



Thesis
By
UKEJE, Charles
Ugochukwu

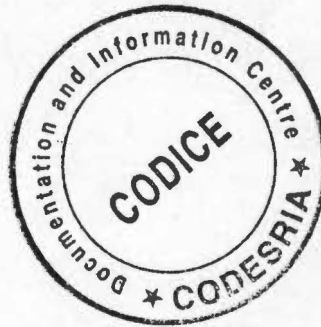
The Department of
International Relations
Faculty of
Administration
Obafemi Awolowo
University Ile-Ife,
Nigeria

OIL CAPITAL, ETHNIC
NATIONALISM AND CIVIL
CONFLICTS IN THE NIGER DELTA
OF NIGERIA

March 2004

**OIL CAPITAL, ETHNIC NATIONALISM AND CIVIL CONFLICTS
IN THE NIGER DELTA OF NIGERIA**

By



01.02.07
UKE
12780

**UKEJE, Charles Ugochukwu
B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc., International Relations (Ile-Ife)**

**Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(Ph.D.) in International Relations**

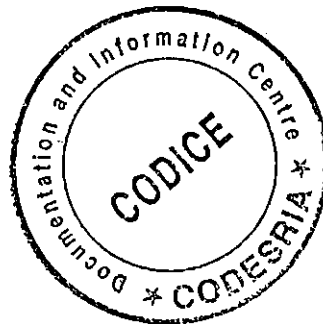
To

**The Department of International Relations
Faculty of Administration
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife, Nigeria**

March 2004

**OIL CAPITAL, ETHNIC NATIONALISM AND CIVIL CONFLICTS
IN THE NIGER DELTA OF NIGERIA**

By



01.02.07
UKE
12780/2

**UKEJE, Charles Ugochukwu
B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc., International Relations (Ile-Ife)**

**Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(Ph.D.) in International Relations**

To

**The Department of International Relations
Faculty of Administration
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife, Nigeria**

March 2004

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research for this thesis was carried out by **Mr. Charles Ugochukwu UKEJE** under my supervision in the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

29/4/2004
Date


Professor Amadu Sesay
Supervisor

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the fond memory of my late Father, **Mr. David Agbeze Ukeje**, and to my Mother, **Mrs. Mercy Ebere Ukeje**, for their painstaking sacrifices to lay the foundation for my education;

And

To the toiling peoples and communities of the oil-rich but poverty-stricken Niger Delta of
Nigeria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have come to realize that the longer it takes to complete a doctoral dissertation, the more the debt of gratitude the author will likely owe people from different walks of life who contributed, one way or another, to its successful completion. In my own case, however, the unusually long duration enabled me to tap, over a fairly reasonable period of time, from the wealth of knowledge and experiences of such a wide array of people: the ordinary inhabitants and the affluent elites of the Niger Delta; government officials and staff of oil companies still in active service or are retired; seasoned academics and researchers; human, environmental and minority rights activists; military and police officers/men; members of the diplomatic community and staff of international organisations, to name a few from an unimaginably long list. The benefits derived from such extensive contacts are truly immeasurable, but can be adequately captured by the popular saying that: 'nothing broadens the mind as contact with people'. I only hope that this finished product justifies the trust and confidence reposed in me by individuals from all walks of life within and outside Nigeria.

It is impossible to mention everyone (and every institution) that assisted me at various stages of this work; hence, I will limit myself to a few. I will naturally like to begin by thanking my supervisor, Professor Amadu Sesay, who should truly have given up on me a long time, but instead opted to persevere and nudge me on, in the face of what became my 'irresponsible' delays. I only hope that he can look back and smile with every satisfaction that he has another feather to his already distinguished career by overseeing the birth of another Ph.D. For me, therefore, it is with the deepest gratitude that I thank him immensely for allowing me to mature on the heels of his own outstanding professional accomplishments.

I am very fortunate to be a staff, and at different times up to this stage, a student in the Department of International Relations of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. That opportunity and privilege have served me very well to the extent that I have come to see the Department, since my enrolment as a young undergraduate in 1985, as one of the most congenial places available in this part of the world for productive

academic and professional development. I owe a debt of gratitude to my senior colleagues- Professors Olusola Ojo, Kayode Soremekun; Drs. Tale Omole, Jide Owoeye, W. Alade Fawole, Dokun Oyeshola- for insisting each time I ran into them on the corridors, that completing my doctoral program matters to them as much as it does to me. Their kind words of encouragement, and leadership by example, I am sure, inspired Dr. Layiwola Owolabi (of blessed memories) and Dr. Alade Fawole, to read and comment on earlier portions and drafts of this dissertation despite their own tight schedules. With my colleague and friend, Ebenezer Obadare, we shared some of the exciting as well as very frustrating moments in this insatiable thirst for knowledge and relevance, same goes to Funsho Adesola and Mrs. Ronke Ako-Nai, as well as the administrative staff in the departmental office. .

I also like to thank some of my senior colleagues within and outside the university who refused to 'let me rest' until this task is done: from the Department of History, Professor Sola Akinrinade, for facilitating a 6-week affiliation with the Centre for International Studies at the London School of Economics which enabled me to use the breathtaking library resources of that great school, Dr. Kemi Rotimi, for constantly reminding me that it is impossible to write a perfect dissertation and that lesser mortals have successfully done so in the past; in the Department of Political Science, Dr. Kola Olufemi, who read portions of this work before the proposal defense and pointed me towards relevant theoretical concerns and debates; Professors B.D. Ako, T.R. Ajayi, and Austin Isichei, for their inspiring engagements with the Niger Delta, even though from purely scientific angles; and professor J.A. Fabayo for his kind interventions at critical points in my short professional life. Words are not enough to describe my deep gratitude to Professor (Mrs.) Adetanwa Odebiyi and Professors Olabisi and Dipo Aina, for allowing me the luxury of leaning on them professionally and emotionally from time to time. Outside this University, I also benefited from the advice and support of seasoned researchers on the Niger Delta, particularly the distinguished historian, Professor E.J. Alagoa (University of Port Harcourt), Professor Adigun Agbaje (University of Ibadan); Dr. Bolade Eyinla (University of Ilorin); and Drs. Cyril Obi and Daniel Omoweh (both of the Nigerian Institute for International Affairs (NIIA)).

I owe as much thank you to people within universities and research institutions in Nigeria as to those who are in other sector within Nigeria and outside. In 1996/1997, I had a career and life changing experience of going on the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship program. It was actually during my Fulbright year that my dissertation research focus changed from the 'distant' Maghreb region where Islamic fundamentalism was fast threatening to ravage many countries in North Africa, to my own backyard, the Niger Delta, where an equally serious crisis of governance and lawlessness was brewing. I thank my 'foster parents' at the Public Affairs Section of the Embassy of the United States of America, Lagos, former Director Jim Callahan and Mrs. Marie Ekpere of the Cultural Affairs Section, as well as the successive staffs of that institution, for enthusiastically supporting my Fulbright application, and taking keen interest in my professional development thereafter.

My preliminary thoughts on this topic was shared with participants at the Rockefeller Foundation sponsored doctoral dissertation writing workshop hosted by the Watson Institute for International Affairs, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, in 1997. I like to thank, in particular, the Director, Professor Thomas Biersteker, and one of the facilitators, Professor Peter Uvin, for helping me to clarify some of the ideas that eventually found their ways into this completed dissertation. Even though the writing workshop was designed for African doctoral candidates in the United States and Canadian universities, they graciously invited me to participate. I was also privileged to attend the Governance Institute 1998, and to receive in the same year, a Small Grant for Doctoral Thesis both from the Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA) for which I thank that reputable institution. I also like to thank Dr. Akwasi Aidoo, former representative for West Africa of the Ford Foundation, and his assistant, Ms. Adaora Ikenze, for facilitating a grant from the Institute for International Education (IIE) based in New York, to enable me conduct extensive archival research at the Public Record Office, London, and other great libraries in the United Kingdom, in 1998. In the same vein, I like to thank Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, the current Executive Secretary CODESRIA who insisted that his final grant for an African Guest Researcher while he was at the Nordic African Institute (NAI) be splitted into two so as to accommodate me

for an enriching 6-week research visit to Uppsala, Sweden, in 2000. In 2001, I won a competitive grant from the Social Science research Council (New York) under the fellowship program *African Youths in the Global Age*. I thank the Director of African Programs, Dr. Ronald Kassimir, who took particular interest in my project and professional development, and Drs. Alcinda Honwana and Beverly Bruce of the Council, for their kind support. I also like to thank my friends: Tope, Dapo and Onome Ako, Sunday Coker, Barbara and Victor Awa, Tunde Balogun, Michael Ilegbemi, Wole Akinleye, Jaiye Olowosuko, Temitope Sunday, Jacob Sutton, Tony Okoh, Iruka Okeke, Funmi Vogt, Wale Adebani, Ebenezer Obadare, Evy and Chimezie Ekwueme, Jacob Sutton, Caleb Kullman, and Gbemisola Remi Adeoti, who made important editorial observations that enriched this study. I also thank the families of Professor and Chief (Mrs.) Amadu Sesay, Dr. G.C. Onyedim, Navy Captain Chris Osondu, Reverend S.A. Ilutanmi, Professor Biodun Ogundaini, Pastor Sunday Olaoye, and my in-laws, the Young-Harry family, for their supports and prayers. I trust that despite the delay in completing this work, you can all still find a place in your hearts to savor the product of your unflinching and enthusiastic supports, and friendship.

Even when I do not deserve their affectionate love, trust, confidence, prayers because of my unusual working habits, unpredictable travels, and sometimes, snobbishness, they never denied me all of that. I thank my dear wife and God-sent companion, Benba; my mother, Mercy Ebere; my brother and sisters, and my two boys, Nnamdi and Chukwuemeka. Finally, I thank God for His abiding love and faithfulness through all the years.

AUTHORIZATION

AUTHOR: UKEJE, Charles Ugochukwu

TITLE: Oil Capital, Ethnic Nationalism and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta of Nigeria

DEGREE: Ph.D. International Relations

YEAR: 2004

I, **UKEJE, Charles Ugochukwu**, hereby authorize the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library to copy my thesis, in whole or in part, in response to request from individual researchers and organizations for the purpose of private study or research.

SIGNATURE: _____



DATE: _____

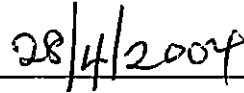


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Authorization	viii
Table of Contents	ix
List of Figures	xii
List of Tables	xiii
Map of Nigeria showing the Niger Delta	xiv
Map of Nigeria showing the Oil Producing States	xv
Abstract	xvi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	5
1.3. Objectives of the Study	12
1.4. Justifications for the Study	12
1.5. Organization of the Study	21

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Oil, Politics and the Nigerian State	23
2.2. Ethnicity and Ethnic Nationalism in Nigeria	41
2.3. Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta	54

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Methodology	70
3.2. Description of the Niger Delta	80
3.3. Scope of the Study	83

CHAPTER FOUR: FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

4.1. Theoretical Framework	90
4.2. Clarification of Concepts	95
4.3. Research Hypotheses	98

**CHAPTER FIVE: FOREIGN CAPITAL AND THE CHANGING
POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE NIGER DELTA**

5.1. Pre-Colonial State Formation and the Penetration of Foreign Capital into the Niger Delta	100
5.2. British Colonial Rule, Capital Accumulation and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta	124
5.3. Colonial Rule and Inter-ethnic Relations in the Niger Delta	160

**CHAPTER SIX: FOREIGN (OIL) CAPITAL, THE NIGERIAN
STATE AND CONFLICTS IN THE NIGER DELTA**

6.1. Oil Capital and the Nigerian State	175
6.2. Multinational Oil Companies and Host Communities in the Niger Delta	192
6.3. Oil, Ethnic Nationalisms and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta	214
6.3.1. The Boro 'Revolution'	215
6.3.2. MOSOP and Ogoni Nationalism	222
6.3.3. Ijaw Nationalism since the 1990s	234
6.3.4. The Itsekiri-Ijaw-Urhobo Rivalries over Warri	244

**CHAPTER SEVEN: RESPONSES BY MULTINATIONAL OIL
COMPANIES, THE NIGERIAN STATE AND THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO CIVIL
CONFLICTS IN THE NIGER DELTA**

7.1. The Limitations of Corporate Social Responsibility: Multinational Oil Companies and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta	252
7.2. The Nigerian State and Civil Conflicts: Coercive and Non-Coercive Responses to Crises in the Niger Delta	269
7.3. The Internationalization of Protests and Violent Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta	301

**CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND
CONCLUSIONS**

8.1. Summary of Research Findings	314
8.2. The Niger Delta in the 21 st Century: Alternative Scenarios and Futures	331

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Journals	337
Archival Documents	364

APPENDIX

Structured Questionnaire	370
In-depth Interview Schedule for Police/Army/Naval Personnel	382
In-depth Interview Schedule for Oil Company Workers	384
Focus Group Discussion Guide	386

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex	74
Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age	75
Figure 3: Distribution of Respondents by Religion	76
Figure 4: Distribution of Respondents by Education	77
Figure 5: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation	78

LIST OF TABLES

Table I: Synopsis of Data Collected	73
Table II: Characteristics of the FGD Groups	79
Table III: Return Showing Number and Tonnage of Vessels entered and cleared in each District of the Niger Coast Protectorate from April 17, 1894 to March 31, 1895	120
Table IV: Custom Duties on Major Imports into the Niger Coast	122

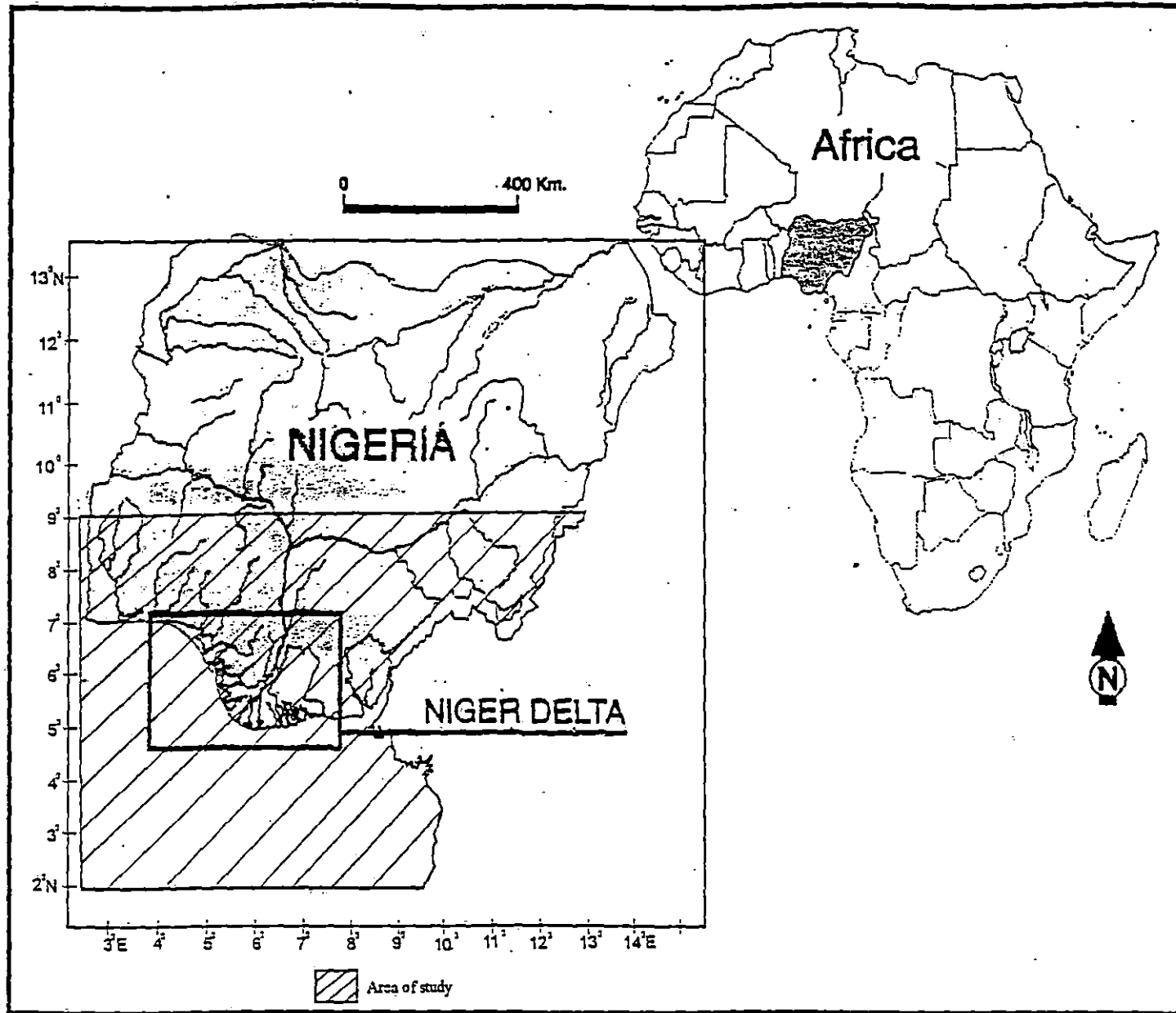
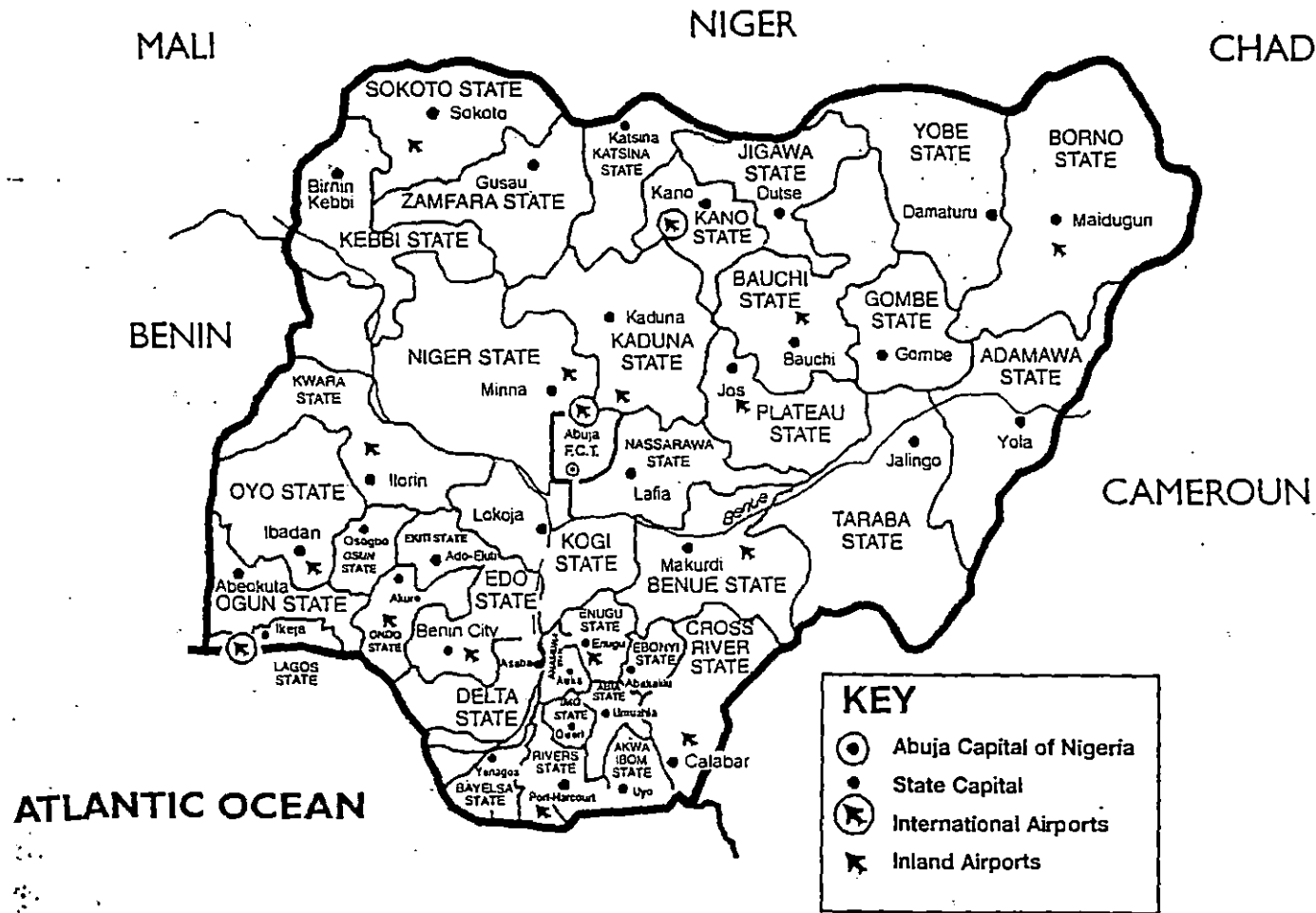


Figure 1: Map of study area showing the Niger Delta Basin located at the apex of the Gulf of Guinea along the west central African coast.



ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Oil Capital, Ethnic Nationalism and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta of Nigeria

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations

Name: UKEJE, Charles Ugochukwu

Year: 2004

This study investigated the background to, and the various dimensions of the violent conflicts that have engulfed the oil-rich Niger Delta of Nigeria in recent times by exploring the interface between the historical experiences of the region and contemporary factors responsible for the spread and exacerbation of the violent conflicts. The central research question of the study was that foreign (oil) capital exacerbated militant ethnic nationalisms and violent civil conflicts in the Niger Delta, and ultimately, accelerated the collapse of law and order in that region of the country.

Primary data were collected using Interview Survey, In-depth Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Direct Observation. Two oil communities each were selected from three of the nine oil-producing States in Nigeria: Ibeno and Eket (Akwa Ibom State), Obunagha and Elebele (Bayelsa State), and Ughelli and Uzere (Delta State). A total of 284 respondents completed the interview survey, while 30 participated in the in-depth interviews. The respondents for the interview survey and in-depth interviews were selected from a cross-section of the stakeholders in the Niger Delta: government officials, staff of multinational oil companies and representative groups within the host communities- traditional rulers, opinion leaders, officials of town unions, youth groups, farmers and fishermen, artisans, and so on. A total of 36 focus group discussions were conducted separately with male and female community leaders, adults and youths in each of the six study communities. Basic information about the target oil communities was documented using direct observation forms. Secondary data were drawn mainly from existing literature, newspapers, newsmagazines, and institutional publications by relevant governmental and non-governmental agencies, oil companies, as well as archival materials at the Public Record Office in London.

A major finding of the study was that multinational oil companies and the Nigerian State played pivotal roles in the exacerbation of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta. The study found that the historical *raison d'être* and mandate of the post-colonial Nigerian State, as defined by its role as a pliable and subservient agent for international capital, foreclosed any genuine effort by successive governments to address and resolve the oil-induced crises and conflicts in the Niger Delta. The study revealed that the complexities of formal and informal networks between the Nigerian State and multinational oil companies continued to facilitate the acquisition, monopolization and dispensation of violence by the State as demonstrated by the large-scale militarization of the Niger Delta. Also, the mutuality of interests between the State and multinational oil companies continued to determine how they related and reacted to one another, and how they perceived and responded to other actors in the region, especially the local oil communities.

The work found that relying solely on contemporary factors and events to account for the prolongation of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta is theoretically and methodologically limited, hence the need to investigate in detail, the complementary role(s) played by history in this process of collapse of public order in the region. The study further established that the process of incorporating the Niger Delta into the global political economy, from the era of slave trade to oil palm trading, was marked by chaos and instabilities- a trend that has continued and intensified in contemporary times; and that there is also strong continuity in the mismanagement and manipulation of ethnic issues and relations dating back from the colonial period.

The work revealed that the eventual exclusion and immiseration of the non-elite segments of the Niger Delta society from the material benefits accruing from increased crude oil earnings, at the same time that oil communities were left to bear the adverse externalities of crude oil-induced economic marginalization, political domination and environmental degradation, was a central factor fuelling the logic of violent conflicts in the delta region. This situation has also continued to push and pitch different ethnic groups in the region against each other in intense and protracted violent conflicts. Finally, the study found that

the narrow notions of security, law and order in public policy circles, as demonstrated by government's preference for military rather than political solutions to the crises in the oil region, have continued to make the search for durable peace and meaningful development an elusive task in the Niger Delta.

The study concluded that the conditions and circumstances precipitating conflicts in Nigeria's Delta region might not change significantly to pave the way for dialogue, reconciliation and partnership among the stakeholders; and that existing initiatives to address the plight of oil communities, especially the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, would be a catalyst for development in the region only if government and multinational oil companies allowed oil communities to have a meaningful and free voice in, and effective representation on matters affecting them.

Name of Supervisor: Professor Amadu Sesay
Number of Pages: 387pp

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The last decade of the Twentieth Century witnessed an unprecedented upsurge in and intensification of violent internal conflicts in various parts of Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Rwanda, Algeria, Burundi, Ethiopia, Angola, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire among others. The oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the focus of this dissertation, has been a theatre of violent antagonism and conflict pitching oil communities against the Nigerian State and multinational oil companies over allegations of political disenfranchisement, socio-economic marginalization and environmental degradation resulting from long years of crude oil exploitation. At the same time, the plethora of micro-ethnic clans and communities that populate the Niger Delta have continued a long tradition of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic hostilities against one another over access to and control of socio-economic, political, cultural and geographical resources, particularly the scarce oil-endowed land. Unlike in the periods before the 1980s, occurrences of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta from the 1990s and after have assumed a scale and proportion that raise fundamental questions over security of lives and properties, the economic and political costs of uninterrupted exploitation of crude oil, and threats to the stability of the Nigerian State.

Like other troubled-spots in Africa, the resurgence of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta also provoked keen interest in that region among scholars and practitioners. Indeed, investigating the Niger Delta has become a major and 'growth' enterprise among the academia and media in Nigeria and abroad. Sach (1996: 12) has rightly argued that the Niger Delta is a classical demonstration of how societies tend to impose the burden of resource exploitation on the people least able to cope- the impoverished minorities.¹ Others have likened the relationship between oil producing

¹ Aaron Sachs, 'Dying for Oil', *World Watch*, May-June 1996, p. 12

communities and the government to that of a cow and a milkman whose sole fascination with the cow is to see its udder heavy enough to yield bucketsful of milk.²

Since fossil oil was exported in commercial quantities from 1958 in the Niger Delta, oil producing communities have persistently expressed exasperation about the insensitive manner in which their environment is despoiled, their socio-economic fortunes undermined, and their participation in national political processes frustrated. Between 1970 and the late 1980s, their exasperation found expression in non-violent protests, involving public demonstrations, petitions, litigation in courts, and community representations to government and oil companies. Unfortunately, these initiatives yielded little or no results, so that by the turn of the 1990s, oil communities had started embarking on militant political actions such as kidnapping and hostage taking, targeting oil company workers; occupation, disruption and vandalism of oil installations and facilities. Today, the Niger Delta is described as a political cauldron, with a formidable and extensively documented tradition of militant grassroots civil action and anomie. In addition, to the above phenomenon, a few of the conflicts have also assumed intra-elite and intra-ethnic forms (Oyerinde, 1999).

Regardless of the forms that these conflicts have assumed, however, at least four interesting and consistent patterns could be identified. First, is the centrality of the political economy of crude oil to the whole enterprise of mass-based agitation and violence in the Niger Delta basin in particular, and Nigeria in general. In contemporary Nigeria, power flows through the barrels of crude oil, with the latter not only determining and conditioning the dynamics of domestic political and socio-economic relations, but also the fiscal fortunes (and misfortunes) of the Nigerian State. Nowhere is this contradiction in substance resulting from the multiple crises of hydrocarbon-based accumulation most vividly expressed than in the Niger Delta where oil-producing communities began by complaining bitterly about their socio-economic, political and environmental plights, only to be forced by the insensitivity of the State and oil capital to take up arms. A recent publication by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), a Swedish-based organisation, was

² Kalu Okwara, 'The Niger Delta Development Commission', *The Guardian*, 9-16-99

right on target when it noted that “[antagonism] towards the oil companies flows over onto the state as the companies’ proxy in settling disturbances (IDEA, 2001: 237). It concluded that the “cumulative acts of exclusion, deprivation and ecocide sponsored by the Nigerian state and petrobusiness profoundly undermined lives and livelihoods and set the stage for a decade of crisis in the Niger Delta” (2001: 246). In the words of Claude Ake, the crises in the Niger Delta have nurtured a “bizarre and frightening novelty of accumulation of terror”, threatening to rupture the fragility of the Nigeria State.³

The second variable common to these conflicts is the element of continuity in the patterns of officially sponsored repression by the State and multinational oil companies, to community disturbances and violence in the Niger Delta. Unfortunately, many commentators on the Niger Delta have wrongly attributed the repressive reactions of the State to civil disturbances among oil communities to the autocratic methods of military regimes who by their very nature and disposition are easily disposed to settling knotty public policy issues through force. In reality, however, it is important to appreciate the responses and reactions of the State against the background of its historical mandate to protect its fiscal and accumulative base, and the critical arms of international capital generating them. Neither in its historical antecedent nor in its contemporary behaviours has the State, overly dependent on rent and royalty from international capital, deviated from that mandate. Indeed, from Umuechem to Ogoni, Warri to Odi and other restive oil communities, the underlying logic dictating actions and the behaviour of successive governments in Nigeria-- whether military or civilian-- have been the pursuit of national security from a narrow militaristic perspective, showing strong preferences for military rather than political solutions to the Niger Delta crisis.⁴ By preferring the militaristic option, it does seem

³ Cited in Claude Ake, ‘Shelling Nigeria Ablaze’, *TELL* (Lagos), January 29, 1996, p. 34

⁴ For the implications of this narrow security definition on the part of government for the management of the Niger Delta crisis, see, ‘The Situation in Warri’ (Editorial), *The Guardian*, 9-6-99, p. 20; See also, Chido Okafor, ‘Niger Delta is National Security Problem, Indigenes Insist’, *The Guardian*, 17-5-99, p. 8

that the State has lost the initiative as well as the infrastructural capability to negotiate and maintain peace in the Niger Delta, through non-violent means.⁵

Slightly adjusting the immediate point above, however, would reveal the third element of commonality in the pattern of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta. The conflicts that engulfed the oil delta for much of the 1990s are indicative of mass revulsions against the prolonged intrusion of the military into governance and civic life, leading to the shrinking or outright collapse of the democratic space for popular socio-economic and political participation. Again, the conventional wisdom is that the economic and political fortunes of oil communities became progressively worse under military rule. As such, only a civilian democratic dispensation can reverse the trend and restore lost opportunities. The Constitutional Rights Project, CRP, reasoned along the above lines when it noted that:

[The] growing incidents of unrest and disturbances in the Niger Delta are the result of lack of democracy and good governance. Democracy would have assured the participation of the people in determining how they are governed, and good governance would have ensured that the huge wealth derived from oil was deployed towards developing the area and preventing the current unrest now threatening peace and economic activities, including oil operations in the Niger Delta (p. 36-37).

From this perspective, civil anomie in the Niger Delta is an integral but unique aspect of the larger, nationwide pressure in support of a quick return to civil democratic rule. The centrality of the Niger Delta question to democratic stability in Nigeria was raised by IDEA when it argued that the region “demonstrates the opportunities offered by democracy as well as the prevailing threats it faces in the country”. It claimed, on the one hand, that the delta region is “the phoenix of Nigerian democracy” because resources from the region helped to maintain military regimes in power, while on the converse, it facilitated the termination of such rules through persistent mass-based political mobilization and struggles (2001: 237).

⁵ For interesting theoretical perspectives on infrastructural capabilities of, and limitations facing States, see O’Kane, 1996; Walton, 1983; Gurr, 1986)

The last point of convergence is that such conflicts impinge on domestic peace and stability and in most fundamental ways, threaten socio-political and economic development in Nigeria. Indeed, the violent crisis in the Niger Delta alongside other explosive ethnic and religious conflicts erupting in various parts of Nigeria in recent times, inform grave doubts in academic circles about the stability and future of the Nigerian State. Such internal threats impose heavy burdens on, and could have profound implications for, Nigeria's international geo-strategic roles in, and responsibilities towards the sub-region of West Africa in particular, and the African continent at large. Indeed, there is a pervasive fear that left unchecked, instability in Nigeria would create unmanageable geopolitical and security challenges in West Africa, and indeed, Africa. At the same time, they are major irritants to foreign capital and interests, particularly the western-dominated global oil industry (Hoffman, 1995; Diamond, 1995; Herbst, 1996; Soyinka, 1996).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Undoubtedly, the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists in November 1995 attracted widespread national and global attention. In its wake, a rich body of knowledge emerged, which focused mostly on contemporary environmental and human rights issues and concerns. Yet, as experiences have shown, merely relying on contemporary factors to account for the emergence and spread of conflicts is rather too restrictive and limited. This is particularly so for several reasons. First, is the fact that the period of gestation of most, if not all, conflicts is rooted either in the recent or atavistic past, sometimes over several decades or even centuries. One major shortcoming of extant works on the political economy of the Niger Delta is that many of them are limited to the period since the commercial exportation of crude oil in 1958. They often convey the impression that the ingredients of history are absent in the menu of violence that has ravaged Nigeria's delta region. In reality, however, it is only by investigating critically the historicity of the Niger Delta (and complementing same by critically probing contemporary forces and factors) that scholars can expose the many "hidden transcripts" necessary for representing a holistic, rather than a partial picture of conflicts in that region.

It is only when “history meets politics” and vice versa that the dynamics of change within any society can be comprehended and put into a holistic perspective (Cf. Elizabeth Perry in Vaughan, 1995: 503). Extending this logic, Vaughan noted that political tensions and confrontations express as much contemporary power relations among classes and communities as the “conflicting interpretations of history and tradition by competing communal interests”. After all, “reconstructed traditions, myths and histories grow out of the living memories and beliefs of communities. They are not frozen in time but operate in the context of the prevailing class structure, ambiguous communal identities and a rapidly changing political economy” (p. 504). For him, “recurring conflict is a good example of how conflicting interpretations of history and traditions shape collective political action in the modern era” (p. 508). Perhaps, the most useful insight from this perspective is that it justifies the imperative to bring history back in into any qualitative analysis and discourse of contemporary violent conflict in the Niger Delta. Janeway (1980: 218) had rationalized this urgent imperative for historical research in order to understand the affairs of societies when she noted that: “there are enough bits and pieces of the past that can be put together, once they are freed from the grips of myth, to give us an idea of how structures of rebellion take shape, and of their strengths and vulnerabilities”. Incidentally, first generation historians and scholars have bequeathed a rich body of knowledge in this regard worth building upon.

Again, it is when history is taken out of the discourse on violence in the delta region that oil is elevated to the center stage. Ashton-Jones (1994: 1)⁶ insisted after a preliminary baseline ecological survey of the Niger Delta oil producing communities, that: “While the oil issue in Ogoniland represents an unacceptable abuse of human rights by both the Nigerian government and Shell, it is not the prime cause of the environmental and associated social degradation of the area, rather, it exacerbates the situation and is a useful platform for justified discontent”. According to him, as far back as the 1930s, the rainforest that once covered most of Ogoniland was substantially depleted, and by the 1960s, substantial clearing for farming (with an estimated population of 6-7 persons per hectare) intensified pressure on land and the vicious cycle. He argued that by the 1990s, degradation became total and continuous,

⁶ Nick Ashton-Jones, The Ogoni Issue. May 1994, (private circulation)

just as biodiversity has shrunk dramatically.⁷ Unfortunately, the parallel to the spiral of land degradation has been the rapid growth of the oil industry, since the early 1960s. As large parcels of communal lands (and water ways) became readily available for oil exploration and production activities consequent upon the introduction of the Land Use Act of 1977 (amended in 1978), many communities began to find themselves in ever-contrasting physical spaces that fuel intra- and inter-communal conflicts.

Because of their undue emphases on contemporary factors to the gross neglect of history, extant literature on violent conflicts in the Niger Delta have focused more on the forms in which these conflicts have assumed, paying only little attention to their socio-cultural and environmental content as well as contexts. The immediate implication of this is that scholars are rather too casual and overly tentative in accounting for, and drawing significant lessons from the Niger Delta. For instance, a leading Nigerian political scientist has characterised the rumpus within the oil communities as expressions of anger that had “so far found expression only in blind violence” (Gboyega, 1997: 177). It is also this shortcoming that has encouraged so much attention to the Ogoni experience; perhaps the most popular, but certainly not an isolated case study. Even then, one can only point to very few detailed and illuminating works that adequately capture the struggle mounted by Ogoni people from 1990 when MOSOP was radicalized and the Ogoni Bill of Rights was adopted, and 1995, when the Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority and environmental rights activists were brutally hung by the regime of General Sanni Abacha. One of such, by another renowned scholar merely also gave a rather pedestrian account of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni Peoples, MOSOP, by rehashing its manifesto, agenda, modes of operation, but omitting to situate the emergence of the Movement within the concrete social milieu that nurtured it (Welch, 1995).

This dissertation, therefore, sets out to generate alternative and empirically rooted explanations for the resurgence of violent conflicts within the oil communities in the Niger Delta. More specifically, it challenges the strong tendency in the literature and

⁷ Reported that of almost 70 tree species in original high tropical rainforest, only oil palm and anthocleista (a fire-resistant pioneer tree) now existed sparsely.

existing institutional publications to over-simplify and over-sensationalize the Ogoni crisis. There is a valid concern that the experience of non-Ogoni oil communities might be overshadowed or lost completely in the strong temptation to 'ogonized' all conflicts in the Niger Delta. Indeed, there is an implicitly wrong assumption that other community-based civil protest and collective actions in that region are of limited analytical appeal and challenge. The data on the ground would not support this underestimation or under-representation of non-Ogoni communities. Besides, other Delta communities exist that have experienced comparable or even worse conditions occasioned by the intensification of crude oil production. For instance, to have compared the unique experiences of other delta ethnic communities, particularly that of the Ijaws⁸ to that of the Ogoni communities as “imitative violence” (Nwabueze, 1999: 2-4) is an arresting case in point. Perhaps, such a narrow conclusion would have been averted had adequate cognisance been taken, for instance, of the historical and geographical circumstances as well as differences between these two communities.

The present dissertation probes this comparison by drawing on new and richer empirical and comparative data from Ogoni and non-Ogoni experiences. It emphasizes caution in making generalizations and drawing hasty conclusions about hydrocarbon-based conflicts in the Niger Delta. The truth is that other forms of civil protests and collective action embarked upon by non-Ogoni oil communities also present interestingly new and unique insights that cannot be ignored or glossed over in the literature. This is not to suggest that there are no interesting parallels for several non-Ogoni groups borrowed heavily from the innovative, mass-based strategies of MOSOP⁹. Rather, the point that is being emphasized is that the elements of uniformity pales in significance compared to dissimilarities.

In the first instance, the physical sites of the two struggles are significantly different. On the one hand, the Ogoni territory is located on easily accessible, land-based

⁸ The Ijaw ethnic group- estimated at close to 3 million people is reportedly the fourth largest in multi-ethnic Nigeria. Due to the nature of their principal vocation, fishing, the majority rural Ijaw dwellers can be found in the riverine areas of the Niger Delta, predominantly in Bayelsa State.

⁹ One very interesting parallel is that between the Ogoni Bill of Rights adopted in August 1990, and the Kaiama Declaration adopted by the Ijaw youths on December 11, 1998.

hinterland, while much of the Ijaw areas are tucked within thick mangroves, swampy territories and poorly demarcated creeks and rivers that serve as strong barriers to effective policing. This geographical factor, although much neglected, played critical role in determining the fortunes and misfortunes of the Ogoni and the Ijaws vis-à-vis the State. Another factor related to geography is the distribution of the population within the two ethnic groups. On the one hand, Ogoniland is a densely populated area covering about 1000 square kilometres of contiguous landmass, and in Rivers State alone. The Ijaws are spread over six states, from Ondo State in the southwest to Cross Rivers State in the farthest southeast. What this suggests is that while the Ogoni could easily be “tamed” through a properly targeted military pacification as witnessed in the first half of the 1990s, Ijaw nationalism has proved both elusive and difficult to suppress. This is more so that the recent consolidation of Ijaw ethnic nationalism around the common cause of resistance to the state and oil companies, have ensured that sympathy and solidarity are easily mustered over a wider social space. Many times in the recent past, government officials and law enforcement agencies have expressed exasperation about the difficulties encountered in effectively policing the Ijaw creeks, lagoons, and territories. No wonder then that due to this difficulty, the slightest chance to suppress pockets of disturbances in more accessible Ijaw areas, such as Kaiama, Odi, and the state capital, Yenogoa, have proved brutal. The variations in terrain (and topography) have therefore, constantly imposed new challenges to the State, while providing Ijaw riverine communities with a range of possibilities that are absent in oil communities in the hinterland. The indisputable familiarity of an average Ijaw native with the harsh mangrove terrain places them in a better position to evade the coercive agents of the State, at the same time that pan-ethnic solidarity, based on strong cultural ties, can become belligerent and contagious. These backgrounds, more than any other factors, continue to provide an enabling environment for Ijaw ethnic nationalism to thrive, while also imposing heavy burden on the alliance between the state and oil companies operating in their territories.¹⁰ While it is practically impossible to exclude history from the discourse of violence in the Niger Delta, the geography of the territory also plays an important role that cannot

¹⁰ There are several other factors that abet Ijaw nationalism, including the oil factor, a history of collective struggle, strong cultural affinity over a wider area, being the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria, and finally, a major demographic shift in favour of youths.

be ignored. After all, the dynamics of social, political and economic transactions within and between communities is boldly etched on their geography.

There is a dominant tendency in the literature to subsume mass political protest under the community framework, without isolating and analysing the pivotal roles played by different demographic elements and the impacts of conflicts in the Niger Delta on them. Important as these levels of discourse are, they exclude the local corollaries and conditions as shaped by, for instance, youths, women, children and the aged. In this study, we suggest a brief pause in the state-centred discourse to consider an alternative community-based path that places youths at the centre of a new form of exploration into the resurgence of violent conflicts in the oil-rich Niger Delta of Nigeria. This factor leads to the next, which is the tendency in the literature to assume that all segments of oil producing communities are uniformly affected by the burden of oil capital or indeed, that the counter-hegemonic responses of the communities are uni-directional. As this study shows, Niger Delta youths engaged in counter-hegemonic projects are a mix of well-educated and uneducated youths; the former forming the core of the “thinkers” or “intelligentsia” and the latter, the militant arm. Both categories of youths complement each other very well in the project of community protest and violence in the Niger Delta.

Another tendency towards excessive generalization on or about conflict in the Niger Delta is that which papers over the factor of ethnicity in the agenda of militant youths in that region. This generalization ignores the high level of internal fragmentation common, but not exclusive to the Niger Delta. Although there is a nascent pan-Deltaic undercurrent, as represented by the formation and activities of the Chicoco Movement, each oil community in the Niger Delta has either gone it alone or engaged others in oil-induced inter-ethnic rivalries and conflicts. It will not be far-fetched to argue that oil has exercised a divisive ethnic influence in the Niger Delta as the protracted ethnic conflict between the Ijaw and the Itsekiri in over ownership of Warri Township in Delta State, the Ijaw versus Ilaje in Ondo State, the Kalabari-Okrika examples suggest. Added to this reality is the fact that the oil communities in the Niger Delta have not been able to present a united front due to the absence of a mutually accepted leadership, unity of purpose and of ideology. This dissertation

explores, in detail, the salient patterns of conflicts in different parts of the oil delta, interrogates the elements of continuity (and change) in them as well as the substantive challenges of forging a pan-Delta alliance between and among the various ethnic-based social movements in the region.

Another interesting problematic germane to this study (and that which extant literature have often glossed over) relates to a critical analysis of the roles, attitudes, and reactions of the Nigerian State and multinational oil companies to the proliferation of militant community groups in the Niger Delta and the attendant violence produced. At the broad level, existing literature has bequeathed a diverse theoretical tradition for the study of the role of the State, particularly but not limited to post-colonial social formations, in the production and management of violent conflicts. Unfortunately, this tradition has not influenced research on the Niger Delta. A major strand of the literature points to the primacy of the historical nature, character, role and evolution of the State as a central factor conditioning and stimulating its behaviour and reaction towards militant constituent parts. Olorode (1998: iii) has argued that “twin process of accumulation and its maintenance by violence has deepened the crisis of legitimacy of decision-makers and hegemonic groups; it has generated more crisis and various forms of resistance and responses”. How, then, do we position the State (and oil capital) into the discourse of conflict in the Niger Delta of Nigeria? What are the factors and forces shaping the behaviour of the State? What are the interests of the political and economic elites that have ‘captured’ the State in the on-going crisis in the oil delta?

In all, then, this study begins by interrogating the background to, and the broad dimensions of the violent conflicts that engulfed the oil delta. It makes a radical departure by exploring the critical interface between the historical experiences of the Niger Delta, and the current factors germane to the production of violence throughout the region. In particular, it focuses on the following sets of problematic: What factors account for the resurgence of violent civil conflicts in Niger Delta communities of Nigeria? How has oil (or ethnicity) intensified the ambient factors for violence? Are there historical precedents to the current pattern of violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta region? Which are the groups within the region Delta that subscribe to and support

violent projects, and what are their grievances? How do they mobilise popular support and collective action, and with what resources? How do different groups in the Delta perceive scarcity and or opportunities, and react to them? What factors condition the attitudes and reactions of the Nigerian State and/or multinational oil capital to the violent crisis in the oil delta? What are the immediate, short and long-term implications of, and solutions to the resurgence of violent conflicts in the delta region? These and several other questions central to the present study are addressed.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Broadly, then, the objective of the study is to trace the historical roots and contemporary dimensions of civil conflicts in the Niger Delta, and how they have contributed to, or intensified the crises of governance in Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Trace the historical backgrounds to contemporary civil conflicts in the oil producing communities of the Niger Delta;
2. Examine the extent to which civil conflicts in the Niger Delta have fed on multinational oil capital and/ or ethnicity and vice versa;
3. Account for the emergence and proliferation of opposition by oil producing communities against the state and multinational oil capital; and
4. Identify innovative strategies for managing civil conflicts in the Niger Delta.

1.4. Justifications for the Study

As far back as 1984, a prominent government official, Chief Phillip Asiodu,¹¹ had reportedly argued that given “the small size and population (of oil-producing communities) it is not cynical to observe that even if the resentment...continue they cannot threaten the stability of the country nor affect its continued economic development”. Less than two decades after, and against the background of an

¹¹ Statement credited to Chief Philip Asiodu in 1984 (Cited in Isumonah, 1997: 10). He had served almost every government in one capacity or the other since retirement. He was permanent secretary under the regime of General Yakubu Gowon, served as Special Adviser on petroleum affairs to President Shagari during the Second Republic, and presently, Chairman of a presidential advisory committee in the new government of President Obasanjo.

alarming rate of violence and insecurity among oil producing communities, highly placed government officials have had to reassess their positions about and policy towards the Niger Delta.¹² By the time they did so, however, the basin had become a hotbed of protracted violence; pitching the “distant” State (with oil multinationals) against a plethora of mushrooming and militant grassroots-based social movements. Indeed, a ministerial fact-finding team despatched by the late General Sanni Abacha, was on record to have concluded that: “[a] new and increasingly dangerous awareness and sensitivity is sweeping through the oil producing communities across the country. It is in the interest of the oil industry and the nation that urgent and lasting solutions should be put in place to prevent the situation from getting worse”.¹³

Omoweh (1994, 1995) marked interesting departures from earlier studies that showed preference for the macro-level, and not micro-level, analysis of the oil industry (Oremade, 1986; Soremekun, 1995). He examined the role of Shell in the underdevelopment of Niger Delta oil communities, focusing in particular, on Ughelli oil communities. Perhaps his most important conclusion is the indictment of Shell for the socio-economic, environmental, health, and cultural crises that currently face the inhabitants of this community. Yet, there are significant limitations to his contribution. First, is the time scope covered; 1937, when Shell commenced exploratory studies of the geology of the Niger Delta in search of crude oil, and 1987, when the cumulative negative effects of oil exploitation became prominent within oil producing communities. Indeed, while Omoweh accepted the utility of studying the pre-1937 era in order to understand the constellation of events and forces that created a fertile enabling environment for the penetration of Shell, he never ventured into it. In reality, though, there is so much we can learn by probing well before 1937 when Shell arrived Nigeria. Certainly, it is important to look further backwards prior to the 19th Century when nascent European capital began to penetrate the Niger Delta in succession from slavery, oil palm capital, formal colonial rule, and in their aftermath

¹² The Niger Delta covers six states in the southern basin of Nigeria, and is home to at least 25 sub-ethnic groups. It is responsible for the entire crude oil production, making it highly strategic for the oil-dependent state.

¹³ Excerpt from the report of a ministerial Fact-finding Team on the Problems of the Niger Delta set up by the Abacha regime. Cited in ERAction: Newsletter of the Environmental Rights Action, January-March, 1999, p. 8.

redefine the power relations in that enclave. Second, the study is limited to Shell Petroleum Development Company (hereafter, Shell); indeed, the *primus inter pares* in the oil industry, but evidently not the only one whose style of operation has incurred the anger and wrath of host oil communities. One of the implications of the above limitation, for instance, is that writing as late as 1995, Omoweh could have taken cognisance of, and accounted for the elaborate community-based protests such as that in Ijawland, Ogoni, and so on. Probing the historical backgrounds and conditions of the Niger Delta communities, at least prior to the advent of foreign (oil) capital, and bringing in other oil companies should illuminate present understanding of, and knowledge about the causes and dynamics of violent conflicts in that region.

In one of his pioneering works on the Niger Delta, the distinguished historian, Alagoa (1972: 46-46, 197-210) divided the Niger Delta into six zones based on physical geography: Western Delta Fringe, Western Delta, Central Delta, Eastern Delta, Eastern Delta Fringe, Northern Delta Fringe. Elsewhere, Jones (1963: 10) had challenged the classification of the Delta into Western and Eastern Deltas, and that by European geographers of the Delta coastline into the Bights of Benin and Biafra, as arbitrary. According to him, such bore little relations to geographical and cultural realities. He, however, argued that the heart of the delta is the central area (comprising mostly of Ijaw-speaking communities), and from here, population moved westwards towards the Yoruba country to form the Warri and Itsekiri kingdoms. Others moved eastwards towards the Ibibio country to form the Andoni and Ibeno tribes of the Calabar Province. This, in his opinion explained why the delta inhabitants are a “culturally and linguistically heterogeneous” population.

This research has opted to follow, in spite of the obvious limitations and overlaps, the classifications by Alagoa and Jones of delta region into three divisions: the Western Delta, corresponding to present day Delta State; the Central Delta, corresponding to the newly created Bayelsa State; and finally, the Eastern Delta, representing Akwa Ibom.¹⁴ Even though this study draws useful lessons from elaborate community

¹⁴ In more recent edited works, Alagoa (1999, 2000) adopted this limited but empirically useful classification of the Niger Delta into three: Eastern Niger Delta, that is Rivers States, Central Niger Delta, that is Bayelsa State, and lastly, Western Niger Delta, coterminous with Delta State. This

mobilization projects across the Niger Delta, much of its empirical focus is devoted to oil communities within the three corresponding divisions identified. This is particularly so, as they have different traditions of origin, hostilities and conflicts, different patterns of state formation, political system, slightly different political economy, contact with external forces and influences- first through slavery, and second, through oil palm and mercantile activities, and lastly, direct British colonial rule. Adopting the above classification also present other important advantages. For one, the patterns of inter-ethnic relations differ remarkably in each of the groups. In the West, for instance, traditional Urhobo-Itsekiri rivalries, to which the notable historian, Obaro Ikime, devoted much of pioneering works, have been punctuated by Urhobo-Itsekiri distrust for the itinerant Ijaws. In the Central Delta where the Ijaws are predominant in the riverine areas, the basis for rivalries and inter-group tension is more horizontal rather than vertical between the inhabitants of the upland Delta and the coastal Ijaws. Despite these dissimilarities and the strong historical insights and comparative appeals they present for this study, there are important points of convergences that present the Niger Delta to a casual observer as a monolithic entity. These include the presence of a rugged terrain/ geography, overlapping traditions of origin, similarities of political economy and external influence- missionaries, traders, navy and consular power, and finally, oil producing.

There is an exclusion of history from contemporary writings on the Niger Delta. At a level, therefore, it is this paucity of contemporary works engaging a backward linkage analysis of the historicity of the Niger Delta that inspired the present work. In specific terms, my interest in the history of the Niger Delta is informed by the following. First, is a fascination with the scholarship on the Niger Delta by first generation historians such as Alagoa, Ikime, Anene, Dike, Johnson, Salubi, to mention a few. By extension, is the absence of continuity in the works of second and third generation scholars who have sought to explain contemporary events in the Niger Delta, particularly the resurgence of violent conflicts, outside their historical contexts Second, is that most, if not all, the current occurrences of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, particularly the resurgence of ethnic-based violent conflicts, date well into the particular history that

classification is mainly for convenience, especially at this time when the usage has become heavily politicized.

extant literature have ignored or paid very scanty attention to. The only difference, perhaps, is that in recent times, excessive manipulation by, and the impact of oil capital have gravely intensified ethnic competition and conflicts.

In his doctoral dissertation on *The Role of Shell and the State in the Underdevelopment of the Niger Delta of Nigeria: 1937-1987*, Omoweh (1995: 4) argued that in spite of the contribution of the region to national development, the Niger Delta basin “has been understudied in the context of the impact of oil companies’ activities on the area.” It is no longer tenable to claim that the literature on the Niger Delta, including its history, is scanty. It is this erroneous claim that has made works by contemporary scholars, by and large, inconclusive and tentative. However, the available literature on the Niger Delta in public libraries in Nigeria and government archives is either poorly catalogued, misplaced or not available at all. My survey of the literature, primary and secondary in the public domain at home and more importantly, in London, reveal the existence of a large body of knowledge on the Niger Delta, past and present.¹⁵ Yet, one is tempted to query the propriety or imperative of another work on the Niger Delta. The truth, apart from the fact that that region would remain of significant economic and political interest to the Nigerian State, is that much of the existing literature on that region in the aftermath of the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his compatriots are overly sensational and emotional. Apart from a handful, the bulk of the works lack empirical depth. Because many of the “authors” are literally “involved” in the Niger Delta crisis, they write from an emotional and already biased perspective. Indeed, as this dissertation argues, it is the absence of qualitative studies on the Niger Delta in general, and the basis of the grievances of the oil communities, that have severely curtailed the search for a lasting solution as well as the restoration of peace and stability in that region. Considering the serious challenges posed by the crises to state security and economic prosperity, there is an urgent need to revisit and find lasting solutions to the Niger Delta crises.

¹⁵ My conclusion in this regard is based on extensive library and archival works in London in 1998. Through an Institute for International Education (IIE) grant facilitated by the Ford Foundation (Lagos and New York), I was able to use the rich resources of the main library of the London School of Economics, the British Library, the Press Library at Collingdale, and more importantly for archival documents, the Public Record Office at Kew Gardens.

Again, when the economic impacts of violent conflicts was considered, that is, the economic loss to all stakeholders- the disruption of economic activities, loss of farmland, destruction of houses and other municipal infrastructures, one would tend to appreciate the need for this study, which hopefully should come up with lasting solutions to the problem. The major player in the oil industry, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), reported increases in oil deferment due to community disturbances in its areas of operation. In the Western Division, with operation base in Warri, the company recorded an estimated total of 1 million barrels deferment in 1995, compared to 3.3 million barrels in 1994. In that zone, a total of 33 community incidents were recorded in 1995 compared to 38 in 1994. In the eastern division, with operational headquarters at Port Harcourt, the company recorded 420 days lost in 64 community disturbances in 1995, representing an increase from 46 the previous year. According to statements at a press briefing by Mr. A.O. Aramabi, Head of External Relations SPDC West, SPDC west lost approximately 60 million USD oil to community disruptions at its operational base in 1997. In the same period, there were 54 major incidents of community disruptions in terms of barrels, the division reportedly lost 6, 672, 000 barrels from 54 sites; up from 36, 000 barrels from 31 major disruptions in 1996. Unfortunately, he blamed host communities solely for these disruptions involving attack on persons, property and equipment, as well as hostage taking and extortion.¹⁶

In another representation to visiting team of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources¹⁷, the three major oil companies in Port Harcourt- SPDC, ELF and AGIP- were estimated to have lost close to \$200,760,000 since 1993 as a result of unfavorable conditions in their areas of operation. The energy sector has also suffered severely from the crisis in the oil delta. Community disturbances have, for instance, increased the overhead costs of oil production, while at the same time reducing the volume of oil production. It has been estimated that during the June 12, 1993 political crisis, the energy sector lost over \$800 million from disruptions to oil activities. Other losses

¹⁶ See *This Day*, Thursday, April 9, 1998, p. 28

¹⁷ Tayo Lukula, 'Oil Firms Count Loses, Proffers Solution to Community Agitation', *The Guardian*, January 25, 1994, p. 3

include the temporary suspension of the \$550 million Escravos Gas Project, \$3.6 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) scheme, \$220 million Industrial Power Development project, and finally, \$70 million Japanese loan for the rehabilitation of the Egbin Power Station¹⁸. All these increased Nigeria's risk rating in the international financial market.

Again, the need to critically study the phenomenon of violence among oil communities, especially at this time when a nascent but fragile democratic structure is being put in place cannot be over-emphasized. This is particularly so as the conflict continues to have far-reaching political, economic, environmental, social and psychological implications at the micro-level, that is, within the oil communities themselves, and at the macro-level, that is, the larger Nigerian polity. Unless the substantive issues related to real or perceived injustice to the host oil communities were properly addressed, violence would continue to erupt. Ake (1996) had forewarned this when he argued that there is a "bizarre and frightening ...accumulation of terror" within the oil region that is fast threatening to completely rupture the fragility of the Nigerian state.¹⁹ He concluded by predicting that from the present outlook, there are strong indications that "there is worse to come", especially as "Shell remains unrepentant and belligerent. At the same time, consciousness and resentment (grow?) in the oil producing communities... Unless something gives, there will be more strife and they will be far more catastrophic". Earlier, the former Military Governor of Rivers State, Diете-Spiff argued that the problem of oil communities is "not just poverty, but poverty in the midst of plenty... it is the problem of frustration". His successor civilian governor, Rufus Ada-George, himself a former employee of Shell, also reiterated that the oil companies were living in luxury at the expense of the host communities. Environmental and minority rights activist, Alfred Ilenre further noted that the "suffering of the people, in spite of the enormous wealth that is got from their area, is inexplicable". According to him, that is

¹⁸ Tajudeen Adigun, 'How Energy Sector Loses USD 800 million to June 12', *The Guardian*, 12-6-98; James Akpandem, 'Nigeria Loses USD 5 billion to Environmental Degradation- World Bank', *The Punch*, 17-4-98, p. 6

¹⁹ Claude Ake, in *Tell*, 29-1-96: 34

why violence has erupted all over... Today, the youths are up in arms because of the seeming failure of the non-violent action”.

The Niger delta region has, unfortunately, become a paradigm for neglect and ineptitude on the part of past administrations.²⁰ There is need to interrogate the communities about their major grievances, and expectations from the State (and oil companies) and how they thought it could be pursued without trampling on the rights of other stakeholders. This is particularly so as policy makers in government and the top echelon of oil companies seem to have a mental fixation about the security challenges in that oil rich basin. Because they perceive the crises in the Niger Delta from a narrow security angle, there is a higher disposition to adopt arm-twisting and militaristic approaches rather than widespread community-based consultation and dialogue. The reality, however, is that the environmental, socio-economic and political challenges facing oil communities have far-reaching security dimensions and implications (Adibe, 1994: 490-505)

It is important to add that the problems of the oil communities could pose a major threat to national security if they are not promptly and properly addressed. Indeed, due to the spate of civil anomie and insecurity in the oil delta, much of the 1990s has been characterized as the period when Nigeria was most susceptible to another civil war, with all its attendant consequences. Soremekun (1995) warned that oil could well trigger the fragmentation of the Nigerian State in the foreseeable future. In *The Open Sore of the Continent*, Soyinka (1996) reiterated the genuineness of fears that Nigeria could blow up in our complacent faces, while Lewis (1994: 32) warned that "within the present conjuncture, political implosion ...is an outlying yet plausible prospect..." Hoffman (1995-1996: 158) predicted that Nigeria was headed for internal war due to division along "deep and long-standing regional, religious, and ethnic lines".²¹ He described Nigeria as "a complex country. Regional, religious, and ethnic divisions roil the waters beneath an already turbulent political surface". Herbst (1996: 162) further

²⁰ Christian Ochiama, 'Restive Youths and Development in Niger-Delta', *The Guardian*, 1-13-2000

²¹ Earlier in 1994, Hoffman had also argued that Nigeria was on the brink of an imminent and disastrous civil war. (1995-96: 148)

questioned the viability of the Nigerian State, arguing that the country may represent the greatest single development tragedy in the world today". According to him, oil revenue funnelled through the State help to strengthen the fiscal muscle of the government, while at the same time nurturing elaborate patron-client networks that leads to intense, zero-sum political competition (p. 157). He concluded on a sombre note that:

Nigeria is simply too big and too important in West Africa for the world to ignore not only its disastrous record but also the fact that there is no reason to believe that it will improve in the future". (Herbst, 1996: 169)

The justification for the study would not be complete without citing two very insightful commentaries about perceived injustices against oil communities.

According to *Today Newspaper*,

To most Nigerians and indeed the world, the Niger-Delta has become a veritable hotbed of discontent and violence, to others; it represents a bold question mark on our fiscal federal structure and revenue allocation principles. To others still, the Niger-Delta provides a vulnerable angle where mischief-makers reap from massive exploitation under an atmosphere of persistent acrimony.

The paper concluded, *inter alia*, that:

... the Niger Delta crisis... has only assumed this monstrous posture because successive administration have seen it as a matter of threat to national security, a means of ego massage and a place to flex her military might.²²

Another editorial in the government-owned *Daily Times* also captured the moral under-belly of the developmental challenges and crises facing the oil delta when it noted that:

in terms of thoughtless pillaging, plundering, plumbing and pumping away of gasoline, acid rain and petroleum fumes and flares all over their lives,... We must look our conscience in the eyes; point the accusing finger at ourselves as the predatory, rapacious, even sadistic society which just takes without giving".²³

²² See *Today Newspaper*, December 19-25, 1999

²³ Isumonah, cited on p. 103

In the light of the social, economic, political, environmental, security, and even moral challenges posed by the on-going civil conflict in the oil region of Nigeria, there is an urgent need for a study of this nature critically investigating its salient aspects and dynamics, with a view to providing lasting solutions. After all, there remains a genuine fear that this violent enterprise may diffuse towards or be emulated by other minority ethnic groups in other parts of the country.

1.5. Organization of the Study

The current chapter presented a preliminary and introductory overview of the background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the justifications for and organization of the study. Chapter two is principally devoted to a critical and in-depth review of existing literature along the following thematic lines: (1) Oil, Politics and the Nigerian States; (2) Ethnicity and Ethnic Nationalism in Nigeria; and (3) Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta. Chapter three detailed the research methodology, a description of the universe of study, the Niger Delta, and the scope of the study. In chapter four titled Framework for the Study, emphases was on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding the dissertation, as well as the research hypothesis. Chapter five, essentially historical, examined the background to pre-colonial state formation and the advent of foreign capital in the Niger Delta, how British colonial rule assisted in nurturing consolidating foreign capital in the Niger Delta and the attendant violent contradictions in this processes. Chapter six explored the nexuses between crude oil and the behavioural patterns of the Nigerian State, the nature and impacts of multinational companies' control of oil production activities in the Niger Delta, the patterns and dynamics of oil-induced civil conflicts in the Niger Delta using empirical data generated both from specific experiences and examples: the Boro Revolution, MOSOP and Ogoni nationalism, Ijaw nationalism since the 1990s, and the Itsekiri-Ijaw-Urhobo rivalries and conflicts over the ownership and control of Warri Township. Chapter seven examined the various patterns of coercive and non-coercive responses to community-based anomie and conflicts among oil communities in the Niger Delta by multinational oil companies and the Nigerian State, as well as the reactions of the international community to these conflicts. The concluding chapter eight presented a summary of the research findings and a futuristic

prognosis of the alternative scenarios and futures facing the Niger Delta in the 21st Century and beyond, especially against the background of the enthronement of civil rule after long and unbroken years of military dictatorship.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is a rich and vast literature on the contemporary dimensions and dynamics of violent conflicts the Niger Delta of Nigeria. For brevity, however, this review of extant literature shall be done under three major sub-headings: Oil, Politics and the Nigerian State; Ethnicity and Ethnic Nationalism in Nigeria; and finally, Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta. This approach has been adopted not only to unravel the diversity in germane literature, but more importantly to show the wealth of knowledge that multidisciplinary research can generate with regards to expanding the frontiers of scholarship about the Niger Delta.

2.1. Oil, Politics and the Nigerian State

The history of the global oil industry has been rightly characterized as the history of imperialism (Chevalier, 1980). Against this important background, Carland (1985) examined the intense politics within the Colonial Office in London around the search for petroleum in southern Nigeria between 1906-1914. He attributed the genesis of this interest to the shift by the British Royal Navy in the early 20th Century, from the use of coal to oil fuel. Carland quoted the official sentiments expressed by a leading British government figure, Sydney Brooks, that “there is no bigger and no more obvious gap in our ... imperial equipment than the paucity of our supplies of oil” (1985: 184). There was also the recognition among notable officials of the British government and admiralty that the only way to secure oil for the Navy is to have a secured source, preferably in the British dominion. Unfortunately for the British, preliminary exploration exercises in several of its colonial territories yielded little or no results unlike the vast discoveries of crude oil in the Persian fields that were outside British colonial control. Oremade (1986: 11-17) provided a useful background to petroleum production in Nigeria, the search for, and discovery of oil, and the important legal instruments regulating oil sector activities- the Company Acts of 1968, the exchange Control act of 1962, the Capital Tax Act of 1967 and the Petroleum Act of 1969 (p. 27-69; Khan, 1994: 15-22). Apart from these legislations, the book also focused on other important issues relating to the oil industry; these

include the issues of underdeveloped properties (land), exploration (geophysical and geological surveys, exploration, and drilling, accounting, cost control, etc.). Other issues deal with aspects of drilling such as reservoir engineering, drilling fluid, well casing, as well as production, royalties, etc. Oremade (1986: 27-29, 83) noted two important provisions of the Petroleum (Drilling and Production) Regulations of 1969 relating to land. The first relates to regulations affecting land required for oil explorations, especially payments for economic trees²⁴. Second, is the provision in Regulation 17, that a licensee or lease is not authorized to enter upon or occupy or to excise any rights over "any area held to be sacred", except there is permission in writing to do so. Even so, such prospective users may not encroach on private land except where authorized in writing.²⁵

The politics of crude oil exploration and production in Nigeria and globally, have attracted the attention of scholars and practitioners alike. Broadly, the literature on oil and the Nigerian State has focused on the impact of oil on: (a) the political economy of the country; (Schatzl, 1969; Akinmoladun, 1976); (b) petroleum policy and external relations (Soremekun 1984; Shaw, 1984); (c) class and ethnic alliance formation (Obi, 1997); (d) soldiering (Soremekun, 1987,1995b); Nigeria's internal petroleum problems (Iwayemi, 1984), and recently, (g) the underdevelopment of host communities (Omoweh 1995). Beyond these important thematic areas, however, Watts (1984: 403-428) examined the general impact of oil rents on pre-existing economic, political and social relations, and how they affected oil-based public investment and capital development, and the effect of the declining oil revenues on the Nigerian political economy. He identified at least four common denominators among oil producing societies. First, that oil expands the scope for the internationalization of capital. Second is the enclave character of the oil sector that effectively removed any linkages with the non-oil sectors of the national economy. Third, is that while oil earnings flow to the State, very little (if any) is ploughed back to the oil-producing sector. Last, that oil ensures the concentration of political and economic power in the State. In the end, the centrality of oil, as acknowledged by

²⁴ For a list of the economic trees/ crops, see Oremade, 1986: pp. 27-29)

²⁵ For other important regulations, see Oremade (1986: 83)

Karl Lynn, also ensured that the state inevitably became “a terrain of struggle and conflict”, or in the opinion of Turner, a market.

Forrest (1994) identified four consequences of oil and oil revenue for Nigeria. The first is that given the rentier nature of the State, there are stronger pressures to maximize current oil revenues and increase expenditure at all cost. Second, that oil revenue impacts on the “structure of incentive” in the economy by changing relative prices. Third, that it ensures that economic expansion is dependent on increased real oil earnings. Lastly, that it integrated Nigeria more thoroughly into the international economy. In the end, Forrest argued, State policies and forms of intervention affect the allocation and use of oil resources, patterns of accumulation, growth and the development of the national economy.²⁶

Ihonvbere (1994) noted that oil plays a pivotal role in the crises that have been racking post-colonial Nigeria. According to him, rather than strengthen the fiscal muscle of the state to facilitate development, oil wealth led to “extravagance, mismanagement and misplaced priorities” (p. 22). Ihonvbere agreed with the former governor of the East Central State under the Gowon regime, Ukpabi Asika, that “Oil misled us ... oil created false impression that all was well and that money was no longer a problem.... The temptations were extraordinary. Nigeria, like many countries misled by oil wealth, was not strong enough to resist the temptation” (Cited on p. 21). Beckman (1985: 80-81) suggested that questions of control over oil-producing territory and the method for dividing the revenue are crucial issues in the on-going struggle between centralizing and separatist tendencies in Nigeria. According to him, the impacts of increased oil production include the strengthening of the fiscal muscle of the State, the elimination of the material base of the regional/ State power, as well as payment for the cost of new state apparatuses and infrastructure, including the Federal Capital Territory, and huge (yet unproductive) investment on the armed forces.

²⁶ Elsewhere, Collier (1996) argued that bad policies are responsible for Nigeria's economic woes (and the nature of political institutions).

In his study of the impact of the oil boom on politics in Nigeria and Iran after 1973, Frank (1984: 295-314) explored the paradox that oil wealth initially answered material dreams but then also stimulated volatile and dangerous political forces. According to him, it is a paradox that oil wealth initially answered material dreams but then it also nurtured and strengthened dangerous political forces. While the study generated interesting comparative knowledge, much of its conclusions are patently tentative. The study, over all, betrayed a narrow understanding of the politics of oil in Nigeria. The comparative appeal of this study is that it highlighted how income differentiation intensified group conflict, and how different cultures reacted to rapid oil-induced socio-economic change, and finally, how government was constantly perfecting the tactics for suppressing opposition. Yet, the article contained several fallacious and tentative conclusions indicating a narrow attention to the politics of oil in Nigeria. Such fallacies imply that the new oil wealth did not increase class conflict in Nigeria; that Nigerians are not conscious of class identity; that classes have not formed- rather, political consciousness is focused on ethnic conflicts; that ethnicity and ethnic conflicts are not class based, and that the former not the latter have traditionally provided the framework of Nigerian politics. Last, is that class-based identity and action are more prominent in sub-national politics.

In her study of the transfer of technology to the oil sector in Nigeria, Turner (1976: 353-390) had noted that contrary to conventional logic, the State in poor societies block the acquisition of technology and the development of indigenous know-how. According to her, unlike in Algeria where the indigenization of the technical know-how serving the oil industry was fully realized in 1974, the Nigerian oil sector was still heavily dependent on external technology and capital. This was because the State did not take the necessary steps to ensure genuine and direct involvement in the exploration and production of crude; preferring instead to remain a "passive tax collector". Dorraj (1995: 119-143) noted the paradox of facing oil-dependent states. Thus, while strengthening the fiscal muscle of the State, oil can also exacerbate the existing social tension within a polity. His proposition is that in oil-dependent societies, "State policies also create and mould new classes and social groups, and in turn the state becomes susceptible to their pressures and political action. Due to the non-existence or weaknesses of the civil society, however, the domination of the

Interventionist State over political life remains pervasive” (p. 121). Doraj argued that for the ruling elite, therefore, the State is both a source of benefit as much as a means for defense against domestic discontent and undue external penetration. He quoted Clapham who acknowledged that: “by monopolizing the means of coercion, the State safeguards its privileges and continuity”(p. 121)

Khan (1994) noted that Nigeria enjoyed a “price premia” in the global politics of oil by virtue of three advantages related to the country’s close location to the markets of the United States and Western Europe; the high quality, low sulphur content of Nigeria’s crude oil; and the great distance between Nigeria and the oil-rich but extremely volatile Middle East region. According to Khan, while the promise of the pieces of the oil pie has glued Nigeria together tenuously, the polity has been heated up by the political and socio-economic strains of the 1990s resulting from the inequitable distribution of oil wealth (p. 9). Furthermore, with no less than 16 giant oil fields, and a recoverable reserve estimated at 500 million barrels²⁷, one could only imagine the cumulative negative impacts of extensive oil exploration and production in this basin. This would include the heavy toll on the environment, the impacts of day-to-day activities on relations with communities, and finally, the increasing scarcity of land occasioned by the presence of gigantic oil facilities and pipelines traversing the length and breadth of the Niger Delta (p. 39-40).

Obi (1997: 11-12) argues that oil not only provides the fiscal basis of the Nigerian State, but also the surplus with which the latter “reproduced itself and provided the impetus for the process of class formation and reproduction”. Thus, the “allocative role of the State made it central to politics, not just as a dispenser of huge oil revenues, but as a vortex of site of struggles between social groups for the control of ‘oil power’”. Much more fundamental was the strong query raised by Herbst (1996:162) on the viability of the Nigerian State, arguing that the country may “represent the greatest single development tragedy in the world today” (p. 162). According to him, oil revenue funnelled through the State helped to strengthen the fiscal muscle of the government, while at the same time nurturing elaborate patron-

²⁷ This estimated figure must have scaled up significantly as new oil wells become operational both onshore and offshore.

client networks that led to intense, zero-sum, political competition (p. 157). He concluded on a somber note that:

Nigeria is simply too big and too important in West Africa for the world to ignore not only its disastrous record but also the fact that there is no reason to believe that it will improve in the future” (Herbst, 1996: 169)

Soremekun and Obi (1993) recalled the pivotal role of oil in the strategic calculations of the breakaway Biafra and the Federal government during the Nigerian civil war. According to them, “the struggle for the physical possession of the oil wealth in the Niger Delta between factions of the domestic ruling class on the one hand, and between the Eastern faction and the producing areas on the other hand, played a significant role in the crisis that engulfed Nigeria in 1966” (p. 14). Unfortunately, as oil-state relationships intensified, the Federation became “immersed in the push and pull within and between the states themselves thereby promoting divisive and separatist tendencies which directly threatened the Nigerian State” (p. 17). This became more acute with the adoption of Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in the mid-1980s. According to them, there was an intense struggle for a larger share of the shrinking oil revenue across class, Federal, State, sub-national and communal lines. A flip side of this phenomenon was the unprecedented militancy in the oil producing communities where multinational oil companies and the Federal Government have been targets of violent attacks.

Omoweh (1995) documented instances when reckless oil exploration activities, including laying seismic cables and explosion, desecrated the cultural space, shrines, taboos and divinity of the host communities.²⁸ Apart from this, he argued that gas flaring has had severe impacts on the health and culture of the people, especially as it destroys herbal plants, alters the local concept of time (for community sacrifices and religious rituals, and encourage the migration of totemic animals. Omoweh traced the trajectory of options adopted by oil communities in drawing attention to their plight.

²⁸ Omoweh referred to one particularly touching example where the Igbe religious group, for want of sacred sites, now use deep mining lakes and burrow pits abandoned by Shell as shrines.

They include legal action, popular protests, sabotage²⁹, and the establishment of popular, mass-based movements (p. 136-139). Elsewhere, Omoweh (1996: 115-143) developed an insightful analysis of the impact of Shell's activities on Ughelli oil community, beginning with the early historical contacts with British colonial capital. According to him, colonial penetration first distorted the traditional religion and native health care system, and thereafter, totally destroyed the cultural development continuum of the Ughelli community (p. 115). While he rightly suggested the need to take a critical look at the consequences of British colonialism on the traditional beliefs of the people prior to the discovery of oil in order to appreciate the magnitude of cultural and environmental underdevelopment, Omoweh did not probe further.³⁰

Soremekun (1987) discussed the factors and circumstances that encouraged the military to take keener interest in the operations of the oil industry. They include the oil dimension of the civil war, the role of Nigeria as a spoiler alongside Venezuela, during the Arab oil embargo of 1973, the formation of OPEC, and lastly, the increasing radicalization of the oil environment during and after Isaac Boro. Yet, he concluded elsewhere that in the final analysis, the worst democratic regime was far better than the best authoritarian military rule because the centralization of power by the latter at the center heightened instability in the polity. To quote him, "the centre, because it is the vault of virtually all oil revenues, becomes the target and theatre of a zero-sum game between and among various factions and fractions of the civilian and military ruling classes" (P. 101).

Elsewhere, Soremekun (1995b: 97-109) interrogated the dialectical relationship between oil and democracy, for according to him, "... such is the defining and definitive nature of oil, that...the attendant revenues [from it] have succeeded in impeding the consummation of the democratic ferment in Nigeria". This scissors behaviour between oil and democracy, according to him, is such that just as oil had

²⁹ Omoweh reported that as far back as 1975, the government had promulgated the Anti-Sabotage Decree prescribing death sentence for offenders cutting pipelines. Since this decree has not deterred people, government have had to maintain large troops in the Niger Delta. (1995: 139)

³⁰ See, for instance, his illuminating section on the 'Foundation of Exploitation and Degradation of the Cultural Environment in the Ughelli Oil Areas: An Overview of the Role of the British Colonial Rule, 1900-1960.

been able to impede the democratic dream, the non-realization of this idea has also had “deleterious effects” on the Nigerian oil industry. Although he noted that under the military there was a strong disposition towards the monopoly of power and increased hostilities by out-groups, a better deal and improved climate should not be expected under a civilian dispensation. This is because the open-ended nature of the latter created a “profusion of triads”- comprising elements of the state comprador, Nigerian middlemen and representatives of foreign firms- that intensify the unwholesome practices in the oil industry.

