day Nigeria. Even before oil became the main source of national income, sharp internal division had always existed between the North and South and also, among the diverse ethnicities in the South. The division is further exacerbated by the perceived political domination of the Northern elite and their power over the central government. However, at the local level in the Niger Delta, tension also exists among the ethnic groups in the region. Groups that once cooperated are having their relationship strained while strong bonds are developing within individual groups. The difference in ethnic lines remained a source of

instability in the region that can be manipulated by local chiefs, politicians and the oil companies to their advantage. A familiar instance was the intensified inter-ethnic conflict in the Warri area between 1997 and 2003, which the federal government orchestrated. Similarly, there were several cases when oil companies manipulated inter-ethnic conflict, a contemporary attempt at divide and rule tactics (Okonta 2000; Ukeje 2001). In the case of Nigeria, it is evident that Nigerians pledge more of their allegiance to their ethnic origins rather than the entity called Nigeria. Both at a national and local level, deep splits exist which are further exacerbated by the ruling elites. However, it is assumed that the sentiments that ethnicity creates in the country is one of the reasons for the lack of united action against the government and the oil companies, which thereby strengthens the power of their alliance to exploit the wealth of the country.

5.3   Factors Driving Violence in the Niger Delta Region

Following the analysis how the structure of various factors that are at the centre of the conflict in the Niger Delta region operates, it is crucial to understand who these factors are effectively.

5.3.1 Manipulation of Tensions by Political Actors

After long years of military rule, there were expectations, as democratic rule returned in 1999, of a rise of a new era of liberal politics where justice, impartial administration and tolerance would exist, including a level playing field for all. Paradoxically, the political culture that bequeathed previous democratic dispensations was still in play; this was a culture in which politics was militarised through the commodification of violence.

Many spates of violence in the region occurred just after the transition to civilian rule. Politicians engaged youths, made idle as a consequence of the region's high rate of unemployment, arming them with weapons to orchestrate their victory at elections. More youths enlisted in armed groups prior and during poll years. Before polls were conducted in 1999 and 2003, most of the political parties, especially the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), hired armed gangs to intimidate political opponents. During the 2003 polls, across the country people were killed in hundreds as a result of the electoral violence orchestrated mainly by PDP Members. In Rivers state, electoral-observing NGOs reported widespread violence, in which sophisticated weapons were used without restriction. It amounted to a 'low

intensity armed struggle' according to a leading European Union election observer (Okonofua 2011).

A Human Rights Watch (HRW) survey in 2003 reported that indigenes in the region, close to the leaders of Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) and Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), revealed that top government officials and prominent politicians supported both Asari and Ateke, the leaders of NDV and NDPVF, through funding of what was called 'logistics' (HRW 2003). Even at the local level, political thugs were used to intimidate contending opponents over traditional chieftaincy. The battle for the traditional seat of the Amanyanibo of Okrika between Chief Dr. Abam and Chief Dagogo, which was perceived as a tussle between the PDP and the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), typifies such political manipulations. The erstwhile Minister for Transport, Dr Abiye Sekibo, engaged the services of Ateke and his group to assault perceived PDP enemies, prominent Okrika sons, including even Chief Rufus Ada George (an ex-state governor and an ANPP stalwart), driving them out of Ogu/Bolo and Okrika areas prior to the elections (Okonta 2000; Ukeje 2001). However, in exchange for the group's violent services, they were granted full access to steal oil. In an interview with Human Rights Watch, a local opposition party candidate claimed that Abiye Sekibo, and other senior members of the local PDP, made use of the 'Ateke Boys' - supporters of Ateke's NDV, to force those supporting the opposition candidate from the Ogu/Bolo and Okrika administrative zones before the elections were held (HRW 2003).Similarly, in a study carried out by Watt (2004), a local resident narrated a case in which some armed members of NDV assaulted opposition party members who were putting up election posters in Amadi Ama. Watt's research revealed that there were also allegations that the former governor, Peter Odili, used Asari to infiltrate the ranks of the Ijaw Youth Council in order to destabilise their growing influence. The IYC is a non-violent group formed in 1998 to articulate the aspirations of the Ijaw youth in the Niger Delta region, and was seen as a threat to Odili's election prospects. Peter Odili wanted Asari to curb the increasing popularity of the Ijaw Youth Council prior to elections.

5.3.2 Manipulation of Tensions by Oil Companies

In Nigeria, before a company carries out oil, gas or mineral exploration, certain payments are made to the federal government as well as the host communities. In the mining sector in general and particularly in oil, it is common and lawful for multinationals to pay the resource-bearing communities and country for resources they intend to exploit. These payments fall under contractual and fiscal regimes and are often referred to as royalties,

bonuses, signature bonuses or taxes. It behoves each mineral-bearing country to determine the amount of money to be paid based on the mining and hydrocarbon code applicable in the country. The payments of these various taxes are meant to compensate for the depletion of resources, the environmental impact of oil exploitation and many other problems that it may bring to the resource-bearing communities (Vanguard 2007). Legally speaking, these payments are lawful, however, due to the high level of corruption in the public institutions in most resource-rich countries, particularly in Nigeria, and owing to the ease with which multinationals can buy the conscience of many of the officials in the oil-bearing countries, many of these payments are made without any transparency, therefore becoming illegal as they are directed to individuals rather than to the public interest, or for the benefit of the people.

Local communities in the region are designated as 'host communities' when their lands or fishing grounds are exploited for oil and they also stand to gain some benefits in the form of security contracts, promises of employment and community development funds from the oil company. However, the tactics being deployed in dispensing these benefits, in many cases, have triggered violence in the region: violence between communities and oil companies, between local communities and within communities. The strategies for distributing benefits to the communities reinforce or intensify existing tensions. The issue of who receives what benefits and how they are distributed remains a driver of violence in the region. Moreover, considering the scarcity of resources for the local indigenes in the region, individuals and groups struggle to position themselves to access the various benefits available from the oil companies.

The oil companies negotiate such agreements and contracts with some selected persons in the communities who they identify as the community representative, most especially the ruling elites. According to Imobighe (2004), such practices have been argued to have played a very major role in the breakdown of values and systems in the Niger Delta through a hostile remaking of the local political landscape and the introduction of corrupt and divisive community relation policies suggestive of the divide and rule tactics of the imperialist. Struggle for the local political space has led to violent clashes such that occurred in several villages about twenty to forty kilometres from Port Harcourt, including Buguma, Tombia, and Okrika. Also, the manner in which most oil companies operate, including their staff behaviour, creates, feeds into, or exacerbates the violence. World Alumni Celebration (WAC) (2003) reported that Shell, one of the oil companies operating in the region, has a policy of

assuming the individual ownership of land and therefore acquires lands from individuals without going through traditional structures, giving rise to distrust and jealousy within a given community against those individuals who receive compensation. The policies of oil compensation also breed violence surrounding the issues about who gets the payment for compensation and who gets the contract for the clean-up.

At the level of inter-community conflict, due to monetary benefits derived from being designated as a host community, communities engage in violent conflicts over lands and territorial issues that grant them such a designation. Indeed, the conflict between the Bille and Kalabiri was as a result of the dispute over the right to ownership of land where two Shell flow stations are sited (HRW 2002). However, there were cases when oil companies, due to their strong desire to pump out oil at the earliest possible time or to maintain a continuous oil flow, would adopt divide and rule tactics to ensure that their short-term production targets were met (Okonta 2000). Such actions exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions which then drive violence. This is the case happening in the conflict between Soku and Oluasiri communities, where Shell is being accused of favouring the Soku community by naming the gas plant situated in that area after Soku, whilst the gas was located in Oluasiri land. This conflict intensified age-old issues between the Soku and Oluasiri, leading to the death of 18 people in early September 2003 (Niger Delta News 2003).

Furthermore, the large quantities of money directed to the community's representatives, many of whom at times failed to share the benefits with their community, has intensified the struggle for political space in the region. These local ruling elites, who are usually the community rulers and elders, have amassed much wealth through their positions, enabling them to control the political behaviour of a large populace. They reward their supporters, mostly youths, who in return sustain their dominance in the community. The oil companies prefer to deal with a selected few who can guarantee an undisrupted flow of business. The spoils derived have made the local leaders tolerant of the inconveniences of oil company activities, i.e. environmental pollution, as long as the oil companies continue to reward them. However, as the political space has become more lucrative and the youth group grows powerful, the youths have risen to challenge the local elites and the oil companies. With this rise of youth militancy, the oil companies in turn, have been forced to make dealings with the youth in order to maintain undisrupted oil operations.

The ultimate consequence for the tactics adopted by the oil companies in distributing monetary benefits, rather than developing projects with long-term communal benefits, is the

creation of rentier space which had led to violent struggle among contending parties. Such practices if not abated will remain a key driver of violence in the region. I conducted two different interviews: one with a Niger Delta indigene and another with an official of the Niger Delta Ministry. When I asked each about the role of the oil companies in the conflict, amazingly their responses were the same. They argued that the oil companies use the award of contracts or development projects to deliberately divide communities and thus can dominate them without serious challenge to their business operation.[14] A similar tactic was reported in a newspaper article, with the title: 'Shell's Odidi gas project tears Ijaw community apart' (Vanguard 2007). This emanated from a protest letter, dated 17th July 2007, by the Ogbe-Ijoh community to the General Manager, Shell, Warri, alleging that there was a covert and provocative plan, promoted by some Ogbe-Ijoh indigenes, in collaboration with some Shell staff, to deny the community of its benefits from the project.

5.3.3 Manipulation of Youth by Business Conglomerates

The manipulation of youth business conglomerates is another conflict-triggering factor in the region of the Niger Delta. The business of oil theft in the Niger Delta has a long and complex history. Commonly referred as to 'Oil Bunkering' in the region and as discussed further on, oil bunkering occurs when crude oil pipelines are attacked by certain individuals who create a hole in the pipeline in order to divert the oil into illegal bunkers These attacks, are a well-organised and very lucrative business (Asuni 2009), consist of sabotaging oil installation with the purpose of stealing the fuel and sell it on the black market. It is estimated that between 70,000 and 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) (up to 12 per cent or more of average daily oil production) are lost to the illegal oil trade (UNDP 2006). Allegedly, it is a business syndicate of oil bunkers, a network that comprises of local and foreign business men, the military, top politicians, and even personnel of oil companies who provides the operational logistics, although since the year 2000, their assistance have become less important (HRW 2003).

Initially, this syndicate recruited armed youths to help protect their illicit operations. The armed gangs provided patrol services to escort the stolen oil through the creeks to the point of illegal transfer to ships at the open sea. Further, the armed groups provided labour to tap directly into the pipelines and redirect the oil through another pipeline to large barges hidden in the creeks. However, over time, by 2003, the armed gangs recruited by the oil bunkering

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[14] Interviews conducted with two Niger Delta community members, Lagos, 14 November and 8 December 2014.

cartel had acquired the necessary business skills and infrastructure to transform them from security providers into oil bunkers themselves. The bunkering business provided the leaders of these groups with a lucrative revenue to acquire sophisticated weapons to further sustain their illicit trade. However, due to the huge profits derived from this business, the armed gangs' struggle to dominate the illicit oil bunkering trade became a constant escalator of violence in the region. A report by HRW (2005) supports that:

> Some of the most intensive fighting between October 2003 and 2004 centred around villages located on tributaries about twenty to forty kilometres south west of Port Harcourt, including Buguma, Bukuma, Tombia, and Ogbakiri. This is Asari's home area and the site of several oil wells, flow stations and gas gathering projects operated by Shell Petroleum Development Company in the Cawthorne channel…Asari and Tom were most likely interested in manipulating a local dispute to gain control of Tombia and Bukuma because of their proximity to lucrative bunkering routes in the Cawthorne channel. Both Asari and Tom armed their new recruits from this area with sophisticated weapons and speed boats to facilitate bunkering.

Even today, this illicit trade still continues in the region, though with less violence, and still remains a serious problem throughout the Niger Delta. Oil bunkering is a complicated issue, considering the political connection to the trade and also the heavy involvement of security forces.

5.3.4 Violent Repression of Legitimate Agitations

Violent repression of legitimate agitations is another conflict-triggering factor in the region of the Niger Delta. The initial protests against the government and its ally, the oil companies, had been peaceful. Such agitations were fostered by a deep sense of inequality (HRW 2003). Then, the familiar cycle starts with a demand or protest against injustice which was most likely rebuffed or ignored by the government and the oil companies. Subsequently, with their issues left unresolved, the Niger Delta people's agitations developed into a collective and conscious action. It was at this point the MOSOP was formed and led by Saro-Wiwa who demanded justice and fairness for the Niger Delta people (Asuni 2009). Unfortunately, the peaceful uprising from the group was met with violence from the state: Saro-Wiwa and other leaders of the group were executed. Beyond the Saro-Wiwa case, the state adopted more repressive methods to subdue any form of protest. Uprisings were seen as a resistance to the

legitimacy of the state; so they adopted strategies such as armed intervention, arrests and physical assault to deter agitations (HRW 2003). The Umuechem town case serves as an illustration. It was reported that the long-standing need for development assistance led to a mass protest at a Shell facility near Umuechem town, which accidentally led to the death of a policemen. Sadly, before dawn, a large mobile police force retaliated destroying over 400 homes and killing 80 people. In an effort to lessen further reaction, the authorities usually employ a strategy of 'carrot and stick' by assuaging the use of force with placation (Asuni 2009). Such placation includes promises of contracts, jobs, money, development projects, or even the creation of new states or LGAs. All such promises are intended to reach a 'soft stalemate' in order to resume oil production. The rise of the insurgent group MEND in December 2005, which frequently demanded for 'self-determination' and greater 'resource control', is in many ways a result of long-term neglect and violent repression by the state (Okonta 2006).

5.4   Conclusion

This chapter analyses the conflict in the Niger Delta region. Contrary to Chapter Four which focused on the development of the current conflicts in the region, this chapter scrutinises the role of various actors in contributing to the protracted conflict in the Niger Delta region. The chapter argued that payments for resources in the oil-bearing communities and/or countries are a common practice which aims to safeguard the future of resources in the said communities or countries. However, when these payments are made for other purposes than those expected, they become illicit, thus paving the way for contentions and conflicts in the communities. As applied to the case of the Niger Delta, it seems that oil payments that should have been used for the betterment of the whole country, particularly the oil bearing regions, have been used for the benefit of the state's officials and a cluster of individuals. This practice has resulted in the discontentment of the people in the resource-bearing communities who resorted to individual justice based on sabotaging and disrupting oil installations in the region.

Overall, the chapter has identified two layers in the analysis of the conflicts in the Niger Delta. The first layer constitutes the structural factors composed of political culture, government system, political economy of oil and diverse ethnic groups. The second layer involves factors themselves, namely manipulation of tensions by political actors and oil companies, manipulation of youth by business conglomerates and the violent repression of

legitimate protests. It draws from both layers of analysis that rather than constituting a factor of development and cohesion, oil resources and revenues have been used as an instrument of enrichment for some and repression for others. Oil revenue has been used as a weapon of massive repression instead of responding positively to the aspirations of oil-bearing communities. Oil taxes or payments need to be re-thought, in terms of how they could contribute to the compensation for the depletion of resources and to the repair of damages that host communities have incurred as result of exploitation, if a sustainable conflict management and resolution is to be achieved in this region. However, for this to be effective there will be the need for the federal government to take responsibility in the management of the oil-conflict in this region. This leads the discussion to the next chapter on the state-sponsored conflict management initiatives.

Chapter Six: State-Sponsored Conflict Management Initiatives

6.1   Introduction

Assessing the effect that various government initiatives have on conflict management can be a challenging task. If such initiatives were specifically intended to help resolve the conflict, many initiators and implementers of conflict management projects may assume that their efforts will contribute at least to something, such as the goal of reducing violence. However, one could wonder whether this is always the case, particularly in the Niger Delta region. Many government-sponsored conflict management initiatives in post-conflict settings may have no discernible impact on the conflict, may exacerbate the conflict, or may even create new conflicts. So, bearing this in mind, this chapter investigates the state-sponsored conflict management initiatives as applied to the conflicts in the Niger Delta region. The Nigerian state has responded to the Niger Delta crises with all sorts of measures which they consider in their best interests, including the establishment of several development intervention agencies, the upward review of the revenue allocation to the region, the use of brutal force and, more recently, the amnesty programme.

This chapter attempts to appraise past and present initiatives taken by the Nigerian state in resolving the crisis in the Niger Delta region, to examine their strengths and weaknesses. As in Chapters Seven and Eight, data collected from the field research undertaken between 2014 and 2016 in Nigeria – in Abuja, Lagos and Ibadan, as well as other villages located in the Niger Delta region – are presented and analysed in four main sections. Overall, it might be said that whilst the state-sponsored conflict management initiatives in the Niger Delta region are believed to have done little to bring peace to the region, this approach has also been blamed for not tackling the real problems which sustain the conflict in the region: the deep-seated issues considered to be the root-cause of various conflicts in the region are still unsolved. While this chapter responds to the main objective of this thesis, as do the upcoming Chapters Seven and Eight, it is however worth remembering that it also answers the second specific research question of this study, namely: In what ways has the state responded to the conflict in Niger Delta and how successful have its initiatives been? Finally, this chapter is structured around four sections: the establishment of developmental

intervention agencies, revenue allocation, the 13% derivation principle, the use of military force and the amnesty programme.

6.2   Establishment of Developmental Intervention Agencies

Several federally instituted developmental agencies have been established for the sole purpose of readdressing the challenges in the region. Essentially, the idea of a development intervention agency was based on the report of the Willink commission of 1958 (Ogan 1994). This commission was formed by the colonial administration in response to the agitations of the Niger Delta minorities; believed to be the result of the high level of ecological deterioration, destitution and underdevelopment. After the commission's enquiry, colonial administration recommended a special treatment for the region, with the minorities' interest being secured by the Constitution, working alongside a special agency, which had to be created, confronting their developmental challenges. However, despite these decisions, conflicts resulting from oil exploitation in the Niger Delta are still not at an end. This section examines four development intervention agencies established by successive governments since independence.

6.2.1 Niger Delta Development Board

The Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) was instituted in 1961 by the Federal legislature in accordance to section 14 of the 1960 Constitution to transform the Niger Delta into a developed region (Constitution 1960; Ogan 1994). This appeared to be the first response to various agitations that had occurred in the region. The principal aim of the Board was to carry out an extensive survey and prepare schemes designed to promote the stabilisation of the local economy and the physical development of the region which would serve as a guide to the federal government on developing the region (Etekpe 2007). By implication, the NDDB operated merely in an advisory capacity. Nevertheless, they identified the local means of livelihood (mainly agriculture) in the region, experimented with a variety of agricultural produce and techniques so as to enhance the region's productivity and developed a scheme for the physical development in terms of road networks and settlement (Enemugwem 2009). However, the Board's activities had little impact as it never moved beyond the planning stage. In spite of the extensive surveys and other activities of the NDDB, the government failed to implement its recommendations on solving the Niger Delta problems (Enemugwem 1998; Ikporukpo 2001). It is thought that the federal government lacked the political will and commitment. On the other hand, the political instability and the

1967 Biafra civil war also harmed the activities of the Board. Note at this point that after the Biafra civil war, the government diverted the money meant for the Board's activities into a fund for restoration and reconstruction programmes across the country (NDDC 2006); something that led some people to believe that the military government had no interest in developing the region, eventually discarding the NDDB's recommendations on resolving the Niger Delta issue. Without ceasing to function officially, the use of the NDDB's money for purposes other than was originally intended rendered the NDDB obsolete and figurative, unable to implement the objectives it was created for.

6.2.2 Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)

General Babangida's administration (1985-1993) established the OMPADEC under Decree no. 23 of 1992. This commission was a response to the rising discontent and restiveness in the region as it spread beyond the Ijaw youths to include the Ogoni youths in the region. The commission was mandated to address the years of neglect of the Niger Delta region. OMPADEC was funded by 3% of oil revenue which had to be utilised for the restoration and development of the region on the basis of the ratio of oil produced in particular areas (Adebayo 2006). This was a more generous funding when compared to its predecessor. However, as a result of mismanagement, OMPADEC failed to achieve its goal. The commission increasingly gained a reputation for entrenched corruption, white elephant projects, poor planning and a lack of consultation with local people. As documented by Sanya (2006), most of its funds were embezzled while the little that remained could only provide electricity and piped water to some villages in the region. In its first three years of operation, OMPADEC started projects valued at USD 500 million but funds were paid to contractors with no contact address, leaving the institution with a huge amount of debt and abandoned projects five years prior to their intended completion (Sanya 2006; Edigin and Okonmah 2010). A staff member of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) concurred that the agency was bequeathed with numerous abandoned or uncompleted projects and vast debts.[15] The absence of a grass-rooted developmental programme coupled with corruption resulted in the execution of projects with little or no impact in alleviating the sufferings of the Niger Delta people. In fact, the Niger Delta people saw the agency as a ploy used to enrich associates of the military government with the pretence of developing the region (Adefaye 2008; Ibeanu 2008). The level of corruption was so evident that the first

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[15]Interview conducted with a staff member of NDDC, Abuja, 16 December 2014.

two sole administrators, Albert K. Horsfall and Professor Eric Opia, were sacked in quick succession. Opia was said to have failed to account for funds running to hundreds of millions of dollars (Frynas 2001; Okonta 2006; Sanya 2006). In addition to the bane of corruption, the federal government manipulated and withheld its monthly allocations as alleged by Horsfall, an ex-chairman of the commission (The Guardian 2000). OMPADEC was replaced by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000.

6.2.3   Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

As a response to the rising violence in the region, the new civilian government led by President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) submitted a bill that eventually led to the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to replace OMPADEC in 2000. The commission was to address the ecological crisis and developmental challenges through conceiving, planning and implementing projects and a programme to bring sustainable development to the Niger Delta region in the areas of transportation, including waterways, telecommunications, water supply, industrialisation, employment, education and health (NDDC Act, section 7(1); (b)). In fulfilling its mandate, NDDC was directed to create and implement an extensive plan for the region which was eventually called the Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan (NDRDMP).[16] The NDRDMP is a fifteen-year plan with an implementation budget of USD 50 billion (Ereibi 2011; Lapin and Rossiasco 2011). In regard to funding, the commission was to be financed through the following contributions; 15 % of the monthly allocation from the federation account, 50 % of the Ecological Funds allocated to the oil-bearing states, 3 % of the total budgets of the oil and gas producing companies and any other contribution from foreign or private bodies (NDDC Act). However, as shown in Table 6.1, the actual funds released to the commission are far less than the contributions agreed by law. Until 2015, the unremitted funds to NDDC stand at NGN 800 billion (about USD 2,216,000,000) (Ibileke 2015).

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[16] The Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan (NDRDMP) is a comprehensive development plan produced from wide-ranging studies and inputs from local stakeholders over a period of six years. The plan essentially entails environmental preservation, micro and small-scale enterprises, human development initiatives, poverty alleviation, community needs and infrastructural development.

Table 6.1: Federal Government Nigeria (FGN) Releases to NDDC, 2001-2009

Some materials have been removed due to 3rd party copyright. The unabridged version can be viewed in Lancester Library - Coventry University.

Source: NDDC (2012)

Within the first five years of operations, NDDC started 2,035 physical development projects across the Niger Delta region (Ereibi 2011). As shown in tables 6.2 and 6.3, the projects

included human capacity development, erosion control, building, shore protection, electrification, water supply, jetties, roads, bridges and canalization in the states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers.

Table 6.2: NDDC Projects –Summary of Completed and On-going Projects 2002-2005

Some materials have been removed due to 3rd party copyright. The unabridged version can be viewed in Lancester Library - Coventry University.

Source: NDDC (2012)

Table 6.3 NDDC Projects –Summary of Completed and On-going Projects 2002-2005

Some materials have been removed due to 3rd party copyright. The unabridged version can be viewed in Lancester Library - Coventry University.