In *Land, Oil and Human rights in Nigeria's Delta Region* (1999), the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP) sought to highlight the provisions of the Land Use Decree of 1978, especially on how the Act impacted on human rights, the right to life, to dignity, to a decent livelihood, as well as the right to political freedom, including self-determination and democracy in Nigeria. The publication quoted the views of notable legal experts on the Land Use Decree, including Oretuyi and Omotola. According to the former, the legislation is one of the most ambiguous laws ever made, and it should win an award for “bad drafting”, while the latter believes that the Act “is no doubt infested with many ambiguities, contradictions and confusions which must have made those concerned with its administration uncomfortable with its provisions” (p. 1-2). In the opinion of the CRP, nowhere in Nigeria has the impact of the Act manifested, “in all its imperfections and inequities, as in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria’s main oil producing region” (p. 20).

Kretzman (1995: 8-11/ 25) examined the impact of oil production on host communities, and how the relationship between the state and the major oil multinationals, especially Shell Petroleum Development Company, SPDC, has led to a multidimensional crisis of accumulation and development in the region. According to him, SPDC of Nigeria³¹ alone accounted for almost 14% of Shell’s global production, the largest for the company outside of the United States. SPDC also accounted for more than 50% of Nigeria’s crude oil output, while oil accounts for more than 90% of foreign exchange and 80% of total government revenue (p. 9). In

³¹ SPDC is the Nigerian affiliate of the Royal/ Dutch Shell Group, one of the largest multinationals in the world with interest in more than 3000 companies operating in over 100 countries.

particular, Kretzman reported (the estimate provided by the authoritative *Wall Street Journal*) that Shell's network of pipelines in the Niger Delta is so extensive that if laid in one line, it would stretch from New York to London. Unfortunately, according to him, until the circumstances of the times began to expose Shell, substantial portions of the pipelines were rusty and antiquated. This, according to him, explains the rising incidents of pipeline explosions that Shell claims are due to sabotage.

By the mid-1980s, oil wealth (and the associated economic growth and development) was replaced by excruciating socio-economic conditions, especially the mounting external debt crisis (Mufutau, 1994: 1223-1242). According to Schatz (1984: 45-57), since the surge in oil revenue, Nigeria has moved from nurture capitalism to pirate capitalism. This, in turn, has created what he called an "inert economy"- that which involved a transition from an economy with a weak engine of growth to one with virtually no engine at all. In *The Political economy of Civil Rule and the Economic crisis of Nigeria*, Forrest identified four consequences of oil production and oil revenue on Nigeria. First, with the rentier nature of the state, there are stronger pressures to maximize current oil revenues and increase expenditure at all costs. Second, oil revenue impacted on the "structure of incentive" in the economy by changing relative prices. Third, oil revenue ensured that economic expansion became dependent on an increase in real oil earnings. Fourth, oil integrated Nigeria more thoroughly into the international economy. In the end, Forrest argued that state policies and forms of intervention affect the allocation and use of resources, patterns of accumulation and the growth and development of the economy.

Turner (in Panter-Brick, 1978: 166-197) has acknowledged the existence of a commercial triad comprising of MNCs, the local middlemen and the State comprador, and how their interactions shape the dynamics of economic relations particularly in the oil industry in Nigeria. Outside of this triangular network, she noted the "tendency towards monopoly of power and advantage within the State leads to suspicion and hostility from out-groups not privy to decisions" (p. 172). Elsewhere, Turner (1976: 353-390) has noted that contrary to conventional logic, the State in poor societies blocks the acquisition of technology and the development of indigenous know-how. Besides, the structures of interest in the oil sector are such that encourages over

dependence on multinational oil companies, while facilitating the consolidation of company-comprador alliance (p. 370). By and large, then, the state constituted itself into what Turner called a “passive tax collector”, thereby ensuring that Nigeria’s position within the international capitalist system is more entrenched, and the state more incoherent and unstable (p. 361-370). By this very illogic, the state becomes a lame duck, as it is both “incapable^s of regulating factional competition for money and opportunities for profit”. Besides that, the State remains the major source of money and opportunities for the indigenous bourgeoisie and their foreign clients [Quoting Gavin William, p. 362]. In the opinion of Turner there is a “commercial triangle” comprising of the State comprador, Nigerian middlemen and foreign suppliers, and a network that stifles technological acquisition and the true development of the oil industry.

Berry (1984: 1-22) accepted the view that oil has financed the expansion and consolidation of the power of the ruling elite. Yet, oil has neither changed the basis on which that power rests nor altered the structure or focus of Nigerian politics (p. 1-2). In short, Berry concluded that oil has brought about few structural changes. For instance, she noted that oil accelerated the rate at which people were leaving the cocoa sector, but did not alter their underlying strategies of mobility and accumulation (p. 4). Berry also noted that the collapse of the domestic market prices of Cocoa became a major platform for grievances and violent conflict by poor cocoa farmers against government until the colonial state took over marketing. The conflict, in turn, heralded a trend towards rising peasant solidarity and militant opposition to the existing political and economic order. With the commercial production of crude oil, however, the need for state exploitation of the cocoa farmers faded- and by so doing, removed a common denominator by which farmers could mobilize themselves for collective political action (p. 5).

The domestic importance of crude oil, particularly for an oil-producing economy such as Nigeria’s is complemented by the geo-strategic and economic significance of the commodity at the global level. The latter has, understandably, also generated a lot of scholarly literature. Heal and Chichilniskey (1991) noted that just as the commodity has strengthened the fiscal base of oil exporting countries, so also have many others

suffered the deleterious effects of the volatility of the oil sector and the neglect of other critical productive sectors. According to them, booms in oil exports led to a decline in agricultural and industrial sectors, while oil-exporting countries have on aggregate, experienced lower growth rates than non-oil exporters. Besides, oil-exporting countries figure prominently amongst the middle-income developing countries experiencing huge external indebtedness. They have also moved from agricultural self-sufficiency to food import dependency (p. 86).

Gause (1994: 42-43) suggested that the very nature of the oil industry makes it easily susceptible to concentration of power and wealth in the hands of the government which, in turn, mediates its impact on the population. Accordingly, the state as the major recipient of oil revenue, increasingly takes on the character of a “rentier” or “distributive” entity, with the government relying overly for “the lion’s share of its revenue...on direct transfers from the international economy, in the form of oil revenues, investment income, foreign aid, or other kinds of direct payments”. According to Gause, the rentier character of the state created several and far-reaching political consequences, no least being that the government ensured that it alone is the dominant player in the domestic economy solely responsible for the authoritative allocation of values and resources to the society (using same, in the process to buy and retain political loyalty and clientele). Other consequences of the rentier nature of an oil-dependent State are that oil revenue invariably facilitates the build up of large government bureaucracies that encourage the culture of waste and patrimony, while at the same time, weakening, if not destroying, the economic basis of groups that in the past opposed the State. In the final analysis, the concentration of power on the State eventually guaranteed the emergence of an oligarchic ruling family or class that consolidates power around it and used such power at times rather indiscriminately (p. 42-44)

The role of multinational corporations in the international oil scene, particularly against the background of the changing political circumstances in the Middle East, Europe and in the aftermath of the Cold War, has attracted the keen attention of scholars (Krapels, 1993; Amirahmadi, 1996; Pury, 1994). De Vos (1989) has earlier argued that foreign extractive industries operating in developing countries have

enormous clouts particularly as the latter's participation eventually leads to heavy dependence on earnings from export of the extracted commodity (p. 4).³² The disadvantaged position that developing countries find themselves vis-à-vis oil multinationals has attracted towards the latter, public scrutiny and indignation. Even more scathing criticism is levelled against multinational corporations who maintain "friendship" or cosy relationships with authoritarian/ dictatorial regimes, engaged in double standards in oil field practices, give tacit support for serious human rights abuses, and reckless destruction of the ecology and environment of host communities. Rubner (1990: 31) reviewed 'antimultis' epithets that have been generated over the years in government, academia and among clerics- most of which presented MNCs as beasts by focusing on what he called their "oppressive might". He noted that in spite of 'The Might of the Multinationals', they are severely constrained by four "afflictions". The first is that their activities are often unwieldy; second, they are "compelled to contemplate their navels and defend their putative social responsibility"; third, because they are "big, famous, and international: it is very hazardous for them to break the law". And, finally, they are not members of a "fighting fraternity" - thus they are all easily denounced because of populist resentment against one of them (1990: 200-202).

Singh (1989) focused on the relationship between mineral-producing Third World countries and the MNCs involved in the extraction of mineral resources- particularly in a small country. He examined, critically, the opportunities available to the Trinidadian State to upgrade its bargaining power vis-à-vis the oil MNCs within a domestic context in which the government also sought to placate its supporters and disarm its critics. Like Nigeria and many other oil producing countries in the Third World, the Trinidadian state started as a passive tax (rent) collector, and then an active participant through the maximization of shares in MNOCs (P. 3).

³² To buttress this assertion, De Vos (1989) referred to the revelations of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations, the Church Committee, indicting American multinationals for the collapse of several governments and political involvements in Guatemala in 1954, Zaire's Katanga Province in 1960, Chile between 1973-1974, Liberia until the early 1990s. For various scholarly perspectives on the role of MNCs in the politics of host Third World countries, see Moran (1974), Lall (1993)

Orthodox classical conceptualisation of the relationship between MNCs and host states in the LDCs as beneficial; or as contributing to the inflow and reinvestment of capital ignores the many flaws inherent in this simplistic view.³³ Empirical findings on the cumulative impacts of the activities of multinational corporations in developing countries point in the opposite direction of this classical liberal perspective. Ahiakpor (1990) has identified the existence of a disproportionately large volume of literature focusing on the emergence of MNCs and their relationship with home/ host governments; and very little on the relationship between MNCs and host communities. Like Razeen (1995), Ahiakpor also agreed that the role of government and MNCs can, more often than not, developed into sharp conflicts because of the substantive differences in their *raison d'être*: MNCs, in profit; the State, in welfare. It is even more important to transcend the traditional economic and political conceptions of the roles of MNCs by incorporating the socio-cultural and environmental impacts of their activities on host communities. In *The 10 worst Corporations of 1988*, Mokhibor and Falloon (1988: 12) noted that corporate crimes and violence are on the rise; and they pose devastating effects on the civil society in their areas of operation. They noted that often, large corporations that “wield vast power often recklessly, and often to the detriment of the environment, workers and consumers”. The situation is even worse for those multinational corporations in the extractive sector who have been accused of environmental recklessness, human right abuses, discriminatory management and operational policies, killings, displacement from homes, village destruction and torture³⁴ (p. 8).

Dana (1992: 7-11) had given a profile of another small country, Burma, in Southeast Asia, a country, which apart from its size and population, has a lot in common with Nigeria. According to him, “a tiny military clique that siphoned between 70-90% of

³³ In the same volume, see S. Lall and P. Streeten ‘TNCs and the Welfare of Host Countries: Analytical Considerations’, Sanjaya Lall, ed. *Transnational corporations and Economic Development* [V.3 UN Library on Transnational Corporations] London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 43-76; P.J. Buckley and M. Casson, “Multinational enterprises in Less-Developed Countries: cultural and Economic Interactions”, Sanjaya Lall, ed., *Ibid.* pp. 106-134; D.J. Lecraw, “Bargaining power, Ownership, and Profitability of Transnational corporations in Developing Countries”, Sanjaya Lall, ed., *Ibid.*, pp. 374-395; P. Streeten, “The Multinational enterprise and the Theory of Development Policy”, Sanjaya Lall, ed, *Ibid.*, pp. 347-373; Sanjaya Lall, “Introduction: Transnational Corporations and Economic Development”, Sanjaya Lall, ed., pp. 1-30.

³⁴ ‘Unocal sued for Alleged Human Rights Violations’, *National Petroleum News*, 88: 11, October 1996: 8

profit from crude oil sales ruled this country of about 42 million people". According to Dana, oil companies supported the illegitimate military government in the capital, Myanmar, led by General Ne Win who took control of the country in 1988 and he maintained his military rule since then. In 1990, the military annulled an election won by an overwhelming 81% of the vote by the Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi. Unfortunately, according to Dana, the West (U.S., Canada, etc.) continues to condemn the regime in Burma while their oil companies engage in lucrative businesses in the country. According to the study, only a year after the military took over in 1988, multinationals from the US, Canada, Britain, Japan and Australia directly invested over \$400 million in the country. The study also revealed that after reversing a 26 year policy of banning foreign investment in onshore oil exploration and development, nine oil multinationals, including Amoco, Unocal (USA), Anglo-Dutch Shell and Idemitsu (Japan), paid between \$5-8 million each in signing bonuses to the Burmese military regime.

Zaidi (1994: 337-348) examined the effects of oil development in the Ecuadorian Amazon, and how that challenges legal thinking, especially in trying to establish a linkage between environmental contamination and ill-health. Like the Niger Delta, the Ecuadorian Amazon (one of the most biologically diverse tropical forest) has since 1972 experienced intensive exploitation by foreign and state-owned oil companies. According to Zaidi, at least four interrelated issues are important, including the appropriate indicators for assessing oil and health interactions- in terms of life expectancy, infant mortality, morbidity rates, disease pattern etc.; the alternative/ acceptable exposure levels to oil-related health hazards; the potential exposure routes- inhalation, ingestion, or dermal contact; and whether chemical substances selected for use in oil exploration activities pose a serious threat to human life and health, and how can we measure them. According to him, crude oil is disposed in either of three ways (pumped into lagoons, distributed as 'black' rain, or pumped into tanker trucks and spread over roads). The major health hazards, then, include that oil pollution causes cancer, reproductive and immunological health complications, and anaemia, all caused by chemicals such as Benzene through ingestion. Second, that it can lead to dermatoses, eczema, skin cancer, depigmentation when they come in close contact

with the skin. Lastly, that oil pollution can cause respiratory and neurological disorders, including dizziness (p. 342).

Jochnick (1995: 12-15) also reached a similar conclusion in his study of oil companies' activities in the Ecuador's Amazon, especially in the 'Oriente'; a territory of about 32 million acres of tropical forest and diverse collection of plants and biodiversity. The Oriente is also home to an estimated 95, 000 indigenous peoples belonging to 8 different ethnic groups. Oil production commenced in 1972, and ever since, major oil multinationals, especially the U.S.-based Texaco (controlling about 90% of total oil production) have engaged in activities that hurt the environment and welfare of the people and intensified human rights abuses. In the area of environmental pollution, it was estimated that Texaco alone discharges about 4.3 million gallons of toxic waste everyday, with toxic contamination in portable water almost 1000 times above the safety standard recommended by the US Environmental Protection Agency. He catalogued some of the atrocities of the company, which include massive deforestation, contamination of rivers, soil and the environment, all of which decimated flora, fauna and aquatic lives. Apart from the destruction of the environment, oil activities also impact negatively on the socio-cultural rights of the indigenous peoples, thereby intensifying the systematic decimation of the population and ancestral land.

The political activities of MNCs, particularly those that impinge on the question of human rights in host communities have spawned a whole lot of debate in the literature. Summarizing the major issues, Meyer (1996: 368-397) acknowledged rightly, that the potential impact of MNCs on human rights in developing countries is often overlooked. Although there are basically no binding legal obligations on MNCs to promote or to protect human rights, Meyer suggested the utility of using the Corporate Internal Decision Structure (CID Structure) developed by Peter French in his investigation of corporate culpability during the Union Carbide plant disaster in Bhopal. The CID structure here refers to a synthesis of the intentions and actions of various biological persons into distinct corporate intentions. On the other hand, another category of scholars advances the social contract theory to corporate relations. Thus, they see corporations as moral agents who must accept obligations and

responsibilities (p. 371-372). Accordingly, Meyer synthesized the two major strands of the theory explaining the ties between MNC and human rights: first, is the engine-of-growth thesis, while the second is the Hymer thesis. The former argues that to the extent that MNCs directly promote economic and social rights and indirectly support civil and political rights, they must enhance human rights. Hymer departed from this view by noting that it is not technology that creates inequality, rather, it is the organization. In those instances when MNCs contribute directly to the violations of human rights in developing countries by “investing in repression”, it is due to their corporate/ organizational behaviour (p. 379). Indeed, the Hymer thesis has proved more realistic and applicable in understanding the behaviour of multinational corporations; especially as very top management executives of such companies have openly expressed preference for a measure of authoritarian control in order to secure profit and accumulative base (Lall and Streeten, 1993: 43-75; Lax, 1988) Along this line, Kowaleski reiterated the persuasive view among Third World scholars that “multinational corporations... may be critical elements in the causal chain that induces and sustains authoritarian solutions in a particular society”. Scholars from developing countries are not alone in this thinking, as studies have shown that the activities of multinational corporations have deleterious implications for human rights promotion and protection in Third World formations (Holden, 1982). Multinationals have therefore been linked to the development of state-sponsored repressive death squads, while production areas gradually turn into colonial enclaves and garrisons where foreigners live like an “occupying army”.

Migdal argued that "peasants undergoing the most rapid, disruptive exposure to newly penetrating market forces will be the ones most likely to respond to organized political movements that offer solutions to their market-induced woes" (p. 229-30). The impact of "intrusive capitalism", according to Migdal, is that often upsets the *status quo ante*; since peasant populations have increased markedly, at the same time that peasants have lost secured access to the lands and other resources. Besides, intrusive capitalism also creates a "crisis in the exercise of power" since “the spreading market has created more distant and exploitative relationships between peasants and their traditional overlords”, and at the same time created partial openings for new kinds of elites (p. 368). Hence, revolution occurs specifically when a

"political fusion" has occurred between armed organizations of one marginal kind of new elite and the "dissatisfied peasants whom the market created, but for whom society made no adequate social provision" (p. 288-89). Much like the experiences of host oil communities in the Niger Delta, the forces of international capital represented by multinational oil companies have had significant impacts on the reproduction and subsistence economies of the people as well as destroyed cultures through social disruptions and environmental destruction.

Migdal therefore, proposed what he refer to as a "systematic theory of how imperialistic modernizing forms impinge on peasant villages and how peasants, in turn, are likely to respond economically and politically" (p. 352). He focused more specifically on the peasants that are most prone to revolution, and why? Drawing heavily from Scott's seminal views that the occurrence of revolution is dependent on whether or not a lower class has the cultural and social organizational autonomy to resist "the impact of hegemony ruling elites normally exercise" (p. 271). Wolf, on the other hand, reasoned that most poor peasants and the dispossessed (land wise) are unlikely imitators of rebellion. This situation, according to him, is because poverty and vulnerability to repression can hinder the active political participation of the peasantry (p. 354). His conclusion is that, ultimately, the decisive factor in making a peasant rebellion possible lies in the relation of the peasantry to the field of power that surrounds it, as a rebellion cannot start from a situation of complete impotence (p. 290).

The conceptual and theoretical implications of Migdal's view on the role of imperialism in the (de) mobilization of peasants have been highlighted by Razeen (1995: 215, 217) who urged the immediate need of "bringing the firm back into interdisciplinary research". According to him, there is need for fresh reconceptualization of existing views in this regard in view of the apparent inadequacies of existing theories in economics, political economy, and other disciplines. The central dividend from such a novel enterprise, according to Razeen is that "the very nature of the MNE makes conflict with government inevitable"- for while MNCs seek to maximize returns in the form of profit, market share, foreign investment, licensing etc., sovereign governments regard MNEs in the context of

broader economic, political, and cultural goals of the nation-state. Much more specifically, Billet (1991: 31) suggested that despite the dearth of literature on the relationship between political repression and foreign direct investment, FDI, two strands of argument are popular in the literature. First, is that “a significant positive relationship exists between political repression and the FDI behaviour of MNCs primarily due to a “safeguarding effect”. In this regard, “The use of political repression to minimize uncertainty and risk while enhancing the political business climate of the less-developed country suggests that an alliance between these governments and the multinational corporation is in the best interest of the multinational corporation”. Or, better still, to quote Gilpin (1987: 247), “because the corporation require a stable host government sympathetic to capitalism, dependent development encourages the emergence of authoritarian regimes in the host country and the creation of alliances between international capitalism and domestic reactionary elites” (cited on p. 32). For Billet, therefore, when a state finds itself in a situation of dependent development, either by design or default, it must co-operate with international capital and willingly use repression to coarsen militant elements in the society who threaten a veritable source of revenue (p. 32-33). The second school, otherwise called the international Morality school- views the use of political repression as creating a negative business climate for MNCs

The conclusions of Grayson (1989: 200-210) in his review of five books on the overall behaviour of oil capital in Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, and in the Latin and North America, is most appropriate to conclude this review section. While acknowledging the vastness and multi-disciplinary nature of the literature on the changing political economy of oil, he argued that:

One fascinating aspect of oil is that it defies academic pigeonholes- a study that begins with, say, a political orientation invariably confronts questions traditionally considered to fall within the domain of a half dozen other social sciences as well as within disciplines as diverse as geology, engineering, law and philosophy” (p. 201).

This reality is as much a confirmation of the opportunities and challenges that confront any serious research on oil and the Nigerian State in general, and the impacts of oil production activities for host oil communities in the Niger Delta. Indeed,

despite the richness and diversity of extant literature on oil at the national and global levels, there are very obvious limitations. Presently, only a handful of existing literature address the specific aspects of the recent civil conflicts in the Niger Delta, and how crude oil has magnified them. Even fewer are those that explore in detail, the impact of oil production on host communities in the Niger Delta, or the nature of conflicts prior to, and since the commercial exploitation of crude oil. Because of their overly state-centric focuses, many of the existing works completely exclude the far-reaching socio-economic, political, cultural and environmental effects of oil production; or at the theoretical level, succeeded in achieving a more robust and holistic conceptualization of the concerns of oil-producing communities. It is these shortcomings and many more that suggest the need to bring the oil producing communities back into the discourse of the issues that for good or ill, affect their daily lives. Otherwise, existing accounts will continue to fall short of adequately theorizing on, and explaining the upsurge in conflicts in the Niger Delta, and what that portends for domestic stability.

2.2. Ethnicity and Ethnic Nationalism in Nigeria

The upsurge of identity-based ethnic nationalisms has become easily the most potent and destabilising force in the post-Cold War era. Such internal struggles, based largely on the rival claims by competing ethnic groups have been identified as the most potent sources of new disorder in the peripheries and a threat to global stability (Moynihan, 1994; Horowitz, 1985; Bangura, 1994).³⁵ Drawing on data emanating from 190 countries, 120 of which have politically significant minorities exposed to the greatest risks, Gurr (1994: 212-215) concluded that communal conflicts between and against the State now form the most potent threat to domestic and internal security. Specifically, he argued that in 1993-1994, ethno-political wars and militarised conflicts showed proportional increase in S-SA and the former Soviet sphere but decline elsewhere. In authoritarian, Third World regimes, the escalation usually happens very quickly, in part because official responses are more likely to be repressive than reformist. Nigeria has, prior to and since independence in 1960,

³⁵ UNRISD (1995: 23) has estimated that in ethnic conflicts accounted for major global conflagrations, about 42 armed conflicts, in 1993 alone.

witnessed intense and deep-rooted expressions of ethnic ill feelings and agitations by its heterogeneous ethnic groups, many of which have culminated in outright violent armed conflicts (Sanda, 1976; Nnoli, 1989). These conflicts have, most often, left in their wake massive destruction of lives and properties due to the ease with which light weapons can be procured and employed by sub-ethnic warlords and militant young adults. Such violent conflicts have become so widespread; indeed, intense, that concerns about their immediate, medium, and long-term impacts and implications are now being expressed publicly; in the media, academia and policy circles.

There are competing explanations for the rise in ethnic nationalism, and the violent enterprise they evoke. On the one extreme are those scholars who draw from the class perspective by arguing that ethnic nationalism is functionally tied to the interest of the ruling class who have the privileges, resources and the popular appeal to employ them pursuit of private political interests. Nnoli (1987) reasoned along this line when he argued that under condition of politicization of ethnicity and the use of governmental powers for interethnic socio-economic competition, ethnic hostility is inevitable (Nnoli, 1989: 24). This instrumentalist conception of ethnicity elevates the role played by ethnic and political entrepreneurs, to the utter neglect of other critical elements in the ethnic equation such as the youths. Egwu (1993: 45) rightly noted that the "struggle for survival acquires the character of inter-ethnic competition as groups tend to perceive their material advancement or otherwise in terms of the activities of other groups. It thus becomes clear that ethnicity serves not only the interest of privileged classes, but those of the underprivileged as well." Another account points to the socio-economic factors that sustain ethnic nationalism and associated violence. Sklar (1996: 152), for instance, traced the root causes of tribal (ethnic) violence in Africa to "the prevailing conditions of poverty, insecurity, and the lack of opportunity for satisfying employment". Ethnic conflicts, according to Lake and Rothchild, are caused by the perception of "collective fears of the future", or as Vesna Pesic suggests, by the "fear of the future, lived through the past" (Lake and Rothchild 1996: 43; Bangura 1994: 9-14).

Ethnic conflicts are unusual in that they are often protracted and almost intractable. Historical patterns of rivalry and contest among communal actors have been identified

as often leading marginal groups to create "a menu of responses designed to redress their grievances (Azar 1990: 7-9). Accordingly, "the factors that frustrate ethnic-based revolution" invariably "increases the likelihood of ethnic riots and rebellion" for they further intensify discrimination, discontentment and frustration in excluded or marginal groups (Enloe, 1973: 223; Enloe, 1980: 5). Paradoxically, ethnic grievances alone hardly ever become sufficient conditions for violence, for they must be acted upon before they assume a basis for political contests (Nnoli, 1977, 1989). By adopting a class-based analytical paradigm in explaining the volatility of ethnicity, Nnoli advances a very useful theoretical framework for unravelling the historical course of inter-ethnic relations and civil conflicts in the Niger Delta. But Nnoli and others did not speak to the specificity of ethnicity in the Delta, and how such a deeply ingrained phenomenon has fed on the structural crisis foisted by oil capital.

In *The Search for Identity: Ethnicity, Religion and Political Violence*, Bangura (1994) presented an insightful analysis of why people are attached to ethnic identities, and why the resurgence of ethnicity has today become the defining characteristic of social conflicts globally. According to him, ethnic consciousness expresses deep rooted human sentiments and primordial cultures, ensuring that in heterogeneous societies, the component ethnic groups constantly jostle for advantages and access to resources. At another level, ethnic identities are also constructed or created out of the concrete social experiences of a people. From the above perspectives, it is important to account for the complexities of ethnic consciousness, how it changes over time, why it varies in intensity among people and why people build and defend relationships along ethnic lines. Bangura interrogated the central question, that is, why do people attach importance to their ethnic identities and provided two answers. First, is that ethnic consciousness expresses deeply rooted human sentiments/ ethnicity is primordial. This view is weak because it cannot account for the complexities of ethnic consciousness or how they are formed, changed over time, varied in intensity and why people build and defend relationships across ethnic boundaries. Besides, ethnic consciousness/ identities need to be constructed for them to have significant impact on collective consciousness.

Bangura identifies three major factors as being responsible for the resurgence of ethnic conflicts in the contemporary world. They include, first, the collapse of the communist system in Eastern Europe; a factor that has “weakened secular ideology as an organizing principle in global conflicts” and brought into sharper focus previously suppressed ethnic feelings. Second, is the lingering effects of the “economic crisis and erosion of state capacity and legitimacy” in the LDCs in the last decade. Third, are the “... changes in the patterns of international migration and the sense of insecurity and phobia this generates among indigenous groups in states receiving migrants” (p. 7-8). Accordingly, there are at least four types of ethnic conflicts based on factors ranging from a group’s objective, its orientation towards the state and the way it defines the discourse of its struggle. These are: Separatist groups, those concerned with distributing advantages within a single state structure, those that focus on the rights of indigenous people, and finally, those that seek to protect the rights of minorities in societies where one group constitutes the majority population. Many of the minority rights movements in the Niger Delta belong to the last three categories. This is particularly so because for all the groups except the first, the aim is mostly not to create an “alternative state but to either capture the existing state or to improve access to it.” (p. 10). Bangura suggests that the cumulative impact of the resurgence of ethnicity and ethnic conflict is far more felt in their political ramification, as “political violence based on identity has often been destructive and uncontrollable. Once political violence becomes part of the dynamics of conflict, it ceases to be simply a dependent variable...” (p. 22).

Azar acknowledged that "identity related conflict" now erupts globally making world politics unpredictable and unstable (p. 2). Such identity conflicts incubate and grow best, according to him, in underdeveloped settings: religious, cultural, ethnic communal identity, - all dependent upon the satisfaction of basic needs, broadly defined. Thus, contemporary conflicts are about developmental needs expressed in terms of cultural values, human rights and security. By their very nature, therefore, they are not easily suppressed and they involve the acquisition and use of destructive weapons. Quoting Brian Crozier, Azar (1990) noted that rebellion is often not triggered by social conditions, since it is an inseparable part of social interaction. It involves two parties locked in actually incompatible goals in the absence of

coordinating or mediating mechanisms. Azar gave a broad survey of theoretical perspectives on conflicts. Yet, there are conflicts that do not fit the typologies that Azar called protracted social conflicts. Azar seems to be implying that contrary to conventional wisdom, every conflict does not go through an organic cycle of genesis, maturity, reduction, and finally, termination (p. 6). Azar identified two clusters of variables that are preconditions for protracted social conflicts. First, is the communal content, that is, protracted social conflicts are most likely to arise in hetero-communal societies due to their colonial legacies, and the historical pattern of rivalry and contest among communal actors. The second set of variables relate to human records, especially the need to satisfy material needs in a situation of resource scarcity. In other words, protracted social conflicts often result from the failure by the authorities to address deprivation forcing marginalized minority groups to activate "a menu of responses", including adopting outright violence to draw attention to their exclusion. Thus, the denial of identity of other groups and objective conditions within "victimized" communal groups aid collective violence and protracted social conflicts. Put differently, when the denial of identity converges with objective denial of perceived rights, it becomes very explosive. There is therefore the need, in short, to focus more critically on the complex relationship among needs in order to understand why conflicts erupt and are sustained for long. According to Azar, trivial events may trigger collective protest, and in turn, lead to repression/ suppression. Victimized communal groups also draw on collective memories of past "insults" to develop the trajectory of violent conflict. To understand protracted social conflicts, then, requires looking beyond the immediate stimuli for violence to such "past insults" (p. 12ff). After all, the type of initial conditions, the organization and mobilization of communal groups, the emergence of effective leadership, the strategies and tactics of this leadership, and the scope and nature of external ties, become important determinants of the dynamics of protracted social conflicts (p. 14).

Like Azar, Lake & Rothchild (1996) debunked the view that ethnic conflict is caused by inter-group differences, "ancient hatreds," and centuries old feuds, or the stresses of modern life within a global economy, or even the opening of the Pandora's box after the Cold War (p. 41). They argued, instead, that ethnic conflict is most often caused by "collective fears of the future". Ethnic and political entrepreneurs,

accordingly, build upon these fears of insecurity on political memories and emotions to polarize society. Hence, communal contenders experience a "fear of the future, lived through the past". Unlike many other scholars, Lake and Rothchild followed a "rational choice" orientation while also examining non-rational factors such as political myths and emotions. They also examined inter-group and intra-group strategic dilemmas that produce ethnic violence (p. 42-43). Lake and Rothchild then insisted that "competition for resources typically lies at the heart of ethnic conflict". This is particularly so in societies where ethnicity is an important basis for identity (p. 44- 45). Because the "state sets the terms of competition between groups, it becomes an object of group struggle".³⁶

In the introduction to their comparative work on *Politics in Developing Countries*, Diamond, Linz, and Lipset (1995: 42) warned that ethnicity represents "the most difficult type of cleavage for a democracy to manage", especially because it "taps cultural and symbolic issues ... the conflicts it generates are intrinsically less amenable to compromise than those revolving around issues of material or functional conflict". Besides, "ethnic conflicts revolve around exclusive conceptions of legitimacy and symbols of worth. Thus, they yield competing demands that tend to be indivisible and therefore, zero-sum" (p. 42). In his review of Human Rights Watch (HRW) publication *Slaughter Among Neighbours*, Auster (1996: 314-318) agreed that in most cases, the analysis of the political origin of communal violence would reveal the fact that "it is the wilful political manipulation of societal animosities, more than the animosities themselves, that lead to a cycle of violence". Quoting the publication, inter alia:

While communal tensions are obviously a necessary ingredient of an explosive mix, they alone are not sufficient to unleash widespread violence... Rather, time after time, the proximate cause of communal violence is governmental exploitation of communal differences". (p. 315)

Enloe (1980: 5) has rightly noted that the relationship between ethnic groups and the state is "multi-faceted and dynamic". This, according to her, is not just because ethnicity is a political instrument that serves as a basis for interest group mobilization,

³⁶ Ake has called this trend the "overpoliticization" of social life. See Claude Ake, 'Why Africa is not Developing? *West Africa*, No. 3538 June 17, 1985 p. 1213

but also because it is “a critical ingredient in the creation, expansion and maintenance of the most potent political apparatus, the state.” Furthermore, she argued that:

[While] at times it is a basis for anti-regime opposition or for parochial detachment from centrally inspired campaigns, ethnicity also has been selected by many regimes as the means for consolidating and extending the power of the state (P. 7).

Another interesting dimension of her work is the suggestion that whatever use ethnicity is put by the state, “militaries and police forces occupy a centre stage... because coercion is so close to the essence of statism”. Hence, according to her, “[all] too often, ethnicity is used not for the sake even of those groups favoured by the central elites but is used chiefly for the sake of securing statist power” (p. 8-9). After all, the police and the military perform essentially the same statist functions: “Both are intended to consolidate and maintain state authority” (p. 132). They are accordingly, frequent “exacerbators, not resolvers of conflicts in multi-ethnic societies” (p. 153)

Rothchild (1997: 197-237) noted that the tenacious balance between group demands and state responses are linked to “the prevailing scarcity of resources”- not only are goods in short supply, but inequalities in their distribution prevail along class, ethnic, religious and sub-regional lines (p. 200-201). Thus, where the “elite spokes persons” of various groups perceive the share of their group's allocation to be unfair “intense conflicts materialize over the formula used in determining these distributions”. Quoting Robert Bates, Rothchild noted that: “Ethnic groups persist, largely because of their capacity to extract goods and services from the modern sector and thereby satisfy the demands of their members. Insofar as they provide these benefits to their members, they are able to gain their support and achieve other loyalty”. Put differently, the role of the ethnic and sub-regional patrons in shaping public grievances into demands and presenting these demands to decision-making elites in the central government remains critical. Gurr argued that “most politically assertive minorities want access to political and economic opportunities, and protection of their rights in existing societies and states”, rather than to “exit” from the State (1994: 216). Hence, the management of communal conflicts should involve a mix of innovative strategies, including the need to strengthen and stabilize political parties to ensure

balanced participation by all communal groups, devolve power to local governments to ensure citizen participation and to protect local power base, and finally, to reconstruct the state system so that territorial boundaries can correspond closely with social and cultural boundaries.

Of course, there remains an unsettled debate over the role of history in the resurgence of contemporary communal conflicts. On the one hand, are those scholars who, in the "Huntingtonian" tradition, would argue that ethnic conflicts, like macro civilizations fault lines, are rooted in history, having "occurred in the past and existed in present memories of the past, which in turn generated fears and insecurities on both sides" (Huntington, 1996: 259). On the other hand, are those who propose along the lines suggested by Horowitz (1985: 99) that "[history] can be a weapon, and tradition can fuel ethnic conflict, but a current conflict cannot generally be explained by simply calling it a revived form of an earlier conflict". To understand new ethnic conflicts, then, we must probe closely not just their location in history, but just as much, the new intrusive factors that are specific to the last decades of the twentieth century. The latter must include examining the nature of politics and political competition, the changing access to, or declines in subsidized socio-economic opportunities, and the shift in demographic balances, not just in favour of particular ethnic groups but also in the direction of youths (Huntington, 1996: 261).

Singh (1994) is persuaded by the view that "the decline of the ideology of territorial nation-state created a vacuity wherein ethnicity is fast emerging as the most solid basis for group formation and its sustenance". According to him, modernization, defined in terms of education, per capita income, urbanization, political participation, etc., create conditions of ethnic social mobilization. Modernization here intensifies identity consciousness (in ethnic groups) that in turn leads to elite mobilization and opposition to the state. Hence, within ethnic groups, modernization creates convulsion that leads to the challenge and gradual erosion of the authority and power of traditional elite and supportive institutions by an emerging core of socio-economic forces nurtured in the crucible of modernization. This modernization thesis, however, contradicts the well-established sociological/ Marxist view that modernization pushes

ethnic competition to the background, and where it lingers, it is considered as an irrational form of behaviour (p. 407-408).

Diamond (1988) sought to explain the interaction between ethnicity and class, and their impacts on the democracy and governance projects. In particular, he focused on how political entrepreneurs manipulated ethnicity and regionalism and incubated the downfall of the First and Second Republics in Nigeria. In his study of resource competition and inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria, Otite (1975) noted that “the incidence of greater ethnic interactions breeds conflicts in social relations owing to scarcity of resources in different regions and to the adaptation and changes in economic spheres”. This economic re-orientation, in turn, redefines ethnic relations and exacerbates conflicts (p. 120). A major limitation of Otite’s thesis, however, is his division of the ethnic terrain into the rural and the urban. In reality, however, there are very strong linkages between the two spaces, as elements within each influence the pattern and or dynamics of inter-ethnic relations in the other. Nnoli (1993: 6-8) reasoned that “ethnic group access to state power or lack of it, is an important element in ethnic politics”. According to him, “...under conditions of intense socio-economic competition in the society, ethnicity is associated with hostility, conflict and violence”. The cumulative impact, then, is that inter-ethnic competition is “so fierce that it has polluted the political process, distorted the economic process and generated a great deal of tension and violence which are not conducive to foreign investment”.

In *Human Rights and Ethnic Conflict Management*, Osaghae (1996: 171-188) challenged the underlying assumption of the human rights approach to conflict management. This approach is based on the assumption that “conflicts arise from the inequalities, discrimination, domination, exclusion and injustices which attend the competition among people and groups of people for scarce political, social and economic resources and benefits. Consequently, if the basis is removed, or at least minimized by protecting the rights which belong to individuals and groups, then it would be easier to manage conflicts” (p. 172). In reality, according to him, ethnicity is situational. This is because “ethnic cleavages co-exist with other important cleavages which also constitute the bases for political contestation, notably class, religion, race and regionalism... ethnic conflicts usually also involve the mobilization of one or

more of these cleavages depending on the situation and the issues of contestation". Osaghae also challenged the logic of liberal thinking that the State is neutral; an impartial arbiter; an umpire in conflict between groups within the society. If anything, Osaghae argued that the State is an instrument of class and/ or ethnic domination. On the converse, the state is also a heavily contested terrain, making it a prized trophy for groups seeking recognition and struggling for rights.

In *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflicts and Democracy*, Diamond and Plattner (1994) and other contributors assessed the prospects for democratic accommodation in ethnically divided societies and investigated the constitutional mechanisms often employed in this regard. In the same volume, Horowitz (1994:146ff) focused on *democracy in divided societies* where he analysed ethnic politics using case studies from Nigeria, India, and the Balkans. Horowitz made two important propositions worthy of mention. First, is that opportunistic politicians regularly manipulate ethnic antagonism as a vehicle for mobilising mass support, often with unintended and quite tragic consequences. Second, is that ethnic conflicts can often be mediated through a judicious implementation of federalism and constitutional guarantees for the protection of individual and collective (minority) rights.

In *Ethnicity and National Development*, Saro-Wiwa sought an explanation for the troubles of Nigeria. According to him, the problem revolves around "the canalisation of all energies into the struggle for power", and because "we have ignored the ethnic nature of our society, choosing to pretend that the ethnic groups do not exist and stubbornly refusing to build our house on the strong fundamentals of ethnicity" (1991). Since independence, the Nigerian State has been a hotly contested socio-political terrain where ethnic and factional interest groups are constantly at loggerheads over access to, and control of national resources. In this regard, one of the most vexatious issues has been that of revenue allocation (Oyovbaire in Panter-Brick, 1978). Another is the struggle for new states analysed by Suberu (1991: 499-522). According to Suberu, the creation of more states has not extinguished the demands for additional constituent units. In this regard, he suggested that rather than creating more states, a more realistic option would be to reform the resource distribution system-based on the alternative principles of derivation, population and

fiscal efficiency- in such a way that all ethnic groups feel a sense of belonging (1991: 520-521).

Gboyega (1997: 149) has identified two "fault lines" in Nigeria, with each "heading in opposite directions and the basis for seismic blockage and tension". First, is the intense competition between and among what he called the major "super-ethno-regional" constructions: North versus South. The result, according to him, is the cycle of military rule, punctuated by shorter rule by civilians that is in itself, symptomatic of the desire of the ruling clique (military/ civilian) to take their "turn at the trough" (p. 151). He also identified the central problematic of federalism in Nigeria as related to the asymmetric territorial composition of the Federation as well as the adoption of policies and practices within the component units and the Federation that exacerbated rather than ameliorated conflicts. One of such relates to the legion of revenue sharing formulas that the State has adopted over the years.

Osaghae has observed the degeneration of the ethnic situation in Nigeria since the 1990s, which according to him, is characterized by the resurgence of bloc ethno-regional conflicts, raising the fear of secession or even civil war, persistent demands by dissatisfied groups for a sovereign national conference, the increasing acrimony over revenue allocation, the resistance of the minorities, demand for new states and equitable power-sharing formula. In the end, Osaghae argued that only the group, rather than individuals, could effectively protect minority rights. Unfortunately, rights that should accrue to ethnic groups (for instance, the Ogoni) go to the artificial state (Rivers State), while the latter has demonstrated a lack of capacity to promote and protect indigenous language, religion, land and culture (p. 185). In *Oil and Minority Ethnic Nationalism in Nigeria*, Isumonah (1997) noted three aspects of the uniqueness of the Ogoni demands that distinguish them from others. First, is that the Ogoni demands were all embracing, that is, they have significant political, cultural, and economic undertones. Second, is that Ogoni experience was unprecedented in the choice of a massive grassroots-based mobilization strategy employed. Last, is that the Ogoni resistance, which also involved the massive disruption of oil activities in ways that threatens the accumulative base of the Nigerian State and the MNOC, is quite distinct from those embarked upon by other Niger Delta communities (p. 8-9).

Coming from a background of deep internal knowledge and the experiences of living/working in the Niger Delta, Naanem (1995) begins his insightful analysis of minority rights politics (using the popular Ogoni case) vis-à-vis the urgent imperatives of restructuring the Nigerian state. Naanem conceptualised the problem of ethnic domination as being central to the so-called National Question. According to him, if the former were left unresolved, it would most certainly portend grave ills for the Nigerian State. The crux of his article can be divided into three: first, is the nature and sources of structural tension in the Niger Delta, and how the southern oil producing communities have been politically active in demanding for change. The second, is how the Ogoni- a distinct and homogenous ethnic minority group in the oil Delta- reacts to the existing power structure that places them at great disadvantage in resolving the structural contradictions that hurt their socio-economic, cultural and political survival. Last, those ethnic factors are, and shall remain a “fundamental element in the structural controversy” (p. 46-47).

In the above schema, Naanem applied a modified version of the internal colonialism thesis to explain the resurgence of violent conflicts within the oil Delta, and by so doing illuminating the relationship between the Federal centre and the oil-producing peripheries or enclave (p. 49). According to Naanem, colonialism left behind “artificial states lacking strong national identities among their constituent sub-national communities”, or put simply, a “centrifugal baggage” (p. 470).³⁷ In the particular instance of the oil Delta, the process of ethnic domination and marginalization became intense with the commercial exploitation of crude oil in the late 1950s; a process strongly aided by the alliance of the State and oil multinationals. A more visible aspect of the marginalization of oil communities could be vividly seen in the reckless degradation of the environment, or what communities themselves have aptly called “ecological terrorism” (p. 50). Significant as the centre-periphery framework applied by Naanem may be, the despicable environmental fall-out of oil operations more than his “process of ethnic domination and peripherization” accounts for the

³⁷ As Naanem also rightly noted, ethnic particularism may have contributed to the collapse of many nation-building experiences in post-colonial Africa and elsewhere, it would be wrong to attribute all conflicts in Africa to ethnicity (Naanem, 1995: 48).

condition of oil producing communities, and the resurgence of violent conflicts in that strategic oil basin. Yet, this observation should not be misconstrued as a critique of the internal colonialism thesis as simplistically employed by Naanem. Rather, it calls for its expansion to include how the introduction of international capital to a pristine, non-capitalist agrarian environment (under slavery, oil palm and crude oil modes in that succession) at the behest of the State (colonial and post-colonial) reinforced the factors that condition internal colonialism. With this background, therefore, it is much easier to conclude that internal colonialism (and the intense conflict it generated, past and present) could be located at three mutually linked conjectural levels. In the first instance, the domination and marginalization of ethnic communities in the oil-producing region of the Niger Delta has been sustained through the process of expropriation of crude oil resources to the benefit of politically dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria. Secondly, is the existence of tight bonds and alliances between the State, dominant ethnic groups, and multinational oil companies which severely reduces or restricts the right of minority groups to have access to the fabled oil wealth. Thirdly, environmental degradation resulting from poor oil field practices have also severely undermined the economies of subsistence of local population in the oil producing region, while providing them with little or no viable employment or vocational alternatives.

Important as these perspectives are, they are not sufficient accounts of the rise of ethnic nationalism, at least in the case of the Niger Delta. Therefore, it is important that we probe the historical and contemporary social, political and economic processes that encouraged the resurgence of ethnic nationalism. In the case of the Niger Delta, the major historical factor can be located within the process of state formation and consolidation during the pre-colonial era, although colonial rule helped to identify and sharpen the differences. Regardless of the socio-cultural context within which ethnic nationalism and violence rupture, a common thread running through them is the strong perception of scarcity and constant urge by ethnic groups to seek advantages over other “out-groups”. What is paramount to this study is the need to account for the complexities of ethnic consciousness and orientations in the Niger Delta, how they have evolved over time, why their manifestations vary in intensity among peoples and why they build and or defend relationships along ethnic lines.

What role is played by external factors (for example, the State and/ or foreign capital) in the resurgence and intensification of ethnic-based conflicts in the Niger Delta? Finding useful and innovative answers to these important questions shall be one of the primary preoccupations of this thesis.

2.3. Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta

One unique feature of violent conflicts in post Cold War Africa is their natural resource dimension. Although unique in several respects, the chronic nature of some of the most devastating civil wars the continent has witnessed- in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)- cannot be divorced from the question of, and stimulating roles played by mineral resources (Reno, 1999, 2000; Soysa, 2000; Sesay, 2003). Two major aspects of resource-induced conflicts have been identified: “cases in which natural resources have *caused* conflicts, and cases in which natural resources have *fuelled* conflicts” (Alao and Olonisakin, 2000: 23). As they explained, “the politics of resource control have played an important part in the weakening of institutional and administrative structures” to the extent that resource-based conflicts become “marred in the complexities surrounding the collapse, or near collapse, of many states”.

Although the distinctions are often blurred, several factors and conditions clearly distinguish violent conflicts in the Niger Delta from those mentioned above. In the first place, agitations by oil communities have never been for the outright control and exploitation of oil resources but for an equitable sharing of revenue based on the derivation formula. Their protests derive not from any attempt to secede from Nigeria, but to be accorded better and equitable treatment within the Federation. Second, the Niger Delta crisis is not anywhere near the manifestation of near or outright state collapse as was the case in the aforementioned countries, but a reflection of the growing contradictions of development and a crisis of governance that, in cumulative, marginalized and alienated government from the people. Third, is that the Niger Delta has so far not witnessed the emergence of ruthless rebel factions such as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) which were controlled by buccaneer warlords like Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh respectively, who were mainly concerned with gaining unfettered access to, and

rapaciously exploiting the lucrative natural resources for self-aggrandizement. At least from the perspective of minority oil communities, there is a visible degree of patriotism on the part of the leaderships of groups such as Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC). Finally, although certain influential segments of western intellectualism and the media at some point predicted that the crisis in the Niger Delta has enough potential to trigger the eventual collapse and disintegration of Nigeria, it is very unlikely that that would happen in the present generation or even after.

There is an increase in the body of literature, mainly institutional publications and a handful of scholarly works, on civil anomie and violence in the Niger Delta, particularly during the peak of the ethno-minority uprising by the Ogoni people in southeastern Nigeria in the 1990s. Indeed, many of these publications came after the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his Ogoni colleagues in November 1995. But they merely chronicled environmental and human rights issues germane to the crisis. One of the most critical institutional publications on the violence in the Niger Delta in general, and in the Ogoni oil communities in particular, was the report by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples' Organization (UNPO) mission to Ogoniland in February 1995. The report catalogued the background to the Ogoni crisis, the birth of the MOSOP, and then the face-off between this minority movement on the one hand and the Nigerian State/ Shell on the other. The Report identified four core demands of the Ogoni people, which range from political (the creation of an Ogoni State with 13 local government councils); to the environmental (the implementation of environment-friendly initiatives as well as compensation for the adverse effects of oil exploration activities); economic (a call for affirmative action for Ogonis in development; and finally, the demand for greater involvement of the people of Ogoniland in the economy of the nation, through employment opportunities in the oil industry. Arguing that the Ogoni people "are already a people with a history of neglect, marginalization and underdevelopment", the UNPO Report warned that the psychological, physical and economic costs of incessant and repressive military operations for the pacification of Ogoni people is threatening their long-term viability as a culturally distinct and homogeneous community (1995: 17).

The advocacy activities of many Nigeria-based Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) continue to draw attention to the plight of oil communities in the Niger Delta. Two of the most trenchant human rights and advocacy groups, the Civil Liberties Organization, CLO (1994) and the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP) are important in this respect. The former identified several political opportunities that galvanized minorities' agitation in the delta region; including the constitutional conference of that year which enabled marginalized people to vent their anger, and second, the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election result. The import of the latter, according to the CLO, was the fear that minorities could never hope for much, if someone from a major ethnic group like the Yoruba could be denied political leadership.³⁸ The Constitutional Rights Project (CRP: 1999) went further by highlighting the controversial provisions of the Land Use Decree of 1978, and how such continues to affect in most adverse ways, the fundamental human rights, as well as the right to life, dignity, a decent livelihood, as well as to political freedom, including self-determination and democracy among oil communities. In the opinion of the advocacy group, nowhere in Nigeria has the impact of the Act manifested, "in all its imperfections and inequities, as in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria's main oil producing region" (p. 20). Personal narratives (Saro-Wiwa, 1995; Soyinka, 1996) have also shown bias for the plight of the Ogonis and little on the experiences of other non-Ogoni and non-oil producing communities in the Niger Delta suffering a similar fate as that of the Ogonis.

In *The Ogoni Uprising: Oil Politics, Minority agitation and the Future of the Nigerian State*, Osaghae (1995) noted that the on-going strife in the Niger Delta results from the "convoluted" democratization program that energized interest groups "raise fundamental but previously suppressed issues related to the "national question" (1995: 325). Obi (1997) conceived violent conflicts in the Niger Delta as a fall out from the illogic of globalization generated by the activities of Shell and other oil companies, vis-à-vis the concomitant local resistance by the oil communities. Naanem (1996) defined the crisis as revealing fundamental flaws the system of internal colonialism that pitches the State and oil companies in a vertical, unequal and violent

³⁸ The election was widely believed to have been won by Chief M.K.O. Abiola, a Muslim from Yoruba-speaking Southwestern Nigeria

relations with the oil communities. Welch (1995) concentrated on the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) that initiated an unprecedented civil mobilization in Ogoniland. He conceptualized the struggle by MOSOP as a strong community-based reaction to the evident inability of successive governments in Nigeria to address adverse social and environmental costs of oil production and the challenge of the fundamental principles of centralized government by excluded groups demanding greater financial share and local autonomy. In comparing the various experiences of community mobilization and struggles, Nwabueze (1999) suggested that the MOSOP led uprising and that by the Ijaw Youth Congress were expressions of two parallels. According to him, the Ogoni movement could as well be a clear and unmistakable signal that voiceless, subordinate and underprivileged groups whose docility have been mistaken for a sign of weakness would, in the future, take up the gauntlet and confront the state with demands whose resolution would imply the dissolution of the burgeoning nation state. The Ijaw struggle, on the other hand, provides “data on imitative mass revolt but more importantly for the covert processes, gestation and brazen expression of revolt and rejection of structures and institutions of state power and authority” (p. 2).

While the institutional publications tended to over-sensationalize the Ogoni crisis, they, much like the more rigorous literature, “ogonized” all conflicts in the Niger Delta. Neither Osaghae nor Welch gave any serious attention to other equally important non-Ogoni experiences of, and evidences pointing in the direction of oil-induced community militancy and violence. After all, there are other Delta communities that have experienced comparable or even worse conditions occasioned by the intensification of crude oil production. In specific terms, Welch's study gave a rather pedestrian account of MOSOP; almost a rehash of its manifesto, agenda, modes of operation, etc, without situating the movement within the substantive social milieu that nurtured it. Together, both works could not account for the inability of other communities to take up arms against the state and oil companies. There seem to be an implicit assumption that other forms of civil protest and collective action by other Delta communities besides that pursued by the Ogonis, present insufficient analytical interests and challenges. Available data and information would, however, not support this under-representation of non-Ogoni communities. In summary, then, the absence

of significant historical details on the phenomena of civil conflicts in the Niger Delta, coupled with the evident neglect of comparative materials on, and account of, non-Ogoni communities, make the summaries of extant literature, at best, tentative.

Oyerinde (1998) variously referred to the Niger Delta as a “veritable political cauldron”, an “ethnographic melting pot”, and went on to identify the intrinsic characteristics of the on-going struggles in the Niger Delta. First, they are struggles for autonomous administrative units. Second, they are about sustaining cultural rights against external assault. And, third, they challenge the exploitative tendencies of multinational (and local) oil companies. Owugah (1999: 5-6) identified four distinct phases of resistance in the Niger Delta based on the dominant strategies in each phase. The first phase, between the early 1970s and the mid 1980s, the oil communities directed their demands at the oil companies, and by appealing to the State, writing opinion editorials, and in the final analysis, by resorting to legal action. By and large, these strategies failed as oil companies refused to budge, and/or abide by court rulings. In fact, when they did at all, they only paid paltry sums as compensations. Under this phase, according to Owugah, the State adopted anti-people measures such as the Land Use Act and anti-sabotage decrees. The second phase, between the mid 1980s and the mid 1990s, saw the adoption of more action-oriented strategies by oil communities, as well as a corresponding response from the State. Peaceful demonstrations and the occupation of oil installations marked this period. The oil companies reacted by securing the intervention of the repressive arms of the State, particularly the dreadful mobile police unit and soldiers that engaged in reckless looting, raping and destruction. During this phase, the State’s response was characterized by a mix of appeasement and intimidation courtesy of Decree No 23 of 1992, establishing the Oil Minerals Producing Development Commission (OMPADEC) and the creation of the ruthless River State Task Force on Internal Security (RSTFIS).

The third phase, between the mid 1990s and 1998, witnessed a rise in the spate of civil anomie in the Niger Delta, evidence that the local communities were undeterred by the gruesome murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists. During this period, new sets of militant groups emerged across the Niger Delta embracing violently ruthless strategies such as forceful occupation and shutting down of oil

installations, seizure of installations, kidnapping of oil personnel and so on. The oil multinationals responded with the usual deployment of armed troops, but soon realized that very little can be achieved outside of negotiation. Disturbed by the new patterns of violence in the Niger Delta, the Nigerian State (and oil companies) were now forced to re-evaluate past strategies, although very little still changed. The final stage, which commenced against the backdrop of the adoption of the Kaiama Declaration on December 11, 1998, had witnessed a paradigmatic shift from the past demand for development to that of resource control. The strategy, among others, was to shut down flow stations and other oil installations until an acceptable formula for control and exploitation is reached.

More recent commentaries have expressed deep concern about the implications of the crises among oil producing communities for national security, both in the short and long runs. Fodeke ³⁹, for instance, examined the magnitude of the developmental challenges peculiar to oil communities and suggested that the region be classified and treated as a “national security problem”. In the paper, he reportedly expressed worry that the “environmental problem of the area has not been treated as a security matter.” Thus, economic and ecological threats “are now downplayed as secondary and less significant issues of national security. Yet, these threats are responsible for the tension in the Niger delta.” Obi (1997a) expressed a similar concern related to the implications of increasing, even excessive, state intervention in the oil industry. This is obvious from the increasing propensity by the state to resort to authoritarianism in order to contain the rising class struggle over shrinking oil surplus. In the final analysis, this process raises the spectre of instability that in turn fuels a crisis of legitimacy and governance. Obi further identified and discussed the different levels in which the struggles manifest, first, between classes, “over the inequity and exploitative nature of monopoly oil-based accumulation”. Second, is the struggle within the dominant class over the basis of allocation of the surplus to the constituent groups. Last, is the struggle between the global and local factions of monopoly capital vis-à-vis the alienated/ dispossessed classes at the local level. In his opinion, therefore, the on-going conflict among oil communities as a result from “the strong

³⁹ Cited in Chido Okafor, ‘Niger Delta is National Security Problem, Indigenes Insist’, *The Guardian*, 17-5-99, p. 8

feeling by the ruling class faction of the oil-producing nationalities, who are under intense pressures from below (due to the sharpening of contradictions under SAP) and feeling aggrieved by their losing out in the sharing of the decreasing oil rents' (p. 26)

Elsewhere, Obi (1997b) examined the "implication of increased globalization of social relations of production and the commodification of Africa's resources as well as the deepening of resource scarcities, environmental stresses, resistance and conflict in Africa (p. 11). According to him, oil-producing communities, particularly the Ogonis, were stripped off the control of their oil-rich ecosystem by colonial and post-colonial legislation (p. 16). Obi traced the historical trajectory of the Ogoni Crisis. According to him, the early stage consisted on the emergence of MOSOP; a coalition of several Ogoni associations.⁴⁰ The next stage, according to Obi, began from the 1990s when MOSOP and Ogoni people presented the Ogoni Bill of Rights to the Federal Government of Nigeria. From this period henceforth, the Ogoni ecosystem soon became "a contested terrain reflecting social and political relations as expression of power over production, distribution and access". He linked the Ogoni resistance to Shell's activities in Nigeria, and the strategic insertion of the latter at a vintage position in the global capital market.

Crawford (1996) betrayed a weak understanding of the internal knowledge of the Ogoni struggle, and indeed, the Niger Delta crises by presenting what read like a compendium or summary of already available information in newspapers, newsmagazines and Internet sources. Most of the issues investigated lacked any serious and rigorous in-depth analysis. One of the few that did, however, was the view that "the combination of political marginalisation by the government and environmental degradation by the oil companies contributed a great deal to the eventual uniting of the majority of the Ogoni in a common cause". Along the same line, he argued that this unity was a latter-day creation for the Ogoni people had

⁴⁰ The branch organizations include the Federation of Ogoni Women Associations (FOWA), National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), Ogoni Teachers' Union (OTO) and the Ogoni Professional Union (OPU). In Alabi Williams, 'A Slow Recovery for MOSOP', *The Guardian*, Nov 10, 1996, p. 10.

always been made up of three sub-groups with loose ethnic bond, different dialects, and different administrative boundaries (p. 187).

Welch (1995) studied the context and factors that encouraged the emergence of three different ethnic-based movements in Africa: the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in Ethiopia, *Mouvement Democratique des Forces Casamancais* (MFDC) in Senegal, and the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in Nigeria. Specifically on the Ogoni struggle, Welch identified several factors that encouraged and stimulated its internationalisation. First, was that MOSOP was very skilful in the area of publicity for it used several media to draw attention to the Ogoni issue. Second, was that “MOSOP crystallized around a determined leader”- in this case Ken Saro-Wiwa. (p. 55). Welch went further to conceptualise the Ogoni demands, first, in terms of skewed development and perceived injustices associated with the allocation of revenue in Nigeria. Second was that Ogoni demands arose from “the accident of their location”, reflected in a long-standing emphasis on local autonomy since “the distant state cannot be trusted to understand or act effectively on grassroots priorities”. Third, was that the demands vividly illustrated the interplay of politics, economics, and ethnicity. Fourth, in “claiming the right to a greater financial share, Ogoni leaders challenge the fundamental principles of centralized government” (p. 112). Lastly, is the opinion that the Ogoni movement, “though based on culture, sprang in reality from politics, intensified by the paradox of oil riches and environmental squalor” (p. 113).

Osaghae (1995: 325-344) traced the background to the recent anomie among oil producing ethnic minorities, particularly that of the Ogoni, to the convoluted transition program of the Babangida regime that stimulated serious questioning of socio-economic marginalisation, environmental degradation and neglect of minority rights (p. 325; Birnbaum, 1995). Although Osaghae suggested that the Ogoni uprising marked “ a new phase in the interesting interface of oil and minority politics”, elements of this interface or indeed the relationships between them were not sufficiently addressed. This neglect ensured that writing in 1995, Osaghae still argued that the Ogoni uprising lasted the short shrift of 1990-1993 (p. 326). According to him, oil changed the circumstances of intra-Ogoni relations, Ogoni relations with

other minorities in the Niger Delta, and relations with the central government.⁴¹ Osaghae saw the uprising in Ogoniland between 1990-1993, as part of the process of increased militancy of the civil society in the latter years of the Babangida regime. Yet, he predicted, “a joining of forces by all oil-producing communities supported by all other minorities in the country is most likely to force a re-negotiation of power relations in the country” (pp. 338-339).

It is important to note that much of the discourses on the Ogoni issue, and indeed conflicts within oil communities, have overestimated (even over-sensationalized) the issues at stake. Osaghae, nonetheless, presented one of the most detailed and scholarly accounts. In one instance, he noted that although the threat of “extinction” was true for all other oil-communities in the country, there were “communities in Delta State whose environmental degradation and underdevelopment (were) worse than those of the Ogonis” (p. 331). How then could one account for the variations in militant activities and violence if neglect and underdevelopment were objective realities and conditions facing oil communities without exception?

Obi (1997b: 137-148) has rooted his analysis of the relationship between Shell and Ogoni in the context of existing contradictions that nurtured and strengthened Nigeria’s location within the global capitalist network. He argued, quite persuasively, that the Nigerian environment (and its systemic parallel) was a “contested terrain reflecting social and political relations as expressions of power over production, distribution and access”. In the context of the above, Obi conceived “local resistance” as a form of collective action aimed at “blocking further alienation, expropriation and environmental degradation, and forcing through a mass project of restitution and self-determination”. It was, according to him, within the dialectics of globalisation and local resistance that we must conceptualise and understand the violent projects in Ogoniland and much of the Niger Delta, rather than fall prey to the obvious limitations of the state-centric approaches. Yet, Obi acquiesced to the need to examine

⁴¹ The first oil well in Ogoniland was struck at Ebubu and Bomu in 1958. By 1965, Nigeria’s first oil refinery was sited at Alesa Eleme. Today, Shell and its JV partners have five major oil fields in the area hooked up to five flow-stations- Bomu, Korokoro, Yorla, Bodo West and Ebubu. See (Osaghae, 1995: 329-330; SPDC, Nigeria Brief: The Ogoni Issue. Lagos)

the state, but only to the extent that such enterprise interrogated its “structural inability to resist globalisation even where the imperatives of global accumulation demand the destruction of the ecosystem and the subversion of the rights of the people” (p. 140). He concluded that the interests of Shell and the state were coterminous; and that they shared a common destiny in the creation of oil surplus and global accumulation. In pursuit of this interest, both partners had privatized the state. Just like oil, the State was also a heavily contested terrain; access to and their control have made them into “sites of constant struggles... power and primitive accumulation” (p. 141-142).

In assessing the Ogoni struggle against the hegemonic power of the state and multinational oil companies, Ofeimun (1994) argued that “it is the knowledge of their economic centrality that has given the minorities in the Delta a clout they are only just able to deploy for their own self-defence”. Reiterating the shortcomings of the present principle of derivation, Ofeimun argued that:

It is as if some parts of the federation chose to remain in the country only because they need the largesse from other parts. If anything, this is why the disadvantaged demand credence for the principle of derivation as a basis for sharing revenue. Derivation is inevitable in a climate like ours raven by so many exclusionist demands. To insist on using population figures or the principle of equality or even landmass in sharing revenue in such a situation is to be guilty of pure robbery.⁴²

Nwadioke (1994: 9) catalogued incidences of communal conflicts in the Niger Delta, and traced them to factors that are “complex and deep-rooted”. They point to frustrations among indigenes of oil-bearing communities regarding their scarcely enviable living conditions and an interplay of powerful forces who have vested interests in the state as some of the causes of the feuds”. To buttress this assertion, Nwadioke cited one Dr. Bio Kombo, Vice President of the Nembe Bibi Okolo, an umbrella organization of all Nembe-speaking organizations as saying that: “...many communities know their boundaries, but because of the recent development of finding oil in most places these problems arise”. According to Nwadioke, with the finding of oil the situation worsened. And the problem was not made better by even some oil

⁴² Odi Ofeimun, *The News*, 11-4-1994: 11. It is important to note that Nigeria has operated under different fiscal regimes on revenue allocation beginning with the Binns Revenue Allocation Commission set up in 1964.

companies, because some are known to be encouraging these conflicts so that instead of fighting them, the communities would be fighting themselves (*The Guardian*, March 28, 1994, p. 9).

If indeed oil was at the centre of political discourse and competition to capture state, especially at the Federal level, it was even more strategic in defining the broad outlines of sub-ethnic consciousness and political agitation among oil communities in the delta region. Regarding the latter, a handful of issue-specific studies have emanated as from the 1990s, against the background of the Ogoni struggle, drawing attention to community-based grassroots political campaigns by oil communities against the state and multinational oil companies. Welch (1995b: 635-649) noted that the “communal pressures that have characterized the Niger delta and many other parts of Nigeria are not only matters of ethnic self-determination but also complex expressions of economic and political disparities” (p. 635). According to him, the Ogoni demands arose not just as a result of their location, but they also “reflect a long-standing emphasis on local autonomy in Africa. The distant state cannot be trusted to understand or act effectively on grass-roots priorities. Indeed, government may be more predatory than servant, an agent of exploitation rather than protection”. (p. 636)

Isumonah (1997) identified three aspects of the uniqueness of the Ogoni demands that distinguished them from others. First, was that the demands were all embracing, that is, they have significant political, cultural, and economic undertones. Second, was that the Ogoni experience was unsurpassed in terms of the mass/ grassroots- based manner it was steered. Last, is that the actual resistance that became the Ogoni agitation was quite distinct from the experiences of other Niger Delta communities, including its sustained disruption of oil activities in ways that threatened the accumulative base of the Nigerian State and the MNOC (p. 8-9). Furthermore, he acknowledged the reawakening to economic and political rights among non-Ogoni oil communities in the Niger Delta as a result of MOSOP activities. Yet, he argued that the environmental condition for violent mass-action already existed in the Niger Delta oil producing communities, but that youths and peasants were “only waiting for a willing and articulate leadership for mass mobilization to set off” (p. 202). Important as this

opinion might be, Isumonah insinuated surprisingly that “any association of the rise of Ogoni nationalism with the democratic space ‘provided’ by the democratic transition embarked upon by the Babangida military dictatorship, is peremptory” (p. 204). Rather, he identified the most relevant factors in explaining the rise of Ogoni nationalism as including, first, “the charismatic leadership of Saro-Wiwa”, and second, “cues from peaceful achievement of self-determination by minorities in Eastern Europe”. Third, are the “adverse effects of oil exploitation and neglect”, and finally, “the calculation that ethnic mobilization could win for the Ogoni recognition of Ogoni identity, political autonomy and material rewards” (p. 204)

Eteng (1996) identified seven major grievances of minorities who incidentally form the bulk of the oil communities, against the central government as follows. First, was that the entire Nigerian system was structured on “institutionalized social inequality”. Second, was that the central government enacted laws that effectively disenfranchizes oil communities, while the third was the double standards that are applied to the principle of derivation and revenue allocation. Fourth, was the diversion of oil revenue to the development of other regions to the neglect of the Niger Delta. Fifth, was that the southern minority oil enclave seemed to have been deliberately abandoned in national development schemes. Sixth, was that those minorities have exhausted peaceful means, and whose last resort was therefore violence. Finally, he identified governments’ response to community violence through heavy-handed repression (pp. 137-140). The allegations by the oil minority communities against multinational oil companies were also detailed. These include, first, their collusion with the state to appropriate ancestral lands and to privatize violence. Second, was that they waged a deadly and comprehensive war against host communities. Third, was the destruction of the traditional economic and social lifeline of the oil region, what Scott would refer to as the “moral economy of affection”. Fourth was that oil multinationals were primarily concerned with the maximization of the production of crude oil and other derivatives that wreaked considerable havoc on the ecosystem of the community. Fifth was the accusation that multinational oil companies were yet to establish “deep, genuine and meaningful cordial relationships with their hosts”, while the sixth was that oil companies aggravated the crises in the Niger Delta by flexing economic, politico-military, as well as legal muscles (p. 140-142)

Akaruse (1999: 152) has examined the challenges and problems that face oil communities in forging a united front, rather than the present disjointed political mobilization project that they currently embark upon. According to him, even though the oil producing communities were besieged by the same problems, they had never demonstrated any sign of unity in confronting their common enemies, thus the prevalence of intra-communal and inter-communal clashes. Hence, prospects for a pan-Delta mass-based organization are dim because of "historical differences and rivalries among the various communities". This, in his view, explained why all protests were usually isolated and never constituted any serious threat to the oil companies.

Two demographic groups- women and the youths- have been very active in the on-going struggle by oil communities in the Niger Delta. Unfortunately no serious scholarly attention had been given to them. A 1996 study of the Ughelli community in Delta State merely noted that the grievances of youths from Orogun village included the reckless plundering of natural resources, and the exploitation of the sexuality of their women by oil workers. According to him, the high incidence of rape, adultery and the resultant increase in the number of unmarried adolescent mothers offended the ethical divinities of the land. The dilemma faced mostly poor women in this regard, was well captured in poetry by Rouse-Amadi (1994). Turner and Oshare (1994: 123-160) have focused on two revolts by women against the oil industry: in rural Ogharefe town in Ethiope local government council, and another in an urban setting, Ekpan village, in Okpe local council area in present day Delta State. The study was innovative in that it focused on "gendered resistance" as shaped by the world oil industry, particularly as most studies on similar themes were either too broad or ignore this critical factor. Three major strands of argument are pushed in the study: the first, was that the uprisings were clashes resulting from class formation spurred by oil-based capitalist development. Second, was that the gender character of the uprisings pitched a faction of women against specific class factions of men. Lastly, that the degree of success enjoyed by women in their struggles reflected both the extent to which peasant relations persisted or were eroded by proliterianization, and the degree to which men acted in solidarity with women.

The study revealed, among other things, that women suffered a lot from oil activities, particularly as they were much more sedentary than men, and are also much more engaged in subsistence farming. They were, in short, much more dispossessed by oil exploitation activities. It also revealed that most of the protest techniques now widely used throughout the Niger Delta were developed and used in the two uprisings described by Turner and Oshare (1994). They included kidnapping, hostage taking, picketing, and the refusal to negotiate. One innovative aspect, however, was the use of “collective nudity” or “disrobing” as a weapon by women. It pointed to the fact that the “multiplication of insurgencies” which had become popular in the oil belt, had as far back as the 1980s, involved the massacre of villagers by policemen as they protested “corporate depredation” (p. 157). It was therefore myopic to peg the 1990s as the beginning of oil-induced civil conflicts in the Niger Delta. Even then, the isolated cases that Turner and Oshare so vividly described were also preceded by such major events as the revolt led by Isaac Adaka Boro against the oil-induced contradictions in February 1966. .

Overall, it is important to sound a few notes of caution on some of the issues that have not only beclouded much of the judgements and views on violence within the oil communities, but also made them overly broad and inconclusive. There is need, first, to reconcile and put in proper context, these diverse images, perceptions and experiences of different demographic groups (for instance, women and youths) in the conflict zones of the oil-rich Niger Delta. Are such experiences, for instance, similar to those in the rest of the Niger Delta, or indeed, in other parts of the world where international capital dominate? Second is the common assumption that every community agitation enterprise within the delta regions is oil-related. Using landmark cases from Nigerian courts on the impacts of oil exploration on the Niger Delta environment, Frynas (1999) acknowledged that conflict over land and oil occurred in two instances: when there is disagreement over land titles between families and communities, and, disagreement over the amount of compensation to be paid by oil companies. Of course, as he rightly pointed out, oil companies are not the only source of land disputes associated with oil production operations; other causes include ethnic rivalries (p. 20). In many instances, oil is not the cause, but it may aggravate existing disputes or generate new ones. Furthermore, as Frynas noted, even in cases when an

oil company did not trigger off a land dispute, the ignorance of oil companies- of customary land rights and local customs- may have exacerbated an existing dispute (p. 25).

Another important concern is to highlight some of the substantive conceptual problems and challenges that must confront serious scholarship on the oil communities. First, according to Nwabueze (1999: 2-3) is the “suffocating politicisation of virtually all aspects of the Niger Delta debate”. The implication of this phenomenon is that the Niger Delta is muddled up in conceptual fluidity that makes it “difficult to gather hard facts as these are coated in interests”. Hence, “boundary definitions have become nearly impossible as each competing group is determined to impose exclusive meanings and definitions”. The second conceptual ‘threat’ arises from what Nwabueze called the “domination complex”. By this, he meant that the political history of the Niger Delta is “riddled with stifling domination, suppression and peripheralisation” that, in turn, condition the mentality of the people towards the state, the larger polity and even toward each other. The third challenge relates to the “militarisation of values”, as “captive groups whose objective conditions have been reproduced through violence, imbibe the value of violence as a legitimate means to unsettle their condition”. For the inhabitants of the Niger Delta, therefore, “values are militarised and their responses to unacceptable conditions can be expected to be no less militaristic”.

By way of conclusion, it is important to emphasize that much of what presently existed in the literature lacked the empirical rigor that could form the basis for enlightened findings and conclusions about the Niger Delta. The implication of this is that much of what existed in the literature on civil anomie within and among oil communities remained largely tentative and inconclusive. Besides, much of what obtained in the literature is quite often, too emotional and sensationalized rather than dispassionate, in-depth and empirically rigorous. The tentativeness of such observations and conclusions in the literature has encouraged too much generalization. For instance, that every oil community (big or small) is engaged in mass-based grassroots political mobilization and violence in order to draw attention to their plights. Unfortunately, it would seem that existing policies by government and

oil companies have overly relied on such narrow, highly emotive and armchair perspectives that are not in any significant way grounded in sound empirical data.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Methodology

Researching the Niger Delta has become a growth industry in the media and academic circle, beginning from the mid-1990s. Nevertheless, a research of this nature and scope, involving deep historical and comparative analysis, requires as much a varied and innovative research methodology. This is particularly so also as the events that are being probed are still active, recent and/ on-going. This research, therefore, involved collecting data from secondary and primary sources.

For secondary sources, the study relied on the following:

i). Library Research, for books, journal articles, and other literature on past and current patterns of ethnicity, behaviour of the State and oil companies, communal disturbances and violence in general and in the Niger Delta in particular. This study benefited immensely from the library resources of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Port Harcourt, Temple University, Philadelphia, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, London School of Economics and Political Science and the British Library both in London, to mention a few.

ii). Institutional Publications by Local and International Non-Governmental Agencies. These agencies have generated considerable information mostly chronicling the plight of minority oil communities in particular, and violence within the oil industry in general. Institutions that have published extensively in this regard include: the World Council of Churches (WCC), Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch/ Africa (HRW/Africa), Sierra Club (SC), Friends of the Earth (FoE), GreenPeace; and locally, the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), Campaign for Democracy (CD), Environmental Rights Action (ERA), and many more. Despite their utility, it is important to point out some of the major shortcomings of these sources of data. This includes their issue-specific focuses, especially on themes such as human rights, environmental rights and action, the rights and empowerment of minority and or indigenous cultural groups, etc. Apart from this, many of such publications tend to sensationalize their advocacy

interventions, hence, a percipient research must be extremely careful in accepting their claims and conclusions without raising critical questions and making double confirmations. The last shortcoming of these publications relate to the lack of empirical rigour in methodologies they employ.

iii). Official Government Publications and Documents, especially at the Federal, State and Local Government levels. It also includes publication by important parastatals such as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), Oil Minerals Producing and Development Commission (OMPADEC), and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). A major shortcoming of this category of information is that they are not always regular, while circulation is restricted and often difficult to gain access to.

iv). Local and International Newspapers and Newsmagazines provided relevant information on day-to-day activities of the oil companies, report events within oil communities, instances of community mobilization and violence, and of State/ oil companies responses. This source also contains important interviews and commentaries by notable government officials and individuals on the situation in the Niger Delta, as well as editorial opinions. Almost all the newspapers and newsmagazines with national coverage have a long record of reporting the Niger Delta. This is not so for their international counterparts. It is interesting to note that between January 1988 and December 1990, there was no single entry on the Niger Delta, not even the Ogoni struggle, in the electronic Newspaper Abstracts of 4 major US newspapers.⁴³ Between January 1991 and December 1993, entries in the National Abstract were preoccupied with the aborted transition program and the return to full-blown praetorian rule, the first-time air hijack, human right abuses as well as the strike by oil workers in support of democracy. The first major entry on the Niger Delta was reported in September 1993 in an article by Kenneth Noble questioning the

⁴³ The newspapers comprising the National Abstract are: The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, and the Wall Street Journal. Their focus on Nigeria during this period include the Orkar Coup, religious riots, endless and expensive transition to civil rule program, economic-induced riots, drug trafficking and toxic waste dumping, democratic and anti-military pressures within the civil society, the fuel crisis, and the devaluation of the national currency, the Naira.

basis of acute shortage of basic social infrastructures in the oil-rich town of Kidere⁴⁴. In the intervals between January 1994 and December 1995, the National Abstract (UK) made 328 entries on Nigeria, with again only a handful on the crisis on the Niger Delta; understandably, the first major (and front page) entry on oil and the Niger Delta focused on Ogoni and Shell.⁴⁵

v). In-house Bulletins and Newsletters by the major Multinational Oil Companies, including Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Elf, Mobil, Chevron, and Agip. These bulletins are most public relations tabloids; hence, they tend to present favourably the impacts of the activities of oil companies, particularly towards host communities, in favourable light

vi). Archival Records. A detailed interpretation of archival records on the Niger Delta was carried out to complement existing historical works on the study area. Expectedly, much of the archival materials available covered the colonial era. However, very few of such archival materials and records are available in Nigeria; neither at the National Archives in Lagos nor at the archives of the University of Ibadan. Even then, it is often difficult to gain access to them since they are either missing on the shelves or poorly catalogued. To transcend this problem, I was again privileged to conduct archival research at the Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, London. It is important to note that resulting from Nigeria's colonial heritage, much of the archival and africana records on the country are deposited in various private and public archives in the United Kingdom.

For primary data collection, therefore, four major techniques were utilized for this study. They include: Survey Interviews; Focus Group Discussions; In-depth

⁴⁴ Kenneth Noble, 'Atop a Sea of Oil, Nigerians are Mired in Misery', *New York Times*, 9-9-93, p. 4

⁴⁵ The article noted the impoverishment of the Ogoni people, despite the fact that over 30 billion USD worth of crude oil had been extracted from that community. [Geraldine Brook, 'Slick Alliance: Shell's Nigerian fields produce few benefits for region's villagers', *Wall Street Journal*, 6-5-1994, p. 1]. Apart from front-page items, the strike by oil workers in protest against the continued incarceration of MKO Abiola and the foreclosure of the democratic space by the military enjoyed the editorial attention of the major U.S. dailies covered in the National Abstract. The strike did not only threaten Nigeria's daily oil production, it also led raised the New York Mercantile Exchange Price of crude oil for September of that year. There were also genuine concerns that the political crisis might go beyond stalling Nigeria's dream of enthroning democracy to also engulf the country in costly internal war and division.

Interviews; and Direct Observations. The different data sources were then integrated using a process of triangulation (See Table 1 below for the synopsis of field data collected).

Table I: Synopsis of Data Collected

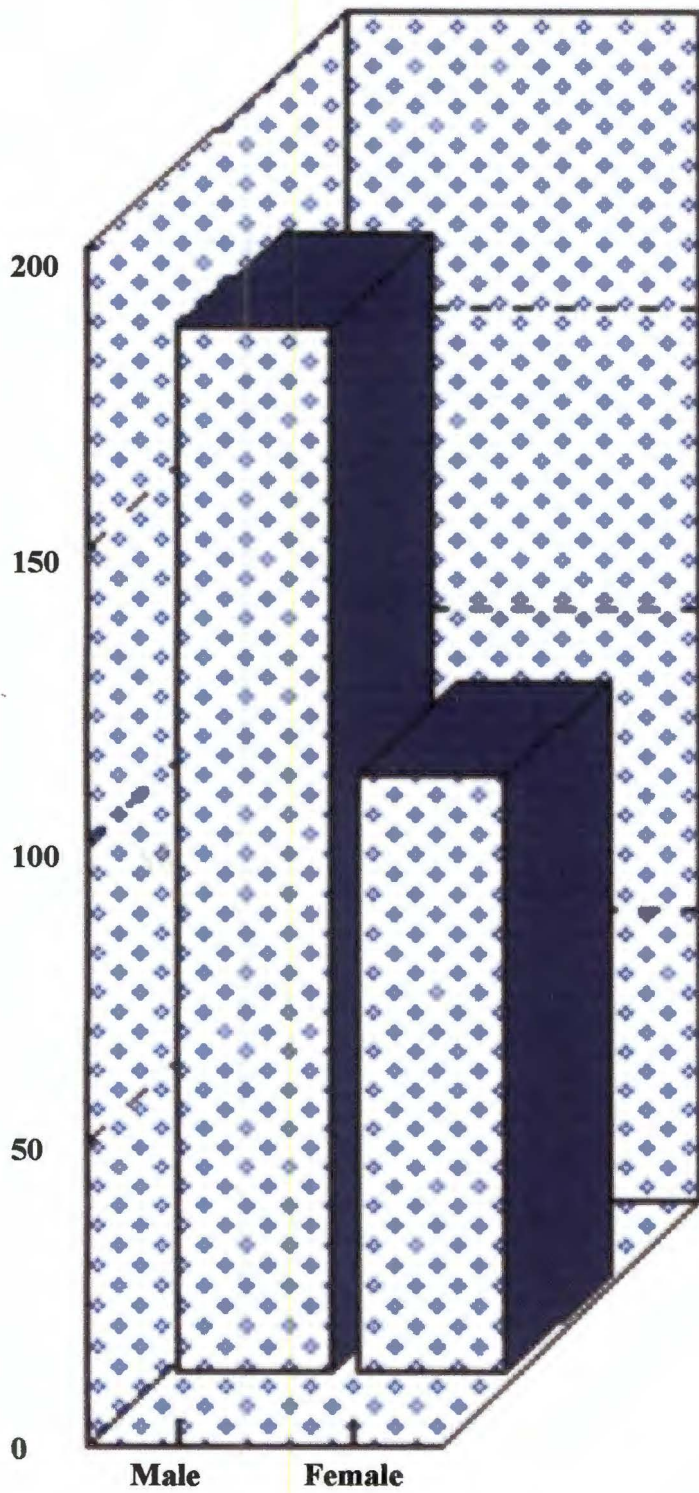
Oil Producing States Selected	Oil Producing Communities	Form A: Interview Survey	Form B: In-depth Interviews	Form C: Focus Group Discussions	Form D: Direct Observation Form
AKWA IBOM	EKET	46	5	6	1
	IBENO	46	5	6	1
BAYELSA	ELEBELE	47	5	6	1
	OBUNAGHA	46	5	6	1
DELTA	UGHELLI	50	5	6	1
	UZERE	49	5	6	1
Total		284	30	36	6

Field Survey, 2000

i). Interviews Survey. These involved the administration of structured questionnaires to purposively and randomly selected social categories cutting across age, gender, income, level of education, profession etc. These categories were selected because they are actively involved in community projects, including those involved in grassroots mobilization and political action. Structured questionnaires aided data gathering from a broad spectrum of randomly selected sample population, including community leaders, farmers, artisans, fishermen, youths, women, teachers, vigilante and age-grade groups, and local activists. The focus will be on their attitudes towards the state and oil companies, how they perceive, or are affected by violent projects. The survey interview enabled us to gather factual information on the opinions, attitudes, views, and beliefs of the different social groups. A total of 284 people across the three target States participated in the interview survey (60.9% males, 39.1% females).⁴⁶ The socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the survey sample are presented here in Figures 1-5 and Table III below. The distribution of respondents by sex is 60.9% male, while female accounted for 39.1%.

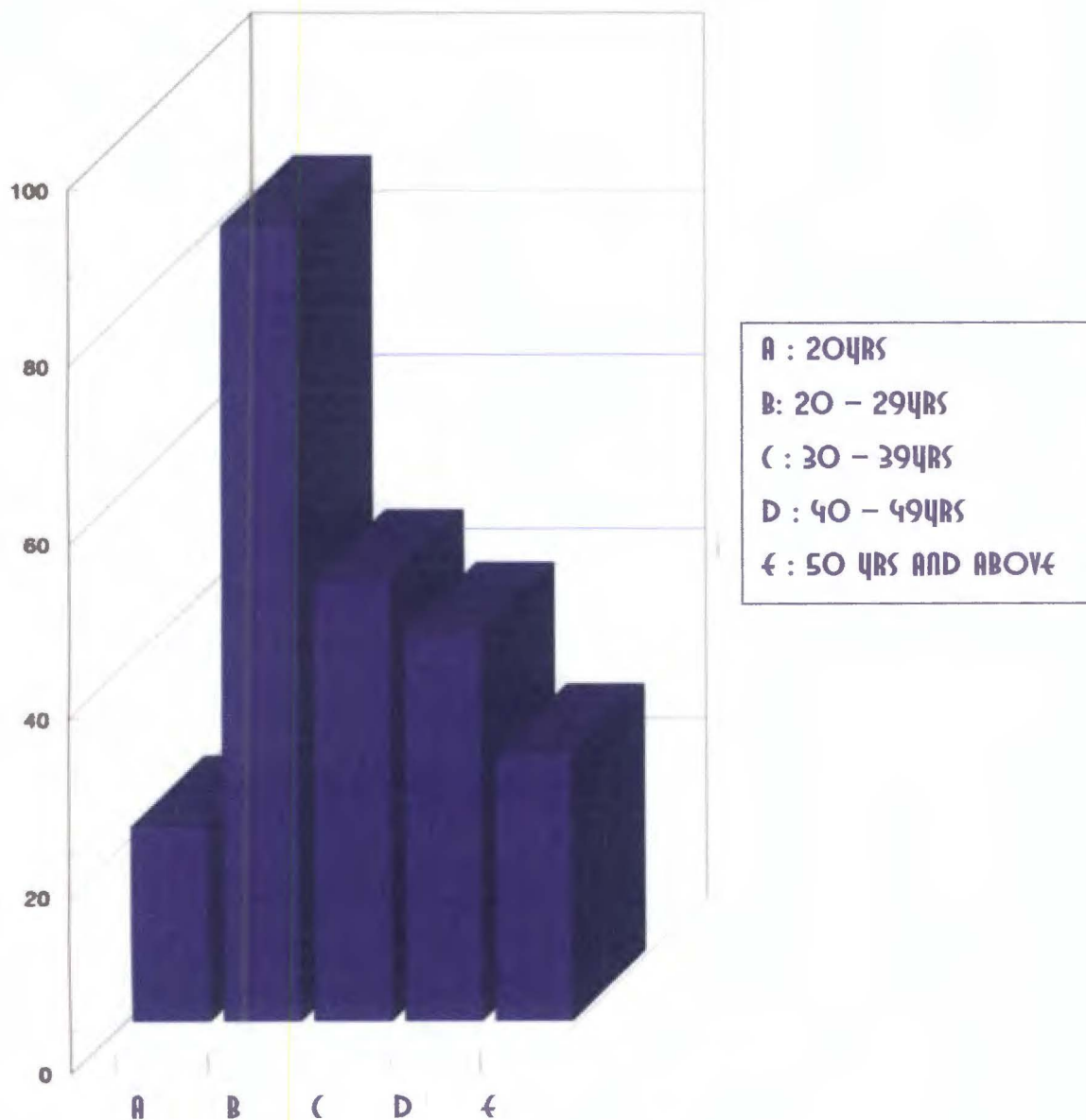
⁴⁶ The Survey Questionnaire and other research instruments are attached as Appendices.

Figure 1: Distribution by Sex



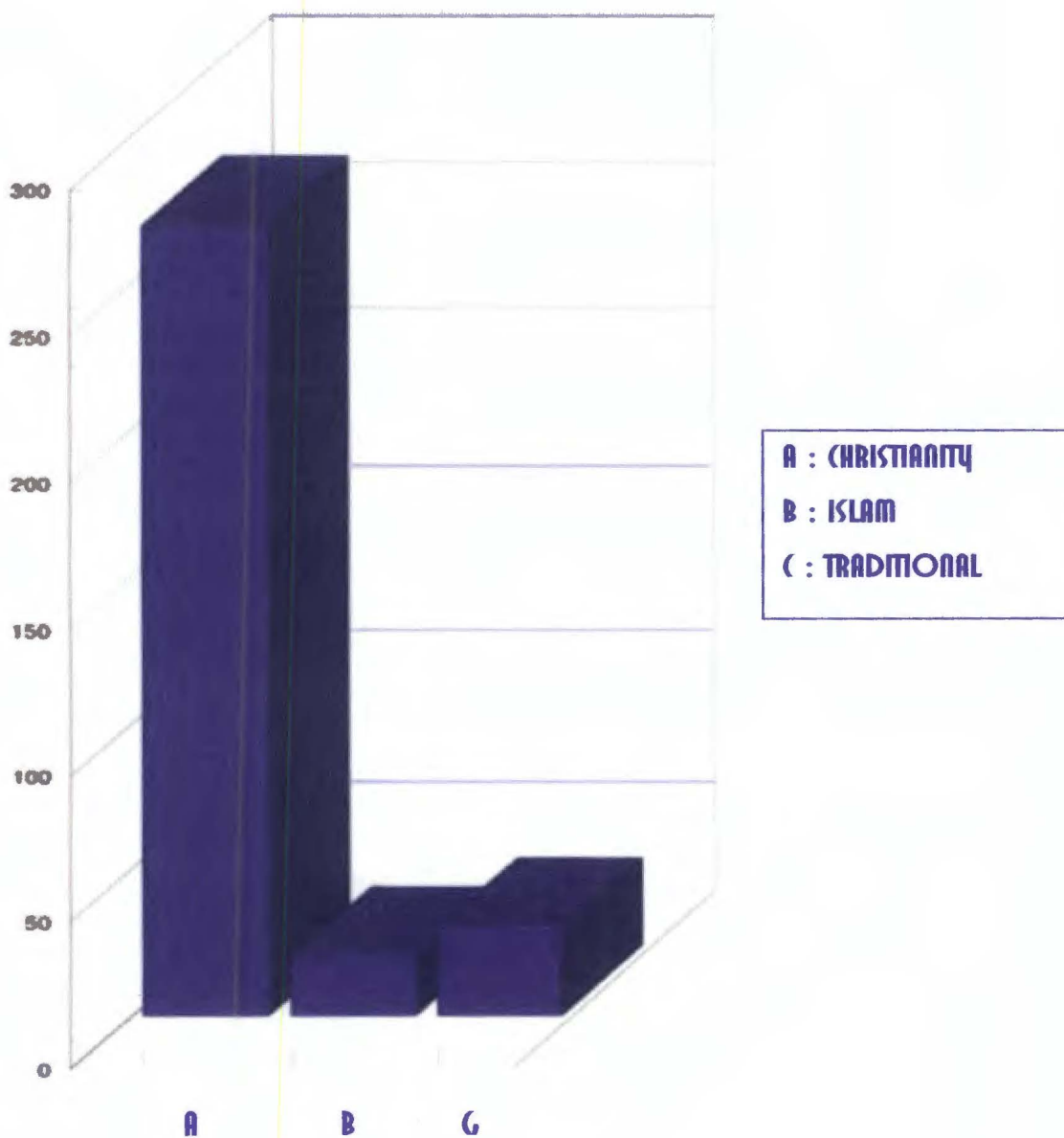
The ages of the respondents range from about 20 years to over 50 years, with an age mean of 32.5 years. Both youths and adults were targets of the study, especially since the impacts of oil exploration activities are felt differently by each demographic category. For instance, the youths play a pivotal role in the recent wave of community mobilization activities and the violence that swept across the Niger Delta. Concerning the marital status of respondents, 52.3% were married and 44.2% single.

Figure 2: Distribution by Age



Christianity is the most popular religion in the study area, with 94.7% of respondents claiming to be Christians. Nonetheless, a high premium is placed on traditional religion, with each community preserving their sacred ancestral shrines.

Figure 3: Distribution by Religion



Oil Survey 2000

It is of particular interest that 32.2% of the respondents have post-secondary education, even though the true reality shows a lower level of educational attainment among the elderly and young girls. Income earnings show a very poor distribution with about 68% of the sample earning less than N10, 000 per annum. Residency is predominantly rural, with 67% located in rural communities and only 33% in urban areas.

Figure 4: Distribution by Education

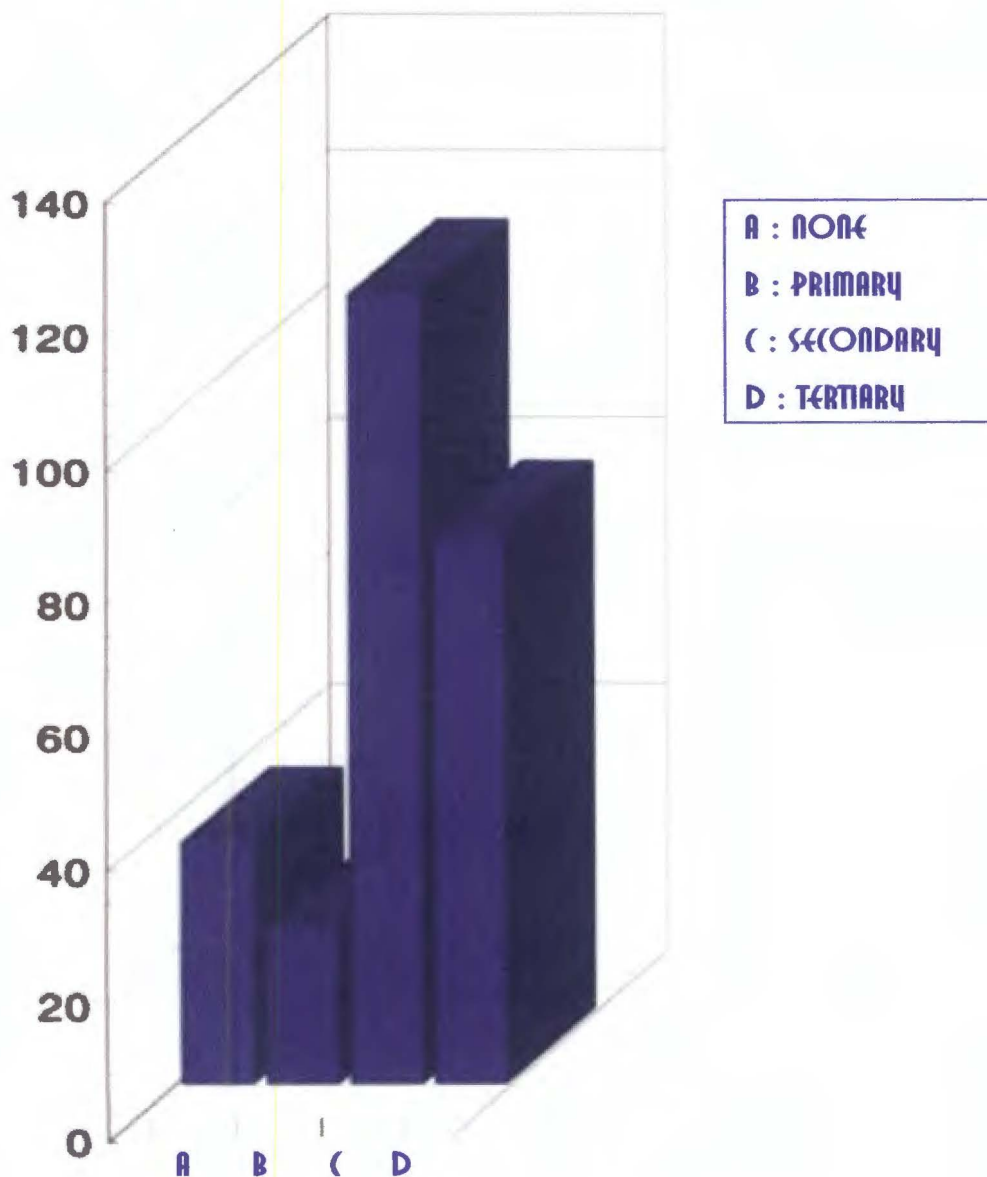
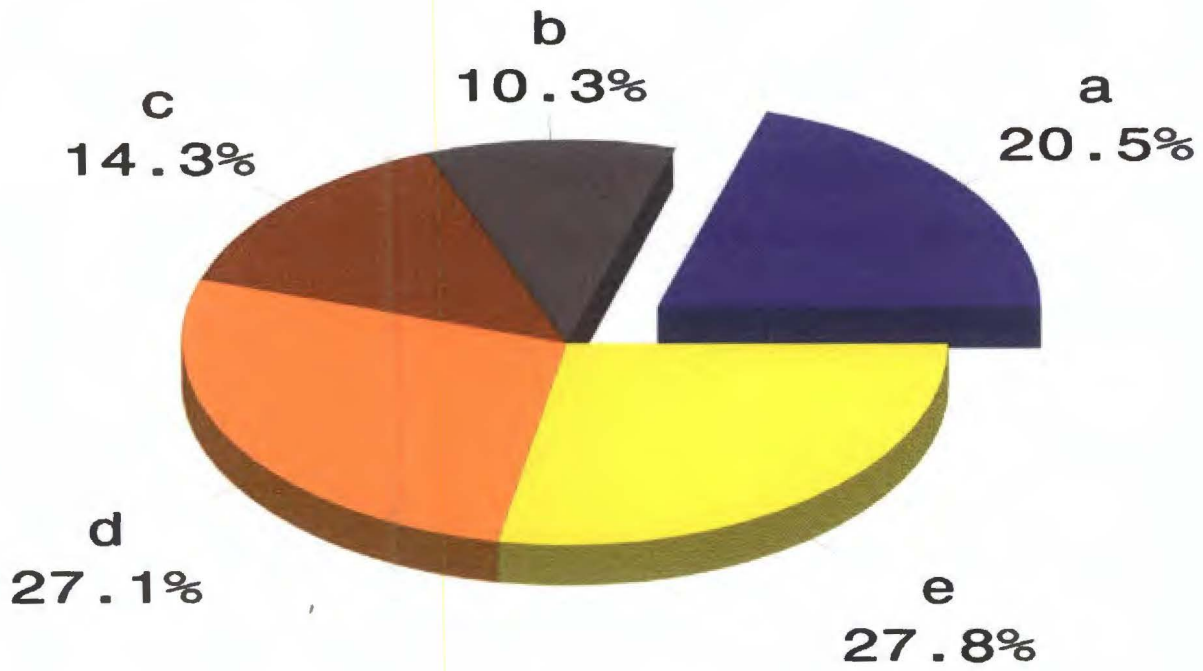


Figure 5: Distribution by Occupation



A : PROFESSIONAL
B : WHITE COLLAR
C : SKILLED
D : UNSKILLED
E : UNEMPLOYED

ii). Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): In all, three (6) FGDs were held in each of the six (6) oil communities surveyed, making a total of 36. This was administered to a range of social categories comprising opinion leaders (male and female separately), adults (male and female separately) and youths (male and female separately). Participants in FGD were selected to reflect homogeneous background, e.g. politicians, community leaders, local government staff. Their views could be relevant in our understanding of the varying impacts of oil and ethnicity on the groups/communities, and aid our search for innovative strategies for addressing fundamental problems facing them. An average of six (6) people attended each of the FGD sessions, and each lasted about 90 minutes [See Table II below on the Characteristics of the FGD]. Key informants were used to identify and screen participants for the FGDs in order to ensure the homogeneity and social parity that would allow participants to express their views frankly and freely.

Table II: Characteristics of the FGD Groups

Categories of the FGDs	AKWA ST Eket	IBOM ATE Ibena	BAYELA Elebele	STATE Obunagha	DELTA Ughelli	STATE Uzere
C.L (M)	1	1	1	1	1	1
C.L (F)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Adult (M)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Adult (F)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Youths (M)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Youths (F)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total No. of FGDs	6	6	6	6	6	6
Average Duration of FGD Sessions	1.15 hrs	1.30 hrs	1.30 hrs	1.20 hrs	1.50 hrs	1.15 hrs
Average No. of FGD Participants	6-7	6-9	6-9	6-8	6-8	6-8

Key: (M)= Male; (F)= Female; (CL)= Community Leaders; (+) means that FGD with these socio-demographic categories were conducted at the locations identified. Field Survey, 2000

iii) In-depth Interviews: These involved extensive and detailed interviews with key informants, especially community liaison officers, opinion/ community leaders, government officials (at the State and Local Government levels), and oil company executives and staff. The key informants were purposively selected because of their job descriptions, social standings within the communities, as well as their deep internal knowledge of the day-to-day “street conditions” within the oil communities. The interviews were conducted using an In-depth Interview Guide (IIG).

iv). Direct Observation: This required gathering information on the physical facilities in the target communities

3.2. Description of the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta has captured the attention and fascination of people from time immemorial, especially since the earliest time of foreign incursion into that territory. Mary Kingsley was reported to have noted that “the great swamp region of the Bight of Biafra is the greatest in the world, ... in its intensity and gloom, it has a grandeur equal to that of the Himalayas”. Winwood Rande reportedly referred to the region as the “Venice of West Africa” in apparent reference to its vibrant trade and commerce, while Talbot referred to it as the “region of sombre mangrove”. Macgregor Laird (in 1832) reportedly called it unhealthy with soil too poor “to produce a ton of oil”. John Hubbard (1931) had described the territory as the “white man’s grave”, in apparent reference to the harsh environmental conditions that caused several sicknesses and the attendant heavy casualty among European explorers, merchants, missionaries, and colonial officials. Jones (1963: 9) described the greater part of the delta as “a barren waste of mangrove forest and most of the inhabitants live scattered over it in small widely dispersed communities of fishermen”.

The Niger Delta region spans the area where the two great Rivers Niger and Benue empty their waters into the Atlantic Ocean; an area with about six million people living in an estimated area of 70, 000 square kilometres.⁴⁷ It is one of the world’s

⁴⁷ Shell, Nigeria Brief: The Ogoni Issue, 1995, p. 1

largest wetlands; over 20 000 square kilometres in southeast Nigeria, and easily Africa's largest deltaic formation. The deposits of the delta consist of predominantly coarse sands, gravel, dispersed layers of silt clay, peat and decomposed organic matters. (p. 9-12). While the southernmost part of the Niger Delta enjoys a rainfall in excess of 2500 mm, the northern bound part has 1500 mm. Annual rainfall is between 3000mm-4500mm, with the raining season extending from July to September, and the dry season, December to February. Over 80 % of the Niger Delta is seasonally flooded. The mean temperature has been put at about 23.9 degrees Celsius. The mangrove forest is reputed to be the third largest in the world; and the largest in Africa, spanning between 6, 000 to 7, 000 square kilometres. Nyananyo (1999: 44-51) has identified three major ecological zones within the Niger Delta: the brackish water swamp forest (mangrove and coastal vegetation), fresh water swamp forests, and the riparian forests. Nzewunna (1980: 1), however, identified four ecological sub-zones: the freshwater swamps and forest; the coastal plains; the saltwater mangrove swamp; and the sandy beach ridges. The World Bank (1995) identified five different ecological zones: coastal barrier islands, mangroves, freshwaters, swamp forests, and lowland rain forest. Regardless of these variations, there is a consensus that while the Niger Delta ecosystem is habitat for a great variety of coastal and estuarine fauna and flora,⁴⁸ lack of adequate protection by the law as well as poor preservation measures by oil companies operating in that region, have wreaked much havoc on traditional environmental and sustainable development resources.⁴⁹

Much more contentious, however, is the controversy over the actual composition of the Niger Delta. First, those categories of scholars who see the region in geographic terms, that is, as triangular territories extending from the Ndoni/ Aboh apex in the North to Qua Iboe River in the East and westwards to the Benin River. Second are

⁴⁸ Moffat and Linden (1995: 531) have documented that previously large population of pygmy hippopotamus, manatees, maritime hippo as well as crocodile and fishes have reduced drastically. They also reported that of the 12 different species of freshwater fish discovered in the coast of West Africa, 10 originated from the Niger Delta.

⁴⁹ Three important World Bank reports on the Niger Delta environment are: 'Towards the Development of an Environmental Action Plan for Nigeria'. Washington DC: World Bank West African Department, 1990; 'Africa: A framework for Integrated Coastal Zone management'. Washington DC: World Bank Environment Department, 1995; 'Defining an Environmental development Strategy for the Niger Delta (Volume I and II), Washington DC.: World Bank Industry and Energy Operations Division, West African Department, 1995

those who see it politically as the six states of the south-south zone: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers. The third category of scholars distinguished between the “core” and “peripheral” Niger Delta; the former corresponding with Rivers, Delta and Bayelsa and part of Akwa Ibom, and the latter, Ondo, Anambra, Edo, Cross River and Imo States. There is still the third and more elastic school that merged the states in the core and periphery together. (IDEA, 2001: 239). The last, as mentioned above, is based on historical, ethno-linguistic characterization and divides the Niger Delta into three: the West, Central and Eastern Niger Deltas.

There are nine oil-producing States in Nigeria.⁵⁰ Out of these, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States have been purposively selected for the study based on several factors. First, is the volume of oil produced they accounted for. The three States are easily the major oil producing States, except perhaps, for Rivers State that places third in terms of the volume of oil production before Akwa Ibom. The second rationale for selecting the three states is that they afford the study a unique opportunity to examine and compare the impacts of the corporate strategies of each of the major multinational corporations operating in the oil sector. Although Shell is *primus inter pares* with about 94 producing fields covering a 31, 000 square kilometre area of the Niger Delta, as well as a daily production of almost one million barrels of oil, it is analytically convenient to probe its operational activities in Bayelsa State. On the other hand, Chevron Nigeria Limited operates in Delta State, while Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited is popular in Akwa Ibom. That way, the study is enriched by an in-depth as well as comparative approach and analysis of the operational, managerial, and community relation policies of some of the major oil companies operating in the Niger Delta. The third rationale is that different ethno-political groups populate the selected States. While, for instance, Bayelsa State is populated predominantly by the Ijaw ethnic group, we have also chosen two other ethnic clusters, Isoko and Urhobo, in Delta State. The Ibibio ethnic group dominates Akwa Ibom, the third state for the purpose of the study. Thus, it is important to know whether such differences have had any significant impacts, positively or negatively, on mass political mobilization and/

⁵⁰ The nine oil producing States are: Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Imo, Abia, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, and Ondo.

or violent conflicts in each of the States. The final reason for selecting the three states is that they manifest different degrees (and intensities) of oil-related violent conflicts: on one extreme is Bayelsa, a State that in recent times witnessed a marked increase in Ijaw ethnic nationalism, violence, and state repression. On the other extreme is Akwa Ibom, a State that only began to witness major violent conflicts about three years ago. In between these two extremes is Delta, a State whose component sub-ethnic groups particularly the Ijaw, Urhobo and Itsekiri in Warri Township, have engaged in conflicts intermittently over the last decade or so.

3.3. Scope of the Study

As noted earlier, three States have been selected for this study. They are Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Delta States. Akwa Ibom is the fourth largest oil producing State, after Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers respectively. The State was carved out of the old Cross Rivers State by the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1987. It is located approximately between latitude 4.32 and 5.53 degrees North and longitude 7.25 and 8.25 degrees east. At its creation, the State had 10 Local Government Areas. This was increased to 24 in 1991, and presently has 31. The major ethnic groups are the Ibibios, Annangs and Orons. The population of Akwa Ibom was 2, 359,736 during the 1991 National Census comprising 49.3% males and 50.7% females. About 75% of this population live in small towns, villages and hamlets. Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MNPU) is the dominant multinational oil company with about 8 offshore locations in Eket, a major town, and Mkpanak in Ibena LGA, a rural location.

Bayelsa State was created out of the old Rivers State on October 1, 1996. The new State derived mainly from Brass, Yenagoa and Sagbama local government areas (LGAs)⁵¹. At its creation, the State had eight local government areas, making it the smallest in Nigeria then⁵². By December 1999, however, an additional twenty-four (24) were created bringing the total to 32. The State is located between Longitude 6

⁵¹ Brass LGA has since been divided into Ogbia, Nembe, and Brass local government areas, while Yenagoa is now Southern Ijaw, Yenagoa, Kolokuma/ Opokuma LGAs. Sagbama has been sub-divided into Ekeremor and Sagbama LGA. See also Alagoa (1999:2-7)

⁵² The initial eight LGAs were Brass, Ekeremor, kolokuma/ Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, Sagbama, Southern Ijaw, and Yenagoa respectively.

degrees East and Latitude 4 degrees, with a total estimated population of 1,121, 693 according to the 1991 National Census. The State covers an area of 12, 000 square kilometres, and over 185 kilometres of coastline located at the heart of the vast Niger Delta wetlands. On average, Bayelsa receives a short dry season, and an annual rainfall ranging from 2, 000 to 4, 000 mm between March and November thereby ensuring that a substantial portion of the land area is flooded (Okonny, Ayolagha and Dickson, 1999: 9-30). The last State, Delta, has a land area of 16, 882 square kilometres located roughly between longitude 5.00 degrees and 6.45 degrees east and latitude 5.00 degrees and 6.30 degrees north. It began, respectively, as a constituent and integral part of the old Midwestern State (1963-1976) and the defunct Bendel State (1976-1991). At its creation in 1991, it comprised 12 local government areas but that was later increased to 19. In terms of ethnic composition, Delta State has five major groups: Itsekiri, Urhobo, Isoko, Ijo and the Igbo. According to the 1991 population census figures, the State had 2, 570, 181 persons made up of 49.5% as males and 50.5% as females.

From each of the three States discussed above, two oil communities were again selected to reflect some of the major sub-ethnic and territorial divisions that are the hallmark of the oil-rich region. In Akwa Ibom, for instance, Ibeno and Eket were selected; the former a rural community, and the latter, a fast-growing town hosting the operational headquarters of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited. Mkpamak (Ibeno) is a town of about 40, 000 inhabitants, most of whom are fishermen and farmers; two vocations that have been adversely affected by oil spillages and pollution. According to oral history, the Ibeno people claim that their great grand parents came to settle in the area from Cameroon. The power structure in the village begins with the paramount ruler (Obong) at the top, followed by eight clan heads: Atabrikang, Mkpamak, Upenekang, Iwoachang, Okorutip, Ntafre, Itak-Abasi, and Opolom. Just below the clan heads are village chairmen, village secretaries, and household heads. In all, there are 12 oil wells in Ibeno, two of which are very close to Mpanak community; that is, about 1-1.5 kilometres to the hub of the village.

In terms of social infrastructures, there are eight primary schools and two secondary schools, namely the Catholic Technical School and Ibeno Community Grammar

School. There is one sparsely equipped and poorly staffed health centre. The only road with asphalt in Ibeno links the community with Mobil operational sites. There is a near total absence of public utilities, including portable drinking water, except for boreholes drilled by Mobil. Majority of the housing type in the town are traditional mud and thatched roof houses, although there are also a few with modern cement bricks and corrugated sheets. Despite the general poverty level in the town, the community spokesman has a satellite dish facility beaming global stations such as the Cable News Network (CNN). The degree of water and air pollution as a result of indiscriminate gas flaring has made the environment less than hospitable. As a result of land, water and air pollution, also, crop yield is very low as most food crops such as cassava, plantain and yams have yellowish colour and stunted growth due to the dearth of chlorophyll. The presence of better-paid oil workers in the village has triggered an exorbitant cost of living.

Unlike, Mpanak (Ibena) that is mostly rural, Eket is a semi-urban area predominantly populated by Ibibio-speaking people. Eket has several municipal facilities such as electricity, hospital, schools, banks, and good roads tarred by Mobil Producing Nigeria unlimited (MPNU). The popular impression is that the cost of living in Eket is exorbitant; probably comparable to big cities like Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, and Lagos. Eket is fondly referred to as Mobil city in apparent reference to the expansive administrative presence of that company in the town. Indeed, a lot of the socio-economic activities and infrastructures sustaining the vibrancy of the town of Eket are provided outright or subsidized by Mobil. Yet, much of the actual oil exploration activities of the company are carried out a few kilometres away in rural and desolate Ibena. This situation has been a source of friction between the two communities who, at the slightest provocation, engage each other in violent communal tussles. Farming and farmlands are better in Eket than in Ibena. This, again, is because the former is farther away from the direct negative impacts of oil production activities such as oil pollution and gas flaring.

In Bayelsa State, Elebele and Obunagha communities were selected; the former is a riverine fishing community, while the latter is an upland agrarian community. The estimated population of Elebele community is about 40,000, while a large percentage-

about 65%- fall within the age group of 30 years old. Elebele is located within the Kolo Creek local government area,⁵³ with about 20 oil wells all connected to the Kolo Creek oil field operated by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC). Except for small-scale farming and subsistence fishing, the majority of youths are jobless and idle. The community boasts of very little, if anything, in terms of social infrastructure. There are, for example, only three blocks of dilapidated buildings housing both the primary and secondary schools, and an uncompleted site for a new secondary school. Surprisingly, there is a vibrant community market patronised by several adjoining villages. The pipe-borne water facility available in the community is non-functional. Usually, then, the community depends on water from the streams for daily use. Incidentally, the same streams (alongside bush corridors) are popular sites for discharging and/ or dumping alimentary wastes.

Despite the extensive oil production activities going on in the community, there is virtually no project funded or supported by the oil companies operating there. At the oil production sites visited, severe degradation of land was evident especially from the disappearance of native crop breeds as well as the poor yield. In most cases, farmers must apply fertilizer in order to boost crop productivity. The local people also reported occasional land tremor, which they attribute to seismic data gathering and other intensive oil production-related activities.

Generally, the general social conditions in the village of Elebele are deplorable. Due to lack of electricity, portable transistor radios are more in vogue than electrical based household appliances such as television sets. Apart from human locomotion, the other major means of transportation within the village is bicycle (or in rare cases, motor bikes). Generally, the inhabitants of Elebele lack access to health care. But for 2 or 3 sub-standard drug stores managed by semi-educated attendants, majority of the community depend on trado-medicine or must travel to neighbouring towns to get medical attention. Most of the houses in Elebele were made of raffia-supported mud. The few houses with corrugated sheet roofing are also visibly brownish. According to

⁵³ Prior to the creation of Kolo Creek LGA, Elebele was under Ogbia LGA.

the community, this is due to excessive heat from the nearby oil fields and the adverse effects of acid rain.

Obunagha is an Ijaw clan located within the Gbarain-Ekpetiama local government area. The population of the village is 20, 000, with a ratio of women to men of about 60-40%. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) started operations in the town around 1964, and according to the people, the company has given back very little to the community in terms of social amenities. For instance, the electrification project in the village, (visible by overhead cables), is not connected to the national electricity grid. The indigenes complain bitterly about this neglect, forcing many to rely on battery-powered transistor radios. Also, the local pipe borne water network commissioned several years ago reportedly never worked forcing the population to rely on untreated community ponds and streams. Since there is no waste disposal system in the village, water used for household chores invariably filters into the streams, raising the chances of water-borne diseases and epidemic. The community school is housed in one poorly designed and maintained building. Generally, enrolment is very low because many have opted to train their children in neighbouring villages and towns - sometimes about 2 kilometres away. Many of the houses are typically built with mud, again supported by bamboo and raffia thatched roofing. The only access road linking neighbouring communities such as Igbogene, Ogboloma and Okolobiri, is uncompleted. More importantly, it was built by Shell primarily to link its oil locations in the community's bushes.

The last State selected for the study is Delta State. Within it, the survey selected Ughelli and Uzere communities. Again, the former is upland and predominantly Urhobo-speaking, while the latter, is an Isoko community. At the creation of Delta State in September 27, 1991, two separate local government areas (out of a total 19) were carved from Ughelli township: Ughelli South and Ughelli North. According to the national census estimates a year after, in 1992, each of the two council areas had a population of 131, 291 and 161, 157 respectively. The advent of British colonial and missionary activities in major towns in the Niger Delta encouraged the establishment of schools, hospitals and other municipal facilities, many of them have endured till date; the most prominent being the elitist Government College, Ughelli, established in

1945. The Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) struck oil in Ughelli community in 1958. Today, the company operates several major oil wells in the community, including one of the largest gas reserves in Nigeria; the Eruomukowharie gas field. While the River Forcados and its tributaries drain the town of Ughelli, the town also has an average rainfall of about 266.7cm and a temperature of 26.6 degrees centigrade, and two major climatic seasons, dry and rainy seasons. The vegetation comprised of mangrove swamps and forests.

The second community selected in Delta State, Uzere, is located southeast of Isoko South LGA with headquarters 12.5 kilometres away in Oleh.⁵⁴ It is one of the 17 clans in the Isoko community of Delta State, and comprises about 100, 000 people. The people of Uzere are predominantly fishermen benefiting greatly from the coastal resources of the evergreen swamp forests of the Niger Delta. In the dry season- November to March- when the floods have receded, the inhabitants engage in farming; growing cassava, yam, groundnuts, sweet potatoes, among others. With the aid of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Uzere attracted a second grade school in 1920s. A Native Authority Primary School was established in 1931; reputed to be the foremost throughout the length and breadth of Isoko and Urhobo lands. A secondary modern school was established in 1961, while Uzere Grammar School opened for student enrolment in September 1974 under the then government of the Midwestern State. Crude oil was discovered in Uzere by Shell in 1956, while commercial exploration began in Lake Omoku, named Uzere I, in 1960. Another site, Uzere II, was struck the following year close to the "Ovwe" Shrine. There are about 39 oil wells in two fields: Uzere West and Uzere East, with a daily production of about 56, 000 barrels. According to community figures, Uzere accounted for about 2.9% of the estimated 556, 678, 882 barrels of crude oil produced in Nigeria in 1971. By 1980, it reportedly accounted for about 2.2% out of the national total of 752, 464, 231 barrels.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ UZERE: An Isoko Kingdom of the Niger Delta. A Publication of the Dynamic Club of Uzere, November 1997 (ISBN 978-32561-3-0).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Several other important factors have influenced the selection of the aforementioned oil communities. Perhaps the first is that they are all small in size, and low profile in terms of their engagement in grassroots political action and violence, unlike “bigger” communities such as Ogoni, Warri, and Bonny, whose struggles dominate existing literature and media reporting. The study believes that the small and relatively obscure communities could, and do indeed, have strong analytical and methodological appeal. At the same time, they allow the prudent management of empirical data generated from the field. Another consideration is that because much of the existing studies have focused more on “major” oil communities, their observations and conclusions are often grossly insufficient (and inappropriate) to capture the dynamic realities of grassroots mobilization in the smaller ones. In fact, except for Ughelli, and possibly, Eket, that presented a semblance of urban communities, the other four communities selected for this study are rural. It is hoped that by comparing their experiences, and bearing in mind the rural-urban divide, the study would provide a deeper insight into the specific and broad challenges that face oil communities in the Niger Delta. Even though the selected study locations are small and relatively obscured, they are important oil communities that are often ignored by researchers in the analysis of on-going militant grassroots protests in the Niger Delta. These, and many other research challenges, motivate the present study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

4.1. Theoretical Framework

In *Multinationals, the State and control of the Nigerian Economy*, Biersteker (1987) identified and discussed six distinct theoretical traditions explaining the consequences of the relationship between foreign capital represented by multinational corporations, peripheral state formations, and local forces. Drawing heavily from different epistemological and pedagogic traditions, these traditions are represented by the views of conservative neoclassical realists, liberal internationalists, structuralists, the dependency genre divided between the “vulgar” and “sophisticated” *dependentistas*, and the Marxists. By way of synthesis, the *conservative neoclassical realists* are persuaded that foreign enterprises (or capital) are essential in the process of development and economic well being of the countries in the world. Accordingly, *liberal internationalists*, see indigenization as an attempt by host countries to increase power vis-à-vis foreign capital with severe implications for protectionism all over the world. Structuralists, on the other hand, challenge the fairness of the existing world order, and view direct foreign investment as a decidedly mixed blessing which has considerable potential for both good and evil. “*Vulgar*” *dependentistas*, on the one hand, view the activities of MNCs as detrimental to the Third World because they distort the process of development, while their counterpart, the “*sophisticated*” *dependentistas* (or the dependent development school), though critical of the contribution of MNCs to national development in host states, still believes that the state is bold enough to act relatively independent of the dominant social forces. The last tradition, the “*classical Marxist*” agrees with *dependentistas* that MNCs are exploitative; but are concerned about distinguishing between stagnation and successful capitalist development.

Although the present study seeks a comprehensive interpretation of the pattern, dynamics and implications of the relationships between the state, local forces and international capital in peripheral social formations such as Nigeria, it does not want to engage issues, separately, with each of these theoretical schools. To do so will not only be evidently outside the scope of this study, but will also mean repeating the

more detailed and illuminating insights, synthesis and criticisms already bequeathed by those scholars. The present work is grounded within the theoretical foundation of the dependency school, particularly the “sophisticated” *dependentistas* paradigm, also popularly called the “dependent development school”. This school is represented in the celebrated work of Peter Evans on *Dependent Development: The Alliance of Multinational, State, and Local Capital in Brazil* (1979).

Broadly, Evans was preoccupied with the nature and dynamics of the internal structure of the Brazilian elite, and how these produce collaboration and conflict between and among its different segments. At the specific level, his analysis located the basis for conflicts and collaboration within the illogic of the complex triangular networks represented by international capital, owners of local capital, and the top officials of the state operating in a ‘triple alliance’; a special instance of dependency, which is characterized by the association or alliance of international and local capital (1979: 32). The complexity of this relationship, according to Evans, facilitates the acquisition, monopolization and dispensation of violence by the elites (p. 11). One of the most important ways of averting conflict within the alliance, then, is to agree on the “division of the surplus” from accumulative processes between and among alliance members. To reduce strains over surplus sharing invariably involves increasing the absolute size of the surplus with the likelihood of only one type of redistribution- redistribution from the mass of the population to the state bourgeoisie, the multinationals, and elite local capital. The ultimate implication is, “should excluded local capital become sufficiently disenchanted... and should they be able to persuade equally disenchanted nationalists to join them, the combination of cultural legitimacy and access to the means of violence could be quite disastrous to the survival of the triple alliance” (p. 239).

The dependent development paradigm invariably, then, believes that social change and transition in developing social formations cannot be divorced from or understood outside the operational framework dictated by the global capitalist system. While less dogmatic in their critique of the role of multinational corporations in Third World formations than their ‘vulgar’ counterparts, dependent development scholars nonetheless remain patently uncomfortable over the contributions of MNCs to Third

World development. Essentially, they believe that MNCs serve as the embodiment of international capital seeking to extend and consolidate the historic mandate of securing the world for capitalism; first, by internationalizing domestic markets, and second, by facilitating the disarticulation of dependent societies (Biersteker, 1987: 34).

Like most theoretical perspectives that rely on the dialectical interpretation of history and society, Evans' "dependent development" perspective does not portend a clean break with the past. Rather, the logical undercurrent of his position is that many of the contradictions inherent in classical dependency, historically, are still very much in vogue. One of such contradictions facilitated the systematic but brutal penetration of international capitalism into the peripheries; a process that invariably triggers stagnation in the later. Unfortunately, the capacity of the elite class in many dependent societies to effectively curtail, if not stem, the intrusive impacts of international capital are similarly called to question. This is particularly so because the elite are hardly known to serve the needs of the masses. Rather, they facilitate their marginalization and exclusion from participating in the development enterprise (p. 11-13). Furthermore, as the consummation of international capital in the peripheries is perfected, so also is the power of the state up to the point that it soon becomes a major site for competitive, sometimes, intense violent struggles between the minority that have firmly captured it and the rest of the population who will have a hard time pressing their grievances beyond sporadic protests (p. 13-19).

Ake (1981) added a voice to this continuing debate when he argued that at the level of multinational firms and the economy, there is so much disarticulation, or better still, *incoherence*. Such incoherence, when pursued to its logical conclusion ensures that: "If they look after their own corporate interests, multinationals will exacerbate both the exclusionary tendencies of dependent development and the disarticulation of technology and social conditions" (p. 38), a situation that, once again, will accentuate the political, economic, social, and cultural alienation or exclusion of the masses (p. 29-30). Since the means of production are also unevenly distributed between the few who monopolize the means of production and the majority who are completely disenfranchised, the relationship between the two classes, the "haves" and the "have-

nots” becomes that of domination, subjection, exploitation and antagonism (p. 14-15). Furthermore, the inequality will, in time, replicate itself violently and endlessly in other spheres. In all of this, the triple alliance becomes an essential tool for facilitating dependent development-- a tool that makes the state repressive and ruthless, while at the same time it is also spearheading the introduction of policies that alienate the majority of the population from the benefits of economic growth. The general conclusion from all the above, as Evans persuasively argued, is that “the need for repression is great while the need for democracy is small” in a climate of dependent development which is dominant in peripheral social formations (p. 48).

For obvious reasons, there is a convergence of opinion on the centrality of the state to the theoretical discourse and praxis on dependent development. In underscoring the lack of any “ambiguities” in the centrality of the state to accumulation in the periphery, Evans noted that:

The contradictions of dependent development are reflected in the paradoxical nature of the dependent capitalist state. It is a nationalist state whose strategy of accumulation is conditioned by its relation to the international economy and depends in the first instance on the cooperation of the multinational corporation. It is a state whose repressive protection of the interests of the dominant class is blatant, yet it excludes most of the national bourgeoisie from political participation just as it excludes the mass of the population” (p. 50).

A dependent capitalist state, in the final analysis, becomes as much a veritable agent of “accumulation” as that of “social control”.⁵⁶ Even at that, there is no doubt that such a state remains central to the broad analysis of dependent development, and more specifically, to our grasp of the dynamics and patterns of relationship within the triple alliance vis-à-vis the excluded segments of the society. Incidentally, the state is also the one with the strongest limitations in most dependent peripheral societies because of its inability to muster the type of leverage that can effectively challenge and tame intrusive foreign capital. Indeed, there is very little optimism that overshadowed by the overarching powers and capability of international capital, most peripheral state formations can effectively articulate and/ or pursue relatively independent positions or provide critical support for local social forces and elements within it to develop (p.

⁵⁶ The State, first and fundamentally to quote Skocpol (1978; 33): “extracts resources from society and deploys these to create and support coercive and administrative organizations”.

36). This lack of capacity to leverage international capital has been criticized in existing writings on the role of the state in postcolonial Africa.⁵⁷ It would seem, then, that at least two stiff options face peripheral capitalist states in relating with foreign capital: they can adopt a patently nationalistic posture in order to serve as a promoter of accumulation at the local level or embrace multinationals against local host communities (p. 215). While Evans' analysis isolates the posture and behaviour of the Brazilian state as epitomising the former, the Nigerian state, have opted for the latter—either ways, with far-reaching implications for national developmental initiatives in both countries. The Brazilian state maintained a strong interventionist position by instituting effective and enforceable codes for the control of multinational companies operating in that country. By so doing, it is able to muster tremendous leverages vis-à-vis foreign capital. On average, Nigeria on the other hand, has shown a weak institutional capacity to tame the behaviour of international capital particularly those operating in the critical oil sector that account for the bulk of the country's gross domestic and national products and foreign exchange earnings. Even though the alliance between state officials, local compradors and international capital is strong in both countries, the gains are better channelled towards national development efforts in Brazil than in Nigeria. By this spread and the accelerated national development process, a truly indigenous class of technocrats and entrepreneurs seem to have emerged in Brazil as equal partners and/or substitutes for their foreign counterparts. Even when these Brazilians collaborate with their foreign counterparts, they do so from a position of strength rather than weakness or helplessness as it is the case in Nigeria.

The salient differences between the Brazilian and Nigerian states, especially with regards to relations with international capital would appear to suggest that Evans' theoretical adventures may, in fact, be a mismatch when applied to the behaviour of multinational oil companies in Nigeria. These variations, or even shortcomings, however, do not overshadow the enormous advantages derivable from using arresting insights from the sophisticated *dependentistas* or the dependent development school as the theoretical template for analyzing the roles played by oil capital and ethnicity in understanding the causes of violent conflicts in the oil-rich Niger Delta of Nigeria.

⁵⁷ For one of the most authoritative criticisms of the post-colonial State in Africa, See Ake (1985: 1-8)

One important advantage of this theoretical perspective is that it integrates the dynamic linkages between global and local forces, how they emerge, transform, and consolidate global capitalist networks, and at the same time, create ripples of anomie and violent conflicts in peripheral societies. By its underlying assumptions, this school suggests that development has both historical and contextual specificities that vary from one society to another, and within time and space. Thus, the need to avoid the likely pitfalls of analysing the behaviours and actions of foreign capital, local capital and the state, as well as the implications of these dialectical relationships in a mechanistic manner. With its support for the dialectics of history, the dependent development perspective ensures that much more attention is paid to the economic structures of society, and how they in turn, transform existing social structures and create new ones. To quote Ake, again:

Once we understand what material assets and constraints of a society are, how the society produces goods to meet its material needs, how the goods are distributed, and what types of social relations arise from the organization of production, we have come a long way to understanding the culture of that society, its laws, its religious system, its political system and even its modes of thought. (Ake, 1981: 1-2).

4.2. Clarification of Concepts

The framework for the study will be incomplete without briefly operationalizing some of the key terms and usages germane to the present work; all of which have been subjects of misuse, abuse and controversy within academia and in government. The key words; “Oil Capital”, “Ethnic Nationalism”, “Civil Conflicts” and “Niger Delta”, have all been subjects of intense controversy and debate in the academia. In this study, “oil capital” is used to describe an important adjunct of foreign capital that began to establish footholds in present day Niger Delta in particular, and much of Nigeria, beginning from the early 19th Century. Historically, “Oil capital” entered colonial Nigeria in the late 1930s when an unlimited right to prospect for mineral oil was granted by colonial Britain to Shell D’Archy. In its contemporary form, “oil capital” is reproduced in the activities of multinational oil companies operating in the downstream and upstream sectors of the Nigerian oil industry. The major players in this industry are Shell Petroleum Development Company (UK/ the Netherlands), ChevronTexaco (USA), MobilExxon (USA), Total (France), Elf (France) and Agip

(Italy). These foreign oil companies dominate and control almost, if not the entire crude oil exploration and production activities in Nigeria in different joint venture arrangements with the government-owned Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC). When “oil capital” is used in this study, therefore, an exception is made of indigenous oil companies whose share of the industry is less than five per cent, and whose activities are both dependent on and complementary to those of foreign oil companies.

The controversial debate around “ethnicity” and “ethnic nationalism” shall be engaged critically in the course of this work. Suffice now to point out that “ethnicity” is a socially, culturally, historically, and invariably, psychologically constructed and nurtured mindset developed through long periods of conscious socialization that eventually ossifies the perceptions and reactions of a distinct, homogeneous group towards others. Ethnicity has become a subtle but nevertheless potent and destabilizing force for defining the contours of social interactions, engagements, and expressions between and among different groups in heterogeneous societies. In many multi-ethnic societies, “ethnic nationalism” describes the politically visible and militant expression of ethnicity by socially homogeneous entities seeking to reclaim social boundaries considered threatened, eroded or lost, or to challenge perceived attempts by other groups to invade and colonize this space. Put differently, “ethnic nationalism” is the instrumentalist expression of ethnicity in its politicised, perhaps violent forms, by contending social groups aided by local, national and international forces. Several factors make previously latent expressions of ethnicity to assume militant, politicized dimensions. Nnoli (1989: 24) argued that under conditions that lead to the politicization of ethnicity and the use of governmental powers for inter-ethnic socio-economic competition, ethnic hostility is inevitable. Egwu (1993: 45) added that the “struggle for survival acquires the character of inter-ethnic competition as groups tend to perceive their material advancement or otherwise in terms of the activities of other groups”. Sklar (1996: 152) traced ethnic nationalism to “the prevailing conditions of poverty, insecurity, and the lack of opportunity for satisfying employment”, while Lake and Rothchild (1996: 430) believe the phenomenon is caused by the perception of “collective fears of the future”.

Today, internal struggles based on rival claims by competing ethnic groups have been identified as the most potent source of new disorders in the peripheries and a threat to global stability (Gurr, 1994; Moynihan 1994; Horowitz, 1985). Such internal struggles between and among ethnic and sub-ethnic groups have become very intense and rampant in the Niger Delta oil region of Nigeria, where no less than 25 distinct groups have had to co-habit under uncertain and sometimes, volatile terms and conditions accentuated as much by the dictates of geography as by the political economy of crude oil. There is hardly anytime in the recent and past histories of the Niger Delta when ethnic competitions have not degenerated to outright violent conflicts: Ogoni-Andoni and Kalabari-Okrika in Rivers State, Ijaw-Urhobo-Itsekiri in Delta State, and Efik-Ibibio in Akwa Ibom State, to mention a notable few. It is, therefore, important to probe critically the role ethnicity and ethnic nationalism projects play in the discourse of conflict and violence in the oil-rich delta region. What factors, for instance, exacerbate ethnicity and ethnic nationalism among groups in the oil region of Nigeria? What are the dimensions and patterns of occurrence of such ethnic rivalries and conflicts? What existing strategies have been used to de-escalate violent ethnic conflicts among oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta, and how successful are these strategies in promoting long-term peaceful co-existence among them?

Of all the terms or phrases used in this study, the “Niger Delta” is perhaps the most contentious, and for political and fiscal reasons that will become obvious in the course of this work. In particular, the exact composition of the “Niger Delta” has been a source of prolonged and unsettled controversy. In one of his pioneering works on the Niger Delta, the distinguished historian, Alagoa (1972: 46-46, 197-210) divided the Niger Delta into six zones based on physical geography: Western Delta Fringe, Western Delta, Central Delta, Eastern Delta, Eastern Delta Fringe, Northern Delta Fringe. Earlier, Jones (1963: 10) argued that European classifications of the Niger Delta were too arbitrary as they bore little relevance to geography and cultural realities; hence, his preference for Ijaw-speaking communities as the core of the Niger Delta from where populations moved westwards to the Warri and Itsekiri kingdoms, and eastwards towards the Ibibio country to form the Andoni and Ibeno tribes of the Calabar Province. This controversy has, in recent times, been accentuated by the

decision of the civilian administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, as contained in the *Niger Delta Development Act (2000)*, making the Niger Delta coterminous with the six oil-producing states in Nigeria: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Imo and Rivers States. In this study, the 'Niger Delta' is defined and classified into three divisions along the lines already mapped out by Alagoa⁵⁸ and Jones: the Western Delta, corresponding to present day Delta State; the Central Delta, corresponding to Rivers and Bayelsa States; and finally, the Eastern Delta, incorporating Akwa Ibom and the Cross Rivers states.⁵⁹

4.3. Research Hypotheses

The major hypothesis of this study is that oil capital has exacerbated ethnic nationalism and civil conflicts in the Niger Delta, as well as complicated the crisis of governance in Nigeria at large. Arising from this, the test Hypotheses include the following:

- [1]. That there exists a relationship between the historical antecedents and character of development within the Niger Delta and recent outbreaks of civil conflict in that region.
- [2]. That the activities foreign capital, represented in modern times by multinational oil companies, accentuates the crisis of development and civil conflicts in the Niger Delta.
- [3]. That the intensification of ethnic nationalism, compounded by the oil factor, exacerbates civil conflict in the Niger Delta.
- [4]. That the relationship between the state and multinational oil companies' on the one hand, and oil-producing communities on the other hand, is a major

⁵⁸ In more recent edited works, Alagoa adopted this limited but empirically useful classification of the Niger Delta into three: Eastern Niger Delta, that is Rivers States, Central Niger Delta, that is Bayelsa State, and lastly, Western Niger Delta, coterminous with Delta State. This classification is mainly for convenience, especially at this time when popular usages have become corrupted and politicized. See Alagoa, 1999, 2000)

⁵⁹ I have deliberately excluded Rivers State because much of the existing works on civil conflicts in the Niger Delta has focused on communities within it. Cross River, on the other hand is not included even though it is within the delta region solely because it is not an oil-producing state. Of course, these exclusions does not mean that important corroborative examples will not be drawn from the two states or indeed from across the entire Niger Delta.

factor in the exacerbation of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, and a serious constraint to the search for effective and durable solutions.

CHAPTER FIVE

FOREIGN CAPITAL AND THE CHANGING POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE NIGER DELTA

5.1. Pre-Colonial State Formation and the Penetration of Foreign Capital into the Niger Delta

The thrust of this chapter is to evaluate the hypothesis that the relationship between the historical antecedents and character of development within the Niger Delta and the recent outbreaks of violent civil conflict in that region. The coastal territories adjacent to the Atlantic seaboard of what became the Niger Delta was certainly not a no-man's land prior to contact with a succession of European explorers, missionaries, traders and colonial officials from around the mid-15th Century onward. It was widely believed by Europeans that the early history of the Niger Delta is almost entirely the history of colonial penetration and expansion; and to that extent, that very little of significant historical importance/ value can be associated with or ascribed to that region. Much of the reasons for this narrow mindset about the Niger Delta cannot be divorced from the fact that majority of the early European visitors preferred to characterize the inhabitants as savage, illiterate, cannibals, and without exposure to any iota of civilization.

Over all, much of their discourse on the delta bore little relation to the geography and cultural realities of the coastal people. Some European geographers divided the Niger Delta coastline into the Bights of Benin and Biafra, a division that was evidently arbitrary. As shall become clearer shortly, rebuttals by first-generation indigenous historians have significantly helped to transcend the ahistorical disposition among Europeans, revealing in the process that many of the communities have had longer and richer historical antecedents dating back to several thousand years when the present-day Niger Delta gradually became populated due to several waves of migrations from different locations in the hinterlands. The latter accounts also vividly demonstrated that prior to the arrival of Europeans, a vibrant architecture and network of socio-cultural and economic relationships had developed and matured in the region, conditioned by the exegesis of its difficult geography which ensured that the greater part of the delta was "a barren waste of mangrove forest and most of the inhabitants

live scattered over it in small widely dispersed communities of fishermen” (Jones, 1963: 9-10). The truth, however, is that great city-states flourished in the delta region before the advent of Europeans, especially in places such as Ebrohemie, Warri and Sapele in the western delta, Brass, Twan, Akassa, Ogbolomabiri and Bassambiri in the Ijaw country of the central delta, as well as Kalabari kingdoms of Buguma, Abonema and Bakana.

Historians have generally acknowledged the challenges and problems associated with reconstructing history through a mass of disjointed data, oral and written, of pre-literate societies such as those that occupied Nigeria’s delta region before the advent of Europeans (Jones, 1963: p. 1-3). Interestingly, the historical origins of several groups and communities in the delta have been well documented, based on the reinterpretation of oral history that it will just be enough to focus attention only to some significant aspects that are of critical importance to this study. Perhaps the most convenient departure point is to draw attention to the unsettled debate over the peopling of the delta region of Nigeria. On the one hand are those who have argued in favour of the existence of autochthonous social domains, even if such settlements and their populations were few and far apart. Indeed, archaeological investigations in various parts of the delta revealed the existence of life and socio-cultural forms spanning several centuries before the coming of Europeans. On the other hand are those persuaded by the thesis that since the Niger Delta is a melting pot of different ethno-linguistic groupings, different group may have relocated into and settled in the region for various reasons. Far from suggesting that the various waves of migration occurred automatically or in any mechanistic fashion, the overwhelming evidence of history weighs in favour of the waves-of-migration thesis.

Several factors helped to stimulate the various patterns of migration, dispersal, settlement and bilateral relations in the pre-colonial city-states of the Niger Delta. The economic factor was necessitated by the need to gain access to and control over socio-economic resources and opportunities, especially markets, trade routes and fishing grounds. The economic attractions of the coastal area, with time, expanded to include the fact that it became one of the most strategic slave markets on the African continent. The factor of geography- particularly the existence of networks of creeks

and waterways facilitated, even though with difficulty, human locomotion that helped to encourage the integration of the various Niger Delta groups into a complex political economy. The security aspect revolved around the frequency and intensity of political intrigues followed by constant threats and eruption of civil strife, territorial expansion and irredentism. Specifically, this included the need to escape the tyranny and abusive authority of the powerful Benin Empire and monarchy, or to maintain a distance from the hostilities of the Ibo people (Alagoa, 1972: 72, 118, 128-133). In between these strands, of course, are those who believe that the two processes, in fact, complement one another. In other words, people may have lived in the delta since time immemorial, even though over the centuries, the population has swollen considerably due to new waves of migrations.

Evidently, majority of those who now live and lay claim to the delta region of Nigeria were originally migrants from hinterland territories such as Benin, Asaba, Aboh, and Igboland. Dike (1956) made this important point more persuasively when he argued that migration into the Niger Delta was due largely to overpopulation and land hunger in the hinterland; a situation that invariably nurtured a high density of ethnic heterogeneity among the population of the Niger Delta. He even went further to argue that “in the peopling of the Niger Delta, no one Nigerian tribe had monopoly, Binis, ijaws, Sobos, Jekris, Ekoi, Ibibio, Efik and even the Northern Nigerian tribes were represented” (p. 30-31). Jones (1963) pursued the intricate question of migration from another perspective when he identified the heart of the delta as the central area (comprising mostly of Ijo-speaking communities) from where the population moved westwards towards the Yoruba country to form the Warri and Itsekiri kingdoms. Others moved eastwards towards the Ibibio country to form the Andoni and Ibeno tribes of the Calabar Province. These movements, in his opinion, explained why inhabitants of the Delta are “culturally and linguistically heterogeneous. (p. 10). Over all, however, the implication of these migrations into the coastal delta, as Dike established, was that polities were produced that may not be regarded as tribal. According to him, then,

city-state is more appropriate designation than tribal state, since the period of migration disorganized the tribal entities and the slave trade further accentuated the mingling of peoples. In the 19th Century, therefore, the delta states were grouped not by considerations of kinship but by contiguity and in

the period under survey, citizenship came increasingly to depend not on descent, but on residence (p. 31).

Invariably, such a citizenship pattern based on residence continues to bequeath a unique pattern and dynamic of inter- and intra-group relations among the various inhabitants of the delta in ways that are of great significant importance, even today.

Without doubt, the movements and settlements of each wave of new arrivals played a facilitative role in economic and cultural transactions among different groups that sought to maintain *de jure* presence in the delta. That the pattern of peopling and cohabitation among coastal groups, and between coastal groups and those in city-states further hinterland, allowed trade and commercial relationships to flourish prior to colonial rule, became evident in several respects. Noah (1980) has hinted at the presence of active interactions and trade relations between the coastal people and their hinterland neighbors preceding the arrival of the Portuguese (and other Europeans) among the Efik inhabitants of Old Calabar, circa 1472. As he reported, there were concrete evidences that different groups engaged in commercial interactions while also maintaining long distance trade relations with Bonny and Ibo countries. The dominant articles of trade between coastal people and their hinterland neighbors in pre-colonial times were dominated by transactions in seafood and salt in exchange for agricultural produces such as yam, plantain, cassava, and palm produce. These exchanges grew in scope and magnitude during colonial times as the logic of slave and oil palm trading necessitated further expansion.

In socio-cultural terms, one visible and enduring outcome of the patterns of movement into and settlement within the Niger Delta is the development of a complex heterogeneity of sub-ethnic groupings and ethnic relations between and among different groups. Using oral tradition “distilled from the knowledge transmitted informally through generations of heads of communities, lineages, town elders, priests, drummers and ordinary men and women of intelligence” to reconstruct the history of the Niger Delta, Alagoa (1972: 16) argued that “the complexity of the language map of the Niger Delta confirms the complexity of contacts and movements within the area”. In his study of the diverse impacts of language on ethnic identity and

social change in the eastern Niger Delta⁶⁰, Wolff (1967: 60) noted the prominence of coastal languages, especially Nembe and Kalabari place names, in the hinterland, and how this suggests the cultural and/ or political dominance of the two coastal powers. This trend, according to him, created a “linguistic concomitant” as seen in: first, the high incidence of bilingualism in the hinterland than the coastal areas; second, the high incidence of coastal personal/ places names in the hinterland; and finally, the frequent use of coastal languages in everyday affairs in hinterland communities. (p. 60). Wolff (1976) concluded that a number of hinterlands group in the eastern Niger Delta were, during the 19th Century, economically interdependent with, and politically subordinate to, coastal peoples in the Oil Rivers. But when such inter-cultural networks are construed, they could be poorly managed and with time, allowed to degenerate into fierce rivalries, competition and outright conflicts between and among groups.

Most certainly, the series of migrations and settlement into the Niger Delta ended up having far-reaching structural implications (and outcomes). A major one was that long processes of transformation of previously small and unimportant fishing and salt-making settlements and villages into prominent city-state with robust trade and commercial relationships. This explains why the transformation of fishing settlements and villages into lucrative business settlements were mostly attended by keen, intense, and oft-times, belligerent competition between and among the various entities mainly for scarce farming land, fishing grounds, and new markets. It is on record that intra- and inter-group competitions and wars were frequent markers of the relationship between and among city-states in the Niger Delta. As Noah (1980: 5) reported in his study of Efik settlements, a frequent outcome of the waves of migration was that the process of settlement brought new immigrants into hostility with early settlers. To survive, therefore, smaller towns sought “protection” under bigger city-states, while the latter, must, as a matter of strategic priority, develop superior military capabilities to deter other belligerent city-states. Since no evidence suggests that new migrants forced those already living in a particular area to relocate, most settlement ended up

⁶⁰ This area, during the 19th Century was known as the Oil Rivers, and during colonial rule, as the Rivers Province. The Name ‘Niger Delta’ was used by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to define its diocesan jurisdiction in that area.

producing political entities where component parts must either tolerate one another or be forced to engage one another in violent clashes to assert their presence or impose their will. Invariably, the brightest prospect that a new migrant group can acquire and lay effective claim to an inhabited area by subduing the weaker tenancy capacity of an already existing group using force. This imperative is important, for unlike in the hinterland where land (for habitation and agriculture) was not a major problem, the Niger Delta coastal area is a harsh environment comprising of inaccessible mangrove forests and a dense network of waterways that together form an inhospitable habitat. Thus, violent contestation over the sparse strips of habitable land were not uncommon between and within the emergent city-states that have, in present day Nigeria, ossified distinctly into ethnic groups.

The overall implication of the settlement patterns that eventually developed was that they produced polities that must either tolerate one another, or in exceptional cases, engage one another in violent rivalries and clashes over sundry issues. The first was that the need to acquire and lay effective claim to inhabited areas held under weak tenancy capacity often resulted into frictions. This is because unlike in the hinterlands, the Niger Delta coastal area is a harsh environment comprising of inaccessible mangrove forests and a dense network of waterways that together form a most inhospitable habitat. Besides, the delta region comprised different ecological and vegetation zones, which coupled with its small size and waterlog, impose severe socio-economic pressures on access to and control of land, particularly when such lands bestow geo-strategic and military advantages to different groups. Indeed, much of the social tension and conflicts that sprang up among different groups in the delta before the advent of the Europeans related to questions of access to and control of communal land, fishing ponds and waterways. Incidents of violently contested territorial claims over the few habitable strips of land were common between and within the emergent city-states that have, in present day Nigeria, ossified into ethnic groups. It is fascinating how little this pattern of rivalry, competition and conflict has changed in contemporary times. Indeed, much of the pressures created by non-accessibility to land for subsistence and non-subsistence purposes have persisted and even assumed an alarming proportion in present-day delta. The issue of land scarcity

will be revisited much latter since it is central in understanding the logic of violent competitions and conflicts in contemporary Niger Delta.

Given the fact that internal chaos marked the transformation of small fishing settlements into villages, towns and city-states, one cannot but also anticipate that the processes of state building and consolidation would occur alongside occasional irritations between close neighbors as they seek advantages over one another. It is this situation that prompted chronicles of the history of the coastal delta peoples to insist that rivalries and conflicts between and among emergent city-states were frequently the rule, rather than the exception, defining bilateral and multilateral relationship in that region. In his study of the oral traditions of small groups in 'Oproza and Early Trade on the Escravos, for instance, Alagoa (1969: 151-157) argued that the fact that not less than 30 sub-Ijo groups are crowded within the region between River Benin and Forcados had far-reaching implications for peace and stability as these communities jostle for strategic economic, political and territorial advantages with one another, and by so frequently getting on each other's nerves. Indeed, according to Alagoa, the existence of a dense network of micro-ethnic boundaries served to raise the prospects of cantankerous political disorders that invariably provided the recipes for social conflict and insecurity in the area. Such frequent deteriorations into bilateral conflicts have tended to portray prehistory delta people as "warlike cannibals rarely at peace". In debunking this connotation however, Jones argued that the peoples were never permanently at war, but that such tensions and conflicts corroborate native traditions that their political system was segmentary, decentralized and largely dependent upon the perpetual readiness of groups to defend themselves at all times.

Again, using oral traditions to reconstruct the history of Obolo (Andoni) community occupying a strip of land from the Andoni River to the Qua Iboe River, Ejitiwu (1991) insisted that the fact that Obolo is surrounded by bigger and more powerful city-states- by Bonny and Kalabari to the West, Okrika and Ogoni to the South, Ibibio to the Northeast, and Ibeno to the East- frequently led to tension and strained bilateral and multilateral relationships with neighbors. To drive the point further home, Ejitiwu drew attention to Obolo's rivalries and struggles for supremacy with Bonny. According to him, both communities were constantly engaged in a "live and let live"

policy which ensured that as old irritants survived, new ones constantly developed (p. 112). At least four major factors accounted for this love-hate bilateral relationship. In the first place, according to Ejitiwu, each side still felt constrained in its trading operations by the presence and activities of the other. Second, each side received encouragement, in its dreams for war, from interested would-be allies. While Obolo received support from the Kalabari, Bonny received from Southern Ogonis (who were frustrated by the denial of Bonny access to its market) and from Okrika (traditional allies of the Bonny). With time, the challenges and opportunity presented by the British ban on slave trade erupted into perennial crises and violent conflicts, while Obolo-Bonny relations suffered several casualties as a result of new forms of European interference along the coast. According to Ejitiwu, these factors accounted for many conflicts, especially those that erupted between 1826-1846.

It is important at this juncture to note that whereas oral traditions dominated the prehistory phase of existing body of knowledge on the delta, the "early history" of the peoples from around the 18th century relied heavily on a combination of written and oral materials (Jones, 1963: 32-33). Principally, much of the latter writings focused on the dynamics of expansion and consolidation that characterized the different city-state with clearly defined political systems. Others examined the social and economic experiences and histories of the component entities, aspects of their bilateral and multilateral economic and political relationships, and relationships between the city-states and European traders, especially during the long years of transatlantic slave trade. Expectedly, the materials on this critical period are extensive and show essentially, that the political systems of the delta city-states were starting to assume distinctive forms, both internally and outwardly. Although city-states flourished in the intervals before the coming of Europeans, significant transformations occurred in the internal and external affairs of the different coastal formations thereafter. These transformations, in turn, defined the structural templates on which the architecture of formal British colonial rule was built, beginning from the first quarter of the Twentieth Century.

There is a rich mass of data on the various aspects of the political, economic and social transformations that took place in the delta during the late Eighteenth and

Nineteenth Centuries preceding the establishment of formal colonial rule. Reference has been made earlier to the peculiarities of the waves of migration into and within the delta region locked different communities, small and big, weak or strong, into physically shrinking and harsh ecological spaces. It will be quite analytically rewarding however, to focus on four of the transformative changes that can appropriately be considered significant and crucial, especially in terms of putting in perspective the origin and escalation of violent conflicts in contemporary Niger Delta. One major transformation that also invariably triggered rivalry and conflict relates to the complex challenge of empire building. Indeed, the desire to build big and powerful empires necessitated the corresponding establishment and maintenance of elaborate institutional structures and regimes for political control, governance and the maintenance of law and order. It would of course be illusory to contemplate that the establishment and sustenance of such elaborate paraphernalia of "statehood" could be designed without behind-the-scenes and open intra-dynastic contestations for power and authority that might, quite frequently, have degenerated into violent conflicts and protracted civil wars. Also, such monumental transformations could never be localized within a defined geographical boundary controlled by a recognized political entity. In this respect, especially, each and every one of the different coastal city-states must define their powers and capabilities in relative terms vis-à-vis those of their neighbors. In this regard, therefore, many of the big and powerful coastal city-states owed much of their expansion and strength to the fact that they must pursue political, territorial and commercial ambitions beyond their de jure boundaries; a situation that often pitched ambitious kings and communities in bitter rivalry and conflict with one another.

The other factor crucial to a clearer understanding of the transformative changes that occurred among the coastal city-states of the Niger Delta can be contextualized within the framework of relationships with the outside world, especially Europeans. Often nurtured and imposed forcefully, transatlantic relationships were fostered through a succession of contacts with European missionaries, slave traders and commercial interests, and colonial officials. In the light of this reality, the distinctive character and form that Niger Delta societies seemed to have assumed in contemporary times developed within the framework of transatlantic commercial contacts and relations.

Certainly, if one enduring impact of transatlantic trade and commerce prior to the inauguration of formal British colonialism is to be acknowledged, it would be that such contacts effectively tied the political economy of the coastal delta to the apron strings of European capitalism, in an unequal and evidently unwholesome relationship that limited the entire region (and even hinterland territories) to extractive enclaves for "raw material"; first of slaves, to work in the plantations of the "new world", and later, palm produce, to sustain the emergent soap making factories in the United Kingdom. The process of integration of the coastal delta of Nigeria into the European capitalist orbit, cannot however, be exonerated from major developments in continental Europe. This is because it was the shift from mercantilism to industrialization in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution in Europe (beginning from Britain) that led to a shift from slavery to oil palm, and the increasing prominence of the Liverpool industries. It should be borne in mind that with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, sea-going ships (equipped with the compass and other navigational instruments) were built thereby making it cheaper for European explorer to venture far away into new and relatively unexplored territories.

It is important to note, however, that the coastal communities of the Niger Delta region produced neither slaves nor oil palm as the catchment belt for these commodities laid further into the hinterlands in the Igbo countries. At the much early phase of the slave trade, for instance, slavers from the coastal delta relied on slave raiders from the hinterlands, especially from the Arochukwu area, for supplies that were eventually sold to the Europeans located along the coasts. As demand for slaves rose astronomically, coastal middlemen established thriving secondary slave markets and trading city-states such as Bonny, Okrika, Nembe, Old Calabar, to mention a notable few located strategically along the creeks of the delta. The arrival of slave entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta stimulated the growth of a number of trading states, which in reality were bloated versions of small Ijaw fishing villages. Far from suggesting the absence of trade relations between and among riverine communities prior to the arrival of the Europeans, Crowther showed how the advent of Western capital in the slave mode altered the pattern of living of coastal city-states, especially those of the Ijaws, their interactions with the hinterland and internal political relations. Although several aspects of these transactions were carried out peacefully, there were

evidences when conflicts erupt occasionally, traditional institutions and authorities are resourceful enough to secure and maintain peace and stability. Such conflicts are, therefore, rarely prolonged or costly in terms of losses of human and material capital.

Even then, slave raiding was a very risky business as it was often carried out in the context of repression, intimidation, killings, and burning down of villages. Clough (1972: 16/41) indicated that no valuable article of trade was offered by the slave merchants that traded in the Oil Rivers in return for the thousands of slaves they acquired from coastal middlemen. In return for slaves, the coastal middlemen received maxim guns, gunpowder, lead shots, rum and mirror: commodities with little or no productive value but which, nonetheless, provided enormous politico-military advantages. The coastal middlemen, in turn, provided their suppliers further inland with weapons and ammunitions acquired from European merchants to enable them raid more villages and capture more slaves. Thus, apart from serving as middlemen between slave merchants and oil producers up-country and European commercial groups, the coastal people enjoyed prosperity, wealth and fame because they also ensured and enforced a monopoly on both communities for almost half a century until they were eventually subdued by British gunboats.