Source: NDDC (2012)

The Commission shows a bias for costly, prestigious projects such as regional roads and jetties which have not bequeathed significant improvement in the welfare of the Niger Delta people (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011). The Commission focuses on lofty projects that will satisfy contractors rather than the ordinary Niger Delta people. This contradicts the participatory approach that underpins the Popular Version of Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan (NDRDMP) where the local indigenes were involved in the planning process. During my fieldwork in Nigeria, a conflict analyst and a staff member of

the Macro-Economic Model of the Nigerian Economy (MONC) based in Abuja both had convergent views supporting the opinion above. The conflict analyst indicated that the commission adopted a top-down approach in deciding on the projects to execute. This approach alienates the local people from the selection and ownership of the project[17] and is also seen as the source of a hostile relationship between the contractors and the community which does not have any sense of ownership or interest in the projects (Okolo 2014). The staff member of MONC was of the view that the non-involvement of local communities had limited the impact of the projects that NDDC embarked upon.[18] In the same vein of thinking, a staff member of NDDC indicated that the rate of completed projects is adversely affected by the slow and poor implementation process. In this analyst's view, a lot of projects were awarded with little funds available to execute them.[19] A staff member of NDDC added that this situation is further complicated by successive administrators of the commission who execute new projects rather complete the older ones.[20] In May 2009, the NDDC had initiated 2,416 infrastructure projects, of which only 841 had been completed (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011). It is important to mention that by the end of 2014, NDDC had 4,000 uncompleted projects (Vanguard 2014).

The commission also had human capacity development programmes, which focus on job creation, as one of its stated priorities. Onwuke (2010) advises that in fulfilling this aspect of their portfolio, they executed projects such as the Empowerment Scheme (NDDC/GLO Empowerment Scheme), the NDDC Mass Transit Scheme (providing vehicles on Hire Purchase to the public) and issued NDDC-NTAC (Technical Aid Corps) contracts (computer training programme). However, evidence from my fieldwork indicates that these projects failed to improve the woes of the people as a result of gross mismanagement, insincerity, insider dealings and nepotism on the part of the NDDC management.[21] An indigene from the Niger Delta that I interviewed told me that there have been instances of the diversion of empowerment aids by the management of NDDC for the gain of themselves and their allies.[22] His view concurs with Okolo's (2014) research which showed examples of purchased vehicles meant to be given on hire purchase to the common people were hijacked; the multi-

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[17] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 8 December 2014.

[18] Interview conducted with a staff member of Shell, Abuja, 11 January 2016.

[19] Interview conducted with a staff member of ExxonMobil, Abuja, 11 January 2016.

[20] Interview conducted with a staff member of NDDC, Abuja, 16 December 2015.

[21] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 20 January 2016.

[22] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Abuja, 20 December 2015.

billion NGN partnership with GLO (telecom company) Nigeria limited to provide start-up equipment was also ruined by insider deals, nepotism and corruption as most relatives of NDDC staff benefitted from it. This left a Nigerian NGO staff member to suggest that some of these programmes lacked real substance and were not fit to empower the Niger Delta people.[23] The NDDC's performance has been riddled with a number of factors namely: corruption, insufficient planning, gross mismanagement, due process violation, lack of accountability and clarity, and lack of consultation with local stakeholders. Ige's (2009) research, for example, underlines that, like its predecessors, successive heads of the commission were accused of corruption. The same research added that in August 2008, a former NDDC chairman, Mr. Sam Edem, was charged with embezzlement of funds amounting to NGN 800 million (about USD 2,216,000). In support to Ige's research, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission's (ICPC) (2011) report, released in 2011, revealed that in that year, the acting MD of the NDDC was arrested and prosecuted by the ICPC, an anti-graft agency, amounting to USD 20 million, whilst in 2010, the execution of 500 project contracts was stopped as they did not follow due process (Aborisade 2010).

6.2.4   Ministry of Niger Delta

The Yar'Adua administration (2007-2010) formed the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) with the responsibility of formulating and coordinating the Federal Government's development initiatives and programmes in the region as it concerns youth empowerment, infrastructural and environmental projects. According to the government, the ministry will serve as a mechanism that will enhance better focus and speedy implementation of Federal government developmental projects in the region (Taiwo 2008). The initial announcement of the Niger Delta Ministry drew reactions. Some in the region saw it as a renewed strategic commitment towards developing the region, while for most it seemed to be another avenue for political settlement and enrichment rather than to serve the interests of the Niger Delta people. According to the ICG (2009), the social movement called Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) advised the region to receive the ministry with apprehension as it might end up being another means for corruption and political patronage. Unfortunately, several years after its establishment, the ministry has achieved little. According to (Francis *et al*, 2011), in 2009, the MNDA's entire NGN 50 billion budget was

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[23] Interview conducted with a NGO staff member, Abuja, 11December 2015.

tied to already existing federal government projects. The Budget of NGN 50 billion comprised of NGN 3 billion for recurrent expenditure and NGN 47 billion for capital expenditure, out of which NGN 30 billion were reserved specially for the East-West road project (The Nation 2009). However, one NGO staff member I interviewed during my fieldwork claimed that most of the projects executed by the ministry were politically inspired with little or no regard to its impact on the wellbeing of the local people.[24] This is partly responsible for the uncompleted projects by the ministry. Moreover, the lack of coherent development planning strategy and lack of concerted framework for action has resulted in unfinished projects. According to a Niger Deltan indigene living in Abuja, this hinders the ministry's capability to properly select projects that add the most value and to pursue it to completion. There is the issue of lack of clarity between the roles of the MNDA and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) as they seem to create an unclear image of overlapping, duplication and competition in their plans for projects, he added.[25] The MDNA proposed to construct new jetties in Ekeremor and Brass meanwhile, in 2010 and 2011; the NDDC had already budgeted for these same projects in the very same locations (NDBMG 2012).

Based on the evidence gathered from my fieldwork, it might be argued that successive governments have not been sincere in their intention towards fixing the developmental challenges of the region. The little effort taken towards ameliorating the plight of the people by the government has failed to measure up, considering the amount of funds said to have been spent by its development intervention agencies, particularly OMPADEC.[26] From documentary review and interviews I carried out, this failure can be attributed to the lack of commitment, mismanagement of funds, extravagant spending, excessive politicisation of policies and appointments and the lack of clear focus on the part of the government and its agencies. This could also justify why the government failed to properly fund or implement the report of the intervention agencies, most especially the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) master plan. My opinion is close to that of a few individuals with whom I held focus group discussions, particularly Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch members. To these people, a number of crucial elements seem to be missing in the operations of the successive development intervention agencies. These elements include:

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[24] Interview conducted with a NGO staff member, Abuja, 11 December 2014.

[25] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Abuja, 20 December 2015.

[26] Fieldwork's results, Nigeria, 2013 to 2016.

clarity of direction, the appointment of qualified and tested technocrats (not politicians), proper funding, effective supervisory mechanisms, and strong-willed government that can guarantee more effective and efficient development interventions in the region.[27] It emerged from this discussion that the agencies have been poorly managed by inefficient administrators whose primary interest was to divert funds for their personal enrichment. Repeatedly, the various intervention agencies have had to conceptualise and implement development projects without the participation of the intended beneficiaries of the development. On the other side, the top-down approach adopted by the agencies accounts for the high cost of projects that have been executed, projects that have had little bearing on people's livelihoods. Furthermore, lessons learned from the discussion tell that the prolonged underdevelopment of the region remains a source of frustration and agitation to Niger Delta people. Finally, the overall trend arising from these views suggested that the failures of the successive agencies have contributed to the escalation of the conflict: the local communities came to realise that violence against the oil industry is the only language that the Nigerian state understands clearly.[28]

6.3   Revenue Allocation: the 13% Derivation Principle

Following the review of the various development intervention agencies, this section looks at the revenue allocation as it has applied to the Niger Delta region. The revenue allocated to the Niger Delta has been at the centre of the agitations of the indigenes. In an interview I conducted with an academic, it was indicated that the Federal Government and the region have been in continual dispute over the revenue allocation formula.[29] According one MNOC staff member I interviewed, some stakeholders are of the opinion that the oil benefits allocated to the region are fair,[30] while another MNOC staff member is of a different view as he claimed that the Niger Delta people deserve a greater share as they alone bear the negative impact of oil exploitation.[31] Whether and how to reconcile these views remains an open question, however, as indicated in table 6.4, the revenue allocation to the region had been declining from 1966 until 1999 when it was revised upwards.

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[27] Focus group discussion conducted with Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch staff members, Shell and ExxonMobil staff member, indigenes and researchers, Abuja, 11 December 2015.
[28] Focus group discussions conducted in Abuja, Lagos and Ibadan, 2014-2016.
[29] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, Abuja, 8 December 2015.
[30] Interview conducted with a staff member of ExxonMobil, Abuja, 1 January 2016.
[31] Interview conducted with a staff member of Chevron, Abuja, 19 January 2016.

Table 6.4: Revenue Derivation: Niger Delta State Shares of Petroleum Proceeds 1953-Present

Some materials have been removed due to 3rd party copyright. The unabridged version can be viewed in Lancester Library - Coventry University.

Source: Lapin and Rossiasco (2011)

Initially, the revenue allocation was based on the principles of Derivation[32] and Even Progress.[33] The three federating units (Northern, Western and Eastern regions) retained 50% of the revenue derived from their respective region; 30 % to be retained by the central government and 20% went to a pool account to be shared by each of the federating units on the basis of population and need (Udeh 2002). One Niger Deltan indigene claimed that the previous formula was discarded as oil became more valuable, creating a sense of unfairness

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[32] The Derivation principle would grant a certain percentage of the revenue generated by the constituting unit.

[33] The Progress principle was designed to allow for adjustments in grants depending on each state's relative need, population and level of poverty.

to the Niger Delta people.[34] However, a few indigenes raised their concern by arguing that when the other regions were producing cash crops (Southwest: cocoa, North: groundnut, East: palm oil), they all pushed for the derivation principle, so why change the rule because of their own resources, crude oil? To these individuals, successive military governments (1966-1979; 1983-1998) gradually reduced the percentage of derivation in the revenue allocation formula; something which instilled a sense of mistrust, deprivation and bitterness in the hearts of the Niger Delta people over the years.[35]

As part of the response to a growing crisis, the 1999 Constitution reversed the trend and entrenched the derivation principle, pegging it to a minimum of 13%. While the increase might have created an impression of fairness in the revenue allocation, the increase of derivation principle remains at the heart of the Niger Delta struggle.[36] It has been at the forefront of various national conference and reports by committees set up by the federal government, stated an academic acquainted with the revenue allocation project.[37] This issue of revenue allocation alone brought the national political reform conference of 2005 to an abrupt end, added another analyst who closely followed the project developments.[38] Nevertheless, the 13% derivation principle granted to the region has produced little in terms of real human and physical development, opined another academic analyst.[39] Another similar view from a NGO staff member was that various stakeholders inside and outside of the region have wondered how the level of development can be commensurate with the amount of funds allocated to the region even with the strong oil prices during late 2000s.[40] For example, for the half-year 2007, the revenue apportioned in the statutory allocation to the four major oil-producing states of Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers, amounted to NGN 58.11 billion, NGN 35.95 billion, NGN 41.46 billion and NGN 85.58 billion, respectively (Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) 2007).The clamour most especially by the ruling Nigerian and the Niger Deltan elite for an increase in the derivation percentage diverts focus from the real issue of how well they have utilised the funds already allocated to these oil-bearing states. This statement led to an academic claiming that the 13%

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[34]Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 14 January 2016.

[35] Focus group discussion conducted with NGO staff members, MNOC staff member, community members and researchers, Ibadan, 12 January 2014.

[36] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Legos, 15 January 2016.

[37] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 10 December 2014.

[38] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 8 December 2015.

[39] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 10 December 2015.

[40] Interview conducted with an NGO staff member, Abuja, 11 December 2015.

derivation principle granted to the region brings to light the fundamental issue that hinders tremendous progress in the region, including failed governance, lack of accountability and transparency regarding public funds rather than the lack of sufficient funds.[41] As noted by HRW (2007) and Ewerenmadu (2008), the magnitude of corruption and governance failure in the Niger Delta is shocking. It is prevalent across the entire nation. Nevertheless, the revenue allocation formula will always remain a ticking bomb (Mefor 2009), as the funds were corruptly mismanaged and local people did not benefit. It will keep showing up on every national dialogue in the country and the federal government cannot delay acting on it indefinitely.

6.4   Use of Military Force

The use of military force has been a common conflict-resolution strategy deployed by the Federal Government in the Niger Delta region. This often involves conscripting security operatives from the entire spectrum of the country's armed forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) with the order to clamp down on any uprising in the region. As the anti-oil protests aggravated in the early 1990s, the Federal Government started deploying armed forces in the region as the police force failed to quell the uprisings (Okumagba 2012). Constitutionally, the Nigerian police force is charged with the responsibility of preserving law and order, claimed a civil society member.[42] However, according to a Niger Deltan indigene, the militants overwhelmed the Nigerian police force, hence the deployment of armed forces to the region. The aggressiveness of the military operations resulted in significant destruction to properties, loss of life and displacement of residents, he added.[43] Instances of state coercion include: the 1990 Umnechem Massacre, the 1992 Bonny Tragedy, the 1994 Egi-Obaji Mayhem, the 1994 Tai-Baira(Ogoni) Massacre, the 1995 Ubima Tragedy and the 1999 Odi Massacre(Raji 1998; Ovwasa 1999; Eteng 1996).

As shown in table 6.5, even after the return to democratic rule in 1999, the Federal Government still relied on the use of the military to subdue any agitation in the region. The civilian government militarised the region with the establishment of a Joint Task Force. The

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[41] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 20 January 2016.
[42] Interview conducted with an NGO staff member, Lagos, 20 December 2015.
[43] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 14 January 2016.

JTF comprises of the State Security Service, Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Air Force, Nigerian Navy and Nigerian Army which were mandated to forestall the criminal activities of militants, preserve and to restore law and order in the region (Omonobi 2004). The JTF has about 4,000 military personnel deployed in Niger Delta. The JTF's mandate requires a strategic use of force to guard the populace while eliminating the militants (Akin-Ojo 2010).

Table 6.5 Militarisation of the Niger Delta 1999-2010

Date	Place	Operating Force	Action
1999	Odi	Army and Mobile Police	Razed the entire community and properties worth millions of NGN were destroyed
January 2004	Uwheru	Operation Restore Hope	Killed 20 persons Razed 11 houses
July 2004	Egbema	Operation Restore Hope and Joint Security Task Force (JSTF)	Used gun-boats, military helicopters and bombs to destroy 13 communities 200 persons, mostly women and children are still missing and are feared dead
August 2004	Olugbobiri and Ikebiri	State Security Operatives	Killed 16 youths for agitating for a better deal from multinational oil
October 2005	Odioma	JTSF	Killed 77 people, including youths
2006	Okerenkoko	JTSF	Killed several people and destroyed properties
2008	Agge	JTSF	Killed several people and destroyed properties
May 2009	Gbaramatu	JTSF	Killed several people and destroyed properties
Dec 2010	Ayakoromo	JTSF	Killed several people and destroyed properties

Source: Okumagba (2012)

While they succeeded in restoring order in most cases of violent conflicts, their involvement usually leads to a disastrous situation with massive waste of human life and property, as shown in table 6.5. In the same way of thinking, a Niger Delta indigene claimed that the JTF operations in eliminating the militants alienated the local citizenry and further increased the locals' sympathy for the militants.[44] An analyst concurred and added that it seems that the primary motive of the security forces is to protect the oil and gas industry with little regard for protecting the civilians in the regions.[45] Asuni (2009) confirms the widespread abuse of human rights, coercion, intimidation and alliances with criminals by the military. In the light of the fieldwork results, it might be argued that the consistent use of force after 1999 led to the emergence of groups such as the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF)[46] and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).[47] Fieldwork evidence shows that even with the massive deployment of JTF in the region, this strategy could not put the militants under control; rather, it worsened the situation, as the surge of these militant groups created more problems for the government.[48] The government spent about NGN 700 billion on security operations between 2008 and 2009 alone (Asuni 2009). By mid-2009, over 1 million barrels of oil production were lost as a result of the deepening militancy (Okumagba 2012). The Nigeria state claimed to have lost over USD 6.8 billion between 2005 and 2009 (Abosede 2012). The use of force to quell protests by the government has been grossly ineffective. The military lacked the capability to manage preventable violence without the loss of innocent lives and destruction of properties. It led to human rights violations and led to the emergence of militia groups. Also, the strategy could not suppress the militancy activities, rather it further aggravated the conflict. The militancy activities significantly affected oil production and revenue. Furthermore, there was the high cost of maintaining the military operations in the region. The militarisation of the region as a strategy only heightened the conflict in the region.

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[44] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 14 January 2016.

[45] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 28 January 2016.

[46] Considered as a terrorist group, NDPVF is one of the largest armed groups in the Niger Delta region, created in 2004 and largely composed of the Ijaw ethnic group. Their objective of fighting is to gain more control over oil resources in the Niger Delta region.

[47] MEND is a free network of armed movements the Niger Delta region that are strongly involved in kidnapping oil workers, attacking oil fields, blowing up pipelines and defying Nigeria's army. They make billions of dollars by stealing crude oil from pipelines.

[48] Results of research fieldwork conducted in Nigeria, 2014-2016.

6.5   Amnesty Programme

By 2008, armed insurgency in the region had reached its peak. At that time, it was quite obvious that the use of military action was not sufficient to conquer the militants in the region. Consequently, ex-President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was compelled to change tactics by withdrawing the stick and offering a carrot in the form of amnesty on 25th June, 2009 – a delayed implementation of the 2008 Technical Committee report.[49] The amnesty was part of that committee's recommendations. This new programme was entirely financed by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and came under presidency projects and budgets (Abazie-Humphrey 2014). The Federal Government's initial budget for the Amnesty programme was NGN 50 billion (Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) 2014). Structurally, the Presidential Amnesty was based on a Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) approach. The DDR strategy is a transformational process that offers social, political and economic reintegration for ex-combatants so as to return them to civilian life (Gleichman et al. 2004). The amnesty was offered on the understanding that the militants were willing and ready to surrender all illegal arms in their custody and to unequivocally renounce militancy in all its forms within 60 days commencing from 6th August and ending on 4th October 2009. At the expiration of the ultimatum, 20,192 ex-militants laid down their weapons, surrendering 2,760 arms of different categories, 763 explosives, 3,155 magazines, 287,445 rounds of ammunition and 18 gunboats to the Presidential Amnesty Programme and accepting the amnesty deal (Abiodun 2009). Moreover, 6,166 ex-militants were later enlisted into the programme by the end of November 2009 (Charles 2010). As summarised in Table 6.6, by the end of the disarmament stage, key militants including Henry Okah, Tompolo and Ateke Tom had accepted the Amnesty deal.

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[49] A committee set up in September 2008 by the ex-president Yar'Adua, comprising of 45 members including scholars, thought leaders and civil society activists mandated to review all existing commission reports, suggestions, recommendations and position papers on Niger Delta crisis and to recommend urgent solutions.

Table 6.6: Summary of Key Militants that Accepted the Amnesty in 2009

Ref. No.	Names	Date of Acceptance	Estimated arms and ammunition surrendered
1	Solomon Ndigbara alias Osama bin Laden	26 June 2009	Gave up 11 firearms and 1,000 rounds of ammunition
2	Henry Okah	13 July 2009	The supposed leader of MEND, Okah, did not surrender any arms because he had been arrested in Angola and extradited to Nigeria where he had been detained since February 2008 and was facing closed trial on 62 charges.
3	Victor Ben Ebikabowei alias General Boyloaf and 31 other militants; including African Owei, Joshua Macaiver and Ezizi Ogunboss	7 August 2009	Surrendered an assortment of 520 firearms, 95,970 rounds of ammunition and 16 gunboats.
4	Soboma George of Outlaws cult group.	13 August 2009	Surrendered 36 assorted weapons
5	Kile Silkey Torughedi (Young Shall Grow).	5 September 2009	Gave up an assortment of arms totalling 100 weapons, 100,00 rounds of ammunition and 3 gunboats

| 6 | Ateke Tom of NDV | 3 October 2009 | Exact number is unknown but it included: anti-aircraft weapon launchers, General Purpose Machine Guns, AK-47 rifles, Mark IV rifles, pistols and much ammunition. |
| 7 | Manfimisebi Othello and the Gwama Boys of Ilaje | 3 October 2009 | Surrendered different weapons, such as: sub-machine guns, AK-47 rifles, hundreds of rounds of ammunition and arrows |

Source: Lysias (2011)

After the disarmament stage, the ex-militants were moved to designated centres (two each in Aluu, Rivers state and Agbarho, Delta state) for demobilisation. These centres can accommodate 3,000 people and as a result the ex-militants were grouped into batches. They received NGN 65,000 as a stipend during the demobilisation period (Ekumaoko 2013). Currently, the reintegration phase is still on-going as the amnesty office reintegrated them into the economy, primarily by deploying them to vocational and higher education courses in Nigeria and abroad.[50] Here they acquire training in technical and entrepreneurial skills and received formal education. As summarised in table 6.7, by 2013, the programme has trained over 9,000 ex-militants in various professions such as fabrication, welding, plumbing and electrical installation to mention a few.

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[50] The study destinations include Ghana, South Africa, the Philippines, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Russia, Canada, UK and U.S.

Table 6.7: Ex-militants trained in Obruba Camp in Rivers state
Some materials have been removed due to 3rd party copyright. The
unabridged version can be viewed in Lancester Library - Coventry University.

Source: (Ikelegbe & Umukoro 2014)

Evidence from a government official indicates that as of March 2015 about 11,000 ex-militants were waiting for placement in academic or vocational training facilities. The Federal government through the Presidential Amnesty Office (PAO) liaised with both the private and public sector to engage the ex-militants.[51] Obia (2014) records a small number of institutions such as the Nigerian Army, Nigerian customs service and SAP Drilling Oil and

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[51] Interview conducted with a member of the office of the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta, Abuja, 11 April 2015.

Gas Limited that engaged some of the ex-militants. Fifty jobs are said to have been identified in road safety, the Navy, Air Force and Customs as 'senior officers' (NSRP 2011). Similarly, Vanguard (2012) reported a total number of 113 ex-militants had been employed both locally and across many countries: for example, about 40 of them were engaged in Ghana, South Africa and Dubai. However, it is important to remember that the developmental projects were not finished, partly because of security conditions.

On the basis of the evidence provided by a staff member of NDDC who I interviewed in Abuja, just a cursory look at the Amnesty programme could signify success[52] for two reasons. Firstly, the prominent militia leaders accepted the amnesty deal, according to a Shell staff member.[53] Secondly, the acceptance of the amnesty deal has secured some level of peace and stability in the region, believed a Niger Delta indigene.[54] As a direct result, attacks on oil companies' facilities and the kidnapping of their expatriate employees fell. This positive détente also resulted in a subsequent increase in crude oil production from a level of 700,000 bpd in mid-2009 to between 2.2 and 2.4 million bpd since 2011, hence allowing the government to demonstrate a positive impact on the nation's revenue profile (Igwe 2010). Through the stability brought by the programme, Kingsley Kuku, the Chair of the Amnesty Programme Implementation Committee, approximates the extra oil earnings by Nigeria and its joint venture partners at NGN 6.3 trillion in 2012 (Sayne 2013). It has saved an estimated NGN 3.74 billion daily which was utilised in tackling the militancy (Vanguard 2009). This progress allowed a staff member of NDDC to be optimistic by claiming that the stability brought by the Amnesty fostered development projects in the region as it was safe for contractors to execute their projects.[55]

On the contrary, however, a deeper analysis reveals that there are challenges imbedded in the programme itself. Drawing from ex-militants' DDR programme, Onuoha (2011), for instance, advises that the success of DDR is very much dependent on the first and second stages which are the disarmament and demobilization. Disarmament success is very much dependent on the number of weapons surrendered compared to the stock of weapons estimated to be possessed. There is a common belief that only a small fraction of the (ex) militant's arms were handed over as most of them had doubts about the government's

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[52] Interview conducted with a staff member of NDDC, Abuja, 16 December 2015.

[53] Interview conducted with a staff member of Agip Oil Company, Abuja, 27 January 2016.

[54] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 14 December 2015.