Whereas transatlantic trade relations secured for the coastal delta peoples relative economic prosperity and political leverage vis-à-vis their hinterland neighbours, such contacts also had negative undercurrents and implications for the coastal region. For instance, the expansion and intensification of transatlantic influence required that existing socio-cultural and religious institutions were either abolished or made to play a secondary role to those of the Europeans intruders. At the same time, also, the patterns and contents of economic and political relationships were significantly moderated, in many cases, or outrightly altered in such a way as to make European commercial houses the ultimate arbiters on important commercial, political and security matters. In *The Fall of Nigeria: British Conquest of Nigeria*, Ikime (1977) devoted a lot of attention to the *modus operandi* of trade, particularly at the level of the relationships between European merchants and coastal middlemen and producer-traders in the hinterlands. According to him, the trust system which was in vogue at that time had a built-in tendency to evoke conflict for the following reasons. First, it

often led to a “breach of faith, which could, and did, lead to disturbances and armed conflicts”. Second, attempts by Europeans to keep newcomers out of the palm oil trade increased tension. Third, was the impact of disagreements over how much oil was outstanding to the European traders, as such disagreements often resulted in punitive measures, popularly called “chopping”, that is, seizure of commodities owned by coastal middlemen as punishment for non-fulfilment of trade agreements. Last, were the controversies over appropriate pricing for palm produce. Thus, with time, what was meant to be a mild sanction to enforce compliance soon degenerated into abuses and uncontrolled assault on oil producers. All these developments prompted the conclusion by Ikime that while the commodity of trade changed from slaves to palm oil, “neither men, methods, nor morality had changed very much” (1977: 16).

The situation was complicated further by the introduction of European firearms and ammunitions into the delta, alongside other dubious articles of trade especially alcohol and spirits. The menacing importation and availability of firearms had been reported as far back as the time of John Barbot, circa 1680, who noted that firearms were great in demand and Negroes became “very expert in their use”, just as “an abundance of firearms, powder and balls are sold and are a very profitable commodity”. While arguing that periods of warfare or of great political changes were accomplished by, or as a result of warfare, Jones (1963: 45-46) added that those wars were sporadic rather than continuous, mostly correlating with the period of uncontrolled importation of firearms and gunpowder. Prior to this time, he maintained, local wars were limited in scope and were prosecuted using weapons such as cutlasses, swords, bows and arrows. Thus, uncontrolled importation of arms and ammunitions greatly intensified local warfare between and among coastal communities, giving those communities that could afford the huge costs of weapons strategic military advantages and leverages over those who lacked the fiscal resources, and therefore better access to, and control of overseas trade.⁶¹

⁶¹ Jones reported that the widespread use of imported firearms began in the Gold Coast in the 17th Century, around 1670, and in the Delta and Cross River only about a Century after (1963: 46)

Despite robust trade relationships with one another, significant aspects of the historical experiences and encounters of the coastal peoples point at violent competitions, rivalries and conflicts with a complexity of implications for society and politics in that coastal region. Fully aware that conflict was an integral adjunct of trade and commercial transactions, the coastal people of the delta permanently vigilant that peaceful relationships could easily degenerate in unpleasant call to arms. It is for this reason that many of the commercial houses, or canoe houses, were also heavily armed sometimes with as much as 40 paddlers and 100 fighting men). This is understandable as the constant possibilities of war required both the acquisition of first-strike capabilities to launch attacks as well as the need to maintain a credible defense against other trading rivals, or in extreme circumstances, to prevent external attacks against the territorial integrity of the Itsekiri country. This last point was corroborated by Burton (1863) through his reference to the Ijaw as a large and influential tribe who were almost always at war with Jakri (Itsekiri) men.

Jones (1963) also examined the history of Bonny, including aspects of the traditions that specifically mentioned wars against the Andoni and the Kalabari. He also reported internal conflicts, what he called "artillery duels" (p. 112) between the Manilla and Annie Pepple Houses between 1859 and 1869. In fact, the role of King William Dappa in the Bonny conflict, which finally led to his deportation by the British, was to be a major source of concern to all Bonny chiefs. After his deposition and death in August 1855, Bonny was again inflamed as the people turned against the House of Dappa and massacred an estimated 600-700 members leaving three of his children who fled to Finnema (p. 125). Inter-house skirmishes too, easily led to full-scale civil wars, and provided Jaja the alibi to successfully secede and form the new state of Opobo (p. 128-132). He reported that with the transition from slave to oil palm trade, those excluded naturally revolted against their socio-economic exclusion by engaging in lawlessness on the rivers against British boats plying Bonny and New Calabar. Leading most of these acts of lawlessness was Awanta, a great slave trader and the priest of Simingi at Finnema until he was finally arrested and deported in 1847 (p. 114).

On the history of Kalabari, Jones noted again that traditions also indicate a period of intense civil strife, which resulted in the fission, and dispersal of a substantial Kalabari population (p. 134). The first and easily the most important dynasty to rule Bonny was that of King Amakiri, whose reign Jones divided into three periods. First, was the period when the Kalabari State was engaged in protracted violent struggles either within or with neighbours for existence. Second, was the period of consolidation when Amakiri was strengthening his position and the Kalabari social structure during its formative era. The final period was when Amakiri reached his zenith, but as a result of old age, was becoming weak and incapable of ruling decisively. During this period, the political system also began to witness divisions as Amakiri's sons and chiefs became increasingly arbitrary and ambitious. This period witnessed several intra-elite crises, especially those between the Amakiri and the Barboy Houses (p. 137-138). Thus, by 1850 onwards, the Kalabari State was beset by troubles that were essentially political and internal, such as the rivalries mentioned above, and externally, in warfare with neighbors such as Nembe and Okrika. Again, Jones reiterated that the period of warfare in the Kalabari kingdom was galvanized by economic nationalism, including the end of the overseas slave trade, expansion of palm oil trade, the search for, and the maintenance of new markets, and the safety of waterways to and from the oil markets of the hinterland. With time, Jones reported, that the entire oil producing country from Brass to the Opobo River was engulfed in long, complicated and universal wars that culminated in the "Perpetual Treaties of Peace" between Kalabari and her three enemies: with Bonny on October 27, 1871, and the next day, with Okrika defining fishing grounds and boundaries, rights of passage on waterways and delimited market boundaries (Jones, 1963: 145-150)

Nair (1972) argued that the most significant and enduring feature of the political history of Calabar for most of the 19th Century was the continuous intra-city and inter-republic rivalries occasioned by its segmentary lineage society. This was particularly so, for as long as political power determined the degree of access to and monopoly of external trade, the different lineage groups had little choice other than to engage one another continuously in rivalries and violence to secure advantages (p. 20-21). Transfer of power and political succession particularly complicated the prospects for peace and stability in Calabar, as was the case in much of pre-colonial delta.

According to him, most societies showed traits of instability not only when an immediate power vacuum is created (for instance, by the need to replace a dead king or when a weak king loses the ability to maintain effective governance) but also in the first few years of new kingship when the process of consolidating power and authority are yet to be consummated. For example, the death of Duke Ephraim in August 1858 triggered a crisis of succession among three lineages: Duke, Eyamba and Archibong (the last providing the king- John Archibong)

Anene underscored the nature and dimensions of the above patterns of inter-house rivalries among the coastal societies in the Delta, and how they challenged the socio-political and economic security of the city-states. As he rightly noted: "Inter-House rivalry was the perpetual menace to solidarity" for "when there was a weak king, civil war invariably threatened". This fate befell Bonny Kingdom on or about 1869-1870 when it was engulfed in prolonged and destabilizing political crisis between the powerful houses of Manilla Pepple and Annie Pepple under the leadership of two ex-slaves, Jombo and Jaja. A similar misfortune deepened the civil war in the Efik State of Calabar, leading again to the relocation of Will Braid, the head of the Barboy House, to a new site that effectively captured and secured the markets of the hinterland. In the aftermath of the relocation, just like that between Jaja and Bonny, a kind of guerrilla warfare ensued between the factions on the creeks leading to the interior markets (p. 46).

Alagoa (1972) reported similar incidents involving political agitations and inter-tribal violence in his study of bilateral relations between Bonny and its neighbors, especially the Kalabari. According to him, the proximity of Bonny to the coast gave the town advantages in the procurement of European armaments that were, in turn, used to harass, intimidate, coerce, and systematically pacify neighbouring Kalabaris (p. 141-142). As Bonny and Elem Kalabari engaged one another in trade rivalries and wars circa 18th Century, Okrika relations with the latter were also characterized by intense and prolonged hostilities. This pattern of hostility invariably led to the collapse and rise of city-states. For instance, after being engulfed in internal civil wars for much of the 18th Century, Elem Kalabari regained its military stature that enabled it to reclaim towns and villages previously lost to, or under Bonny. However, it is not

all the time that such political intrigues led to civil wars, but when they did, they took a heavy human and material toll. Several of these wars continued into the 19th Century, but became even more frequent and intense during the early 20th Century in the context of the scramble for oil palm markets and conflicting claims over land and water routes (p. 156).

A remarkably similar scenario emerged from Alagoa's account of the traditions of relations between Nembe and other eastern Delta city-states, mainly relating to rivalries and warfare. In these, as he argued, the proximity of Nembe to the coast afforded it the easy procurement of European armaments that were, in turn, used to harass Kalabari neighbors. The latter had little room to manoeuvre other than to pitch tent with Elem Kalabari thereby intensifying trade rivalries with Bonny from the 18th Century (Alagoa, 1972: 141-142). At the same time that Elem Kalabari was engaged in conflict with Bonny, it was constantly at loggerheads with its Okrika neighbors, just as did Bonny and the Andoni people (p. 156). Because of the intensity and frequency of violent conflicts, small and weaker city-states tended to maintain protection treaties with more powerful neighbors- a major component of which is the insertion of trigger clauses that in the event of an attack on a friendly treaty partner, other more powerful members of that alliance would provide assistance to subdue such threats.

Unlike the many other works that focused on the impact of external agents of change on Calabar, Nair (1972) explored the interface between external factors and internal conditions that influenced (and undermined) these changes. The factors included the "interactive effects of the internal rivalries between the towns, changes in the lineage structure and the role of socio-economic and political institutions such as the Ekpe Fraternity" (p. XIII). Unlike what obtained in Bonny and the Kalabari kingdoms, the Efik house system was based, according to Nair, on patriarchy. They all began as "corporate groups of kin tracing descent to common founders" in the 18th Century, and transformed into canoe houses/ war canoes in the 19th Century. Once again, according to Nair, the most significant and enduring feature of the political history of Calabar for most of the 18th and 19th centuries was the continuous intra-city and inter-city rivalries. This, he noted, was due to its segmentary lineage and social structure.

One example of this was the killing, in 1767, of over 300 inhabitants of Old Town on board the ship *Indian Queen*, and the selling of other notable chiefs into slavery (p. 25-26). This massacre, as Noah (1980) pointed out, not only marked the high-point of an unhealthy rivalry between the inhabitants of Duke Town and Old Town, but also significantly altered the geo-politics of the city-states of Old Calabar as Old Town degenerated into a second rate power (Noah, p. 18, 53-54). This incident made Noah to conclude that the political history of Duke Town since the middle of the Eighteenth Century presents "a chronicle of intense rivalry with the other Efik city states" (p. 57). This pattern continued well into the 19th Century, for by 1853, conflicts became a more frequent and vociferous feature of trade relations complicated by the appearance of independent European traders and African traders from Sierra Leone.

In the concluding years of the 19th Century, trans-Atlantic commerce dominated by slave trading was abolished. While it lasted, slave-based accumulation significantly defined the economic profile of the coastal city-states and kingdoms of the delta. According to available statistics, an estimated 10 million West Africans were sold into slavery between 1450 and 1856; close to half of that figure passing through the slave markets of the delta (Kalu, 1980: 5). Anene (1972: 270-290) acknowledged that the slave trade created lucrative sources of wealth leading to remarkable political and social development in the Delta communities of Ijaw, Kalabari, Itsekiri, Ibeno and the Efik culminating in the emergence and consolidation of city-states and the house system. Besides, it also led to inter-house rivalry and instability that were the menacing hallmarks of that era. Inter-house rivalries, competition and conflicts led to the erosion of central control and the establishment of new micro-city states. These city-states included Warri and Sapele for Itsekiri and Urhobo; Brass, Akassa, Twon and Nembe for Ijaw, Buguma, Abonema, and Bakana for Kalabari; Bonny for Ibeno; and finally, Creek, Henshaw, Duke Towns for the Efik. (Anene, 1972: 276-277). Among Europeans, the British succeeded in establishing itself- after decades of stiff competition and rivalries with the Portuguese, French and the Dutch- as the most prominent slave-trading nation on the coast of the delta. Although it was the last entrant, Britain soon overtook other Europeans in the slave merchandise⁶² in the Bight

⁶² British slave trade started around 1564, and was pioneered by a Royal ship christened *Jesus!* (Kalu, 1980: 8)

of Benin not because of its might, but its ability to set its rivals one against the other vis-à-vis the coastal chiefs. It was also helped by the Industrial Revolution that began in the mid-19th Century (Kalu, 1980: 4-16)

It is important to bear in mind that some of the slaves retained to service the private and commercial interests of coastal middlemen of the delta, not only became powerful players in the oil palm commerce that emerged afterwards, but also played pivotal roles in the socio-political affairs of the various delta communities. Mention had been made earlier of the activities of two ex-slaves, Jumbo and Jaja, both of whom rose to prominence in Bonny kingdom, and how the later in fact successfully seceded to establish Opobo. In his analysis of the structural changes that took place in Calabar during the era of the oil palm trade, for instance, Nair drew attention to the influential political roles played by two categories of slaves: those sent into the hinterland to buy oil and those who stayed at home to carry out coastal trade. More importantly, there were the clashes between plantation-dwelling slaves and town-dwelling slaves who benefited from differential social statuses. According to Nair, this situation created tensions that accounted for much of the upheavals of the early 1850s. This was particularly so, since the plantation slaves were less prosperous, were not incorporated into the houses, and were almost totally cut off from European intercourse and trade, and with little or no prospect for socio-economic enhancement. They soon formed the Blood Society, led by one Eyo Okon, to challenge their exclusion and marginalization (p. 42). Again, in the conflicts that ensued between and among republican city-states, European supercargoes were to play prominent roles.

Alagoa (1971: 565-578) challenged certain assumptions that portrayed the political upheavals that engulfed the eastern delta and Calabar as “slave revolts” arguing that since slaves can become socially and politically integrated, as in Bonny, it is a gross misconception to portray them as accounting for all revolts. One frequently touted example, the controversy and tension around Jaja, according to Alagoa, is not indicative of a slave revolt, but a normal struggle for power between Houses. Another- the crisis generated by the activities of the Order of Blood Men in Calabar- was re-conceptualised as a binary conflict between “the power, the less privileged and

mainly country dwelling people” against “the small, wealthy town-dwelling cliques” that ruled Calabar (Cited on p. 562). This explained, accordingly, why the Order of Blood Men was not organized by the slaves to secure their freedom but to protest against the widening socio-economic gaps vis-à-vis the affluent minority that dominated social, economic and political activities. Indeed, the revolt of the slaves was against the deep crisis of governance that polarized the society along two irreconcilable lines⁶³. Besides, the series of intra-House, inter-House and inter-city-state conflicts that engulfed the Eastern Niger Delta can not be blamed on slave revolts, especially as royal lineage often broke into rival factions. For instance, the Amakiri lineage broke into Amakiri and Barboy families in Elem Kalabari (New Calabar), while in 1879, a minor disturbance between Christian adherents and traditional believers in Okrika and Nembe (Brass) over Christian burial rites for King Ockiya triggered a social fracture (p. 571). In the end, Alagoa drew two insightful conclusions. The first is that unlike in Calabar, the lines of division for battle in the eastern Niger Delta are not drawn horizontally along class lines but vertically along power blocs within the State. Second, is that such struggles hardly ever resulted in any substantive improvement in the status or conditions of slaves, either in the short or long term.

The transition from slave to oil palm economic activities had major and far-reaching implications for the middlemen of the coastal city-states. Initially, it was not difficult for the coastal middlemen of the Niger Delta to take advantage of the emergent oil palm trade by playing essentially the same traditional role they played under the slave-based accumulative dispensation. This is not to suggest, however, that the transition from slave to oil palm enterprises occurred without frictions, either among the coastal city-states who further intensified the search for, and the maintenance of strong trade relations with the oil palm producers further into the hinterlands of the Igbo country, or between delta middlemen and supercargoes, as the European commercial interests were popularly referred to, on a whole range of issues. In the scramble to control palm oil markets (apart from the exploitation of land and water

⁶³ At the center of the revolt by the Order of Blood Men is the highly stratified and graded Ekpe society. Mobility within that society depended solely on wealth. Thus, even freemen were, just like slaves, effectively excluded (Alagoa, 1971: 568).

resources), trade rivalries and wars between and among different city-states within the Niger Delta became more intensive during the 19th Century, compounded by lingering problems associated with inter-ethnic variations, differences in culture, language, economic and political interest all of which ultimately brewed tension, and on certain occasions full-scaled wars (Kalu, 1980: 16). Jones noted that delta states had to adjust to the shift in the principal export from slaves to oil palm. He argued that with time, oil palm trade became very competitive as the different states jostled to secure new markets or to scheme rival and weak states out of their traditional markets. Predictably, these high-pitched exchanges were to lead to skirmishes, riots, and outright wars. This transition also brought about increasing contacts between Africans and European settlers/ merchants, again with far-reaching socio-political implications (pp. 72-87). In the final analysis, major sources of bilateral irritations and civil wars in the delta were trade, collection of debt, succession and transfer of power, as well as sheer intra-house rivalries and competition (p. 88-101).

Undoubtedly, coastal city-states fared well in the oil business, but none surpassed the prominence of Bonny as the most lucrative market throughout the coast of West Africa (Dike, 1962: 42-50). In 1834 alone, Bonny accounted for oil trade worth nearly 500,000 Pounds. The entire African production of palm oil averaged 40, 000 and 42, 000 tons. Flint (1960: 10-11) reported that the mangrove swamps of the coasts on either sides of the Niger River contributed the bulk of palm oil for the soap making industries in Liverpool. According to him, 150 tons of oil were shipped to Liverpool in 1806, while in 1819, it was 3, 000 tons. In 1839, it reached an all-time high of 13, 000 tons. As Hutchinson noted, 27, 000 tons of palm oil were imported into Liverpool from the Oil Rivers out of 34, 000 tons, the aggregate amount from West Africa, into different parts of the United Kingdom in 1854 alone. Ten years after, in 1864, total production by Bonny and New Calabar rose to 70, 000 tons as against 16, 000 in 1885-56. In that same year, also, total revenue from oil exports was 800, 000 Pounds out of the African total of 1.5 million Pounds (Cited in Dike, 1962: 241). In monetary terms, total delta trade was worth 800, 000 out of an African total of 1.5 million Pounds. Apart from oil palm, other commodities such as ivory earned 17, 000 Pounds per annum, while camwood and dyewoods earned between 10, 000 and 15, 000 respectively in one year (1962: 100-103). With regard to shipping, Liverpool trade

with the Delta alone reportedly involved between 12, 000 to 15, 000 tons of shipping per annum. In 1840, Bonny trade ships totalled 13, 170 tons and employed 736 Englishmen.

Table III: Return Showing Number and Tonnage of Vessels entered and cleared in each District of the Niger Coast Protectorate from April 17, 1894 to March 31, 1895

District	Entered		Cleared	
	No of Vessels	Tonnage	No of Vessels	Tonnage
Old Calabar	68	86,476	67	86,055
Opobo	65	84,500	66	85,505
Bonny (and New Calabar	103	131,842	102	130,913
Brass	48	68,731	46	67,419
Benin	59	79,390	60	80,902
Warri	62	81,755	63	82,900

See Annual Report for 1894-1895 of the Administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate, July 15, 1895 in FO.2/84/73: Niger Coast Protectorate Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Year 1895-1896

By the late 1850s, however, significant changes had taken place in the pattern of trade throughout the delta. One of those changes promoted the establishment of fixed European premises ashore unlike the previous cases whereby the European merchants restricted themselves to the coastal seaboard. Second, businesses formerly run by individuals coalesced into big limited liability companies so that by 1864, the West African Company had a subscribed capital of 100, 000 Pounds. While in 1866, 17 European firms operated on the Bight of Biafra, the number increased to 24 by 1872, including a Dutch and a German firm. In all, 23 European trading houses had 55 posts in 7 rivers and employed 207 white agents, clerks and mates plus 419 African hands and 2000 Kroomen from Cape Palmas (Nair, 1972). Little wonder then that by the time the slave trade was abolished and "legitimate" trade in palm oil commenced, the delta coastlines had become of very significant geo-strategic interest to the British as witnessed by the heavy presence of British naval squadron costing 706, 454 pounds to maintain. Up to that period, this naval flotilla had claimed the lives of 166 officers and men, and 104 invalidated (Hutchinson, 1960: 246).

The huge trade figures earlier mentioned conceal the content of imports, predominantly of weapons and liquor, into the Niger Delta by European firms as shown below. Indeed, the coastal city-states of the Delta became flooded with guns made by British and non-British manufacturers, including the Danes. Thus, according to Dike, even as late as 1864 when the coastal city-states were comparatively peaceful, each house could raise 2, 500 musketeers. The abundance of ammunitions often ensured that “when hostilities break out they will be equally bloody to the natives, and injurious, if not dangerous, to the Europeans” (p. 107). Livingstone had bitterly complained, “English traders have furnished the rival chiefs with guns, shots, and powder, as required, until war materials are a drug” on the Delta markets. This trend culminated in an unhealthy “armament race” which “intensified the struggle and widened the area of conflict to the tribal interior”(Cited in Dike, 1962: 194-195). The danger to European interest often manifested in the obstruction of trade and navigation, damage or seizure of vessels and harassment of European and local personnel. As Dike puts it,

It is a matter of reflection that little of permanent value came into West Africa from 400 years of trade with Europe. In return for the superior labour force, the palm oil, ivory, timber, gold... which fed and buttressed the rising industrialism, they received the worst type of fake gin and meretricious articles (p. 114).

There are fascinating parallels between the disparate benefits from trade and commerce during the eras of slavery and oil palm and that of contemporary Niger Delta that would be highlighted in the next chapter.

Table IV: Custom Duties on Major Imports into the Niger Coast

Items	Amount Received		Estimate
	1892-1893	1893-1894	1895-1896
Ale, Bar, Pinter, etc.	150	187	100
Brandy	60	40	50
Gin and General	29,900	85,200	65,000
Gun Powder	3700	6600	5000
Cap guns*	100	2000	5000
Dane Guns	3900	800	500
Lead	400	700	500
Liquor	200	100	100
Rum	3590	45,500	40,000
Salt	1300	1900	2000
Tobacco	20,900	25,700	22,000
Whisky	200	300	300
Wines	100	100	200
Total	96,810	169,127	

* Item protected under Firearms Ordinance

Suffice to conclude this section by noting that whereas conflicts between and among coastal communities in the Delta prior to the advent of European merchants were on issues such as establishing fishing rights, sharing hunting booties and spoils of war, and disputing claims to scarce land, the era of palm trading considerably witnessed an expansion in the scope and context of violent conflicts in that region. This is particularly so at those times when the fluctuating prices of oil palm translated into lower profits, dwindling market shares, uncertainties, rivalries and conflicts between and among principal trading partners. This was exactly what happened when as a result of a fall in the price of oil palm and profit, coastal Delta communities engaged each other in very unpleasant competition over markets, as was the case in 1846 when King Pepple of Bonny attacked and annexed Andoni in a successful military campaign just to secure its Ibo oil market in the interior (Dike, 1956: 1962).

The vagaries of the fluctuation in the oil market and the realization that the activities of coastal middlemen could actually be compromising palm produce supply and pricing regimes prompted European supercargoes to initiate direct contacts with hinterland producers, thereby breaking the long monopoly of the coastal peoples in trans-Atlantic trade relations. Although initially considered unthinkable, perhaps even suicidal, the supercargoes became bold enough to gradually break the monopoly of coastal middlemen traders in terms of gaining direct access to the hinterland markets. They achieved this feat because of two unrelated factors. The first factor related to the discovery of antibiotics, notably chloroquine, which guaranteed that European merchants could actually travel around, and actually live in, the thick and mosquito-infested mangrove Delta and the forest belt further inland without grave concerns about the deadly malaria disease that made the region to be called the “white man’s grave”. Another was the fact that the supercargoes had become sufficiently established in, and central to the oil palm business over the years almost to the point of indispensability. The strength of the supercargoes was not just in terms of their number, which in itself is significant, but more importantly, because they could quite easily impose their harmonized will on commercial partners throughout the length and breadth of the coastal Delta. Indeed as the supercargoes engaged in trade activities, they also invested a lot in acquiring comparatively sophisticated firearms and ammunition that served both as reminders to potentially recalcitrant coastal middlemen, and in many other cases, as instruments of coercion, intimidation and subjugation.

It is important to expatiate on the later point, as would be done in the next section, because its various manifestations and outcomes defined and determined, in fundamental ways, the dynamics and character of the historical relationships and interactions that evolved between British mercantile interests and their coastal delta partners in the period prior to the establishment of formal colonial rule. It is important to make clear that the process of breaking the long monopoly of coastal middlemen did not happen without stiff opposition and wars that left casualties on both sides. Both sides suffered heavy casualties, in terms of men and resources, in the ensuing contest to gain access to the potentially rich resources of the hinterlands. Expectedly, attempts to break the monopoly of coastal middlemen triggered a lot of resistance and

clandestine acts of terrorism directed at British interests. In one instance in 1841, widespread opposition to this forceful penetration led to punitive reprisals from the British expeditionary force, leaving 48 Europeans dead out of 145 troops. The number of casualties not only convinced the Europeans, especially Liverpool merchants, of the need to retain middlemen, but also retarded, for close to a decade, British penetration of the hinterlands until about the 1850s when London began to show renewed interest in this enterprise. Even then, every attempt thereafter only intensified and made hostility a permanent feature of the 1860s. As Flint (1960: 18-23) pointed out, “the attempt to get behind the middlemen on the Niger had reduced the banks of the river to anarchy” and a groundswell in anti-British feelings among coastal middlemen who were worried that the rewards of their interlocutory position in transatlantic oil trade might be eroded or stopped abruptly.

With this background, it was only a matter of time before the coastal delta attracted global prominence, both as a major source of raw material for industry and as a market for finished European commodities. This global importance, in turn, translated the coastal Delta into a territory of significant geo-strategic importance to the extent that whosoever controlled it was assured of gainful access into and control of the ‘key of the Niger’ and the unlimited commerce of the interior. To argue, then, that coastal Delta was the platform on which Britain sought to realize and consolidate its commercial and colonial ambitions in Nigeria, in the second half of the 19th Century, would be appropriate and incontrovertible. This seaboard attracted significant geopolitical interest for Imperial Britain. After acquiring Fernando Po from the Spanish in 1827 for use as a naval base, the British firmly secured a strategic platform from which it could easily launch reprisal attacks on “troublesome” monarchs and chiefs whose activities were deemed “inimical” to or “subversive” of Imperial ambitions.

5.2. British Colonial Rule, Capital Accumulation and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta

“Commerce took us to West Africa; commerce keeps and will keep us in West Africa. It is the *fons et origo* of our presence in West Africa” (British philosopher, Morel, cited in Anene, 1959: 319)

Commerce had been the driving force behind European penetration of Africa, as well as the crux of inter-continental relationships ever since the first European ships berthed on the coasts of the continent around the 15th Century. It is incontrovertible that the Niger Delta, in particular, was a veritable platform on which Britain sought to consolidate its commercial interests (and colonial ambitions) in Nigeria from the second half of the 19th Century onward. From time immemorial, the economic significance of the Niger Delta was too significant to be ignored as an important determinant of British Imperial ambitions in colonial Nigeria. After all, the region (which the British officially named the Oil Rivers) accounted for the largest chunk of trade than the entire British West African colonies- the Gold Coast, Lagos, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia (Hutchinson, 1960: 120).

Significant milestones in the erection of British colonial structure (and the foundation laying of modern Nigeria) commenced not long after the conclusion of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 called to partition Africa among the major colonial powers of Europe. An effective political presence was established with the proclamation of a protectorate over the Niger District. By January 1891, an effective government for the Oil Rivers Protectorate (ORP) was formed, followed two years later, in 1893, by the declaration of the Niger Coast Protectorate. It is important to note, however, that the decision to establish effective political suzerainty over that region was informed by several factors, internal and external, beyond merely setting up a politico-administrative colonial infrastructure. The internal factors included some that had already been mentioned in the previous section. For emphasis, there was an urgent concern about securing the coastal territories for European traders who had by then established extensive commercial presence important to the global economic clout of Britain; but who were faced by the treacherous activities of coastal middlemen bent on disrupting trade.

From the 1850s, for instance, significant changes had taken place in the pattern of trade in the Oil Rivers to warrant closer British attention. One was the establishment of fixed European premises ashore as against what obtained in the past when European commercial interests were restricted to the coasts. The next was a proliferation of European firms with active business interests in that area such that by

1872, the number of those operating on the Bight of Biafra increased from 17 in 1866 to 24 by 1872, including a Dutch and a German firm. In all, 23 European trading houses had 55 posts in 7 rivers and employed 207 white agents, clerks and mates plus 419 African hands and 2000 Kroomen from Cape Palmas. Last was that in the face of stifling competition, several of the small European businesses formerly run by individuals merged to form big limited liability companies such that by 1864, for instance, the West African Company had a subscribed capital of 100, 000 Pounds (Nair, 1972: 107-108). To further underscore the vibrant economic status of Southern Nigeria, most especially the Oil Rivers, the Bank of British West Africa (BBWA) Limited applied to the Under-Secretary of State at the CO to commence bank operations at Forcados and Calabar in January 1908, alongside similar facilities in Ibadan and Northern Nigeria (C.O. 520/ 73/ 3448).

On the external front, the establishment of formal colonial rule over the coastal delta, as a prelude to the penetration of the hinterlands, was informed by serious concern in London that other European powers were enviously preying on the affluent coastal territories and the potential riches further inland. The most apprehension arose from the aggressive activities of the French who not only outsmarted the British over Cameroon, but had by 1882 established 17 floating stations on the lower Niger with headquarters among the Brassmen, going as far as Nupe in the north where Compté de Samella established a trade post (Flint, 1960: 39). However, this feat was as much a result of French suave as a constellation of internal political conditions. Flint reported, for instance, that the Emir of Nupe incurred the wrath of his army chiefs for his open support to the British. They rebelled against him for the umpteenth time, demanding free trade with the French. That rebellion, according to Flint was the 52nd in fifty years of Nupe history (36-40).

Prior to 1885, Britain had a “precarious and vague form of unofficial responsibility” on the Oil Rivers, ensuring that the ambiguities and contradictions that characterized the first period of official British rule over that territory made the description “paper protectorate” most appropriate (Anene, 1959: 256). For Britain, the principal concern or fear of the French was the beginning of commercial and political wisdom. In fact, this stiff competition from the French made British traders to be more alert and

competitive, while at the same time, it raised goose flesh that prompted government officials in London to take more decisive and pre-emptive checks. In fact, this “incursion” prompted Britain to abandon its lukewarm attitude towards the creation of a direct colony in the Oil River ostensibly fearing the huge costs of such an involvement (p. 51). The British anxiety over French machinations in the coastal delta was heightened by the fact that the later had already annexed the Cameroon in July 1884, pulling the rug off the feet of British colonial officials who had thought that the Cameroon would be an excellent location to site the headquarters of the Oil River Protectorate (Flint, 1972: 110-132). In direct attempt to checkmate French incursion into the delta area, the British cabinet in November 1883, decided to establish a protectorate over the lower Niger, the Oil Rivers, and the Cameroon. At the Berlin conference, Bismarck traded the Niger with the British for Leopold’s Belgian Congo on 18 December 1884 (Flint, 1960: 69). By October 1887, the Oil Rivers Protectorate was proclaimed, while in 1903, the ORP became the Niger Coast protectorate.

Such was the international attention enjoyed by the Oil River territory, especially in defining the outline and outcome of Anglo-French rivalries that Flint rightly concluded: the “French intervention translated the Niger question from the level of the balance-sheet to the level of the diplomatic note, and Goldie from an obscure businessman to a familiar name in the Foreign and Colonial Offices” (p. 15). In less than three years after the Niger Company received a royal charter to trade and administer the Oil River, Tubman Goldie had effectively tamed French interests, and only a fortnight to the Berlin Conference, in June 1884, forced the *Campagne Francaise* to capitulate and receive 60, 000 Pounds in shares in the company. (p. 67). The global significance of the Oil Rivers was evident in its inclusion on the agenda of the great powers during that historic summit. In the end, Bismarck traded the Niger with the British for Leopold’s Belgian Congo on December 18, 1884 (p. 69). Apart from inter-European rivalries and hostilities, there was also intense competition among African traders from Brass, Sierra Leone, and Lagos almost numbering about 45 firms (p. 48).

In December 1890, Major Macdonald identified requirements for the establishment and operation of the Oil Rivers protectorate- including provisions for a civil service,

district commissioner's department, treasury, customs, public works, marine, medical department, constabulary, etc. According to him, a slightly higher salary scale was proposed because, first, the Oil Rivers District is equal if not greater in extent than the districts administered by the Governors of Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, and Lagos. Second, that there are six important rivers in the Oil Rivers District with substantial European business interests. Third, that the officials will have more arduous task as it is harder to maintain order in the Oil Rivers because of the difficult nature of the country. In terms of revenue, Major Macdonald correctly argued that the Oil Rivers could conveniently sustain itself. In 1889, tobacco imports into the Oil Rivers was 2,138,562 lbs. Between 1-1-1890 and 15-11-1890, 2,651,179 gallons of spirits were imported into the Oil Rivers by the two Liverpool line of steamers and over 40, 000 gallons by sailing vessels. The increase in the importation of spirits in 1891 was estimated at 2, 500, 000 gallons.⁶⁴ Principally because this cost-benefit analysis favoured the continued operation of the direct colonial rule over the Oil Rivers Protectorate, the scope of British political, administrative and consular presence was expanded with the inauguration of the Niger Coast Protectorate (NCP) on May 13, 1893 (p. 145)

Undeniably, the bulk of spadework meticulously implemented to soften the ground for the eventual enthronement of British colonial rule was done at the behest of the Royal Niger Company (RNC) granted a royal charter in 1881. Indeed, the RNC was a mini-government in its own right as it not only had unlimited license to establish trading posts and carry out lucrative commercial activities on all the major rivers throughout the Delta region, but could also maintain an administrative structure, a police constabulary force, an army as well as other paraphernalia of governance and administration. The Charter establishing the RNC clearly, however, forbade the Niger Company from setting up or granting a monopoly of trade in its ventures. Through this caveat, it was envisaged that a healthy commercial relationship would be fostered between the Company and coastal host communities to the mutual reward of both partners, but ultimately British trade. Unfortunately, sufficient safeguards were not put in place either by the Charter or in colonial policy regulations, to check and

⁶⁴ [FO403/133: Memorandum by Major MacDonald on the Oil Rivers Establishment, FO December 23, 1890]

control the excesses of the RNC, a situation which left more than an elbow room for the company to pursue monopolistic trade and break anti-trust clauses at will. One fascinating aspect of Crowther's seminal work probed the relationship between British companies, especially the Royal Niger Company and communities in the Oil River. According to him, the RNC schemed out other European countries, especially the French, from the coastal and hinterland markets, at the same time, they dispossessed/ disenfranchized coastal middlemen and native from traditional markets and trade routes. The cumulative effect of the above, and many more, led to bitter rivalries between the RNC and Africans on the one hand, and between British and foreign competitors on the other (Crowther, 1978)

With the benefit of hindsight, it is quite clear that formal colonial rule never was predicated on any pretension to altruism on the part of the designers of the British colonial architecture. In his book on *British Enterprise in Nigeria*, Cook presented a heavily distorted and one-sided view of the momentous events that culminated in the making of Southern Nigeria in the manner the British desired it. He had noted, for instance, that it was "a passion to make one corner of the world happier and more prosperous" that drove men like Goldie and Lugard as much as "the satisfaction of feeling that they were doing something... to bring security of life and property to millions of black men who had never known what such things mean" (p. 82). Hence, he glorified Goldie in the face of incontrovertible evidence that he was an unrepentant monopolist as well as apologist of colonialism⁶⁵. Stripped bare off its missionary pretensions, then, colonial rule was primarily designed to secure the vast territories of Nigeria as an exclusive economic zone for Her Majesty's Government in London (Dike, 1956). This explained why the colonial office turned a blind eye for such a long time while Goldie and the RNC engaged in exploitative business activities. It is important to highlight certain aspects of the activities of the RNC because of the

⁶⁵ The book read more like an image laundry exercise for Goldie and the RNC. Otherwise, it is difficult to agree with Cook that Goldie was "deeply concerned" about the evil menace of traffic in liquor that he took steps to control it in the Niger Company territories. In reality, there were too many loopholes in the liquor trade that effectively prevented the RNC from putting its fingers on the trade, or even to make lucrative gains in form of duties. The issue of trade in liquor in southern Nigeria was of particular importance that it formed the basis of a parliamentary investigation in 1909. (p. 216).

fascinating parallels they bring to our understanding of the behaviour of multinational oil companies in contemporary Niger Delta.

Apart from finding itself enmeshed constantly in anti-trust controversies, the relationship between the Company and its coastal trading partners degenerated steadily as a result of bitter rivalries and violent conflict throughout the lifespan of the Company. It is particularly important to draw attention to the relationship between the RNC and its host communities, not only because it never showed signs of improvement throughout the chequered lifespan of the Company, but also because the political albatross created by the corporate misbehaviours of the company informed the ultimate decision of the Colonial Office in London to abandon the Royal Charter in favour of direct governance. Ultimately, then, what British colonial rule succeeded in doing was to create an enabling environment for the unlimited expansion and consolidation of the accumulation agenda of its commercial arm in such a way that it could either completely ward off other European competitors, or in the extreme case, gain an overriding advantage. As far as the coastal inhabitants of the Oil River are concerned, this phase in the conquest of Nigeria coincided with the aggressive inroads of foreign capital complemented by increased colonial intervention in the affairs of the people. The RNC never hid its intention to pursue its business without caring about the impacts of its activities on local host communities. The company was contented, despite public criticisms, with the pursuit of its imperialistic ambition, which as Nkurumah suggested often manifested in a situation where “for those who practice it, it means power without responsibility, and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress” (Cited in Olorode, 1998: 23).

Almost in all cases, British military interventions in colonial Nigeria, as elsewhere, were directed at securing the extractive engagements of British-owned commercial enterprises- a case of “the flag following the ship”. Asiegbu (1984) traced the development of British military institutions or activities in West Africa, first, to the early 19th Century when its naval squadron was actively involved in anti-slavery campaigns, and then, to the establishment of Constabulary Forces in different colonies

between 1829-1899 to discharge police and military duties in aid of commerce.⁶⁶ Asiegbu examined five case studies of British military interventions in Nigeria-- and the strong trade motives behind them-- corresponding roughly to the conquest of Yorubaland, the Niger Delta, the Sokoto Caliphate, Igboland, and the Cross Rivers⁶⁷. Since our focus here is on the Niger Delta, it is important to draw attention to the gallant experiences of three coastal chief recorded by Asiegbu: Jaja of Opobo, Nana of Itsekiri, and Koko of Nembe Brass.

The problem of King Jaja of Opobo with the British started over access to and control of trade, but steadily deteriorated to the extent that British consular officials began to accuse him of scheming to dominate the affairs of the Oil Rivers. In one of such accusations, acting Vice Consul Henry Johnston mentioned in a memo to the Foreign Office in London that Jaja was a serial monopolist, whose activities threatened British commerce, causing instability in the Oil Rivers. He also alleged that Jaja was about to sell his country to the French having dispatched an emissary to France- the major rival of Britain in the Bight of Guinea. There seemed to be a conviction in British consular circles that Jaja's rising political and commercial profile had to be subdued, otherwise, he stood the chance of scuttling the Imperial interests of Britain in the Niger Delta. The true bone of contention between Jaja and the British however magnified over the exact domain of Jaja and his right to "comey", a form of sale tax earned on the basis of within exclusive economic zones (p. 84-85). Johnston had insisted in the memo that Jaja was "one of the most grasping, unscrupulous, and overbearing of the mushroom kings who ever attempted to throttle the growing commerce of white men with the rich interior".⁶⁸ Given the cantankerous nature of local politics, it was not a surprise at all that the British colonial authorities saw and exploited the

⁶⁶ For a very interesting account of the exploits of the RWAFF, see Asiegbu (1984: XXV-XXVIII).

⁶⁷ The conquest of Yorubaland included that of the annexation of Lagos (1851-1861) and of the expedition to Ijebuland from 1892. The pacification of Sokoto included the activities of the RNC and the Niger Sudan campaign (1892) as well as Anglo-French rivalry and the Lugardian policy in Northern Nigeria. The case study on Igboland focused on the famous ARO expedition (1901-1902), the British and the "silent ones" or the EKUMKU in Asaba hinterland as well as the resistance by the Olokoro people to colonial rule in UMUAHIA (1892-1902). The last, in the Cross River, included the military expedition to NSIT and other Ibibio districts and the massive disarmament campaign that followed.

⁶⁸ See Johnston to Foreign Office, F.O. 84/1828

internal weakness of coastal communities in the Delta region in order to rally opposition against Jaja.

However, this rancour was a later day irritation as the relationship between Jaja and the British consular officials was cordial up till 1881 as reflected in the tone of their correspondences. Indeed a letter dated July 18, 1881 from Jaja to Consul Edward Hyde Hewett stated that:

... it is with deep regret that I notice the distrust with which you look upon all the statements emanating from me, especially when I remember the confidence that your good brother and your predecessor have had in my word.

After that year, tension began to brew and deteriorate against the background of allegations that Jaja was making serious efforts to monopolize the lucrative Qua Iboe market. Again, in one of such correspondence, Consul Hewett warned Jaja to withdraw his forces from Qua Iboe and refrain from molesting the people. In his words, "I give you serious warning, that should you fail to comply... it will be at your risk and peril".⁶⁹ Even though it looked as if Consul Hewett had made up his mind to harass and sacrifice Jaja, that should not be construed as representative of the opinion of all segments of British colonial administration. In an investigation presented in the form of a letter to Commodore Sir F. Richards by Commander Hammick dated 21-11-1881, the later argued that Jaja's case was a native, and not trade affair, and that Jaja did not rob Mr. Watt's factory as claimed but merely broke in the premises to search for prisoners. It was a matter of curiosity that even the Colonial Office was privy to the circumstances leading finally to the deportation of King Jaja, and in fact, upheld the action. Lord Salisbury remained on record as having insisted that Consul Johnston's deportation of Kind Jaja amounted to "kidnapping", but did nothing to stop or reverse the action.

The relationship between Nana, whose tenure as "Governor" of the Oil Rivers began from 1884, and the British marked another fascinating watershed in the deterioration of Anglo-Delta relations. Again, the critical issues in contest were on the perennial problem of fixing acceptable prices for oil produce, and the complications arising

⁶⁹ E.H. Hewett to Jaja, 24-5-1881 in F.O. 403/18: Correspondences Respecting Affairs of the Oil Rivers District on the West Coast of africa and the question of British Protectorate, June 1883

from the imposition of Imperial agenda. In many ways, Nana, like Jaja, enjoyed a very cordial relationship with the British colonial authorities at the very early stage. It would in fact be recalled that the inability of Consul John Beecroft to elect a new traditional ruler, the Olu of Itsekiri, prompted the creation of the office of the governor of the Oil Rivers whose primary role was nominal and limited to supervising the collection and repatriation of comey and other forms of trade tax. The office also granted enormous political and economic power to the occupant as the duly elected executive authority in the whole of Itsekiri land. A measure of the cordiality in the relationship was therefore clearly demonstrated in Nana's appointment as Governor after the death of his father, Olomu.

With time, the relationship between Nana and the British grew steadily sour, even though accusations levelled against him were as unfounded as those against King Jaja of Opobo. He was not only accused of trading in slaves, but also of terrorising other traders within the Itsekiri Kingdom and those from the neighbouring Urhobo Country. As Ikime (1966: 39-49) pointed out however, there were few recorded instances of skirmishes (not to talk of outright war) between Nana and his Urhobo neighbours. In fact, according to Ikime, Nana followed the footsteps of his late father by enhancing good commercial relations with Urhobo people, including maintaining friendly socio-cultural relationships through alliances and inter-marriages.⁷⁰ Backed by the intimidating military power and track record of winning wars, Nana exploited and enjoyed the advantage of strong connections with the oil producers, while his trade organization and reputation as a trusted customer, endeared him to prominent Urhobo people. Ikime recorded only three instances of war between Olomu and his fellow Itsekiri men; two of which arose out of jealousy for his successes with Urhobo trade, and the third, caused by quarrel over debts (1966: 39-49).

Of course, the Ebrohimi expedition was the final straw which pitched defiant Nana against the British; an action which not only led to punitive gun-boat retaliations against him, the destruction of his capital, and his eventual exile. In many ways, the defeat of Nana was pursued to success due to a convergence of interests among

⁷⁰ Nana's mother and one of his own wives are of Urhobo extraction, the latter from Effurum (Ikime, 1966, 41)

certain elements within the Itsekiri Kingdom and British Imperial authorities. For instance, not a few of his kinsmen, especially also notable chiefs like Dogho and Dudu, peddled all sorts of rumours about Nana, including the one that he was dealing in slaves. By 1894, the bitterness between both parties had reached a boiling point leading to the subjugation of the Itsekiri capital, Ebrohimi. The significance of the attack went beyond the action itself, which was certainly not new, or indeed, the destruction inflicted on the well-fortified capital. The encounter, however, revealed how much firepower prominent coastal chiefs could muster, mostly as dividends of long years of trade relations with the British. After the battle, which showed the gallant resistance of the Itsekiri, a startling discovery was that Nana had amassed a huge arsenal of firearms and ammunitions comprising 106 cannons and machine guns. Others included 1640 kegs of gunpowder and 2500 rounds of machine gun ammunitions (Ikime, 1966: 42). After the fall of Nana's capital, he escaped to Lagos and handed himself over to Governor Carter. He was later returned to the Consular Court in Old Calabar where his trial began on November 30, 1894 under the chairmanship of Sir Claude MacDonald.⁷¹

In the Ebrohimi war, Asiegbu noted that although Nana had a force of about 3000 to 4000 men on the Benin River between 1890-1894, the victory of the British was secured because of superior firepower, and the active connivance of local chiefs (especially Dogho, Dudu) opposed to Nana. The war itself, according to him, was far from humanitarian as it was never intended to stop slaver, but rather it resulted from the British willingness to accommodate the monopolistic practices and excesses of the RNC and not that of Nana. In the end, Nana with his capital, Ebrohimi, was destroyed on the preposterous account of "ruthless trade monopoly and terrorism" (p. 85-98). Clearly, and before then, the British consular officer had foreclosed any chance that the military option would not be employed against Nana. In a letter acknowledging Nana's earlier one, Consul Hewett gave Nana three difficult options, "one of which will certainly have to be applied" (Asiegbu, 1984: 76). The options included Nana's removal as the Governor, unlimited access to British commercial interests to establish factories in the hinterland markets dominated by Nana, and finally, the annexation in lieu of protection of the Jekri country.

⁷¹ For Nana's defense, see Asiegbu (1984: 95-98)

Last in the series of major resistances mounted by coastal Delta people against British imperialism was the encounter between the Ijaw people of Nembe Brass against the ruthless trade monopolies of the Royal Niger Company (RNC). It will be recalled that the RNC was especially notorious in claiming land property rights on both sides of the River Niger, actions that made it impossible to land, moor, set up market, and erect stores without the express permission of the company. Such actions, without doubts, effectively ensured that the RNC enjoyed free and unlimited access to and control of land (almost in the same way as multinational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta have been given secured access to land for exploration and production activities under the Land Use Act of 1978). Invariably, this sort of absolute control over land had the repercussion of effectively disenfranchising the local people whose entire subsistence economic activities revolved around this fixed factor of production. Apart from its near-absolute access to and control of land, the company also adopted some of the most obnoxious and anti-people behaviours that come with such overwhelming power and clout. Flint reported, for instance, that at the height of the Niger Company intimidation of coastal peoples, Brassmen could not trade, smuggle or even collect payment of debts due them legitimately from Ijaw producers. The RNC also seized food or "chop" canoes bringing yam and cassava from the hinterland forcing Brassmen to turn to fish and plantain that grew in their infertile swamps (p. 198-99). According to Flint, then, behind the scenes the men of Brass and New Calabar, whose trade was dwindling month by month and whose very food supply was in danger, were storing up anger and hatred, collecting weapons, and plotting for the day of revenge against the company that had ruined them by taking away their markets" (p.155).

The critical moment came in 1895 when the chiefs and people of Nembe Brass decided they had had enough of exploitation and were bent on a final showdown with the RNC over the company's ruthless monopolization of trade that was having a debilitating impact on the local economy. According to Asiegbu, "perhaps very few instances in history have demonstrated as clearly as the British-Brass conflict in 1895-96, the imperialist principles of might is right, or the unconscionable contradictions which enabled the British to condemn, and to militarily resist, trade monopoly by

African individuals or groups, while at the same time condoning even the worst forms of it in the Royal Niger Company". In close and fascinating extents, the complaints of the Brass people bear close affinity with the types of grievances that pervade the oil-rich Niger Delta in contemporary Nigeria. In one instance, the people complained that: "We have suffered many hardships from the company's regulations, our people have been forced upon by the Niger Company' Launches, they have been fired upon from the Niger Company's Hulks, our canoes have been seized and goods taken, sometimes when engaged in what white men call smuggling, and sometimes when not". That was not all. The people were also piqued that all these "unjust things have been done to us many times we have been told to be patient and have been so, and the wrongs which we consider we have suffered are now worse than ever. All these drove us to take the law into our hands and attack the company's factories at Akassa" (cited in Asiegbu, 1984: 104).

The summary of Sir John Kirk's 'Report on the Disturbances at Brass' is very illuminating and dispassionate. According to Sir Kirk, the chiefs of Brass had brought a litany of complaints before Sir Claude MacDonalds, Commissioner and Consul-General, Niger Coast Protectorate in 1895, to the effect that the RNC was monopolizing their markets and trading on the rivers (Hodgkin, 1960: 313). To effectively exclude the natives from the oil trade, the RNC reduced the price of oil, and when the people smuggle, their oil became expensive. According to the Chiefs,

A person who has been accustomed to eat (sic) bread and knows its sweetness from his youth to manhood happens to offered (sic) by another man to eat dust instead of bread. At the very time he hears the word dust he will go mad. Starvation brings a man to insanity". They concluded their letter by noting that: "...if part of the Niger River is not given to us the war with the Niger Company will not stop (Hodgkin, p. 312).

The chiefs added that there used to be many Christians in Brass but "many have gone back to their old faith, owing to the oppressions of the Niger Company" (Cited on p. 313). The above statement is very important and should be put in context in order to understand the motive behind the Brass attack for the resolve of the Brass chiefs underscored the significance of trade to communal survival; a fact known to, but blatantly ignored by, the monopolists that administered the RNC.

The notoriety of the RNC was however not limited to the coastal delta.⁷² Isichei provided further insights into other impacts of the activities of the RNC on host communities that are worth highlighting, if only for the ways they illuminate the corporate high-handedness and irresponsibility of foreign capital in peripheral social formations where little or no effective regulations exist to checkmate them. According to her, the RNC at its peak employed about 40 Europeans, most of whom were despised by British soldiers and protectorate officials as being of low social origins and lacking in formal education. Besides, the direct staff, Isichei reported that in 1889, the RNC had an army of 421 soldiers, 5 of whom were Europeans and the rest, instructively, from Hausaland, Yorubaland and the Gold Coast (p. 114-115). She paraphrased the opinion of a Holy Ghost Father who wrote in retrospect in 1902 that the RNC “had mined the Niger, drained away its products, and destroyed the first shots of civilization” (p. 117). Isichei’s conclusion about the impact of RNC activities on host communities, especially Asaba where the company located its administrative headquarters, is instructively sad. According to her, that town experienced the most traumatic changes. First, it developed into an enclave economy servicing European commercial interests. Second, it evolved into a Garrison State, or ‘soldiers town’ of about 300 houses. Citing Asaba oral history on the ordeals of the people in the hands of the RNC, Isichei noted that

they constituted a great menace to Asaba people, catching goats, fowls and cows at will for their food and pleasure, molesting the inhabitants by invading the farms and stealing their property and sometimes going to the extent of violating by force the chastity of a woman going to the River Niger for water.... The people of Asaba were constantly molested and earned no rest both night and day until the soldiers... moved away from Asaba (p. 119).

In conclusion, Isichei noted that the Company’s atrocities, “its amalgam of violence, economic exploitation...perhaps reveal... the face of colonial government everywhere” (Isichei, p. 121). By the time the assets of the RNC were liquidated, Goldie’s RNC controlled an area estimated at 500, 000 square miles and sold the company for 865, 000 Pounds (Cook, p. 106; Ikime, 1977: 133-140).

⁷² It would be recalled that the complaints of Brassmen against the RNC closely paralleled that of the Asaba people, and most other communities that hosted the RNC. In one instance, Brassmen noted that “The ill-treatment of the Niger Company is very bad... .Our boys fired, killed, and plundered, and even the innocent provision sellers were captured and killed likewise.... They fired, killed and plundered the fishermen and even the innocent women were caught, stripped naked, and painted with coal tar”. (Cited on p. 120; See also F.O. 403/ 215: Kings and Chiefs of Brass to MacDonald, 4-2-1895)

By 1884, an estimated 25 European firms, mostly British, were engaged in lucrative trade in oil palm.⁷³ In cumulative, even though the delta region was one part of Nigeria that has had the longest, direct and unbroken contacts with foreign capital till date there was frequent need to solicit military and consular support to secure vital economic interests at every stage. Often, such “distress” calls by the commercial branch of the British colonial enterprise received immediate attention as colonial expeditionary forces were employed to quell community disturbances, even when the causes of the disturbance were clearly traceable to the discriminatory trade policies of British companies. It is true that some of the companies established their own armed patrol units, the most notorious being the RNC constabulary that used punitive force to maintain its monopoly over commerce in the Niger Delta region and well into the hinterland. Yet, the colonial government hardly hesitated in placing its constabulary forces at the beck and calls of the companies. It was this disposition, for example, that led to the use of British naval units at the instance of the RNC to bombard and subdue Ebrohimi. It was also the same British naval force that launched a heavy-handed reprisal against the Nembe people of Brass for protesting against and vandalising the technical and administrative headquarters of the RNC in Akassa.

Essentially, then, whether it was aimed at expanding British trade or promoting a Pax Britannica, colonial Britain never quivered in asserting its authority. To quote Tamuno, “in considerably changed circumstances, the conflicts between the people and the new government resulted in bloody encounters which involved the frequent use of troops and police”(Tamuno, 1978: 47). Unfortunately, the successor company to the RNC, the United Africa Company (UAC), was also guilty of the criminal exploitation of trade and commerce to the detriment of the local people. The UAC was established in 1929 from the amalgamation of several smaller firms active in West Africa for close to a Century, mainly R & W King Limited (established 1695), F & A Swanzy Limited (established 1695), Hatton and Cookson and the Miller Brothers. By 1919, Goldie’s Niger Company teamed up with another big company,

⁷³ For a List of Firms Trading in the Oil rivers and Names of their Principal Agents as at August 1, 1884), see F.O. 403/ 32: Correspondences Respecting Affairs of the Oil Rivers District, July-October 1884

the African and Eastern Trade Corporation (AET) to establish UAC on the basis of 50-50 holding shares. There was however nothing significantly different between the RNC and its successor company, UAC, in terms of their monopolistic behaviour, and the contempt with which the public held them. In a letter to the Colonial Office dated September 9, 1948, H.M. Foot captured the generally negative public sentiment towards the UAC; which is still relevant to contemporary circumstances. As he rightly stated:

It is I think a fact that general accusations of exploitation are made here without quite the same malice as in the Gold Coast but the general feeling in Nigeria, as elsewhere in West Africa, is that the UAC is not only opposed to African enterprise but is here solely for what it can get out of the country. This feeling is by no means restricted to the articulate politicians...the people feel that the companies buy too cheaply and sell too dearly.... The Government suffers seriously from the backwash of this ill feeling".⁷⁴

Foot further noted that part of the deep-seated antagonism against UAC arose partly because the company is paid half of the entire mining royalties due to an earlier agreement with the Niger Company made long ago without public knowledge or approval. This, in his opinion represented "exploitation at its very worst", and a "considerable ingredient in the anti-foreign feeling which so handicaps our work in Nigeria". In the final analysis, Foot proposed a policy of Nigerian participation as a way of breaking "the suspicion and opposition which are the chronic political diseases of the articulate sections of the Nigerian peoples."

From the foregoing, the point can be made that history has a way of repeating itself, especially with regard to the exploitative behaviours of foreign capital. A concrete example of this is the striking parallel between two events separated by almost a Century: the celebrated revolts in the Oil River by the Brass people of Akassa against the notorious RNC in 1895, and that since the 1990s, by oil communities against multinational oil companies, particularly Shell. In both cases, the coastal communities harboured the deepest suspicion of, and ill feelings towards the monopolistic behaviour of foreign capital. In both instances, civil revolts were preceded by long complaints and bitterness towards foreign capital and interests. Indeed, long before

⁷⁴ C.O. 537/ 3554/ 30: H.M. Foot to A.B. Cohen esq., The Colonial Office, September 9, 1948

the raiding of the RNC central maintenance workshop and headquarters in Akassa, in 1896, Brass people had complained bitterly about the negative impacts of Royal Niger Company activities on their daily livelihood and survival. It is also on record that they made collective but unheeded representations and wrote long petitions (just like other non-RNC whites trading firms in the Brass Rivers did) to Commissioner McDonalds during his extensive visit to assess the condition of the Oil Rivers and to catalogue the grievances of the people. In the end, they were forced to wage a war against the high-handedness and arbitrary rule of the Royal Niger Company; a company that enjoyed a Royal Charter to exploit and administer virtually the entire Niger Delta Oil Rivers.

Exactly about a Century later, in the 1990s, the Ogoni people and other Niger Delta oil communities launched sustained assaults against Shell, another Anglo-Dutch concern, in protest against ecological damage and socio-economic neglect. Despite the generational gap, the two incidents demonstrate the nature and forms of economic and political change and civil violence in the Niger Delta. They also draw attention to the fact that the state, whether colonial or post-colonial, plays a major role in the spiral of violence in the Niger Delta. While the modern parallel of the RNC, the Anglo-Dutch oil company, Shell, has access to the coercive instruments of the state, and in fact, directly contributed money and military hardware towards its upkeep; the RNC maintained a well-equipped constabulary that facilitated several punitive military expeditions at least once a month. Nonetheless, both companies have directly or indirectly instigated the use of punitive measures against local communities. In fact, the RNC went beyond the Niger Delta to places as far into the hinterland as Onitsha, Obosi, and Abo (Anene, 1959: 127-130, 216-217).

Although the “preponderance of the trade motive” was unequivocal, another enduring aspect of British colonialism in Nigeria revolved around “the almost exclusive use of military expeditions to intimidate the people of the protectorate into accepting British authority” (Anene, 1959: 328). According to Tamuno (1978: 45), “punitive expeditions, patrols and coercion generally constituted the paradox of Pax Britannica”, citing the views of Prime Minister Chamberlain that “there has been bloodshed, there has been loss of life among the native populations.... You cannot have omelette without breaking eggs; you cannot destroy the practices of barbarism,

or slavery, of superstition which for Centuries have desolated the interior of Africa, without the use of force".⁷⁵ Asiegbu queried the "sheer hypocrisy" in the British attitude on its bloody wars of conquest, which it claimed were for humanitarian and or benevolent purposes (1984: 353-354).

Several problems beset the colonial enterprise of Britain in Nigeria, but much more so in the Oil River as the present day Niger Delta was called during the days of oil palm trading. The first problem is related to the issue of maintaining law and order, and in this context, the expected roles of the colonial security institutions, most especially the army and police. Next were problems that emanated from the implementation of colonial policies, especially those of Indirect Rule, considered patently repressive by the local population. An adjunct of the previous two problems was the third which was essentially related to the far-reaching effects of the indiscriminate and menacing proliferation and use of firearms and ammunitions.

Two colonial inventions that have survived modern day Nigeria, but with indisputable notoriety, are the law enforcement agencies, principally the police force and the military. The colonial antecedents of these two forces reveal that by and large, they were central instruments of state coercive power and subjugation, with relevant ordinances backing them⁷⁶. It will, therefore, be recalled after all that British presence was facilitated using gunboats, and after that there was the need to manage the day-to-day matters of administration and the enforcement of law and order. Several constabularies units were created in different parts of Nigeria, such as the Glover Irregulars, Royal Niger Constabulary, the Oil Rivers Irregulars, were all established. Recruitment into these constabulary units comprised mostly of people with questionable moral and social backgrounds, including bandits, thugs, social miscreants, and convicted rogues. In terms of training, orientation and doctrinal

⁷⁵ It should be noted that this official view credited to Mr. Chamberlain is not widely held in the top British business circles. In fact, John Holt, one of the major Liverpool merchants expressed serious misgivings about the logic behind this policy which unfortunately endured.

⁷⁶ Two of such Ordinances were promulgated in 1912: The Collective Punishment Ordinance No. 67 and the Unsettled Districts Ordinance No. 15. See C.O. 588/ 4. PRO., Kew, London. See also, .O. 538/173/2; Confidential Memoranda for the Guidance of Police and other Officers in the Case of Civil Disturbance. Lagos: Government Printers, 1950

codes, the forces then, as now, were geared towards maintaining the interest of the State and those in control of political power.

With the re-christening of the Oil Rivers Protectorate (ORP) as the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893, a standing army drawn from Hausa, Yoruba and men from Lagos and the Gold Coast armed with machine guns, rockets, and especially constructed rifles for bush fighting was established⁷⁷. Unfortunately, the army did not enjoy a monopoly of access to firearms. With the lax in import regulations, there was a proliferation of firearms among coastal and hinterland natives. Isichei's assessment of the role played by firearms in the growth of states and their relations with one another is instructive. Largely because of the unsystematic importation of firearms and ammunitions, the Niger Delta became a major theatre of dangerous warfare (Isichei, 51; Jones, 1963: 46ff)⁷⁸ Isichei noted also that the advantage of the possession of superior firepower might have been overestimated and more psychological. According to her, most of the native communities in possession of such weapons are ill trained to use them, while most of the weapons imported were of poor quality and obsolete in Europe. Regardless of the above observations, it is instructive that firearms- no matter how inferior or obsolete- confers superior advantages to the owners. Besides, since firearms can have a more hurting effect than say machetes at medium range, the credibility of first strike capability is higher for the holder.

Apart from the army, the police was another widely used instrument in the pacification and expansionist agenda of colonial authorities in Nigeria. Yet, the police was one of the most poorly administered of all colonial institutions, especially as the welfare of members was handled with a pinch of salt. Indeed, a visiting police adviser acknowledged a pervasive tone of disappointment from administrative and police offices in the provinces on this matter in a memo to the Secretary of State for the Colonial Office and Governor Sir John Macpherson. These disappointments related,

⁷⁷ On the series of punitive military expeditions that opened up the Niger Delta and hinterland countries respectively to Pax-Britannica, see Isichei, p. 123-134 and p. 136-143.

⁷⁸ Isichei however made the erroneous comment that firearms were used but they did not trigger the wars in the first place. (p. 51)

first, to the fact that “a great deal more must be done to satisfy the minimum requirements of adequate and hygienic housing of members of the Force”, and second, the “shocking standard of driving and the incidence of serious road accidents” requiring “systematic and regular police patrols”. Others include representation from officers that pay is low and generally insufficient as well as criticism over the system of promotion, benefits and uniforms, etc.⁷⁹

Alemika (1993) has highlighted the various ways in which the unpleasant and unenviable colonial origins of the police is at the roots of the crisis of legitimacy confronting the force in the post-colonial era. Arguing that the police since the colonial era have been “consistently repressive, corrupt and inefficient”, he indicted the British colonial regime for bequeathing a police force that was patently “paramilitary in organization” and which operated as an “apparatus of violence” to suppress opposition from below (p. 187). It is important to point out that the notorious colonial origins of the police force (and the army) as instruments of intimidation and brutality has continued till date. This is particularly so as the police force was structured to “regulate and regiment the indigenous people and facilitate their exploitation”, organized as mercenary units and employed in several punitive expeditions to maim and kill “belligerent natives”, and to burn and loot “obstructionist” villages (Alemika, 1993: p. 202). Apart from that, the patterns of recruitment of the police, and how they were used in quelling civil uprisings, reveal a pattern that has endured to date. For instance, the first Armed Police Force (APF) for the Colony of Lagos comprised mostly of Hausas, run-away and freed slaves. In this regard, colonial governors showed evident bias for the “advantages” of using an alien (Hausa) to police a Yoruba population. In short, the colonial governments preferred the mercenary police system, that is a Police Force “whose personnel are alien to, alienated from and hostile to, the population among whom they are deployed”. It is important to note that apart from creating a “soulless” police force that could carry out orders to the letter, the preference for alien recruits also ensured that the police force was overly dependent on the government. This, in turn, makes them very vulnerable

⁷⁹ CO537/5783: Report of Police Adviser on his visit to Nigeria; see also CO537/5784: Police Department, Organization of, under new Constitution; CO537/7165: Regionalization policy of the Macpherson Era.

to political manipulation, and partisanship, and amenable to the repression of political opponents. To quote an earlier work by Alemika (1993: 204), the “colonial police forces were organized and oriented to behave as occupation forces-- ruthless, brutal, corrupt, dishonest and prone to brutalizing the colonized peoples and vandalizing their properties”. In specific terms, Alemika noted that the militaristic and repressive nature of the colonial policing were evident in the brutal suppression of pockets of dissidents during the anti-tax riots of 1929-1930 in Warri Province, and the brutal manner of quelling the Egba women’s demonstration in 1948. Accordingly, there has been a strong element of continuity in the tradition of the police as “the foundation of the structures of exploitation and injustice as well as the legacy of the domination of the population by a few predatory and corrupt individuals ... remain intact and have been progressively strengthened in Nigeria since independence.”

Perhaps the police force cannot be indicted for all the malaise that continues to beset its operational activities. It is important not to forget, as Alemika argued that much of the criticisms against the Police Force reek with sheer disdain as they “operate against structural and institutional or organizational constraints that are fundamentally crippling, and which tend to account for the conduct, performance and non-legitimation of the police force in the country”(Alemika, 1993: 188-200). This widespread disdain and lack of confidence and support from the people to the police was well known to British colonial authorities, as they were often privy to the “numerous acts of lawlessness and pillage”, “several acts of violence and looting” inflicted by the police on the people. Much more recently, the top hierarchy of the NPF was also acutely aware of the inadequacies and excesses of the police⁸⁰. In 1990, the secretary to the NPF, Ibrahim Coomassie, who later became the Inspector General of Police, reacted to the deluge of petitions against the police received at the Force Headquarters in Lagos. According to him, the

commonest among these cases include corruption, lack of supervision, negligence of duty, abuse of office, insubordination, disobedience to lawful order and incivility to members of the public. Serious other cases include criminal offences bordering on stealing/ theft, armed robbery, rape, forgery

⁸⁰ For a critical self-evaluation, see commentaries by former IGP Ibrahim Coomassie who argued that the police is a reflection of the ills of the society and that it will be foolhardy to expect so much from the Force. (Alemika, 1993: 200). See also CLO (1990, 1991) for contemporary accounts of the activities of the police.

and altering, misappropriation of funds, obtaining under false pretences, extortion and demanding by menaces. In some instances, capital offences such as murder, arson and libel against the State are included”(cited in Alemika, 1993: 200).

Tamuno reported the role of the military and the police in curbing the civil anomie among coastal communities and their hinterland neighbors- including the Aro expedition of 1901-1902, the Ekumeku Disturbances of 1903-1904, as well as the series of punitive expeditions to acquire territories. He traced, for instance, the emergence of the RWAFF in 1898, and prior to this time, the establishment of constabularies in Lagos (from 1880s) and in the NC Protectorate (from 1894). To give effect to the powers of these coercive forces, the colonial government passed three major Ordinances between February and June 1912. The Collective Punishment Ordinance No. 67 basically prescribed a range of punishments for any community in the event that an individual or group member of that community committed an offence. The Unsettled District Ordinance No. 15 and the Peace Preservation Ordinance No. 4, essentially defined what methods of law and order were to be implemented in order to suppress civil disturbances in communities where an outbreak of hostilities essentially threatened peace and stability.⁸¹

In March 1919, the Acting Governor of Lagos, A.G. Boyle expressed concern in a memo to the Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs (hereafter, SSCA), to the effect that the colonial government lacked effective structures for maintaining peace among the natives⁸². According to him, the Arms Ordinances of 1917 effectively made it difficult, if not impossible, to arm troops with the kind of weapons necessary for the maintenance of public law and order. Besides, the troops were also handicapped by lack of discipline and leadership. To correct these shortcomings, the acting Governor proposed the strengthening of existing Ordinances, including the Unsettled Districts and Peace Preservation Ordinances of 1916 and 1917 respectively, and to reorganize

⁸¹ The Peace Preservation Ordinance was later amended with the promulgation of No. 31 of 1912. See Tamuno, p. 45-47.

⁸² The Acting Governor was apparently reacting to a 15-page report by a three-man committee comprising the Attorney General E. Greenwood, Commandant, Nigeria Regiment, Brigadier-General F.G. Cunliffe, and the acting Inspector General of the Police, W.R. Parry titled Civil Disturbances: Scheme for Reorganization. C.O. 537/ 842/ 26743 of March 31, 1919.

civil forces for the maintenance of law and order. It is instructive to note that the memo also proposed a scheme for the mobilization of the police (and in the event of escalation), how to employ army resources to quell disturbances. In this regard, four circumstances were stipulated under which the Force may be used to quell civil anomie. First, if twelve or more persons continue riotously to assemble when a reasonable time has lapsed after the reading of the proclamation. Second, was where an attack is made on a person or property, and third, in order to repel force, that is, in self-defence. Last, was where it is the manifest intention of the mob to attack persons or property. However, the determinant of “manifest intention” was subjectively vague a matter entirely left to the judgement of the troop leader.

It is not clear, however, the circumstances (and amount of force) that may be used to maintain law and order and/or punish communities in the event of a breach of peace; apart from a long-standing concern over the use of strictly military resources to manage issues that should ordinarily be the exclusive preserve of the police. One of the most devastating expeditions in the colonial history of Nigeria was that against the Aro people in the Igbo hinterlands resulted from this controversy. The importance of the Aro expedition manifest in the huge casualty figures on both sides, the long four months duration it took from November 1901 to March 1902, and the fact that it dominated most of the colonial dispatches and correspondences in that year.⁸³ Although the details and scope of the expedition are outside the scope of this study, three facts relating to that brutal reprisal further amplified the high-handedness of the colonial administration. In the first instance, was the sheer large number of forces involved, estimated at 87 officers, 1550 men and 2100 carriers.⁸⁴ Second, was the amount of weapons used by both sides; including almost 25, 000 rifles and cap guns reportedly captured from the natives.⁸⁵ Third, was the extent of damage wrought on the people of Aro by the superior firepower of the British expeditionary forces. In one

⁸³ C.O. 520/ 14: Southern Nigeria, 1902, v. II

⁸⁴ This number was eventually reduced to 72 officers, 1250 men and 1800 carriers because the government of the Northern Nigeria could not supply enough hands. Later, 400 men added by southern Nigeria bringing the total of officers and men to 1745.

⁸⁵ See details in C.O. 520/ 14/ 1642-16430. According to colonial records, this large consignment of firearms captured prompted the promulgation of the Firearms Proclamation of 1902.

operation just before the commencement of full-scale hostilities, the expedition reportedly massacred some 400 men, women and children in Obegu, a hinterland town in Opobo District.⁸⁶

Another historical example of these contradictions (and the inherent dangers they posed) could be seen in the controversy over the use of the military expeditionary forces under the auspices of the Royal West African Frontier Forces (RWAFF) to quell civil disturbances like those that occurred at the Qua Iboe rivers in 1909, in reprisal for the killing of two government officials. In this expedition, an armed team comprising 6 white men and 100 soldiers reportedly burnt the town into “a heap of blackened ruins” right up to the borders of town. Indeed, the recklessness of the soldiers was matched by similar actions by the officers, one of whom reportedly killed 50-60 natives in an expedition that also affected ‘innocent people belonging to a neutral tribe’. In the aftermath of the reprisal attacks, three women were crippled through gun shots: one through the right thigh, a young girl shot right between toes with bullet still in her foot, and another old woman shot through the upper part of her foot with ruptured tendons.⁸⁷

Of course, the reasons behind punitive military expeditions involving large-scale massacres of natives and destruction of properties, often also, included the absurd and intangible. In Ijonema, a community three miles from Amie (headquarters of the Kwale district), the main reason was the flogging of a native court messenger sent by District Commissioner Davidson to serve court summons. Thus, in October 1905, Major Maclean led a force, armed with maxim guns, to shell the town⁸⁸. By the time the expedition arrived, however, they met an empty town but for two white flags hoisted, 26 calabashes of palm oil, 4 goats and 300 tubers of yam thereby suing for

⁸⁶ My citations are from a detailed report by Lieutenant Colonel A. Montanaro, Commander of the Aro expedition (C.O. 520/ 14/ 1642-16430). Although the Aro project was elaborate, several others took place in and around the ND and Southern Nigeria in general, aimed at pacifying the natives. For the Asaba expedition led by captain Moorhouse and assisted by 200 men, see C.O. 520/ 16/ 51266, 12-12-1902).

⁸⁷ For letter by R. Smith to M'Keown, Qua Iboe Mission, Belfast, 10-6-1909, See COS20/87/24005: Qua Iboe Mission: Punitive Expedition at Enen on Qua Iboe River]

⁸⁸ Before the force went on that expedition, it loaned a millimetre gun from Calabar, making its intentions clearer.

peace. This did not deter the forces as they did not only raze the town but went in hot pursuit of Ijonema people to the neighbouring town of Ogure, inflicting severe wounds on 40 people in the process. On 5-10-1905, the people capitulated, while stiff penalties were imposed, including 100 goats, 20, 000 tubers of yam, and a commitment to undertake the construction of such roads as the political officer might order. A program of demobilization was also put in place forcing the natives to surrender their arms and ammunitions. The “instigators’ of the crisis were also taken to Sapele as hostages so as to ensure the payment of the fines. Finally, the forces maintained long after the cessation of hostilities, a military garrison in the town.⁸⁹ The various encounters between colonial state sponsored punitive expeditionary forces and local people bear remarkable similarities with the operational behaviour of the police and military in contemporary Nigeria as witnessed quite frequently throughout the oil region of the Niger Delta.

To these actions should be added the concomitant lack of clarity on the limits of police and military power, or indeed, the circumstances under which one should give way to the other. In the wake of the Aba riots, for example, the colonial government set up two commissions to investigate the circumstances leading to the crisis. The Birrell-Gray Commission on the one hand justified the shooting of protesters, while the Aba commission led by Aubrey Cooke condemned it in no unmistakable term. The memorandum submitted by the Cooke Commission dated 17-12-1930 highlighted substantive issues relating to the operational use of military and or police power to control civil insurrections. According to Aubrey Cooke, the main duties of the Force were essentially “to maintain internal peace and security” and “to defend the country against external aggression”. Several questions emanated from the investigation including whether soldiers despatched to assist the police quell riots should be constituted as “troops” in themselves not as “additional police”. Second was the kinds of weapon that could be used by troops: lethal, non-lethal e.g. truncheons, batons, etc. Third was whether the troops should open fire in order to produce a “deterrent effect elsewhere”. Fourth related to the conduct of the military when called out to aid civil authorities; precisely whether they should be in control of the operation or fall under

⁸⁹ C.O. 520/ 32: Southern Nigeria. 1905, v. 4, n. 38260 of 27-10-1905- Report by the acting High Commissioner, southern Nigeria to Lyttleton, SSCO, 18-11-1905

the control and supervision of the police authorities. The fifth controversy is related to whether or not the equipments of the RWAFF were entirely suitable for their duties in aid of a civil power. Although both arrived at two different conclusions that placed the government in the predicament of having to make a choice, the Cooke Commission in particular, noted that all present arms at the disposal of the armed force, except the butt of the rifle, are lethal. Arising from this fact, the Commission suggested several measures to prevent a reoccurrence, including the need to supply the Force with non-lethal weapons and to provide them with special civil-based training in crowd control. It also recommended, as a matter of urgency, the need to redraft the manual guiding the conduct of officers, military or police, in the cause of civil disturbances and anomie.⁹⁰

The striking parallels between the role of the security forces in colonial times and now is due to the fact that at independence, the post-colonial State did not re-define the historical roles of the forces. Thus, the army inherited was that of enforcers of the will of the state not that of the people. The army was to maintain order as defined by the State and to terrorize and permanently subjugate the people. The armed forces remained largely an army of occupation established to maintain the predatory state. The police as an offshoot of the military also became an instrument used indiscriminately by the central government to intimidate opponents; a kind of Gestapo force. Rather than to protect and serve, both forces intimidated the civil population. It is quite revealing, then, the mindset of the senior official at the Colonial Office in London who inscribed a handwritten note on one of the Ordinances deposited at the PRO in London. He insisted that that troops must cut costs and reduce the burden on State purse by living on the restive community, thereby giving tacit approval to police and army personnel to plunder the farms and extort local people! If the behaviour of the police and military personnel in contemporary Niger Delta was anything to go by, it is clearer that very little of this unwritten operational code has changed in modern times.

⁹⁰ For details, see C.O. 583/ 176/ 9: Memorandum on the action of the Royal West African Frontier Force during the Aba disturbances- Aubery Cooke, 17-12-1930

Apart from the economic aspects of British enterprise in the Niger Delta, another major source of irritation was the actual implementation of colonial policies considered rather harsh and discriminatory by the people, and the punitive styles of enforcing such mandates. It would be recalled that the British were quite reluctant to establish any elaborate structure for colonial administration; not because it did not desire to maximize the advantages of such an investment, but because it feared such an engaging involvement would be too costly to sustain itself. This euphoria was however short-lived as they soon found an ingenious way to engage colonial extraction without responsibility through the policy of Indirect Rule. From the perspective of the first generation of colonial architects, the policy of Indirect Rule was essentially the product of British benevolence which, as opposed to the Portuguese policy, for instance, sought to preserve as much as possible local institutions and resources rather than impose a new, alien culture on the people. The truth, of course, was that Indirect Rule turned out to be the cheapest (and most attractive) of all the options available to the British requiring it to create and deal with a segment of the local population, especially the aristocratic elite who occupied and controlled existing traditional structures of governance who would, in turn, implement colonial policies ultimately directed at unlimited resource extraction. In this scheme of colonial governance, traditional institutions were repositioned to serve as intermediaries between colonial administrators and the local population, and in the process, enjoyed sinecure opportunities and advantages determined from time to time by British authorities.

In the context of the Niger Delta (as in much of southern Nigeria), the realities and outcomes of the Lugardian policy of Indirect Rule showed mixed results as witnessed for instance, in the widely unpopular decision to impose a regime of direct taxation on communities under the Native Revenue Ordinance (NRO) as well as the groundswell of popular grassroots discontentment with, and reactions to the abrasiveness of Native Authority administrators handpicked to administer colonial policies. These two interrelated aspects in the administration of Native Authority will be discussed in some details in order to expose the various limitations and contradictions of colonial rule in the delta region. Many aspects of these colonial moments and experiences continue to resonate, in very significant and potentially destabilizing ways, in

contemporary Nigeria. The Native Revenue Ordinance (NRO) necessitating the imposition of taxation was preceded by detailed assessment of people's wealth for the purpose of taxation, as well as a census of population, livestock, as well as economic trees; all steps which the local population were unfamiliar with and suspicious of. Indeed, had the British taken the time to understand and appreciate the culture of the people, those who designed the NRO would have realized that in local norms and customs, the local people considered tax a redemption fee payable only by slaves to secure their freedom.⁹¹ It is irrelevant to catalogue the various reactions of local delta communities to direct taxation policies of the colonial authorities, especially as the reactions were basically uniform and spontaneous. Clearly the most celebrated of the anti-tax protests was that carried out by women which broke out in Aba in 1929 in anticipation that the taxation of women was to be an integral part of the indirect rule project (Afigbo, 1966). A year earlier, men in different parts of southeastern Nigeria had, without raising a finger, grudgingly succumbed to what was widely accepted as too repressive a taxation regime. In the final analysis, the women's protest became a rude awakening that not only jostled colonial administrator but also more importantly, forced a re-evaluation of this controversial piece of legislation.

The renowned historian, Obaro Ikime, has rightly pointed out that the Aba protests were even more significant and complex than has often been imagined in history textbooks. According to him, the upheavals were essentially "protests against the sum total of grievances associated with contemporary British administrative practices and the allied inroads of western civilizations" into totally different societies (Ikime, 1980: 444). Apart from the long duration of the demonstrations, three months, beginning on 18 November 1929, it covered several areas: four divisions in the Province of Owerri, two out of the three divisions in Calabar Province, and in Afikpo division in Ogoja Province. A closer look at its spread reveals the less obvious reality that the protests occurred most intensely along important trade and market routes dominated, if not outrightly controlled by itinerant women traders. As rightly pointed out by Ade-Ajayi and Espie (1965: 203, 394), the prevalence of markets and long distance trading encouraged interaction between and among women from different backgrounds

⁹¹ The revelation forced the British to reverse its position in preference for a system of "lump assessment" payable by towns. (p. 566).

outside of control by men. This is particularly interesting when it is borne in mind that in most traditional African societies, markets are important beyond serving as sites for buying and selling, but more importantly, for serving as focal points for frequent social, political and cultural contacts, as most social engagements and arrangements are organized around market days. Another celebrated case of women's revolt occurred between 1941-1947 during which Egba matriarchs staged a long-drawn campaign of civil disobediences, demonstrations and insurrections against colonial exploitation, taxation, market closures and commodity hold-ups. This culminated, ultimately, into the kidnapping of colonial officials and their local agents, as well as the dethronement of the traditional ruler, the Alake of Egbaland. That these protests broke out and spread like bushfire caught the colonial administration in the southeast and southwest of Nigeria (and also the men) by surprise, demonstrated that with determination women could embark on autonomous social actions outside frameworks determined by their male counterparts.

Like other parts of southern Nigeria, the introduction of direct taxation in the coastal delta, circa 1927, had been described as a "most unwelcome interference" with the "sedate traditional life" that the people were long accustomed to (Ikime, 1967: 77). The anti-tax riots in Warri province between 1927 and 1928 would be sufficient to illustrate the unpopularity of this British intervention. Believing that it would be more expedient in terms of generating more resources to enable it meet the burdensome overhead costs of administration (coupled with the fact that the global recession that came in the aftermath of the World War I was already biting hard on the British economy), British colonial personnel were blinded by the enthusiasm of higher revenues through taxation. Clough (1972) noted other factors that precipitated the tax riots, including the fall in the price of palm oil, the cutting back of shipment due to the Great Depression, and the opposition to the appointment of warrant chiefs by the colonial authorities. The first two factors are important as they indicate how volatile the economy of a society could be when it is inserted, prematurely, into the mainstream of a hostile and highly unstable international capitalist system. Elsewhere, Ikime (1966b: 559-573) has critically investigated the anti-tax riots that broke out in

Warri as a result of the second aspect of the Lugardian agenda⁹². According to him, unlike other parts of southern Nigeria, the British were particularly slow in implementing the NA system and direct tax in the Warri Province for two reasons: first, the city-states of western Delta lacked centralized political institutions, and second, the people were unaccustomed to the idea of paying direct tax. By 1927, however, the justifications behind the slow implementation of direct taxation in Warri and its environs had collapsed against the backdrop of the need to meet the exigencies of implementing self-governance programs. Besides, the British colonial administration needed urgently to give credence to the moral argument that, as a matter of equity, the population of this area must pay like their counterparts in the eastern Niger Delta as well as throughout southern Nigeria (p. 559).

In a broader context, Dudley (1973: 26-26) had pursued the profound argument that colonial rule was essentially military rule. To paraphrase him, colonial rule was, for all practical purposes, military rule; hence whatever legitimacy the colonial authorities possessed derived essentially from the monopoly of the means of violence thus making colonial administrators 'praetors', and the system of rule, authoritarian and dictatorial. In very fundamental respects, the patterns of response by the colonial government to the tax riots demonstrated clearly this claim. In the aftermath of the outbreak of violence in Sapele (Warri Province) soon after the Officer Administering the District had gone there to explain the new policy on direct tax and what informed its adoption⁹³, rifles were issued and policemen fired 2-3 rounds of ball cartridges killing one person and wounding three. Thereafter, the police detachment was also increased to 98, while market towns such as Forcados and Burutu received reinforcements.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, the anti-tax riots were not directed at the British administrative officers with the same fury reserved for local agents such as the warrant chiefs, court scribes, and messengers who were considered as corrupt.

⁹² The police station was reportedly sacked by a "large and excited mob" that almost overpowered the IGP and a local detachment of 12 policemen. The first aspect being the establishment and consolidation of the Native Authority system, otherwise known as indirect rule.

⁹³ C.O. 583/ 154: Disturbance at Sapele in Warri Province.

⁹⁴ See Telegram from Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria to the SS Colonies, 8-10-1927)

In response to the spate of anomie, the colonial government also invoked the Collective Punishment Ordinance that led to series of arrests. In many Urhobo/ Isoko villages and towns, as well as Ode Itsekiri, it took the police patrol almost two months to quell the riots (p. 563). The Resident proposed the breaking up of the Warri Province into 4 coinciding with the major ethnic groups: Warri, Sapele, Forcados and a sub-district Ase for Isoko-speaking clans. Unfortunately, again, this reorganization was more or less for administrative exigency rather than any attempt to decentralize power and make governance closer to the people. For instance, the Warri District comprised Itsekiri, and all Urhobo-speaking clans except Agbon, Abraka and Orogun, and one Ijaw clan. The Sapele district comprised of Sapele Township and half the clan of Okpe and the Itsekiri settlement around Koko. The sub-district of Ase comprised of Isoko speakers and a number of Ibo (Aboh) speaking clans and 2 western Ijo clans. Only in the Forcados district was a homogenous Ijo ethnic group clearly discernible (Ikime, 1966: 567).

However, the colonial authority was favourably disposed to the use of police and military firepower to break the anti-riots principally because the anti-tax movement was taking a heavy toll on business and colonial government interests. Although initially localized, the anti-tax movement soon began to spread to other areas while at the same time stimulating previously “underground” ethnic-based associations and unions to become more assertive.⁹⁵ A telegram by the agent of the African and Eastern Corporations at Aba to his headquarters and the CO reported that the upheavals seriously affected trade, and urged the reduction of all indents by 50%, suspension of new shipments etc. The proliferation of violence invariably led to the invocation of “Proclaimed Districts”, a martial law that required unusually large deployment of troops to quell community disturbances and impose stability.

The complications that emanated from the various attempts to implement the colonial taxation policy must however, be considered alongside the widespread frustration with the second plank of the Lugardian policy on Indirect Rule relating to the

⁹⁵ As far back as the late 1920s, colonial officials had always suspected that there were “much more tribal and clan organization than was ever suspected...” (See Hunt [resident] to Major walker, deputy IGP in CO 583/ 158/ 4: Disturbances in Warri Province- 13-3-1928)

administration of Native Authority. Indeed, there is a sense in which one can argue that it was misleading to assume that taxation alone triggered the wave of protests and violent riots in southern Nigeria in general, and the Niger Delta in particular. It would be recalled that in places where the British did not meet a centralized traditional institution of authority, they assumed wrongly that such communities are politically ungovernable. This was the case in most of eastern Nigeria and the coastal delta where a highly decentralized system operated. Since Indirect Rule was designed to function with the active connivance of traditional institutions and authority, the British created new ones, often without the consent of the local people.

A closer investigation reveals that beyond taxation were a litany of other complaints: discontentment with persecution, extortion, corruption and practices of Native Court members, the autocracy and high-handedness of appointed Warrant Chiefs, illegal and oppressive sanitary fines, continuance and enforcement of unpaid labour on civil constructions, and unfair/ excessive imprisonment, and the abysmal low prices of farm produces (especially palm oil and palm kernel) as well as exorbitant prices on imported goods (especially tobacco and spirits)- both of which threatened or eroded the purchasing power of most families (Afigbo, 1972; Arifalo, 2001). By way of conclusion, therefore, it should be noted that taxation merely created an alibi, rather than the real cause of the riots of 1927-1928. This is because the colonial enterprise from this period on had started experiencing its own sets of acute contradictions. At a level, natives across board were already tired of, and willing to jettison the NA, and to go back to their traditional ways of doing things. The upheavals that followed this frustration, in turn, intensified the prospects for civil anomie, and the use of police repression by the British.

Trouble had marked the institution of the warrant chiefs from its inception, especially so because there seemed to be an unwritten rule in colonial circles that unpopular and patently pro-British elements were to be appointed. Ikime traced the political rise and tyranny of the local chief to September 13, 1917, when a government gazette announced Chief "Dore Numa" as a "Recognised Chief" and the "Native Authority"

for the Warri Division⁹⁶. According to the gazette, other chiefs appointed were to serve as subordinates to Dore (p. Ikime, 1965: 313)⁹⁷. Unfortunately, the creation of paramount chiefs, although it extended the logic of indirect rule, had its own inherent contradictions in that appointees were usually favourites of colonial administrators who, most often, can be trusted to exercise arbitrary authority inimical to their people. In a memo authored by Major G.H. Walker (DSO), the following scathing criticisms were levelled against this system. First, was that they were “cordially disliked” and second, “exceptionally corrupt”. Third was that the chiefs were an “artificial creation who for the sake of their warrants and their vested interests are ready to consent to an unpopular measure”. One of such arbitrariness in the administration of native authority law and institution had been well documented by Ikime (1965: 313-333) in the case of Warri where the appointment of a local chief, Dogho, represented in significant ways the worst contradictions inherent in the administration of NA. Chief Dogho of Itsekiri ruled with so much tyranny while the British looked the other way. His people and other chiefs accused him of building a place of his own instead of living in big Warri (Ode Itsekiri), the ancestral home of the Jekri, and indicted him for never calling meetings to discuss important community matters. With time, colonial officials began to complain in official memos not only about the corruptive practices of warrant chiefs, but also that “the more disquieting thing is the fact that we shall have to support the Warrant Chiefs even though there may be grave doubts as to their competence on the job”. Even more serious opinion was the sentiment that “[If] Native Administration in the Southern Province is to be a real thing, it must be built up on the existing organizations of the Sobos and Jekris and not imposed as an alien thing from above”.⁹⁸ Although warrant chiefs were actively courted by the British,

⁹⁶ It is important to note that the role played by Dogho in the overthrow of Nana was not by accident. Both figures have always seen each other as rivals. This rivalry, it should be noted, predated them. Their parents and families (Olomu and Numa) were also archrivals in the second half of the 19th Century. Nana and Dogho, their children, inherited the feud.

⁹⁷ It should be noted that the appointment of Dogho showed, as usual, British ignorance of local customs. Although Dogho had familial connections to the royal family and that of the PM, Ologbotsere in Itsekiri, his descent was on the female side. This fact should ordinarily disqualify him, according to local custom, from holding such an important position. (p. 314).

⁹⁸ Amery, SSCO endorsed the latter view, which soon found practical effect in the reforms of the native administration effected soon after. (C.O. 583/ 158/ 4: disturbance in Warri Province- Amery to Governor Thomson, 3-4-1928)

there remained widespread opinion that in their circles “the more disquieting thing is the fact that we shall have to support the warrant chiefs even though there may be grave doubts as to their competence for the job”- a sought of paramount chieftaincy without a people!⁹⁹

In many ways than one, then, the emergence of powerful local lords like Chief Dogho encouraged nascent suspicion and tension, especially between the Itsekiri and the Urhobos. For example, Dogho was to play a crucial and pivotal role in the anti-Nana campaign and other controversial administrative agenda of the British between 1894-1932¹⁰⁰. Apart from showing outright favouritism to his kinsmen in making appointments to sinecure Native Authority positions, Ikime identified the acquisition and sale of land in Warri and Sapele as other areas where Dogho’s political ambition and interest was most visible. The cumulative impact of this was that the anti-tax movement in Itsekiriland between 1927-1928 also began to coalesce with a festering anti-Dogho sentiment. Another areas where the tyranny of Dogho was most vividly pronounced related to that of land distribution; an issue that in many ways provided the final alibi for local anomie and conflicts. On the issue of land, the authoritative weekly magazine, *West Africa*, captured it best when it noted that if you are looking for trouble, the land question offered the safest and the fastest source. The land policy of the colonial government, which vested lands in the British Crown and effectively dispossessed the people of vast communal/ ancestral lands never augured well for many communities. In fact, many communities threatened that as soon as their leases expired, they would not renegotiate (Baddeley to Amery, 16-1-1927).

The last nagging problem for British colonial authorities revolved around that of arms trafficking and weapons proliferation in the Oil River. The severity of the problem was underscored, in particular, by the fact that it was not just a major issue in all British colonies, and throughout Africa, but also a subject of major international

⁹⁹ CO583/158/4: Disturbances in Warri Province- JEW Flood Minutes to Governor Dep. Baddeley, 13-3-1928

¹⁰⁰ According to Ikime, Dogho received a medal for his service during the Ebrohim Expedition, and was made the political agent for the Benin River in 1896. He also supplied the British with carriers during the Benin Expedition between 1896-1897 at a time when the Itsekiri and Urhobos were reportedly reluctant to assist. (1965: 315-316).

conferences (FO403/376). It also did not escape the attention of other European officials as an inquiry to that effect was requested by the Belgian Charge d'Affaires. In response to this request through a letter from the CO to the FO, R.L. Antrobus, agreed that unfortunately no special measures have been recently taken by the Government of Southern Nigeria to prevent the illegal importation of firearms into the protectorate. He pointed out that, to no avail the government of southern Nigeria had published a gazette offering rewards for information leading to the conviction of persons contravening the Firearms Proclamation of 1902 (and the subsequent Proclamation (no. 2) of 1903.¹⁰¹

Since there were no industries for manufacturing those guns and ammunitions physically located in any of colonial territory, the surest source of these illicit weapons must be traced abroad, even though such importations were driven by the felt-need among Niger Delta communities to acquire them so as to secure strategic advantages over one another. In an undated report on Customs proceeds, Consul MacDonald traced the proliferation of firearms in West Africa in general, and the Oil Rivers in particular, to two major wars that raged in Africa about that time: the Franco-German war of 1870 and the Ashante war in the Gold Coast. He described the trade in Firearms as a "legitimate, brisk (and singularly unwise)" one until 1880 when vice consul Johnston published an order banning importation, except for rifles importation that could not be stopped. It was only in 1891 that the Niger Coast Protectorate administration, by a customs ordinance, banned the importation of rifles, cannons, machine guns, rifle ammunitions etc. Debunking the widespread but critical view that within the last two years, especially after the Brussels Act, some 1500 rifles and machine guns smuggled into the Brass district alone, MacDonald noted that:

There is not, now, nor has there ever been, a machine gun in the Brass district; the total number of rifles in possession of the Brass people is somewhere between four and five hundred, many of these are old and obsolete patterns, and all have been in possession of the Brass men for many years.

¹⁰¹ See FO403/376/5: R.L. Antrobus, CO to FO, received on 24-1-1906 in Correspondence Respecting 'Arms and Liquor Traffic in East and West Africa' (1906), part 1

Although certain categories of weapons, especially rifles, percussion guns, cannons, etc. were prohibited under the Brussels Act¹⁰², they were freely available in various parts of Nigeria. In the area where the Royal Niger Company administration began in 1889, for instance, a blanket prohibition of importation of firearms was “more honoured in the breach than the observance”. Even by the time the Royal Charter of the company was evoked and a new colonial administration established in 1891, Consular Orders given by Vice Consul H. Johnston prohibiting the further introduction of breech-loading rifles, cannons, and machine guns, were disregarded and unlimited quantities of firearms still allowed to pass. Data on trade returns in the following two years, 1892-1893, recorded no less than 62, 272 guns of which 18, 746 were percussion weapons, 34, 410 cartridges, 33,370,550 percussion caps, 637, 248 lbs of powder, and in 1893, 14, 459 percussion guns and 258, 893, 750 percussion caps. By April 1894, more than 258 million gun caps were imported, with little or no step taken to prevent further importation or to control sale by munitions dealers.

Despite the hypocrisy of colonial administrators many of whom pretended not to know that the weapons were smuggled into the costal delta, there were isolated voices suggesting innovative ways of transcending the arms proliferation problem proactively. Rather than forcefully recovering the weapons through blockage and harassment, for instance, MacDonald demonstrated a firm grasp of the delicacy of the situation and the need for caution when he suggested that the only way to disarm the people is to “gain the goodwill and confidence of the native chiefs and eventually to purchase the better kinds of weapons at very reduced rates”. In direct reaction to the growing concern over indiscriminate arms proliferation, Sir Egerton requested the permission of the SSCO through a confidential memo dated September 15, 1908, to instruct customs officers in Calabar (under Section 53 of the Customs Ordinance) not to grant permits for landing arms, ammunition and powder in excess of the average for the last three years, and to publish notification to that effect in the official gazette warning merchants. This would seem to underscore the suspicion of government that that port city had become a major point for the illegal importation of arms and ammunitions.

¹⁰² See FO 403/217: Confidential- Sir John Kirk to the Marquis of Salisbury received on August 30, 1895 on the grievances of Chiefs of Brass against the RNC

In short, the ineptitude of British agents disrupted indigenous institutions in southern Nigeria, and paved the way for full-blown colonial occupation, misrule and eventually, disintegration whose results are only now being recognized and rectified. As Anene (1959) rightly pointed out, during the period between 1849 and 1884, Britain “imperceptibly entrenched herself in the politics of the coast” as a natural starting point of the modern history of southern Nigeria (p. IX). Thus, according to him, the far-reaching consequences of British rule cannot be assessed objectively without reference to the confrontation between the traditional indigenous institutions and the new ones for the former were based on “utter ignorance” of the latter. British pre-conceptions with the peoples was “both prejudiced and ignorant” as witnessed by the widespread but erroneous misconception that the absence of extensive political integration was evidence of anarchy; whereas such a mindset demonstrated that the British never appreciated the “complexity and subtlety which characterized the social and political institutions of the indigenous people”(1959: 1-2). The salient aspects and impacts of colonial rule continue to have far-reaching implications and complications for the post-colonial regimes of governance, state-society relations, and the maintenance of law and order in the Niger Delta in particular (especially as the basin became of such a major strategic importance to Nigeria with the discovery of crude oil in large quantities), and Nigeria at large.

5.3. Colonial Rule and Inter-ethnic Relations in the Niger Delta

In the preceding section, an account was presented of how colonial rule led to and accentuated economic dislocation and socio-political instability in Nigeria’s delta region. In a similar vein, the unique typology of conflicts and struggles that ensued, and how the over-reliance on extreme violence and ruthlessness by the colonial state created an uninspiring basis for tension and conflicts in that region were highlighted and discussed in detail. Yet, one critical aspect of the contradiction and crisis occasioned by colonial rule, particularly in the context of the Niger Delta that still required in-depth account and analysis was how colonial rule created a basis as well as the context for the politicization of inter-ethnic relationships between and among the various ethnic communities that eventually emerged in that region. There is need

to pay some attention to this aspect if only because ethnicity played (and continues to play) a pivotal and defining role in the dynamics of society, politics and change within, between and among the various city-states that eventually ossified into the scores of ethnic groups that now inhabit contemporary Niger Delta. Obviously, the experiences (and effects) of contacts with Europeans differed in several interesting respects from one community to another, depending on how each community was able to take advantage of and maximize their external trade and political engagements with the British. Regardless, the transformations witnessed by the coastal city-states of Nigeria's delta in the context of colonial rule continue to have lasting, even irreversible implications for inter-ethnic relationships between and among them that cannot be ignored due to their manifestations in violent forms in contemporary Nigeria.

Although slanted in several regards, the earliest accounts by European visitors have painted a picture of inter-group relations that cannot be discountenanced in terms of grasping the complexities and long traditions of rivalry and hatred among ethnic groups in the delta. In his report on the mission to the Niger and Benue Rivers in June 1889, for instance, Major Claude MacDonalds reportedly claimed that inhabitants of areas around the north of Ase River, belonging to the Patani tribe were "chiefly remarkable for their treachery, lawlessness, and love for plunder", a claim that may have been based largely on Ijaw rumours rather than the reality. As far back as the 1930s also, Hubbard had noted that the Ijaw attitude towards the Isoko group was characterized by "a feeling of intense hatred", noting perceptibly further that "there is sure to be friction whenever they come into contact". According to him, while the Ijaws call Isoko (Igabo), Isoko people call Ijaws Ahworria; both epithets for savage, cannibal and bushman.

There is some sense in arguing that indigenous resistance to external economic and political dominations accounted for the lion share of social upheavals in the delta region during colonial rule. This should not, however, be construed to mean the absence (or non-significance) of inter-communal, inter-ethnic rivalries and competition as stimulants of conflicts. Indeed, in the pursuit of its many Imperial ambitions focusing primarily around economic extractions through unequal trade,

British colonial rule manipulated and exploited existing ethnic sentiments for selfish immediate gains. Ultimately, even though competitions, rivalries and wars marked several aspects of the relationships between the coastal city-states that invariably ossified into ethnic and sub-ethnic groups, the analysis thus far has pointed inexorably to the fact that the advent and consolidation of British colonial rule complicated, if not intensified, these various networks. What is certain, of course, is that soon after independence in 1960, the highly repressive colonial strings that forcefully linked and bonded different ethnic and micro-ethnic groups in the oil Delta together had started showing signs of weakening.

These complications have occurred in several directions that ultimately led to the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic relations among various ethnic groups cohabiting the delta region of Nigeria. In the first place, the nature of colonial trade and politics (coupled with the character and aspirations of British commercial and consular interests) evidently favored some ethnic groups over others. Since the logic of colonial extraction required that different groups engaged one another in sometimes unhealthy competition in order to gain maximum advantages over and above the other in political and trade matters with the British, it became quite easy for them to engage in practices that compromised peaceful inter-ethnic relations. As a matter of fact, such a situation often created the basis for bitter enmity especially among groups that considered themselves disenfranchised or excluded from the economic and political processes. If this argument is extended even further, it also becomes clear why, in order to maximize the advantages of commerce, different groups engage themselves in contests over scarce resources, especially land. The second complication stimulated by colonial rule in terms of heightening the ethnic distrust and crises among various groups grew essentially out of the practice of the policy of divide-and rule designed by the colonial authorities for the purpose of governance. An unintended side-effect stimulated by colonial rule in general, and the policy of divide and rule in particular, was the assurance that ethnic groups and communities are unable to muster, collectively, such a united front to effectively challenge colonial policies and rule.

It must be borne in mind that British colonial administration leaned heavily on the policy of divide and rule in order to administer its vast colonies and protectorates in

Nigeria, each with distinct culture and language. It was true that the policy was conceived against the background of an overriding need to drastically reduce the overhead costs of colonial governance; hence, the appointment of *suitable* pro-British personalities from within communities as recognized representatives with the sole mandate to enforce compliance with colonial policies. Unfortunately, the appointment of these nominal/ titular viceroys never completely resolved the crisis of administration that faced colonial officials. If anything, the activities of the appointees encouraged nascent suspicion and tension between communities. One example that readily comes to mind, was that between the Itsekiri and Urhobo in the aftermath of the announcement, through a government gazette of September 13, 1917, of Chief "Dore Numa" as a "Recognized Chief" and the "Native Authority" for the Warri Division¹⁰³. The gazette also explicitly stipulated that other chiefs appointed were to serve in subordination to Dore. It was only a matter of time, then, that the appointee began to exercise arbitrary authority over a large area and to constitute a political nuisance even to the British colonial authorities.¹⁰⁴

Itsekiri-Urhobo relations were not generally cantankerous until the coming of the British. This must be borne in mind especially as chief Nana signed a treaty of protection with the British on behalf of himself and the Itsekiri-Urhobo communities west of the Forcados River in 1884. Ikime had analysed the thrusts and mis(fortunes) of these bilateral relations, reporting few instances of war between the two communities prior to the establishment of colonial rule, especially as the Urhobos were conscious of the superior firepower at the disposal of their Itsekiri neighbors southward. In a few instances, which was to be expected, conflicts often developed in the context of trade in palm oil. In 1876, for example, Olomu attacked Abraka, an Urhobo town, while his son and successor, Nana, continued this undercurrent of hostility after the death of his father. Apart from wars against the Urhobos which were

¹⁰³ It is important to note that the role played by Dogho in the overthrow of Nana was not by accident. Both figures have always seen each other as rivals. This rivalry, it should be noted, predated them. Their parents and families (Olomu and Numa) were also archrivals in the second half of the 19th Century. Nana and Dogho, their children, inherited the feud. (Ikime, 1965: 311).

¹⁰⁴ It should be noted that the appointment of Dogho showed, as usual, British ignorance of local customs. Although Dogho had familial connections to the royal family and that of the Prime Minister, Ologbetsere in Itsekiri, his descent was on the female side. This fact should ordinarily disqualify him, according to local custom, from holding such an important position. (Ikime, 1965: 314).

mostly over runaway slaves (the Igun war) and the breaking of his trade monopoly (Ogiegba War), Nana fought several others against his countrymen, two of which were in connection with his trade in Urhoboland. Unfortunately, however, Nana's ascension to the throne a year after the death of his father (1884) coincided with the time the British had made up their minds to impose direct rule in the Niger Delta. That same year, on July 16, 1884, the Itsekiri country became a British Protectorate. (p. 82-83). The tension between Nana and the British intensified, and came to a head in 1886 when the former stopped trade with white merchants to force the price of oil up¹⁰⁵

Between 1851 and 1894, three treaties were signed between British consular officials and the chiefs of Itsekiri all directed at promoting and regulating trade, ensuring political control and consolidating British colonial power on the Benin River.¹⁰⁶ The treaty of August 2, 1894 was however particularly aimed at clipping the wings of Nana, whose capital Ebrohimi was attacked seven weeks after the treaty (Ayomike, 1988: 4). In the consolidation of British influence in the Benin River, and by extension, Itsekiri status in Warri, the name of Chief Dore stood out for he was not just the undisputed pointsman for the British consulate, but also the sole source or leaser of Warri land to European business concerns such as the African Association, the Miller Brothers, UAC, and John Holt (p. 19-20). No wonder, then, that there were scores of land-related litigations against Dore and his Itsekiri kinsmen, some getting as far as the Privy Council in London, and after independence, the Supreme Court in Lagos. At different times, the claimants to Warri included the Royal family, individual free citizens, Agbassa Urhobos and Gbaramatu Ijo¹⁰⁷. Several other factors raised the importance of, and stakes over, Warri. The first, as Ayomike pointed out, was the decision of the colonial government to acquire a large parcel of land in 1901 on a 99-year lease. The purpose of this large acquisition was to erect residential

¹⁰⁵ It is intriguing to note that while between 1884 and 1888, the British under Consul Hewett flaunted Nana's power to tame the Ijos, by 1889, MacDonald had started questioning the myth of Nana's superiority (Ikime, 1969: 94).

¹⁰⁶ The Itsekiri claim to Warri could be traced to this treaty which Dogho signed, alongside more than 14 others chiefs at the Benin River Vice-Consulate. See, F.O. 2/ 63

¹⁰⁷ For details of land matters and cases in courts, see Ayomike (1988: 19-57)

quarters, barracks, and government offices. Dogho signed the lease on behalf of the Itsekiri. The second was the decision of the government to make Warri the capital of the Central Province, and then, of Warri Province, and last was the decision by the government to award the title of Olu of Warri, instead of Itsekiri (p. 65-66).

Colonial rule was such that inter-ethnic rivalries almost ultimately led to conflicts, most especially in the Niger Delta, in the context of trade and land use. For much of the oil palm trading era, Itsekiri-Urhobo trade relations were marked by series of troubles often culminating into strained bilateral relations. Two major factors have been identified as responsible for this situation. The first was that in order to meet the rapidly expanding demands of market for personnel to man trading posts and infrastructures of defense and security, Itsekiri merchants raided the Urhobo country for slaves since tradition forbade them from putting own kinsmen into servitude. Next, the methods of trade, especially the pernicious credit system that compelled Urhobos to pawn their children, as assurance that debt owed would be repaid, often degenerated into irritations and bad blood. As time passed, British inroads and entrenchment in the hinterland markets, achieved as a result of improvements in land and water communication, dealt a severe blow to Itsekiri communities as they began to lose their competitive edge and advantages. In the case of the Urhobo, British contacts occurred in late 1891 when the first British consul, Captain H.C. Gallway, reached and interacted with the people, and then selected Sapele as his administrative headquarters.¹⁰⁸

By 1892, and with the establishment of Sapele, the British consulate effectively closed down the consulate on the Benin River thereby ending almost 433 years of European enterprise there. The establishment of Sapele also effectively led to the collapse of the monopoly of trade enjoyed by Itsekiri middlemen (Salubi, 1958: 184-207)¹⁰⁹. Ikime traced the historical antecedent of the Itsekiri-Urhobo conflicts to this

¹⁰⁸ Effective British administration in Urhoboland commenced effectively in 1890. This is paradoxical for Urhoboland shares border with the Benin River- a scene of historic European enterprise in West Africa spanning over 400 years (Salubi, 1958: 204-205).

¹⁰⁹ Salubi (1958: 196-197) identified the role of several political agents- George Eyube, Tom Falladoh and Chief Dore Numa- in the consolidation and perpetuation of British colonial authority in

British decision to establish a vice-consulate in Sapele, as against the previous location in the lower Benin River that created the tussle over ownership. This relocation, and the subsequent expansions witnessed by that town, ensured that hitherto prominent Itsekiri markets and towns lost their competitive economic edge, and by implication, political and administrative clouts and importance. As more and more Itsekiri traders began to move into Sapele- especially after the fall of Nana-, they were not only permitted to settle at the waterside of Urhobo towns, but also to live and carry on trading from there to the extent that they were able to establish some *de facto* claims to Sapele (Salubi, 1958: 132, 156).

The point had been made earlier about the circumstances and arbitrariness that characterized the breaking up of the Warri Province into four- Warri, Sapele, Forcados and a sub-district Ase, for Isoko-speaking clans- roughly coterminous with the major ethnic groups. Ikime had criticized the underlying assumptions that informed the above administrative gerrymandering, and in the process, provided insights into how this action further brought the various groups, particularly the Itsekiri and Urhobo, into frequent loggerheads that remained till date. First, he questioned the view that the Itsekiri were a dying race that required regeneration through intermingling with Urhobos. In the second instance, he pointed out that the history of the period immediately preceding the reorganization, especially the role of Dogho in the strained bilateral relations between Urhobo and Itsekiri, did not augur well for a fusion. Third, was the awareness by the Resident that the two communities have been engaged in a love-lust relationship, and that the Itsekiri looked down on their neighbors as inferior. Fourth, was the sentiment reportedly expressed by the Resident that the Itsekiri desired the joint Native authority in order to ensure continued predominance over the Urhobo, while the latter resented this.

After 1932, the relationship between the two rival communities deteriorated as it fuelled the ember of separatism by placing emphasis on ethnicity and ethnic politics. By 1936 when the reorganization had run its full course, the major ethnic groups within each district became stronger and less accommodating, thereby setting the

Urhoboland. The chiefs, in turn, perpetrated all kinds of atrocities such as looting and burning towns at the slightest provocation, and using land leases arbitrarily.

stage for new competition, rivalries and outright conflict. In the same year, the British upheld the Urhobo position to the traditional title of Olu of Itsekiri rather than the Olu of Warri¹¹⁰. The operation of the Native Court system also created problems for bilateral relations especially as the British ignored several Urhobo complaints about the highhandedness of Itsekiri judges¹¹¹. In fact, according to Ikime, the Urhobos reserved their greatest disdain for Dogho who exercised great authority and political influence within the Native Court system (p. 218). On February 7, 1936, a new Olu was inaugurated ending 88 years of interregnum.¹¹² This action convinced the Urhobos of the need to forge closer alliances and create centralized institutions as an index of development. As Ikime argued, the installation of a new Olu filled the Itsekiri with another dose of exaggerated conception of their superiority over Urhobos and the Ijaws, just as this action immediately raised the issue of ownership of Warri land (p. 253-254).

After 1936, bilateral relations between the Urhobos and the Itsekiris degenerated further on the issue of ownership and control of land in Sapele, the question of Itsekiri enclaves in Urhoboland, the establishment of Warri, a town associated with Itsekiri predominance, as the capital, the vexed issue of the traditional title of the Itsekiri king, and finally, the political circumstances that emanated from the implementation of the Richards and Macpherson Constitutions of 1946 and 1957 respectively. The introduction of the Richards Constitution in 1946, it should be recalled, required the appointment of a provisional member to represent the Warri Province in the Western House of Assembly. An Urhobo man, Mr. Mukoro Mowoe, the President-General of the Urhobo Progressive Union, won the first election. Unfortunately, he died in 1948, an action that necessitated another by-election, again won by another Urhobo man- Jessa Ogboru from Abraka. Another seat allocated to Warri Province in the Western House in 1949 also went to an Urhobo man- Mr. W.E. Mowaria. According to the

¹¹⁰ The AG-led government of the Western Region was to restore the title to Olu of Warri; a token of the support for that party by the Itsekiris (Ikime, 1966: 573).

¹¹¹ By 1930s, Urhobos began to take education seriously as a way of bridging the gap with Itsekiris. This attention and the subsequent graduation of Urhobo students provided a ready pool of personnel for the NA- and a concomitant drop in the employment of Itsekiris (Ikime, 1969: 245).

¹¹² The new Olu was EMIKO- the great grandson of Akengbuwa with the title of Ginuwa II

Resident, the aftermath of the election was such that there was a frightening “recrudescence of ill-feeling and bitterness between the Itsekiri and Urhobo” (Ikime, 1966: 266-268).

The outcome of the elections that followed the adoption of the Macpherson Constitution again favored the Urhobo over Itsekiri. While 6 candidates from the former contested and won under the platform of the NCNC, only two Itsekiri men- Chief Arthur Priest (AG) and Chief Festus Sam Edah (latter Okotie-Eboh) of the NCNC- won seats. The AG eventually formed the government in the Western Region with only one Itsekiri representation and majority Urhobo NCNC members. When the issue of the title of the Itsekiri came up for hearing at the House, the AG leader and the Western Regional Minister of Local Government, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, upheld Itsekiri request that their king be known as the Olu of Warri¹¹³. This was against the vehement opposition and protest by Urhobo assemblymen who were in the minority party, the NCNC. These factors and the achievement the following year of the long sought Urhobo autonomy all contributed to the inexorable deterioration of bilateral relations.

Rather than create the basis for inter-ethnic cohesion and cohabitation, therefore, the limitation of colonial rule was such that it encouraged estrangement and alienation among groups, thereby disturbing the basis for peaceful coexistence, political stability and unity. Indeed, the administrative methods, or measures, applied to integrate Nigeria lacked consistency, for if the objectives of colonial administration were to unite or integrate Nigeria, “the result of colonial policies was the anti-thesis; the same process of administrative integration ushered in disruptive forces and processes” (Okpu, 1977: 40). This, of course, is not to suggest that colonial authorities lacked awareness of the combustible nature of the ethnic heterogeneity of the Niger Delta. One aspect of those colonial initiatives culminated into the setting up of the Willink Commission whose core mandate was to seek ways and means of allaying the fears of domination of minority ethnic groups by the major ones. It will be recalled that long

¹¹³ It should be recalled that in 1936, the Urhobos successfully protested the title. Again, in 1944, the Itsekiri reopened the matter in a petition to the Chief Commissioner of the Western Province but lost. (Ikime, 1969: 268)

before the setting up of the Commission, several movements in favour of varying measures of political autonomy and the creation of new states had sprung up among minority ethnic groups in Nigeria; most importantly in the Mid-western region that then included the Niger Delta area. Naanem and Pepple (1998: 145) have traced the earliest of such enterprise to the 1920s, with the formation of a handful of pan-ethnic unions, although it was only in 1941 that an Ijo Rivers People's League was founded which sought the removal of Rivers territory from Owerri Province in protest against political domination and economic marginalization. Six years after, in 1947, the Rivers Province was established comprising Ahoada, Brass, Degema, and Ogoni with headquarters in Port Harcourt. It was however obvious that elements within the broader movement for autonomy preferred a different agenda. On the one hand, are those who believed in incremental, formal pressures in such areas as the setting up of a political party, the Niger Delta Congress, NDC, to contest for parliamentary seats. This category, led by Harold R. Wilcox, latter Chief Dappa-Biriye, won a lone seat in the 1959 election into the Federal House of Representative. The second category were agitators for a Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers (COR) State, while the third, and more radical strand led by Isaac Adaka Boro and his band of 150 Niger Delta Volunteers Force (ND-VF) preferred militant action in drawing attention to the plight of the people of the Niger Delta.

In September 1957, a Commission under the Chairmanship of Henry Willink, was set up by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, The Rt. Hon. Alan Lennox-Boyd to "ascertain the facts about the fears of minorities in any part of Nigeria, and to propose means of allaying those fears whether well or ill founded". The Commission was also to "advise what safeguards should be included for this purpose in the Constitution of Nigeria" as well as make, if absolutely necessary, "detailed recommendations for the creation of one or more new states..." The report of the Commission was presented to Parliament in July 1958, with the following specific highlights.¹¹⁴ In the first instance, it acknowledged the existence of widespread fears among minorities, especially those from majority ethnic groups residing in large number in other states. Second, the Commission accepted the view that "some degree of Federal organisation and control

¹¹⁴ London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958) (B. S7/ 277)

should remain” in order to safeguard the minorities. In this regard, it expressed fear that a police force controlled by regional government could be at constant loggerheads with the “strong arm groups” emerging. Third, the Commission examined the arguments for and against the creation of new states as well as minority agitation. More specifically, the Commission noted the clamour for the creation of Rivers State. First, it noted two points about the demands of chiefs: legal and historical. The former arguments raised by the Rivers Chiefs and Peoples to the effect that their treaties with the Crown differ in that the Chiefs were not bound to surrender to the British Government a sovereignty which could be transferred to another country. Hence, they called for a return to their original *status quo ante* prior to British rule. The historical argument noted the persistent clamour for the creation of Rivers State beginning after the Constitutional Conference of 1953, when the Council of Rivers Chiefs prepared a memorandum for the resumed Conference of 1954. Unfortunately, consideration of the memorandum was postponed until 1957. As noted by the Commission, the case for Rivers State is strong, because apart from the historical and legal argument, “the people in this area shared a way of life dictated by the physical circumstances of the country in which they lived, and that they were united by fear of neglect at the hands of a Government who did not understand their needs and who in any case put the needs of the interior first”.

Unfortunately, the Commission did not recommend any new state for Rivers Province; rather, it suggested “another chapter arrangements which we think might go some way to help the Ijaws and other of the coastal strip to receive sympathetic consideration in their peculiar problems” (p. 51). Thus, although the Commission was particularly impressed by the special circumstances of the Ijaw- (1) the fact that Ijaws on both sides of the Niger River desired to unite; (2) the fact that their interest was not adequately protected by the headquarters in the interior- it merely recommended that the Niger Delta, especially the Ijaw area be designated a “Special Area”, and be brought under the creation of a Federal Board appointed to consider the problems of the area of the Niger Delta. The Commission also proposed the Development of Special Areas be placed on the concurrent list.

One immediate outcome of the failure of the Commission in the above regard was that by the early 1960s, movements in favor of greater autonomy for Niger Delta peoples became even stronger, more pervasive and radical. As Alagoa and Tamuno (1978: 6) rightly argued in *Land and People of Rivers State*, this failure nurtured radical persuasions that attempted extra-legal means as a way of solving or drawing attention to social problems. It was also the latter that eventually coalesced into the short-lived Boro Revolution much criticized for its mono-ethnic conception of the Niger Delta and the violent methods employed by his group. Nevertheless, the Boro revolt represented a significant milestone in the struggle by minority ethnic groups in the delta basin against perceived or real political domination and socio-economic marginalization in the affairs of the nascent Nigerian State. As Naanen and Pepple (1998: 151) rightly noted, Isaac Adaka Boro and his colleagues were well ahead of time in conceptualizing and responding to the conditions of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta. More than three decades after the path-breaking, but failed attempt by Boro, the Niger Delta has been engulfed in a deep and highly magnified social crises exacerbated by crude oil.

The question of land is a major one in the context of inter-ethnic relations within the Niger Delta, due to the difficult topography and small physical size of the area. Often, different ethnic communities have found themselves in the difficult circumstances of disagreements and conflicts over land, around which most subsistence activities- especially agriculture and fishing- are carried out. One example of inter-ethnic conflict around land for subsistence activities during the colonial era occurred between the Okrika-Kalabari over fishing rights at Ochokerocho in the Degema Division of the Rivers Province which led to the killing of 23 Okrika fishermen on August 4, 1950.¹¹⁵ Under the Collective Punishment Ordinance, the Governor of Nigeria, Sir John Macpherson, appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate the killings, and before that, declared the area a "Proclaimed District"¹¹⁶ and ordered the

¹¹⁵ For eye-witness accounts of the Kalabari-Okrika conflict given by 20 witnesses including policemen, fishermen, opinion leaders and independent observers, see CO 537/ 7173.

¹¹⁶ By this Proclamation, a state of emergency was imposed on that area placing it under direct martial control of the Governor. For the composition of the Commission and its mandate, see Government Notice Number 184 (extract from Nigerian Gazette No. 8 of February 8, 1951)

surrender of arms and ammunitions to the DO. At the same time, 117 Kalabari men were detained and charged for murder.¹¹⁷ In the end, the Kalabari community was fined 20, 000 pounds and given one month within which to pay the fine in accordance with section 8 of the Ordinance.¹¹⁸ In a swift reaction, the Kalabari National Union in Lagos posted several telegram to London, urging Whitehall, the Colonial Office, the Parliament and the judiciary to intervene on the matter, and to condemn the Governor's fine as *sub judice* since a murder case was already on in court.¹¹⁹ In a similar vein, the Kalabari community in Great Britain and Ireland noted in particular that the fine is a "chronic source of trouble" since the area is among "the most neglected spots in Nigeria with regards to the most elementary social services like schools, sanitation and housing".¹²⁰ And that so much hardship is being caused to people who earn about 6d per day and have experienced considerable loss of trade due to the exorbitant fine. In April 1951, the Supreme Court in Port Harcourt acquitted all 9 Kalabari tribesmen accused of murdering 23 Okrika fishermen.¹²¹ Even at that, Kalabari indigenes in Lagos, Great Britain and the Ireland raised several petitions to the Colonial Office complaining about the exorbitant fines.

The Governor however, gave useful insights into government thinking, and why the heavy fines were imposed in a letter to the SSCO on April 3, 1951. According to him, by the very nature of the massacre, every member of the Kalabari clan must at least know one perpetrator. The only Kalabari willing to assist the police was reportedly hanged, while the people and their Native Authority officials declined cooperation with the police, thereby stalling police action. The attack also required extensive police action to prevent further disturbances. Just as much, the 500 Pounds reward offered for information in connection with the massacre yielded no result, while there

¹¹⁷ See Government Notice No. 184, extract from Nigerian Gazette no.8 of 8th February 1951. CO 537/7170: Disorders in Eastern Provinces.

¹¹⁸ The breakdown of that amount earmarked 12, 000 as restitution to the families of the murdered men and 8, 000 pounds to the regional government for "extraordinary police measures". See, CSO 7170/6; See also, *Times*, 16-4-1951, 'Tribe Fined \$20, 000: Nigeria Massacre Echo'.

¹¹⁹ See C.O. 537/ 7170/ 31

¹²⁰ See Kalabari community in GB and Ireland petition to the CO dated 15-5-1957 in CO7171/ 31.

¹²¹ CSO 7170/130

are strong suspicions that the Anguloma juju was evoked against betrayals. Finally, by the swiftness of the attack, it is incontrovertible that it was a carefully preconceived tribal war rather than an ordinary murder.¹²²

In spite of the entreaties by Kalabari kinsmen at home and abroad against the heavy fines imposed on them by the colonial authorities, the Governor of Nigeria reported to the SSCO in a letter dated June 12, 1951, that they had completed payment of the fine in full eight days before the deadline, on June 4. He noted however that consequent upon the stay of execution entered by the counsel to the plaintiffs, disbursement of fine had to be halted until the case before the Supreme Court is disposed in Lagos on June 28.¹²³ On July 15, 1951, the Supreme Court dismissed action brought by two Kalabari chiefs, first, against the heavy fines, and second, against Mr. Newington, for unlawful trespass and desecration of the shrine of Awomekaso. According to reports, however, an uneasy calm remained in the area. A paper, in fact, noted Kalabari's temporary quiescent, but it is uncertain how long they will remain so and meanwhile the Okrikas, who in the past have earned themselves a reputation for unpleasantness, and rapidly dissipating the goodwill... by various displays of truculence and intransigence.¹²⁴

Although the case terminated finally at the Supreme Court in Lagos after the Kalabari had paid the fine in full, there was no doubt about the disquiet among the local indigenes about the injustices believed to have been inflicted on them.¹²⁵ On their part, however, the chiefs and peoples of Okrika petitioned to the Rt. Hon. SSCO claiming that Kalabari people continue to terrorize "defenceless" Okrika fishermen, refusing to accept their own guilt and remain "obdurate, impudent and defiant". Besides, they noted that the fine of 20, 000 Pounds was too small to pay for human soul and went on to predict, quite instructively, that "casual debate at the House of

¹²² C.O. 537/ 7170/ 4: Governor, Nigeria, to SSCO. Reference no. 30819/ 51 of April 3, 1951

¹²³ C.O. 537/ 7170/ 41: Governor of Nigeria to SSCO, 12-6-1951

¹²⁴ C.O. 537/ 7170/ 48: Extract from Nigeria. P.I.S. No. 38 of July 15, 1951

¹²⁵ Cited in CO 7170/48: Extract from Nigeria, p.1.5, no. 38; for counter-petition from the Okrika people, see CO537/7170: 44

Commons cannot end the issue; that such punishment as could serve as deterrent be effected else no peace or safety in the Rivers can be achieved".¹²⁶

To summarize this chapter, then, it is important to underscore one major challenge emanating from the several arresting insights gained from the in-depth and critical analysis of the pre-colonial and colonial histories of the Niger Delta. This relates to the disappointing lack of continuity and interconnectedness between the path-breaking works of first generation scholars, mostly historians, and "new" generation scholars engaged in the enterprise of rigorously accounting for the contemporary resurgence of violent conflicts in the region. In reality, there is so much we can learn through a retrospective evaluation of the dynamics of the delta societies prior to and in the aftermath of the establishment and consolidation of European capital and political control. Second, is that from the available body of knowledge and literature, it is no longer tenable to conclude that the historicity of the coastal peoples of the Niger Delta is scanty. Such a conclusion has made works by scholars working on the dynamics of contemporary conflicts in the Niger Delta largely inconclusive and too tentative. Indeed, it can only be safely claimed that literature on the Niger Delta is either absent or poorly catalogued in public libraries and archives.¹²⁷ Third, is that most of the current violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, including those inspired by the contradictions of crude oil exploitation date way back into the very history that extant literature have ignored or paid only scanty attention.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ CO 537/ 7173 titled 'Disorders in Eastern Provinces' contain detailed evidences given by 20 witnesses to the Kalabari-Okrika communal clash, including policemen, fishermen, opinion leaders, independent observers. My reading and interpretation of this document strongly suggest that the attack was premeditated for the fact that only Okrika casualties were recorded, and that they were caught off guard.

¹²⁷ My survey of the literature, primary and secondary, in public libraries and archives particularly in London, reveal the existence of a large body of knowledge on the ND, past and present.

¹²⁸ The intermittent eruption of communal strife between Kalabari-Okrika communities over fishing territories had been drawn attention to by Porter Intelligence Report as far back as 1933.

CHAPTER SIX

FOREIGN (OIL) CAPITAL, THE NIGERIAN STATE AND CONFLICTS IN THE NIGER DELTA

6.1. Oil Capital and the Nigerian State

“The history of the oil industry is the history of imperialism.”¹²⁹

“There is no bigger and no more obvious gap in our ... imperial equipment than the paucity of our supplies of oil.”¹³⁰

Quite often, scholars of British imperialism insist that the driving force behind the ruthless establishment of formal colonial rule was to gain access to and secure uncompetitive trade and commercial advantages from Her Majesty's Government (HMG) colonial outposts. Despite the centrality of trade and commerce however, there was another underlying, essentially politico-security logic behind this imperial ambitions: the need to maintain the dominant global leadership and supremacy of the British military establishment, particularly the Royal Navy. Britain derived much of its great power and global status, at least until the outbreak of the First World War, not in any significant respect from the country's human and material resources, size or strategic location compared to other European states, but from taking early advantage of the Industrial Revolution to establish itself as the *primus inter pares* in global commerce and naval power. Indeed, Britain maintained its global popularity and reputation of being the “storekeeper nation of the world” as well as the maintainer of European balance of power and global political order both because of these commercial networks as well as its unprecedented naval advantages.

Clearly, more than control of trade was required to maintain this global prominence and/ or pre-eminence. To sustain its global military supremacy and superpower status, of course, also required that Britain found and exploited the vast natural resources of the outposts, the most strategic being fossil oil for industrial usage in general, and in particular, for use by the Royal Navy establishment. Thus, as British colonial authorities were deeply involved in overseas commerce, there was also considerable

¹²⁹ See Jean Marie Chevalier, *The New Oil States*. London: Allan Lane, 1980, p.38

¹³⁰ Sydney Brooks, leading British government official, cited in Carland, 1985: 184

concern not to relent in the search for vital resource inputs required by the Royal Navy. Perhaps because matters of military acquisition and supplies are often classified or shrouded in relative secrecy, very little connection is made between the politico-military interests of colonial Britain and the search for mineral resources. This peculiar situation, perhaps again, was responsible for the overemphasis on the trade and commercial enterprises of Britain to the neglect of the equally elaborate attention to, and investment in, mining activities.

In the context of Nigeria, the history of mineral exploitation has had a much longer antecedent than is often acknowledged in the literature. This shortcoming is particularly very obvious in the chronicles of the history of international oil capital in the Nigeria which many scholars tended, erroneously, to date quite recently to the 1950s. The truth, of course, is that British enterprise in Nigeria involved extensive interests in mining activities, of which the search for fossil fuel was paramount. In *Nigeria Handbook*, Burns (1921) provided interesting statistical and general information in respect of the colonies and protectorate of Nigeria,¹³¹ especially those involving mining activities, mostly tin. According to him, the mining exploratory activities began around the end of 1903 when a mining survey party visited Nigeria. By 1906, the Niger Company had started mining activities, and in about 13 years (1919), there were 88 mining companies in the Northern Province alone. The companies together held nominal capital close to 6 million Pounds, a working capital of over 2 million Pounds and operational areas spanning close to 360, 000 acres (p. 63).¹³² By the same 1919, the mining companies employed an average of 218 Europeans and 22, 289 natives. In the second instance, the earliest search for crude oil in the Nigerian colonial formation began around the late 19th and early 20th Centuries such that by the 1930s, a British oil mining concern, Shell D'Arcy was already actively engaged in extensive crude oil prospecting activities having been granted exclusive rights to explore the vast mineral resources of the coastal areas and the hinterland.

¹³¹ For a detailed account of the growth and impacts direct foreign investment in the mining industry in Nigeria between 1900-1930, see B. Ndoma-Egab (1974: 75-98)

¹³² As Olorode 91997: 110 pointed out, by 1914 tin mining on the Jos Plateau had grown into about 10 million pound sterling investment, employing about 200 European companies.

The principal concern here is not so much about the actual mining activities, but the complex political undertones and implications the search had at that time for colonial Britain; and subsequently in the post-independence era, for the Nigerian State. There are several angles through which these complex political variables relating to mining in colonial Nigeria can be understood and accounted for. The first one had been mentioned only briefly above, as relating to the urgent imperative of finding and controlling strategic sources of mineral oil for the Royal Navy. This search was, understandably, to become of intensive and high-priority political concern not only among civil servants in the Colonial Office but also those in the War Office, the Admiralty, and ultimately, the Whitehall. The importance of the search for mineral oil was such that Britain looked everywhere throughout its vast colonial territories- in Asia, Africa and the Indian continent-, and was willing and prepared to look even outside its immediate spheres of influence. The search for mineral oil in Nigeria was characterized by several twists. It began with coal, arising from the conviction that oil extracted from it would be of sufficiently large commercial quantities. Before the discovery of crude oil, therefore, coal was a very important strategic mineral whose exploitation engaged the attention of the British government and investors. In a letter to Crown Agent for the Colonies dated January 27, 1926, for instance, Captain H. Burges Watson acknowledged sending samples of the Udi coal (Enugu) to different laboratories in the U.K. to ascertain the value of its oil, gas and tar products as well as its suitability for cooking. He also expressed concern over the heavy expenses currently being incurred by the shipping firm of Messrs Elder Dempster and Co. in bringing coal to Liverpool- charges that far exceeded the value of the coal. In the end, he suggested that motor transport oil and other lubricants might be produced locally by the treatment of brown coal deposits using a complex, yet cheaper, technical procedure.¹³³ Yet, in as much as the British desired a positive result from the extraction of oil from coal, the strategic significance of that mineral, or indeed, the value of the process was never lost.¹³⁴ Because of the shift in the use of coal to crude

¹³³ See C.O. 583/ 143/ 3: Statement by Sir Richard Redmayne on Low Temperature Carbonization of Nigerian Lignite. See also C.O. 583/ 143/ 3/ 55: Watson to Crown Agent, 27-1-1926

¹³⁴ See correspondences between J.D. Falconer, director of the Geological Survey in Nigeria with the Imperial College staff and the Colonial Office. C.O. 583/ 143/ 3: Nigeria Coal and Lignite: Production of Oil from, 1926

oil by the British navy and commercial vessels, coupled with the small amount of oil derivable from coal, there was renewed attention to the search for crude oil. In this matter, there was a strong undercurrent of opinion, justifiably so, within the colonial, war and foreign offices in London that whatever crude oil was discovered in Nigeria, or elsewhere within the British Empire, was to be for the exclusive use of Her Majesty's government, especially the Royal Navy branch.¹³⁵

Oil was first struck in 1909, after several geological surveys had indicated otherwise. Prior to this time, there was widespread scepticism over the likelihood of discovering oil in sufficient quantities in the Niger Delta.¹³⁶ This scepticism was pervasive among senior officials of the colonial office, and scientists at the Imperial College London who were involved in extensive geological surveys of the colony of Nigeria. In a letter to Sir Fiddes at the colonial office, Mr. Arkatonel noted that the Nigeria Bitumen Company (NBC) "is no nearer finding oil now than they were in 1908 when they induced us and Sir Walter Egerton to lend them 25, 000 Pounds on the strength of their prospects". He reiterated sarcastically the view persuasively used by Bergheim that "it would be a good thing for the Empire" at a time when notable authorities, including Professor Dunstan, expressed informed pessimism about the commercial value of oil¹³⁷

In May 1909, a cablegram from the NBC reported the discovery of "large quantities" of oil in bore hole no. 19 at a depth of 642 feet, to the colonial office.¹³⁸ In September of the same year, oil was again reportedly struck at borehole no. 5 at the rate of 2600

¹³⁵ It should be recalled that this period coincided with the period when the British navy occupied a vantage strategic position in London's claims to global power and supremacy.

¹³⁶ See Professor Wyndham Dunstan, report on Mineral Specimens from a well of the Nigerian Bitumen Company, Southern Nigeria. C.O. 520/ 120/ 35742 of 12-11-1912.

¹³⁷ This mounting criticism more or less resulted from persistent requests by the NBC for increased government support for its activities. For instance, in a letter to Lord Emmoh at the CO dated 20-10-1912, the Chairman of NBC requested further assistance, arguing that areas of the world hitherto considered useless and "poverty-stricken now have thriving operations after prolonged search for oil (C.O. 520/ 120/ 34245). C.O. 520/ 120/ 34245: Oil Mining; Government Assistance to Enable Further Boring Operations, October 29, 1912.

¹³⁸ C.O. 520/ 87/ 17056: Oil Struck in Bore No. 19, 19-5-1909- Secretary, NBC to R.L. Anthrobus, Assistant Under Secretary for the Colonies, CO

bpd. Two memos attached to this report however underscored the dispositions of officials at the Colonial Office. One of the memos was to the effect that “[This] news is of great importance, not so much on account of the amount of oil coming out of the hole, as that it proves the fact that this territory is an oil bearing one, and as oil is under great pressure, large quantities may be expected.”¹³⁹ Another was more cautious in adding: “Let us hope that this is destined to do more than merely raise the price of the company’s shares”.¹⁴⁰

After an extensive geological and geophysical survey of the concession area granted the NBC, the company again wrote to the Governor of Southern Nigeria, copying the Secretary of State at the Colonial Office (SSCO). In the letter, the company opted to drop unproductive blocs, and requested concession to link hole numbers 1 and 7 due to continuity. The company also proposed a financial arrangement whereby the colonial government gives loans, buy shares or engage the NBC in a joint venture arrangement.¹⁴¹ In justifying the later, the NBC noted that “Once oil is struck the money advanced us will be repaid, you will have helped the exploration, you will have raised the Colony to a very high position, have created a new industry which will unquestionably make that district healthy, and have obtained fuel for British ships and that at no expense to the Colony. I say nothing of the revenue to the Colony that would immediately accrue”.¹⁴² Despite the exploratory works of the NBC, it was obviously not the only British company interested in oil mining. About the same time the NBC struck oil, its archrival, the British Coal and Petroleum Corporation Limited (BCPC), was fighting to break this monopoly and the bad publicity generated by the insinuation that the corporation is on quicksand in terms of prospects of oil discovery and financial base.¹⁴³ After much persistence, the colonial office granted the BCPC

¹³⁹ Bergheim to Crewe, SSCO, 24-9-1909.

¹⁴⁰ Crewe to Fiddles, 25-9-1909, in C.O. 520/ 87/ 31740: Oil Struck. 24-09-1909.

¹⁴¹ This was to be the earliest precursor to the JV arrangement between NNPC and other multinational oil companies operating in Nigeria.

¹⁴² See C.O. 520/ 55/ 40763: Bergheim to Governor of Nigeria, 19-11-1907) in C.O. 520/ 55: Southern Nigeria, 1907, v. 13]

¹⁴³ C.O. 520/ 87/ 32427: Oil Industry- British Coal and Petroleum corporation Limited, Higgins to Crewe, 30-9-1909.

through a letter dated 27-12-1909 licenses over 100 square miles between the Benin and Escravos rivers.¹⁴⁴

It is important to draw attention to the fact that several policies and strategic decisions to find and secure hydrocarbon oil for the colonial enterprise were put in place almost at the same time as the earliest oil exploration activities commenced. With respect to the need to remove obstacles to the oil search, especially by ensuring unencumbered access to land for mining operations, for instance, legislations were promulgated granting sole and unlimited rights on the colonial government and their appointed representatives to search for and exploit crude oil. One such legislation was the Mining Regulation (Oil) Ordinance of 1907 enacted by the Governor of the Colony of Southern Nigeria, Sir Walter Egerton. The 1907 ordinance superseded three earlier legislations: the Lagos Mining Regulation Ordinance of 1905 which does not apply to mineral oil, and the Southern Nigeria Mining Regulation Proclamation of 1902, which although did not apply to mineral oil gave control of all land, except those specially designated and published in the gazette or by a proclamation of the governor, to the colonial authorities.¹⁴⁵ As shall become obvious shortly, the latter regulation was the earliest precursor to the Land Use Act of 1978 vesting all lands in Nigeria on the government; thereby ensuring that multinational corporations could have access to scarce communal land regardless of the vehement opposition of local communities. The 1907 Ordinance had several important aspects and far-reaching implications that must be highlighted since the legislation was to become a significant whetstone upon which subsequent legislations relating to crude oil exploration and exploitation in Nigeria hinged. Cap 5 of the Ordinance stipulated that “It shall be lawful for the Governor to enter into an agreement with any Native authority for the purchase of full and exclusive rights in and over all mineral oils within and under any lands which are the property of any Native Community”. In Cap 16, Natives shall continue to have rights to land for “gathering firewood, hunting, using water, farming or any other rights... if and so long as such right can and shall be exercised without interfering

¹⁴⁴ C.O. 520/ 87/ 39083: Oil Mining License, 1-12-1909

¹⁴⁵ C.O. 588/ 2: Southern Nigeria Certified Ordinances, 1906-1907

with the rights conferred upon the holder of the license".¹⁴⁶ It would seem, however, that the 'rights' of the natives were merely cosmetic for the Ordinance not only stipulated, in Cap 15, that the holders of the licenses and leases shall be British citizens, but went on in Cap 31 to grant them the rights to erect refineries. To quote Cap 15 in full,

No license or lease shall be granted under the provisions of the Ordinance to any firm, syndicate, or company which is not British in its control and organization, and in the case of a company, all the directors shall be, and shall at all times continue to be, British subjects, and the company shall be registered in and subject to the laws of some country or places which is part of His Majesty's dominions, or in which His Majesty has jurisdiction.¹⁴⁷

Cap 31 on the "Rights of His Majesty's Government", had four major sub-sections, all aimed at securing British interest at all times. The first bestowed on the holder of a license to erect in the colony or protectorate or elsewhere in His Majesty's dominions a refinery. Second, that HMG shall have the rights of pre-emption of all crude oil raised, won, or gotten from the area subject to the license or lease. Third, a license precluded preferential price to HMG. Finally, HMG can take control of the works and plants in the event of war¹⁴⁸. Successive colonial policies, beginning from the Mineral act of 1914, merely strengthened the absolute control of the emergent Nigerian oil industry by the British until 1969 when a new Petroleum Decree was enacted giving government not just more control of the industry but also cutting the period for oil concession from 30 years to 1 year (Soremekun and Obi, 1993: 5)

If the basis for, and origins of, crude oil exploration and exploitation are anything to go by, therefore, one needs to understand both the seriousness with which the colonial authorities considered matters pertaining to exploration and marketing of crude oil and why they erected seemingly insurmountable politico-legal and administrative

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ C.O. 588/ 2: Southern Nigeria Certified Ordinances, 1906-1907

¹⁴⁸ On June 12 and August 28, 1907 respectively, the original 1907 Ordinance was amended with little semantic changes that merely strengthened the 'Britishness' of the licensee and or leaseholders. C.O. 588/ 2: Southern Nigeria Certified Ordinances, 1906-1907- Colony of Nigeria, An Ordinance to Regulate the Raising, Winning and Getting of Mineral Oils in the Colony and Protectorate, 27-3-1907, otherwise called the Mining Regulation (Oil) Ordinance

barriers to prevent non-British subjects and firms from entering the business. In significant ways also, the various policies underscored the intimate romance (and preferential treatments) cultivated between major mining concerns and the imperial government which eventually enabled Shell D'Arcy to enjoy the early-bird's advantages in oil exploration activities. Indeed, much like the Royal Niger Company that was discussed in the preceding chapter, Shell D'Arcy became the successor-monopolist of 20th Century colonial and post-colonial Nigeria, having been granted exclusive crude oil prospecting and concession rights all over Nigeria in 1938. The company, in turn, held this uncontested monopoly for close to two decades thus enjoying the leverage of keeping the most promising oil blocs.

The exploration license granted the company in 1938 covered 357, 000 square miles (Schatzl, 1969). By 1951, the company reduced its Oil Exploration License to 58, 000 square miles, from which it chose an Oil Prospecting License (OPL) covering 23, 600 sq. km by January 19, 1955¹⁴⁹. By January 1, 1962, the company obtained 46 Oil Mineral License (OML) covering 15, sq. km., ensuring that it had access to the most endowed blocks, while other new-comers jostled for the left over (p. 1-3). Mobil, an affiliate of Socony-Mobil Oil Company of the USA obtained an exploration license covering 281, 782 sq. km., almost all that was abandoned by Shell-BP, including the Sokoto Basin and sites in the western region. In March 1961, Mobil returned the latter two due to negative results. Other companies soon joined: Tennessee Nigeria Inc., Nigerian Gulf Oil Company, Nigerian Agip Company Limited, SAFRAP Nigeria Limited, Philips Petroleum, Esso Exploration Company etc. Between 1951-1956, a total of 18 exploration, appraisal and development wells had been drilled of which only those in the Eastern Region- Oloibiri and Afam- showed promises at a depth of 9000- 11000 feet. Encouraged by its successes, Shell went on to drill highly productive fields in Bomu, Ebubu, Imo River and Korokoro¹⁵⁰ (p. 4-14). Between January 1960 and 1962, Shell applied for and was granted 46 mining OPL ranging

¹⁴⁹ For a very useful Statistical Appendix" on OML, exploration wells up till 1964 and the amount of oil and gas drilled, see pp. 191-246.

¹⁵⁰ For the effects of the petroleum industry on the Nigerian economy in the early periods, see p. 152-186.

from 7, 658 acres to 764, 942 acres of land¹⁵¹. In this period, the company also conducted seismic activities over a total of 3546 kilometres (2385 kilometres on land and 1161 kilometres in the swamps), drilled 128, 230 feet, completed 10 exploration wells with 6 yielding oil and gas in commercial quantities. Oil production increased in the same period from 68, 000 barrels per day (BPD) to just over 72, 000 BPD. By 1962, only Shell was allowed to conduct surveys- in No 15 (Bodo-Bonny), No. 16 (Imo River to Alesa Refinery) and No. 17 (Okoloma to Ebulu). It was also the exclusive beneficiary of Oil production License (OPL) No 10, 11, 12, and 13 for which it paid a grant fee ranging from 109 to 119 Pounds. (p. 15). Because of the head start it enjoyed vis-à-vis other companies, Shell was able to control important oil fields 25 miles of Port Harcourt.

In many significant ways, the unlimited oil mining concession granted to Shell D'Archy and its successor company, Shell-BP, by the colonial authorities enabled the company to engage in extensive search for oil throughout Nigeria, and thereafter, reserved for its singular exclusive use, the most promising areas. By so doing, Shell became not just the sole holder of the most lucrative oil licenses, but also the *numero uno* among other companies that were eventually allowed to engage in oil activities as from the 1970s. The second point is that of convergence of interest between the colonial and the post-colonial successor states vis-à-vis Shell: while the former two required oil to strengthen their strategic and accumulative basis, Shell needed to make returns to its private shareholders. Herein lies the concrete basis and objective of the relationship between the post-colonial state and Shell. It is the same mutually beneficial relationship between two dialectically linked forces that continues to determine and condition how each relates and reacts to the other, and also the striking similarities in their responses to exogenous forces that challenge and threaten to undermine them. It is difficult to ignore the striking similarities in the pattern of relationship between Royal Niger Company and the Colonial State, and what currently exist between multinational oil companies, particularly Shell, and the Nigerian State from 1958 onwards. Whereas the Colonial government relied on the Royal Niger Company to realize the colonial ambition of unlimited resource

¹⁵¹ See Federation of Nigeria, Annual Report of the Mines Division of the Ministry of Mines and Power for the Year Ended March 31, 1962. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division, 1963.

extraction that is beneficial to Britain, the post-colonial state has cultivated an intimate relationship with Shell (and other multinational oil companies) to facilitate crude oil extractions for the fiscal accumulations that come along with it, often in a manner unhealthy to host communities.

Almost five decades after the pioneering strike in 1909, oil was only discovered in commercial quantities by Shell-BP (the successor to Shell D'Arcy Petroleum Development Company) in the village of Oloibiri in 1958. However, two completely unrelated global and domestic events stalled the commercial exploitation of crude until much later in the 1970s. The first event was the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, halting the activities of Shell D'Arcy, while the second, was the three-year long Nigeria civil war that broke out in 1967. The latter is particularly significant, as the unsuccessful Biafran secession that eventually erupted into full-scale civil war has been traced, among other factors, to the struggle for control of the oil-rich Niger Delta so as to enjoy the fiscal advantages derivable from crude oil sales. Although the causes and trajectories of the civil war are obviously outside the scope of this work, it is important to bear in mind that some of the fiercest battles were fought in and around the Niger Delta as the oil-rich region assumed major significance in the geo-strategic, economic and political calculations of the Federal Government and secessionist Biafra.

Ultimately, then, although several multinational companies operate in the up-stream and downstream sectors of the oil industry,¹⁵² the Nigerian affiliate of the Royal Dutch Shell Group (Shell Petroleum and Development Company, SPDC), remains the biggest corporate player. The SPDC accounts for an estimated 14% of Shell's entire global production, the largest outside of the US.¹⁵³ In Nigeria, SPDC is the joint venture holder of 30% interest in NNPC-Shell, the largest oil and gas company accounting for about 50% of the entire crude oil production in the country. These

¹⁵² Other oil companies, such as Mobil, Elf, Total, Chevron, Agip, have various types of joint venture relationships with the state-owned Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) beginning from the early 1960s when they entered the oil sector. The head-start by Shell, no doubt, allowed the company to secure for itself the largest and most lucrative oil blocs.

¹⁵³ Cited in Tgeo, 'From Bonny To Baglan Bay: De-Unionisation and Human Rights Issues in the UK Oil Industry', http://www.McSpotlight.org/beyond/delta2_nov96.html

figures speak volume especially in a country where oil alone accounts for almost 90% of foreign exchange and 80% of federal government revenue, the major player cannot but assume a high-profile political role (Kretzman, 1995: 9). Over the years, the company has effectively projected its enlightened self-interest through an “alliance of military rulers, top echelons of the civil bureaucracy and the business sector”. It is also “firmly embedded in political and economic structures”, through diverse linkages with the State, and finally, built up a network of human contacts in Nigeria, including those at the highest levels of government.¹⁵⁴

The nascent oil industry witnessed a tremendous boost after the civil war in 1970. The urgent need to maximize the benefits accruable from crude oil sales, and to meet the immediate challenges of post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation, necessitated closer government scrutiny of the oil industry. Beginning in 1969, therefore, the government expanded considerably its participation in, and regulation of the oil industry unlike the previous arrangement whereby long and unlimited concessions were granted to oil companies. There were several dimensions to this shift or “liberalization” of the oil industry after the civil war. One distinct feature was the decision of government to go into different kinds of partnership arrangements with foreign oil capital such as joint ventures, risk service contract and production sharing. Another feature of the post-concessionaire period culminated in the “democratisation” of participation as shown in the increased number of foreign capital investors in oil industry. It will be recalled that the sole concessions granted to Shell to prospect for oil in Nigeria had been reduced, by choice, in 1959, after the company gave up all but 16, 000 square miles of the original concession area. With this, other companies entered the relatively under-subscribed industry. In 1962, the Petroleum Division was created from the hydrocarbon Section of the Mines Division. The new division was charged with the responsibility of administering the Mineral Oils Act, the Petroleum Act and the Oil Pipelines Act as well as other regulations under them. It was also to supervise and advise on the operations of multinational oil companies, and enforce

¹⁵⁴ Ike Okonta, ‘Shell in Nigeria. Scenario Planner of adept Manipulator of Nigeria’. Delta News #3, October 1997. http://www.oneworld.org/delta/3_news3.html

safety standards and regulations (p. 1).¹⁵⁵ By 1969 when the concessionaire era came to an end, other multinational oil companies started to gain elbowroom to operate in the upstream and downstream sectors of the oil industry. That was not all. The post-concessionaire period also witnessed government's dissatisfaction with merely limiting its role to that of a rent-seeker entity. Despite constraints related to its lack of technological capabilities and adequate administrative oversight on the activities of multinational oil companies, the state began to show keen interest in becoming an active player by setting up the Nigerian National Oil Company (NNOC) which merged with the Ministry of Petroleum Resources in 1977 to form the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC). The NNPC was established to regulate the oil industry and to function as a multinational oil company.

It is more appropriate at this juncture to highlight some of the major elements determining the behaviour of oil capital and the Nigerian state, and how the partnership between them has defined the character of social, economic and political relationships in Nigeria. For analytical clarity, these can be highlighted briefly along the following themes: the monopoly of technical expertise in oil exploration and production activities by multinational oil companies; the weak regulatory capacity of the Nigerian State; the centrality of oil in the political economy of Nigeria, leading in turn, to the dwindling emphases on non-oil sectors which previously accounted for the bulk of foreign exchange earnings prior to the discovery of crude oil; and finally, the gradual but ultimate exclusion of the non-elite segments of the Nigerian society from the qualitative benefits of expanded crude oil production and sales.

Despite changes in policies aimed at regulating and controlling the oil industry, the power of multinational oil companies have only been curtailed in symbolic and perfunctory respects; rather than in any substantial manner. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. In the first place, the oil sector is highly capital intensive, a situation which effectively ensured that only entities that have access to cutting-edge technological skills, managerial expertise and capital could venture into and enjoy economies of scale that arise from the huge investment required in oil business

¹⁵⁵ See Federation of Nigeria, Annual Report of the Mines Division of the Ministry of Mines and Power for the Year Ended March 31, 1963. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division, 1964

operations. It is not by sheer coincidence, therefore, that the oil sector in Nigeria, as elsewhere, is a close-knit family of global oligopolists united for the sole aim of exploiting, often with reckless abandon, hydrocarbon oil. Today, the major multinational oil companies involved in the downstream and upstream oil sectors are Shell Petroleum Development Company, MobilExxon, ChevronTexaco, Total, Elf and Agip. Together, their total output accounts for more than two-thirds of the country's foreign exchange earnings and gross national product (GNP). Second, and arising from the earlier point about the stature of these multinational oil companies, is that individually or collectively, they are able to utilise the huge resources at their disposal to gain political leverage from the government, and when the latter was reluctant or not forthcoming, have ganged up against it. Little wonder that allegations of sharp practices, particularly in the implementation of joint venture agreements, frequently levelled against multinational oil companies in the country.

This unravels the third major element defining the behaviour of oil multinationals- the weak regulatory capacity of the Nigerian State. If indeed the colonial state was successful in ensuring effective control of oil mining activities, especially with regard to determining the firms that can participate, successive post-independence governments have not been able to do the same. The weak regulatory capability of the Nigerian state can be traced to historical factors as well as contemporary limitations. The historical factors related to the role and mandate bequeathed by the colonial state to its successor after independence which, essentially, was that of junior partner in, and facilitator of, resource extraction for the ultimate benefit of international capital. Nearly three decades ago, Turner (1976: 353-390) indicted the State for its inability to effectively regulate the oil industry. According to her, the State neither took steps to ensure genuine and direct involvement in the exploration and production of crude (leaving it entirely to MNOC) nor encouraging the development of local investors. At the same time, the structure of interest in the oil sector is such that it encourages over dependence on the multinational oil companies for technical skills and expertise thereby strengthening company-comprador alliance. By design, the State has limited itself to the secondary role of what Turner labelled a "passive tax collector", thereby entrenching Nigeria's weak position within the international capitalist system as well as the incoherence and instability of the country (1976: 361-362).