[55] Interview conducted with a staff member of NDDC, Abuja, 16 December 2015.

sincerity with regard to the amnesty deal. Looking at the amnesty programme, an inland researcher and analyst suggested that the number of arms surrendered by the ex-militants is not commensurate with their actual number and the projected number of arms anticipated to be surrendered.[56] This raises the question of how is it that only about 2,760 arms were recovered from 20,192 ex-militants. Furthermore, the subsequent 6,166 ex-militants enlisted into the programme have no available record on the arms they laid down. There is also the question of the authenticity of some of the people that registered as ex-militants, since there are some indications that most of the people presenting as ex-militants did not actually take part in the armed struggle (Okonofua 2011). In a response to Okonofua's (ibid: 243-244) concern regarding this issue, a member of the Niger Delta Community claimed that:

> No genuine militant is participating in the Amnesty program. None! The people you see, these are area boys of some big shot politicians. They put their boys and girlfriends in there just to make money. If you think I am lying, ask about the weapons returned. And you will see that where they say they have 26,000 reformed militants, they will only show you a few hundred guns and thousands of bullets. What is a bullet without guns? Bullets are like groundnuts in the Niger Delta.

Another Niger Delta indigene claimed that the people who were part of the amnesty programme were either just unemployed individuals looking for a means of livelihood, or the cronies of politicians.[57] This created a bloated figure, thus crowding out the real militants from participating in the programme. Conversely, there is the issue of non-inclusion of some ex-militants from the second and third phases of the programme. According to Ameh (2013), the failure to properly reintegrate ex-militants would create more problems in the future as they might be forced to return to the life of crime. To illustrate this better, by 2009, the incidence of oil pipeline vandalism was about 1,453, by 2010 it fell drastically as a result of the introduction of the amnesty programme via the DDR programme. However, by 2011, it rose to 2,768 during the reintegration phase and has become a major issue in the region, as the result of keeping the true ex-militants from participating in the programme. Table 6.8 below summarises different incidents occurred from 2009 to 2012 as a result of the inappropriate application of the Amnesty programme.

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[56]Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 8 December 2015.

[57] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 14 January 2016.

Table 6.8 Pipeline Incidents in Nigeria 2009-2012
Some materials have been removed due to 3rd party copyright. The unabridged version can be viewed in Lancester Library - Coventry University.

Source: NNPC (2012)

Another challenge engrained in the amnesty programme is the means of paying the ex-militants. An arrangement whereby payments are initially made to ex-militant commanders who in turn pay their "boys" in the camps reinforces the bond between the ex-militants and their commanders, giving the latter the ability to rally them to any new cause. Also, it is important to add that there are also cases where these "boys" are being short-changed by their ex-commanders (Eno-Abasi 2011).

Indications from my research fieldwork show that the indirect money for weapons approach might undermine the success of the amnesty programme as many of the ex-militants may only be interested in the financial gains rather than the reform packages.[58] This poses a danger as the ex-militants might likely return to violence when the stipend stops flowing or when they are unable to find employment opportunities that will pay them as much as the Amnesty programme.[59] Evidence from an interviewee indicates that the NGN 65,000 stipend paid to the ex-militants is significantly higher than the average public servant pay, deterring most of the ex-militants from searching for, or accepting, a job. This might create new regional security issues in future when the programme comes to an end.[60] Also, the kind of training offered to the ex-militants does not align with the labour market. The training is very much centred on aviation, oil and gas businesses with a consequential raising of expectations

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[58] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 20 January 2016.

[59] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Abuja, 20 December 2015.

[60] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 15 December 2014.

of the ex-militants who look forward to working in such industries.[61] Meanwhile, the industry sources contend that there is little or no space available to absorb these trained ex-militants.[62] By the end of the first quarter of 2015, a meagre 151 ex-militants out of the 15,451 graduate trainees were able to get jobs with reputable organisations (ICG 2015). Another major issue arising from the implementation of Amnesty is its narrow focus on the militancy. The Amnesty programme was just part of Technical Committee's recommendations, what happened to the other recommendations, asked a community member.[63] Other concerns that the amnesty programme did not factor in are to do with the empowerment of women and youths, environmental remediation and sustainability, establishment of credible institutions, etc. A community member has been of the view that the fact that the vulnerable groups in the communities are excluded from the amnesty programme is problematic. Vulnerable groups, according to this indigene, include women, children, unemployed youths and elderly persons. They are excluded from the benefits and assistance packages associated with amnesty.[64] This sends a wrong signal: that the use of violence pays; those that did not take up arms are excluded from the programme.

The amount of money expended on the ex-militants reveals the government's disposition to buying peace. On the programme, the government have expended NGN 72 billion and NGN 88 billion in 2012 and 2013 respectively (Punch 2012). This surpasses the yearly budget for basic education. In fact, this is perfectly reflected on the huge oil pipeline contracts awarded to ex-warlords by the government, ranging from NGN 560 million to NGN 3.6 billion (This Day 2012). This supports the evidence from a NGO that the ex-militant general Tompolo, alone was given a contract worth NGN 3.6 billion which excludes other contract such as the Vessel supply contract worth over NGN 15 billion.[65] In addition to the ex-militants commanders, most of the funds designated for the programme has been utilised in paying its administrators and the rising number of consultants and contractors. During an interview with a community member, it was claimed that a review carried on the programme in 2010 revealed that 80% of the budget had gone on payments of consultants and contractors,

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[61] Interview conducted with a staff member of Shell, Abuja, 11 January 2016.

[62] Interview conducted with a staff member of Elf Petroleum Nigeria, Abuja, 28 January 2016.

[63] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 15 December 2014.

[64] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Abuja, 20 December 2015.

[65] Interview conducted with a NGO staff member, Abuja, 11 December 2015.

leaving 20% for the rehabilitation of the ex-militants.[66] This supports Ameh's (2013) view that the programme itself has now become a very lucrative business for the political class.

Overall, it emerged from the above that there has been much focus on the amnesty programme with little emphasis on the root causes of the crises in the region. There is no practical development besides the few developments initiated by the development intervention agencies. There remains environmental degradation, underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment, corruption and marginalization. Furthermore, there are vast constituencies of the Niger Delta people that are excluded in the post-amnesty deal, specifically Ogoni youths, who had no involvement in the armed struggle. These marginalised youths can pose a future threat to peace in the region as they have observed that violence seems to be the only tool that will get the government to address their needs. Since Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the amnesty programme has been the most successful intervention programme to bring relative peace in the region. However, if the root causes are not effectively tackled another vicious cycle of violence will eclipse the post-amnesty peace.

6.6   Conclusion

The conflict management strategies adopted by the Nigerian government in the Niger Delta have been largely defective and ineffective. Though, it has fairly resolved some of the issues fundamental to the oil conflict in Niger Delta, yet there is still much to be done. Successive administrations have approached the crisis from three major platforms: developmental interventions, increases in revenue allocation and the use of brutal force. The government (s) have established several development intervention agencies to execute infrastructural and human development projects in the region. Unfortunately, they have failed to effectively execute their mandate. The appointment of politicians as the agencies' administrators, the lack of consultation with the beneficiaries and unbridled corruption remain factors that have hampered the effectiveness of the agencies. Also, the government increased the revenue allocated to region through the increase of the derivation formula. However, the increased allocation does not trickle down to the poor masses but rather it ends up in the hands of the predatory network of the Nigerian state. The lack of transparency and accountability of the utilisation of oil revenue by political leaders in the region facilitates the abuse of public funds. One of the most commonly adopted strategies by the government is the use of force

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[66] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 14 January 2016.

which is aimed at violently repressing any form of uprising or threat to the oil business. The violence only complicated the crisis in the region as it inspired the Niger Delta people to develop a correspondingly violent response through the emergence of militia groups to tackle the state security agents. It led to the loss of human lives and properties as civilians were caught in the crossfire. Furthermore, the state security agents lacked the training to quell the insurgency without harming the civilian populace. Finally, the master stroke that brought relative peace in the region is the amnesty offer to the militia groups. The willingness of the militia groups to surrender their arms shows that the youths would prefer a legitimate means of livelihood to a life of crime. Although it has brought peace to a degree, the programme is a diversion from the real issues sustaining the conflict in the region. The deep-seated issues are yet to be largely resolved. Environmental degradation, underdevelopment and unemployment still pervade the region. Meanwhile, the absence of strong political will, the non-implementation of the NDDC's master plan, non-consultation with the grassroots, poor funding, appointing mediocre staff and having a strong reliance on brutal force all symbolise the insincerity of the Nigerian state towards resolving the root causes of the crisis.

Overall, this chapter has analysed the state-sponsored conflict management initiatives as applied to the conflicts in the Niger Delta region. Its main argument was that several government-sponsored conflict-management initiatives in post-conflict environments could fail to have an impact on the conflict, could exacerbate the crisis, or may even pave the way for other tensions. The chapter endeavoured to assess a few initiatives taken by the Nigerian state in managing and resolving the crisis in the Niger Delta region. The presentation of data throughout this chapter has broadly brought up two perspectives. The first is that the Nigerian state has attempted to address the Niger Delta crises using various approaches including the establishment of several development intervention agencies, the upward review of the revenue allocation to the region, the use of brutal force and, more recently, the amnesty programme, which at first sight has given the best results. The second, however, considers that the state-sponsored conflict management initiatives in the Niger Delta region have scarcely settled conflict in the region and have neglected the deep-seated issues considered to be the root-cause of various conflicts in the region which are still unresolved. Conflict in the Niger Delta is an oil mineral issue whereby the conflicting role of oil companies is undeniable. The next chapter will try to examine how oil companies approach conflict in the Niger Delta region.

Chapter Seven: Conflict Management Initiatives by Oil Companies

7.1   Introduction

It is commonly agreed that multinational companies working in the oil and gas sector have to be aware that the impact of their operations can lead to conflict. Failure to appreciate and address local dynamics in regions of potential conflict, or regions known as such, might be costly to their effective existence in terms of impact on employee safety, normal business operations, social licence to operate, reputation and future opportunities. Worldwide, in oil producing countries like Nigeria, oil and gas companies are believed to have accrued significant experience of working in areas of conflict. Nonetheless, rudimentary knowledge of, and training in, conflict risk and conflict management seems to be a common concern in oil-producing developing countries. In the oil and gas sectors, it is becoming increasingly clear that conflict, in all its forms, is a business risk that these industries should not overlook. In fact, the MNOCs operating in regions that are at risk of, or experiencing, conflict need to be prompt in taking decisive steps to proactively and conscientiously address socio-economic grievances resulting from their involvement in resources exploitation, if they are to manage and reduce the risks that conflict poses to their existing or potential operations.

This chapter evaluates conflict management initiatives by the oil companies in the Niger Delta. It contends that the problem of conflict management between the oil companies and oil communities in this region is not new. As made clear in the preceding chapters, political and social volatility has long been a real concern in the Niger Delta region where large oil and gas resources exist. Recently the conflict between the MNOCs and oil communities has been getting worse as, in the search for more oil, the companies operating in the Niger Delta extend their operations into the more conflict-prone parts of the region. At a minimum, conflict and social unrest could be a source of costly delays to new projects and operations. Similarly, it could also result in damage to a company's reputation, depending on that company's responses to conflict and on the consequences, or perceived consequences, of its behaviour and actions. In the worst cases, conflict could lead to the loss of lives and livelihoods among local populations, employees or contractors and deep developmental set-backs. Greater success is believed to stem from working proactively to avoid conflict and to build sustainable relations with communities and governments instead of trying to defuse discontent and outrage after they have arisen. To do so, the MNOCs would, at least, need to

be aware of the potential impacts of their actions both on their own business and on the local communities in which they are working. Also, they would need to pursue actions and policies that avoid the stimulation of new conflicts or the aggravation of old ones. In this chapter, the analysis of findings is presented in one main section: Conflict Management Initiatives adopted by the MNOCs. It explores the different means used by the MNOCs to settle conflicts in the Niger Delta region. It also responds to the third specific research sub-question: in what ways have the companies engaged with the state and communities in their oil operations and what are the relevant factors that influence the conflict management initiatives of oil companies in the Niger Delta.

7.2   Conflict Management Initiatives adopted by the MNOCs

Several multinational oil corporations (MNOCs) operate in the Niger Delta region as shown in table 7.1, including Elf Petroleum Nigeria Ltd (EPNL), Total, Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), ExxonMobil, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC). These MNOCs epitomise the major players in the oil industry in Nigeria and make use of Joint Ventures (JVs) to fund most of the oil and gas projects while other projects, particularly the recent ones situated offshore, have been funded through Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs). The combination of these two different arrangements is what is called in the oil or mining sector, a 'fiscal and contract regime' and is recorded in the hydrocarbon or mining code. It involves a signing of agreements between the MNOCs and the host community, often represented by the state's government depending on the political system applied in the host state (Gordon *et al*, 2011). The understanding of fiscal and contract regime in the oil sector is very important because it is a source of conflict in case one contractual party is less respective of engagements than the other. It has been proved that much of the conflict in the mining or oil sector is the result of a lack of understanding of fiscal and contractual regimes or the lack of respect for signed engagements (Picton-Turbervill 2014). Joint Venture (JV) is a contractual structure formed between two or more parties to create a new entity by both or all parties contributing equity, and they then share the revenues, expenses and control of the enterprise. A Production Sharing Contract or Agreement (PSC or PSA), however, is an agreement with a host country regarding the percentage of production each party will receive after the participating parties have recovered a specified amount in costs and expenses (Johnston 1994; Mazeel 2010; Gordon *et al*. 2011; Picton-Turbervill 2014).

Table 7.1 Major Oil and Gas Companies in the Niger Delta

Major Operator (Entry year) Est. Average. Production	Principal Companies	Operations and Community Footprint	History: Status of Shut-Ins as of January 2008 (bpd)
EXXONMOBIL ExxonMobil (1955) 620,000 bpd	Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (JVMPNU) Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited (PSC - EEPNL)	Produces around 720,000 bpd of crude oil, condensates, and natural gas liquids from 90 offshore wells **No onshore production**. **Near offshore:** Qua Iboe platform **Communities:** Eket and Akwa Ibom LGAs **Deep offshore**: Erha, Usan, Boli, etc.	Nil
DUTCH/SHELL (1937) 510,000 bpd Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG): processes 7.5 bcfd of gas	Shell Petroleum Development Company (JV-SPDC) Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (PSC -SNEPCO) Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (JV-NLNG)	Produces around 630,000 bpd of crude oil, condensate, natural gas liquids (down from 1 million in April 2006) **Onshore:** SPDC: production area of 31,000 km^2 in Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Imo, Rivers **Communities**: 1,200 **Near Offshore:** EA Field **Deep Offshore:** Bonga Field **NLNG Communities**: Bonny Island, Finima	**Onshore:** Forcados 280,000 since Feb. 2006 **EA:** Shallow offshore SNEPCO 115,000 from Feb. 2006 **Bonga deep offshore Field:** 19 June 2008 failed MEND attack

CHEVRON (1961) Merged with Texaco in 2001 500,000 bpd	Chevron Nigeria, Limited (JV-CNL), and Texaco Overseas Petroleum Co, Nigeria (JV- TOPCON) PSC: Chevron Agbami	**One-third of operations are onshore.** First offshore discoveries in 1963 **Onshore:** Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Ondo, Rivers **Communities:** 425 **Deep Offshore:** Agbami field began July 2008	Escravos (Chevron) 70,000 since 2003 Pennington (Texaco) 20,000 since mid-2007
TOTAL (ELF) (1962 –as ELF) Total merged with ELF in 2000 300,000 bpd	Total E&P Nigeria Limited (JV - TEPNG) formerly: (EPNL) Total Upstream Petroleum Nigeria Ltd. (JV- TUPNI)	**Onshore communities:** Delta: 7, Rivers: 14 **Coastline Rivers**: 4 LGAs, **Pipeline communities:** Akwa Ibom: 20 **Offshore:** fields Amenam/Kpono **Deep offshore:** Akpo, Usan fields	Affected by shut-ins of partner projects
ENI S.p.A (AGIP) (1962) 150,000 bpd	JV - NAOC, a subsidiary of ENI Other: Nig. Agip Energy and Natural Resources (PSCAENR) and Nig. Agip Exploration (PSC-NAE)	**Onshore:** Four fields in Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Imo, and offshore fields. **Communities:** 300 **Offshore:** AENR, NAE	40,000 as of April 2007

Source: Francis et al. (2011).

Although this chapter looks at the conflict management approach as applied by various oil companies operating in the Niger Delta including Shell, Total, Chevron Nigeria, EPNL,

ExxonMobil and Agip Oil Company, much of the focus, however, will be given to Shell, not only because it is the longest established MNOC, but also because it has the largest onshore footprint in Nigeria's oil industry. Broadly, it is important to bear in mind that the MNOCs operating in the Niger Delta have developed their own view regarding conflicts in the region. This particular comprehension of conflict, which is not necessarily shared by the oil communities, has also resulted in a certain approach to conflict resolution by the MNOCs: conflict suppression and crackdown on those that dare to protest. The following strategies adopted by the MNOCs in handling conflict in the region illustrate this approach.

The upcoming lines review a variety of community development approaches including; the deployment of state security agents, the use of vigilante groups, giving cash gifts, awarding contracts to powerful elements in the community and the provision of community development projects used as conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region.

7.2.1 The Deployment of State Security Agents

One of the strategies emerging from my research findings gleaned from different interviews is the use of state security agents by the MNOCs to manage community protests.[67] It bears emphasising that before the 1990s the oil companies in the region of Niger Delta were keeping a low security profile using un-armed security forces and limited perimeter fencing around their properties. At that time MNOCs had been deploying supernumerary police, known as a security unit that does not carry arms, as their security operatives (Okonta and Douglas 2001).

However, at the start of the 1990s, as the awareness of the ecological disaster caused by the oil business intensified, and while the issue of prolonged underdevelopment was still unsolved, a more organised structure of anti-oil protest in the region thrived in an unprecedented manner. As Ikelegbe (2001) posited, the anti-oil struggle started to rally around civil society and youth groups. As the consciousness of the locals in the region rose, the MNOCs adopted new approaches to their security arrangements. The uprising during this period ushered in a grand collaboration between oil companies and the Nigerian state for the securitisation of the oil operations. The oil companies fortified their security arrangements with the state security services such as the mobile police, navy and army. They imported arms and financed the state security forces. For instance, Shell was indicted in the

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[67] Fieldwork's results, research fieldwork conducted in Nigeria, 2014-2016.

importation of arms ranging from smoke grenades, through bullets, to sub-machine guns in order to reinforce its security arrangements (Frynas 2001:51). Moreover, the MNOCs took full responsibility for the up-keep of the state forces which were protecting their facilities. From an assessment carried out by Niger Delta Human and Environmental Rescue Organisation (ND-HERO), it has been revealed that Nigeria Agrip Oil Company (NAOC) had a 100 per cent responsibility for the troops posted to its facilities (ND-HERO 2000).

From a series of interviews I conducted with individuals from different communities in the Niger Delta region, Abuja and Lagos, my research results showed that the oil companies have been using force as a key strategy for resolving the surging conflict in the region.[68] These results concurred with the views of some conflict analysts in the region that state security forces have been used by the oil companies to settle their conflicts with local communities in the Niger Delta region. For example, evidence from a youth leader from Omuku village in the Niger Delta,[69] supported by two different sources: a lecturer of the University of Abuja[70] and a Niger Delta indigene based in Abuja,[71] indicated that Shell had relied heavily on intimidation and the use of state security forces in quelling oil-related agitations. However, there have been some occasions where Shell was inviting the armed forces, which included the Army, Navy and Police directly, to suppress any form of organised protests even without any approval from the government (Ibeanu 2000). In 1987, the natives of Iko in the Niger Delta carried out a peaceful demonstration against Shell on its obnoxious practice of flaring gas. In response, Shell brought in the mobile police force; a forceful and military operation which destroyed homes and left about 350 people homeless, inflicted injuries and raped women (ERA 1995; Okonta and Douglas 2001). Three years later, an unarmed community in Umuechem protested against the adverse effects of Shell's drilling operations on their farmlands which were covered with oil spillage. In response, Shell invited in the mobile police force. The police intervention killed 80 people and destroyed 495 homes (Douglas and Ola 1990). Following this event, the anti-oil protest grew across other communities Ijaw, Uzure, Irri, Izon, Ogbia and Uzure (Bello 1992; Bello 1992; Rowell 1994; HRW 1995).

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[68] Interview conducted with an Eruemukohwarien community member, Amodu, the Niger Delta, 10 December 2014.

[69] Interview conducted with an Omoku community member, Amodu, the Niger Delta, 10 December 2014.

[70] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 12 December 2015.

[71] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Abuja, 13 December 2015.

As referred to further in Chapter Eight, there is the well-known case of Kenule Saro-Wiwa, where Shell was implicated for their complicity in the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other indigenes. Ken Saro-Wiwa, the leader of MOSOP and an environmental rights activist, started massive protests against the environmental catastrophe resulting from Shell's work in Ogoniland. The group issued a series of demands: that Shell should pay ten billion dollars in royalties and damages, stop its pollution, make good the exposed pipelines and start fresh negotiations for any future oil extraction projects. The ruling government took advantage of the controversial death of four Ogoni chiefs by a violent mob to arrest and sentence Ken and his colleagues to death in an unfair trial (Osaghae 1995; Adefemi 1998; Holzer 2007). In 1998, Chevron called in a joint force of Navy and mobile police forces to attack a group of protesters that occupied one of their oil facilities. The attack resulted in the killing of two Niger Delta activists (Goodman and Scahill 1998). The same way, in 2000, the naval personnel posted at NOAC's brass terminal shot dead five youths who were protesting against the non-execution of an agreement reached with the company in 1994 (HRW 2000). Furthermore, in 2005, Chevron invited a joint force of soldiers and mobile police to disperse a protest carried out by a group of Ugborodo women in the Niger Delta. As illustrated above, the involvement of state security led to the loss of a life and scores of injured protesters (Irene 2005), with many of them having claimed they were tortured and abused.

What is even worse, the continuous reliance on state security force by the MNOCs instead of using appropriate and acceptable conflict-handling mechanisms inspired the youths to engage with the oil companies in more violent measures. Moreover, it is of note that despite the huge funds spent on security, the assaults on the MNOCs installations continued unabated. Research from Amunwa (2012), for example, depicted that Shell spends more than USD 1 billion on the security of its production infrastructure. However, the incidence of continued and coordinated assaults on its oil installations and employees stood at about 40 incidents in 2006. This figure rose to 80 and 90 incidents in 2007 and 2008 respectively, while at the same time the abduction of oil company employees reached 62 in 2006 and 172 in 2007 (Nnimmo 2015). In the same way of thinking, it is important to underline that the oil companies experienced frequent production shut-ins as a result of the sustained militant assaults. For example, in June 2009, Shell production went down significantly to 140,000 bpd, losing 85.9% of its production (Adeyemo 2009). Hence, it may be argued that the reliance on the use of state security by the MNOCs in handling conflict further worsened the situation as the oil communities in the Niger Delta region became more hostile towards their

operations. On a personal note, I can contend that MNOC use of state security agents for conflict management has been ineffective and illegitimate: not only has it backfired in terms of loss of production, but also it has bred further conflict and dissension in the region rather than reducing it. This tactic seems to be a demonstrably disingenuous approach to conflict resolution by the oil companies, in many ways similar to divide and rule tactics, as further developed in the upcoming sections.

7.2.2 The Use of Vigilante Groups

Realising the worsening security situation arising from the use of state security forces, the MNOCs instead reached an agreement with the youths in the villages of Niger Delta oil communities to protect their oil production facilities.

The use of these 'vigilante' groups is a particularly invidious tactic of divide and rule. It consists of getting one section of youth to do a dirty job for the MNOCs. It is an attempt to co-opt part of the youth. From an interview I conducted with a staff member of Shell in Abuja, it was clear that local communities' youths were engaged by the MNOCs to invigilate and protect pipelines against illegal oil bunkering and vandals.[72] This view supports Day's (2008),who asserted that Shell developed a 'Community and Shell Together' (CAST)policy designed to recruit youths to protect oil pipelines from vandalism. A source from ExxonMobil agreed with the two views above and indicated that the hiring of youths by the MNOCs was seen as a means of engaging the youth economically to deter them from disrupting oil production.[73]

However, the hiring of these youths by the MNOCs apparently complicated the security issue of both the oil companies and communities in that some of the youths engaged were also members of the militants who carried out attacks against the oil companies. A report from Agence France-Presse (2003), for instance, indicated that in 2003 the case of 14 kidnapped Chevron staff was linked to some members of a security outfit employed from the communities to guard their facilities. This confirms the evidence from research and an analyst who claimed that the security arrangements as provided by the MNOCs have always fuelled violent struggle for employment among community youth as well as groups within

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[72] Interview conducted with a staff member of Shell, Abuja, 15 January 2016.
[73] Interview conducted with a staff member of ExxonMobil, Abuja, 20 January 2016.

communities.[74] In the same vein, a lecturer of peace and conflict studies at the University of Lagos added that the groups left out from the companies' security 'arrangements' often attack the oil companies' facilities or use other forms of violence.[75] It seems to be that the oil companies give out huge sums of money to the vigilante groups so they can acquire arms to not only strengthen their capacity to protect their oil installations, but to fight rival gangs. This situation illustrates how the MNOCs have been playing into the intensification of the local conflict dynamics in the region (WAC 2003). As result, this strategy changed the socio-economic situation, thereby increasing the grievance situation and the culture of greed, particularly for those groups left out of the security arrangements. In the long-term, as is further discussed in the following section, the oil companies will employ the 'use of vigilante groups' as a tactic aiming to divide and rule local communities.

7.2.3   Giving Cash Gifts and Contracts to Powerful Elements in the Community

Offering cash gifts and contracts to powerful elements in the community is a way of buying off potential opposition. As in the use of vigilante groups, this is again a very dubious and morally reprehensible tactic due to its partial and unfair approach to addressing conflict. This attitude has been condemned by many individuals which I had discussions with during my fieldwork. Looking at this invidious tactic, results from my fieldwork also indicated that the MNOCs adopted the strategy of giving gifts and contracts to the most vocal and violent groups in the oil communities as a means of handling potential conflict that could emerge as the result of their oil activities within oil communities.[76] Evidence from a lecturer at the University of Lagos, for example, suggests that the oil companies have been lobbying the groups in a community which are most influential on those capable of disrupting oil production.[77] A researcher from the University of Abuja similarly stated that the giving of gifts and contracts to a category of individuals known for their violent activities against MNOCs facilities has become a vital licence to operate peacefully in the region.[78]

However, reflecting on the agreements between the MNOCs and certain groups of youth leaders within oil communities, it is important to point out that the initial arrangement was between the oil companies and the community ruling elite. That is to say that the oil

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[74] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 21 January 2016.

[75] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Lagos, 11 January 2016.

[76] Results of the fieldwork conducted in Nigeria, 2014-2016.

[77] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Lagos, 16 December 2015.

[78] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 10 December 2015.

companies focus on local elites, traditional chiefs, before cutting off security agreements, as they are seen as influential within communities. The MNOCs reached agreements with the leaders of the community to whom they gave cash and contracts for them to carry out. This was the beginning of the patronage relationship in the region: a relationship between a few members of the communities and the MNOCs (Nnimmo 2015). These development contracts were awarded to these individuals without any evaluation plan, as the oil companies were not concerned at all about the way the funds were to have been allocated towards the development of the community. In most cases, these projects were either not executed at all or were poorly implemented, said an indigene from the Niger Delta.[79] The oil companies were seen to be buying peace from the community leaders through the contracts awarded (Norimitsu 2002; HRW 2005; Watts 2007), a situation which led an analyst to claim that the MNOCs fostered a strong tie with the local elites as they provide the oil companies with low access cost and a peaceful operating environment.[80] The view concurs with Kemedi' (2003) who asserted that the ruling elites in most of the communities became corrupt, having diverted project funds for personal enrichment at the expense of their people. As a researcher put it:

> By taking advantage of low cost access to security through these arrangements, the oil companies have built a material relationship with the traditional leaders of the communities. On the contrary, these leaders started losing their authority or control over their subjects, especially the youth. Hence fragmentation and weakening of social relation in the community arose.[81]

The youth accused their elders of leadership failure as they were seen to stand by in silence as the oil companies destroyed their homeland for a paltry compensation.[82] Osaghae *et al.*'s (2007) research on the militancy activities within oil communities in the Niger Delta provided that the youths lost faith in their ruling elites and so they decided to confront the patronage alliance that emerged between the oil companies and their traditional rulers, hence they resorted to disrupting the operations of oil companies in the region. This is what Ukeje *et al* (2002) alluded to as youth guerrilla warfare aimed at damaging the oil companies'

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[79] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 22 January 2016.
[80] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 15 December 2014.
[81] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 10 December 2015.
[82] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 11 January 2016.

installations also heightened the insecurity in the oil communities. In doing so, they have thus severed themselves from their elders and no longer receive any instructions from the ruling elite. As a consequence, according to Ile and Akukwe (2001) and Kemedi (2003), the oil companies in turn started dealing with the youths as they were seen as the ones with more disruptive powers. The youths became the object of patronage and power brokers; becoming the determiners of major decisions in most oil communities particularly on the distribution of oil profits.[83]

It is arguable at this point that the oil companies were identifying and influencing those powerful stakeholders in communities that had the capability to ensure a peaceful business operation for them. Ikelege (2006) elaborated on this point, ascertaining that the MNOCs supported selected individuals who were considered to be influential in their communities. He concluded that although the MNOCs' support was shown to be evident to certain factions, these factions, however, still retained the ability to disturb the MNOCs operations. Ikelege's stand (2006) seems to corroborate some realities on the ground, as the contestation over patronage and rent-seeking resulted in violent struggles among youth groups within communities, giving rise to individuals fighting one another for supremacy. Programmatically, however, this was part of the 'divide and rule' tactics of the oil companies. An analyst claimed that when the youths succeeded in getting their demands met by the MNOCs by using violence, they realised their power and so resorted to yet more violence to get their subsequent demands met.[84] Another conflict expert is of the view that the sabotage of the Oil Companies' installations by the youths partly promoted the culture of violence by youths against the oil business. Once a group is identified as the master-mind of violence, they become available for conflict settlement, he added.[85] Overall, it could be argued that the selective financial and material offering strategy adopted by the MNOCs weakened the community's relationship and divided community's members. It also created a struggle for power and position to access the oil benefits that come with such a position. This further reinforced a culture of violence in the oil communities.

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[83] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 12 January 2016.
[84] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 13 December 2015.
[85] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 17 December 2015.

7.2.4 Provision of Community Development Projects

In an effort to placate the host communities, the oil companies have also been providing community development projects. Originally, the MNOCs adopted a corporate assistance approach that placed emphasis on corporate philanthropy in the provision of assistance programmes to their host communities. However, the oil companies' development undertakings in the oil communities were limited to philanthropic indulgencies (Francis *et al*. 2011). Ite (2004), in this context, indicates that the MNOCs implemented community projects that were directly related to their operations, including rolling out agricultural support programmes, providing basic amenities to the neighbouring communities which serve their remote oil facilities; scholarship awards on petroleum courses etc. Most of the community assistance programmes that were implemented were designed to enhance the MNOCs social image rather than to address urgent social and economic problems and had little or no impact on the socio-economic wellbeing of the oil communities.

Conversely, at start of the 1990s, the anti-oil protests had intensified as the Nigerian state failed to provide social goods and the environmental degradation caused by oil production continued unabated. Research from Okoko (1996) showed that the host communities channelled their demands to the oil companies who were seen as the conduit through which their resources went to the federal government. They perceived the development of their communities as a legitimate duty of the MNOCs. One could argue that with the increasing pressure from the local communities, the MNOCs were forced to re-examine their approach towards community development, stepping up their support for infrastructure as well as agriculture, health and education. Taken from this particular view, Francis *et al*. (2011) put forward that the oil companies evolved their approach from corporate philanthropy to a 'Top-Down' community development approach and finally to a 'Bottom-Up' approach that places emphasis on sustainable development and community participation.

Researching on the oil companies' provision for the oil communities, however, Nwokolo (2012) pointed out some problems associated with the initial approach of providing the community development projects that further exacerbated the crisis. Initially, the provision of development projects and other social services, according to an operational manager of Total, were predicated on the communities being designated as 'Host Communities'.[86] Herein lies the important issue to underline: that the MNOCs draw a clear line between communities that

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[86] Interview conducted with a staff member of Total, Abuja, 21 January 2016.

directly host their oil facilities and those outside of their area of operations. This difference in the understanding of 'host community' is the basis of the policy which determines access to oil benefits for communities located within the operational zones of the oil companies, added a staff member of Chevron.[87] It follows from this that the adoption of such policies can breed violent conflict between communities in the region, fuelling intense struggles between communities for the access to oil benefits. Additionally, these policies have also polarised the existing, but volatile, peace among these communities. Besides, they have proved that the oil companies have failed to understand that the damaging effect of their operations is also borne by the communities surrounding the host communities, namely: oil pollution, high cost of living and loss of livelihood (Nwokolo 2012). A significant example is that the violent clash between the Ijaw communities Ogulagha and Odimodi in Delta state was as a result of the non-host community being adversely affected by the oil production with no compensation while the designated host communities enjoyed the oil benefits (Vanguard 2008). This inter-community conflict illustrates another consequence of divide and rule tactics by the MNOCs.

In regard to a top-down approach adopted by the oil companies, communities were provided with assistance on the basis of what the oil companies believed were the needs of the communities (Francis *et al*. 2011). However, as observed by some critics (WAC 2003; Idemudia and Ite 2006), it is arguable that the application of the top-down approach by oil companies was the result of their lack of a systematic approach in the provision of development projects for the communities. Over time, such projects were often implemented haphazardly with little positive impact on the socio-economic wellbeing of the oil communities. This was exemplified by a notable from Obrikom who said that there were cases of unfinished projects, particularly a health centre in Obrikom in Port-Harcourt that was constructed by Agip with no equipment and drugs in it.[88] From another source, but supporting the same view, it was said that coupled with the policy of issuing contracts to prominent individuals in the oil communities, the oil companies further fragmented social ties and exacerbated the conflict within communities, as their projects were either never completed or ended up in the pockets of a few individuals.[89] This situation fuelled conflict among groups within oil communities which in most cases escalated to violence.

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[87] Interview conducted with a staff member of Chevron, Abuja, 14 January 2016.

[88] Interview conducted with a notable of Obrikum community, Amodu, Rivers state, 15 November 2014.

[89] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 15 January 2016.

Over time, the MNOCs became increasingly frustrated by the chaos, violence and destruction (IRIN 2006). Part of the increasing violence was related to competition for compensation for land ownership, allocation of employment opportunities and community-development projects. The increased funding towards community development by the MNOCs did not seem to make much difference as the violence continued unabated with little to show for the funds disbursed for community development. Research by Bustany and Wysham (2000), for example, depicted that the sum of USD 28 million disbursed for community development by Chevron during 1990-1997 was largely misused as most projects were either missing or non-functional. Similarly, the assessment carried out on Shell's community development projects revealed that less than a third of the projects established were successful (Legborsi 2004). With regard to Chevron, its operations were disrupted over 70 times between 1997 and 2001 following violent community clashes (Reider and Haastrup 2013). Summarily, it could be said that the conflicts that were associated with previous community development programmes were driven by the exclusion of the oil communities' own initiatives and the arguments among factions/ethnic groups over oil benefits.

Recognising the divisive consequence of the 'host community' designation, Chevron decided to initiate a development policy that targeted clusters of communities in its operational area (IRIN 2006). Therefore, in 2004 Chevron took the initiative of changing the traditional development strategies and to reduce conflict and strengthen civil society through a new model called 'Global Memoranda of Understanding' (GMOUs). This model is primarily based on 'bottom-up' community-driven development initiatives in the region (Ristau and Knight 2008). A GMOU is a written agreement between an oil company and a group of several communities. The groupings are based on local government or ethnic lines as advised by the relevant state government. Under the terms of the GMOUs, the communities select the developments they desire while the oil companies provide the funding. Chevron's GMOU created coalitions of communities that concentrated efforts on managing projects to meet long term goals. The company (with the support of New Nigeria foundation) created eight federations on an ethnic basis managed by 'Regional Development Councils' (RDCs) – a governance structure in each cluster made up of representatives from the community, NGO, government and oil company, covering 850,000 people in 425 communities in five states (Reider and Haastrup 2013). Other oil multinationals followed suit in adopting the GMOUs model (Okechukwu 2014). In 2006, Shell Nigeria declared plans for 67 similar structures, clustering 1,200 communities under Community Development Boards. By the end of 2012, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) had reached agreements with 33 GMOU

clusters, covering 349 communities, about 35% of the local communities around their business operations in the region (SCIN 2013).

As for the desire of the Niger Delta communities, an independent assessment undertaken in 2009 suggested that they want to partake in the management of their development through community-driven arrangements that guarantee community-based planning and greater local empowerment (RTI/SFCG/CBI 2008; Francis *et al*. 2011). The results of this assessment corroborate the view of a researcher from the University of Ibadan who stated that an appraisal of the GMOU revealed the intent of many community stakeholders. This researcher claims that the community-driven arrangements approach stimulates more sustainable development, ownership and transparency, and has enriched company relationships with the communities. [90] Moreover, the GMOU model has been widely accepted by the oil communities, [91] as claimed by an engineer of EPNL, who is familiar with the local development projects. This is because one of the great innovations of this approach is that all decisions on local projects would be made in a participatory process by the community at large, starting with community focus groups that included women and youth as confirmed by a consultant of Nigeria Agip Oil Company.[92]

Moreover, an indigene close to the projects advised that through this approach, the communities do get assistance from partnering donor agencies or NGOs in the planning and designing of their projects. [93] Therefore, unlike previous development programmes, the GMOUs contain a series of checks and balances to ensure transparency and guarantee strong financial oversight (LaPin 2000). Project funds are released by the approval of a community management board chaired by the oil company with the release being triggered by satisfying criteria, such as: the identification of project as a high priority, identification of certified local contractors and project budgets. Chevrons GMOUs implemented approximately 258 projects in more than 400 communities and benefitted some 600,000 lives. Projects worth more than USD 83 million have been completed (Chevron 2015). In 2012, through Shell's GMOUs, a total of 723 projects were completed. By 2012, over USD 117 million had been spent on the GMOUs programme (SCIN 2013). The projects completed involved electrification, education, health, transportation, housing and economic empowerment. The economic

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[90] Interview conducted with a University reseacher, Ibadan, 15 January 2016.

[91] Interview conducted with an engineer of Elf Petroleum Nigeria Ltd, Abuja, 20 January 2016.

[92] Interview conducted with a consultant of Nigeria Agip Oil Company, Lagos, 17 January 2016.

[93] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 14 January 2016.

empowerment projects included investment in SMEs, skill acquisition and micro-credit schemes which all brought the prospect of alleviating poverty in the communities (Idemudia 2009). Micro-credit is particularly important for women's groups. Further, the community development councils or boards are expected to maintain a record of their development history, in order to attract funds from other sources. Nine of the 33 Cluster Development Boards (CDB) under Shell GMOUs are now registered foundations receiving third- party funding (SCIN 2013).

The implementation of GMOUs has reduced violence around the areas of the oil companies' operation. Chevron, for example, recorded a reduction in community-induced disruptions to their operations from 81 in 1998 to zero in 2012(Reider and Haastrup 2013). Experience from my fieldwork shares the view that largely, GMOUs are a successful model owing to some MNOCs adopting them for empowering the oil communities. It is thought important to maintain a sustainable partnership between the oil companies and the oil communities. For this to be achieved, in addition to the community development projects, there needs to be a credible change in the setting of the MNOCs corporate priorities and the way in which they execute their core activities in order to reduce the environmental ills associated with their business. Furthermore, over the long term the choice strategy for industry is to attract greater commitment from government, donors, NGOs and other private entities to support community development in the region.[94]

7.2.5 Reparation and Conservation of the Environmental Damage

The environmental degradation caused by oil exploration has been at the centre of the oil communities' agitations. In an interview I conducted with an engineer of Shell in Abuja, environmental concerns and their remediation were one of the contents of Shell's plan towards conflict-management initiatives, the engineer claimed that the remediation of environmental damage caused by oil extraction is one of initiatives adopted by the MNOCs towards managing the conflict in the region.[95] Following the mid-1990s incident, Shell took measures towards replacing its old flow-lines and pipelines that are more than fifteen years old (Aghalino 2009), a situation which entails the installation of modern equipment to enhance the safety and environmental standards of their operations.[96] Quite recently, most of

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[94] Fieldwork conducted in Nigeria, 2014-2016.

[95] Interview conducted with a staff member of Shell, Abuja, 16 January 2016.

[96] Interview conducted with an environment engineer working for Shell, Lagos, 15 December 2014.

the MNOCs are undertaking remediation programmes on past impacted oil production sites.[97] Shell has been involved in remediating over 700 impacted sites across the Niger Delta covering over 1,500 hectares including legacy sites such as Bomu-11, Bomu-31, Bomu-manifold, Sime, Nokpor, K-Dere, B-dere and Bomu Well 41/50 (Shell 2012). Concomitantly, other MNOCs, in collaboration with the federal government, have started several ambitious natural gas utilisation projects which, among others, include the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas Project at Bonny in Port Harcourt and Gas-to-liquid project at Escravos in Delta state (NLNG 2015).[98] According to two different engineers from Shell and Chevron I interviewed respectively in Abuja and Lagos, it may be considered that the projects above were aimed at eliminating gas flaring.

There has also been some effort by the oil companies to incorporate a waste management system for their facilities, including a system aimed at reducing the impact of their operation on the environment by treating and disposing waste products in compliance with relevant regulatory requirements.[99] Shell, for instance, has two recyclable waste depots where waste from its installations are reprocessed, while the organic waste is transformed into manure utilised for remediating polluted land (Odisu 2015). However, despite the efforts taken, a staff member of ExxonMobil that I interviewed in Abuja is not aware of the fact. To him:

> The MNOCs have not done much to prevent environment degradation and that the oil companies still have lot to do in remediating the environment, as the production sites claimed to have been remediated were still polluted.[100]

Based on the assessment carried out by UNDP (2011), oil pollution at several sites was claimed to have been cleaned up by Shell. However, following the inspection, it has been found on the ground that the company's Remediation by Enhanced Natural Attenuation (RENA) technique for environmental remediation was ineffective. Similarly, a Union for the Conservation of Nature-Niger Delta Panel study (2013) noted that the methodologies presently utilised for the remediation and rehabilitation of oil spill-impacted sites in the Niger

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[97] Interview conducted with a staff member of Shell, Abuja, 16 January 2016.

[98] Shell is the leading private investor in the NLNG project which processes about 3.5 billion (standard) cubic feet per day of natural gas while Chevron is the leading private investor in the NLNG project which processes about 325 million cubic feet per day of natural gas (Chevron 2015).

[99] Interviews conducted with Shell Engineer, Lagos, 22 January 2016.
Interview conducted with Chevron Engineer, Lagos, 22 January 2016.

[100] Interview conducted with a staff member of ExxonMobil, Abuja, 21 January 2016.

Delta do not fully address the need for the rehabilitation of biodiversity. Amnesty International (2015) concurs and adds that little has changed since the UNDP assessment. There are still recent cases of oil spillage and on-going gas flaring. In 2014, Shell and ENI have admitted to more than 550 oil spills in the Niger Delta in the previous year, according to an Amnesty International study of the companies' latest figures. This represents a huge disparity when compared with Europe where only 10 spills have occurred between 1971 and 2011(Amnesty International 2015). However, continuous delay on cleaning up polluted land in the region will keep encouraging confrontation between the oil companies and the oil communities. More so, such delays further complicate the remediation process, as it becomes more difficult to clean-up over time. There is a need for a more concerted effort by the oil companies towards adopting effective remediation techniques and accelerating the remediation of past impacted oil production sites. Furthermore, the issue of continuous gas flaring and oil spills needs to be effectively addressed. Such an effort would go a long way to reduce the frustration of the oil communities.

Broadly, in regard to the in-depth analysis of above-substantiated conflict-management initiatives adopted by the MNOCs, namely: the deployment of state security agents, the use of vigilante groups, cash gifts and contracts offered to particular indigenes and the provision of community development projects, I might argue that the conflict management system of the MNOCs is not effective owing to the security situation of companies varying widely. In reference with the deployment of security agents, for instance, it has been established that the management arrangements surrounding the conflicts in the Niger Delta is opaque (Avant 2005: 184), as quite often oil companies rely on public security forces for both protecting their operations and for settling their disputes with local communities. For example, oil companies have been asking for the supernumerary police to be deployed for the protection of their facilities. This police, also known as 'spy police', are officially one of the specialised units of the Nigerian Police Force, but have been *de facto* employed by the oil companies, since they are paid by them. Oil companies also depend on different public security forces: police, army and navy to protect their assets. These forces are thus repeatedly allocated to oil companies' facilities, hence getting paid by companies including top-up allowances, housing and meals (ICG 2006b: 7-9; Omeje 2006: 80).

As to cash gifts and contracts offered to particular indigenes, one could ascertain that another common practice, used by the MNOCs to handle conflicts in the Niger Delta is to have 'surveillance contracts'. Evidence from the ICG (2006b: 10) has stated that these are

arrangements whereby an oil company hires different members and groups from host communities, such as youths and some influential individuals, "to provide security services for the company's oil facilities and services within their local domain on a contract basis." Shell's security problems, for instance, involves attacks on personnel, facilities and pipelines as well as kidnappings which have caused the temporary shutdown of operations (Shell Nigeria 2007f: 7; Omeje 2006: 75-77). Shell is believed to be the company most heavily criticized for its partnership with public security forces and connivance in human rights violations. Following the mid-1990s Ogoni crisis, Shell's conflict-management approach to security changed from a reactive to a more preventive one. Several analysts seem to concur with the view that Shell is now aware of the potential human rights implications for its security provisions and also perceives its community commitment as a tool to prevent conflicts (Freeman *et al*. 2001).

Overall, the scope of this chapter is to discuss the conflict management initiatives by the oil companies, using the views of different opinions above and those of my fieldwork. However, suffice it to say that Nigeria in general and the Niger Delta region in particular, has developed into a typical resource-conflict state (Omeje 2006; 2008) where the state is no longer reliant on traditional conflict-resolution and -management, but on a conflict-oriented or -tailored management and a solution which involves all protagonists (oil-communities, federal government and oil companies). It is, however, of note that following the partial nationalisation of upstream oil production in 1971, oil production was re-organised in the form of joint ventures. This re-organisation *de facto* set a close partnership between the state and oil multinationals (Frynas 2001: 30), but ignored indigenes' rights: a situation which impeded the consecutive governments to provide a sound conflict-management regulatory framework for oil production. Consequently, Nigerian people have been blaming their government for backing oil companies' operations at any cost, since it is believed to be willing to repress community protest against oil production (Ibeanu and Luckham 2007: 57). Here it is important to also underline that initially, the 1990s protest movements against oil production in the Niger Delta had the aim to protest peacefully against the central government and the oil companies. Communities have always required compensation, health services, educational opportunities, infrastructure and socioeconomic development directly from companies as "surrogates for an absent or neglectful government" (Ibid: 72). As a response, the oil companies resorted to either using violence against protesters, or bribing the leaders of some communities. Nonetheless, the size of the MNOC facilities and geographical

spread in the Niger Delta makes them vulnerable to protest and violence. Conflict management initiatives by oil companies differ from the local people's expectations and make security a precarious issue. The dearth of palpable and sustainable conflict-management initiatives that factor in the local communities' rights and views has resulted in protracted conflict in the Niger Delta. Oil companies and the federal government have always been colluding and applying invidious and dubious conflict-resolution and -management tactics to buy any opposition off.