One angle demonstrative of the weakness of the state to regulate the multinational oil companies is the fact that oil companies could almost carry on business without effective administrative and financial oversights from government. One major factor that led to the promulgation of the Decree 51 of November 1969 could be traced to the inability of government to curtail sharp practices on the part of oil companies. In that year, the Minister of Finance, Chief Obafemi Awolowo informed the Federal Executive Council that Nigeria was being short-changed by the oil multinationals operating in the country based on the report of the fact-finding mission on petroleum taxation and other problems affecting petroleum revenue and miscellaneous matters in the oil industry (Soremekun and Obi, 1993). Almost four decades after, the ability of the government to effectively control (and tame) multinational oil companies operating in the upstream and downstream sectors of the oil industry remain doubtful. This fact was revealed in the recent allegations published in the national daily, *The Guardian*, that there were discrepancies in the book keeping of oil companies, including a staggering 60 million USD by Shell Petroleum Development Company.¹⁵⁶ Even though such revelation is not entirely new, it is a profound indictment on the sloppiness of the partnership between NNPC and the multinational oil companies. Earlier in August 1996, government directed that joint venture operators deposit their share of counterpart funding in escrow accounts to be jointly managed by them and the NNPC, against the background of suspicious financial practices. The then petroleum minister, Chief Dan Etete reiterated the reservations of government against oil companies when he told their executives that:

The necessary accountability and transparency that should complement the trust implicit in these arrangements have been lacking in a number of cases. Some joint venture operators blatantly ignored calls on them for justification or details of expenditure items. Presently, the Joint Venture accounts from which payment are made have the operator companies providing the sole signatories”.

Again, in 1997, the Minister of Finance, Chief Anthony Ani, accused Joint Venture (JV) partners of sharp financial practices by excluding indigenous experts from planning and costing processes. To quote him: “We don’t even know how much it costs to explore and exploit; all that is happening is that we get bills which we have to

¹⁵⁶ Dianam Dakolo, ‘Rumbling in the Oil Industry’, *The Guardian*, Tuesday, April 25, 2000

settle... Nigerians have not been actively involved in the whole business".¹⁵⁷ On another occasion, the National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS) reported that the JV partners have fleeced the country of billions of Dollars in 9 years. That sub-division of the NNPC specifically claimed to have recovered 158 million Dollars and N628 million (the equivalent to about 15 billion Naira) from Chevron. In the same period, N700 million was recovered from Agip. All this is apart from what an observer called "the routine abuse of expatriate quota regulations by the JV operators".

Either by error of omission or commission, post-independence governments in Nigeria have re-enacted the colonial script of repressive exploitation to the letters, with slight deviations.¹⁵⁸ The other dimension that shows the weak regulatory capacity of the state is the persistent display of its lack of capacity to deal decisively with multinational oil companies simply because its fortunes are inextricably tied to those of the oil majors in the country. In other words, the Nigerian State must ensure at all times, and no matter the ultimate burden, the unhindered production activities of multinational oil companies since what it gets in terms of revenue and royalties, secures its own accumulative base.¹⁵⁹ It is this symbiotic but incestuous relationship, that underpinned the protective umbrella and political insurance the State has had to provide for multinational oil companies, even when the latter truly do not deserve such cover. This point will be elaborated further in another section of this thesis. Suffice it here to note, along the lines of Billet (1991: 31), that there is a "significant positive relationship" between political repression and the behavioural disposition of foreign direct investment represented by multinational oil companies primarily due to a

¹⁵⁷ Ani's successor, Mallam Ismaila Usman, expressed similar disgust. In fact, he went ahead to engage the services of international technical (oil) audit specialists to review and report on overall joint venture operations, oil reserves of the nation, the most acceptable cost per barrel of oil as well as alternative funding options.

¹⁵⁸ One of the deviations followed the decision of the Murtala-Obasanjo regime to nationalize the assets of British Petroleum (BP) in Nigeria as a final effort to arm-twist British to step down its support for the Unilateral declaration of Independence (UDI) by the Ian Smith government in Rhodesia. It was this political move that eventually paved the way for the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980.

¹⁵⁹ Ahiakpor (1990) challenged this argument on the convergence of ambitions between the state and multinationals by noting that their roles can, more often than not, be conflictual because their *raison d'être* differ: multinationals are keen in making profit, while the state is principally responsible for the enhancement of welfare. See also Razeen (1995); Gilpin (1987: 10-11).

'safeguarding effect'". Accordingly, the use of political repression to minimize uncertainty and risk while imposing a climate of stability for business to thrive in less-developed countries indicate a strong alliance between governments and multinational corporations in the oil industry. Thus, when a State finds itself in a situation of dependent development either by design or default as Nigeria has done, it must cooperate with international capital and willingly use repression to coarsen militant elements in the society who threaten a veritable source of revenue. Gilpin (1987: 247) buttressed this point when he argued that:

because the corporation require a stable host government sympathetic to capitalism, dependent development encourages the emergence of authoritarian regimes in the host country and the creation of alliances between international capitalism and domestic reactionary elites. (Billet, 1991: 32)

The centrality of crude oil to the political economy of Nigeria is an established fact. In less than one decade after the commercial production and sale of the commodity, earnings from it had replaced those from other sectors, especially agriculture, as the most prominent source of foreign exchange. The neglect of agriculture, or in Struther's phrase, "de-agriculturization" of the Nigerian economy (1990: 309-341) introduced what is popularly known as the Dutch Disease effect- the deleterious economic difficulties associated with the political economy of oil. New oil wealth not only altered the structural template on which the political economy of the country thrived and relied, but also the basis for political, economic and social relationships among different groups and interests in the country. Oil wealth gave government the fiscal strength to accelerate the process of infrastructure creation and growth (not development) as seen in the building of gigantic edifices, sprawling networks of roads and housing estates as well as ambitious 'white elephant' projects- the so-called 'Cathedrals in the Desert'.¹⁶⁰ On the converse, oil wealth introduced a culture of reckless spending or squandermania, misappropriation, embezzlements, prebendalism and corruption that have become the hallmark of public life in Nigeria. Ihonvbere (1994: 21-22) highlighted how oil played a pivotal role in the chain of crises that has punctuated the Nigerian post-colony. According to him, rather than strengthen the fiscal muscle of the state to facilitate development, oil wealth led to "extravagance,

¹⁶⁰ One of the mind-boggling ways Nigeria's fabled oil wealth of the 1970s was squandered had been documented by Apter (1996: 441-466) in his account of the FESTAC project.

mismanagement and misplaced priorities” Ihonvbere quoted the former governor of the East Central State under the Gowon regime, Ukpabi Askia, as saying that: “Oil misled us ... oil created false impression that all was well and that money was no longer a problem.... The temptations were extraordinary. Nigeria, like many countries misled by oil wealth, was not strong enough to resist the temptation”.

In *The Political Economy of Civil Rule and the Economic Crisis of Nigeria*, Forrest (1990) identified four consequences of oil and oil revenue in Nigeria. First, is that with the rentier nature of the state, there are stronger pressures to maximize current oil revenues and increase expenditure, at all cost. Second, is that oil revenue impacts on the “structure of incentive” in the economy by changing relative prices. Third, that it ensures that economic expansion becomes dependent on an increase in real oil earnings. Lastly, that it integrated Nigeria more thoroughly into the international economy. In the end, Forrest argued that state policies and forms of intervention affect the allocation and use of resources, patterns of accumulation and the growth and development of the economy. According to Schatz (1984: 54), since the surge in oil revenue, Nigeria has moved from nurture capitalism to pirate capitalism by creating an “inert economy”- involving a transition from an economy with a weak engine of growth to one with virtually no engine at all. However, oil neither changed the basis on which that power rests nor altered the structure or focus of Nigerian politics (Berry, 1984: p. 1-2). Yet, by raising the stakes of political and economic competition among rival groups and interests, oil gradually eliminated the non-elite segments of Nigerian society from benefiting in any qualitative sense from the oil wealth. Since it is in the nature of oil to concentrate political and economic power and wealth within the state, tension and conflict between those who controlled the apparatus of power and those excluded from it soon intensified (Gause, 1994). This, as Lynn argued, turns the state into an inevitably “terrain of struggle and conflict” (p. 408). The paradox of oil again revealed itself in the fact that revenue from it irrigated certain segments, but largely those contributing the least to productive accumulation. Thus, it remains a profound paradox that the economic boom associated with oil initially answered the material dreams of Nigerian elite in particular, and also sharpened, stimulated and unleashed volatile and dangerous political forces that have

been difficult to pacify.¹⁶¹ Side by side, then, the oil boom of the 1970s and 1980s effectively ushered in a period of socio-economic and political alienation, as well as the suffocation of the civil society. Having control over the means of coercion, the military rulers that held sway on governance in this period militarised the civil society to such an extent that it foreclosed avenues for dialogue; nurturing instead, a culture of violence and instability. Ultimately, there emerged two important and perhaps unexpected trends: the radicalisation of professional and ethnic groups and unions, and the groundswell of popular clamour for the expansion of the economic and political space in the country. How the activities of these groups, particularly those that emerged in reaction to the contradictions of oil-induced accumulation within the oil territories of the Niger Delta is the focus of the next session.

6.2. Multinational Oil Companies and Host Communities in the Niger Delta

This section investigates the second hypothesis of the study that the activities of foreign capital, represented in modern times by multinational oil companies, accentuate the crisis of development and civil conflicts in the Niger Delta. The appropriate point of departure is to draw attention to the dominant trend in the literature casting doubts on the relationships between multinational corporations and their host States, especially weak developing countries. There are two broad perspectives on the impacts of multinational corporations on host developing countries. One strand, taking a cue from the Western liberal orthodoxy insists that multinational corporations are critical agents for enhancing global and national welfare since they produce and spread wealth (and cutting-edge technological capability and expertise) to regions that otherwise would never have experienced growth and development. The converse, mostly radical dependency scholarship from the Third World, claims that multinationals do not distribute global wealth and resources in any equitable manner; certainly not in ways favourable to developing countries. Rather, these global businesses have merely turned developing countries into appendage or enclave economies serving principally the interest and welfare of the metropolitan countries, and only to a lesser extent, those of the tiny national elites

¹⁶¹ An interesting comparative lesson was documented by Lawrence (1984: 295-314) in his study of the Iranian and Nigerian experiences.

in the host country. Contributors to Sanjaya Lall investigated various aspects and dimensions of the activities of multinationals, and how these affect the welfare of developing host countries, impact on new developments in terms of investment development cycles, new forms of investments in the developing countries, impact of debt-equity swap and foreign direct investment in the developing countries, impact on developing countries in the area of technology development and productive efficiency, impact on host countries socio-economic development, and finally, how such impacts do differ according to policy, environmental and institutional variations across cultures and societies (1993)¹⁶².

Although the debate is less intense now than before, the overwhelming weight of the argument is that the operational activities and corporate mis/behaviours of multinational firms have persistently exacerbated the contradictions of underdevelopment confronting many of the weak and poor countries hosting them. This is particularly so since the primary motive of multinational firms is profit, and not concern with “benevolent” or “public-spirited act” as they provide basic social amenities; only on rare occasions when doing so would enable them gain further access and leverage in the extraction of vital natural resources. Indeed, Lall and his associates suggested that orthodox conceptualisation of the relationship between multinationals and host states in the developing countries as beneficial, or as contributing to the inflow and reinvestment of capital, ignore the many obvious flaws in such a rather simplistic view. According to them, analytical considerations and empirical findings on the activities of multinational corporations in developing countries overwhelmingly point at the opposite direction of the classical liberal perspective that they are harbingers of qualitative economic and social change in developing countries.

¹⁶² Sanjaya Lall, ed. *Transnational Corporations and Economic Development* [V.3 UN Library on Transnational Corporations] London: Routledge, 1993. In the same volume, see Sanjaya Lall, “Introduction: Transnational Corporations and Economic Development”, pp. 1-30; S. Lall and P. Streeten “TNCs and the Welfare of Host Countries: Analytical Considerations”, pp. 43-76; P.J. Buckley and M. Casson, “Multinational enterprises in Less-Developed Countries: cultural and Economic Interactions”, pp. 106-134; D.J. Lecraw, “Bargaining power, Ownership, and Profitability of Transnational corporations in Developing Countries”, pp. 374-395; P. Streeten, “The Multinational Enterprise and the Theory of Development Policy”, pp. 347-373.

It is now common knowledge that multinationals pose a formidable threat to long-term human interest and the sovereignty of states in developing countries.¹⁶³ Hamilton (1986) noted that although scholarly attention to MNCs has been commensurate on their meteoric rise, there remain “important gaps in our knowledge of past trends and experiences”, particularly as there are “signs that the character and behaviour of MNCs and national attitudes to them are again changing under the stressful politico-economic conditions of the mid-1980s.”¹⁶⁴ Paradoxically, it is only much recently that scholarship is beginning to probe closer and beyond the global-national nexus by also investigating micro-level relationships between multinational corporations and the grassroots communities who directly host them.¹⁶⁵ Yet, the output of scholarship in the last decade or so, based on empirical national and cross-national data/ experiences, has shown that interrogating the micro-level relationships between multinationals (particularly those in the extractive sector), and host communities (especially those in weak countries), can harvest fascinating insights into the peculiar forms and characters manifested by political, economic and social forces within them. By divine providence, several areas of the world endowed with rich mineral resources also happen to be populated by poor and marginalized indigenous peoples and ethno-minority groups. This paradox has pitched many of those weak communities against the multinational corporations that are operating in their territories on diverse issues, mostly those relating to indigenous, minority and environmental rights.¹⁶⁶ In many areas of the world, therefore, contests around indigenous, minority and environmental rights have become very persistent especially as the corporate behaviours and activities of multinational corporations have tended largely to compromise these rights. Indeed, these issue have also attracted global attention in such institutions as the United Nations, especially since 1966, when the GA adopted Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. By 1977, the UN

¹⁶³ David C. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World*. London: Earthscan, 1995. 374pp.

¹⁶⁴ F.E.I. Hamilton, ‘The Multinationals: Spearhead or Spectre’ in C.J. Dixon, D. Drakasis-Smith and H.D. Watts (eds.), *Multinational Corporations and the Third world*. London and Sydney: Crown Helm, 1986), p. 2

¹⁶⁵ James C.W. Ahiakpor, *Multinationals and Economic Development: An Integration of Competing Theories*. London: Routledge, 1990.

¹⁶⁶ *Multinational Monitor*, ‘Indigenous People Versus Multinationals’ (Editorial), 3: 12, December 1982, p. 3

sponsored a conference in Geneva attended by an estimated 60 representatives of indigenous peoples from around the world. At the latter meeting, participants adopted a “Declaration of Principle for the Defense of the Indigenous nations and the People of the Western Hemisphere”. In more recent times, there is a groundswell of global anti-corporate movement drawing attention to the shortfalls in the operational activities of multinational companies in countries where regulatory mechanisms and institutions are either too weak or not in existence.

To be sure, detailed studies have been conducted on the relationship between industries engaged in the extractive sectors and host communities in more developed countries. The overwhelming conclusion is that the activities of these companies impose heavy environmental costs both in the short and long terms. Chess and Lynn (1996: 87-110) examined “the relationships between corporations and communities concerning potential environmental hazards, particularly near production facilities” in the chemical industry in the United States. More specifically, Carls, Fenn and Chaffey (1995: 273-286) have examined the effects of oil and gas drilling on soil contamination in Texas, USA. They reported that research on the impact of oil waste on the environment continues to rise. Longley and Jackson (1980: 275) identified 6 major impacts of oil and gas production on brackish marshes such as those in the Niger Delta. They include loss of vegetation, loss of consumers from the food chain, increases in dissolved materials, the addition of particulate, the addition of toxic materials, and changes in the water flow regime. Matlera catalogued instances of Chevron’s environmental recklessness in the United States, including the violation of underground oil storage tank monitoring requirements in Orange County, California in 1991. Other breaches included the dumping of pollutants into Santa Monica Bay from the EL Segundo refinery, the leakage of about 16, 800 gallons of fuel from corroded Chevron pipelines into wells where several Texas communities get their drinking water. The company also reportedly violated Federal and State standards for the emission of sulphur dioxide (at its EL Paso Site), while also causing the leakage of thousands of gallons of gasoline into the sewage lines serving Northern Colorado leading to explosion and forced evacuations in 1980. What has come out clearly in the context of developed countries, however, is that environmental regimes guiding companies in the extractive sector are very strict. At the same time, citizens’

awareness about rights is so high that they can ask questions and get answers on matters relating to the environmental implications of business activities, either directly from companies or from government. In the United States, for instance, Congress was prompted by the Bhopal disaster of 1984 to enact two years after, the federal right-to-know legislation, called the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), that mandates industry to report its activities to the public.

There is a wide contrast in the experiences of developing countries in the above regard. In many developing countries, environmental protection agencies are weak and/or poorly equipped. Just as much, limited pressures from communities, environmental activists and groups, have neither placed multinational corporations under pressure to inform the public about their activities that could have harmful health implications, nor have they made them responsible to redemptive actions. Ultimately, then, there is a big question mark on the range of activities carried out by multinational companies, especially those involved in the extractive sector such as mining and oil in developing countries. They are accused, among others, of applying substandard business and operational practices that leave a sad trail of health, environmental, cultural, social, economic and political problems for host communities. In his examination of the effects of oil development in the Ecuadorian Amazon, Zaidi (1994: 337-348) drew attention to the linkage between environmental contamination and the poor health status of several communities. Like the Niger Delta of Nigeria, the Ecuadorian Amazon is one of the most biologically diverse tropical forests in the world, but since 1972, it has been under intensive exploitation by foreign and state-owned oil companies. According to Zaidi, at least four interrelated questions are important. First, what are the appropriate indicators for assessing oil and health impacts- in terms of life expectancy, infant mortality, morbidity rates, disease pattern etc.? Second, what are the alternative/ acceptable levels of exposure to oil-related health hazards? What are the potential exposure routes- inhalation, ingestion, or dermal contacts? Do the chemical substances selected for use in oil exploration activities pose a threat to human life and health, and how can we measure them? These chemicals include metals, heavy metals, salts, gases (e.g. hydrogen sulphide, nitrogen oxide), volatile organic compounds (benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, and

xylene) etc. The major health hazards, then, include the charges that oil pollution causes cancer, reproductive and immunological health complications, and anaemia all from chemicals such as Benzene through ingestion. Oil pollution can also lead to dermatoses, eczema, skin cancer, depigmentation, and acne when metals such as arsenic, cadmium, chromium, and mercury come in contact with the skin. Lastly, they cause respiratory and neurological disorders like dizziness through the inhalation of gases such as hydrogen sulphide, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide. Ultimately, also, when traditional food sources are compromised, widespread malnutrition become prominent among children of indigenous peoples. Invariably, the over all concern is that the “communities who are exposed are often those least able to avoid exposure or to cope with its health effects”. This suggests, in turn, an unmistakable nexus between social, economic, demographic, and political factors in environmental vulnerability. In conclusion, Zaidi indicted the Ecuadorian State for violating the human rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon not only by supporting pollution in a manner that threatens the health of citizens, but also by allowing private actors to contaminate the environment while at the same time failing to inform the citizens of the potentially serious health effects associated with oil development.

There is also a large body of scientific investigations on the impacts of oil exploration activities, especially those related to the polluting Nigeria’s delta region.¹⁶⁷ At a broad level, the chairman of the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES), Mr. Gamaliel Onosode, identified the social, environmental and health conditions stimulated by intensifying oil production activities. These include a high rate of migration to urban centers; a condition which has created unemployment in the area and threatened its flora and fauna. Accordingly, the “collateral impact” of oil exploration has significantly altered the pristine natural vegetation. At another level, oil exploration has had negative impacts on the health status of oil communities, particularly the spread of diseases such as malaria, gastroenteritis, respiratory tract infections, measles, worm infestation, anaemia and hypertension, etc., all of which have increased mortality rates in the region. According to Onosode:

¹⁶⁷ See, for instance, Kakulu and Osibanjo, 1992; Jaiyesimi and Pugh, 1994; Benka-Coker and Ekundayo, 1995; Benka-Coker and Olumagin, 1996; UNEP, 1992; Okogu, 1994.

given the high level of poverty, the surge of urban population coupled with poor access to socio-economic infrastructure, most households lack food security while in terms of food hazards, the major problems are posed by pathogens, cyanide toxicity, mycotoxins and hydrocarbon contamination.¹⁶⁸

Elsewhere, Onosode also pointed out, inter alia, that

Oil industry has induced a high level of migration of urban centres; spatial and social access to the amenities of roads, housing, electricity, water, education and communication facilities and health centres is very low. Because of the unequal spatial distribution, urban centres are few and far between and are under increasing pressure from population... leading to rapid decay and deterioration of infrastructure. For many parts, the rate of unemployment in the Niger Delta is higher than in most other parts of the country." (Cited in *Sunday Times*, 26th April, 1998: 4)

These side effects from oil exploration are already very rampant in the Niger Delta. But since it is the overriding political activities of multinational oil companies that define other aspects of their corporate mis/behaviours, it is important to focus more critically on them.

At the general level, Meyer (1996: 368-397) summarized the major issues relating to the political activities of multinationals that ultimately illuminate the Nigeria case study. As he rightly noted, there may be no legally binding obligations on the part of multinationals to promote or to protect human rights, yet the potential impact of their activities on human rights in developing countries should not be overlooked. According to him, two broad perspectives exist on the human rights concerns characterising the relationship between multinational corporations and host communities: the engine-of-growth thesis, and the Hymer thesis. The engine-of-growth thesis argues that to the extent that MNCs directly promote economic and social rights and indirectly support civil and political rights they must enhance human rights. The Hymer thesis however, challenged this notion by pointing out that it is not technology that creates inequality, rather it is organization. Accordingly, multinational companies can be directly implicated in the violations of human rights in developing countries precisely because they are "investing in repression" (p. 379). The Hymer thesis certainly captures the

¹⁶⁸ For details, see Pius Mordi, 'Oil Exploration Induces Migration, Unemployment, says NDES', *The Guardian*, 31-12-1997, p. 2.

fundamental thrusts of the deteriorating corporate relations between multinational companies and host communities, especially as top executives of multinational companies have been known to prefer authoritarian regimes that can ensure the socio-political stability necessary for extraction, accumulation and profiteering, to “democracies” that are weak and therefore unable to demonstrate decisiveness in dealing with grassroots political actions that threaten business.

The previous section highlighted the patterns of emergence of foreign oil capital, and how their relations with the colonial/ post-colonial states have been shaped by several imperatives, most importantly the need to secure extraction and accumulation principally for British-based capital. From that point of departure, the thrust of the present argument would be that the various manifestations of the alliance between the State and multinational oil companies have far-reaching implications, mostly negative, for host communities in the Niger Delta. For convenience, the implications of crude oil production activities can be divided into several sectors: environmental, economic, social and political. In terms of the environment, the region has been described as one of the worst in the world, thanks to the reckless production activities of oil companies. In *Shelling Nigeria Ablaze*,¹⁶⁹ the distinguished political scientist, Late Claude Ake, berated multinational oil companies for contributing to global warming in Nigeria than any other part of the world, per capita. Ake, interestingly, cited a World Bank report of 1995 titled *Defining an Environmental Development Strategy for the Niger Delta*, which estimated that as much as 76% of all natural gas from petroleum production in Nigeria is flared compared to 0.6% in the USA, 4.2% in the UK, and 21.0% in Libya. Gas flaring occurs at temperatures of 1, 300 to 1, 400 degrees centigrade, “heating up everything, causing noise pollution, and producing CO₂, VOC, CO, Nox and particulates around the clock”. Since Nigeria’s crude oil is light, the emission of CO₂ of about 35 million tons a year, and methane of about 12 million tons, can expect to occur at an estimated 50% in 48 hours.¹⁷⁰ Citing another study by the European Community titled “*Mangroves of Africa and Madagascar*”, Ake added that the waters of the Niger Delta contain at least 6% of petroleum and

¹⁶⁹ Claude Ake, ‘Shelling Nigeria Ablaze’, TELL (Lagos), January 29, 1996, p. 34

¹⁷⁰ On Shell and global warming, see G. Lean, in Independent on Sunday, 10-12-1995

often up to 60ppm. In Bonny Terminal in Rivers State where Shell does its separation of water from crude oil, Ake drew attention to the EU report claiming that the mud level at the bottom of the Bonny River has a lethal concentration of 12, 000ppm. Ake then queried the lack of any serious study by oil companies on the impacts of gas flaring. As he pointedly insisted:

They have not in fact studied it. They don't really know... Flares are harmful to health. The temperatures are incredible. They dry up everything in the vicinity and the soot is all over the place. How can they say that it is not harmful. You can feel the heat. You are already dealing with tropical heat. It is not just pure flame it comes with soot. It is constant. It is night and day pollution. This is the kind of crude arrogance that incenses people. It is unthinkable that such a thing would be in Britain, so for somebody to think that it is not harmful, these are the things that are getting people incensed (p. 6).

There is a sense in the deep public disappointment with oil companies who claim that their production activities do not impact adversely on the environment and subsistence of host communities, despite incontrovertible empirical evidences that they do operate in a responsible and environment-friendly manner. Oil spillage has become a frequent occurrence in the Niger Delta, and all too often, the responses of oil companies are either too late or too inadequate. Shell is the world's third largest Transnational Corporation (TNC) with a market capitalization of \$102.871 billion, according to the Financial Times Top 500 Companies, in 1996¹⁷¹. It was pointed out earlier that approximately 14% of its oil comes from Nigeria, but with a heavy burden of environmental devastation. Yet, as recent as 1995, Shell continued to deny that its activities have caused environmental devastation in the Nigerian Delta".¹⁷² Omoweh (1994: 2) reported that 784 oil spills took place in the region between 1976 and 1980, resulting in the loss of about 1.4 million barrels of crude oil- out of which Shell alone accounted for 578 spills amounting to approximately 1million barrels. A 1992 survey published in the *Oil Spill Intelligence Report* was unequivocal when it noted that although approximately 14% of its oil comes from the Nigerian fields, a staggering 26 of the 67 world oil spills officially acknowledged by Shell between 1982 and 1992

¹⁷¹ Tgeo, From Bonny To Baglan Bay: De-Unionisation and Human Rights Issues in the UK Oil Industry

¹⁷² Out of the latter figure, Shell argued that it retained 15% to cover investment and operating costs, 6% to the private industry partners, while 79% goes to government and NNPC in taxes, royalties and equity stake. See West Africa, 27 November-3 December, 1995: 1834

took place in the delta region.¹⁷³ A senior official of Shell, Mr. A.A. Adesida, also publicly admitted that his company recorded 44 cases of oil spills in 1997 alone. The concern here is both about the spills as well as the reluctance of oil companies to accept any responsibility. Shell has noted, for instance, that oil spills are primarily due to acts of sabotage, with 28% of spills between 1988 and 1994, occurring as a result of sabotage. The tactic, as it insisted, is becoming increasingly prevalent with sabotage accounting for 35% of all spills in 1994 alone. Ultimately as the company claimed, "...there are environmental problems associated with its operations, but they do not add up to devastation. The company believes the environment is also being used by communities to try to wrest more money from oil companies and the government." The company may however, be speaking to an aspect of the truth when it noted that the sabotage of facilities is "both a sign of frustration and an attempt to get more money out of oil operators in their areas". Obviously such acts of sabotage against oil companies point clearly to the powerlessness of youths and communities in the Niger Delta region.

Oil companies are quick to emphasize the cost implications of oil spills, both in terms of the volume of production and revenue lost, rather than the overall environmental, socio-economic and health implications of spills. About a week after the Idoho oil spill, for instance, Mobil took an advertisers announcement signed by its Chairman and Managing Director, Mr. P.L. Caldwell, titled "Mobil Cares".¹⁷⁴ In it, he cited the claims of Professor Clifford Odu of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology that 40, 000 barrels of crude oil could not have created the huge impact on the environment as did the Mobil spill. The announcement also claimed that if 40, 000 barrels was indeed spilled, 20, 000 barrels would have evaporated naturally within three days while the balance could not have spread from the coast of Akwa Ibom to Lagos almost 840 kilometres away. Besides, the spill could not have taken 30 days to clean up if only 40, 000 barrels were discharged. In the end, Caldwell claimed that Nigeria lost N5.4 billion (\$66.36 million) to the spillage; or an estimated 4.74 million barrels of crude oil over 47 days. Although the Idoho oil spill caught

¹⁷³ On Shell and global warming, see G. Lean, in *Independent on Sunday*, 10-12-1995

¹⁷⁴ Chuks Isiwu, 'Environmentalist Faults Mobil on Oil Spill', *National Concord*, 23-6-98, p. 23; see announcement in *National Concord*, 20, 1-98, p. 180

international attention, an official of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Michael Young, was on record to have argued that the spill would not cost Mobil more than \$2.1 million; a cost that is “immaterial” and “less than a rounding error. It’s a drop in the bucket for Mobil; it’s a drop in the bucket for the world”.¹⁷⁵

Another matter relating to oil spill is the avoidable delays in cleaning up and the usually controversy over the amount of compensation to be paid to affected communities. Usually, communities affected by oil spills and other adverse side effects of oil production are understandably impatient over such delays and the amount payable as compensation. One example was the handling of the famous Mobil Idoho spill of January 1998 that affected several coastline delta communities from Akwa Ibom to Ondo State. For an estimated 135 communities in Ilaje LGA of Ondo State, it was only six months after, in July, that any effort was made by Mobil to compensate them. Even then, the exercise was fraught with several problems.¹⁷⁶ According to the affected communities, the entire process of identifying, assessing and paying claims was fraught with difficulties. Communities affected by the oil spill accused Mobil of irregularities and outright cheating. According to the local government chairman of Iruan LGA, Elder Hogan Ben Inyang,

Mobil’s approach to compensation from the beginning to the end is faulty. They gave us only 150 forms which were grossly inadequate and then came out with more names mostly non-Iruan indigenes. Already they have burnt the affected fishing nets thereby destroying a major evidence of the spillage and now they are bringing the state government to help them cover up properly. Why all this in such a sensitive situation?”¹⁷⁷

On July 13, 1998, sixteen local government chairmen from the affected communities petitioned Mr. Caldwell, insisting “the claims process and method were imposed, teleguided and manipulated by Mobil to the disadvantage of the innocent and ignorant claimants in the state...” They queried the motive behind Mobil’s deadline for the submission of claims, wondering sarcastically why “Mobil spilled the oil and yet

¹⁷⁵ ‘Oil spillage in Akwa Ibom’, *Vanguard*, 15-1-98, p. 1 and 2

¹⁷⁶ Kolawole Olabisi, ‘oil Spillage: Mobil Pays Compensation in June’, *The Punch*, 1-5-98, p. 3; Actual compensation started on July 9 according to the head of Mobil investigation team, Chief Cecilia Onitiri. See *The Nation*, 3-7-98, p. 22

¹⁷⁷ Awawa Eka-Enang, ‘Idoho Oil Spill: War Over Mobil’s Compensation Package’, *The Punch*, 23-7-98, p. 20

fixed and enforced the deadline for the aggrieved to seek redress". According to them, the verification exercise as conducted in Akwa Ibom State by Mobil was particularly "unfair, manipulated, fraudulent", and the procedures employed were not only "unfair but unscientific in every sense." This is especially so as "[Legitimate] and verified claims were voided by Mobil without recourse to the claimants after destroying the exhibits and many legitimate claimants were denied their rights to file claims by Mobil's illegal and unilaterally imposed deadline." In the final analysis, the aggrieved communities rightly asked to know 'if the spill of the kind or magnitude had occurred in the United States or Europe, would Mobil had paid the same amount proposed despite the higher production cost of crude oil out there?' The number of claims eventually submitted by the affected communities numbered a staggering 14,200; although as it turned out, the company was only willing to earmark N258.26 million (less than \$2 million) as compensation. In any case, the Federal Government did not help matters, as it was indecisive. In March, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Alhaji Gidado Idris, only urged victims to await government's intervention.¹⁷⁸ That intervention never came despite complaints that the amount earmarked by Mobil was grossly inadequate. In some cases, even, individuals with affected communities that protested either non-payment or too little compensation ended up being arrested, interrogated, incarcerated or coerced by the police.¹⁷⁹

Only in very few instances have oil companies or their senior executives openly acknowledged, or accepted responsibility for environmental pollutions arising from oil production activities. The management of Mobil, for instance, acknowledged that pollution is a major environmental problem facing multinational oil companies in Nigeria, and that the sources include: pollution from drilling operations, production operations, platform and pipeline construction, tanker loading and marine operations, and other wastes from oil and gas operations: chemicals, sanitary waste and solid

¹⁷⁸ Paul Mumeh, 'Mobil, Community Meeting on Compensation Fails to Hold', *Daily Times*, 16-7-98, p. 20; See Kate Da Costa, 'Idris Urges Oil Spillage Victims to Await Government Action', *The Guardian*, 26-3-98, p. 48

¹⁷⁹ This was particular the case in the aftermath of demonstrations in Qua Iboe Terminal (QIT), Mobil's catchment area. Paul Mumeh and Bassey Okon, 'Police Probe Demonstrations Over Oil Spillage in Akwa Ibom: 300 Community Leaders Quizzed', *Daily Times*, 2-2-98, p. 3

wastes.¹⁸⁰ In his letter of resignation from Shell, the erstwhile environmental adviser, van Dessel¹⁸¹ argued that on the basis of existing information alone, “it is perfectly clear which environmental problems SPDC are facing and what to do about them”, suggesting that the present environmental situation in the Niger Delta is “serious, complicated and explosive”(1995: 3). Unfortunately, at the same time, there is a quick impulse to indict host communities for sabotaging oil installations. They hardly agree that oil spill incidents may also be due, in significant respects, to mechanical defects, operational failures or simply corrosion of oil pipelines due to long age.¹⁸² In a few instances senior executives of oil companies have owned up to these possibilities. In April 1998, for instance, the General Manager, Western Division of SPDC, Mr. Joshua Udofia, reported the shut down of its Jones creek station following the spilling of about 40, 000 barrels of oil in Warri South West LGA. He acknowledged that the 20-inch delivery line taking oil from Jones Creek, Odidi, Egwa flowstations to Forcados terminal is between 20-25 years old.¹⁸³ Due to age, and the fact that they are on the surface rather than buried securely in the grounds, many of the pipelines that criss-cross the Niger Delta region have become weak and corroded. It is also important to mention the wear and tear on the pipelines and other equipments as crude oil is pumped at very high pressure from one installation to another. There is strong persuasion, then, in the argument that the many pipelines and installations presently used by oil companies in the Niger Delta would long have become antiquated and replaced several times over if the operational environment were as stringent and as high as those in developed countries.

Claude Ake added an entirely different dimension to claims by oil companies that host communities are responsible for acts of sabotage. To quote him in details:

¹⁸⁰ 'Managing Pollution from Oil Operations'. Excerpts of a keynote address delivered by Mr. Paul Caldwell, Chairman/ MD, MPN at the 1998 World Environmental Day seminar organized by the Nigerian Environmental Society, NES. See *The Punch*, 18-6-98, p. 20

¹⁸¹ Dessel joined Shell in 1990 as a biologist, and after two years of work in the Nederland, assigned to Shell Nigeria, where for over two years he was an environmental advisor. He resigned from the job in December 1994 because his “professional and personal integrity was at stake”(p. 5).

¹⁸² Ademola Adedoyin, 'Oil Spill: Shell Records 44 Cases in One Year', *Vanguard* (Lagos), 3-4-98, p. 13

¹⁸³ Olu Owolabi, 'Oil spillage: Shell Loses 588, 000 Barrels' *The Punch*, 17-4-98, p. 6; see also, Emma Ogoigbe, 'Shell announces Oil Spill in Warri', *vanguard*, 30-3-98

[How] can you determine beforehand that the pollution is being done by the people, when the operations are being carried out under armed guard? The facilities are not accessible... the K-Dere flowstation was built in the middle of a community, a settlement, and high pressure pipes in front of the houses. Shell now turns around and tells people that the community have built houses there. Tell me how they would allow people to build a house with a doorstep two feet from pipelines. This kind of irresponsible propaganda gives the impression of not taking the people seriously. This style is causing a lot of anger. A little amendment of style could go a long way.

He went further to blame the oil companies for insensitivity, as

“There was only one case, the one that they refused to clear up, saying it was damaged by the people... People know that this is completely false and irresponsible, and it makes people mad, and this is the problem. If this is the case, why not bring in an independent person to judge this. Victimising and blaming... (p. 6)

There is a complex linkage between environmental degradation and the economic/social problematic facing oil communities in the Niger Delta. Nowhere has this revealed itself in such a devastating manner than in the area of access to subsistence land (and water) resources. Frynas has insisted that the adverse impacts of oil operations cannot be explained adequately without reference to land issues, particularly as both oil companies and village communities depend on land for their respective business and pecuniary activities. Oil operations affect the use of land in village communities in several ways: the dense network of pipelines and flowlines affect, in the words of Ashton-Jones, “foot communication” and traditional land use patterns such as bush burning for farming (Frynas, 1999: 20). The expansion of oil production activities has no doubt accentuated the crisis of land availability and usage in the region, especially since the traditional subsistence activities of the people (farming and fishing) rely entirely on these fixed resources. Although the role ecology plays in civil rebellion has not been given much attention, such roles are central in understanding the patterns and dimensions of collective mobilisation in the oil delta. A significant proportion of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta reside in rural areas where the ecology is not just inclement, but where the two major subsistence economic activities have had to compete unfavourably for land use for oil operations. In the contest for land, however, oil companies have a legal advantage. Unlike in the past when communities had the franchise to use and dispose land, the controversial

Land Use Decree of 1978 ensured that oil-related activities take priority over individual or communal needs for land. This situation, in turn, effectively dispossesses inhabitants from communal lands, including traditional cultural sites. Besides all these, the ever-shrinking physical space that oil communities have held on to for farming, fishing and sundry activities have either been taken over by oil companies, or polluted through oil production and other allied activities. Today, land has easily become the most contentious resource in the oil delta, and a basis for intra-community, inter-community as well as strained relations with oil companies. Some of the conflicts over land in the Niger Delta often have longer antecedents that predated the discovery of oil, but ignorance of (and disdain for) customary land rights and local customs have been identified as significantly exacerbating existing disputes (Frynas, 1999: 1-32). In other cases, once peaceful neighbours become enemies soon as oil companies discover crude oil and decide to commence exploration and production, precisely because such activities ultimately confer the privilege of “oil producing community” with its pecuniary rewards. Amadi et. al. summarised this point well by claiming that as the oil industry developed, land became poorer. This apparent correlation, they claimed, is a coincidence for with the growth of the industry,

... the wealth of which might have been expected to mitigate the rural decline, has only created additional problems: oil spills contaminate water; gas flaring, until 1993, took away the calm of the night and, in the rainy climate produced ... acid rain that damaged tin roofs and crops; but above all the wealth of the oil industry, so visibly flaunted by a lucky few but tantalizingly out of the reach of most people exacerbates social discontent caused by the degraded environment (Amadi, et. al., 1986: 2).

Although the activities of multinational oil companies are at the heart of the crises that have been rocking the delta region for several years, they certainly do have a clear grasp of the causes and dimensions of the problems afflicting the communities, and why they have intensified violent protests and agitation in recent times. They are privy, for instance, to the fact that in the many years of oil exploration and production activities, government drifted further away from the oil communities in terms of meeting basic developmental responsibilities such as providing social amenities and infrastructures. Indeed, if the huge monetary gains derived from crude oil sales is anything to go by, there should really be a cause for concern for the poor state of infrastructural development as well as widespread poverty in the Niger Delta.

According to Deji Haastrup, Manager, Community Relations, Chevron Nigeria Limited, “[In] many remote areas where poverty and unemployment are more pronounced and policing is almost absent, many of the youths have turned to crime and the criminal has not had much deterrent.” Shell has also clearly identified three core factors that precipitate community disturbances: political, social, and environmental factors. The political factors include the lack of reasonable share of oil revenue complicated by a rapidly rising population putting pressure on land causing deforestation, over-farming and erosion. Second, is the emergence of a new generation of well-educated youths who are aware of the disparity between urban and rural centers, and who believe that multinational oil companies have the wherewithal to redress this widening social gap. Third, is the fact that oil communities have found that extracting a greater share of oil wealth is possible only by forcefully holding oil companies accountable. At the social level, Shell noted that “[Anger] is growing and increasing militancy is overthrowing traditional social order in some communities.” This, according to the company, has led to a situation whereby “a complex and dynamic fragmentation of communities characterized by frequent power shifts between factions” makes it difficult, if not impossible, to negotiate compensation for land acquisition damages due to oil spillage. The last social factor is the resurgence of intense ethnic politics and conflicts that sometimes affect oil operations. The environmental factor relates primarily to oil spills, which the company frequently blamed on sabotage. It is an undeniable fact, as Ashton-Jones pointed out in the particular case of Shell, that

[While] I remain persuaded that Shell has not, as a matter of policy, operated in a way that is detrimental to the environment and to the communities that have been its hosts, ... the company is environmentally and socially careless and tactless, having allowed itself to be seduced by the climate of low environmental standards and carelessness for human rights within which the Nigerian oil industry works..., Shell has shown, to say the least, a cavalier attitude to the well-being of these communities... (1994: 6).

In my opinion, this cavalier disposition on matters affecting the well-being of host oil communities is at the heart of the troubles that oil companies are bedevilled with in Nigeria. It is true that the principal motivation for the operations of multinationals oil companies is profit; but the ways they have carried on their activities and relations with host communities over the years pointedly demonstrate nothing short of

corporate irresponsibility.¹⁸⁴ Of course, the popular claim among oil companies is that they are purely business outfits not government; hence cannot be expected to play the role of Santa Claus by taking over the legitimate duties and responsibilities of government to its people. The contradiction arising from this position is quite obvious: multinational oil companies are the only 'government' poor oil communities have ever known in the last four decades since the commercial exploitation of crude oil started. Oil executives are conscious of this contradiction for as Haastrup again noted, "one of the greatest challenges for the industry is how many people perceive it." He gauged accurately the popular mood among oil communities thus:

Oil companies are in fact seen as an alternative government. And as if in response to this unusual situation, some oil companies have now departments of agriculture, health, education, and so on, much like governments have ministries. Some of the companies in the oil industry have annual budget for community development and corporate contributions bigger than what some state governments allocate to development.

He went further to note that:

... the previous neglect of many remote, rural communities which host our operations affords us an opportunity to make real, tangible and verifiable differences in the lives of a number of people, some of whom have put up with many years of inadequacy and privation.

Hence, as many oil companies begin to show signs of inability to "meet the needs and expectations of a nation in the throes of scarcity", it became "the victim of the people's wrath." What is becoming the fad, according to retired ambassador Dele Cole however, is that:

... oil companies have lived on the fiction that having secured Federal Government's permission, they owe no obligation whatsoever to the communities. That is a notorious theory because it does not exist anywhere else in the world, except in Nigeria¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ In the 'Statement of General Business Principles' released by Royal Dutch/ Shell Group of Companies in June 1990, it pledged responsibility to shareholders, employees, customers and the society, in that order. See UN, World Investment Report 1994. New York: UN, p. 321

¹⁸⁵ Emeka Nwadioko, 'In Search of Balm for Oily Feuds in Rivers', *The Guardian*, March 29, 1994, p. 9

For many oil communities therefore, nothing can be more frustrating than the persistent claim by multinational oil companies that they are a purely business conglomerate, and so apolitical. Unfortunately, the major companies, particularly Shell, are quick both in insisting that they are apolitical but more importantly, in confessing their unreserved preference for stable dictatorships rather than unstable democratic regimes. That much could be gleaned from the sentiments expressed by Nnaemeka Achebe, the highest-ranking Nigerian on Shell management as at 1996. According to him, "For a commercial company trying to make investments, you need a stable environment. Dictatorships can give you that. Right now in Nigeria there is acceptance, peace and continuity".¹⁸⁶ This corporate attitude ensures that oil companies are ever willing to play on the side of the state to secure profit, even if their activities have damaging socio-economic, political, and environmental impacts, as is presently the case in most oil communities in the Niger Delta. The above situation, coupled with the tendency by oil companies to underplay the extent of their political clout vis-à-vis the state, and all the differences these could make in bringing succour and socio-economic development to host communities, is a major source of irritation and conflict. Unfortunately, also, when oil companies trump up their apolitical and purely "business-as-usual" credentials, they mock and offend the sensibilities of the inhabitants of oil communities. This is because in reality, oil companies have a strong political leverage over and contacts with government, at the highest level.

Contrary to public relations rhetoric and epitaphs by multinational oil companies of pursuing "partnership-in-progress" and "community-friendly" relationships, there is no doubt that their relationships with host communities have steadily declined and deteriorated over the years. This deterioration cannot be divorced from the widely known corporate insensitivity among oil companies. For instance, the major oil companies operating in Nigeria's delta have been at the receiving end of hostilities from their host communities, especially against the background of their substandard environmental records, community development initiatives, as well as visible alliances with the repressive state/ military. In reality, corporate irresponsibility in the

¹⁸⁶ Cited in Joshua Hammer, 1996: 59; See also, Holden (1982: 12, 5) reported a strikingly similar sentiment among oil multinationals in Latin America, where there has been a consensus that there is more "democracy for business" under authoritarian regimes.

oil industry is associated with their failure to assist in providing basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, portable water, good drainage, schools and health care facilities for hosts. In many of the oil communities, state-of-the art infrastructure is provided only for the comfort of company staff, without giving consideration to host communities even where feasible. This open disparity in the provision of infrastructure, coupled with the sheer arrogance with which the oil firms publicise their dubious community relations and assistance, are certainly factors that frequently raise communal anger the Niger Delta. Ultimately, what is ignored from the perspective of oil communities is that because the nature of the oil business has changed significantly from “unaccountable corporation to quasi- government”¹⁸⁷, multinational oil companies have little choice other than to come to terms with and accept the responsibilities that come with that circumstantial role.

One of the major questions asked during focus group discussions (FGD) conducted among different segments of oil communities is for them to assess the cumulative effects of the operations and activities of oil companies in their areas. Most of the FGD respondents agreed that almost four decades of the operational presence of multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta have had negative socio-economic, environmental and health effects on the inhabitants of oil communities. A female respondent at Ughelli noted that “people are still suffering from all kinds of hardships, especially hunger as the farm produce get poorer and poorer every year”. Respondents also identified the indiscriminate destruction of farmlands, economic trees and pristine forests as well as water and air pollution. Others noticed the gradual decimation of wild life, tectonic animals, and the corrosive impact of gas flaring on rooftops. In Uzere, FGDs with youths (male) identified three concerns, or “big problems”. The first is that of the negative impacts of gas flaring on health, farmlands, and social infrastructure. Next, that despite the presence of oil companies, “the community still suffer unemployment and epileptic power supply”. Finally, “some of their workers snatch other peoples’ wives, because they have more money than the peasant farmers among whom they work”. Female youths from Ughelli stressed that oil workers are not just “insensitive to the plight of the people”, they are sometimes

¹⁸⁷ http://www.McSpotlight.org/beyond/delta2_nov96.html

quite “hostile” to the host communities. They likened the relationship between oil workers and communities to that between “a cat and a dog being forced to dwell together”. These perspectives, broadly around the non-beneficial nature of oil exploration activities, are shared by female youths in Uzere oil community; but they present the logic in a different way. According to a representative respondent,

The oil companies are just cheating the people with the so-called compensation they pay. The adage that says ‘teach me to fish and don’t give me fish’ comes to play. The money derived from the oil is not used in developing the oil communities and when the oil finishes these communities will never have anything to show for producing the nation’s wealth. (FGD with Female Youths in Uzere, 12-4-2000)

It is important not to ignore the fascinating contrast to the above deposition in the views of opinion and community leaders. According to one opinion leader in Uzere, for example, the presence of oil companies “is quite helpful. Shell, in particular, has been quite attentive to the needs of the people here. Unfortunately, there are saboteurs all over the place who frustrate the efforts of SPDC”. Another respondent insisted that “many of the villages...have constant supply of electricity, which is a big privilege, but they (the villagers) keep complaining”. His counterpart agreed that while “some people get some part-time jobs with them, the problems they create are far more, ... an unprofitable venture as “land and water is destroyed and the people are left in their problems of hunger and all kinds of sicknesses. Ken Saro-Wiwa corroborated the above claims more graphically when he pointed out that multinational oil companies are waging an “eco-war”, defined as a silent war where “no blood is (apparently) spilled, no bones are broken, no one is (assumed) maimed, so few are alarmed; but men, women and children die; flora, fauna and fish perish, air, soil and water are poisoned, and finally, the land and its inhabitants die” (The Guardian, 17-3-1993, p. 9).

It is such generally negative assessments of the operational irresponsibilities of multinational oil companies that ultimately underscore the grievances and ill feelings harboured by the host communities towards them. Asked to highlight their major grievances, most of the respondents to the FGDs administered on different categories of the population in the oil communities agreed that the problems facing their

communities are numerous. A male respondent in Eket, Akwa Ibom, noted for instance, that the crux of the problem is that:

The government has failed to provide for those communities. Of course, you have the company also has failed to provide for those communities. If the communities paid tax, it is the duty of government to provide the needs of the people for them. The problem we are having is due to the lack of seriousness on the part of the company. The argument of the company is that after they have made payment of tax to the government, then they owe community no duty to provide social amenities. (FGD Male Adult, Eket, Akwa Ibom, 15-2000)

Another respondent complained about the uneven recruitment pattern into oil companies, especially that which sidelines indigenes, both at the senior administrative echelon and in the regular staff cadre. The implication of this, according to him, is that:

If you employ members of the community then you are not going to have problem. If you employ members of the community as Board of Directors members, or Managing Directors, there will be no problem. But if there is nothing like that, then they would not be happy. (FGD Male Adult, Eket, Akwa Ibom, 15-2000)

The above opinion is also shared by youths who find themselves out of gainful employment in the oil industry. According to one youth (male) respondent in Uzere, Delta State, "whenever the oil companies want to employ, they take people from Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo tribes, leaving those from the sources of oil". A female youth respondent corroborated this sentiment during FGDs conducted in Uzere. Still another respondent highlighted the problem of favouritism so well when he noted that:

The irony of it all is that whenever there is a space in Shell or any other oil exploring company, the officers of such companies employ their relatives, leaving those from this place who are equally qualified for the job. The end product is lack of development in the area [FGD, Uzere Youths (Male), 12-4-2000]

The popular defence among oil companies is that the number of employable people with the requisite education and skills among oil communities are few, hence the need to look outside those areas. One respondent, an opinion leader from Uzere, described this impression as erroneous. According to him, "SPDC recently laid claim that there are no graduates in Uzere, the truth is that Uzere has over 40 graduates of which about 20 are engineers and are unemployed" (FGD, Opinion Leaders, Uzere, Delta State,

124-2000). In another instance, an opinion leader in Ughelli (Delta State) blamed oil companies as much as the elite class within oil communities for the problems facing host communities. He noted, in particular, the occasional disagreement among elders on the monies collected on behalf of communities from oil companies. He gave a most revealing anecdotal account of a recent problem in Ewveni (a nearby town) where the paramount ruler was killed for allegedly embezzling N6 million paid to the community by an oil company. He reported that the youths in the village tied him to a motorcycle and dragged him round the town “until he gave up the ghost” (FGD, Opinion Leader, Ughelli, 15-4-2000).

It is important to observe here that the deteriorating relations among stakeholders in the oil industry are responsible principally for the collapse of law and order, and general insecurity in the oil region. In the past, oil communities relied on peaceful means (newspaper advertorials, community delegations, litigation, and occasional demonstrations) to draw attention to their environmental, social and economic plights. With the benefit of hindsight, such non-violent alternatives woefully failed to achieve the desired results in terms of restitution or actual development for the oil communities leading, in turn, to a shift in strategy in favour of militant and violent methods.

Since the 1990s, oil communities have embarked on a series of politicized actions to draw attention to and seek redress for the diverse negative effects of oil production. They have mobilized themselves at the grassroots level and established various sub-ethnic militant groups to challenge the state and oil companies. Their youths have also embarked on unorthodox but politically visible activities such as kidnapping and hostage taking targeting oil company workers, the occupation, disruption and vandalization of oil installations and facilities. Communal disturbances have, in turn, affected oil production activities and by implication, profit for multinational oil companies and fiscal resources for the government. Because the state and oil companies depend, to a significant extent, on earnings from crude oil sales, community disturbances in the Niger Delta have become a source of deep concern to them. The responses and reactions of the government and oil companies have, as usual, been complementary as they point dangerously to the belief that only the use of

state repression can serve as a credible deterrence, secure peace and provide an adequate chance for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. If anything, such officially instigated reactions (and counter-measures) have mostly heightened insecurity and instability in the region, and ultimately, throughout the country as a whole.

6.3. Oil, Ethnic Nationalisms and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta

The bone of contention between oil communities on the one hand, and the alliance of the State and multinational oil companies on the other, have centred on allegations of widespread unemployment, land and ecological degradation, lack or scarcity of basic social amenities and infrastructure, and irresponsible oil field practices by virtually all the multinational oil companies despite their claims to the contrary. Certainly, what is becoming incontrovertible by the day is that beyond merely degenerating into “expressions of blind violence”, the unending cycle of community disturbances and state-sponsored repression have become symptomatic of the “decision of hitherto voiceless, subordinate and underprivileged minority groups to take up the gauntlet and challenge state structures and institutions controlled by majority groups who have been grossly unjust over time in the distribution of national resources” (Ojo, 2002: 8).

Whereas it is important to investigate the circumstances of the 1990s that conspired to deepen the anger and protests among oil communities in the Niger Delta, such an attempt runs the risk of festering the erroneous impression that such conflicts are recent. Thus, apart from the fact that contemporary acts of rebellion have deeper historical roots as the conditions of the past are easily transported to the present, the strong correlation between past and levels of protests and violence can also not be over-looked. For a long time, then, it will be difficult to contemplate that the Niger Delta problem would lose its prominence as a major political issue in Nigeria. Nwabueze (1999: 2-3) has identified two major factors that would ensure the relevance of the Niger Delta to national politics now and in the future. They are, first, what has been called the “suffocating politicisation of virtually all aspects of the Niger Delta debate”, and second, the “militarization of values” in that region, while the third is the constant reproduction of the dominant culture of violence among the inhabitants. As he concluded ominously, it is the “case that captive groups whose

objective conditions have been reproduced through violence, imbibe the value of violence as a legitimate means to unsettle their condition". In the next section, four case studies representative of the broad spectrum of violent civil conflicts in post-independence Niger Delta shall be examined in closer and critical detail. These are: (a) Isaac Boro's Twelve Day 'Revolution' of 1966; (b) Ogoni Nationalism with effect from 1990; (c) Ijaw Nationalism from the 1990's till date, and finally, (d) the ongoing Itsekiri-Urhobo-Ijaw Rivalries over Warri. Each of the case studies will throw light on the third hypothesis which is that the intensification of ethnic nationalism, compounded by the oil factor, exacerbates civil conflict in the Niger Delta.

6.3.1. The Boro 'Revolution'

Although short-lived, the Twelve-Day 'Revolution' by Isaac Adaka Boro and his compatriots in February 1966 marked the humble, but also effective, beginning of militant ethno-nationalism by any group in the Niger Delta after Nigeria's independence. Operating under the banner of the Niger Delta Volunteers Force (NDVF), these young and well-educated students and activists, mostly drawn from the Ijaw ethnic group, held the military regime of General Aguiyi Ironsi to ransom before it was crushed, and the leadership imprisoned. It is fascinating that many of their complaints and grievances have interesting parallels with those among oil communities in the Niger Delta today. For instance, the young men raised nagging questions around issues of injustice in the fiscal and resource allocation formula, which obviously was skewed against the oil region much of which still goes to the bigger ethnic groups- the Igbo in the southeast, Yoruba in the southwest and the Hausa-Fulani in the north. They were piqued by perceptions of gross economic, political and social injustices and neglect instigated by the dominant ethnic groups who have captured the state apparatus and resources and used them to perpetuate the dominance and subordination of minority ethnic communities in the Niger Delta, the proverbial goose that lays the golden eggs.

Closely related to the above is the second bone of contention, the persistent claims of minorities' disempowerment, marginalisation and exclusion from the mainstream of the political and economic life in Nigeria. It will be recalled that minority ethnic communities in the delta region had expressed fears that their interests might be

subverted if adequate safeguards were not put in place before granting independence to Nigeria. Such fears have persistently stimulated clamours for the creation of more states, believing that only such a step could bring government closer to the people and satisfy their political and economic yearnings. Even, then, hopes for the creation of more states have often become dashed as witnessed, for instance, by the outcome of the Henry Willink Commission of Inquiry which merely called for the designation of the delta region as a special area. It took quite some time before the Federal Government began to heed agitations for the creation of more states in the delta region.¹⁸⁸ Unfortunately, state creation did not attend to the substantive problems facing communities in the Niger Delta in spite of the discovery of vast reserves of crude oil in that region. Even now that they have their own states, their indigenous governors have performed woefully in terms of looking after or improving the welfare of oil communities.

What is perhaps more important however, is to draw attention to the broader theoretical implication of a revolt of the nature briefly described above for governance and stability in the African post-colony. By the 1960s decade, many African countries had begun to bask in the excitement, yet uncertainties, of the 'wind of change' ushered by independence- after, on average, about one century of unbroken colonial rule. The fascinating details of their colonial experimentations (and ordeals) have been documented in detail earlier. However, one should neither lose sight of the characteristically violent forms post-colonial regimes eventually assumed, nor the far-reaching implications of the post-colonial caricatures for peoples and societies across the continent. Undoubtedly, one of the enduring legacies of colonialism in Africa has been the manifested disconnection (or disarticulation) between the colonial state and society in terms of claims to, and the exercise of power and authority. In more ways than one, colonialism was to all intents and purposes, a regime of alienation and violence precisely because it was patently undemocratic in the exercise of power and authority over colonial 'subjects'. Understandably, then, colonial rule had to rely heavily on a complex architecture of pacification, subjugation and control; precisely because local communities would not succumb to external domination without stiff

¹⁸⁸ The most recent of the states created in the Niger Delta is the predominantly Ijaw-speaking Bayelsa State carved out of former Rivers and Delta states in 1996.

(and often, violent) opposition and resistance. Even when *de facto* colonial order had become entrenched principally to facilitate and secure resource extraction and markets, the methodologies and structures that emerged were operationally consistent in implementing the mandates. Unfortunately, whereas most of the first and second generations of political leaders achieved power on the platform of sustained anti-colonial discourses and campaigns, they also imbibed and retained the pathologies of violence and repression. Ultimately, the power and authority came, not from the people, but through the 'barrels of a gun' and other forms of political misrules.

Through their revolt, therefore, Boro and his co-travellers drew one of the earliest attentions to substantive shortfalls in their expectations from the Nigerian post-colony, especially with regard to economic empowerment and political mainstreaming of minority ethnic groups in the delta region. They were concerned about the widening gaps between the state and society, and ultimately how that was allowing conditions of marginalisation, exclusion and alienation to fester. Regarding the manner in which the Nigerian state reacted and/or responded to the Boro Revolution, one enduring lesson is clear: by 1966, inter-ethnic competitions and conflicts had become sufficiently combustible to threaten the existence and survival of the incumbent regime and the young Nigerian state. Thus, when the Boro Revolution broke loose, the immediate reaction and response of the Ironsi regime was to suppress it using the police and military forces before it spinned out of control. This was particularly important for within a short while, it had become quite obvious that Boro and his militias were gaining popularity, acceptance and assistance from among the largely riverine Ijaw ethnic group. From the perspective of government, it did not matter if there was an element of truth in the catalogue of grievances that precipitated the revolt; so it was crushed immediately and decisively both to safeguard the emergent oil industry as well as to deter other ambitious ethnic groups. In this regard, the government mobilized a heavy military presence into the delta, and mounted an extensive manhunt for the leadership. They were eventually arrested, indicted for treason and imprisoned; but later granted state pardon by the Gowon regime.¹⁸⁹ Since Boro, inhabitants of the Niger Delta have never rested in drawing attention to and

¹⁸⁹ Isaac Boro eventually died fighting on the side of the Federal Government against the Biafra during the Nigerian civil war.

contesting the essential logic on which the Nigerian state is constructed and reproduced. Indeed, another enduring lesson from the Boro Revolution is that his pioneering effort continues to serve as the mythical template for defiant grassroots mobilisation, militancy and anomie predominantly not only among the Ijaw population living along the banks of the Atlantic seaboard, but also by other ethnic groups in the Niger Delta.

Even though crude oil was not a principal issue as is now the case in the Niger Delta, the Boro revolt paralysed oil production activities and nearly brought the Gowon regime to an abrupt end. More importantly, and with the benefit of hindsight, it can no longer be claimed that the Boro Revolution occurred prematurely well ahead of its time, because it broke out barely after the discovery of large deposits of crude oil when the socio-economic, environmental and political contradictions of crude oil exploitation were yet to be felt in any significant manner. Instead, what has become quite clear against the background of the chronic and protracted conflicts and insecurity prevalent in the Niger Delta, is that the botched Revolution was only the first major expression of large-scale concern that for host oil communities, the social costs of commercial oil production could far outstrip the benefits of development. Although it was brutally suppressed by the government, the revolt was archetypical of collective political action involving civil society-based groups locked in armed confrontation with government.

By the 1990s, the protests began to acquire economic motives (environmental and resource-related), in addition to the subsisting political ones relating to greater devolution of power through the creation of more states and local governments. The 1990s also coincided with economically motivated grassroots mobilizations among oil communities involving a repertoire of activities: kidnapping and hostage taking targeting oil company workers, the occupation, disruption and vandalism of oil installations and facilities. It is not surprising, also, that the later period coincided with the emergence and proliferation of new civil society-based social movements with sometimes, dubious or extortionist agenda. Today, the Niger Delta has become an uninspiring benchmark for highlighting the ever-growing contradictions punctuating the nation-state projects in post-colonial Africa. The region is potentially the richest,

with the commercial exploration of crude oil accounting for the rapid development of social infrastructure and amenities immediately after the destructions wrought by the civil war. The paradox is that in the midst of bounty, the Niger Delta has become one of the most impoverished regions in Nigeria as very little is ploughed back from huge oil revenues to develop it.

It is important to digress a little bit in order to reflect critically on the constellation of factors that preceded the various protests and violent conflicts that became prominent in the Niger Delta from the 1990s; after all, the chaos experienced since that time did not incubate in a vacuum but were stimulated by a chain of internal and external factors and conditions. In the first place, the preceding decade was characterised by chronic socio-economic difficulties resulting in the implementation of unpleasant neo-liberal economic conditionalities dictated by the IMF/World Bank as preconditions for externally supported reforms. In Nigeria, the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida responded positively to the persistent overtures by these international financial institutions to implement structural adjustment program (SAP) in 1986. Highlights of the adjustment policy included the liberalization of imports and exports, rolling back government's direct involvement in economic activities through the privatisation and commercialisation of state-owned enterprises, devaluing the national currency, the Naira, by allowing 'unseen' market forces to determine prices of goods and commodities, and finally, the removal of subsidies on essential public goods, services, utilities.

There is a robust debate among Third World scholars overwhelmingly pointing to the fact, acknowledged almost a decade after by the IMF/World Bank, that SAP really did not have the desired positive impacts on implementing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. From the perspective of these scholars, SAP did not only succeed in eroding the purchasing power and disposable household income of the most vulnerable social categories, but also that the implementation of the program had been attended by a heavy dosage of authoritarian repression before people accustomed to subsidized socio-economic opportunities could swallow its bitter pills. Thus, as it became obvious that SAP conditionalities could not be implemented without some measures of counter-resistance 'from below', many governments became more

predisposed to using repressive measures to induce compliance and to quell anti-SAP public demonstrations and riots. One concrete- perhaps, unexpected- outcome of this official reaction to the failures of neoliberal economic prescriptions could be clearly seen in the variety of ways in which civil society groups- peasants, students, workers, urban dwellers, and intellectuals, became more militant (although many also partially withdrew into private spheres hoping to construct independent and parallel structures and networks for survival). According to Fatton (1990: 456), such withdrawals occurred in the direction of ethnic, racial, religious, and other sectarian associations. Unfortunately, such withdrawals were hardly complete and total by virtue of the firm grip of the state on the fiscal purse and resource allocation regime.

In Nigeria, as elsewhere in the continent of Africa, the mid-1980s also coincided with the visible radicalisation of the language of politics, especially from below, among existing and/or newly emergent civil society groups. This radicalisation of civil society groups occurred against the background of the reluctance by the military oligarchy, having ruthlessly held on to power continuously since 1984, to conduct general elections, enthrone civilian democracy and withdraw to their barracks, according to popular wishes. Essentially, the groups coalesced around popular protests against authoritarian military rule; showing preference for plural democratic reforms and good governance, as well as transparency and accountability on fiscal matters. An unexpected outcome of this process was the groundswell of a coalition of civil society based anti-military, pro-democracy, pro-human and environmental/ minority rights advocacy groups clamouring for the expansion of the democratic space and respect for the wishes of the majority. With time, the radicalization of these groups began to permeate every segment of the civil society, ultimately elevating the language of violence into a major national discourse.¹⁹⁰

Although every segment of the civil society in Nigeria experienced the debilitating impacts of SAP, the situation among oil communities in the Niger Delta was much worse. Long before the introduction of SAP, the negative impacts of oil exploration

¹⁹⁰ The cumulative of the above prompted the statement credited to Information Minister, Professor Jerry Gana that "the violent military dictatorships in the country over the years had turned the populace into an angry lot ready to fight over the slightest provocation". See *The Guardian Online*, May 2, 2000.

activities had reached an alarming proportion in the region. It should be recalled that oil communities in the Niger Delta experience unique conditions dictated by their ecology, as they occupy an asphyxiating and unfriendly terrain comprising thick mangrove forests and swamps that severely constrain human locomotion. Movement is usually only possible by crude water transportation through a dense network of unmarked rivers and canals. In *'Anatomy of Rebellion'*, Welch (1980: 27-30), explained broadly the conditions that prompt the transition from personal to group awareness and then collective political action. Rebellions, according to him, are most likely to occur at the intersections of geography, history and social realities. Constrained by conditions of geographical marginality, oil communities in Nigeria's delta also attract less and less of government presence and attention. The result of this geographical marginality and government's ineptitude has been the exacerbation of ecological problems. Hence, Welch concluded that the "more the negative consequences of natural events are ascribed to government than God, the greater their potential political effects". So, as oil extraction intensified under SAP, tension heightened among oil-producing ethnic minority communities that could no longer be contained. At the same time that oil communities were weathering the biting effects of SAP, traditional structures for control and maintenance of law and order became increasingly compromised and weakened. This could be seen, in practical terms, in the inability of traditional structures and institutions to effectively contain the anomic outbursts of youths who, excluded from access to subsidised socio-economic opportunities, find themselves increasingly involved in socially destructive activities. Ultimately, oil communities became a veritable terrain for contesting not just political space and access to resources, but also one for resisting authoritarian forms of state rule and accumulation (Obi, 1997).

It is necessary to insert the important caveat here that in a complex socio-ethnic formation as Nigeria, violent enterprises may tend to coalesce around popular discontent, but popular discontents do not automatically and invariably lead to the outbreak of violent conflicts. As Welch (1980) rightly noted, collective political violence is not a spontaneous, unilateral projection of people experiencing discontentment. Often times, there is a value-added undertone that can only be captured by looking at the cumulative experiences that people live through on daily

basis or over a period of time. At the intervening gaps in-between maintaining the status quo and the outbreak of full-scale rebellion, therefore, are several other forms of socio-political expressions ranging from impotence to co-optation, frustration, banditry/ brigandage, heightened insecurity, low-intensity demonstrations and anomie, insurgency and full-scale rebellion. The usefulness of this approach becomes obvious in the sense that instead of focusing on the nature and scope of discontentment in itself, it may be more rewarding to probe the process and structural conditions that encourage the “politicisation of discontent”. Such a methodological approach can contribute to existing knowledge about why and how social discontents against multinational oil companies and the State developed and are channelled. The experiences of mass mobilization and campaign against Shell and the government embarked upon by the Ogoni ethnic group (under the aegis of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, MOSOP) will highlight some of the salient issues in this regard.

6.3.2. MOSOP and Ogoni Nationalism

The Ogoni people live upland in present-day Rivers State and form a distinctively homogenised ethno-linguistic group with an estimated population of about half a million on about 500 square kilometres of landmass. The Ogonis have had a long antecedent of politicised, mass-based struggles, but dating only about seventy years during the nascent phase of forced colonial penetration of the hinterlands to break the monopoly of the coastal middlemen of the Niger Delta. The formative years of Ogoni nationalism crystallised around efforts to forge a pan-Ogoni identity that would bring all the six major clans constituting Ogoniland under the same politico-administrative umbrella. This effort yielded result in 1946 with the creation of a separate administrative and political division for Ogoniland. It is important to point out that prior to this unification, the six major clans neither held nor shared the dreams of unity; at best, their expectations never went beyond the level of aspiration and dreams in spite of the fact that the various clans had thrived on centuries of shared co-existence, common language, customs, tradition, and geographical contiguity (Naanem, 1995; Crawford, 1996:187).

Nevertheless, if Ogoni unity was forged against the background of a felt-need to bring them under the same political and administrative umbrella in the 1940s, the challenges of crude oil production and accumulation sustained and strengthened it from 1958 onwards when oil was discovered in Ogoniland.¹⁹¹ By the mid-1980s, there was a groundswell of active community-level politico-cultural groups and movements engaged in the enterprise of building separate, but vibrant political cultures and structures at the grassroots level (Omoweh, 1994; CLO, 1994; Osaghae, 1995). In many ways than one, then, much of what ultimately became of the Ogoni movement during its formative years of popular expressions in the 1990s can be traced to the past and more recent histories of the people; a history of intense anti-colonial struggles and struggles against the alliance of multinational oil companies and the Nigerian state (Naanem, 1995). It is incontrovertible that the discovery and commercial production of crude oil significantly altered the social, economic, environmental, and ultimately, political status or profile of the Ogoni people. Like many other oil producing communities, Ogoniland is a bold testament to the unpleasant paradoxes of oil-based accumulation. On one extreme, is the tiny group of commercial and political elites dominate the traditional structures of governance and administration and are able to attract enormous wealth and opulence based on the long-years of attracting patronage from multinational oil companies and the government. On the other hand, are the vast majority of the inhabitants who have barely managed to live above poverty lines mostly out of small-scale subsistence activities such as farming, fishing and petty trading. Going by the intimidating presence of gigantic oil installations, one would be tempted to conclude that Ogoniland is developed compared to other oil communities. Within the small Ogoni territory are two giant oil refineries, a petrochemical plant, a port facility and naval installation, and an uncountable number of flowstations, oil pipelines and other oil installations. The truth, of course, is that many of the oil facilities are merely physically located in Ogoniland, whereas the various benefits derivable from such localisation have not altered in any manner the quality of life of the majority of local

¹⁹¹ The first oil well in Ogoniland was struck at Ebubu and Bomu in 1958. By 1965, Nigeria's first oil refinery was located at Alesa Eleme. Today, Shell and its JV partners have five major oil fields in the area hooked up to five flow-stations- Bomu, Korokoro, Yorla, Bodo West and Ebubu. See (Osaghae, 1995: 329-330; SPDC, Nigeria Brief: The Ogoni Issue. Lagos)

inhabitants. The contradiction arising from this eventually turned Ogoniland into what can be rightly referred to as an enclave or parasite economy.

It is against the background of the various crises generated by oil-based accumulation that the climax of grassroots protest and militant struggle by Ogoni people can be understood; at least up till November 1995 when the hero of the struggle, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and eight of his compatriots, were hanged. Like most conflicts that develop along a dynamic, self-sustaining cycle, the Ogoni movement could be divided into several phases. The first phase predated the establishment of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in 1990 as witnessed in the emergence of a several disaggregated and uncoordinated pocket of groups pursuing a range of advocacy activities along cultural, economic and environmental lines. The second phase, which coincided with the 1990s, was distinguished by a strong resolve to harmonise and consolidate the disparate and sometimes contradictory activities of existing groups under the umbrella of MOSOP. This stage also coincided with the radicalisation of the struggle, especially after the adoption of the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR).¹⁹² The third stage pitched MOSOP and the Ogoni people against a powerful alliance of the state and oil capital, and turned Ogoniland into what Obi referred to as "a contested terrain reflecting social and political relations as expression of power over production, distribution and access" (1997: 137)¹⁹³. The period from 1993 in particular, coincided with the phase of militant violence and official repression. According to the *Review of African Political Economy* (ROAPE), during this period, government forces sacked 10 Ogoni villages, and left in their trail an estimated 750 dead and 30, 000 displaced (1995: 244-245). Over all, the last stage signalled the beginning of a open and systematic militarisation of Ogoniland, and indeed the entire Niger Delta.

¹⁹² Federation of Ogoni Women Associations (FOWA), National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), Ogoni Teachers' Union (OTO) and the Ogoni Professional Union (OPU). In Alabi Williams, 'A Slow Recovery for MOSOP' *The Guardian*, Nov 10, 1996 p. 10

¹⁹³ The major weakness of this classification is that it ignored the fact that Ogoni solidarity has had a longer antecedent dating to the 1950s, when the clamour for an autonomous administrative division began (Obi, 1997: 137)

The Ogoni uprising marked a bitter landmark in the history of mass-based political mobilisation and violence in Nigeria, but not much was heard of it until 1990 when MOSOP was launched. Thereafter, MOSOP adopted the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) which demanded, among others, the political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people, control and use of a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development, and finally, the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation. The adoption of the OBR provided an *élan* to the Ogoni movement. In particular, the document, for the first time in the history of grassroots struggles within the Niger Delta, gave MOSOP and the Ogoni people the intellectual platform within which to justify mass-based political mobilisation and civil protest, and served as a kind of working document for mobilisation cells and individuals. On October 2, 1990, the OBR was addressed to the military Head of State, General Babangida; and after a one-year wait, MOSOP reported lack of audience from government. In addition, an addendum to the OBR berated the military government for retaliating with systematic official-sponsored violence aimed at decimating Ogoni people and culture. According to the statement, government continued to “decree measures and implement policies which further marginalize the Ogoni People, denying us political autonomy, our rights to our resources, to the development of our language and culture”.¹⁹⁴

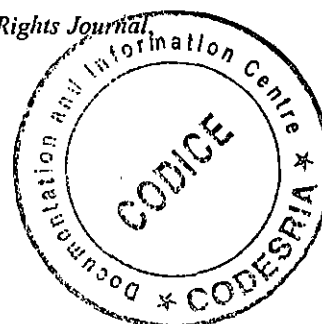
Although the failure of government to recognise and/ or honour the OBR, triggered a transition of the Ogoni project from the peaceful, non-violent stage to that of high-pitched grassroots political mobilisation, it was by no means the only stimulant. Another important factor that assisted this transition was the major shift in the leadership structure, style and strategies of MOSOP. In his analysis of the dialectics of exchange between the elite and society operating within a fluid plural space, Bottomore had noted that such conditions arise when factions emerge among the political class; noting that after all, “men of power do not constitute a cohesive group” (p. 23-24). This perspective provides an interesting aperture for capturing the impacts of the leadership crisis within MOSOP, and in explaining the transition of the Ogoni struggle from that of non-violence to violence. In terms of leadership change, there

¹⁹⁴ For a full text of the OBR, see ‘Ogoni: The Struggle Continues’, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1996)

was the resignation of the first president of the Movement, Dr. Garrick Leton, and his replacement by the steering committee, with Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa and a crop of younger, articulate, better-educated, and politically active individuals into leadership positions within the Movement. The older, more reactionary leaders were voted out in an atmosphere of complete exasperation with their inability to effectively project the Ogoni goals as enshrined in the OBR. Of course, it is important to also insert the important caveat that nothing in the leadership of the Ogoni Movement suggested that the leadership comprised a bunch of disgruntled and marginalized individuals on the margins of political and socio-economic opportunities. In fact, the background, training and exposures of leaders of social movements in the oil basin have exploded this widespread but dubious myth. In the case of Saro-Wiwa, the point that can be persuasively made is that his educational, political, social and economic backgrounds placed him far from the image of a proto-typical and anti-establishment social movement leader. He had, in fact, confessed this when he stated that "I have lived a good life myself: I have had everything a society can offer an individual. I have a good education all on scholarship and as soon as I left university, I became a commissioner, if that is anything to go by..."¹⁹⁵. At a level, Ken Saro-Wiwa's decision to provide the intellectual and symbolic leadership for the Ogoni struggle leading to the escalation to the stage of direct confrontation with the government and multinational companies can be interpreted as an act of class suicide. Perhaps the point Saro-Wiwa was making by doing so had more to do with his own understanding and interpretation of history and his expectations about what his role would ultimately be in it. For instance, several of Ken's creative engagements prior to his leadership of MOSOP pointed fairly well to his soft spot for the so-called underdogs in the society. Even though he was part of the elite class, he never hid his unreservedly disappointment with, and caustic disdains for their greed and rapacity in betraying the common man and the very ideals anchoring the society in his numerous literary productions (books, short poems and films).

In terms of structure, the Ogoni mobilisation was galvanised by the strengthening of the leadership and organisational structure of MOSOP, and in particular by

¹⁹⁵ See Ken Saro-Wiwa, '1989 Constitution is against Minority Rights', *Constitutional Rights Journal*, October-December, 1993: 13



centralising the activities of its affiliate groups.¹⁹⁶ To achieve centralisation and control, the Central Working Committee; a body mandated to determine the broad policies and directions of the Movement, was populated by elected members from each of the affiliate groups. Perhaps the most important outcome of these shifts constituted strong factors responsible for the eventual politicisation of the Ogoni movement, and the internationalisation of the struggle. Clearly, the shift in leadership of MOSOP favoured those who believed that with the failure of dialogue, violence becomes a justifiable option for social clamour and change. Thus, as the leadership of MOSOP drifted apart over strategies; with one favouring a behind-the-scenes, non-combative, and pro-federal government approach, the more youthful and radical wing that was solidly behind Saro-Wiwa was frustrated by the failure of the non-violence strategy, preferring instead more militant and confrontational postures.¹⁹⁷ Although Ken Saro-Wiwa was a prominent member of the defunct executive council, in his capacity as its General Secretary, he differed with the older executive members on the interpretations of the mandate given to MOSOP by the Ogoni people, and the strategies for achieving them. Prior to his tenure as President of MOSOP, therefore, the rift had become very apparent and divisive enough to strain relationship between Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders to the extent that he began to look more towards the militant youth wing, the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), to carry out what he believed was the historic Ogoni mandate.