7.3   Conclusion

This chapter was related to the conflict management initiatives by the oil companies in the Niger Delta and aimed to offer and examine the fieldwork's findings on the causes, impacts and resolution strategies pertaining to the on-going conflicts in the Niger Delta. It mainly argued that the issue of conflict management between the oil companies and oil communities in the region of the Niger Delta is not new and that political and social instability has long been a real concern in the region of the Niger Delta where large oil and gas resources exist. Overall, the analysis of fieldwork data suggested that at least two major conflict management initiatives by the oil companies could be identified to have led to increasing protest and oil-related violence in the Niger Delta; firstly, the selection of certain local leaders on the basis of the divide and rule principle, especially through the distribution of revenues, and secondly the vague agreement regarding a sustainable project addressing the ecological and social consequences of oil production. The first point has argued that the distribution of revenues on the basis of invidious and dubious tactics based on the divide and rule principle is perceived as unjust by the communities who bear all the negative consequences of oil production. Herein lies the importance to underline that the question of revenue-sharing in oil communities is further convoluted by rent-seeking behaviour, lack of transparency and corruption of elites at the federal but also state and local levels. As a result, demands for local ownership over resources also mirror the fear of domination and overlap with conflicts over the political influence of different ethnic groups (Anugwom 2005: 104). The second point, however, contended that an unclear management framework for the ecological consequences of oil production and its resulting social deprivation have given rise to different groups demanding greater control over resources, but also using violence to extract money by taking hostages or by engaging in illegal oil bunkering. Consequently, militias' activities are sometimes tolerated or even supported by companies and local governments who use militias

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or vigilante groups to secure their own power base or to enforce government control. By reflecting and analysing relevant factors that influence conflict management initiatives of oil companies in the Niger Delta, the research analysis on this point departed from the political and societal environment in Nigeria and in oil companies' home states, to explain the system of their conflict management initiatives. To this point, suffice it to say that companies prefer not to engage in a proper conflict management system, as they perceive it to be at the core of the state's responsibilities (Feil et al. 2008).

As opposed to what is expected to be an appropriate mechanism for conflict management initiatives by the oil companies in the region, however, the MNOCs have chosen violence against indigenes and the corruption of influential local elites as a conflict management framework. The disproportionate use of force by the MNOCs, supported by the government, as a means toward managing resources contentions, has exacerbated the existing animosity between the MNOCs and the indigenes. Summarily, the conflict management initiatives by the oil companies are simply attempts at conflict suppression, at times resulting instead in conflict escalation.

Discussions in this chapter have shown that the form of the conflict management initiatives executed by the oil companies in the Niger Delta region are in reality an attempt to settle the problems using violence and using the divide and rule principle which privileges a small social group to the detriment of the other community members. It also noted the implementation of the MNOCs' policies or top-down policies as a means toward ending the conflict has instead exacerbated the situation. In sum, the analysis has shown that managing the oil-led conflict in the Niger Delta region would need the MNOCs, and their ally the government, to adhere to the local communities' blueprints in regard to their socio-economic development. Embracing community participation and initiatives have already proved to be among the best ways to proceed in the post-conflict recovery process. This process could be an emulated powerful coalition between all protagonists involved in the conflict. In doing so, it could also create and communicate a vision for change that could tackle obstacles that have prevented the oil companies and oil communities from agreeing on the development of the region.

Summarily, a variety of community development approaches as reviewed in this chapter demonstrates that the deployment of state security agents, the use of vigilante groups, giving cash gifts, awarding contracts to powerful elements in the community and the provision of community development projects have all shown the limitations of the oil companies'

conflict-resolution initiatives. The inability of the oil companies to realise to the indigenes aspirations exacerbated the existing violent environment of the politics; a situation which eroded the security of their operations. These tactics applied by the oil companies have also revealed their attitude and behaviour toward the development of the conflict management framework in the region. These companies have been reluctant in engaging in a proper conflict management system in the Niger Delta region. However, how do local communities respond to the conflict management initiatives by the government and the MNOCs? The following chapter attempts to respond to this query.

Chapter Eight: Local Community Opposition to the Oil Companies and Adverse Effects on their Lives

8.1   Introduction

From a contemporary and global perspective, the dramatic upsurge in violent confrontation and protest against the Oil Multinationals in the 1990s in the Niger Delta coincided with the end of the Cold War. The developments of violence in this region raise the question regarding how local communities could contribute to the solution of the problem which has seemingly spiralled out of control. The spate of instability and criminality has given rise to the question around local communities' perspectives on how social movement's peaceful protest against the negative impact of oil development has become one of violent conflict, and how this conflict has been handled in the Niger Delta. This chapter appraises local community opposition to the oil companies and the adverse effects on their own lives. It argues that non-violent and violent actions by local communities are a direct response to the government and the oil companies' apathy to the issues that local communities are facing as the result of oil exploitation. As in Chapters Six and Seven, it also presents and analyses data collected from the field research undertaken between 2014 and 2016. However, contrary to the two previous chapters that looked at the conflict-management efforts by the government and oil companies, this chapter focuses on the indigenes' attitude towards the government and oil companies' approaches to conflict resolution and management in their oil-bearing communities. In doing so, the chapter attempts to address the fourth sub-question: in what ways have the communities been affected by, and responded to, the issues of governance in the Niger Delta. This part is structured around four sections: the adverse effects of oil in the Niger Delta, local community opposition, violent actions and responses, and the MNOCs and state's responses to the community actions. Overall, it develops an analytical discourse on Oil Communities' responses to the MNOCs' conflict-management initiatives and suggests the integrated conflict-management model as a problem-solving or management approach to conflicts in the Niger Delta. Therefore, the main focus of this chapter is an account of the various opposition strategies that have been emerged at community level.

8.2   Succinct Overview of the Adverse Effects of Oil on the People of the Niger Delta

As this discussed in the previous chapters, particularly in the literature review, this section briefly highlights some of the issues that the oil communities have been suffering in the Niger Delta as a result of oil exploitation. It is worth noting that the duplication of this information at this particular point is solely to serve the purpose of analysing how indigenes came to respond to different issues resulting from the oil operation within their settings, as will be discussed further in this chapter.

Several oil multinationals have been offered the licence to operate in the fields of oil and gas in the Niger Delta. These operations have been lucrative for the oil companies and a few government officials, indigenous communities, however, continue to suffer from the negative effects of oil exploitation and the lack of the needed compensation related to this exploitation and the export of their resources. The issues that the oil-rich communities in the Niger Delta face include energy poverty and access to energy, poor democratic institutions and practices, oil spillages and gas flaring, poor governance and service delivery, land clearances and displacements, and the subjugation of women, to name but a few. However, for the purpose of this research, only oil spillages and gas flaring are being examined, due to their serious impact, namely pollution, on the livelihood of the people in this region.

As substantiated on the 'environment burden' in Chapter Three, it has been clearly established that poor operational practices, the lack of implementation of regulations and a continuing unlawful oil economy have given rise to a series of oil spillages and gas flaring in the Niger Delta region (Ndubuisi and Asia 2007; Kadafa 2012) that have been disastrous for the environment. This catastrophic environmental pollution has destroyed existing livelihoods and triggered mistrust and antipathy between indigenes and the oil companies; thus damaging the functioning security of the MNOCs and federal government (Ukoli 2005). The daily flaring of gas in the Niger Delta region is comparable to the Brazilian quotidian gas consumption (Kadafa 2012). In other words, it is not only a loss of multi-billions of dollars, but also prevents communities from effective energy solutions (Anifowose 2008). However, most importantly is the fact that gas flaring is the single largest contributor to CO_2 releases in the Niger Delta (Anifowose 2008; Kadafa 2012). The environmental disaster caused by oil spills and gas flaring in the Niger Delta has many serious negative effects on the farming, fishing and agricultural activities as well as people's health (Tolulope 2004; CAB 2009). As

discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, the federal government and the oil companies have taken a few initiatives towards managing and solving these issues. However, in the view of local people, these initiatives did not live up to their expectation, nor did they address the fundamental problem related to resource ownership and compensation. Rather, they contributed to the creation of a rift between the federal government and the oil companies on the one side, and the members of local communities on the other. The local communities decided to express their concerns to the oil companies and government in order to gain full rights over their resources. The following section looks at the different means used by local communities.

8.3   Adverse Effects of Oil and Local Community Opposition in the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta communities are effective in forming organised and well-coordinated civil society groups with various degrees of demands and different approaches to getting them answered (Olowu 2011). These civil society groups mostly work on the basis of a non-violent ideology (Inokoba and Imbua 2010). As stated earlier in the literature, following a long period of neglect over their concerns, the oil communities decided to organise themselves into the MOSOP group to further their cause (Mitee 1997). Recently again, the silence of authorities on the problems caused by oil operations is still prevalent. Oyibode's (2016) research on the oil activities in the region, for example, points to the issue of the continuous gas-flaring going on in Dokwa communities. He notes that regardless of numerous complaints by the representatives of Dokwa communities addressed to the Presidency, the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources and the Delta State Ministry of Oil and Gas, they are yet to get any response. Overall, it may be deduced from the above that the oil communities' petitions toward the solution of environmental pollution was a peaceful approach toward managing an ongoing social issue. However, the continuous avoidance of complaints by the MNOCs obliged them to use more aggressive actions to get their demands met. The insensitivity and nonchalant attitude of both the Nigerian state and oil companies only added to the exasperation of the petition writers.

Drawing from the literature, it can be indicated that following the shortcomings of using petitions, the Niger Delta people resorted to legal suits against the oil companies (Owugah 1999; Ibaba and Okolo 2009) in order to voice their concerns. Through legal actions, the aggrieved communities thought they were assured in using the judiciary system as a legal channel to obtain their rights from the government and MNOCs. Yet, observed analysts at the

University of Lagos, their grievances were largely ignored by the oil companies that purposely were flouting court verdicts and, to some extent, took advantage of the judiciary system's loopholes to postpone decisions.[101] This MNOCs' behaviour is still persistent and prevalent nowadays; the cases of the Ejama-Ebubu community against SPDC in 2001 (Sheldon 2011), Ijaw community against SPDC in 2006 (Vanguard 2010) and Iwherekan community (Gbemre) against SPDC (This Day 2005), to name a few, are very telling. In all these cases, the oil companies flouted the High Court judgements against them. Two employees of Shell and Chevron that I interviewed in Lagos were of the consensus that the inefficiencies observed in the Nigerian judicial system has allowed the oil companies to act and behave in an anarchic and unruly manner. For these individuals, although there are compensation agreements between the MNOCs and local communities, environmental damages caused by their operations are still not repaired.[102]

By early 2000 confrontations between indigenes and the oil companies over oil extraction in the Niger Delta metamorphosed from peaceful protest to violent confrontations. The abhorrence of the Niger Delta people at the adverse effects of oil exploitation was expressed vocally to the MNOCs by local community members. The people's grievances thereafter grew into more organised mass protestations whose demands, approaches and tactics substantially changed with social and sociological dynamics. In order to voice their concerns to the oil companies, local communities adopted various strategies which included: written petitions to oil companies and the government, media interviews and newspaper publication, legal suits, sending of delegations to oil companies and government, vocal threats, communiqués, mass rallies and demonstrations, blockades and disruption of company operations, temporary occupation of installations and oil premises, and the kidnapping of MNOCs' employees (Okoh 2005:100).The different oil communities' strategies are grouped into two phases. The first phase uses non-violent protests and includes writing petitions, legal suits, organised protest, mass rallies and temporary occupation of oil facilities. The second phase employs violence against the oil companies and state.

8.3.1 Writing Petitions

The earliest community peaceful protests against the oil companies started with writing petitions in the 1960s. These petitions were initiated, written and signed by the local

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[101] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Lagos, 17 January 2016.

[102] Interviews conducted with Chevron and Shell staff members, Lagos, 23 January 2016.

communities' notables, youth movement leaders, members of civil society organisations, members of local and international human rights, environment and development NGOs. They were addressed to the federal government and oil companies operating in the Niger Delta region (Oyibode 2016). They were expressing frustrations and concerns of local communities on the issue of environment pollution, loss of livelihood and health, as well as lack of access to oil revenue (Mitee 1997). From a series of interviews I conducted in Nigeria in line with the case being studied, a few people in the Niger Delta, among which indigenes, oil company employees and academics, have been of the view that the oil communities have been using the writing of petitions as a strategy to express their grievances regarding their non-access to oil revenue.[103] During a focus group discussion conducted with academics and researchers working on the Niger Delta's environmental remediation at the University of Ibadan, the same view above was supported by three individuals, who claimed that the earliest community protest involved sending petitions or community delegations to register their complaints to the oil companies and the Nigerian State.[104] Communication between the oil communities and the MNOCs was relayed by local community leaders, as mentioned above, through written petitions. However, in most cases, the oil companies had been reluctant to respond or when they did respond they failed to fulfil the promises they made. For example, the Ogoni crisis was initially marked by indigenes' petitions and complaints to Shell, the Federal Ministry of Mines and Powers (as it was then known) in Lagos as well as to the state ministries in Rivers State, on the environmental degradation caused by oil spillage (Mitee 1997). This issue was not resolved until it turned into a full-blown crisis. Oil communities were thought to have tired of writing petitions, and so decided to organise themselves into the MOSOP group to further their cause (Mitee 1997). The 'no-response' attitude by the government is still prevalent in recent times. In 1966 for example, despite several petitions written to the Presidency, the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources and the Delta State Ministry of Oil and Gas by representatives of Dokwa communities on the continuous gas-flaring happening in their communities, they are yet to get any response (Oyibode 2016). To a large extent, this shows that initial response or action of the oil communities towards the effects of oil exploitation has always been of a peaceful nature. However, the continual disregard of the oil communities' complaints appears to have been forcing them to adopt

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[103] Interviews conducted with Niger Delta community members, MNOCs staff members and researchers, Niger Delta region, 10 January 2016.

[104] Focus group discussion conducted with NGO staff members, civil society representatives and researchers, Ibadan, 12 January 2014.

more forceful actions in order to get their demands met. The submission of petitions by indigenes has shown to be ineffective: this strategy having been frustrated by the insensitivity and nonchalant attitude of both the Nigerian state and oil companies towards a possible early resolution to an issue. Hence, local community's members have resorted to other actions more compelling than writing petitions.

8.3.2 Legal Suits

The Niger Delta people perceived that their petitions regarding environmental damage and the unfair sharing of revenue did not receive any positive response from either the government or MNOCs. From the late 1970s, the Niger Delta people have utilised the strategy of taking legal actions against the oil companies (Owugah 1999; Ibaba and Okolo 2009). The aggrieved communities were assured that the judiciary system would consider their appeal then take action on their behalf against the government and MNOCs. Nevertheless, the grievances went largely unresolved as the oil companies deliberately flouted court verdicts and in some instances exploited loopholes in the legal system to delay judgement. These attitudes to the legal system are still prevalent in more recent times. There are several instances where the MNOCs attempted to frustrate the justice system or totally ignore the court order. For example, in the Ejama-Ebubu community v. SPDC case, where the plaintiff brought a suit against Shell for an oil spill incident in 2001, is very telling. It is important to mention at this point that before the verdict, Shell tried to file interlocutory (interim) appeals no fewer than 27 times, thus delaying the merits of this case to be held until the July 2010 judgement (Sheldon 2011). Shell interfered by attempting to suspend the proceedings each time the court decided a preliminary issue in favour of the plaintiffs. The court verdict on the oil spill case in Ejama-Ebubu community, after so many years of delayed justice, was for Shell to pay NGN 15.4 billion (USD 100 million) as compensation. However, following the court's verdict, Shell applied for a stay of execution and appealed against the order which will delay justice for the communities whose lands and livelihoods were destroyed by Shell's careless actions (Vanguard 2010:56). Similarly, in the 2006 case of Ijaw community v. SPDC, the court ordered Shell to pay NGN 210 billion (USD 1.5 billion) to the plaintiff in compensation for harmful environmental effects caused by the defendant's operations (Opinion Juris 2006). Like the previous case, Shell filed for stay of execution and appealed to the Supreme Court following the court's verdict. However, the High Court judge instructed Shell to pay NGN 210 billion to the coffers of CBN pending the date for the appeal hearing, but Shell flouted the order (Sheldon 2011). Another similar case is that of Iwherekan

community (Gbemre) v. SPDC and others, where the plaintiff sued Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, Total and Agip to stop flaring gas in their community (This Day 2005). Shell behaved in the same way as in other cases illustrated above, it kept filing a stay of execution in response to the court's verdict and they are yet to stop the gas flaring (Sheldon 2011).

The cases illustrated above denote not only the inefficiencies in the judicial system, but also the oil companies' attitude towards addressing the environmental damages caused by their operations. The Niger Delta people believe that ecological destruction in their region is the result of oil production in their local communities. The MNOCs' view on this issue, however, is totally different from that of the local communities. They blame the local communities for environmental issues, as their conviction has always been that the environmental degradation results from youth militancy against oil installations in the region (Sheldon 2011). In response to my question regarding the impact of conflict on environmental deterioration in the Niger Delta region, Shell and Total employees that I interviewed have been of the view that most of the oil spill cases which cause environmental degradation in the region have been as a result of the vandalism of their oil facilities by local communities.[105] This view was dismissed by two researchers who closely follow the developments of this conflict in the region, they upheld the view that poor operational and maintenance standards resulted in corroded and leaky pipelines that stretch across Niger Delta.[106] This stance corroborates that of Kaufman's (2010), who thought it absurd that the oil companies claimed that the local communities were largely responsible for the environmental damage. Kaufman further emphasised their disturbing attitude in which they initially try to blame others, then avoid international scrutiny and finally overwhelm the local courts which have limited resources. A researcher believed that the oil communities' strategy to take legal action against the oil companies has been hampered by the poor legal and institutional framework, court delays, non-compliance by the oil companies to court orders and the relatively large sums paid to lawyers, sums which are difficult to find for the communities of limited funds.[107] Many applicants are poor and cannot sustain a long legal proceeding that could take many years for a court to decide on. The strategy has not been effective in getting compensation for the oil communities. The local communities are forced to look elsewhere for solutions. As noted by

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[105]Interviews conducted with two Shell and Total staff members, Abuja, 17 January 2016.

[106] Focus group discussion conducted NGO staff members, Agip Oil Company staff member, indigenes and researchers, Abuja, 11 December 2015.

[107] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 15 December 2015.

some scholars, there is a strong correlation between the environmental degradation and social unrest in the region as the oil communities are not adequately compensated for the damage done to their environment (Ukeje 2001 and Jike 2004).

As stated earlier in the literature, following a long period of indifference over their concerns, the oil communities decided to organise themselves into the MOSOP group to champion their cause (Mitee 1997). Recently again, the silence of the authorities on the problems caused by oil operations continues. Oyibode's (2016) research on the oil activities in the region, for example, points out the issue of the continuous gas-flaring going on in Dokwa communities. He notes that regardless of numerous expressions of complaint by the representatives of the Dokwa communities addressed to the Presidency, the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources and the Delta State Ministry of Oil and Gas, they are yet to get any response. Overall, it may be deduced from the above that the oil communities' petitions toward the solution of environmental pollution was a peaceful approach toward managing an ongoing social issue. However, the continuous avoidance of complaints by the MNOCs obliged the communities to use more aggressive action to get their demands met. The unresponsive and indifferent attitude of both the state and MNOCs made the petition writing futile.

The failure of the use of legal suits exacerbated the already contentious relationship between the MNOCs and local communities, and progressively led the latter from peaceful confrontation to more violent protests such as those set out further in the following sections.

8.3.3 Organised Protest, Mass Rallies and Temporary Occupation of Oil Facilities

From the mid-1980s, the Niger Delta communities adopted a more action-oriented strategy to voice their grievances. This strategy was based on the members of the oil communities forming several organised and well-coordinated civil society groups to make demands at many levels and using different approaches (Olowu 2011). Prominent among them was the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) (1990), the Ijaw National Congress (INC) (1991), the Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality of the Niger Delta (MOSIEND) (1992) and the Ijaw Youth council (IYC) (1998) (Inokoba and Imbua 2010). For example, the MOSOP group, which until then was known for their non-violent ideology, initially embarked on massive protestations against the environmental disaster that Shell had caused in Ogoniland (Holzer 2007: 287). The group issued a series of ultimatums, including a demand that Shell pay ten billion dollars in royalties and damages,

cease all environmental pollution, repair all exposed pipelines and start new negotiations for future oil extraction and exploration (Osaghae 1995). They took active measures to drive home their demands, a situation which involved actions that disrupted oil production through peaceful protestations and occupation of oil facilities. Between January and August 1990, for example, Shell installations were blocked at least 22 times, sometimes several days at a time, by communities protesting against the environmental degradation caused by the company (Newswatch 1990:32).

By the mid-1990s things became worse as the Niger Delta communities had totally lost faith in the oil companies and the government. The oil communities turned to forceful but still non-violent action, as will be explained further. Groups in the Niger Delta communities forcefully occupied oil facilities and at times caused some destruction (Mabro 1997). It was in that particular period when women and youths occupied and closed down oil facilities and captured the helicopters and vessels of oil companies (Nnimmo 2015). As a result, production and other oil-related activities slowed down. Research from Osaghae (1995), for instance, stated that on 17th August 1997 more than 10,000 youths from across the region assembled in Aleibiri town of Bayelsa state to protest against the ecological disaster caused by SPDC. Later, in 1998, ascertained Nnimmo's (2015:87) research, some Ilaje youths occupied Chevron's offshore platform, while the Ijaw youths were also occupying some oil-flow stations and shutting down the gas flares the same year. The Ijaw youths through the IYC platform issued their aspirations, known as 'historic Kaiama Declaration', calling for resource control and autonomy. The oil multinationals were given an ultimatum to leave the Niger Delta by the end of 1998 until the issue of resource ownership and control is resolved (Nnimmo 2015). At this point, their requests had evolved from simple demands for social amenities delivery and sufficient compensation, to a political demand for resource control and self-autonomy. However, the oil companies, assisted by the state, continued to use state security agents to quell any form of protest with the attendant abuse of human rights. The leader of the MOSOP group, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and eight other MOSOP activists were executed in what is believed to be a 'Judicial Murder', on the orders of a special military tribunal, for their involvement in an unsubstantiated and controversial death of some local chiefs. One could argue that the IYC's Kaiama declaration was an invitation for a dialogue with the Nigeria state on their discontent. As accounted in Ibiba (2006), a prominent leader of IYC, Tuodolo Felix, clarified the intention of the group's declaration as being a revelation of the wrong-doings going on in the region and what needed to be changed. It was simply an

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opportunity for negotiations on issues that have been at the forefront for a very long time, including the destruction of livelihood, deprivation, marginalisation and environmental pollution. On the contrary, the state responded with horrific military actions causing the loss of several lives. It was a case of carnage in Kaiama town in Bayelsa State (Ibibia 2006). In many instances, the invitation of security forces to quell the protests resulted in killings, raping, burning down of houses etc.

The use of protest, rallies and occupation of oil facilities to get the attention of the oil companies and government proved ineffective as their attitudes remained unchanged. However, the oil communities did achieve some gains. KenSaro-Wiwa's MOSOP non-violent movement against the oil establishment, for example, drew the world's attention to the plight of the Ogoni people. All participants were quite outstanding in its role in internationalising the struggle of the oil communities. They also drew sympathy from several international institutions including Amnesty International, the UN committee for Indigenous People, the World Conference on Indigenous People, the London Rainforest Action Group, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace (HRW 1999; Obi 2010; Okonta 2002). Although the movement led to the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa, it started an irreversible momentum of popular mobilisation in the region. As Shell was implicated in the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa (Watts 2005:394), the mounting domestic and international pressure forced the company to pull out of Ogoni land and reconsider its relationship with the oil communities. With a damaged public image coupled with the intensification of the anti-oil protests at that time, Shell had to review its projects and policies in the region. It was in this context that a new era was launched in the oil industry. Shell and other MNOCs started moving from their previous attitude of relying on state force and intimidation towards a more 'socially responsible character' whereby the company engages the oil communities in the development of infrastructures and social services.

8.4 Violent Actions and Response: Use of Violence against the Oil Operations and State

The Niger Delta communities are adept at forming organised and well-coordinated civil society groups using various approaches to make their demands known (Olowu 2011). These civil society groups mostly work on the basis of a non-violent ideology (Inokoba and Imbua 2010). The escalation of militancy in the Niger Delta is a direct consequence of the use of brutal force to suppress non-violent protests in the region. The killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa had

left in the collective memory of local communities a sense of being under the oppression of a government which works for the interest of the oil companies rather than that of its people. The oil companies slowly started to change their response to indigenes concerns from one of violence to one more positive. However, the 1999 Odi incident was not only a reaction to the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa, but also served as an example of the terrible outcome of the communities' action against the MNOCs and the state, who helped to maintain the conflict in the Niger Delta. This violence happened in the context of a continuing conflict in the Niger Delta over indigenous rights to oil resources and environmental protection. The Odi massacre was carried out by the Nigerian military in the predominantly Ijaw town of Odi in Bayelsa State in retaliation for the murder of twelve members of the Nigerian police by a gang near Odi (Environmental Rights Action 2000; Olowu 2011; Egbemeile 2015; Nnimmo 2015). According to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, a wide range of civilians, estimated at more than 2,500 individuals, had been killed (Environmental Rights Action 2000; Egbemeile 2015). A Nigeria-wide national opinion still holds that the massacre was ordered by Olusegun Obasanjo, the then Head of State. However, the security system, particularly the military, has repeatedly defended its action saying it was ambushed on its way to Odi; so raising tensions before entering the village (Nnimmo 2015).

The 1999 Odi massacre brought significant concern for the young democracy of Nigeria: the 1999 democratic elections in Nigeria had opened an era of expectation of peace in the nation. Many people in the country, particularly those from oil communities in the Niger Delta State, were expecting the return of peace to the region. However, this was not the case as the attitude of government remained repressive, according to a staff member of Amnesty International.[108] The Odi case in 1999, in which a whole town was razed, houses bombed and over 2,500 people killed by the state forces (Environmental Rights Action 2000) tells much more about the brutal attitude of the Nigerian security system. This was a total abuse of military force, a case of genocide committed against the Niger Delta people, claimed a staff member of Human Rights Watch.[109] An indigene from the Niger Delta concurred with the view above, offering:

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[108] Interview conducted with a staff member ofAmnesty International, Abuja, 15 December 2015.
[109] Interview conducted with a staff member of Human Rights Watch, Lagos, 22 January 2015.

With the sustained use of excessive force, continuous environmental degradation, underdevelopment and the amassing of riches at expense of the Niger Delta people by the government and oil companies, it is easy to understand why the phases of non-violent agitation turned violent from the year 2000.[110]

Two young persons from the Niger Delta region explained what stimulated them to become involved in violence: "We became frustrated and resorted to violence as our goals and aspirations remained unresolved".[111]In the same vein of thought, a conflict analyst added that the rise of militancy is a direct consequence of the use of brutal force to suppress non-violent protests in the region.[112] These views side with Nnimmo's (2015)that the destruction in Ogoni Land, the massacre in Odi town, to name but two events, created the context upon which a militant leader, Asari Dokubo, in 2004, declared war against the Nigerian state. Subsequently, in 2005, several militant groups came together to form a coalition under the umbrella of Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Jomo Gbomo (Olowu 2011). Other prominent groups include the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Niger Delta Vigilantes. These groups, unlike their predecessors, were impatient with non-violent approaches and adopted a violent strategy.

According to a conflict analyst, the group adopted guerrilla warfare as they implemented a number of organised violent assaults on oil facilities and staff. Their tactics involved the kidnapping of MNOCs' staff, seizure and bombardment of oil facilities, interruption of oil production and armed confrontation with state security forces.[113] Egbemeile's (2015) research on the conflict-oil in the Niger Delta concurred and added that between 2008 and 2009 about 243 attacks (174 inland attacks and 69 offshore attacks) have resulted in 128 kidnap cases and over 1,000 lives lost. This led a Shell employee to claim that the region became a theatre of all sorts of violence including hijackings, the destruction of oil facilities, bombings and acts of piracy against the petroleum industry.[114] The MEND was able to measure up to the Nigeria military's force due to the sophistication of their own armoury, mode of operation and deep understanding of the terrain. A source close to Shell's

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[110] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Abuja, 17 January 2015.

[111] Focus Group Discussion conducted with Niger Delta community members, Lagos, 24 January 2016.

[112] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 23 January 2016.

[113] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 15 December 2015.

[114] Interview conducted with an employee of Shell, Abuja, 17 January 2016.

development plan for the region believed that MEND's philosophy behind their *modus operandi* was to frustrate the oil production process, making it more expensive, although a few federal government' s officials believed that the militants' operations were simply to enrich themselves.[115]

While some (Ekpu 2007) saw the vandalism of the oil installations by indigenes as being due to the frustration of unemployment and poverty caused by the oil industry, it is also important to acknowledge that the oil companies and the government lost billions of dollars in oil income as a result of the militants' operations. This view is supported by a Niger Delta indigene[116] and a conflict analyst that I interviewed during my fieldwork.[117] As detailed and discussed in Chapter Six, with the continuous loss of revenue and the inability of security force to suppress the insurgency in the region, the state decided to grant amnesty to the militants in 2009. The states use of its military forces could not suppress the militancy; thus the MNOCs and government were forced to seek a non-violent alternative which took the form of an amnesty. This creates the impression that if you are peaceful in presenting your demands to the Nigerian government, you would be taken for granted, claimed an indigene.[118] In other words, in responding to the needs of its citizenry, the Nigerian political structure only understood the logic of the gun, as shown by the actions of the Niger Delta youths. As reprehensible as the strategy of the militants might seem, it brought some fringe benefits to the region. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the appointment of Niger Deltans into key federal positions such as the Vice Presidency (Dr. Goodluck Jonathan), the Minister of State for Petroleum (Mr. Odein Ajumogobia), Chief of Defence Staff (General Andrew Aziza) and others was as a result of oil communities' actions. Unfortunately, this did not benefit the communities, but solely those appointed.[119]

Despite the seeming effectiveness of the use of violence to get the state to respond, it came at a huge cost to the oil communities including the disruption of social services, loss of livelihood, environmental pollution and loss of lives. The militants' assaults on oil facilities instigated a brutal confrontation between the state security force and the local communities.

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[115] Interviews conducted with a source close to Shell's development plan for the region and two members of the Nigerian Department of Energy and Oil, Abuja, 17 January 2016.

[116] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 23 January 2016.

[117] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 24 January 2016.

[118] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Abuja, 16 December 2015.

[119] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 10 December 2015.

In many instances, the military force has mindlessly murdered, tortured, raped and imprisoned several innocent civilians, including women and children, in the region. Such cases happened in Odi (1999) with more than 2,500 civilians killed as mentioned before, Choba (2000) with 50 innocent civilians unlawfully arrested, Gbamaturu (2009) with 70 individuals illegally arrested and killed, and similar events in several other communities (Egbemeile 2015; Nnimmo 2015). The invasion of the soldiers has left many of their towns and villages in ruins.

Another unexpected cost to the oil communities is that the violence created an unflattering image for the Niger Delta groups both at local and international level. The frequency of hostage-taking, the destruction of oil facilities and other related crimes gave a wrong impression especially as several groups hijacked the struggle itself, for their personal enrichment. There were cases in which children and old people were abducted, something which brought into question the legitimacy of the struggle (Imbua and Inokoba 2010). The criminal element in the region eroded the legitimacy of the militant groups (Aiyetan 2007). Also, the activities of the militants disempowered other sections of the society who did not participate in such violent struggles, women, children and the elderly, as economic activities were disrupted by the increasing violence in the region.

Drawn from various provisions as set above and in the light of my fieldwork results, I could argue that the struggle of the Niger Delta people started as a vocal demand by the indigenes before it turned into a more organised mass protestation, in which their demands, approaches and tactics to handle the oil-conflict changed substantially. The conflict in the Niger Delta has shifted from a peaceful contention – between the 1970s and 1980s, to a violent confrontation – by early 2000.[120] On the basis of my fieldwork research and in the light of Okoh's (2005:100) research, for example, one could argue that local communities used the written word as a means to voice their concerns regarding the exploitation of their resources. Conversely, in a focus group discussion in which three indigenes participated, they said that the first channel used by the oil communities to express their concern was the writing of

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[120] General trend from my fieldwork findings conducted in Nigeria, 2014-2015.

petitions. Writing petitions, according to these individuals, was the early conflict-management initiative used by the oil communities to handle the conflict with the MNOCs.[121]

Reflecting on the protracted violence in the Niger Delta, a peace and conflict researcher suggested that the first confrontation between oil-communities and the oil companies included sending community delegations to register their complaints to the oil companies and the Nigerian State.[122] This respondent's view is backed by the Ogoni community's notable, for whom local communities tried to use the written word as a way toward settling the oil-conflict that was emerging between them and the MNOCs. The writing of petitions, he added, consisted of the oil communities sending their message to the oil companies through their leaders. Although this practice was meant to be a peaceful way of resolving the conflict, it, however, brought few results, because the MNOCs barely responded to them, since they were not fulfilling their promises, he concluded.[123] Evidence from my fieldwork supports this view, due to a few individuals saying that the Ogoni crisis was the result of the failure of Shell, the Federal ministry of Mines and powers in Lagos, as well as the State Ministries in River states to respond to the petitions and complaints of oil communities on the environment degradation caused by oil spillage. For these people, this issue was ignored by the officials above until it became a full-blown crisis.[124]

The weakness of the state's judiciary system allows the oil companies to contend that most of the oil spill cases were as a result of vandalism by local communities to their oil facilities.[125] However, some other individuals counter to this view, believing that poor operational and maintenance standards, resulting in corroded and leaky pipelines spread all over the Niger Delta, has been at the origin of environmental degradation.[126] The argument by the oil companies that the local communities are largely accountable for the environmental damage, contrasts Kaufman (2010), is absurd, since these companies initially try blaming others, eluding international scrutiny and overwhelming the local courts, as they are aware of the fact that these courts do have limited resources to counter their actions. As a conflict analyst of the University of Abuja concurred:

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[121] Focus group discussions conducted with Niger Delta indigenes, Elf Petroleum Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria staff members, civil society and Amnesty representatives, Lagos, 24 January 2016.

[122] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 21 January 2016.

[123] Interview conducted with the Ogoni community's notable, Niger Delta, 11 December 2015.

[124] Fieldwork's findings, research fieldwork conducted in Nigeria, 2015-2016.

[125] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 17 January 2016.

[126] Focus group discussions conducted in Abuja, Lagos and Ibadan, 2014-2016.

The use of flouting strategy by the oil companies has further weakened a poor legal and institutional framework, delayed court decisions, sustained the MNOCs to not comply with court orders and relatively exposed the legal system to corruption, with large sums being paid to lawyers of which the oil communities have limited resources.[127]

Some scholars (Ukeje 2001 and Jike 2004) have noted a strong correlation between the environmental degradation and the conflict in the region. This suggests to me that this is owing to communities being inadequately rewarded for the damage done to their environment. As local communities are poor and cannot sustain a long legal proceeding, they are compelled to find alternative means of conflict management as legal suits do not meet their hopes.

The local communities have been at the origin of massive protests against environmental disaster caused by the MNOCs in their region (Holzer 2007: 287). These movements included actions that disrupt oil production through peaceful protestations and occupation of oil facilities and their demands spanned from simple demands for social amenities delivery and adequate compensation to a political demand for resource control and autonomy. However, the government and oil companies ignored their demands, instead, they preferred to quell any form of protest, something which turned into human rights abuse. Local communities' grievances were based on the wrong-doings going on in the region and what was needed to repair the damage. Local communities saw this as an opportunity to negotiate on issues that have been at the forefront for a very long time. However, the state response to their request was horrific military actions. Protests were quelled and resulted in killings, raping, burning down of houses etc. (Ibibia 2006). Data from my fieldwork supports this position[128] and suggest to me that even if protests, rallies and occupation of oil facilities proved ineffective, as the oil and MNOCs attitudes remained unchanged, local communities, however, achieved some gains that fixed an irreversible momentum of popular mobilisation in the region. Three lessons could be learned from this; firstly, oil communities drew the world's attention to the plight of the Niger Delta people; secondly, they were also notable for their role in internationalising the struggle of the oil communities and thirdly, they drew

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[127] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 13 December 2015.

[128] Findings from my fieldwork conducted in Nigeria, 2014-2016.

sympathy from several international NGOs that started advocating for their cause and concern on an international platform.

Following the return of democratic rule in 1999, the attitude of government toward oil communities still remained repressive (Environmental Rights Action 2000). From a NGO staff member's view, it could be noted that the coalition between the MNOCs and the state's security was a total military abuse, also cited as a case of genocide committed against the Niger Delta people.[129] As indicated by the findings of my fieldwork, excessive and continual use of force, ongoing environmental degradation, poverty and the depletion of resources by the government and oil companies have been the main cause of the switch from a non-violent struggle to a violent one.[130] The Niger Delta youths, concurred a conflict analyst, became frustrated and were then motivated by violence as the ultimate means of achieving their goals and aspirations.[131] The rise of militancy is a direct consequence of the use of brutal force to suppress non-violent protests in the region, added a source from the Niger Delta.[132] These views are evidenced by the environmental destruction in Ogoni Land and the massacre in Odi town, to name just two examples. These situations set out favourable context for the militancy movement to arise and declare hostilities with both the government and MNOCs (Nnimmo 2015). As a result, militant groups decided to collaborate under the resistant and fighting organisation called the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Olowu 2011) for the kidnapping of the MNOCs' staff, seizure and bombardment of oil facilities, interruption of oil production and armed confrontation with state security forces.[133] Indications from Egbemeile (2015) hold how the region became a theatre of all sort of violence including hijackings, destruction of oil facilities, bombings and acts of piracy against the petroleum industry.

Broadly, it could be drawn from the fieldwork experience that the MEND developed a violent conflict-management initiative that was able to counter the Nigerian military's force because of the sophistication of their armoury, their *modus operandi* and their knowledge of the terrain.[134] Equally, the ideology leading their *modus operandi* – which is actually their

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[129] Interviews conducted with Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch staff members, Abuja, 17 December 2015.

[130] Interviews conducted with Niger Delta community members, Abuja, 15 January 2015.

[131] Interviews conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 17 January 2016.

[132] Interview conducted with Niger Delta community members, Lagos, 18 December 2015.

[133] Experience drawn from my fieldwork research conducted in Nigeria, 2014-2016.

[134] Interviews conducted with Shell, Total and ExxonMobil staff members, Abuja, 26 January 2016.

conflict-management initiative or perspective, analysed a MNOC employee, was based on the frustration and sabotage of the oil production process in order to draw rent from militants' operations.[135] However, it runs contrary to what has been said earlier: that some indigenes from the Niger Delta have been of the view that their militancy against the MNOCs and state is not only linked to the frustration of unemployment and poverty attributed to the oil industry, but also, to the institutionalisation of corruption and the pillage of oil resources by the MNOCs and state, something that enormously damages the future for the coming generations.[136]

It suggests to me, however, that force used by the government to assault peaceful activists, rather than using appropriate conflict management initiatives, could not address grievances, rather it resulted in militancy. As a Niger Delta indigene put it; "if you are peaceful in presenting your demands to the Nigerian government, you will be taken for granted".[137] In the words of another individual from the Niger delta, it means that in response to the needs of its citizenry, the Nigerian government uses the language of violence, especially when it has to do with the Niger Delta activists. As reprehensible as militancy may be, it brought some fringe benefits to the region. For this individual, there is nothing sarcastic in admitting that the appointment of Niger Deltans into key federal positions such as the Vice President (Dr. Goodluck Jonathan), the Minister of State for Petroleum (Mr. Odein Ajumogobia), the Chief of Defence Staff (General Andrew Aziza), just to mention a few, is a lure which aims to buy some elites to the detriment of the poor people.[138]

Overall, it might be noted that the use of violence as a conflict-management initiative to get the state to respond to the grievances brought a huge cost to the oil communities, including disruption of social services, loss of livelihood, environmental pollution and loss of life. The militants' attacks on oil facilities triggered rough reactions from the MNOCs and government, something that resulted in brutal confrontation between the state security forces and the local communities. This has left many of their towns and villages in ruins. As result, the image of the Niger Delta region worsened at both local and international levels. The frequency of hostage taking, oil facilities disruption and other related crimes created a bad image of the region, especially as several groups hijacked the struggle for their personal

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[135] Interview conducted with a Chevron Nigeria staff member, Abuja, 25 January 2016.
[136] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 08 January 2016.
[137] Interviews conducted with Niger Delta community members, Abuja, 14 December 2015.
[138] Interviews conducted with Niger Delta community members, Abuja, 15 December 2015.

enrichment. The activities of the militants disrupted economic activities and left those sections not directly involved in the violence, such as women, children and old people, without a voice in the struggle (Imbua and Inokoba 2010). Herein lays the importance to underline that the major short-coming of the conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region is the dearth of local community participation in decision-making regarding the development of their society. As is further developed in the following section, the government and MNOCs have been promoting the use of violence to settle the oil-conflict in the region, instead of listening to the needs of the indigenous population.

8.5 The MNOCs and State Responses to Community Actions

As indicated above, resource conflict in the Delta Niger region has seen some MNOCs reaching agreements with the youths of local communities to protect oil exploitations and facilities within their localities. Shell, for example, established CAST, which comprised two agencies for the recruitment of youths and specialised in the protection of oil pipelines from vandalism (This Day 2008). This conflict management initiative sounded productive in the short-term but limited for any longer. Suffice it to argue that the engagement of a group of youngsters in the protection of pipelines against unlawful oil bunkering and vandals was viewed as a way to empowering the youth economically in order to dissuade them from disrupting oil production. [139] However, this engagement was criticised for apparently complicating the security issue of both the oil companies and communities, according to a freelance journalist in Ibadan.[140] In the words of the Agence France-Presse (2003): "some of the young people who were recruited to work with the oil companies have been associated with militant groups that vandalise oil companies". The kidnapping of 14 Chevron employees in 2003, for example, is believed to be linked to some indigenous youngsters, members of a security outfit employed to watch over Chevron's facilities. From another individual's view, it was put forward that security provision is not only a source of employment, but also a source of violent conflict among youth and other unemployed groups within communities.[141] Viewed from this perspective, it could be assumed that there had been a fragile, but opportunistic, deal based on the offer of material advantage, concluded between the MNOCs and militant groups in the region. My view meets that of a few individuals that I interviewed:

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[139] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 24 January 2016.

[140] Interview conducted with a Nigerian freelance journalist, Ibadan, 17 December 2015.

[141] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 22 January 2016.

they ascertained that young people who have not enlisted to work for the oil companies were often the source of the assaults against oil installations and other forms of violence.[142] This would mean that the MNOCs conflict-management initiative based on the hiring from certain social groups to the detriment of others was limited in terms of resolving the grievance, rather it aggravated it. In this case, the MNOCs have become a source of both employment and insecurity. As WAC's (2003) research on the MNOCs in the region put it, the oil companies disburse a huge amount of money to equip the vigilante groups with weapons to fight rival gangs and strengthen their capacity to protect their installations. In this case, MNOCs are playing a double game of divide and rule. WAC's stance upholds my view, as expressed above, that the MNOCs also bear the root-cause of the conflict dynamics in the region, something that has negatively affected the socio-economic situation in the region, thereby increasing the grievances and the culture of greed, particularly for those groups believed to be marginalised during the security arrangement.[143]

Conflict-resolution initiatives as applied in the Niger Delta are in reality the use of violence by all protagonists; therefore, hardly conflict management, which questions the use of this concept. Against the thought developed above and in light of my fieldwork experience, one could argue that the involvement of state security against anti-oil protesters in the Niger Delta region has been seen as a strong conflict-resolution mechanism, minimising the loss of human life that it may result in. From interviews that I conducted with a lecturer in peace and conflict studies at the University of Abuja, [144] and with community leaders from Eruemukohwarien[145] and Omoku in the Niger Delta,[146] it has been said that several times the MNOCs resorted to force as their main strategy toward settling the conflicts in the region. A group of individuals and others from NGOs working in the region[147] concurred with the fact that Shell, for example, used intimidation and state security forces as a means to quell oil related agitations. This opinion was supported by one MNOC source to whom the involvement of the state security forces in the oil companies' business helped to avoid the breaches of law and order and protect oil companies' installations.[148] Since the Nigerian state

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[142] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Ibadan, 22 January 2016.

[143] Interview conducted with a Nigerian freelance journalist, Ibadan, 16 December 2015.

[144] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 18 December 2015.

[145] Interview conducted with an Eruemukohwarien community leader, Niger Delta, 17 December 2015.

[146] Interview conducted with an Omoku community leader, Niger Delta, January 2016.

[147] Focus group discussions, Abuja, Ibadan and Lagos, December 2015 and January 2016.

[148] Interview conducted with a multinational oil company employee, Abuja, January 2016.

is the main shareholder in the joint venture with the oil companies and has the right to protect the oil rents, so the use of state security was seen as legitimate.[149] Broadly, respondents have established that MNOCs have been using the state's security apparatus as a tool for the settlement of conflict with local communities. Shell, for example, resorted to using the Navy and police, even without any approval from the government, to suppress any form of protest held against them, opined Ibeanu (2000). The peaceful protest of the natives of Iko in the Niger Delta against Shell on its obnoxious practice of flaring gas was brutally dispersed by the mobile police force brought in by Shell (Okonta and Douglas 2001), likewise an unarmed community protest in Umuechem against the adverse effects of Shell's drilling operations on their farmlands was crushed by the mobile police force invited in by Shell (Douglas and Ola 1990). However, this crude way of dealing with protestations did not resolve the conflicts, rather it awakened local communities' consciousness about the denial of their resources by the MNOCs, and so furthered the protests against oil companies in the region (Bello 1992; Rowell 1994; HRW 1995).

In response to questions I asked of a Senior security officer and two civil society activists, respectively in Abuja and Umuechem, they said that the reliance on the state security force by the MNOCs in lieu of using classical conflict-management initiatives failed to bring about sustainable solutions to the conflicts between local communities and the MNOCs, rather it led the youths of the Niger Delta Region into militancy. The two activists further believe that militancy is a proportional strategy and response to the violent actions of the Oil Companies against anti-oil protesters in the region.[150] This opinion supports Amunwa's (2012) who is of the view that despite the fact that Shell has a security budget of more than USD 1 billion, their installations are still subject to continued attacks. Security forces used by MNOCs to stifle activists' grievances and the activists' resistance to the MNOCs' violence have supplanted conventional conflict-management initiatives in the region. A cursory inventory of the continuing coordinated assaults occurring against oil installations and their employees shows that militant attacks stood at about 40 in 2006, 80 in 2007 and 90 in 2008, while the cases of abduction of oil companies' employees was 62 in 2006 and 172 in 2007. Conversely, the number of human rights abuses caused by security forces against activists exponentially ascended over the same period of time (Nnimmo 2015). Overall, one could infer that the use

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[149] Interview conducted with a senior employee of Shell, Lagos, January 2016.

[150] Focus group discussion conducted with Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch staff members, Shell and ExxonMobil staff member, community members and researchers, Abuja, 11 December 2015.

of state security by the MNOCs and the recourse to militancy by the indigenes as conflict-management initiatives have both exacerbated the tension in the region and developed local animosity against the oil operators.

Beyond the reliance on the state's security system, as referred to early, the Oil Companies have other mechanisms, such as cash gifts and contracts to lure and materially dissuade local groups who are hostile to their economic activities in the region. In a focus group I conducted in Abuja with a Niger Delta native, I was told that one of the strategies used by the MNOCs to buy peace is to offer gifts and contracts to the most vocal and violent groups in the oil-endowed communities.[151] The strategy consisted of attracting the group most influential and capable of causing serious disruption to their oil exploitation operations.[152] This strategy, offered an academic at the University of Abuja, became a vital warrant for a MNOC to operate peacefully in the region.[153] In light of evidence gained from a militant from the Niger Delta region, it is argued that the initial agreement had to be signed between the oil companies and the community ruling elite. The MNOCs signed the accords with the leaders of the community to whom they gave money and contracts to be executed. Then, the contract would be awarded to a few people in the communities. Herein lies two important points to underline: firstly, by giving out cash and contracts to some of the oil community's elders, the oil companies had bought the community's silence over the side-effects of hydrocarbons exploitation on their society. Secondly, the oil companies did not monitor community leaders to see if the funds given to them were used exclusively for the development of the community. The lack of monitoring of funds allocated to the leaders led to the mismanagement and poor implementation of development projects within communities.[154] This form of patronage relationship in the region (Norimitsu 2002; HRW 2005; Watts 2007), enabled local elites to foster a strong bond with the MNOCs, as the MNOCs considered the elites as agents through which they would have access to resources, not only at low cost, but also in a peaceful operating environment.[155] In the substance as in the form, this conflict-management initiative carries the germ of future conflict as it is still based on a top-down view and rules out local participation from its planning to its conclusion.

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[151] Focus group discussion conducted in Lagos, 24 January 2016.

[152] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 16 December 2015.

[153] Focus Group discussion conducted in Lagos, 24 January 2016.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Interviews conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 16 December 2015.