It is in the context of the shifts in leadership and strategies that we can locate the collapse, within a short time, of the solidarity that characterised the Ogoni Movement in its formative years. It is also in this context that we must conceptualise the slow but steady descent of Ogoniland into the kind of violent conflict that MOSOP clearly lacked the means to effectively direct, manage and control. This, in turn, explains why soon after the crisis erupted, it precipitated a chain of uncontrollable events that culminated in the mob action leading to the murder of four prominent Ogoni chiefs at

¹⁹⁶ The Federation of Ogoni Women's Associations (FOWA); National Youth Council of the Ogoni People (NYCOP); Council of Ogoni Churches (COC); Council of Ogoni Professionals (COP); Council of Ogoni Traditional Rulers (COTRA); National Union of Ogoni Students (NUOS); Ogoni Students Union (OSU); Ogoni Teachers Union (OTU); and Ogoni Central Union (OCU). See Sha'aba (1999)

¹⁹⁷ The CLO reported surreptitious attempts by the government to prevent Ken from participating in the constitutional conference, and to exploit this internal rift in the leadership of MOSOP. (1994: 209-210)

a rally in Giokoo in 1994.¹⁹⁸ This brutal murder, unfortunately, provided the Abacha regime with the alibi it had long sought to extract retribution from, and deal ruthlessly with the Ogoni leadership.¹⁹⁹ The regime, apart from clamping down on Ogoni dissidents including Saro-Wiwa, imposed a heavy military siege on Ogoniland. Ogoni people were intimidated, harassed, beaten, maimed and murdered, while several of their villages were burnt down resulting in massive internal displacements. *Human Rights Watch* reported interviews with some of the soldiers who took part in the long military expedition; many of whom claimed they were withdrawn from active peace-keeping duties in war-ravaged Liberia under cover of darkness, ostensibly to wade off military incursions by Cameroonian gendarmes into Nigeria. The soldiers interviewed also acknowledged that with the understanding of their commanders, they perpetuated several acts of human right abuses, including participation in multiple and gang raping of women and young girls.

The Ogoni movement also met stiff challenges at other levels; but overall, these seemed to have been instigated by the government and Shell. Top government officials, including the military administrator of Rivers State, Colonel Dauda Komo, and the leader of the Rivers State Task Force on Internal Security (RSTFIS), Major Paul Okutimo, took turns to indict Saro-Wiwa and the leadership of MOSOP well before the tribunal set up to try them met. Several fictitious publications disparaging them were also in circulation. One, published in 1995, purportedly portraying the “reality of the situation” labeled MOSOP a “terrorist organisation”; and its youth wing, NYCOP, as constituting an “army of trained thugs and hoodlums” engaged in “reckless” and “careless” activities against indigenes and non-indigenes alike.²⁰⁰ (p. 26-29). The pamphlet hinted at Saro-Wiwa’s exhibition of an “air of superiority complex” while actually suffering from “inferiority complex inwardly”. It also

¹⁹⁸ The police had, in fact, placed Saro-Wiwa on house arrest to prevent him from attending the rally. See *The News*, 18-11-96: 11

¹⁹⁹ The suspicion that government was privy to the killing of the Ogoni chiefs is one that has gained currency among Ogoni watchers. This view was strengthened with the leakage of a secret memo to the government written by the head of the Rivers State Task Force on International Security, Major Paul Okutimo, where he requested authorisation for a “wastage operation” and to exploit internal dissent within the Ogoni movement.

²⁰⁰ The book also included a list of all those allegedly killed by MOSOP/ NYCOP. See p. 70

catalogued certain characteristics he possessed, including: “treachery, egocentricity, pomposity, parochialism, ruthlessness” alongside “charisma, scholarship, discipline and hard work”. (p. 53-58). As if to confirm its sponsorship, the book contrasted sharply the positive disposition of and “paternal role” played by the government in Ogoni (p. 59-61).²⁰¹

Much of these criticisms can be discountenanced as sentimental outbursts by a regime desperate to repair or salvage its already battered and evidently irredeemable public image that was being disparaged by the campaigns of Ken and MOSOP at home and abroad. One claim that was however hard to ignore was that which fingered him as over-personifying and over-centralizing MOSOP and the struggle around himself, and surrounding himself with an inner caucus of relatives, youthful associates, as well as unrepentant apologists.²⁰² There were also strong reasons to believe that a vibrant cult of personality was building around him- as a charismatic leader and an illustrious ‘son-of-the-soil’. Another important lesson provided by hindsight was that MOSOP relied heavily on support, from the international non-governmental organisation and media community, and less locally. One point that could be made with certainty, though, is that those who demonstrated sympathy towards the Ogoni cause did so much on principle and as part of the ongoing anti-military, pro-democracy campaign nation-wide. Except for media contacts and public sympathy, few concrete attempts was made by the leadership of MOSOP under Saro-Wiwa to forge alliances with other radical and pro-democracy groups and movements in the Niger Delta, not to talk of engaging in any serious and creative way with those in other parts of the country.

Nevertheless, the reaction of the military, especially under General Abacha, was boldly etched on the elaborate and repressive security architecture it put in place throughout the Niger Delta, and in the short trial and eventual hanging of Saro-Wiwa

²⁰¹ There were also allegations that Ledum Mitee, formerly Vice President of MOSOP under Saro-Wiwa, requested \$5 million from the Abacha government to mobilise Ogoni support for the regime! See *AM News*, 30-1-96, p. 11, cited in Isumonah, 1997: 31.

²⁰² Those who make issue out of this support the allegation by pointing to Ken’s brother, Dr. Owens Wiwa who was a member of the steering committee of MOSOP, Chairman of the Ogoni Health and Social Welfare Committee and the Ogoni Relief and rehabilitation Committee. For some of the activities of Owens, especially after the hanging of his brother, see <http://www.sierraclub.org> (Saro-Wiwa) testimony.html

Ken and his Ogoni compatriots.²⁰³ Earlier in May 1993, for instance, the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida had hastily promulgated the Treason and Treasonable Offences Decree in order to prepare a legal basis for dealing with the Ogoni Movement in the light of the threatened boycott of the Presidential Polls.²⁰⁴ In 1994, a secret memo by the Rivers State Commissioner for Police titled 'Operation Order No 4/ 94- Restoration of Law and Order in Ogoniland', called for extensive and combined military operations involving the navy, airforce, army and the police. In that same year, another leaked memo dated 12-5-1994, by the Rivers State Internal Security Task Force (RSISTF) highlighted strategies for maintaining law and order in Ogoni, etc. In it, the chairman of the task force, Major Paul Okutimo advised the military administrator of Rivers State that "police in Ogoni remain ineffective since 1993", and that "Shell operations (were) still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence". The memo hinted at the prospects of using Ogoni neighbours, as well as exploiting division within the hierarchy of the Ogoni, to deal with the belligerent leadership of MOSOP. In view of the above, the memo recommend "intra-communal/ kingdom formulae alternative as discussed to apply", meaning to exploit the anti-MOSOP coalition within Ogoniland. It also recommended a "wasting operations during MOSOP and other gatherings making constant military presence justifiable". The memo suggested "wasting targets cutting across communities and leadership cadres especially vocal individuals in various groups" as well as the deployment of 400 military personnel (officers and men) in Ogoniland. Also, it called for "new checkpoints slightly different from Operation Order No. 4/ 94 dated 21-4-94 by Commissioner of Police Rivers State Command", as well as "wasting operations coupled with psychological tactics of displacement". A press censorship was requested, including the "restriction of unauthorised visitors especially those from Europe to the Ogoni". Finally, the memo requested "high level authority for the Task Force effectiveness" and "ruthless operations", as well as "direct supervision by MILAD (military administrators) to

²⁰³ CDHR had devoted a whole chapter in its annual reports on the HR situations in Nigeria to the issue of "Ethnic Minority Rights, Ethnic Relations and the Environment". (CDHR, 1995: Chapter 14)

²⁰⁴ See *Newswatch Magazine* (Lagos), 24-5-1993, p. 14: For a list of the draconian decrees promulgated by successive military regime from 1984 to the mid-1990s, see also Welch, 1995: 249-251; Kretsman, 1995: 8-11, 25

avoid unruly interference by other superior officers”. Details of the planned military operations were definitely elaborate and bound to be costly, but the expected sources of funds to implement the operation revealed a lot about the active involvement of oil companies in supporting and sustaining official repression in the oil delta. Specifically, the memo requested “as agreed” the initial disbursement of N50 million as advance allowances to Officers and men, and for logistics to commence operations with immediate effect. In addition, it suggested an ECOMOG allowance rate and “pressure on oil companies for prompt and regular inputs as discussed” as well as a stand-by arrangement from OMPADEC, again, “as arranged”.

Details of the trial of the Ogoni 9 are well document and they need not delay us here. However, the entire process that led to the hanging on November 10, 1995²⁰⁵ turned out to be a huge mockery of judicial procedures and common Law, and a rude shock to many in Nigeria and abroad. Throughout the trial led by Justice Ibrahim Auta,²⁰⁶ Shell sought, and received permission to retain a counsel on watching brief (CDHR, 1995: 150)²⁰⁷, at the same time that counsels to the Ogoni 9 were frustrated into resigning when it became obvious that the tribunal was bent on convicting them.²⁰⁸ In and out of the tribunal, Shell was exposed to domestic and international ridicule, including the frequent allegation that it offered bribe to principal witnesses,²⁰⁹ and that it had a history of providing logistic support to the police and the military. In that regard, the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) had reported that during cross-examination by the prosecution, some witnesses, especially #22, made contradictory

²⁰⁵ Six of the 15 defendants were released, including Ledum Mitee, Vice President of MOSOP.

²⁰⁶ The 3-man tribunal comprised of Justice Ibrahim Ndahi Auta, Justice Enyong Arikpo, and Lt. Colonel M. Alli. See CLO, 1995: 26). The tribunal was set up under the ‘Civil Disturbances- Special Tribunal) Decree of 1987 which gave it wide powers to convict anybody who though not charged before it, is implicated by evidence before it.

²⁰⁷ For details of the judicial excesses of the tribunal, and Saro-Wiwa’s closing statement titled “We all stand before History”, see CDHR, 1995: 146-159

²⁰⁸ See Femi Falana, ‘Death Becomes Cheap’; Interview with Counsel to the Ogoni 9. Liberty/ CLO, 21-11-1995: 24-25

²⁰⁹ See, SPDC, SPDC Answers Allegations of Bribery, Background Brief, 1995, 8 November

statements suggesting they may have been under undue influence or pressure.²¹⁰ Throughout the trial, of course, Shell insisted that “It is not for a commercial organisation like Shell to intervene with the legal process of a sovereign state such as Nigeria”.²¹¹ Although it was not under any obligation to even issue statements, it is important to also bear in mind that none of those the company eventually issued during that period saw anything wrong in the fatally flawed court process as pointed out by local and international observers. Perhaps even more damaging was the leakage into public domain allegations that the company had been buying firearms for the Nigerian Police Force (NPF). For a long time, the company had vehemently denied such an allegation until it was confronted with incontrovertible facts, including an arms deal that led to litigation in a Lagos High Court. After the revelation, the company lamely rationalise its ‘arms-for-protection’ by the NPF claiming that a total of 600 criminal incidents, 10% of which involved firearms, occurred in the preceding two years against its workers. But then, such armed robbery incidents have become so consistently an event in Nigeria in generally that oil company workers are not the only victims.

Undoubtedly, the Ogoni Movement represented an unprecedented defiance of a brutal military, and raised fears that new movements may likely emerge along the same lines to seriously threaten oil production activities and the fiscal base of the State. In the final analysis, and as Saro-Wiwa pointed out in his closing statement at the Tribunal that subsequently sentenced him and his colleagues, the Ogoni won the “moral victory”. Beyond that, the Ogoni struggle emboldened other groups to embark on militant mass-based actions aimed at the alliance of the State and multinational oil

²¹⁰ This particular witness, a 34-year old musician, testified that his earlier statement indicting Ken was on the basis of a promised financial and occupation rewards from Shell, OMPADEC, as well as a house anywhere in Nigeria. Three other witnesses swore affidavit that they collected N30, 000. The latter’s statement was struck out by the tribunal. Similarly, a video recording of the military administrator, Colonel Dauda Komo, indicting Ken a day after the Giokoo murder was not admitted as evidence. In attendance during that press conference was Alhaji Kobani, junior brother to one of the slain chiefs. For details, see *Liberty: A publication of the CLO (Special Edition)*, 6: 4, October-December 1995: 6-17

²¹¹ See, SIPC, *Verdict on the Trial of Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa*, 1995, 31 October. Despite claims that it would not interfere with ‘judicial processes’, Shell issued a statement in response to the confirmation of the death sentences acknowledging that the Chairman of the Committee of Managing Directors of Shell, Mr. Herkstroter, pleaded with Abacha for clemency. See, SIPC, *Response Statement*, 1995, 8 November

companies in Nigeria. Much more importantly, and in the long run, was the fact that the circumstances surrounding the judicial murder not only pulled the moral rug under the feet of the Abacha regime, but also effectively precluded it from negotiating peacefully with other recognised groups in the Niger Delta. It also effectively sealed the fate of the regime of general Abacha as brutally maniacal and one that was ruthless to the extreme, and deaf to domestic and international pleas against hanging the men. Had the Abacha regime handled the Ogoni uprising with care and caution, it could probably have set in motion a process that could have resolved the conflicts in the entire oil basin peacefully.

The 'final solution' authorised by the Abacha regime against the Ogoni 9 was designed to send strong and unmistakable signal to other 'trouble makers' and ambitious groups in the oil Delta.²¹² Unfortunately, it neither terminated the Ogoni Movement, nor did it hold other oil producing communities in abeyance. True, MOSOP has considerably mellowed its militant stance, but it still wields enormous residual power and influence among the people. Ledum Mitee, now president of MOSOP, had hinted at this as far back as 1996 that MOSOP would adopt "a more reactive and vibrant approach", create a "completely new structure", and "de-emphasise public and mass gathering of people".²¹³ The prolonged and costly mass action against the State and oil companies may certainly have contributed to watering down the belligerent postures that marked MOSOP's activities during the formative years. It could also be said that the crucible of mass resistance might have accelerated the maturity of the present leadership of the movement, and indeed, the Ogoni people.

Even though it was initially racked by a series of internal and leadership problems, the 'new' MOSOP is certainly not a spent force on matters pertaining to grassroots action among Ogoni people. This is clearly visible in the organisations' continued refusal to allow Shell to return to Ogoniland, and in the campaign of blackmail embarked upon by the company. Up to the time of writing, 2003, the Ogoni people had stubbornly prevented Shell from returning to Ogoni territory, although several attempts had also

²¹² It took a clear 9 months after incarceration to charge the Ogoni 9 before the Tribunal.

²¹³ 'MOSOP is Changing Gear': Interview with Ledum Mitee, *The News*, November 18, 1996: 17-18

been made.²¹⁴ One of the earliest attempts took place during the Abacha regime when the National Reconciliation Commission (NARECOM), a creation of the government led by Chief Alex Akinyele, met with a number of Ogonis in the presence of Shell officials, to allow the company resume operations. As far back as 1996, *The Guardian* (Lagos) detailed plans by Shell to commence a four-year 39 million Dollar Ogoni Re-entry Plan, aimed at initially restarting production in Ogoni from 20, 000 barrels per day. The newspaper reported that the MD, Mr. Brian Anderson, had approved the plan with the military two weeks earlier.²¹⁵ It is also on record that the British High Commissioner to Nigeria attempted to reconcile MOSOP and Shell, but failed. It was reported by the younger brother of Saro-Wiwa, Owen, that Shell allegedly demanded that MOSOP should openly deny that there is environmental devastation in Ogoniland, and stop the international media campaign against the Anglo-Dutch firm; requests that form the very basis of the Movement and the Ogoni struggle in the first place.²¹⁶ Thus far, all attempts to re-enter Ogoniland have failed. In all these overtures, it is clear that the government and Shell have learnt little, if anything, from the previous poor handling of the Ogoni issue and other cases of unrest throughout the Niger Delta. MOSOP continues to reiterate and warn Shell not to attempt a forceful re-entry into Ogoni without first meeting the people's demands, for such "will be viewed as an act of extreme provocation and would be stoutly resisted by all lawful means".

6.3.3. Ijaw Nationalism since the 1990s

In *Social Movements* (1996), Sidney Tarrow drew theoretical attention to the role of "early risers" in making opportunities visible that are not evident to most movements pursuing specific and/ or broad agenda. By so doing, such early riser movements draw critical attention to certain structures of opportunity that allow other groups to behave or respond in certain ways in pursuit of collective political actions. There is still need however, for caution in drawing the conclusion that the emergence and proliferation

²¹⁴ See, Ogoni Update, Delta News #3- October 1997. http://www.oneworld.org/delta/3_news5.html

²¹⁵ T. Adigun, 'Ogoni: Shell's N3.12 billion Re-entry Plan Faces Obstacles', *The Guardian*, 1996, 17 October

²¹⁶ See, 'A Call to End the Shelling of Nigeria: An Interview with Dr. Owens Wiwa' (MM, July/ August 1996, p. 27-29 + 33.

of social movements in the Niger Delta, especially among non-Ogoni communities, is a lesson in imitative politics, as Nwabueze claimed with equivocation (2000). In particular, it is important to bear in mind that other forms of collective grassroots actions and acts of violence embarked upon by non-Ogoni oil delta communities against either the Nigerian State and/or multinational oil companies present fascinating insights that cannot be glossed over or ignored in the literature. Even then, this caveat should not imply the complete absence of interesting parallels between Ogoni and non-Ogoni social groups, as the latter may have borrowed a lot from the much-celebrated mass-based strategies deployed by MOSOP. The point that may not be compromised however is that the outward elements of uniformity pale into insignificance compared to the dissimilarities in those various encounters. Put differently, even though the Ogoni struggle has become popular for celebrating the emergence and highpoint of collective grassroots struggles in the oil delta, it is more important not to succumb to the temptation of using that singular action as the sole yardstick/ parameter for gauging or assessing the specific experiences of other non-Ogoni oil communities. To do so would not only be missing the salient differences and/ or similarities in the various mobilization projects, but more importantly, it will fall short of adequately explaining the equally robust struggles by other oil communities across the region. It is in this framework, for instance, that one can capture and adequately explain the occurrence and trajectory of the Ogoni struggle which occurred side-by-side with others in the Ijaw territories in the riverine areas.

Each of the major grassroots protest actions embarked upon by different communities have their unique attributes as revealed here in the analysis of the backgrounds to, and patterns of Ijaw ethnic nationalism and struggle which was going on at about the same time as that of the Ogoni. The Ijaw ethnic group is considered the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria. With a population estimated at over three million, the Ijaw people can be found in six states along the Atlantic seaboard: from Ondo State in the extreme southwest to Cross River State in the farthest southeast. The principal Ijaw population however resides in Bayelsa State, carved out of the Old Rivers State. As a result of the special hydrographical terrain of the Ijaw region, the traditional vocation of the people is principally fishing, followed by farming on available but scarce land. In comparative terms, therefore, the physical sites of the mobilization and struggle by

Ogoni and Ijaw ethnic communities have had far-reaching implications for grassroots mobilization, and efforts by state security agencies to maintain effective law and order in Nigeria. Whereas the Ogoni territory is located on easily accessible, land-based area, much of the Ijaw areas are tucked within thick mangroves, swampy territories and poorly demarcated creeks and rivers that serve as effective barriers to police duties. Related to the geographical factor is the distribution of the population within the two ethnic groups. On the one hand, Ogoniland is a densely populated area covering about 1000 square kilometres of contiguous landmass in Rivers State alone. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the Ijaw population is not in one location but scattered among several states.

Among other things, then, while militant Ogoni mobilisation was 'localised' within a defined geographical boundary, that of the Ijaws occurred simultaneously at different sites. The implication of this for the maintenance of law and order as well as counteractions by the repressive state comes out clearly. For while the military pacification of the Ogoni was more specifically focused, violence associated with Ijaw nationalism has proved difficult to manage. Although it is unthinkable that intra-Ijaw rivalries and fractures do not exist, the recent consolidation of Ijaw ethnic nationalism around the common cause of resistance to the state and oil companies, has encouraged robust empathy and solidarity over a wider socio-ethnic space. For instance, many times in the recent past, government officials and law enforcement agencies have expressed their exasperation with respect to effective policing of the vast riverine Ijawland. Frustrations arising from this explain perhaps, the fact that the slightest chance to suppress community disturbances in more upland and accessible Ijaw areas, such as Kaiama, Odi, and the state capital, Yenogoa, have been carried out with reckless precision and with so much vengeance and brutality by state security outfits. Nonetheless, and at the same time, the difficult riverine terrain (and topography) is constantly imposing new and serious challenges related to the maintenance of law and order. It is also providing Ijaw riverine communities with a range of possibilities and rooms for manoeuvre than other oil communities in the hinterland. The indisputable familiarity of an average Ijaw native with their inhospitable waterlogged mangrove terrain easily places them in a vantage position both to evade the state and to carry out surprise attacks on oil infrastructures. At the same time, the situation has allowed pan-

ethnic solidarity based on strong cultural ties and affinities to flourish, and assume the kinds of belligerent and contagion forms they have today. In short, then, if any singular factor/ condition is to be identified as responsible for the emergence, spread and maturity of Ijaw ethnic nationalism- and the heavy burdens of security, law and order- it will be this unique circumstance of geography.²¹⁷

It is important to underscore the fact that Ijaw nationalism has had a robust historical antecedent dating back to the colonial era, but resurrecting more assertively in 1966 when Isaac Adaka Boro and his Niger Delta Volunteers Force (NDVF) held the state (and oil companies) to ransom. Since the 1990s, ethnic Ijaw nationalism has broadened and deepened considerably as witnessed in the proliferation of militant movements pursuing different agenda and interests. Space would not permit a case-by-case examination of the different militant groups operating within the Ijaw territory. What is much clearer though, is that the activities of these different groups have in very significant and radical ways elevated the platform on which sub-Ijaw communities can draw attention to and articulate their most pressing socio-economic, environmental, cultural and political concerns, particularly those relating to the crisis of underdevelopment occasioned by the activities of multinational oil companies and the state. Here, a synoptic overview of the activities of the umbrella movement of the Ijaws, that is the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), shall be drawn attention to for the fascinating lessons they explicate for any holistic understanding of Ijaw nationalism in Nigeria's oil region.

The first outing of the IYC was during the All Ijaw Youth Conference held in Kaiama town, Kolokuma/ Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, on December 11, 1998. At that conference, delegates drawn from different Ijaw communities and clans met and adopted the famous Kaiama Declaration (KD), whose major highlights- much like the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR)- included the right to self-determination, resource control, environmental sustainability, and safeguard of the rich Ijaw culture. The Declaration traced the historical and contemporary challenges facing the Ijaw

²¹⁷ There are several other factors that abet Ijaw nationalism, including the oil factor, a history of collective struggle, strong cultural affinity over a wider area, being the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria, and finally, a major demographic shift in favour of youths.

nation, beginning with their forced inclusion by British colonial fiat into the nascent Nigerian formation. According to the preamble of the Kaiama Declaration, “but for the economic interests of the imperialists, the Ijaw ethnic nationality would have evolved as a distinct and separate sovereign nation, enjoying undiluted political, economic, social and cultural autonomy”. It noted that since this time, the quality of life of the Ijaw people has witnessed a steady decline as a result of “utter neglect, suppression and marginalisation visited on Ijaws by the alliance of the Nigerian State and trans-national oil companies”. The Kaiama Declaration conceptualised the essence of persistent political crises in Nigeria as due in large part to “the struggle for the control of mineral oil resources which account for over 80% of GDP...” It also complained bitterly about the “damage done to our fragile natural environment and to the health of our people” due mainly to “uncontrolled exploration and exploitation of crude oil and natural gas...” This degradation, it insisted, was because “Ijaw people have been robbed of their natural rights to ownership and control of their land and resources through the instrumentality of undemocratic Nigerian State legislations...” (p. 7). Furthermore, the Declaration challenged what it claimed to be the conscious and systematic obliteration of the principles of derivation in revenue allocation as well as the looting of oil proceeds with reckless abandon to successive administrations in the country. Finally, the document indicted the government (and oil companies) for being privy to most violent conflicts in Ijawland and other parts of the Niger Delta area- strategies used to keep the communities weak, distracted and divided (p. 8).

Arising from these complaints, the IYC demanded complete claim of ownership of all land and natural resources (including mineral resources) within the Ijaw territory, the withdrawal of recognition to all undemocratic decrees that disenfranchises oil communities of the right to ownership and control of resources without participation and consent. They also demanded the “immediate withdrawal from Ijawland of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigerian State, insisting that “Ijaw youths in all the communities in all Ijaw clans in the Niger Delta will take steps to complement these resolutions beginning from the 30th of December, 1998”. The Kaiama Declaration enjoined Ijaw youths and peoples to “promote the principle of peaceful coexistence between all Ijaw communities and with our neighbours, despite the provocative and divisive actions of the Nigerian State, trans-national oil

companies and their contractors. We affirm our commitment to joint struggle with the other ethnic nationalities in the Niger Delta area for self-determination". (p. 9). At a broader, national level, the Declaration rejected the transition to civil rule program of the military regime of General Abubakar, calling instead for a "sovereign national conference of equally represented ethnic nationalities to discuss the nature of a democratic federation of Nigerian ethnic (sic) nationalities". (p. 9). Perhaps the most politically significant was the stern warning and deadline given to all oil companies operating in Ijaw territory to withdraw their operations beginning from 30-12-1998. According to the Kaiama Declaration, the Ijaws demand

that all oil companies stop all exploration and exploitation activities in the Ijaw area. We are tired of gas flaring; oil spillages, blowouts and being labelled saboteurs and terrorists. It is a case of preparing the noose for our hanging. We reject this labelling. Hence, we advise all oil companies staff and contractors to withdraw from Ijaw territories by the 30th of December, 1998 pending the resolution of the issue of resource ownership and control in the Ijaw area of the Niger Delta (p. 9).

The next chapter focuses on the various reactions of the state and oil companies, as well as the international community, to the collapse of public law and order in the Niger Delta in general. It is important to point out briefly that being at the forefront of the mass-based ethno-political mobilisation going on in Ijaw territories, leading members of the IYC became targets of police and military arrests, incarceration and brutality. For instance, at the expiration of the deadline for government to respond to and implement the Kaiama Declaration, protesting Ijaw youths were accosted by the brutal firepower of the military and the notorious mobile police force unit leading to several casualties and the burning down of a number of villages. The troops on such military expeditions were also on record to have perpetuated acts of human rights violation and abuses, including sexually assaulting harmless women and young girls. In one particularly gruesome incidence, Human Rights Watch/ Africa reported the arrest and torture under scorching sun in a motor park over three days of 67 people, including an Ijaw traditional ruler who was eventually murdered.

Less than three weeks after the Kaiama Declaration was launched, the IYC issued a press release in Bomadi extending "Operation Climate Change" indefinitely in the face of non-compliance by oil companies. At the meeting, the youths noted the

“refusal of the trans-national oil companies and their business partner, the military dictatorships to enter into dialogue with Ijaw youths”. They also indicted oil companies for reacting in a rather premeditated manner, by inviting armed soldiers to the area, claiming that “the presence of the military is provocative, oppressive and totally unacceptable”.²¹⁸ The Council then called on all Ijaw communities that have suffered and continue to suffer the destructive effects of climate change principally from the burning of fossil fuel to take demonstrative steps to protect the environment” from January 1 to 10, 1999. Within this period also, multinational oil companies were expected to have extinguished gas flares and withdrawn from Ijawland or face reprisal attacks (p. 12-13). Since the first meeting at Kaiama, several parliamentary meetings have been held in different parts of Ijawland by the IYC to drum up support for this pan-Ijaw project.²¹⁹

Easily the most militant branch of the IYC is the Supreme Egbesu Assembly, also popularly known as the Egbesu Boys of Africa. The Egbesu Boys have been at the forefront of the confrontational politics and violent conflicts targeting the State and oil companies. This group, known to wear distinct bodily incisions and tattoo invoke the mythical Ijaw god of war, Egbesu; a popular deity representing equity, justice and fair play. The Egbesu Boys, according to contemporary Ijaw folklore consult the oracle of Egbesu before embarking on their militant exploits, and by so doing, are purportedly fortified and made invisible in battle. The real internal dynamics and leadership structure of the Egbesu may not be known since their activities are mostly shrouded in secrecy and socially constructed mythologies. What can safely be claimed with justification based on the spread and diversity of the group’s activities may be that membership comprised mostly of youths whose presence and activities penetrate the entire length and breadth of the Ijaw territory (Sesay et. al., 2003: 44-52). It is often claimed in the national media that Egbesu Boys are a bunch of illiterate and

²¹⁸ For the full text of the communiqué signed on behalf of the collegiate leadership by Felix Tuodolo, Isaac Osuoka and Kingsley Kuku, see Ijaw Youth Council, Press Statement, Saturday, February 16, 1999. In Delta News Release (<http://www.oneworld.org/delta/990119.html>)

²¹⁹ ‘Forward Match to Freedom’, Communiqué issued at the end of the 7th Council Meeting of Ijaw Youths Held at KOLOBIAMA community in the Opobo Clan of Ijawland on 20th Day of March 1999. See <http://www.kemptown.org/shell/mar20.html>; Of course, the release did not limit itself to purely ND or Ijaw matters. It, for instance, condemned the ambassadorial posting by the Abubakar regime as “insensitive, unfederal and provocative”.

unemployed miscreants who embrace social anomie as an escape route from the low lives of indolence and drudgery. The truth- if the manner in which they articulate their grievances is borne in mind- suggests that the group may in fact also have a prominent band of highly educated, employed and articulate Ijaw youth population. It is important to draw attention to the possibilities of the existence of a strong symbiotic relationship and network between Egbesu 'foot soldiers' and those who control the more openly assertive environmental and communities' empowerment groups found all over the Ijaw region. Instructively also, the Egbesu Boys became a prominent and militant force for change at the same time that they enjoyed openly supportive interventionist influence from pro-minority and pro-environmental groups such as the Niger Delta-Human and Environmental Rights Organisation (ND-HERO) and the Environmental Rights Action (ERA).

A critical study of the symbiotic relationship between ethnically based grassroots social movements and environmental non-governmental organisations is overdue. The salient point to note here is not just the proliferation of both forces almost simultaneously, but the fact that their environmental and minority rights advocacies and interventions have clearly demonstrated that they often worked in partnership. Whereas ethnic-based social movements have been at the forefront of the forms of agitations highlighted earlier, their environmental non-governmental partners have continuously drawn attention both to the life-threatening ecological issues and problems of the Niger Delta and provided the intellectual backbone and stimulation for the intensification of social mobilisations favouring grassroots economic, political and cultural empowerment (Geddicks, 1993). The philosophy behind the creation of environmental non-governmental organisations such ND-HERO and ERA is succinctly summarized in the *raison d'être* of the latter which is "the defence of human ecosystems in terms of human rights, and to the promotion of environmentally responsible governmental, commercial, community and individual practice, through the empowerment of local people."²²⁰ In the context of the Niger Delta, these environmental non-governmental rights' groups have openly shown sympathy towards, and support for the IYC, the Egbesu Boys, and other micro-ethnic groups in

²²⁰ See, Environmental Rights Action, ERA Philosophy, February 1997.

the Ijaw delta. In many cases, the membership and leadership of many of these non-governmental advocacy rights organisations and those of minority/ ethnic social movements are intricately interwoven and complementary in several remarkable ways that cannot be overlooked. Indeed, such NGOs can more appropriately be identified as the “intellectual” or “scientific” wings of movements such as the IYC or Egbesu Boys. This is besides the fact that these NGOs have played pivotal roles in galvanising and sensitising the Niger Delta public on substantive environmental, political and socio-economic problems affecting oil communities in general, and in particular within the Ijaw delta.

The above situation aside, it was the incremental groundswell of opposition against the state and oil companies that eventually provided fertile grounds for the emergence of the pan-Niger Delta initiative, popularly called the Chicoco Movement²²¹ during the summit of Ijaw peoples at the town of Aleibiri²²² in Bayelsa State, on August 17, 1997. According to the spokesman for Chicoco, Oronto Douglas, the initiative was targeted at forcefully engaging “the oil companies into very serious dialogue beyond the realm of public relations that has been the hallmark of these multinationals”. He also noted that “If they do not accept the path of dialogue we will close down the flow-stations and if they hide under a military cloak to repress us then we will resist”. The Chicoco Movement describes itself as first, “a representative mass organization for the defense of the rights of the ethnic minority nationalities in the oil rich Niger Delta area... a proclamation of the struggling unity of these ethnic nationalities against our common oppressors.” Second, the Movement represents an “expression of the historical struggles of the peoples of the Niger Delta area at the present time for social justice, corporate social responsibility, resource and environmental control, and self-determination.” In this regard, the Chicoco Movement “recognises and supports the struggles of all nationalities and groupings within Nigeria in their struggle for

²²¹ The name ‘Chicoco’ is inspired by the organic soil common to the Niger Delta on which the mangroves grow. On it, a variety of seafood thrives while also protecting the shoreline. The soil, according to the Charter of the movement, is also used “to build dwellings and protective embankments, and to reclaim degraded lands... To the people of the Niger Delta, Chicoco is a balm”.

²²² Aleibiri was purposively selected for launching this initiative, as the site Shell has refused to clean a major spill that occurred six months earlier. Like the Kaiama Declaration, the birth of Chicoco sends an alarming signal to government and oil companies’ circles about the devastating prospects of a united front by oil communities.

survival, welfare and development”, and calls for co-operation. It specifically acknowledges the poor conditions of oil workers and the "muzzling" of their unions by calling for the promotion of “a new spirit of solidarity between the peoples of the Niger Delta and the oil workers”. The Movement identified eight major demands of political, security, environmental, socio-economic and legal ramifications in the document adopted at the meeting in Aleibiri, Yenogoa. Highlights of the concerns that informed the creation of the Movement are as follows:

- An end to the ecological devastation of the Niger Delta by transnational oil companies and the Federal government;
- Reparation and compensation to the peoples of the Niger Delta for the damage done by reckless oil and gas exploitation activities;
- An immediate demilitarisation of the Niger Delta communities and an end to the use of oil companies' private armies;
- Respect for the fundamental human rights of our people, particularly the rights to freedom of expression, association and conscience, and the immediate release of all prisoners held in connection with the demands of the oil-producing communities;
- The abrogation of all obnoxious laws like the Oil Minerals Act (1969) and the Land Use Act (1978) that rob our people of the right to control our land and mineral resources for sustainable development of the area;
- The stopping of the ad hoc creation of new Local Government Areas and states;
- A new democratic Nigerian constitution recognising and enshrining the right to self-determination for the nationalities of the Niger Delta, with the unity of Nigeria preserved by a genuine and just federation of ethnic nationalities; and,
- An independent Sovereign National Conference composed of elected representatives of all the organisations of the people, including minority nationalities, workers, students, youth, women, military formations, etc, to discuss the basis and nature of the new Nigerian union, particularly how it affects resource distribution and ethnic nationality.²²³

By way of summary, then, three major points are relevant. First, many of the previously amorphous groups operating in Ijawland seem to have gradually coalesced into larger mass-based movements with visible political and organisational structures. Second, as they proliferate in size and operational scope, these grassroots movements are increasingly led by a crop of enlightened, well-educated and politically conscious young men and women familiar with the difficult responsibility of providing not just high-profile leadership but also the intellectual templates for community struggles.

²²³ Adapted from ‘The Chicoco Movement... Reclaiming our Humanity’, Enough is Enough: A Message from the Niger Delta’, Aleibiri/ Yenogoa, Niger Delta, August 1997

Finally, with the adoption of the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR), the Kaiama Declaration (KD), and similar other documents by aggrieved oil communities, the level of awareness and mobilisation seemed to have assumed a sense of urgency and significance such that an average (even illiterate) inhabitant is conscious of the basic issues in contention, and so can easily muster bonds of radicalism and survival critical to sustaining community struggles. In all these changes, however, is embedded the tacit but now widely accepted opinion that secession from the Nigerian federation is really not an attractive option for consideration no matter the intensity of politicised agitations in the Niger Delta. It may be that the events of the civil war are still fresh in the collective memories of oil communities and the scores of ethno-community groups that have become prominent since the 1990s all over the Niger Delta. In fact, contemporary experiences, at least since the civil war, have shown that no matter how charismatic the leadership of an aggrieved sub-ethnic may be, it loses support quicker when the secessionist option becomes a major issue stimulating group struggles. Thus, even the two most popular documents of rights-the Ogoni Bill of Rights and the Kaiama Declaration- maintained a conspicuous silence on this issue; preferring instead to categorically insist on their peoples collective desire to remain a part of the Nigerian Federation, but under a more favourable and equitable socio-economic and political climate.²²⁴ Today, it is practically difficult if not impossible to find an oil community where one form of collective protest action or another has not been pursued, or is not presently in progress. Predictably, such protests and anomie should continue well into the future until multinational oil companies and the Nigerian State give fundamental considerations to the issues of the qualitative and sustainable development of oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta.

6.3.4. The Itsekiri-Ijaw-Urhobo Rivalries over Warri

Earlier in chapter five, attention was drawn to the colonial genealogy of the cantankerous 'cat-and-mouse' relationships between and among the major inhabitants of present-day Warri Township- especially the Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ijaw ethnic groups. From that account, it was clear that the bone of contention has persistently

²²⁴ Secessionist projects that have suffered similar fate since the civil war were the Isaac Adaka Boro 'Revolution', the coups led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu and Gideon Orkar at different periods respectively, and the recent public ire against a neo-Biafra group called MASSOB.

revolved around issues of access to and use of land resources, commercial and political rivalries to maximise advantages and patronages vis-à-vis the British colonial administration, and a host of other socio-cultural problems. Undoubtedly these multiple levels of problems quite frequently turned out to be veritable sources of strained and violent relationships between the major ethnic groups in that town. The point that will be made here is that such historical moments and experiences invariably served as points of reference for understanding and articulating the dynamic characteristics of inter-ethnic competition and confrontations among these ethnically defined co-inhabitants. The other reality however, is that such historical insights may increasingly prove inadequate in explaining the chronic dimensions that urban-based inter-ethnic conflicts have assumed in the case of Warri Township from the late 1990s onwards.

There is no doubt that the major ethnic groups in Warri have cohabited together for Centuries, going by accounts of the patterns of peopling of the Niger Delta. Yet, two fundamental and recurrent realities about inter-ethnic rivalries and violence between the various ethnic groups resident in the once beautiful but now conflict-ridden oil city of Warri should not be overlooked. The first irritation is with regard to which of the three different ethnic groups can claim original and rightful ownership of the town. Arising from this is the second point: which of the ethnic groups has the traditional authority to govern the town. It is important not to belabour these issues here, after all, a lot is already available in the public domain. Apart from the colonial administrative style which either favoured one ethnic group over another (in many cases, the Itsekiris over Urhobos/ ijaws), or played them against one another, the highpoint of confrontational relationships among the ethnic groups can be traced to the ill-motivated political decision by the Action Group-led government in the Western Region in 1954 to change the title of the paramount ruler of the Itsekiri, the Olu of Itsekiri, to the Olu of Warri.²²⁵ That decision, without doubt, not only exposed the underbelly of strained relationships but also precipitated long-drawn quarrels and violent skirmishes, principally between the Urhobo and the Itsekiri. This was

²²⁵ See John Oguma, 'Issues in and Dimensions of the Warri Crisis', *The Guardian*, September 25, 2003: 8

especially so because the change in traditional title conveyed erroneously the impression that the Itsekiri ethnic group owns, and should therefore control Warri Township. Clearly, that decision reinforced and aggravated age-long suspicions harboured among other ethnic blocs that the Western regional government was bent on re-enacting the dubious colonial administrative policies that withheld recognition and political autonomy to any group other than the Itsekiri in the conduct of the affairs of colonial Warri. Unfortunately, by the time remedial measures were initiated with the promulgation of the Chief's Law (Cap. 19 of 1957) to the effect that the Ijaw and Urhobo areas are excluded from the authority of the Olu of Warri, non-Itsekiri tempers had reached boiling point. It must be borne in mind that flashpoints in Itsekiri and Urhobo rivalries not only resulted in occasional acts of inter-ethnic violence but also long-drawn legal battles going as far as the Privy Council in London, and after independence, the Supreme Court (Imobighe, Bassey and Asuni, 2002)

Almost four decades lapsed, from 1957 to 1997, before the current resurgence of hostilities this time, principally between the Itsekiri and Ijaw ethnic groups. What factors accounted for the long interregnum, bearing in mind especially the fact that the re-christening of the traditional title of Olu, was never rescinded, and that the question of who owns and should control Warri has continued unabated? What factors have precipitated and are driving the far more devastating conflicts in that town since the late 1990s? To answer the first question, it is important to bear in mind that Warri was relatively peaceful and stable until the late 1980s, mostly due to relative socio-economic growth and development witnessed by that town which, in turn, created a robust level of satisfaction among the various inhabitants. By the second half of the 1980s, especially against the background of the rise of authoritarian military regimes and the introduction of IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), socio-economic problems began to fester, even bite harder. In this context, different groups intuitively became conscious of, and paranoid about the need to become militant and self-assertive in clamouring for ethnic rights to subsidised economic opportunities, most especially access to and control of lucrative oil-rich lands. Under this dispensation, it was possible for the tiny but powerful ethnic entrepreneurial class to manipulate the already large pool of unemployed youths in pursuit of their ambitions of safely securing self-centred access to sinecure opportunistic resources

from government and oil companies. These ethnic entrepreneurs- many of whom reside outside Warri come home occasionally, but nevertheless still manage to mobilize and maintain a creative network of political, economic, and social patronages by providing the youths with all that was required to pursue confrontational politics: money, guns and perhaps, also drugs. In this scheme, this tiny class of ethnic elite pretend to be benevolent and public spirited but in reality are merely jostle to safeguard their positions of advantage vis-à-vis rival ethnic elites. Rather than focus rather unproductively on youths as the basic unit of analysis and problematic of inter-ethnic violence in Warri therefore, it will be much more helpful and rewarding to draw attention to the deeper, more structural rivalries between elites of different ethnic groups. In short, the role of ethnic entrepreneurs in the eruption and exacerbation of the Warri conflict has become so incontrovertible that it cannot be questioned or ignored. This is particularly in view of the fact that the conflict in that town is distinguished notoriously by the widespread availability and indiscriminate use of sophisticated and expensive firearms. In recent times, police and military authorities have openly expressed worries about the density of weapons availability held and used by the different ethnic groups in that town. According to them, given the high cost of acquiring such weapons, it is impossible to gain access to the without the active connivance of and sponsorship from influential indigenes. This apart, the rapid growth of the oil industry and allied infrastructures have affected in very significantly ways, the political economy of Warri. This is seen, in particular, by the fact that local communities are becoming more and more apprehensive of their options for survival and qualitative social reproduction in the context of unequal competition with oil companies over scarce land. It is true that competition for scarce land, especially those with proven reservoir of crude oil or those on which gigantic oil infrastructures are erected, is a significant factor in inter-ethnic rivalries and violence in Warri. Besides, since the oil industry is expanding at a time when land is scarce (in some cases, poorer), oil companies understandably are becoming easy targets of popular discontent and anomie by various communities and ethnic groups. Even then, government policy, especially the Land Use Act of 1978 have continued to subvert whatever remained of private and communal land, giving multinational oil companies' such an unlimited leverage to exploit inter-ethnic rivalries over land. In several instances, the acquisition of scarce lands for oil-related ventures has pitched

once friendly communities against one another (See also Frynas, 1999, 2000). In turn, such violent crises have left in their wakes heavy human and material toll, stimulated further strains in community relations, and in the long-term led to the accumulation of an unprecedented high degree of bitter enmity and rancour among different ethnic groups in the town.

Having noted all of these, it is important to point out that nothing in the history of inter-ethnic relations in Warri seemed to suggest the absence of violent conflicts between and among different ethnic groups in the interval between 1957 and 1997. What is left to emphasize is that such occasional acts of violence were issue-specific and lasted for short periods. One of such conflicts occurred in August 1977 between Ekpan (Ethiope LGA) and Ubeji (Warri LGA) Communities leading to the loss of lives, injuries to persons, destruction of properties as well as massive looting and arson. Highlights of a 211-page report of the Justice B.A. Omosun-led Commission of Inquiry set up by the then Bendel State Government on that conflict are most instructive.²²⁶ The Commission identified the immediate causes as including the acquisition of land for the proposed second Warri oil refinery as well as controversy over the payment of compensation for land acquired for the second refinery. It noted the fact that before the refinery was built, relations between the two communities was very cordial and without any record of dispute over land.²²⁷ More instructively, the Commission indicted the police for contributing to the exacerbation of tension and the eventual outbreak of violence by acting rather too late and indecisively, and for demonstrating less discretion and neutrality.²²⁸ Some of the most important recommendations of the government panel was the call for the physical and

²²⁶ For details, see Bendel State, Nigeria, 'The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots and Clashes between Ekpan and Ubeji Communities'. Official Document No. 3, 1978 in CSC 520/ 235; see also, Western Nigeria, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Warri Division (Itsekiri Communal land) Trust by Honourable Mr. Justice S.P. Thomas. Ibadan: Government Printer- Official Document No. 2 of 1963 in CSC 515/ 150]

²²⁷ While the main oil refinery lies wholly in Warri LGA, the site acquired for the housing estate for the refinery personnel lie in-between Warri and Ethiope LGAs.

²²⁸ According to the report, by the time the police from the divisional headquarters intervened on 16-8-77, they only condoned off Ekpan allegedly looking for arms and to arrest suspects. The police was also accused of breaking doors and windows to gain entry into houses, and arresting only Ekpan indigenes. Finally, government was blamed for sending relief to Ubeji people, and none to the Ekpan community. *Ibid.*, p. 124-136

administrative demarcation of the boundary between Warri and Ethiope LGAs, changing the title of the traditional monarchy from the Olu of Warri to Olu of Itsekiri, renaming of public institutions located within Uvwie clan to reflect proper location,²²⁹ and finally, the creation of more LGAs in Warri to reflect sub-ethnic composition (p. 137-153).

With the above backgrounds in mind, the immediate factor that led to the resurgence of violent conflicts from 1997 onwards could be traced once again, to the ill-motivated and highly insensitivity decision of the military government of General Sanni Abacha the previous year, to create new local government areas nationwide. As in several others instances, the creation of new local governments has become of so politicised in Nigeria because ordinary people believe strongly that the third-tier level of government is the closest to them. Often however, government sidelines such popular aspirations since such acts of political gerrymandering eventually do not satisfy local expectations as to the administrative framework under which different groups and peoples would like to be governed. This was well demonstrated in the circumstances that led to the creation of South-West Warri local government area. Clearly, the manner in which the new local council was announced by government not only left much to be desired but also demonstrated a lot of bad faith. It will be recalled that the initial pronouncement by Abuja in December 1996 had located the headquarters of the new local government at Ogbeh-Ijaw, a renowned Ijaw ancestral enclave. By the time the operations of the local government commenced in March 1997, however, the military administrator of the Delta State, Colonel J. Dung, announced Ogidigben, an Itsekiri domain, as the new headquarters. An insight into the bad faith on the part of government was also prominently demonstrated in an interview when the Military Administrator publicly confessed his ignorance on the circumstances that led the Federal Government to create South-West Warri council and the relocation of the headquarters from Ogbe-Ijoh to Ogidigben. According to him, he was neither aware nor was allowed to make any input into the decision by the Federal Government in Abuja. He went further and noted categorically that: “[Honestly], I would not know what informed the relocation but I would think it was

²²⁹ Some of the public institutions named after Warri included the Warri Airstrip located at Ugborikoko in Ethiope LGA and the Warri Oil Refinery physically located in neighbouring Ekpan.

based on the presentation of another group that were not happy with the first decision". He also revealed that the Mbanefo Panel Report on the crisis has neither been made public by the Federal Government nor made available to the State Government. If anything, the counsel from his answers puts no one in any doubt whatsoever about the weak linkages between the first and second-tiers of government in terms of decision-making, responding to and effectively managing incessant controversies and conflicts in the Niger Delta in general, and in Warri in particular.²³⁰

A strong note of caution, and clarification, is however important at this juncture. This is to the effect that the mayhem that now engulfs Warri may have been triggered by, or appeared in the form of, unhealthy political disagreements over the location of headquarters. The fundamental logic driving this descent into seemingly uncontrollable anarchy should be located more appropriately within the larger context of access to, contest for, and control of hydrocarbon-related resources and opportunities. Although Warri has achieved public notoriety as a highly combustible and unstable town, this has not dented its popularity as a major oil city in apparent reference not only to the presence of strategic oil installations in that town, but also the fact that it continues to serve as the administrative and operational base of several multinational oil companies. It will be difficult to ignore, then, the fascinating correlation between the expansion of the oil industry in Warri, as in other parts of the Niger Delta, and the steep increase in the level of inter- and intra-ethnic tensions and violence between ethnic groups in that town. Importantly, also, as the discovery and expansion of new and existing oil findings confer important economic benefits and rewards on host producing communities, the prospects of contestation over ownership of land becomes both critical and violent. Against the background of the operational leverage and freedom enjoyed by oil companies, they are able to exploit, to negative effects, such structural tensions between ethnic groups over ownership of oil-rich tracts of land. A 1999 publication by the Human Rights Watch/ Africa titled *The Price of Oil*, summarised this point beautifully by noting that

the possible financial reward connected to contracting to the oil industry, in an otherwise impoverished region, has great potential to exacerbate tensions between different communities, thus contributing to the level of violent

²³⁰ For the full text of the interview, see *The Guardian*, May 13, 1997, p. 13)

clashes between neighbouring villages or ethnic groups in the delta region.”
(HRW/ Africa, 1999: 114)

As we now know, although the conflict in Warri is not unique in the context of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, it nevertheless indicates the extent that growing and persisting oil-related conflicts have deepened and exacerbated existing sub-ethnic, class, demographic, and ideological fault lines in the oil region of Nigeria. A recurrent dimension to all the above, but one which has been deliberately omitted until now, is the open and central roles played by government and multinational oil companies in the resurgence and (mis) management of sub-ethnic violence in Nigeria’s oil delta region. The next chapter shall investigate the final hypothesis; that the relationship between the State and multinational oil companies on the one hand, and oil-producing communities on the other hand, is a major factor in the exacerbation of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, and therefore a serious constraint to the search for effective and durable solutions to those conflicts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESPONSES BY MULTINATIONAL OIL COMPANIES, THE NIGERIAN STATE AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO CIVIL CONFLICTS IN THE NIGER DELTA

7.1. The Limitations of Corporate Social Responsibility: Multinational Oil Companies and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta

What has come out very clearly from the preceding chapter is the pivotal nature of the role(s) played by multinational oil companies in the exacerbation of violent conflicts in Nigeria's delta region in the last decade-and-a-half. The study has shown that the corporate misdemeanours and irresponsibilities of multinational oil companies are frequent instigators of grave human and environmental concerns in the delta region. By focusing on the distinct behaviours and pathologies of international capital, it becomes easier to predict with remarkable accuracy, the elements of continuity in their historical and contemporary relationship and experiences vis-à-vis coastal oil communities in Nigeria's Delta. Even though oil companies and successive governments in Nigeria would like to paint a contrary picture, the devastation that petroleum production has inflicted on the environment is a central factor in understanding the conflict dynamics in the Niger Delta. Going a step further, the Swedish organisation, IDEA, pointed out that:

These cumulative acts of exclusion, deprivation and ecocide sponsored by the Nigerian State and petrobusiness profoundly undermined lives and livelihood and set the stage for a decade of crisis in the Niger Delta (IDEA, 2001: 246)

It is important to point out that multinational oil companies are not unaware of the myriad negative impacts of their operational presence throughout the Niger Delta; although almost all of them claim to be investing huge sums of money and resources towards transforming the appalling situation in which virtually all their host communities find themselves. There are at least four inter-related patterns of response by multinational oil companies to the protracted problems and chaos that characterise their relationship with host communities. First, and easily the most consistent, has been the tendency to feign ignorance or to fall back to denials and deceit by blaming the victim instead of taking a critical self-examination of the cumulative impacts of their oil exploration activities. This tendency encourages a second pattern: too much

reliance, and huge spending on public relations driven community development initiatives that only tangentially meet the true yearnings and aspirations of host oil communities. With the benefits of hindsight, much of the supposedly 'huge' investments in community development projects have failed woefully to achieve their target due to lack of any significant input from host communities on what precisely their priorities and demands are. Because communities do not participate in the process of conceptualising, designing and implementing most development projects sponsored by oil companies, they feel little or no attachments at all to them, a situation that in turn hampers acceptability and sustainability. The third strategy employed by oil companies is that they continue to deepen their symbiotic relationship with the state through several means including influencing and controlling government policies as they affect (directly or indirectly) their operations, as well as cultivating and watering their formal and informal relationships with key government officials and local elites. By investing so heavily on such a network of patronages and contacts, oil companies are able to instigate and implement several divide-and-rule tactics by playing different groups within communities against one another, and different communities against one another. Lastly, oil companies from time to time exploit access to the instruments and infrastructures of coercion such as the police and the military through increased spending on security matters.

Oil companies have consistently demonstrated lack of tact, carelessness and insensitivity on a range of specific issues that have the potentials of seriously undermining relations with host communities. Three of these will be highlighted briefly not just because of the intensity of public criticisms they evoked, but more importantly, because the issues they raise are at the root of their strained relationship with host communities. The first relates to the consistent denials by oil companies that their activities have far-reaching implications for the delicate environment of the delta region, and invariably fundamentally also affect the traditional subsistence activities and cultures of these communities. Of course, it is a fact, as Shell claimed in one of its publications to debunk Ogoni claims of environmental devastation, that there are "unique difficulties in operating 86 flowstations and about 6200 kilometres of pipelines and flowlines in 31, 000 square kilometres of the Niger Delta in a variety of extreme habitats". But to turn round and claim that "allegations of environmental

devastation in Ogoni, and elsewhere in our operating area, are simply not true”, or that “further impact on the lives of people in the area comes from the rapidly expanding population which has caused deforestation, erosion and over-farming leading to degraded soil”, are evasively disheartening. Clearly, the oil companies’ operating in the Niger Delta exploit the absence of a strong politico-legal and administrative regime for managing and safeguarding the environment in Nigeria. In fact, in the same document that the company made the above claim, it scored itself very high in its current environmental performance by insisting that it should be seen and judged “in the context of Nigeria, its social and economic problems” rather than in the context of higher and stiffer international standards within which it carries out similar activities in Europe and North America.²³¹

The second level of denial comes out of the character of the relationship between multinational oil companies and the highly repressive apparatus of the Nigerian State. This is evident, for example, in the various forms of equipment, facilities and logistic support placed at the disposal of the military as well as the police, to suppress community protests and disturbances. Despite incontrovertible evidence, Shell, the leading oil company, persisted until early 1996 in its denial that it had actually made purchases of arms and ammunitions for state security outfits in return for ‘protection’. One of such revelations was made by the influential *London Observer* of Sunday, January 28, 1996, which reported that shell was importing firearms. In a stern rebuttal, the company denied this allegation as untrue noting that the last purchase of arms, about 107 handguns, for the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) was 15 years earlier. Less than two weeks after this open confession, however, *The London Observer* drew attention once more to how Shell tried to negotiate fresh importation in 1993-1995.²³² The purpose, according to the company, was to ensure that the NPF is able to adequately protect its staff and facilities “against the high level of general and often violent crime frequently carried out using sophisticated weapons”, and against the background of declining public services. Claiming that the company has nothing to

²³¹ Shell, Nigeria Brief: The Ogoni Issue: p. 6

²³² P. Ghazi and C. Duodu, 'How Shell Tried to Buy Berettas for Nigerians'. *The Observer*, 1996, 11 February. Shortly before this second revelation, the police high command launched a full-scale inquiry into Shell's purchase of firearms for a “supernumerary police force” attached to the company's operations.

hide, the erstwhile Managing Director of Shell, Mr. Brian Anderson, expressed disappointment that “Shell is being singled out for blame for a practice which is common in commerce and industry in Nigeria” (www.Shell.org). For a long time, in fact, the company had vehemently denied this allegation until it was confronted with incontrovertible facts, including an arms deal that turned sour and became the basis for litigation in a Lagos High Court. By January 1996, Eric Nickson, a Shell spokesman, made a *volte face* when he admitted to *The London Observer* that

Shell has purchased side arms- handguns- on behalf of the Nigerian Police Force who guard Shell’s facilities. But once imported, the arms remain the property of the Nigerian Police, who store, guard, and use them... The Nigerian Police do not have sufficient funds to equip themselves... We purchase the weapons on their behalf. But Shell does not have the arms itself.

Of course, well before the trial of the Ogoni 9, the environmental, human rights and pro-democracy lobby in Nigeria and abroad had repeatedly pointed accusing fingers at multinational oil companies operating in Nigeria for providing infrastructure and logistic support to the security services in the Niger Delta. For instance, in an interview published in *Village Voice*, Oronto Douglas, environmentalist and lawyer, alleged that “Shell provides logistic support in terms of helicopters, speed boats and vehicles to convey soldiers to their installations in what they called ‘protection’. All over the delta, the military do not have helicopters to fly in soldiers to oil installations. Transportation is done by oil companies, including Shell”.²³³ Since the sustenance of the repressive military architecture is impossible by the state acting alone, multinational oil companies have frequently come to the rescue to meet shortfalls. It is not coincidental therefore that most police stations and military barracks are located close to, next to, or inside, oil installations. Obviously, the infrastructures of crude repression are so deeply embedded into the infrastructures of crude oil exploitation in the region. Ultimately, the two infrastructures service one another in essentially the same manner that substantiates the earlier view that in Nigeria, ‘power flows not just from the barrel of a gun but also from the barrel of crude oil’.

Another dimension to the incestuous relationship between oil companies and the Nigerian State is the ease with which both alliance members are able to request for

²³³ See, A. Rowell, ‘Sleeping with the Enemy’, *Village Voice*, (New York), 1996, 26 January

assistance when trouble brews. Beginning with the heavy-handedness and unbridled violence wrought on Umuechem village in the 1990, the notoriety of oil companies in calling up the notorious and dreaded mobile police unit popularly known as the kill-and-go as well as soldiers, has become legendary. Yet, oil companies have consistently denied inviting police and military personnel to quell community disturbances, and on many occasions also insisted that whatever havoc the security services inflict on host oil communities is properly and entirely a matter for the forces. It took Shell six years (on May 20, 1996) to come out clearly to apologise for inviting the military when the former Managing Director, Brian Anderson, acknowledged in a television programme, 'World in Action' of making "mistakes" by inviting the security forces to quell a community protest against the company's unsustainable ecological damage on the environment in that locality. In that instance, Mr. Anderson remarked further: "We once called in the police to assist us on a case where things got out of hand completely and I must say that taught us a lesson... some people died because of that".²³⁴

The above, however, is a partial picture demonstrative of the deep contempt harboured by oil companies towards hosts in the Niger Delta. At the general level, it is difficult not to be struck by the sheer and palpable arrogance with which oil companies pursue and implement various activities in the communities where they operate. It is important to bear this in mind in order to put in proper context claims by oil multinationals of pursuing decent, globally compliant and socially responsive corporate operations in the country. For a very long time, for instance, oil companies operating in Nigeria have claimed, with very hollow justification, that they are in business to make profit, not as missionaries seeking to win new souls or to redeem 'lost' ones. Expectedly, but more intensively since the 1990s, oil communities have in turn demonstrated increasing irritation and unwillingness to continue to tolerate such insensitivities and contemptuous attitude and disposition by reacting with anger and violence. An environmentalist, Aston-Jones, summarised the situation very well when he noted that:

²³⁴ *Reuter*, Shell Regrets "Mistake", 1996, 20 May

[While] I remain persuaded that Shell has not, as a matter of policy, operated in a way that is detrimental to the environment and to the communities that have been its hosts, ... the company is environmentally and socially careless and tactless, having allowed itself to be seduced by the climate of low environmental standards and carelessness for human rights within which the Nigerian oil industry works... Shell has shown, to say the least, a cavalier attitude to the well being of these communities...²³⁵

It is the cumulative of all the above that has generated an unparalleled and deep contempt on the part of many communities towards multinational oil companies. This is very obvious from the opinion of several respondents during in-depth interviews and FGDs conducted in different study locations. One of the questions that was paramount during the fieldwork related to the perceptions of ordinary inhabitants of Niger Delta oil communities towards the operations of multinational oil companies, and how that fuel crises and conflicts in that region. A 31-year old accountant at Uzere noted that the “attitude of Shell is that of neglect, the government protects Shell. Recently, Shell was made to realise that the people can vandalise their installations. It was only at this point that they started responding to the needs of the people”. A 30-year old who claimed to be a businessman described Shell as a tortoise. According to him, “if the tortoise refuses to move, if you touch it with fire, it will move. This means Shell always waits to be militantly ‘cajoled’ before doing anything”. An even younger respondent, aged 19, who identified himself as a contractor, indicted Shell for courting the elders of the communities by giving them commission, claiming; that is why “Shell don’t listen to the communities problems”. According to the young man, the elders in turn bribe the youths to prevent them from confronting the Shell workers. This assertion was corroborated by an unemployed 24-year old female who indicted oil companies for “causing more trouble by making the elders in the community ‘comfortable’ with bribes. They neglect others in the community”. An opinion leader in Uzere noted that “oil companies go back on their promises, or keep too long in fulfilling them”, while his peer expressed the view that it is only “when the pressure on the oil companies is high that they visit the communities to sign unfulfilled agreements”. A 45-year old respondent who also happens to be a contractor to Shell believed that “the employment policy of these oil

²³⁵ Nick Ashton-Jones, ‘Shell Oil in Nigeria’, (Private Circulation), August 1994, p. 6

companies is not in favour of the oil producing communities, resulting in unemployment among the youths of the area”.

The turn of events in the Niger Delta since the 1990s revealed very boldly by the politicisation of protests and anomie among the Ogoni people, exposed the stinking underbelly of the operations of oil companies in Nigeria to domestic and international audience. In particular, the trial exposed Shell, the major oil company embroiled in the crisis, to allegations of complicity leading to the conviction and hanging of the Ogoni 9 in November 1995.²³⁶ For a company that constantly beats its chest for abiding by due and fair processes, it is curious that SPDC never saw anything wrong in the judicial process that was not only fatally flawed but also obviously pre-designed to convict the men. In fact, a senior official of the company in London was on record at that time to have insisted unsympathetically that “[It] is not for a commercial organisation like Shell to intervene with the legal process of a sovereign state such as Nigeria”. But then, neither did it raise a voice against the patently extra-judicial methods that the tribunal deployed- including claims by defence counsels that the company bribed principal witnesses- throughout the trials other than a claim by the Chairman of the Committee of Managing Directors of Shell, Mr. Herkstroter, that he pleaded with Abacha for clemency for Ken and his compatriots.²³⁷

Also very revealing are the statements of the company’s spokesperson on their controversial relationships with the Nigerian military. Shell officials have been on record to make statements denying provision of money and logistic assistance to the military, colluding with the military, and inviting the repressive forces to safeguard its facilities. In May 1995, a leaflet by SPDC to its shareholders specifically noted that “Shell is not in collusion with the military. It has stated publicly it does not wish for a military presence to maintain operations. Shell has repeatedly condemned violence, by anyone”. Against the background of the Ogoni trials in November 1995, SPDC

²³⁶ See, SPDC, SPDC Answers Allegations of Bribery, Background Brief, 1995, 8 November

²³⁷ See, SIPC, Verdict on the Trial of Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa, 1995, 31 October. Despite claims that it would not interfere with ‘judicial processes’, Shell issued a statement in response to the confirmation of the death sentences acknowledging that the Chairman of the Committee of Managing Directors of Shell, Mr. Herkstroter, pleaded with Abacha for clemency. See, SIPC, Response Statement, 1995, 8 November

insisted that "It is not true, as has been claimed, that Shell supported any alleged operations of a task force under Lt. Col. Okuntimo in Rivers State".²³⁸ Public utterances by senior executives of the company in other parts of the world also inadvertently compounded the problem. For instance, on the issue of using the armed forces to violate the rights of the oil communities, the DG of Shell Finland, Rolf Hasselblat, asserted on 15 November 1995 that "Shell opposes all kinds of violence used to solve disagreements. The claim that Shell requested help from the 'occupation forces' is totally unfounded". A press release by Shell UK on November 21, 1995, added emphatically, that: "Shell has not and never would collude with the Nigerian military authorities or security forces. Shell has not been involved in any actions by military forces in the area". Along this line, the Head of External Affairs at Shell International, Peter Bright noted that "Such accusations, for example of colluding with the military to subdue Ogoni's campaign for a better deal, are totally false. The facts have often been distorted or ignored".²³⁹ By the time the company began to own up to its too-close-for-comfort fraternity with the military, it preferred to underestimate the scope and depth of such rapport. Thus, by 1996 when much of its false claims were openly retracted by very senior officials, including the one by the Head of Media Relations at the headquarters in London, Mr. Eric Nickson, it was merely to the effect that the company "paid the military, but only on two occasions, one of which was to go and look for a fire engine. We did pay Lt. Col. Okutimo field allowances on that occasion but it was only enough for about two meals a day".²⁴⁰

It is in the light of the above that one must take seriously the indictment by Late Professor Claude Ake of multinational oil companies for privatising the State, and in the process, arrogating and engaging recklessly, the instrumentalities of repression, is in order at this juncture. According to him, the "privatisation of the State is evident in the swarm of police men and women in Shell residential headquarters and officers supposedly securing Shell; the presence of armed troops in the operational bases of

²³⁸ See, Shell, Background Brief for Journalists: Shell Nigeria Answers Allegations of Bribery, November 8, 1995

²³⁹ See Peter Bright, head of External Affairs, Shell International, 1 December 1995

²⁴⁰ Eric Nickson, Head of Media Relations, Shell International, 6 November, 1996

the company, and in the prerogative of Shell and other oil companies to call on the police and the military for their security".²⁴¹ Ake went further by singling out Shell for condemnation. According to him, the company is

Shell has been driving the violence by creating excessive concern about security in the mineral producing areas and by thinking of ways to reinforce coercive mechanisms which also drove it to the importation of arms. At the same time it has been giving the impression that the whole question of law and order or coercion is really a matter for government, while in fact it has been communicating the insecurity to the government".²⁴²

The implication of Shell's (and other multinational oil companies') campaign of disinformation on the question of whether it supports the military by paying the allowances of personnel and providing them other logistic support was also raised by Ake, viz:

Shell has been misleading the public. This has always been our point: that Shell is driving the violence by exaggerating the need for security, by exaggerating the anger in the mineral producing areas and by its support, sometimes illegal, to people who have been maintaining security. The whole question of the smallness of the amount is totally irrelevant. The fact that it is paying anything at all to Okuntimo and that security unit is what constitutes not only corruption but also driving violence and a clear act of hostility against the people of the Delta region (Ibid.)

He noted in the same breadth that:

We cannot accept a situation where Shell privatises the state, because Shell is not answerable to the public. Any kind of logistical or military support or whatever that Shell is providing to anybody, or any claim it makes on coercive resources, is a process of the privatisation of the state. This can have very serious consequences for political legitimacy, for sparking off radical, social movements and systematic breakdowns. The implications of this are very serious.

Given the broader ramifications of the untidy relationship between multinationals and the repressive agencies of the State therefore, it is tempting not to avoid the

²⁴¹ Claude Ake, 'Shelling Nigeria Ablaze', TELL (Lagos), January 29, 1996, p. 34. Shell is not the only multinational oil company deep in the art of funding the security services in return for protection. One respondent, an accountant with Mobil at Eket, Akwa Ibom State, told the researcher that the company spends almost 10 million Naira as protection fee. Interview, 16-4-2000

²⁴² 'A Tribute to Ake', Interview with Professor Claude Ake by Andy Rowell and Owen Wiwa respectively. Delta #3- October 1997.²⁴² (http://www.oneworld.org/delta/3_news6.html)

conclusion that multinational oil companies have an especially strong preference for autocratic regimes that are able to impose a regime of political stability conducive for international business than their democratic counterparts, even when they are weak and unstable. Holden (1982: 12, 5) had reported the general opinion among multinational oil companies' executives attending a chamber of commerce meeting on Latin America, that "dictatorship is the best form of government for these people (Haitians)", and that there is more "democracy for business" under authoritarian regimes like that of Papa Doc Duvalier in Haiti.²⁴³ This preference for stable dictatorships, as indicated much earlier, had been expressed by Nnaemeka Achebe, the highest ranking Nigerian in Shell's management hierarchy in 1996. According to him, "For a commercial company trying to make investments, you need a stable environment. Dictatorships can give you that. Right now in Nigeria there is acceptance, peace and continuity" (1996: 59).

It is a most revealing irony that Achebe's claim to "acceptance", "peace", and "continuity" during that sad footnote in Nigeria's contemporary history only applied to the relationship between oil companies and the state, and not in any way reflective of the severely strained relationship between oil companies and local host communities in the Niger Delta. At a level, therefore, it is important to bear in mind that the realities that determine and condition the arrogant corporate behaviour of multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta is tied too closely to the close association romance and leverage they enjoy vis-à-vis the Nigerian State. It is true that the major motivation for oil multinationals operating in Nigeria, as elsewhere, is jumbo profit, but the ways they have carried on their activities in the Niger Delta region over the years persistently implicate oil companies for irresponsible corporate behaviour by critical segments of the civil society. What has clearly happened is that such corporate carelessness has further deepened the crises of legitimacy and acceptance of oil companies by host communities.

Just as multinational oil companies would prefer to underplay the bond of fraternity between them and the military, they have also shown a tendency to underestimate the

²⁴³ Reported in Robert H. Holden, 'Corporate Officials Embrace Latin American Dictators at Private Chamber of Commerce Session', *Multinational Monitor*, 1982: 12, 5

enormity of the political clout they wield vis-à-vis the State, and all the differences that this could make in influencing policy changes that might be favourable to host communities. In fact, it has become such an incontrovertible public knowledge that either individually or collectively, senior officials of oil companies enjoy a network of carefully cultivated political contacts with very senior government officials. One Catholic Nun who has lived and worked in the Niger Delta since 1964, Sister Marjella, was reported as characterising the whimsical relationship between multinational oil companies, especially Shell, and government as a “revolving door”. It is against this background that the claim was made elsewhere particularly about Shell that in Nigeria, ‘*Shell is the State, the real State is an empty shell*’. As Andrea Goodall of Greenpeace also succinctly summarized it:

Shell’s profession of innocence ignore the fact that the Nigerian government is far from democratic, and that Shell itself is the most powerful political actor on the Nigerian stage- both historically and currently. In Nigeria, the power doesn’t come from the people, it comes from Shell. If Shell (executive) wanted to make a difference, they could. (Cited in Kretsman, 1995: 9)²⁴⁴

Put together, therefore, the relationship between oil companies and host communities has declined significantly over the years (despite claims by of the companies of connecting and engaging actively with host communities in a sincere partnership for progress). To the chagrin of oil communities, multinational oil companies have insisted they are in business for profit not as Father Christmas or as an alternative government. By this claim, they dismiss oil communities’ unending calls to assist with the provision of basic social amenities and infrastructures such as motorable roads, electricity, drinkable water, schools, health care facilities, and so on. Yet, in many of the oil communities, similar state-of-the art facilities are provided for the comfort of company staff, but none for the host communities- even when it is feasible to do so in order to maximise economies of scale. In an earlier fieldwork conducted for a related project, it came out strongly that one factor that has persistently ignited communal bile against oil companies is the sheer arrogance with which they- the oil

²⁴⁴ See also, Philip Mattera, Chevron: The Big Oil Boys’, *Multinational Monitor*, April 1992: 27-30

companies- publicise their community relations and assistance, when in reality they have been doing very little.²⁴⁵

Yet, [because] the nature of oil companies/ business in Nigeria has changed from that of an “unaccountable corporation to quasi- government”, they have been urged to accept the responsibilities that come with that role.²⁴⁶ Even then, based on cost-benefit analysis, what many oil communities are asking for from multinational oil companies cannot significantly dent the huge budget and revenue of most oil companies; instead, meeting many- if not all of them- will help the companies gain positive and far-reaching social mileage in terms of improved community relations. Of course, this is not to suggest in any way that it is the responsibility of the oil companies to cater for the sundry but empire of needs of host communities long neglected by a ‘distant’ and irresponsible government. In the context of Nigeria’s delta, there would be nothing strange or curious if oil companies extend genuine hands of assistance and partnership to host communities by filling in the critical gaps in their developmental aspirations and expectations. It is a matter of deep curiosity, then, that oil companies are able to provide quite a number of these social amenities whenever and wherever such would facilitate the process of resource extraction, but not as an act of benevolence or genuine commitment to host communities’ welfare. Besides, the huge sums of money invested on public relations and in providing security can make a lot of difference to the communities.

Over all, in the absence of what many indigenes consider an appropriate and adequate response by government to their myriad developmental problems, even executives of multinational oil companies agree that: “one of the greatest challenges for the industry is how many people perceive it.” Clearly, many communities see multinational oil companies to every intent and purpose as an “alternative

²⁴⁵ One interesting anecdotal example recently reported in the dailies was the inclusion in the official bulletin of Shell of a family, with fictitious name, in joyous mood over the arrival of a new baby. The photo credited the financial assistance by Shell to the family. Not long after, the real family sued Shell.

²⁴⁶ Statement credited to Dr. Owens Wiwa, younger brother of Ken Saro-Wiwa. http://www.McSpotlight.org/beyond/delta2_nov96.html

government”.²⁴⁷ Partially in response to this unusual role as a sort of “quasi-government”, some oil companies now have departments of agriculture, health, education, and so on, much like government has ministries. Indeed, some of the giant oil companies operating in the country have annual budgets for community development and corporate contributions that are bigger than what some state governments allocate to development. Hastrup concluded that: “... the previous neglect of many remote, rural communities which host our operations affords us an opportunity to make real, tangible and verifiable differences in the lives of a number of people, some of whom have put up with many years of inadequacy and privation”.²⁴⁸ There is, of course, the equally important dimension that the political activities of oil companies (even when they are not acknowledged by their executives) have ramifications for human security and human rights, broadly defined. Although there are basically no binding legal obligations on the part of multinational corporations to promote or to protect human rights, there is at the same time no doubt about the bold question mark on their human rights scorecard.

What is also certain in the context of Nigeria’s oil industry is that much of the pressure for change in the community relations’ policies and strategies of oil companies come from outside- from sustained protests by civil society elements and groups within the Niger Delta, nationwide, and at the international level. No matter how one looks at it, it remains very difficult to sustain the argument that the current level of relationship between oil companies and host communities is the best that can be achieved, given the fact that most of the disturbances and violent actions embarked upon by host oil communities actually represent symptoms of the failure of existing community and public relations interventions by multinational oil companies. It is true that after the conflagrations of the 1990s, during which community disturbances peaked in the Niger Delta, the major oil communities publicly committed themselves to a comprehensive review of policies and strategies towards the host communities;

²⁴⁷ A Mobil Staff claimed that the company has a construction department that executes or supervises community development projects, including taking over the responsibilities of the government in core host communities such as Eket and Ibeno. Indeed, the popular innuendo in Akwa Ibom State is that there are two governments: the State government and Mobil government. (Excerpt from Interview with Mobil Staff, 16-4-2000)

²⁴⁸ Challenges of Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria’s Oil Industry’. Excerpts from paper delivered by Deji Hastrup, Manager, Community Relations, Chevron Nigeria Limited.

especially by ensuring that previous top-down approaches are replaced with broad-based and bottom-up processes that allow oil communities to make inputs into, determine their priorities and how best oil companies can assist in implementing them. It is also not clear if the major multinational oil companies considered- not to talk of enthusiastically embraced- the need for a more pro-active and comprehensive dialogue with their host communities in order to find mutually beneficial and durable solutions to problems before they get out of hand. With the suspicious and disdainful way and manner senior officials of multinational oil companies and their rank-and-file, view their relationship with host oil communities, it is very unlikely they will be able to conceptualise, articulate and put in place truly community-friendly initiatives to address the plight of host communities.

What cannot go unnoticed even to a first-time visitor to the Niger Delta is the visible presence of stern looking state security personnel- the regular police, mobile police, soldiers and naval ratings- who directly or indirectly are on the payroll of the multinational oil companies. Although these companies have claimed, with some justification, that they are entitled to protection like every other individual or corporate citizen, it is vain and preposterous that the same oil companies would turn around to feign ignorance of what these security personnel do either in or out of duty within the host communities. In the context of Nigeria where security personnel have an uninspiring record for the utmost disregard, perhaps even contempt, for the lives and properties they are paid to protect, it is obvious that their day-to-day activities would be a source of irritation and conflict between them and host communities. Indeed, the presence of these security forces has led unquestionably to what Claude Ake called the "militarisation of commerce". This heavy security presence continues to have far-reaching implications for civic life and the maintenance of law and order, especially as those security personnel have become notorious sources of insecurity and instability in the region.

One example is particularly revealing in terms of the ease with which multinational oil companies can call upon the services of the police and soldiers, and then turn around to deny responsibility for their subsequent actions. On January 3, 1999, youths from Opia and Ikenyan allegedly attacked Chevron, which prompted a punitive

military reprisal against the two communities that led to the burning of houses, wounding and killing of some of the indigenes. In its public reaction to the incident, Chevron claimed that it “was a matter between Federal Government Armed Forces and community militants”. In addition to the account given in the letter to community representatives, Chevron stated that the soldiers at the rig had radioed to the Madagho military base for assistance, and that the soldiers at the base had in turn come to Chevron's nearby Escravos facility and demanded use of the helicopters and boats on contract to the company. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), Chevron stated that company staff at their facility did not allow the soldiers to take the helicopter and boats for one hour, until the sound of gunfire over the radio had ceased. The chairman of the company, Kirkland, did not believe that Chevron had any right to refuse the soldiers permission to take the equipment; nor any choice, since they would have taken it anyway. As he reportedly told HRW, the company had expressed its concern about this the incident to General Karmasche, the head of the military task force deployed in Delta State since the 1997 Warri crisis. Throughout the assault on Opia and Ikenyan, according to Human Rights Watch, Chevron never made any public statements critical of the military's use of its equipment to inflict excessive damage on the two communities, nor demonstrated any resolve to avoid similar incidents in future. If anything, HRW claimed that the company said it did not have internal written guidelines relating to security at its facilities and the response of company staff or contractors to security incidents, just as it claimed it did not to have any form of written agreement with the Nigerian government relating to the provision of state security at its facilities. Chevron's position is that the company is operating in a region that is rife with ongoing ethnic conflicts, which required a military presence (Cited in HRW/Africa).