A cursory reflection on the conflict in the Niger Delta region suggests that community members have always been accusing their leaders of allowing the MNOCs to have access to their resources at an unacceptable price. In the view of these indigenes, local leaders have been induced and corrupted by financial gifts offered by the MNOCs, as they diverted project funds for personal enrichment at the expense of their people (Kemedi 2003). This stance was largely supported by a conflict analyst who I interviewed during my fieldwork, he claimed that over time, financial enticement and cash gifts offered by the MNOCs to the community leaders have been a source of fragmentation and weakened the social relations in the community, since in the view of the indigenes, their elites have lost authority and control over their subjects, especially the youths.[156] A Niger Delta individual concurred and stated: we are being ruled by a poor leadership which has received a paltry compensation and failed to prevent the oil companies from destroying our homeland.[157] This indigene's view sides with Osaghae *et al.'s* (2007), the youths no longer relied on their ruling elite and decided to challenge the sponsorship agreements existing between the oil companies and their traditional rulers. Hence, they embarked on guerrilla welfare damaging the oil companies' installations, something which heightened the insecurity in the oil communities (Ukeje *et al* 2002). As these youngsters had decided to disrupt the activities of the oil companies, they had also decided to ignore any instructions coming from the elders, since in their eyes the elders were considered to be conspiring with the MNOCs against local interests. The first evidence of this attitude is a clear fragmentation between youth and elders. This disintegration was further reinforced by the MNOCs buying the conscience of youth groups. As a result, this allowed the oil companies to adopt new strategies based on a direct cooperation with the youths, who had a growing capacity of destruction and disruption,[158] thus making youths the object of patronage and power brokers (Ile and Akukwe 2001; Kemedi 2003).

Considered as major protagonists in the conflict between the MNOCs and oil communities, youth groups became an unavoidable factor and started to play determining roles in taking major decisions within most oil communities, particularly on the distribution of oil rents.[159] Ikelege (2006), for example, noted that the MNOCs bought off youth factions by offering them significant support as they believed they were able to disturb their operations. As a result, different groups of youths within communities gave up the struggle over the patronage

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[156] Interviews conducted with a University researcher, Abuja, 16 December 2015.
[157] Interview conducted with a Niger Delta community member, Lagos, 22 January 2016.
[158] Focus Group Discussion conducted in Lagos, January 2016.
[159] Focus group discussion conducted in Lagos, 24 January 2016.

and rent seeking. However, for more analysts (Osaghae *et al.*2007), this was the beginning of the fight for supremacy. This was a successful line for the MNOCs in the region to take, as they succeeded not only to divide and rule the youths, but also to have established a relative rapport of trust with some local representatives. Through these representatives they have been able to identify and influence the powerful stakeholders that could ensure a peaceful business operation for them.[160] The "divide and rule" tactics of the Oil Companies was aimed at weakening any local community's attitude toward protest about the Oil Companies' activities in the region. However, there is a strong trend from my fieldwork data that these tactics actually contributed to a radicalisation of the youths vis-à-vis the MNOCs, as these oil companies relied on the power of violence in obtaining the cooperation of the oil communities. By the same token, as the use of violence by the youths appeared to be successful in having their demands met by MNOCs; they resorted to more violence to achieve their subsequent demands.[161] The patronage relationship instigated by the MNOCs partly endorsed the culture of violence against the oil business by the youths, since as soon as a youth group is identified as the most powerful 'enforcer' (by violence); the MNOCs then make a settlement with them.[162] Overall, it is arguable that the conflict-management initiatives based on financial and material reward adopted by the MNOCs, and on militancy by the oil communities, has favoured the struggle for local power in order to access the oil benefits that come with such power, and which, in the long-run, gave rise to a culture of violence in the oil communities. Herein lays the importance of thinking of a new approach toward preventing and managing conflict in the Niger Delta region. This approach could involve an integrated conflict management approach which hinges around the contribution made by members of the local communities in the Niger Delta. It is also known as a bottom-up or participatory approach to the conflict model.

8.6   Conclusion

This chapter has delved into local community opposition to the oil companies and the adverse effects on their lives in the Niger Delta. As its main argument, it posited that non-violent and violent actions by local communities are a direct response to the government and the oil companies' apathy to the issues that local communities are facing as the result of oil

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[160] Findings from my field work conducted in Nigeria, 2014-2016.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Interview conducted with a University researcher, Niger Delta, 15 January 2016.

exploitation. The top-down approach to the conflicts adopted by the governments and the MNOCs as a conflict-management strategy appeared to be working against the local communities, which had been purely peaceful, as they were guided by various non-violent strategies to resolve their grievances. Broadly, from the MNOCs' and state's conflict-management actions towards the local communities' objections to the MNOCs and their activities, the local communities learnt the lesson that moving from non-violent to violent protests to address their grievances would be more productive. There were changes in their strategies and these changes were influenced by a few other actors including internationals NGOs and institutions. In order words, it is argued that the use of state security forces by the government and the MNOCs to respond to the oil communities' requests led the latter to engage with the MNOCs in more violent ways.

Overall, local community opposition to the oil companies and the adverse effects on their lives was led by social movements through various mechanisms, as have been listed in chapter 8.3. Essentially, the findings presented and analysed in this chapter addressed the fourth research sub-question: in what ways have the communities been affected by, and responded to, the issues of governance in the Niger Delta. The findings have also shown that oil communities' opposition to the government and the MNOCs' conflict-management initiatives towards the conflicts in the Niger Delta region is a result of their top-down approach which only takes into account the view of two protagonists – the government and the MNOCs and leaves out the view of the oil communities. The precedence of the government and the MNOCs' view in responding to local communities' grievances has failed and calls for a more integrated conflict management approach that would build around local community contributions to conflict settlement. Therefore, it would be crucial that the MNOCs, government and oil communities proceed with a bottom-up approach to conflict management in the Niger Delta, if conflict management initiatives for a sustainable peace and development in this region are really to be efficient.

Finally, the examination of the findings has established that conflict in the Niger Delta is the result of grievances, bitterness and government indifference to the plight of the people and their environment. Most important is the degradation of the environment as a result of oil exploitation and the long-term effect on the health of the people and their livelihoods, in as much as their lives have not only become difficult, but there is also some hostility towards communities and people who previously had lived in peaceful co-existence. Data collected from the fieldwork also depicted the discrepancies existing in the manner in which

communities' proposals have been dealt with by the government and MNOCs as one of the causes of conflict. This has exacerbated the existing poverty and violence in the Niger Delta. Exploitation of the communities' resources by the MNOCs has been perceived as inimical to the peoples' wellbeing, while MNOCs' insensitivity to the plights and initiatives of the inhabitants became a popular concern. The lack of consideration of the initiatives made or proposed by local communities has created a missing link in the quest for sustainable development, amidst the increasing militancy in the region.

Chapter Nine: Synthesis and Conclusions

9.1   Introduction

This research was conducted to enhance the understanding of the factors that have contributed to the violent conflict in the Niger Delta Region in order to adopt the most appropriate conflict resolution and management strategies that could help to set sustainable peace in this vast and severely deprived oil and gas-rich region. For a better understanding of the study being undertaken, the research has set the three main objectives as presented in Chapter 1.3.

➢ To review other existing and unresolved issues driving and sustaining the Niger Delta conflict moving beyond economic and factor endowment.

➢ To analyse the past trends of conflict resolution adopted in the region so as to highlight the weaknesses and potential pitfalls as to why they failed to address the issue.

➢ To evaluate the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies and reflect on what might help with bringing sustainable peace and preventing another cycle of violence in the region.

In order to achieve these research objectives, this research has used the case study method, supported by qualitative data and aiming to analyse the following: the background and other causes of the conflict in the Niger Delta; detailed context of Nigeria and various dimensions to the Niger Delta conflict; the structural factors embedded in the very fabric of the Niger Delta region and those factors that fuel violence in the region; the role of the oil companies and the oil communities in tackling the contending issues in the region and the different tools toward conflict settlement initiated by the belligerents in the Niger Delta region. This chapter encapsulates the key findings of this research and appraises the achievement of the research to conclude the thesis. Drawing on this perspective and using the data collected from primary and secondary sources, this thesis contributes to enlarge our knowledge of the conflicts in the Niger Delta; the analysis of causes, impacts and prevention strategies from 1999 to 2011.

The main research question that this thesis has answered is: in what ways, and to what extent do the responses of different actors to the conflict in the Niger Delta contribute to its resolution? The research has addressed the following subsequent explicit research questions:

1. What is the relevance of resource curse and rentier state theories to conflicts in oil-bearing settings?

2. What is the background to the conflict? What are its causes?

3. In what ways has the state responded to the conflict in Niger Delta? And how successful have its initiatives been?

4. In what ways have the companies engaged with the state and communities in their oil operations and production? What are the relevant factors that influence conflict-management initiatives of oil companies in the Niger Delta?

5. In what ways have the communities been affected by and responded to the issues of governance in the Niger Delta.

This chapter summarises the main results of this research and weighs the achievement of the study to conclude its discussions and analyses.

9.2   Main Research Findings

The research began with a review of the conceptualisation of the conflict in resource-rich countries and the socio-historical thriving of the conflicts in the Niger Delta region, respectively in Chapters Three, Four and Five, to shed light on how conflict-resource, Nigerian settings, history of the Niger Delta and the various dimensions of the Niger Delta conflict are linked and feed on each other. The review of the conceptualisation of the conflict in resource-rich countries in Chapter Three provided that the presence of resources, the willingness of the oil companies to maximise their interests to the detriment of the oil-communities, the corruption of local and national elites and weak governance trigger violence. This chapter revised the literature on domains that are pertinent to the research subject, specifically the theory of conflict and economic war, rentierism, paradox of plenty, the reaching of agreements in resource-based conflicts and conflict resolutions.

The analysis of this chapter holds that in social interactions, conflicts are unavoidable since it is a major strand in social sciences. However, the issue lies in the way conflicts are managed and resolved. The way conflict is dealt with could have negative consequences or end up in

violence, it could also yield sustainable peace and development, if appropriately handled. Hence, positive attitudes and behaviours are required to manage and transform conflict into societal development. The chapter also showed that conflict has thrived from interstate conflict to intrastate conflict, which is quite different from the conventional war in terms of scope, actors and methods of warfare and finance. The legacy left behind in the colonial states by imperialists has been blamed to be largely responsible for contemporary conflict. This legacy allegedly gave rise to weak states, characterised by unconsolidated democracy, illegitimate government and a divisive nation.

Considering the nature of the conflicts in the Niger Delta as discussed in Chapter Four and Five, rentier theory and resource curse are highly influential in the analysis of resource-oriented conflict. The analysis in these chapters has shown that rentier theory validates the bloated public sector found in resource-rich countries which serves the pockets of the ruling elites rather than the general society. The review of literature also depicts that an interaction between economic, political and cultural factors (normally historically formed) being heightened by severe group disparity in political involvement, economic resources and income and social access and well-being, constitutes the root causes of most conflicts. It derived from the analysis of the review that the strategies adopted in ending resource-conflicts have proven to be inappropriate. These strategies included military action, economic sanctions and revenue-sharing. However, structural conflict resolution and management instruments offered a better solution to ending the crisis, as it sought to eradicate the conditions that brought forth violence in the society.

The presentation of the conflict in the Niger Delta and the analysis of the crisis in the region in Chapters Four and Five demonstrated the importance of the inland context in which resources were unfairly exploited and distributed, which then induced violence and militancy in the region.

Four elements explain the developing violence that originated from an uneasy quarrel dated back to colonial rule. Firstly, the existing ethnic and religious differences between the predominantly Muslim north and the mainly Christian south that were exacerbated and politicised by the different forms of colonial rule– and a deep split between the major ethnic groups and minority groups have brought forth fear of dominance among different local communities. Dispute over land ownership and traditional authority between the largest minority ethnic group –the Ijaw– and the minority ethnic groups –the Itsekiri, Urhobo and Adoni– are another source of violence in the Niger Delta region. Similarly, the discovery of

oil only intensified the ethnic lines giving rise to ethnic nationalism which has led the Niger Delta people to resort to ethnic patriotism rather than national patriotism by advocating for self-determination.

Secondly, the vigilante groups became a law unto themselves and practiced extra-judicial killings, seizure of personal property, and other serious human rights violations, something which led to increased intra-community conflict. Struggles developed over threats to customary authority within communities; or new power-brokers emerged to challenge traditional leaders. Over time, the vigilante groups evolved into the militia groups bunkering oil and kidnapping foreign workers.

Thirdly, following the country's independence in 1960, the political structure has always been characterised by over-centralisation of power and resources, a structure which lacks federalist institutions and values, although the political system is said to be federalist. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the 1999 Constitution deters the federated states from having their own constitutions or enacting legislation that opposes national legislation (Obo 2005). This constitution monopolises regional revenues, which are mainly derived from oil, to the centre, a situation that creates dependent states relying in large measure on the decisions and resources of the federal government. The defective public service delivery in the Niger Delta thus stems from the political character of the country which is largely responsible for the underdevelopment, environmental degradation and insecurity that infects the region.

Lastly, the havoc inflicted on the environment by oil multinationals went unnoticed for several years prior to the selling of oil production; a situation that destroyed farmlands and polluted surface and ground waters, thus negatively affecting the basis of the livelihood for the Niger Delta people. The environmental degradation and the lack of developmental infrastructure in the Niger Delta have subjected people to untold inhumanities and injustices. Most of the conflicts have arisen from complex environmental problems and a long history of neglect and social development of peoples who have seemed helpless, watching their land and water resources continually being devastated by the intense exploitation for hydrocarbons without deriving any appreciable benefits by way of investment in their own development.

In Chapter Six, the examination of the conflict management strategies as applied by the Nigerian government in the Niger Delta depicted that government's policies regarding conflict management and resolution in the region have been largely defective and ineffective. Though they dealt with some of the issues fundamental to the oil conflict in the Niger Delta,

yet they have still shown several limitations. It has been shown that consecutive administrations have approached the crisis from three major pedestals, namely: developmental interventions, increase of revenue allocation and the use of brutal force. The government has established several development intervention agencies to implement infrastructural and human development projects in the region. However, they did not live up to effectively fulfil their mandate. The appointment of politicians as the agencies' administrators, lack of consultation with the beneficiaries and unbridled corruption have been pointed out as factors that have hampered the effectiveness of the agencies. Similarly, even though the government increased the revenue allocated to the region through the increase of the derivation formula, the increased allocation did not improve the lives of the poor masses. Rather, it ends up in the hands of the prebandal network of the Nigerian state. The lack of transparency and accountability over oil revenue by political leaders in the region facilitates the mismanagement of public funds. One of the most adopted strategies by the government is the use of force which is aimed at violently repressing any form of threat or uprising against the oil business. This strategy worsened the crisis in the region as it inspired the Niger Delta people to develop a correspondingly violent response through the emergence of militancy movements to confront the state security agents. This situation culminated in the loss of life and property, as civilians were the victims of violence between state security agents and militants. Furthermore, the lack of professionalism by the state security agents in quelling the insurgency ended in severe harm to civilians, with many having lost their lives during public protestations. The amnesty offered to the militia groups was the master stroke that brought relative peace to the region. The willingness of the militia groups to surrender their arms illustrated that the youths preferred a legitimate means of livelihood than a life of crime. Thus, although the militia disbandment brought peace, the DDR programme was a diversion from the real issues that were sustaining the conflict in the region: deep-seated issues that were not being addressed. The chapter also delved into how environmental degradation, underdevelopment and unemployment still pervade the region. It derived from this that the absence of strong political will, the non-implementation of the NDDC's master plan, lack of consultation with the grassroots, poor funding, making mediocre appointments and a strong reliance on brutal force epitomises the hypocrisy of the Nigerian state towards bringing sustainable solutions to the root causes of the crisis.

The analysis of the conflict in the Niger Delta in Chapter Six supports the abovementioned complex causalities and interactions. It has been proven from this chapter that different violent confrontations against the MNOCs by the Niger Delta oil-communities have been

driven by decades of oil expropriation, negligence of environmental pollution, insensitivity and maltreatment of the local communities by the oil companies. Although the oil communities used various non-violent approaches to settle their grievances at the earliest period, many years after, however, the oil companies have resorted to use the state security force to intimidate their hosts rather than establishing a regime of corporate social responsibility and sensitivity to them. Subsequently, the oil communities took a more violent and forceful approach towards the oil business by occupying their facilities and disrupting their oil production. As the local indigenes became more hostile to the oil companies' business, the MNOCs changed their strategies and agenda by distributing oil benefits to a few selected and influential members of the oil-community. These approaches were not envisioned to solve the problem, rather to assuage the people in order to secure an uninterrupted business operation. The MNOCs have been colluding with the most powerful groups in a society in order to settle and establish their business and secure uninterrupted oil production. In doing so, they encouraged the selective empowerment of a cluster of individuals in the communities, hence polarising the existing peace in the already fragmented communities. This has culminated in further violent struggles among groups for access to the oil rents. The analysis in this chapter also depicted that the payment of the benefits to some of the people from different communities reinforced mistrust among indigenes. Ironically, this further threatened the security of MNOCs operations. As a result, local resistance emerged, a situation which eventually gave rise to a rag-tag army of lawless and agitated youths who started a regime of violent extortion of oil benefits from the oil companies. The MNOCs initiated a bottom-up community-driven development initiative in the region with the implementation of the GMOU models to counter the intensification of the conflict. The GMOU model categorised neighbouring communities in a MNOC's area of operations and helped them have a sense of collective ownership of community projects in their area. By using this model, the MNOCs have been able to deliver development projects and other social benefits to the region. This strategy appeared to be significant and encouraging. The MNOCS moved from uniting with the state, in order to suppress the local people, to partnering with local communities, in order to secure a cooperative and safe operating environment. The chapter additionally showed that the engagement between the MNOCs and the oil communities could assuage grievances relating to employment, livelihoods and poverty, and in the long-term, secure sustainable peace in the region. With this engagement, the oil communities could request the MNOCs to work assiduously towards cleaning up impacted production sites and adopt world-wide operating standards in order to reduce

further impact on the environment and lessen confrontation with the local people. In the ongoing conflict in the Niger Delta region, two armed movements emerge; the one supported by, and fighting for, the MNCs and that backed by, and fighting for, oil-communities. While there seems to be an agreement that the ongoing conflict in the Niger Delta region is an oil-based crisis, the examination of the link between oil exploitation, militancy and violent conflict in this region has underlined that the empirical analysis of the conflict incentives of the militants is extremely limited. Notwithstanding the limited analysis of the conflict incentives, some argue that oil exploitation and its corollaries are the major driver for the protracted conflict, or have become the principal incentive for the conflict. Others believe that the exploitation of oil and environment pollution pave the way for the conflict, or that the link between oil exploitation and conflict is a result of insecurity and federalism failure in Nigeria. In reference to the scholarly knowledge of the political economy of war, revised in Chapter Three, the economic agenda barely seems to be the leading reason behind most of armed conflicts, even if it is challenging to visibly draw the line between economic reasons and other factors, partially due to the fact that conflict dynamics and agendas depend on individual temperament and can switch over time. In the absence of an agreement on a set of conflict inducements, the prospect of riches from the availability of abundant natural resources and the effect of weak governance are essentially viewed as causing armed conflicts by the political economy of war.

The observation above has been prominent in determining the responses, applying to the 'conflicts in the Niger Delta approach in particular.' The responses thus focus on the task of analysing causes, impacts and management strategies with the aim of ending and resolving violent conflict. They also seek to improve governance since the 'paradox of plenty' hypothesis suggests that weak governance is a fundamental variable in causing violence in resource-abundant countries. They are reverberated in the growing pressure on and standpoints of oil-exploiting companies examined in Chapter Seven. The oil-exploiting companies and national authorities are increasingly requested to take into account local communities' grievances instead of applying a strategy of 'carrot and stick' by assuaging the use of force with placation intended to reach a 'soft stalemate' in order to resume oil production. The analysis of state-sponsored conflict-management initiatives in Chapter Six, that of conflict-management initiatives by oil companies in Chapter Seven, and then local community opposition to the oil companies and adverse effects on their lives, in Chapter Eight expounds the very different perspectives between the Nigerian government and the multinational oil companies on the one side, and the oil-communities on the other.

Provided with the analysis of the nature of the link between oil-exploitation-production, regional violence or militancy and different views within local communities as alluded to above, Chapter Six appraised previous and current initiatives taken by the Nigerian state in managing and resolving the crisis in the Niger Delta region, drawing out their strength and weakness. Successive administrations have approached the crisis from three major pedestals: developmental interventions, increase of revenue allocation and the use of brutal force, none of which addressed the deep-seated issues at the origin of the conflict in the region. It rather complicated the crisis in the region since the government used force to violently repress any form of threat or uprising to the oil business; a situation which inspired the Niger Delta people to develop a correspondingly response to tackle the state security agents through the emergence of militia groups.

Considering the particularity of the conflict management initiatives by the oil companies in the Niger Delta region discussed in Chapter Seven, this study has indicated that what are referred to as conflict-management initiatives are in reality the settlement of divergent points of view through the use of violence and the 'divide and rule' tactic in order to privilege a small social group to the detriment of the rest of communities' members. Chapter Seven has also underlined the weakness of top-down policies implemented by the MNOCs to settle the conflict in the region. This principle, based on the MNOCs imposing a '*modus operandi et vivendi*' to the indigenes rather than listening to them, has rather exacerbated tension between local communities and oil companies in the region. Taking into account the local communities' concerns in the management of the conflict, which seems to be lacking in this context could remedy the limitations of the top-down policy implemented by the MNOCs. Similarly, any conflict-management initiatives by the MNOCs towards handling the oil-led conflict in the region of the Niger Delta would require the MNOCs and their ally the government to adhere to the local communities' plan regarding socio-economic development of indigenous communities.

The willingness of the militia groups to surrender their arms indicated that the youths preferred a legitimate means of livelihood rather than a life of crime. However, the absence of strong political will, the non-implementation of the NDDC's master plan, lack of consultation with the grassroots, poor funding, mediocre appointments and a strong reliance on brute force could not resolve the root causes of the crisis. Additionally, there are no top-down schemes that could be effective enough to resolve or even manage the conflict, as these schemes are externally driven without sufficiently including the local perspectives. Conflict-

management initiatives by oil communities in the Niger Delta and local opposition to MNOCs, respectively, developed in Chapters Seven and Eight painted the earliest period of the conflict in the Niger Delta region as a period when local communities were guided by various non-violent strategies to resolve their grievances. Nevertheless, the use of the state security force by the MNOCs to suppress oil communities' protests in lieu of establishing a regime of CDR and sensitivity led the indigenes of oil communities to engage with the MNOCs in more violent ways. The local communities' opposition to the MNOCs' and state's conflict-management initiatives in this context has been described as both non-violent and violent means to voice their grievances. The non-violent means used have previously been listed in Chapter 8.3.

Chapters Seven and Eight have both shown the major short-comings of the conflict management initiatives in the Niger Delta region, as actions towards settling violence in the region are an imposition of the MNOCs views onto a local community, views associated with the use of violence. If it has been ascertained that the government and MNOCs have preferred the use of violence to suppress the local communities' grievances in the region, there is also the need for acknowledging that oil communities have also used violence to counter the MNOCs' actions. However, in such conditions, a bottom-up approach towards managing and resolving the conflict seems to be crucial in order to envisage a sustainable and efficient peace and development process in the region, but also to develop trust amongst different actors.

The developmental interventions that were intended to contribute to developing the mechanisms towards managing the crisis in the region were discussed in Chapter Six. However, these interventions are characterised by a lack of transparency and accountability concerning the utilisation of oil revenue by political leaders in the region, something which facilitates the abuse of public funds. As they are developmental, rather than conflict-management/resolution initiatives, they appear to be largely ineffective and inefficient. Furthermore, as they are voluntary initiatives, they have been poorly enforced, with little monitoring and accountability. They also lack the views and input from the oil-communities in their processes. Drawing on the above analysis of the linkages between oil-resource and violence in the Niger Delta region and the local ownership case, I have suggested how considering a host community's grievances and using a grassroots-up approach could be of interest in terms of conflict-management and conflict-resolution initiatives in the Niger Delta region. While the grassroots-up approach, as a new form of policy development towards

managing conflict, is thought to improve governance through more inclusive, transparent and accountable decision-making processes at a lower level with a higher participation of communities' members, my research has identified the marginalisation of oil-communities' grievances in most conflict-management and resolution initiatives and policies regarding conflicts in the Niger Delta region. Without factoring in the local communities' grievances, conflict-resolution mechanisms, like conflict-management initiatives, have been largely driven by the interests of the MNOCs, government's officials and some corrupted local leaders. These have freely ignored corporate social responsibility and MNOCs' legal duties; if they adhered to them that could lead to an appropriate approach towards resolving and managing the conflicts in the Niger Delta.

The approach to the conflict in the Niger Delta region has determined what constitutes the oil-based conflict or to what extent the production of oil in the region actually triggers any violent conflict.

Based on the federal and local multifaceted causalities of the conflicts in the Niger Delta region, in which unfair sharing of oil revenue and environmental disaster played a role in creating animosity between the MNOCs-government and oil-communities, may provoke grievances and violence. There is no concrete evidence as to what developmental plan based on oil dividend would prevent the Niger Delta militants from attacking MNOCs' facilities. Moreover, the oil-conflict management and resolution approach, with its focus on top-down processes, is a divide and rule tactic, morally dubious and invidious, aimed to buy off opposition in the oil-communities. It shifts the balance in favour of the government, MNOCs and a few corrupt local chiefs, and marginalises the rest of the oil communities.

The marginalisation of the oil-communities' grievances and the dearth of grassroots-up approaches towards conflict-management and resolution initiatives, a major shortcoming singled out in this research, highlight the difficulty in genuinely resolving and managing conflict in the Niger Delta region, owing to the nature of the conflict in question. Local communities may be impeded by a shortage of resources or capacity to be able to participate meaningfully in the conflict management and resolution initiatives. However, their views regarding their grievances need to be taken into account and those communities' members who are taking part in militancy need to be integrated into the process and initiatives of conflict management and resolution. This is the point in which I seek to contribute to knowledge by enlightening the theoretical argument of applying a grassroots-up approach as a means of conflict resolution and conflict management in an environment of violent conflict

and unfair sharing of resource. The concept of grassroots-up approach requires re-assessment of the imperfect environments to which it could be applied and a clarification of the extent to which the local communities' grievances should be factored in.

In addition to the point above, the arguments offered in my thesis have contributed to ongoing academic discussions on conflict analyses and resolution, the adverse effect of resource hypothesis and the political economy of new war in particular. I have highlighted that managing and resolving the oil-led conflict in the Niger Delta region would need the MNOCs and government to consider the local communities' blueprint in regards to their socio-economic development, as community participation has already been proved to be one of the best ways to proceed, in line with conflict management and resolution, in the post-conflict recovery process. My research has also offered empirical analysis and data on the oil-based conflict, conflict resolution and conflict management in line with armed movements or militancy in the region of the Niger Delta. It has proved how the implementation of grassroots-up policies as a means toward ending the conflict could play the role of uniting people from different perspectives around one common objective.

I have achieved the objectives of the research as set out in the introduction. The data and arguments have, I believe, confirmed this and shown that there is evidence to support that a grassroots-up approach could draw together several groups from different backgrounds and interests around a shared objective that could then tackle obstacles that prevent the MNOCs and oil communities to decide, and get on with, the development of the region. While it has provided insight into how and why the grassroots-up approach does contribute to the management and resolution of the conflict in the Niger Delta region, the research has a limitation, as shown below.

The research subject is a continuing challenge and it is not possible to appraise the results of the grassroots-up approach at this current stage of activity. Some of the research findings are therefore not conclusive. This was evident from the start of the research; however, I still decided to conduct this research because the subject is extremely significant. Firstly, the subject is a serious illustration of the connection between poverty and resource curse, which exposes the developing world to chronic conflict; secondly, it requires a pressing reply for the population in the Niger Delta region.

9.3 Revising the Analytical Framework

As discussed early in this thesis, the nature of conflict in the Niger Delta region is the issue at stake which may be classified into four variants, namely: inter-community conflict, intra-community conflict, community versus oil companies conflict and community versus (federal, state or local) government conflict (Alao 2007). Although each variant bears its own characteristics and developmental pattern, they have all, however, contributed to the use of violence as conflict resolution by the oil-communities, government and MNOCs. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that conflicts in the Niger Delta involve socio-cultural, political and economic dimensions which are interconnected with oil-related issues, namely: deprivation, marginalisation, environmental degradation, military intervention, and old rivalry between the communities (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011; Amunwa 2012; Nwokolo 2012; Nnimmo 2015).

In revisiting various discourses on conflict thriving in the region being researched, I might argue that conflicts in the Niger Delta are becoming more frequent and intensely violent, resulting in continued loss of life and property. On the premise of recent conflict resolution strategies, including the creation of such institutions as the OMPADEC and the NDDC as mentioned in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, the creation of local government areas/councils, the provision of social amenities and the payment of compensation for land, failed to end conflicts in the Niger Delta. As substantiated earlier in this research, I could concur with Alao (2007) and Williams (2016) that various conflict resolution initiatives as applied by different protagonists in the Niger Delta have shown their limitations, or merely failed. As a result, the crises have taken a turn for the worse; something that points to the need for re-examining the conflict resolution approaches of relations within and between communities and MNOCs, and communities and government, with a view to introducing conflict resolution approaches that would bring peace and sustainable development to an anticipated post-conflict Niger Delta region.

The conflict resolution initiatives implemented in the Niger Delta were based on how each of the three stakeholders – communities, the oil companies and the federal or federated state governments, understands the problems of the Niger Delta and the approaches for dealing with them (Nnimmo 2015). Drawing from this perception, I could put forward that; firstly, the oil communities have come to the conclusion that their fates are in their own hands and as such they have always used strategies and tactics spanning from reactive pacifism to reactive militancy (Nwokolo 2012). This is what this thesis has identified: groups have demanded

political empowerment, increased fiscal allocation to compensate for resource exploitation and consequent environmental degradation, control of their resources, and overall development. The strategies used to make these demands have intensified tension, insecurity and conflicts in the region.

Secondly, the MNOCs have observed that the basic need of the communities is for the mitigation of poverty through the delivery of basic social and economic infrastructure, as part of their corporate social responsibilities (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011; Amunwa 2012). In their view, these 'hand-outs' fills the gap between them and the host communities; they provide the missing links needed to effect mutual co-existence between them and the militant communities. Unfortunately, the communities looked down on these efforts, viewing them as paltry compared to the apparent value of resource exploitation by the MNOCs and the revenue received by federal government. Consequently, violent conflicts continued unabated.

Thirdly, the federal government has mostly regarded the conflicts in the Niger Delta as acts of rebelliousness to the nation. Hence its resolution 'style' aimed to control the conflict (Amunwa 2012). This approach involved the use of control measures, force, coercion, impatience with dialogue and information gathering.

Broadly, two strands of conflict resolution initiatives by the state for the Niger Delta have been put in place. The first involved a number of *ad hoc* measures, such as the use of force to suppress violent insurrection in a bid to compel the aggrieved communities into quiescence, or to coerce conflicting communities to avoid or accommodate conflict. Other such measures included: litigation, impromptu tribunals and judicial commissions of inquiry into such conflicts, special improvised committees, militant declarations and ultimatums, hurriedly organised symposia, workshops and conferences, peace talks, elders' forums, environment friendly publications and workshops organised by all or any of: the government, oil companies, NGOs, communities, traditional rulers, print media, pseudo-environmentalists and an array of nascent groups and movements.

The second is based on the 'paradigm shift' to the new view that the indispensable bond between peace in the Niger Delta, the oil companies and the Nigerian economy is to be found in community development projects. Such projects have involved the delivery of social and economic infrastructure, reparation for contaminated environment, a youth skills acquisition programme and scholarships for students of Niger Deltan origin (Alao 2007). By popular

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demand, specialised institutions, such as the OMPADEC and NDDC have been created to further pursue the aims and objectives of the community development paradigm.

Notwithstanding these conflict resolution initiatives, violence has not ended in the Niger Delta.[163] The findings of my research fieldwork also suggest that the current government-MNOC's initiatives, referred to as a top-down approach, to tackle the endemic conflict problem has failed to yield results that are both socially and economically sustainable. This failure could also be ascribed to the dearth of a common development framework and focus; something which could call for another and new approach that would meet this need.[164] The integrated conflict resolution, or participatory approach is hereby being suggested. The integrated conflict resolution approach, also referred to as the grassroots-up approach to conflict is a collaborative approach to problem-solving and decision-making. This approach places an equal importance on the relationship with the other parties and on a mutually satisfactory outcome. The strategies of the 'problem-solving' conflict resolution approach involve building trust, communicating face-to-face, collecting information, interchanging, exchanging, valuing diversity, team building, having focus-group discussions, searching for alternatives and seeking 'win-win' solutions (Downey, Bonds and Clark 2010; Kadafa 2012). Previous methods of conflict resolution in the Niger Delta have been adversarial, as they were based on bargaining from established positions, attacking the other party, applying whatever standards to be effective in achieving individual goals, and considering ways to advance specific parties' positions (Chidi 2010; Okunola and Ikuomola 2012). The integrated conflict resolution approach to conflict in the Niger Delta might be viewed as a collaborative and problem-solving methodology. It is also a democratic process, since it acknowledges the people's right and responsibility to manage and resolve their own affairs. It further allows antagonists to participate in making a decision by giving all participants an equal chance to express their views, generate options and influence the final decision (Reider and Haastrup 2013). As a collaborative problem-solving methodology, the approach finally encourages honest and open communication and allows the sharing of information. It avoids fault-finding and blame-trading by the parties, while the reciprocally assertive attitudes remain future-oriented and trust-building. In doing so, it encompasses some procedures including: negotiation, a focus on the problem and not on parties or persons, a search for common

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[163] Focus group discussions conducted in Abuja, Ibadan and Lagos, 2014-2016.
[164] Fieldwork findings from research fieldwork conducted in Nigeria, 2014-2016.

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 (Eno-Abasi 2011).

The benefits of community participation in conflict resolution are effective simply because this approach has the potential to impact positively on social and economic progress (Eno-Abasi 2011). Applied to the case of the Niger Delta, for example, some of the specific benefits of effective community participation would be effective in the context of situation analysis and policy making. Firstly, this implies that it would improve the quality of policies and services. It is worth underlining in this context that when various stakeholders are involved in decision making, the policy-makers benefit from their first-hand understanding of the issues (Ereibi 2011). Stakeholders provide reality checks, which facilitate the testing of *a priori* assumptions. Secondly, the grassroots-up approach helps to resolve complex issues: social, economic and environmental issues are nearly always multifaceted. The conflicts as they evolve in the Niger Delta offer a case where working together could raise the possibility of finding sustainable solutions. Thirdly, the grassroots-up approach builds trust and understanding. This could be most useful and interesting in the case being researched where these two strands of development are conspicuously missing. Communities build and develop confidence in a government or agency that overtly offer them opportunities to contribute to decisions that affect them. A foundation of trust becomes an invaluable component when strong decisions, as are required in the case of the Niger Delta, need to be taken. Fourthly, integrated conflict resolution helps to create an all-encompassing society. From my research experience, I could argue that when government works in collaboration with communities, the people feel more empowered, more justly treated and more valued. The collaboration between government and local community is useful for the creation of a peaceful environment in which the community members could be part of the solution to their own problems. Applied to the case of the Niger Delta, this would enable self-reliance and innovation leading to sustainable development. Fifthly, community participation is useful in evaluating progress, as active collaboration with the community would be valuable for monitoring policy outcomes. Finally, community participation in policy and decision making would ensure the respect of human rights and enable the Niger Delta people to get a fair share of their resources.[165]

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[165] Fieldwork findings, research fieldwork conducted in Nigeria from 2014 to 2016.

However, the integrated conflict resolution approach has some limitations in that it faces a number of inherent challenges. Some of these challenges are due to its process. The extent to which an integrated conflict-resolution approach could reach its potential contribution depends fundamentally on the level of care with which it is applied. The integrated conflict-resolution tool kits, for example, should only be handled by facilitators who have vast experience in doing so, and who understand the community's traditions, customs and, most importantly, language. This approach also faces other challenges such as: time pressure, fear of conflict, temptation to revert to the old ways of doing things, narrow or partial measures of success or achievement and the tendency to want to settle for partial measures of success and achievement (Ereibi 2011). All these challenges, however, could be more easily tackled if all the stakeholders could show their ability to overcome their private agendas to achieve a sustainable peace settlement.

9.4 Key Recommendations and Future Research

I would therefore suggest that future research should investigate those local views that are not currently being factored into, or included in, the various government decisions and policies. The research will need to go beyond the analysis of the nexus between the militancy and oil production, for example, by examining the issues and needs of the local communities. As this study has suggested, the oil communities face broader issues, including inequality and unfair sharing of oil resources, environment pollution, dearth of adequate infrastructures, poverty and insecurity. The next study will need to gather ideas about how these issues and needs could be tackled and what has prevented the improvement of the situations on the ground. Such research envisions improving policies and decisions for conflict resolutions, culminating in sustainable peace, development and security, by integrating these issues and the views of critical oil communities who are not organised or able to voice their worries and views. This further research also necessitates an anthropological approach through longer-term observations of the political economy of oil to complement the scarcity of statistics in the Niger Delta Region. It also requires a holistic analytical approach to examine these statistics that could be borrowed from a sustainable livelihood approach or the concept of human security. Similarly, for the future research above to be able to improve decisions and policies, another set of research needs to be carried out to look at how best these oil communities' views could be communicated to the ongoing grassroots-up approaches. The future research should take into account how and why the oil communities in these

grassroots-up processes may change their perceptions. For this research, an applied research study of the grassroots-up processes including facilitated dialogue with people from a wider range of local communities, particularly their leaders, would be appropriate.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Assessment Process of Ethics Approval

Appendix 2

Desk-Based Research Ethics Approval

Coventry University ETHICS

Desk-Based Research Ethics Approval

This project involves using materials already in the public domain and does not involve human participants

Project Title

EARLY CONFLICT PREVENTION BETWEEN OIL COMPANIES, GOVERNMENT BODIES AND VILLAGE COMMUNITIES IN NIGER DELTA NIGERIA: A STRATEGIC AND PRACTICAL APPROACH TO HANDLING CONFLICT AND REACHING AGREEMENTS

Principal Investigator Certification

I believe that this project **does not require research ethics approval**.	X
I confirm that I have selected this option because it honestly describes the risk associated with my project.	X
I confirm that I will carry out the project in the ways this application describes (see project summary, comments and attachments if proferred). I will immediately suspend research and request a new ethical approval if the project subsequently changes.	X

Principal Investigator

Name: Habiba Musa Ahmed..

Date: 28/11/2012..

Student's Supervisor (if applicable)

I confirm that I have discussed this project with the student and agree that it does not require research ethics approval. I will continue to review ethical issues in the course of supervision.

Name: Alan Hunter...

Date: 23/07/2013 ....

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Desk Based Research Ethics Approval Checklist

Applicant Details

Project Ref:	P9693
Full name:	Habiba Musa Ahmed
Faculty:	[BES] Business, Environment and Society
Department:	[IS] International Studies and Social Science
Module Code:	BESR003
Supervisor:	Alan Hunter
Project title:	EARLY CONFLICT PREVENTION BETWEEN OIL COMPANIES, GOVERNMENT BODIES AND VILLAGE COMMUNITIES IN NIGER DELTA NIGERIA: A STRATEGIC AND PRACTICAL APPROACH TO HANDLING CONFLICT AND REACHING AGREEMENTS
Date(s):	15/10/2012
Created:	28/11/2012 13:49

Project Details

The aim of the research is to investigate, analyse and evaluate the many issues surrounding conflict amoungst oil companies, government bodies and village communities. To address the issue of a divided communitie and conflict interest in Niger Delta Nigeria. The project will also aim to discover the necessity and impact of early conflict resolution and a strategic method to managing crisis. Using new generation methods by trying to establish peace by virtual means using social media and cyber technology to promote awareness and generate a lobby to help settle conflict and problems going on in the area of Niger Delta.

Another method that will be used to carry out this project is to review current trends and strategies adopted by experts, academia and government bodies in managing and resolving conflict amoungst oil companies,Government,and village communities in the Niger Delta.

There will be no data collection from the Niger Delta no field work will be carried out in that area because it is considered to be too DANGEROUS. The sample will be drawn from different ethnic groups raging from local communities, chiefs, youth,farmers, and businessmen and women that are indigenous to that

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Appendix 3

Ethics Certificate Approval

Coventry University

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant:

      Habiba Musa Ahmed

Project Title:

      Conflicts In The Niger Delta, Analysis, Causes, Impacts and Prevention
      Strategies1999-2011.

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry
University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and
approved as Medium Risk

Date of approval:

      21 September 2015

Project Reference Number:

      P33406

Appendix 4

Field Research Plan

_____

Title of Research: Conflicts In the Niger Delta: Analysis of Causes, Impacts and Resolution Strategies, 1999-2016.

Institution: Coventry University, Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies,
http://www.coventry.ac.uk/cprs

Principal investigator: Habiba Musa Ahmed

Email:musaahmh@uni.coventry.ac.uk

Fieldwork: 2014-2016

Objectives of Fieldwork

Fieldwork	Objectives
Objectives	❖ To Interview officials of the *Niger Delta Development Commission* (NDDC) liaison office in Abuja, and Lagos.
	❖ To interview officials of private oil exploration and servicing companies based in Abuja and Lagos which includes Chevron, Shell and Mobil.
	❖ To interview officials of NGOs based in Abuja which includes: *Niger Delta Peace Initiative;Actionaid Nigeria*; *ND-HERO, Environmental Right Actions (ERA)* and **Niger Delta Youth Movement (NDYM)**
	❖ To interview Niger Delta Indigenes residing in Abuja, Ibadan, and Lagos.

	❖ To Interview Professors at the Institute for Peace and strategic studies in University of Ibadan, lecturers in University Of Lagos and University Of Abuja. I also plan to visit the University library's for research materials.

Type of Research Data, Instrument, Informants and data recording

Type of Research Data:

- *Primary Data derived from Interviews with:*

  - Oil companies representatives   - Niger Delta based organisations

  - Government Agency official   - Niger Delta indigenes

  - Academic experts   - NGOs

- *Secondary data sourced from:*

  Thesis, journals, conference reports, newspapers and books.

Type of Research Instrument:

- **Interviews**:

  Semi-structured interviews which may include the following means of different communication technologies, such as email, phone and Skype, will be adopted to obtain useful information from a range of stakeholders.

Method of recording Interview proceedings and analysis

The method of interview recording below will be used based on research informant's preferences.

- *Audio recording:*

It will involve audio recording. The audio records will be transcribed. Information gathered will also be grouped based on themes, commonalities, and patterns

- *Note-taking:*

It will involvenote-taking. The notes taken during the off record interview sessions will be developed and transcribed. The responses will be categorized according

to themes and similarities. Codes will be generated for each category and a code record will be kept for proper documentation.

Interview Venue

The factors I intend to consider for the choice of the interview venue are; security, privacy and convenience for my research informants. The environment must be enclosed to ensure privacy and also be situated in location that is safe. Most interview will likely take place at respondents' office or a hotel, whichever, provided that is more convenient and secured.

Timetable of Actions

Pre-Field work	Field work	Post-field work
❖ Document search through library, centres for studies and internet **(2 wks.)**	❖ Identify key informants for this study and schedule interviews **(3 wks.)**	❖ Coding, Transcription and categorization of interview data; referring them to secondary data **(3 wks.)**
	❖ Conduct interview **(3 wks.)**	

Place of stay and Movement specifics

I will spend most of my time in Abuja and I will stay in my residential home. I intend to make short visits to Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu. During my visits, I intend to stay in a Hotel/Relative house. In Abuja, I intend to use my private car as a means of transportation. While in other locations i will use commercial vehicles, cab services as a means of Transportation.

Appendix 5

Sample of Interview Questions and Schedule

In-depth Interview

Name of Interviewer-----------------------------------

Date--

Name of Interviewee----------------------------------

Position in the community----------------------------

Good morning. I am _____ (introduce self).

This interview is being conducted as a part of my doctoral research. The aim of this session is to find out the effectiveness of strategies/actions that have been adopted in the Niger Delta crisis and generate possible solutions to bring sustainable peace in the region. I believe you are in a position to provide information that is vital for this research.

Based on your choice, our conversation will either be tape recorded or note-taken so as to have a capture of the interview details. I also guarantee the confidentiality of your comments so please answer the following questions to the best your knowledge.

Questions:

1   Can you please explain in detail the remote and immediate causes of the conflict in the Niger Delta?

2   Are you familiar with the efforts that have been made in the past to resolve this conflict, if you do, can you shed some light on them?

3   What is your opinion about the amnesty program?

4   What do you think is the main reason (s) militants are participating in the program?

5   In your opinion, who is a militant and what do you think is their prime motivation?

6   Overall, what is your opinion about the amnesty program? Has it been successful in mitigating the conflict?

7   In your opinion, do you think the issues surrounding the conflict have been adequately addressed? If no, please expatiate.

8   What does peace in the Niger Delta mean to you?

9   What role do you think the local communities (youth, elders and women) in the region can play in achieving sustainable peace in the region?

10   What role do you think the international oil companies have in achieving sustainable peace in the region?

11   What role do you think the NGOs have in achieving sustainable peace in the region?

12   What facilities, structures, institutions, activities, events, and policies have been created to stimulate the economic development of the region?

13   In your opinion, do you think these facilities, structures, institutions, activities, events, reforms and policies have been able to stimulate the economic development of the region? If no, please kindly explain the facilities, structures, institutions, activities, events, reforms and policies that can stimulate economic development in the region.

14   Who benefits from peace in the region? Who benefits from the conflict?

15   Over all, is there anything else you wish to tell me about the Niger Delta violence and the amnesty program?

16   Over all, Is there any possible reforms, strategies and actions you feel that should be taken to bring sustainable peace and prevent the reoccurrence of conflict in the Niger Delta region?

Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix 6

Informed Consent Form

Title of Research: Conflicts in the Niger Delta: Analysis of Causes, Impacts and Resolution Strategies.

Institution: Coventry University, Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies,
http://www.coventry.ac.uk/cprs

Principal investigator: Habiba Musa Ahmed

Email: musaahmh@uni.coventry.ac.uk
_____

Purpose of This Research

The main aim of this research is to explore the advantages of early conflict resolution. The research aims to investigate a way of providing a strategic and practical approach to handling conflict and reaching agreements. For further details, please see the separate information sheet.
.

Procedures

This interview is designed to collect your views and understanding about the Niger Delta crisis. The compilation of your views would be analysed along with others. The research aims to provide recommendations that could be helpful in setting future conflict or crisis. The research will promote a method to handle conflict in that region.

Possible risks or benefits

There is no risk involved in this study. There is no direct benefit to you also. The study uses your views and understandings for analysis and to come to some conclusion regarding the Niger Delta Conflict. The results of the research may help to solve the issues surrounding the Niger Delta crisis and also aid in reconciliation, which will help improve the stability of the oil sector that in return can benefit Nigeria as a country.

Right of refusal to participate and withdrawal

You are free to choose to participate in the study. You may refuse to participate or withdraw any time from the study. There is no adverse impact to you from your withdrawal.
Right to choose the mode of interview recording

You are free to choose how the interview proceedings should be recorded. You are free to choose, whichever that suits your comfort, either for the conversation to be audio recording or note-taking.

Confidentiality

All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence to the extent provided by the law and your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number and this informed consent form will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analysed, the list will be destroyed.

For further information

If you need more information about the interview or research program please ask me directly when we meet. Alternatively, you are welcome to contact me through the following email address:
musaahmh@uni.coventry.ac.uk

If you wish to take any queries further you are welcome to contact the Director of Studies at Coventry University: Dr Alan Hunter, a.hunter@coventry.ac.uk
The research is based at the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies at Coventry University: http://www.coventry.ac.uk/cprs

Appendix 7

Participant's Consent Declaration

I understand that participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no adverse effect to me. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of accrued benefits.

I declare that I am at least 18 years of age.

Participants   Signature:_____

Participant's Name:_____

Date: _____

Investigators Declaration

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedures in which the participant has consented to participate.

Principal   Investigator's   Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness

I witness the above signatures:

Witness Signature: _____   Date: _____