A further bone of content that continues to strain relations between oil companies and their host communities has to do with the recruitment policy of the former vis-à-vis unemployment opportunities for indigenes. In most cases, the oil companies are accused of recruiting very few indigenes, preferring instead to engage them more as casual daily paid workers and not as permanent staff. Whereas allegations that their recruitment policies favour non-indigenes of non-oil producing communities seem to be substantive, and in large part correct, very little seems to have been done to correct

this anomaly. As recent as year 2000, for instance, the topmost management positions at Mobil Producing Nigeria (MPN), including the vice chairmanship of the company, country human resource manager, corporate affairs manager and several others, were held by people of Yoruba extraction. Indeed, out of a total of 18 personnel movements at the senior and managerial levels announced in January of that year, 10 were from the Yoruba-speaking Southwest- and none from Akwa Ibom, the host state.²⁴⁹ This issue has therefore become a major irritant, especially as indigenous youths who have peers that have had the benefit of higher education but are from other parts of the country, end up securing lucrative employments and positions in oil companies. This complaint was the crux of violent protests by youths in Eket, Akwa Ibom State, against Mobil early in 1998. In a recent interview, a traditional ruler in Eket, Obong Etim Abia, noted that the community was

not happy at all that after nearly 30 years Mobil was not able to produce one manager from here. It has just promoted a few people to managerial positions and we have been hoping that somebody in the community would be on the Board of Mobil...I am not saying that somebody in the Board of Mobil will guarantee good things coming to the community... but it will give confidence to the people in the community and the State that they have somebody at the top (Community News, p. 17)

It is certainly very strange that a company that began operations in Nigeria in 1955 as Mobil Exploration Nigeria Incorporated, and the second largest oil producer in the country today after Shell, cannot boast of highly trained personnel in senior management position who are indigenes of the oil producing areas.²⁵⁰ The popular refrain among officials of oil companies is that the very few indigenes of oil communities who have had the benefit of higher education have mainly focused on disciplines such as the liberal arts and humanities, not hardcore sciences and engineering that are more relevant to the human resources need of multinational oil companies. This reasoning has been challenged by several communities who claim that even their qualified children are deliberately sidelined by the recruitment policies of oil companies clearly favouring non-indigenes. It is thus worrisome, to say the least, that multinational oil companies will make such claims when in fact a cardinal part of what host communities expect of them is to assist in providing opportunities

²⁴⁹ *Mobil News*. January-February 2000, p. 16.

²⁵⁰ See Mobil, *QUA IBOE TERMINAL: Information Handbook*, Lagos: MPN Limited, July 1999, p. 1-2

for their sons and daughters to be trained in cognate fields in higher educational institutions at home, and if need be, abroad, so they can also benefit from lucrative job opportunities in the oil industry.

On the surface, oil companies pride themselves of putting in place proactive and human centred community relations programmes. Usually in very glossy in-house magazines, they trumpet their strictest adherence to good oilfield practices and good neighbourliness. Mobil, for instance, announced in 1993 a 4-year expanded programme on community development costing N280 million comprising of civil works such as roads, water supply, electrification projects, educational development, health care delivery, arts and culture/ leisure, sports, and other sundry matters.²⁵¹ More often than not, however, much of the community development programs developed by multinational oil are conceived and implemented not on the basis of felt community needs, but essentially to serve the company and ease its operations. It is under such a guise, for instance, that electrification and water projects are implemented to ease the plight of staff leaving outside of official quarters provided by the company, ditto for hospitals and schools for their families. Like other social amenities, road construction is designed to create access to oil installations and to facilitate extraction rather than to ameliorate the drudgery that has become the singular distinguishing feature of most rural oil communities. Virtually all the oil companies have been accused of not meeting their approved contributions to the purse of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for the purpose of financing its developmental agenda for the Niger Delta.

By way of conclusion therefore, certain facts are incontrovertible when assessing the reactions of multinational oil companies towards host communities against the backdrop of the violent exchanges that have marked the relationship between them in the last decade or so. In retrospect, multinational oil companies operating in Nigeria seem to have learnt little, if any lessons at all, from the experiences of the last decade of community anomie and official repression that have merely served to exacerbate violent conflicts and instability in Nigeria's delta region. Indeed, what readily comes

²⁵¹ Ibid. p. 34-36.

to mind is the popular adage that 'the more things change, the more they remain the same'. At another level, the oil companies seemed to have internalised, very badly, the notion that they can do no wrong; and when it becomes evident that they have erred, no punishment or sanction can be imposed on them by the State. In this regard, the major oil companies have refused to mellow their gusto of arrogance towards, and their contempt for host communities, thus leaving the latter with no other option than taking their fate into their own hands through acts of belligerence aimed at the companies.

7.2. The Nigerian State and Civil Conflicts: Coercive and Non-Coercive Responses to Crises in the Niger Delta

(Given) the small size and population (of oil-producing communities) it is not cynical to observe that even if the resentment...continue they cannot threaten the stability of the country nor affect its continued economic development.²⁵²

Government of today in Nigeria is wide-awake to its responsibility to the people. It, therefore, does not need require any shock therapy to wake it to action"²⁵³

"Government has decided that irrespective of their grievances, the oil communities have no reason whatsoever to take laws into their hands. Government will not condone any further disruption of production in their areas. Any further disturbances will meet with full weight of the law."²⁵⁴

A new and increasingly dangerous awareness and sensitivity is sweeping through the oil producing communities across the country. It is in the interest of the oil industry and the nation that urgent and lasting solutions should be put in place to prevent the situation from getting worse.²⁵⁵

²⁵² Statement credited to Chief Philip Asiodu in 1984 (Isumonah, 1997: 10)

²⁵³ Tayo Lukula, 'Oil communities to enjoy Better Deal, Says Etiebet', *The Guardian*, January 20, 1994, p. 1

²⁵⁴ October 15, 1998; NTA Network News, Information and Culture Minister, Mr. John Nwodo briefing newsmen on the outcome of the FEC meeting. Cited in Chukwuma Nwokoh, 'Niger Delta: Bomb waiting to Explode', *The Guardian on Sunday*, 18-10-98, p. 17 &19.

²⁵⁵ Excerpt from the report of a ministerial Fact-finding Team on the Problems of the Niger Delta set up under the despotic regime of General Sanni Abacha. Cited in ERAction: Newsletter of the Environmental Rights Action, January-March, 1999, p. 8.

The reaction of the State comes in the form of intimidation which most people do not want to accept...the State will compound our problem by bring in police and army into the communities.²⁵⁶

What the above quotations point equivocally to is the general consciousness that part of the responsibilities for the chaos in the Niger Delta cannot be divorced from the actions (and inactions) of successive governments. At the broad theoretical level, it is undeniable that States play a pivotal role in determining the character, degree and longevity of violent conflicts in any society. It was not until quite recently, however, that concern was expressed to the effect that scholars of State behaviour have generally not given sufficiently rigorous and empirical attention to interrogations of the character and dynamics of governmental repression, because more often than not, they ignore the “awful and bloody deeds of government” (McCamant, 1984: 11). This tendency, according to Mason and Kane (1989), has encouraged a situation whereby violent actions by States are treated as reactive, rather than proactive phenomena. Put differently, that States (especially under repressive regimes) do not just respond to violence with violence but are on many occasions the principal instigators of violence and insecurity. In the context of Nigeria’s oil-producing region, acts of omission and/or commission on the part of successive governments can clearly be indicted as the most singular, most consistent instigator (and ‘aggravator’) of violent conflicts. By omission, the glaring failures of successive attempts to decisively address, during the formative stages, the myriad developmental problems that are particular to the oil region have, in turn, led to deep-seated feelings of disappointment, frustration and disillusionment among the inhabitants against government and multinational oil companies. Obviously, the kinds of volatile conflicts that have rendered the Niger Delta region one of the most inhospitable parts of modern-day Nigeria did not crystallize in a vacuum. They matured against the background of long years of neglect, marginalization, and exclusion, etc. of the region by successive governments since independence. As government itself rightly acknowledged “[As] it is today, the

²⁵⁶ FGD Extract, 2000

agitation is not something that had come overnight. It has been accumulating and the political trauma that we had for the past four years also exacerbated the issue...”²⁵⁷

Whereas the errors of omission committed by successive governments can be aptly identified as constituting the structural template for violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, blatant errors of commission also on the part of government, seem to be driving such violent conflicts in the form and manner that are both sustainable and uncontrollable. A manifest dimension to this is the predictable tendency on the part of government (with or without the prompting of multinational oil companies) to rely overly on ill-motivated divide-and-rule tactics and militaristic posturing in its conflict prevention, management and resolution strategies towards that highly volatile region. The missing link, unfortunately, is the fact that instead of adopting a genuine, sincere and proactive approach in the management of the diverse problems facing oil communities, successive governments have relied more on strategies that emphasize more of the symptoms and their manifestations rather than the root causes of the underdevelopment of the region. Of course, it cannot be denied that long and unbroken years of military dictatorships complicated and accentuated the problems of the Niger Delta especially as they foreclosed, at every major stage, opportunities for the democratic allocation of values and resources to oil communities. Generally, then, there is a remarkably close parallel between the authoritarian antics of repressive military regimes and their quick predisposition to use force as an instrument of coercion and intimidation against communities that are considered to be unnecessarily bellicose.

To be sure, historically the earliest official response to the developmental problems facing the Niger Delta did not occur in relation to the contradictions arising from oil-based accumulation. Instead, the reaction of government was prompted by high-pitched agitations and protests by minority groups for devolution of power and political autonomy before the due date for the transfer of power to indigenous political elites waiting on the wings to take power from the departing colonial authorities. In particular, there were strong and pervasive concerns and fears among

²⁵⁷ Abubakar through Porbeni, Joseph Ollor Obari, 'Abubakar Promises Relief for Oil areas' in *The Guardian*, October 29, 1998)

the ethnic minority groups in the delta region, much more than the minorities of the middle belt region in the last days of colonial rule, that their interest and future may not be well served and secured in a post-independent Nigeria dominated by the three big ethnic groups- Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Against this backdrop, it was difficult for Her Majesty's Government to discountenance the rumblings among the minority ethnic groups for too long, more so as the bases for some of their rumblings were legitimate and factual. Thus, the British government responded by setting up a Commission of Inquiry to investigate and report on the fears of the minorities under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Willink. Much of the details of the Commission's mandate and outcomes have been highlighted earlier. The most notable of the outcomes was the recommendation that government must recognize and treat the Niger Delta region as a 'special area', and to this effect, establish a developmental agency with the sole responsibility of identifying and meeting the substantive needs of the inhabitants of the oil region. It was to give some concrete expression to this important recommendation that the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was established in 1960. Unfortunately, this pioneering initiative lasted for only a short while, as it soon became an agency for prebendalism and the disbursement of sinecure resources to meet the insatiable needs of influential local elites close to the government of the day. Even though the spirit behind the setting up of the Board was laudable, it died a natural death with the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war in 1967. Its demise within such a short period of its establishment was however popularly touted by many of those suspicious of its mandate in the first place as 'riddance to bad rubbish'.

During the long interval between the demise of the NDDDB and the creation of the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992, the Niger Delta region benefited, mostly on the sidelines, from the various spin-off effects of broader national interventions by governments. One particularly prominent area in this regard were the contentious politics of revenue allocation. Without doubt, revenue allocation has become one of the most controversial issues in Nigerian politics since independence, and the coastal minorities in the Niger Delta have been at the forefront of the popular clamor for a comprehensive review to reflect

derivation.²⁵⁸ I do not need to go into the fascinating historical details of these clamors, what is important to point out is that they became more frequent, more persistent and more trenchant from the 1980s onwards against the background of dwindling access to subsidized socio-economic opportunities occasioned by the implementation of IMF/World Bank induced structural adjustment programme (SAP) by the Babangida junta in 1986. Indeed, virtually every committee set up by government has recommended greater fiscal allocation to, and spending on oil producing areas and states. In 1980, for instance, government published its views on the Presidential Commission on Revenue Allocation headed by Dr. Pius Okigbo. The Commission recommended, among other things, that the existing legislation for the prevention of pollution, attending to its incidence and effects as well as payment of compensation should be strictly applied. It also noted that since pollution continues, "a special provision should be made for the restitution and rehabilitation of the people and the areas concerned and that this provision should be made directly from the Federation Account to be applied by a Special Agency to be created for this purpose". Finally, the Commission recommended a Special Fund (7% of Federated Account) to manage ecological problems-soil erosion, desert encroachment, flood control etc., and another 2% to solve Special Problems of the Mineral Producing Areas. In response, government created a Special Fund to be shared by oil producing areas on the basis of derivation- a total of 3.5% to be shared on the basis of 2% to the state of origin and 1.5% to be managed by a special agency for the development of minerals producing areas. A second special fund was earmarked for the Federal Capital Territory (2.5%), while a third was for tackling the ecological problems (1.0%).

Another nationwide intervention came under the auspices of the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) set up by the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida.²⁵⁹ According to its

²⁵⁸ See, FGN, Report of the Presidential commission of Revenue Allocation, V.III: Official Memoranda Submitted by the Government of the Federation, State Governments, State Houses of Assembly and Local Government Councils. Apapa, Lagos: Federal Government Press, 1980

²⁵⁹ It is still a matter of deep curiosity that General Babangida chose his immediate predecessor (whose regime he overthrew in a bloodless coup d'etat in 1985), General Muhammad Buhari, as the Chairman of the PTF. Many, in fact, saw the both the decision to create that financial Leviathan and the appointment of General Buhari as its chairman as another 'settlement for the boys' especially as the huge sums it received directly from the Federated Account made it the biggest spender after government.

mandate, the PTF was set up to identify and implement projects that are likely to have maximum social impacts- roads, rural electricity, health care delivery, schools, water, etc.- nationwide using funds allocated directly to it from the Federated Account. Although the PTF was left intact by the Abacha and Abubakar regimes, damaging allegations of massive corruption, nepotism and other irregularities trailed the organisation for much of its lifespan.²⁶⁰

It was almost three decades after the demise of the NDDB before another specific policy and institutional framework were put in place by government aimed at alleviating the harsh socio-economic, environmental and infrastructural problems facing the Niger Delta. The Decree establishing the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) was approved by the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida in July 1992, while the Commission proper commenced operations in 1993. The OMPADEC was actually a direct product of an earlier recommendation by the Justice Belgore Commission set up by government to identify the root causes of the incessant communal clashes and disaffection in the oil producing areas and to suggest the best way forward. According to the letters of the Decree, the Commission was established to receive and administer the monthly sums from the allocation of the Federation Account in accordance with confirmed ratio of oil production in each State-; for the rehabilitation and development of oil mineral producing areas, and for tackling ecological problems that have arisen from the exploration of oil minerals. It was charged with several responsibilities, including;

- (a) to determine and identify, through the Commission and the respective oil mineral producing States, the actual oil mineral producing areas and embark on the development of projects properly agreed upon with the local communities of the oil mineral producing areas;
- (b) to consult with the relevant Federal and State Government authorities on the control and effective methods of tackling the problem of oil pollution and spillages;
- (c) to liaise with the various oil companies on matters of pollution control;
- (d) to obtain from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, the proper formula for actual oil mineral produced in each State, Local Government Area and community and to ensure the

²⁶⁰ The Obasanjo administration dismantled it not long after it came to power in 1999.

- fair and equitable distribution of projects, services and employment of personnel in accordance with recognised percentage production;
- (e) to consult with the Federal Government through the President, the State, Local Governments and oil mineral producing communities regarding projects, services and all other requirements relating to the special fund;
 - (f) to render annual returns to the President, Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces and copy the State and Local Governments on all matters relating to the special fund;
 - (g) to advise the Federal, State and Local Governments on all matters relating to the special fund;
 - (h) to liaise with the oil producing companies regarding the proper number, location and other relevant data regarding oil mineral producing areas; and finally,
 - (i) to execute other works and perform such other functions which in the opinion of the Commission is geared towards the development of the oil mineral producing areas.

Some other attempts were made on ad hoc basis to address the problems of the Niger Delta. In January 1994, for instance, the Abacha regime dispatched a three-man ministerial visitation team to the Niger Delta for two days against the background of worries about the increasing frequency of disruptions to oil exploration and production activities by restive communities. It is clearly not coincidental that the three members of that high-powered government team are also prominent indigenes of different oil-producing states in the Niger Delta: Donald Etiebet (petroleum); Alex Ibru (internal affairs) and Melford Okilo (commerce and tourism).²⁶¹ Nothing substantive came out of that visitation beyond the usual platitude that government was committed to providing oil communities with social infrastructures to alleviate their plights. Not much should have been expected from the delegation, however, considering the very short duration of its visit; which, no doubt, would have left it with just enough time for official niceties. In March 1999, the regime of General Abdulsalam Abubakar inaugurated a 22-member committee headed by Maj. Gen. Oladayo Popoola, to examine existing development initiatives in the delta region, and "to make appropriate recommendations on what can be done before the end of the current administration." The membership of the committee comprised of the military administrators of the South-South zone, several ministers, representatives of the

²⁶¹ Tayo Lukula, 'Oil Communities to Enjoy Better Deal, Says Etiebet', *The Guardian*, January 20, 1994, p. 1

Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), and other notable government figures.²⁶² Strangely, this important committee excluded grassroots representatives of oil-producing communities as well as important civil society organizations.

By the time the committee submitted its report two weeks after, on March 16, it merely recommended the immediate expenditure of 15.3 billion (U.S.\$170 million) on infrastructure projects in addition to normal budgetary allocations, as well as the establishment of a Niger Delta Consultative Council, made up of key government figures and representatives of the oil companies to be chaired by the Chief of General Staff or the Vice-President, to oversee the development projects. Once, again, the Committee's report maintained an embarrassing silence on the participation of the very oil communities whose grievances are at the roots of mass-based mobilization and violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, and on whom the money was to be spent. It is also not certain how the Committee arrived at the estimated amount it advised the government to disburse; but clearly what it proposed was a far cry from what the communities claim will be required to turn their misfortunes around for the better. The following year, in June 2000, the Federal Government reportedly approved the purchase of infrared satellite equipment from the USA to maintain surveillance on the 6, 000 kilometers of oil installations in the delta region. Apart from the immediate concern of protecting oil installations from vandals, it is clear that the decision to purchase the equipments was to send a clear signal to the international community confirming the readiness of the government to acquire vital infrastructure and make investments in the strategic oil sector.²⁶³

Immediately after its inauguration, in May 1999, the new civilian administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo publicly vowed that it would respect, restore and protect the fundamental human rights of the Nigerian citizenry, and more specifically, find lasting solutions to the problems of underdevelopment and violent conflicts in the

²⁶² See statement by the Military Administrator of Bayelsa State, Colonel Paul Obi, in Adagogo Brown, 'Projects for Niger Delta to Start Soon, says Administrator', *The Guardian*, 03-24-1999

²⁶³ Alifa Daniel, 'Govt. Orders Equipment to Survey Oil Installations', *The Guardian*, 1-5-2000

Niger Delta oil region. The new civilian government demonstrated this resolve in several respects not only at the symbolic level when the President made his first official visit outside of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, to one of the most volatile oil towns, Warri²⁶⁴, in Delta State, but also by pursuing what has clearly become the most ambitious developmental enterprise embarked upon by any government in the Niger Delta- the controversial Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Bill. In comparative terms, each of the major government interventions addressing the specific circumstances and plights of the oil communities in the Niger Delta- NDDC, OMPADEC and NDDC in that order- were essentially new, improved versions of each previous attempt. In this regard, the NDDC mandate undoubtedly represented the most ambitious of them all in terms of the scope and activities expected of it. The Commission shall, among other things:

- (a) formulate policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger Delta area;
- (b) conceive, plan and implement in accordance with set rules and regulations, projects and programmes for sustainable development of the Niger Delta area in the field of transportation, including roads, jetties and waterways, health, education, employment, industrialization, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications;
- (c) cause the Niger Delta area to be surveyed in order to ascertain measures which are necessary to promote its physical and socio-economic development;
- (d) prepare master plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger Delta area and the estimates of the costs of implementing such master plans and schemes;
- (e) implement all the measures approved for the development of the Niger Delta area by the Federal Government and the member States of the Commission;
- (f) identify factors inhibiting the Development of the Niger Delta area and assist the member states in the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger Delta area;
- (g) assess and report on any project being funded or carried out in the Niger Delta area by oil and gas producing companies and any other company including non-governmental organisations, and ensure that funds released for such projects are properly utilized;
- (h) tackle ecological and environmental problems that arise from the exploration of oil mineral in the Niger Delta area and advise the Federal Government and the member States on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring and environmental pollution;
- (i) liaise with the various oil mineral and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution, prevention and control; and to

²⁶⁴ It is important to bear in mind that at the same time the inauguration was going on in Abuja, Warri township was already months into a fratricidal and deadly inter-ethnic war prompted by the decision of the earlier military government to relocate the headquarters of Warri South Local Government Council from Ogbe-Ijaw to Ode Itsekiri.

- (j) execute such other works and perform such other functions which, in the opinion of the Commission, are required for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta area and its people.

To achieve the above goals, the NDDC established 11 directorates for Administration and Human Resources, Finance and Supplies, Community and Rural Development, Utility, Infrastructural Development and Waterways, Environmental Protection and Control, Agriculture and Fisheries, Education, Health and Social Services, Commercial and Industrial Development, Planning, Research, Statistics and Management Information Systems, Legal Services, and Project Monitoring, as well as a department each for corporate affairs and internal audit.

But then, one of the shortcomings of public policies in Nigeria, as in many developing countries, has been the fact that there is usually a wide gap between hopes/ aspirations and concrete results. Initially, there was a lot of optimism that the advent of a civilian government after a long period of military rule, followed spontaneously by the promulgation into law of the controversial NDDC Act, would open another window of opportunity for government to tackle the substantive developmental problems facing the delta region. In fact, even diehard critics of successive government's poor handling of the issues and problems were genuinely willing to give the government a respite to demonstrate its readiness and good disposition towards implementing those corrective measures under the framework of the NDDC. Unfortunately, the ghost of past misadventures seemed to have reincarnated in the implementation of the NDDC agenda. From the very beginning, the NDDC was smeared with a litany of controversial intra-governmental political rivalries between the National Assembly and the Presidency- a development which almost scuttled the birth of the Commission. The disagreements between these two arms of government varied considerably, but the most contentious ones are related to issues of budgetary allocation and sources of funds to the proposed Commission, which branch of government- the executive or the legislature- should wield administrative and political oversights and control, the composition of the Commission²⁶⁵, authority to appoint

²⁶⁵ The Commission relied on a very broad definition of the Niger Delta coterminous with major and marginal oil producing states: Rivers, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Imo, Edo, Ondo, Abia, Cross Rivers, and Bayelsa.

members of the Board, and so on. In the end, much of the powers rested in the President whose responsibility it was to appoint virtually all the board members, determine fiscal allocations to the Commission and at the same time stipulate conditions for the award of contracts, and define the priorities of the Commission. Beyond this, the operations of the Commission continue to generate remarkably criticisms similar to those against its predecessors: that it is under-funded, badly managed, very partial in its allocation of funds for projects, lack of equitable distribution in terms of project implementation, poor quality of many projects, lack of adequate consultation with and input from local beneficiaries in the conceptualization and implementation of projects, indiscriminate use of funds to cultivate and strengthen patronage, excessive bureaucracy, politics and corruption. Another scathing criticism of the NDDC is that its enabling instrument ignored the substantive clamor for resource control and improved revenue allocation by oil producing areas. As the incumbent Executive Governor of Bayelsa State insisted; “for anyone to think that the Niger Delta Development Commission Bill will solve the Bayelsa problem is only plain unintelligent”.

The general perception among inhabitants of the oil-producing communities is that past and on-going attempts by governments to alleviate the myriad developmental problems facing oil communities have failed mainly because they were designed for nothing short of the political intentions of creating jobs for the boys and giving a semblance of doing something serious in the Niger Delta region. It is instructive, indeed, that the majority of local respondents to interviews and in focus group discussions believed, strongly, that the government is not doing much besides perfunctory and occasional interventions. They claimed across board, that government and oil companies “are just making empty promises”, and “most time such promises do not go beyond the pages of newspapers”. Others noted that the government only “pretends to be of good intention”, while one respondent noted that “at least we are not aware of anything the government is doing”. A male youth leader in Elebele insisted that the “present attempt by the federal government to alleviate the socio-economic problem will be a total failure unless they involve the oil community people in any decision that will bring solutions to the problems”. Another male youth leader in Obunagha was much more forthcoming. According to him,

[The] government has done nothing. The 13% derivation target that was promised to oil producing states has never been met. The proposed Niger Delta Development Commission is not what we are demanding for. What we need is direct control of the oil resources. Government came with OMPADEC, they failed. They came with PTF, they failed. We are tired of these Commissions.

This conclusion leads to the second major facet of government's response to the developmental complications in the Niger Delta: the predisposition to apply coercion in dealing with oil communities considered restive towards multinational oil companies (and by extension, the State). Although isolated cases of the use of coercive methods against oil communities have occurred prior to the 1990s, such acts became systematic, frequent, and ruthless after the 1990s. The earliest example of the overbearing use of coercion occurred in 1990 when, at the prompting of Shell, the notorious mobile police, or 'kill-and-go' as they are popularly called, embarked on a punitive and excessive use of naked force against the village of Umuechem. In the build-up to that crisis, the Eastern Divisional manager of the company was on record to have suggested a mobile police presence to quell the community disturbances that were hindering oil production activities claiming that "[Past] experiences supported the presence of Mobile Police as a deterrent and the best chance of a peaceful resolution of the situation." The company went on to acknowledge that the police did not heed its advice to deploy MOPOL immediately. Rather, it deployed regular policemen who were chased and beaten by a mob. During that incident, almost the entire village was razed to the ground in a vindictive scorched earth maneuver that also led to wanton looting of properties, assaults and the gruesome killing of innocent women and children.

The Umuechem incidence exposed, and at the same time called to question, the strong relationship and goodwill that oil companies enjoy vis-à-vis the state police. Perhaps most instructive was the conclusions of a government panel headed by Justice Opubo Tariah on the incident which descended heavily on the mobile police squad for behaving like an invading army that "had vowed to take the last drop of the enemy's blood. They threw all human reasoning to the wind, shot people and razed down a total of 495 houses in the village with blast grenades", (forgetting) "that their duty was to protect life and property and not to destroy them" (Isumonah, 1997: 52). It was

six years afterwards that Shell openly acknowledged having invited the armed policemen putting to rest an allegation long held by minority rights groups.²⁶⁶ As it has turned out, Umuechem represents a major benchmark for gauging government's high-handedness in downscaling conditions that can precipitate violent conflicts in the delta region. It undoubtedly marked the beginning of a systematic abuse of the fundamental human rights of oil communities, and a consistent pattern of naked officially sponsored violence unparalleled in the political history of the Niger Delta.²⁶⁷ A report released by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in February 1999 indicted oil companies operating in the Niger Delta for "failing to respond adequately to serious human rights abuse in that region" because they "can't pretend they don't know what's happening all around them. The Nigerian government obviously has the primary responsibility to stop human rights abuse. But the oil companies are directly benefiting from these crude attempts to suppress dissent, and that means they have a duty to try and stop it".²⁶⁸

The security services are widely deployed throughout the Niger Delta, but particularly in oil-producing communities. In April 2000, the police pooled efforts with NNPC to establish a security task force to secure oil pipelines and other infrastructure against vandalism. Several State governments also set up their own special security outfits. In Delta State, the government passed a law in August 2001 banning militant groups blamed for disruption of oil activities in the state, including waving at those caught the grim prospects of seven years imprisonment. In November 2001, the federal government set up a Special Security Committee on Oil Producing Areas, "to address the prevailing situation in the oil producing areas which have, in recent past, witnessed unprecedented vandalism of oil pipelines, disruptions, kidnappings, extortion and a general state of insecurity." The committee was made up of the chiefs of army, navy, and air staff; the inspector general of police; the head of the State Security Service; a representative of the national security adviser; the managing

²⁶⁶ BBC, *Focus on Africa*, 20-5-1996

²⁶⁷ For a catalogue of some of the horrendous activities of the military in the Niger Delta, see Austin Ekeinde, 'Operation Kill and Rape!', see *TELL Magazine*, February 8, 1999, p. 30

²⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch, 'Oil Companies Complicit in Nigerian Abuses: Rights Group Urges Oil Firms to Help Prevent Niger Delta Crackdown'. (Lagos, February 23, 1999)

director of the NNPC and the director of the Department of Petroleum Resources; the secretaries to the governments of the nine oil producing states; and the managing directors of the five biggest multinational oil companies operating in Nigeria. The committee's terms of reference were, among other things, to "identify lapses in the protection of oil installations including causes and sources of facility vandalism and sabotage and recommend appropriate measures to enhance oil installations' security" and to "appraise the negative impact of youth and community agitations and recommend measures to reduce youth restiveness, communal agitations, and other incidents of sabotage of pipelines in oil communities." The Committee however went beyond its terms of reference by recommending an increase in the derivation component to states to "not less than 50%", passing laws making it mandatory for multinational oil companies to increase local content in their operations, encouraging measures relating to infrastructure construction and employment generation, repealing the Land Use Act, Petroleum Act, "and other laws which dispossess oil producing areas of their land", and urging the Federal Government to pass a law prohibiting the oil companies from hiring "ghost workers" who are paid to do nothing, but then which generates conflict between those so favored and others who would also like to be paid for no work. Other recommendations include the creation of an "integrated oil producing areas security and safety system" with an operations center to coordinate all the law enforcement agencies, including the navy, army, police, SSS, and other relevant authorities, putting in place a new training regime for troops stationed in the region, and finally, providing them with new equipment, including communications equipment, fast boats and other vehicles.

The reactions of successive military regimes, especially that of General Abacha, were boldly etched on the elaborate and repressive security architecture it put in place throughout the Niger Delta, and in the long trials and eventual hanging of Saro-Wiwa Ken and his Ogoni compatriots. Earlier in May 1993, for instance, the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida had hastily promulgated the Treason and Treasonable Offences Decree in order to prepare the pseudo-legal template for dealing ruthlessly with the Ogoni Movement in the event of the threatened boycott of the Presidential

Polls.²⁶⁹ In 1994, a secret memo by the River State Commissioner for Police titled 'Operation Order No 4/ 94- Restoration of Law and Order in Ogoniland', called for extensive and combined military operation involving the navy, airforce, army and the police in Ogoniland (Kretsman, 1995: 8-11, 25). Another leaked memo dated 12-5-1994, by the River State Internal Security Task Force (RSISTF) highlighted strategies for maintaining law and order in Ogoniland, etc. In it, the chairman of the task force, Major Paul Okutimo advised the military administrator of Rivers State that "police in Ogoni remain ineffective since 1993", and that "Shell operations still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence". The memo hinted at the prospects of using Ogoni neighbours, as well as exploiting divisions within the hierarchy of the Ogoni, to deal with the belligerent leadership of MOSOP. In view of the above, the memo recommend "intra-communal/ kingdom formulae alternative as discussed to apply", meaning to exploit the anti-MOSOP coalition within Ogoniland. It recommended mounting what he called "wasting operations during MOSOP and other gatherings making constant military presence justifiable". The memo also suggested "wasting targets cutting across communities and leadership cadres especially vocal individuals in various groups", the deployment of 400 military personnel (officers and men), the erection of "new checkpoints slightly different from Operation Order No. 4/ 94 dated 21-4-94 by Commissioner of Police Rivers State Command", as well as "psychological tactics of displacement". A press censorship was requested, including the "restriction of unauthorized visitors especially those from Europe to the Ogoni". Lastly, the memo requested "high level authority for the Task Force effectiveness" and "ruthless operations", as well as "direct supervision by MILAD (military administrators) to avoid unruly interference by other superior officers". Specific details of the planned military operations were definitely scary, but the expected sources of fund to carry out the tasks even more revealing and highlighted the role of oil companies in the political economy sustaining grassroots anomie and state repression in the oil delta. The memo requested "as agreed" the initial disbursement of the sum of 50 million Naira as advanced allowances to Officers and men, and for logistics to commence operations with immediate effect. It, in fact, suggested an ECOMOG allowance rate and

²⁶⁹ See *Newswatch*, 24-5-1993, p. 14

“pressure on oil companies for prompt and regular inputs as discussed”. Lastly, the memo suggested that “OMPADEC stands by as arranged”.

The Ogoni movement also met stiff challenges at other levels, all associated with or instigated by the government and Shell. Government officials, for instance, took turns to indict Saro-Wiwa and the leadership of MOSOP. Several fictitious publications disparaging them were also in circulation. One, published in 1995, purportedly portrayed the “reality of the situation” and labeled MOSOP a “terrorist organisation”; and its youth wing, NYCOP, as constituting an “army of trained thugs and hoodlums” engaged in “reckless” and “careless” activities against indigenes and non-indigenes alike.²⁷⁰ (p. 26-29). The pamphlet hinted at Saro-Wiwa’s exhibition of an “air of superiority complex” while actually suffering from “inferiority complex inwardly”. It also catalogued certain characteristics he possessed, including: “treachery, egocentricity, pomposity, parochialism, ruthlessness” alongside “charisma, scholarship, discipline and hard work”. (p. 53-58). As if to confirm its sponsorship, the book contrasted sharply the positive disposition of and “paternal role” played by the government in Ogoniland.²⁷¹ (p. 59-61)

The reasons for government’s propensity to employ coercive methods in dealing with restive oil communities cannot be blamed on the fiscal fact that it depended almost solely on revenue from oil to maintain itself; such that community disturbances are seen as mitigating the process of unlimited extraction. This is evident in the fact that government’s concern is usually limited to securing oil installations and allowing unfettered access to easy extraction of crude oil. It seems quite obvious that each time military action is taking place in the region, it is usually about safeguarding the vast oil interests.²⁷² Often, stern warnings are constantly issued by top government officials to the effect that government would not hesitate to launch punitive military reprisals

²⁷⁰ The book also included a list of all those allegedly killed by MOSOP/ NYCOP. See p. 70

²⁷¹ There were also allegations that Ledum Mitee, formerly Vice President of MOSOP under Saro-Wiwa, requested \$5 million from the Abacha government to mobilise Ogoni support for the regime! See AM News, 30-1-96, p. 11, cited in Isumonah, 1997: 31.

²⁷² There is an unconfirmed allegation that both sides, the Ijaws and Itsekiri, had the backings of their kin who were recently retired from the armed forces. It is alleged that these retired officers and men placed their military expertise at the disposal of their respective communities in the prosecution of the conflict.

against those targeting and destroying or disrupting oil activities. In one of such warnings, Petroleum Minister, Dan Etete, from the oil producing delta region, read the riot act to would-be saboteurs: "community leaders should restrain their youths who have formed the habit of vandalizing extremely expensive oil equipment and machinery". He added that the government "will not tolerate a situation where every political grievance is taken out on the oil installations and operations of oil companies."

Another reason for government's behaviour can be traced to the point made by Mason and Kane (1998: 177) that the inherent weaknesses of government sometimes also prevent recourse to less violent alternatives. Callaghy (1989: 97) made a similar point much earlier when he noted that "authoritarian flow of rule result not from high level of power and legitimacy, but from the tenuousness of authority and the search for it." Acts of repression or terrorism by the State have been described as involving "deliberate coercion and violence (or the threat thereof) directed at some victims, with the intention of inducing extreme fear in some target observers who identify with that victim in such a way that they perceive themselves as potential future victims" (Nicholson, 1986). He suggested that state terrorism be assessed in terms of scope (i.e. the degree of potential harm inflicted upon victims in order to create the required level of fear), intensity (in terms of the frequency of occurrence during a period of time), and the range (that is, the size and type of target population).

At this juncture, there is need to once again, bring the police and the armed forces into the analysis of the tragedy of maintaining law and order in the delta region. The theoretical template for this takes a cue from Enloe who rightly argued that the "resolution of inter-ethnic conflict demands that armies and police forces be examined not as neutral instruments that cope with problems, but as potential causes of the problem as well" (1980: 153). Hence, "when one watches a central government employing its national military against a domestic challenger one usually is not witnessing simply a conflict between a national institutions and insurgents. More likely, it is a conflict between ethnic groups, one of which happens to be attired in the state's military uniform." (1980: 23). The focus on the police, according to Enloe, is because operation-wise, its activities are more fragmented and ad hoc. Besides, the

expansion and militarization of police forces in various ethnically divided countries have accentuated their salience in inter-communal relations. At what point, then, does an army have to be invited into an essentially domestic conflict? What is the proper division of labour between the police and the army? How does the interaction between the police and the military affect those institutions? According to Enloe, police institutions in quite disparate systems are acquiring military characteristics in a process she described as the 'militarization of Police Forces', or the converse, "police-ization" of the military". Thus, she argued that "The police and military frequently are exacerbators, not the resolvers of conflict in multi-ethnic societies". (1980: 129-133).

Historically, the processes that nurtured the two institutions in the context of Nigeria are basically similar. After British presence was facilitated using gunboats, there arose the need to manage day-to-day matters of administration and the enforcement of law and order. Constabularies of different shapes were thus established: the Glover irregulars, Royal Niger Constabulary, the Oil Rivers Irregulars, were all established. Recruitment into these constabularies were mostly from bandits, thugs, social miscreants, rogues; people who today would pass as 'area boys. The two institutions have lived up to their billings by virtue of their uninspiring historical antecedents as instruments for the subjugation of local peoples. In terms of training, orientation and doctrinal codes, the armed forces and police are institutionally geared towards maintaining the interest of the predatory state and those who wield political power. At independence, therefore, the post-colonial state did not redefine either the historic role of the police or that of the army, as they remained essentially the enforcers of the will of the elite in power, acting as custodians of the State. An example was the heavy militarization of the Tiv community in the 1960s. The police as an offshoot of the military has also been used indiscriminately by the central government to intimidate opponents; a kind of Gestapo force. Rather than adhering to the universal tenets: to protect and serve, the police in Nigeria have turned into a Frankenstein monster that is used to for tormenting and intimidating the people. This much could be deciphered from the statement credited to the former military administrator of Rivers State, Lt. Colonel Dauda Komo, when he warned that:

“I will want to assure you that we have our forces in position now. We are determined to maintain law and order in the state, every part of the state. We will rather the communities on their own allow for peaceful coexistence. But where that does not happen, we are going to enforce peace with everything we have got. We have the force to do it. We should not hesitate to do it. They are trained to do it and they will do it because in the end there must be peace and security in every part of the state.” P. 7

Besides, there is an obvious chasm between the rhetoric of government and what it actually understands and does to maintain law and order in the oil region. This, for instance, could be seen in the response of the Abubakar regime which, despite claiming to have the desire to extend the proverbial olive branch of peace to restive communities, warned during his annual budget address that: “... we cannot allow the continued reckless expression of these (angry) feelings. Seizure of oil wells, rigs and platforms, as well as hostage taking, vehicular hijacking, all in the name of expressing grievances, are totally unacceptable to this administration.” The head of state then went on to speak of “dissent through dialogue rather than dissent through violence”. Despite this, the regime maintained a heavy military presence throughout the Niger Delta which at that in Yenogoa, the small capital of Bayelsa State, was reportedly put at about 10 armored vehicles and over 500 soldiers, along with fast attack seacrafts and two warships.²⁷³

There is a rich body of knowledge investigating the various roles played by the State in the instigation and exacerbation of violent conflicts in different parts of the country. In the past, the exclusion of the State from the analysis of collective political action and violent conflicts has been identified as a major limitation of the literature. Increasingly, but acutely more so in the context of the implementation of harsh neo-liberal reforms in many developing countries, the role of the State in stimulating the vicious cycle of repression and violence is now known as one major factor reinforcing the identity and mobilization of counter social movements with radical orientations. Acts of state-sponsored repression also often turn out to become a crucial issue not just for the challenger, but also to those third party elements that would otherwise have abstained. One avenue through which “supportive mobilization” on the part of

²⁷³ Ima Niboro, ‘Blood Bath in the Delta’ (Cover Story), *Tell Magazine*, January 18, 1999, pp. 20-25

third parties takes place is when the media focus attention on the challenger (Kriesi, 1998: 178). Because of this, it is possible to predict the likelihood that the more confrontational or alienating the State is, in words and deeds, the more radical/militant social movements become. In short, social movements (and protests) develop when institutionalized options are limited or absent in its entirety.

Stohl & Lopez (1986) have identified four environments in which rulers use systematic state violence or terror. They include the use of violence as an extension of an oppressive or repressive system, a method for the consolidation of power, a reaction to 'reformist-minded' political, social and economic organizations and their demands. Last, is state violence as a reaction to insurgent challenge to the State. The first two are strategies for increasing centralized control, while the latter two are represent responses to the challenge facing government policy and legitimacy. According to them, the ruling elite opts for terror when they perceive that in their existing political situation, the opportunity costs of terror are low, and when the conditions of the wider political environment appear to permit or to encourage the use of state terror to achieve political goals. In summary, then, the justification for, and maintenance of this patterned and persistent violence by government against real and presumed adversaries rests in the discrete, indefinable, and self-reinforcing dimensions of a shared mindset of government elites" (1986: 74- 75).

There are other general circumstances under which political elites are likely to use terror against the population they govern. Gurr (in Stohl and Michael, 1986: 45) wrote of the need to go beyond the lopsided limitation of interrogating the "grievances, ideologies, organization of challengers and rebels" alone by also looking at the State and the political environment that it nurtures and dominates. After all, an understanding of why elites selectively use coercion, co-optation or even mute silence and or utter indifference, in response to sub-groups is very important in explaining the dynamics of rebellion. Gurr then highlighted several general principles, or hypothesis, about state violence:

1. That the greater the political threat posed by challengers, the greater the likelihood that a regime will respond with violence;

2. That the greater the latent support for revolutionary challengers among the population, the greater the likelihood that a regime will respond with terrorism;
3. That challengers who resort to or rely on terrorist and guerrilla tactics are likely to be countered by state terror; and finally,
4. That regimes are more likely to use terrorism against politically marginal groups than opposition groups that have influence on or supporters among the elite. (p. 51-52)

Arising from the above assumptions, Gurr (1986) opined that the character of the State and prevailing political traditions are important determinants of state terror. Accordingly, "Weak regimes are more likely to use violence in response to challenges than strong regimes" precisely because such regimes have low levels of political institutionalization unlike the strong ones. Besides, such coercive regimes usually lack the political means to implement peaceful democratic change such that as constantly as it is faced with fresh challenges it must use violent measure to suppress opposition (p. 53-54). The scenario is especially complicated when the elites that have captured political power did so through violent and undemocratic means, and see themselves as promoters of parochial ethnic interests. To secure and maintain power for any reasonable period of time would invariably require opting for violent responses to future challenges. Gradually, an institutionalized culture of sponsored official repression and oppression, encouraged by previous and successful situational uses of state terror to maintain political control, develop and take firm root (p. 55-57).

Azar (1990) focused primarily on how governance and the role of the State could either serve as intervening or mediating factors in the process of crystallization of societal dissatisfaction or deprivation of basic needs leading to violence. In many instances, according to him, societies experiencing what he referred to as "protracted social conflicts" tend to be characterized by "incompetent, parochial, fragile, and authoritarian governments that fail to satisfy basic human needs" (p. 19). For this reason, therefore, it will be grossly inadequate to suggest that the inability of government to meet and satisfy growing societal needs is the sole factor that triggers and sustains protracted social conflicts. Rather, it is also important to understand the communal content of the State in order to capture the logic that allows protracted social conflicts to fester. An example, according to Azar, would be to investigate how the domination of the state apparatus by one or few communal groups distorts modes

of governance, triggers a crisis of legitimacy and helps to exacerbate already existing competitive or conflictive situations. Once this process of descent into hostile competition and anarchy commences, the State begins to experience further diminishing ability to meet basic needs; a factor that further intensifies existing developmental crises (1990: 11).

Apart from stimulating the condition and process of unhealthy competition and rivalry, decay and collapse, anomie and conflict, the actions and strategies that States in societies experiencing protracted social conflicts employ also tend to determine the duration and longevity of such conflicts. For one, accommodation is seldom used because it is perceived as a sign of defeat; cooperation is used as a strategy to fragment the opposition and divert its attention; while finally, coercion/ repressive options lead to an upward spiral of violent clashes. The pattern that emerges in the long run is that a protracted social conflict becomes a zero sum affair as outcomes contain latent ingredients and/or grounds for future conflicts (p. 15). In summary, then, protracted social conflicts generate certain conditions relating to the deterioration of physical security through the institutionalization of underdevelopment and the destruction of physical and social infrastructure, the creation of "institutional deformity", and finally, they lead to a "de facto paralysis of political institutions". Apart from fragmenting the broader social fabric, protracted social conflicts allow for "communal cleavages [to] become petrified, and the prospects for cooperative interaction and nation building become poor". It creates and nurtures a vicious cycle of fear and hostile interactions among communal contenders, and in the long run, such conflicts, attitudes, cognitive processes and perceptions become set and ossified. Ultimately, those who control the State in such a difficult circumstance gradually find themselves unable to act unilaterally without external support- sometimes from very selfish and dubious partners (p. 17). Thus, according to Lake and Rothchild, in the end the state's weakness becomes a precondition (or recipe) for violent social and ethnic conflicts precisely because under conditions of threats to "physical security" occasioned by the decline of the central authority, groups become fearful of their survival. In response, groups invest in and prepare for violence, thereby making actual violence possible, indeed, inevitable. In the opinion of Lake and Rothchild, again, three conditions encourage the eruption of violence: 1) information failure, (2)

problem of credible commitment (3) incentive to use force pre-emptively. (1996: 43-44).

Writing specifically against the background of military rule in Nigeria, and drawing heavily on an earlier (and highly controversial) study by Richard Joseph, Lewis identified the three central features of a predatory order as follows: First, is the concentration of personal power under coercive auspices. By so doing, successive military regimes in Nigeria, but most especially the Babangida and Abacha regimes, availed themselves of diverse instruments of control, extended repression, enervated the political class and pre-empted perceived enemies. Next, the military regimes exercised very close discretion over public resources which they, in turn, use to induce obedience and loyalty, and lastly, Nigeria's predatory order expressed itself through the conscious erosion of central public institutions and the corresponding hegemony of a small circle of loyalists to the military (1996: 101). Put together, these ingredients lured Nigeria into some of the saddest and most difficult praetorian orders ever witnessed in the country's post-independence history.

The manifest stamp of the military in the use of coercion and repression has been replicated by the incumbent civilian administration despite expectations that a fundamental shift in government's relationship with, and reaction towards oil communities would occur. This is no doubt one of the most formidable stumbling blocks to peace and stability in the Niger Delta, besides other related factors such as the reluctance of the government to carry communities along on basic decisions affecting them, and sometimes, the arrogance of people are at the helm of affairs in the country.²⁷⁴ Human Rights Watch did not mince words in this respect when it indicted government's heavy-handedness over the Odi crisis. According to the

²⁷⁴ The was the experience of the Odi community in Yenogoa. Apart from visiting the village after this punitive military expedition, this researcher had had the opportunity of spending part of his compulsory National Youth Service in Odi in 1989. The physical condition of the community at that time was, to put it mildly, excruciatingly bad. Even though an oil producing community for almost four decades, Odi lacked basic social amenities such as motorable roads (as the one veering off from the notoriously bad East-West road linking Warri to Port Harcourt is partly motorable for about 3-4 months only during the peak of the dry season!); housing facilities, electricity, and schools. The water and sanitation situation was also bad as the people get their water from one of the dirty and polluted tributaries of the River Niger. This researcher had to 'abandon' the village for the relative 'comfort' of Port Harcourt after a confirmed outbreak of cholera! The researcher's experiences during the brief period of living in Odi stimulated, in great part, the desire to investigate the myriad problems of oil communities in the Niger Delta.

Organization, "the scale of the destruction indicates not that this was a policing operation in which ill-disciplined soldiers got out of hand, but that soldiers were following orders to demolish every building". Expectedly, in the immediate aftermath of the invasion and massive destruction of Odi, there was a wide gulf between public opinion and the statements credited to government. For the ordinary Nigerian, there was shock that the state could authorize not to talk of condone such display of naked firepower. To quote Human Rights Watch at length:

The Military action that is being waged against the people of the Niger Delta is a most unfortunate continuation of the oppressive philosophy of governance which regards force as the basic strategy for dealing with social and political problems, a policy for which the country's erstwhile military dictators were notorious. The size, weaponry and operational approach of the deployed troops as well as their cold blooded savagery in the two-week old military campaign leave us with no choice than to conclude that the object of the operation is the comprehensive destruction of human lives and habitation in the besieged community. Certainly, the physical wiping off from the surface of the earth of the town of Odi cannot be justified by the purported man-hunt for the killers of the policemen (the stated objective of the operation) but portray the Obasanjo government as living up to the mindless atrocities that Abacha and Babangida's soldiers unleashed against the people of the Niger Delta. Obasanjo and the ruling Peoples Democratic Party cannot in good conscience explain away the mass killing of innocent civilians, including women and children, and the wholesale vandalisation of property all in the name of trying to bring a few so-called outlaws to justice. The mindless demolition of Odi...lengthens further the long list [of communities in the Niger Delta oil region] that were totally destroyed and sacked by the military when the overt dictators were in power.²⁷⁵

In his reply to critics of the operation, however, the erstwhile Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Dr. Doyin Okupe, insisted that:

I wish to make it categorically clear that government, by this act, has not violated any internationally acceptable human rights provisions as practiced elsewhere in the world... How can it be said that a carefully planned and cautiously executed exercise to rid the society of criminals is a violation of human rights? (Reported in Punch, 2-12-1999)

In the aftermath of the perfidious military attack on Odi, belated attention was again drawn to the many problems facing oil-producing communities in the entire Niger Delta. On Tuesday, November 25, 1999, for instance, Senate passed a resolution urging government to withdraw all troops from Odi, while on Tuesday, November 30,

²⁷⁵ See, Abayomi Ferreira, 'The Ultimate Solution to the Niger-Delta Issue', *The Guardian*, 12-7-99

the then Senate President, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, led a delegation to the village. During the visit, Okadigbo lamented the scale of destruction, noting that "The facts speak for themselves. No need for speech as there is nobody to speak with". In the heels of this visit, the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Na'aba, also toured the community. Less than a week later, Senate rushed through the NDDC Bill and approved it with substantial amendments. The House also passed a resolution requesting president Obasanjo to take permission from the National Assembly before committing the armed forces to domestic peacekeeping assignments. In response to the public outcry at the military operation in Odi, the government announced an emergency project worth USD 50 million in the Niger Delta, including technical training for youths, road building and improved power supply. Unfortunately, very little has changed in these areas in terms of resettling and rehabilitating the people of Odi.

There are other substantive questions arising from the authorization of reprisal military action against the Odi community. In the first instance, under a democratic dispensation, there are procedures for authorizing the use of military force that the government did not comply with in Odi. This is to the effect that government is required, compulsorily, to seek authorization and approval from the National Assembly before committing troops to such assignment. Secondly, and as also provided for by the Constitution, is that the maintenance of domestic law and order is primarily the responsibility of the police and not the military. If soldiers had been utilized indiscriminately during the long years of military rule, it certainly did not make that option an appropriate convention that the civilian administration should follow. Even if we assume that the capacity of the police to adequately respond to the endemic security situation in the Niger Delta is doubtful, that would still not be enough excuse to use the military in such a heavy-handed manner as the Obasanjo administration did less than six months after its inauguration. The mere fact that some policemen on official duty were murdered in such an uncivilized manner should not warrant the wholesale transfer of police responsibilities to the armed forces as he did at that time. Experiences from several parts of the Niger Delta in particular, as well as other parts of the country, point clearly to the fact that a militaristic approach to conflict management is anathema to the search for genuine and long-term peace and

security. What is clear from the beginning is that the Niger Delta crisis cannot be resolved by military force. The solution, instead, lies in the constructive involvement of the Niger Delta peoples themselves in the resolution of the mounting and daunting socio-economic problems of the region. Such a reaction has encouraged the increasingly popular opinion that the constitutional structure of the Federation, and the powers of government, ought to be revisited and renegotiated to enable the people utilize their natural resources for their own development.

Of course, it is impossible to ignore or even deny the difficult challenges of policing the Niger Delta beyond the fact that the terrain is far from suitable. On a number of occasions, policemen have been withdrawn from certain areas to forestall what had been perceived as a severe threat to their lives.²⁷⁶ An in-depth interview with a police officer serving with the Bayelsa State Police Command, Yenogoa, revealed important dimensions to this problem. According to him, several problems face the police, including those of housing, equipment, patrol vehicles and boats, basic gears, as well as other motivational incentives which government promised but had so far failed to redeem. One of the lasting impressions that remained with this researcher is that there may actually be a correlation between the paucity of material and non-material motivation of police personnel and the military, and their disposition towards oil communities. In large part, the impression from interviews with police officers and careful observations of their attitudinal and behavioural patterns revealed that the communities are by and large regarded as colonial enclaves to be exploited and plundered with reckless abandon. In words and deeds, the average police personnel in the Niger Delta cares very little, if at all, about the poor oil communities beyond expectations that they are veritable sources of non-official aggrandisement. This dimension to peaceful police-community relations in the oil region was captured by another officer, thus:

Actually when we go out on peace mission, it is not that we don't have feelings for the people because they are demanding for their rights. It is true that the communities are neglected in terms of social amenities. But we are to

²⁷⁶ In 1998, for instance, policemen posted to some rural villages were withdrawn to Igbokoda, the headquarters of Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State, where they again became targets by Ilaje militants. A senior police officer was reported as saying that the intensity of hostilities in that area, and the fact that the police lacked adequate operational facilities, "makes our operation in the area dangerous and it appears that all security agents are in hostile area". Cited in *The Guardian*, 30-9-1998

support the Federal Government... I personally would wish that the Federal Government would look into the problems of the Niger Delta with a view to bringing about a lasting solution to them.

There is of course a non-professional angle to the operational culture of the police and the military in the conflict-ridden Niger Delta. This is to the extent- again in large part but based on an unwritten rule- that troop deployment into the area should be done on the basis of an unwritten rule whereby non-indigenes, mostly Hausa and Yoruba, are posted to serve in the region. There is a curious rationality to this trend that is traceable to the colonial era when the colonial authorities preferred to cross-post personnel to regions other than their own, believing that they will be less sympathetic and committed to the cause of the local people. There is also the tacit hope that with such rationale of deployment, police and military personnel will be better disposed to defending the interests of the State, in a ruthless manner if need be. Perhaps these scenarios are not typical of the Niger Delta, but it certainly cannot be denied they are particularly acute in that region. A leading authority on the police force in Nigeria drew more attention to this point when he argued that although much of the criticisms against the police reek with sheer disdain, they “operate against structural and institutional or organizational constraints that are fundamentally crippling, and which tend to account for the conduct, performance and non-legitimation of the police force in the country” (Alemika, p. 188). In the same vein, there is a serious worry that the haste with which the government embarked on the expedition not only violated procedures but also suggested that it is favourably disposed, like its military predecessors, to the use of repressive tactics as a preferred strategy for responding to civil anomie in the oil region. To use the excuse of the murder of 12 policemen to invade and inflict such a heavy damage and casualty on the community is quite unfortunate.²⁷⁷

Thus, what the incumbent civilian administration perpetrated in Odi, and continues to do in most other parts of the Niger Delta is tantamount to a gross violation of fundamental human and collective community rights. That government could not distinguish between arresting and bringing a handful of hoodlums and common

²⁷⁷ *THISDAY*, 2 May, 1999 p.17

criminals to justice and protecting the constitutional rights of the vast majority of law abiding citizens in that community is a major indictment on the administration. This point is particularly important because the traditional authorities within Odi had complained bitterly and times without number, to government that they were being terrorized by youth gangs from neighbouring villages. Finally, there is legitimate fear that the prolonged presence of soldiers and other security operatives in the Niger Delta would intensify violence and criminality as more and more youths acquire lessons on the supremacy of the guns. Prolonged military occupation could also force certain groups underground, if only temporarily. Such repressive occupation has the potential tendency of incubating a more dangerous brand of radicalism not just among already militant elements, but also among those who were previously not well disposed to violence as a strategy of protest but are gradually being socialized into it by virtue of what is happening around them. It is against this background that Human Rights Watch (HRW) denounced the action of the Obasanjo administration as "the worst possible response to the unrest in the Delta."²⁷⁸

What is clear is that government is far more favorably disposed towards arm-twisting tactics and repression as preferred panacea to the legion of problems in the region. The government demonstrated this disposition in December 1999, when Vice President Abubakar Atiku, announced that a well-equipped specialised unit of the Nigerian Police has been established to deal with troublemakers in the Niger Delta area. It was also hinted that the new unit would be able to compete even with the armed forces in terms of weaponry.²⁷⁹ Quite recently, also, some national dailies reported the donation of some small but fast assault seacrafts by the United States to the Nigerian Government ostensibly, for use to patrol the country's territorial waters. In reality, however, the crafts were to be used to patrol and maintain effective police presence and action along the creeks and waters of the Niger Delta, thereby facilitating oil production. .

With hindsight, however, it is not new for governments to create specialised forces to deal with "militia men". In the Second Republic, President Shehu Shagari equipped

²⁷⁸ See Sam Egwu, cited in *National Concord*, 26-5-1992, p. 22

²⁷⁹ 'Police for the Niger Delta Area', *The Guardian*, 12-20-99

the mobile force with armoured vehicles to crush the supporters of the opposition in different parts of the Federation. General Ibrahim Babangida on his part created the defunct National Guard to deal with those who might want to derail his political transition programme, while his successor, late General Sani Abacha, established the dreaded hit squad under the leadership of Major Hamza El-Mustapha to deal with National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) chieftains and others opposed to his civilianisation master plan. Although the action of the Obasanjo government may be welcomed by the multinational corporations and their local partners, there is a huge question mark on how such specialised forces will impact on the welfare of the people of the Niger Delta, or indeed, the extent to which such a force will be able to resolve the lingering crises in the region.²⁸⁰ Unfortunately, the employment of the military as an agent for internal repression not only marginalizes the constitutionally approved agency for maintaining internal law and order defined by the ruling class, the police, but also has the implication of making the latter much more contented with using its subordinate roles on the sidelines to extort pecuniary gains.

Other dimensions usually ignored but which nevertheless are very crucial in understanding the cumulative implications of prolonged police and military activities have been documented. Agbese described such interventions as heightening the prospect of “privatisation of repression”, defined as “the open utilization of force in an official capacity, but without official sanctions, for private gains” (Godspower, 1993). From this perspective, he insisted on the need to analyze and re-conceptualize state-sponsored repression and violence from a class perspective rather than as a disciplinary problem emanating from the individual psychology of the ordinary soldier, but in the context of the political economy within which it occurs. Thus, whereas no single factor explains the privatisation of security, the “material deprivation of rank and file soldiers”, according to him, “is the fundamental determinant of confrontations between soldiers and civilians” (Agbese, 1990: 241-2). In the light of all this, he concluded that “It is the nature of the Nigerian social structure and the position of rank and file soldiers as lower class Nigerians within the

²⁸⁰ In Bayelsa State, a special force codename, Operation Salvage, was formed under the command of one Major Oputa, in August 1997, to response to threats to oil workers, installations and production.

structure, coupled with their determination to appropriate the state to serve their own interests, that best explain the privatisation of repression” (1990: 261).

The hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa in November 1995 had other important security and law and order implications. It was not just the final straw that pulled the moral rug off the embattled feet of the regime of General Abacha, but it also effectively foreclosed the prospect of resuming genuine dialogue between the State and militant communities and stakeholders in Ogoniland and other parts of the Niger Delta. For one, Saro-Wiwa provided a charismatic alternative- and some would say, mythical- leadership to his people, the Ogonis, and to other deprived communities in the Niger Delta who had hoped that the publicity from, and possibly, the successes of the Ogoni cause would serve as a template for them to make their own claims against government and multinational oil companies. It is true that at the time Saro-Wiwa and others began to articulate their collective communal grievances, not many communities had become exposed to the kind of large-scale violent option that is now prevalent in the region; but then, several other communities were literally and eagerly waiting in the wings only to become disillusioned and exasperated that the government went ahead against local and international pleas, to hang the Ogoni 9. Had government negotiated with Saro-Wiwa at that time, it is most probable that other Niger Delta communities would have accepted the outcomes and mellowed down; or at least maintain the *status quo ante* that would have allowed government to articulate and negotiate a more comprehensive program of poverty alleviation and integrated development for the Niger Delta peoples.

The point that is being made here and in the previous analysis, is that there are striking parallels between the role of the security forces in colonial times and now, especially as the post-colonial State made no concerted effort to redefine the historical role of the forces. As Agbese (1990: 250) has again argued, the colonial origins of the military, like that of the police, have been a major limitation to the institution, especially as the colonial government did not create either of them to serve and protect Africans against external attack but as instruments of internal repression to

enable Europeans control and exploit Africans.²⁸¹ He buttressed this claim by drawing attention to the view of Clifford May that “African forces are deployed only against their own people in their own countries” (Cited on p. 250). According to Alemika (1993), the colonial governments preferred the mercenary police system, that is “a Police Force whose personnel are alien to, alienated from and hostile to, the population among whom they are deployed”. To quote his earlier work, the “colonial police forces were organised and oriented to behave as occupation forces- ruthless, brutal, corrupt, dishonest and prone to brutalising the colonised peoples and vandalising their properties” (Alemika, 1988, cited on p. 204 of 1993).²⁸²

This is not surprising because the State, in truth, is not an honest broker or neutral broker of peace in weak formations. Indeed, the behaviour of the State, and its relations with capital formed the basis of a major critique offered by Beckman (1982: 37-51) in his interpretation of the class character of the Nigerian State. According to him, the Nigerian State is first and foremost an organ of international capital (as it facilitates penetration) at the same time that it doubles as an organ of the domestic bourgeoisie (which seeks to facilitate emancipation and conformity). Invariably, it is essentially an organ established to protect foreign capital in general. Arising from these inherited attributes, the State in peripheral social formations like Nigeria tend to take up an “oppressive, backward and predatory character” in terms of managing and controlling anti-status quo forces (p. 39). This reality, demonstrated by the violent eruptions within the colonial enterprise continues to manifest today in the unrestrained State-sponsored repression throughout the oil Delta. The thrust of this argument is that if scholarship understands what can better appreciate the political economy and structural template of the Nigerian State, there would be no controversy at all about why it behaves the way it does in the Niger Delta. To quote a leading scholar of politics and society in Nigeria, late Professor Claude Ake (1985: 3)

²⁸¹ Tamuno has warned against the tendency to evaluate the police force purely from its colonial origins. According to him, the current status of the force developed in the light of “local factors of time, circumstances, and leadership”. See Tamuno and Atanda, 1989: 85. The former Inspector General of Police, Ibrahim Coommasie, joined this thesis when he argued that the police is a reflection of the society, and that it will be foolhardy to expect so much from the Force (See Alemika, 1993: 200; Civil Liberties Organization, CLO, 1990, 1991)

²⁸² For a precisely analysis of the militaristic character of the colonial regime, see Dudley (1973).

(The) primary role of the Nigerian State is to establish, maintain, protect and expand the conditions of capitalist accumulation in general, without which neither foreign nor Nigerian capitalism can prosper...The repressive, regulative, productive, reproductive, and ideological activities of the state...cannot be understood in terms of the requirements of any particular segment of capital, domestic or foreign.

Without doubt, then, the issues affecting the Niger Delta have become so patently politicized that they appear intractable.²⁸³ An opinion on the Niger Delta published in the Today Newspaper summarized the situation well when it expressed profound concern that:

To most Nigerians and indeed the world, the Niger-Delta has become a veritable hotbed of discontent and violence, to others, it represents a bold question mark on our fiscal federal structure and revenue allocation principles. To others still, the Niger-Delta provides a vulnerable angle where mischief-makers reap from massive exploitation under an atmosphere of persistent acrimony. (December 19-25, 1999)

The editorial opinion went further by noting that:

The Niger Delta crisis is not beyond redemption. It has only assumed this monstrous posture because successive administration have seen it as a matter of threat to national security, a means of ego massage and a place to flex her military might (Ibid.)

It is obvious, in conclusion, that the Niger Delta crisis is becoming endemic mainly as a result of the reluctance on the part of government to experiment with peaceful options and means to curtail the free flow of anger from local communities. It is only when government and multinational oil companies water down what is evidently an over-bloated ego about the best practices for responding to and tackling the complex problems facing the Niger Delta that genuine and lasting peace can be restored in that region. There is wisdom in the popular axiom that 'only time will tell'.

²⁸³ 'The Crux of the Niger-Delta Matter', *The Guardian*, 6-2-99

7.3. The Internationalization of Protests and Violent Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta

The last decade of the Twentieth Century witnessed what were undoubtedly monumental and irreversible transformations at the national and global levels. Accounting for all of them is clearly outside the scope of this work, but the few that are germane were occasioned, largely by the termination of the ideological rivalries and conflicts that marked the relationships between the East and the West at the height of the Cold War. It will be recalled that while it lasted, the Cold War had profound and pervasive effects on global (as well as regional/ national) politico-diplomatic, socio-economic, military- security relations not just between the major superpowers and their allies, but also for and in countries far from the epicentre of those rivalries. Specifically, with the collapse of communism, the supremacy of western neo-liberalism ideology not only flourished, but also became the guiding principle on which reform of domestic and global order, and relationships were to be defined and implemented. Transformations came in quick successions: the introduction of market reforms in countries that were previously centrally administered; the collapse of one party and military dictatorships and states, and their replacement with different versions of multiparty democracies; the persistent vocalization (and increasing legitimisation) of previously suppressed identities long held by marginalized ethno-nationalities, minorities and religious groups; a revolutionary overhaul of the prevalent notion of 'security' beyond its myopic military-security conception to include non-military and human-centred understanding of security, to mention a few.

In the context of dependent development and the post-Cold War international system, this study has also demonstrated how the association between multinational oil capital and the state (with local elites as subordinate partners) has produced and accentuated competition and violent conflict in the Niger Delta oil region. The complexities of this relationship have been shown to facilitate the acquisition, monopolization and dispensation of violence by a generation of political (and military) elites that have captured power. When a state, such as Nigeria, is therefore confronted with the sharp-edged sword of dependent development, either by design or default, it finds itself cooperating more and more with international capital as a junior partner, and is

willing to use repression to coerce militant elements in the society who threaten the basis of accumulation and revenue. It is as a result of this symbiotic relationship that Robert Gilpin argued much earlier, that:

Because the corporation requires a stable host government sympathetic to capitalism, dependent development encourages the emergence of authoritarian regimes in the host country and the creation of alliances between international capitalism and domestic reactionary elites.

The only option left to quench the insatiable appetite of multinational capital and the dependent state would be to accelerate the process of resource extraction and accumulation, often in an unsustainable manner, so that what is eventually available to the partnership members for sharing is substantial enough. Of course, nothing suggests that the Nigerian State and multinational oil capital do not engage one another in competitions and rivalries, particularly- but not exclusively- over the distribution of the wealth and surpluses from oil production processes. But, then, the analysis so far has tilted towards how such an alliance has triggered ripples of anomie and violent conflicts and complicated the crisis of development in the Niger Delta over the last decade or so. From the perspective of dependent development scholarship, therefore, the most reliable safety valve against conflict between international capital and the State is to expand production from time to time so that earnings can conveniently be distributed among partners. The end loser, of course, can only be the local people who are disenfranchised and at the same time, who are victims of repressive interventions from the State to nip potential opposition and acts of 'violence-from-below' before they get too dangerous and uncontrollable. The central point that is often ignored, then, is that the kinds of disarticulating social dynamics and experiences that are punctuating the contemporary history of the Niger Delta; or indeed, such other uncertainties and turbulences that are occurring in several other peripheral capitalist outposts in the developing countries and regions cannot be divorced from, and understood outside the framework of the intrusive nature of global capitalism.

At the same time, also, the last two decades of the Twentieth Century have signalled the demystification, erosion and collapse of the boundaries between what is domestic and what is external in several respects. In the first instance, borders have virtually become obsolete and anachronistic given the ability of international capital to move

back and forth across them. There is a direct linkage between the global enterprise of multinational capital and its local behaviours in several different countries, especially in the Third World, because of the ease with which capital is able to move across national frontiers in this age of globalization. Despite their powers and global outreach, multinationals still have to rely on and be supported by their various national governments who provide 'political insurance' for their activities globally. Because the relationship between multinationals and their various national governments and host states is deep and interwoven, it can be expected that their operational activities in different environments will also have strong political and diplomatic contents. This, for instance, is manifested clearly in the volatile and high-politics content of the international diplomacy of oil as played out in a world where access to and control of this important natural resource confers enormous advantages and leverages on the oil rich countries. Another clear implication of the weakening and/or collapse of borders is that below the surface, there is very little demarcation between local and international issues- especially as issues and agenda at the local level tend to diffuse and have implications beyond national boundaries, while at the same time, international issues can and do influence local events and outcomes.

Indeed, the ingredients for the internationalisation of a crisis of the nature that engulfed the Niger Delta have been very prominent. As explained in chapter three, for instance, the Niger Delta has had the earliest, longest and unbroken contact with foreign capital and governments more than any other part of Nigeria. One of the historical highpoints in the internationalisation of the Niger Delta occurred in 1884 during the infamous Berlin Conference which was called to partition Africa. The Niger Delta featured prominently on the agenda of that conference against the background of the intensive politico-diplomatic rivalries between Britain and France. The large presence of foreign firms engaged in the lucrative oil palm sector, and since the 1930s, in the search for and exploration of crude oil, further made the Niger Delta prominent in global political economy matters. It is a fact that in terms of foreign investments, contemporary Niger Delta is host to the highest per capita investment in the country. In many significant ways therefore, the longevity of foreign capital and interests, coupled with their sheer size and significance especially in contemporary times, make the Niger Delta to be of strategic economic, political and security

importance to Nigeria in particular, and the world at large. Although their external interests are predominantly private and commercial, one critical lesson from the political economy of foreign direct investment (represented in this instance by multinational oil companies) is ultimately that how they behave abroad is often watched with keen interest and possibly, protection by their home governments. The politics of oil may therefore not be limited merely to the politics of imperialism defined by the interest of multinational capital, but also by a strong determinant of the health of neo-imperial western nations as many of them depend on commodities, such as crude oil, produced by the companies, but which earn a lot of foreign exchange from the global activities of multinationals. Thus, it can safely be expected that those governments, in protecting multinational capital, will flex their politico-diplomatic muscles to ensure continuous access to and control of the strategic commodities and minerals that the companies produce abroad. The huge earnings by multinationals, especially in the capital intensive but also volatile oil sector, add up to such a significant percentage of foreign exchange earnings and reserves of host countries that the interest of such companies cannot be ignored. Over all, then, multinational corporations are not just the major stakeholders in the politics of oil in the Niger Delta, but also their home governments.

It is in the above respects that one must contextualise several of the issues pertaining to the internationalisation of the struggles by oil communities in the Niger Delta from the 1990s onwards: especially, but not limited to the constellation of local and global opportunity structures that stimulated the processes, the different phases of the internationalisation of the struggles by local communities, and the reactions of the international community (especially western governments and international civil society) to them. Without any doubt, the various struggles by oil communities benefited from local and global opportunities that attended the end of the Cold War. Speaking to the inevitability of the outburst of hitherto suppressed grievances by oil minorities in the Niger Delta erupting into the open and on a global scale, and the ease with which such groups can easily “connect with the changing current of global transformations, Obi pointed out that broadly:

The ferment of transformations: political, economic and social in the wake of the end of superpower rivalry provided a global canvas on which the forces for national and local transformations would play themselves out. These changes

in themselves impacted on African states, which were immersed in the various stages of the crisis of legitimacy and governance (Obi, 2001: 53).

As noted earlier, the end of the Cold War marked a significant milestone in many countries (and for many communities) experienced long periods of authoritarian political and economic regimes. As those regimes began to collapse one after another, previously marginalized and disenfranchised ethno-religious and minority groups became more and more assertive and militant in seeking attention to and redress for their long-sufferings. They were encouraged by a fundamental shift in global public discourse on various issues pertaining to human, environmental, cultural, political, minority and socio-economic rights- issues that have always been very dear to them, but which could be very perilous to amplify in the past for fear of punitive sanctions by oppressive regimes. Many of the militant oil communities in the Niger Delta fall within this category as they undoubtedly learnt and benefited from the experiences of similar groups in other parts of the developing world that mounted sustained acts of political mobilisation and violence against international capital and their collaborating state partners. The diffusion of the early-bird experiences of many of the groups, especially those in the environmentally and culturally challenged forest territories of Latin America, was in turn, stimulated by the advocacy and enlightenment activities of civil society agencies, public opinion, and the media in those countries and globally.

Within global civil society, for instance, the late Twentieth Century coincided with the emergence and proliferation of local and international non-governmental civil society organizations with the capacity to investigate, monitor and expose the corrupt activities of multinational companies, particularly those operating in the extractive sectors in developing countries, where governments and societies are much weaker in terms of their ability to resist and/or control them. These civil society organisations have played the role of active advocacy and lobby groups that engage multinationals on diverse and topical questions of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development. Ultimately, through their activities, such civil society groups have succeeded in elevating previously ignored questions of business ethics, corporate morality, accountability and transparency to high profile public discourse, and as important yardsticks for assessing the corporate behaviours and responsibilities of

multinational companies. Of course, many of these local and global civil society advocacy groups would not have accomplished the visibility and successes that they have today in isolation of other global changes. Apart from the fact that many of them have been able to establish local networks of partners and informants, their advocacy and watchdog activities have been significantly aided by the global revolutions in media and telecommunications which allow them to draw attention, within a very short period, to flagrant human right abuses and the environmental recklessness of multinational corporations in connivance with their weak host governments. International civil society groups have also been able to mobilise international public opinion on critical aspects of the operation of multinational oil companies.

Apart from international human and environmental rights advocacy groups such as Amnesty International, Bodyshop, Human Rights Watch, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, to mention a few, one of the most embarrassing criticisms of the corporate irresponsibility of multinational corporations in the oil industry came from a most surprising source: the Church, through the activities of the World Council of Churches, WCC.²⁸⁴ It would be recalled that the Council was very active in internationalizing the Ogoni struggles (WCC, 1996) as part of its global missionary projects. At the broader level, WCC has helped, through its programs and advocacy activities, to create the international opportunity and moral template for local communities to challenge multinationals. According to the coordinator, Marcos Arunda, "In the milieu of ecumenicalism, there has been a broad ignorance about the importance of transnationals".²⁸⁵ The Church, in his opinion, is beginning to show concern, through its help to victims of corporate misdemeanor and recklessness, and by building a "transnational countervailing power" that would impose "constraints on transnational corporations that can effectively make them act responsibly".

²⁸⁴ The WCC is an organisation of Catholic and Protestant Churches claiming over 400 million worshippers worldwide. See Multinational Monitor, 'The WCC Takes on the Corporations: An Interview with Marcos Arunda, Co-ordinator of the Council's Program on Transnationals', August 1982: 13-15

²⁸⁵ The WCC started a program on Transnationals as far back as June 1977 to sensitize the Church about the issue of TNC.

The first high-profile international exposure by any ethnic group in the Niger Delta was by the Ogoni people using the instrumentality of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). At the initial phase, MOSOP was primarily concerned with drawing attention to the plights of Ogoni people arising from their social, political, and environmental neglect by Shell and the Nigerian State, and shopping for already established global advocacy agencies that can adopt the Movement and the causes it stood for. One of the thrusts of this approach required embarrassing Shell and exposing it to condemnation in the aftermath of the hanging of the Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni crusaders. A business outfit of global standing, Shell is also a major political force in the context of Nigeria. For allowing the hangings, therefore, Shell sat uncomfortably at the top of the list of the 10 most irresponsible multinational companies in the world.²⁸⁶ By internationalizing their protests, therefore, what MOSOP and other minority and environmental rights groups in the Niger Delta did was to expose not just the complicity/ connivance of multinational oil companies in the gross violation of human, environmental, socio-economic and cultural rights of the indigenous people, but also to draw the attention of shareholders and the public in the home countries of the multinational oil companies to the debilitating impacts of oil operation in other parts of the world where regulatory standards are very weak. The decision to take their concerns and grievances to countries in Europe and North America, as well as to major international governmental and non-governmental organizations, was stimulated by a chain of factors endogenous and external to the various ethno-minority and environmental rights movements in Nigeria's delta. Within MOSOP and the other non-Ogoni movements, for example, a new generation of leadership emerged equipped with the necessary political skills, resources and awareness about the vista of opportunities derivable from launching an enlightenment and advocacy campaign on a global scale. Unlike the older generation of community leaders and activists many of whom later became too pro-status quo as a result of the extensive network of patronage they successfully cultivated and enjoyed from the State and multinational oil companies, the new crop of leaders were skilled professionals exposed to higher education in different parts of the world. Besides that, they were much more familiar with, concerned about, and sensitive to the diverse

²⁸⁶ Randy Barcham, Shell Heads Ten Worst List (MM List of Corporate Misconduct), *Alternative Journal*, July-august 1996, 22: 3, p. 2(1);

negative effects of multinational business activities not only in Nigeria but in other parts of the world. They found themselves on very familiar terrain when it came to building coalitions with other local organizations and networking with peer movements and non-governmental institutions to launch very successful public enlightenment campaigns. Thus apart from the fact that the issues covered by these movements and mobilize attention on, are in themselves of enormous moral appeal to the domestic and global publics, the decision to build coalitions and networks with established global advocacy groups were, strategically speaking, sound and desirable. Although the internationalization of the protests also meant extensive/ expensive international travels, appearances and speaking engagements for the activists, the phenomenal blossoming of the information superhighway via the internet also meant that they can be located anywhere to be able to connect with global partners and constituencies in real time and at drastically reduced or no cost at all. It is important not to underestimate the crucial transformatory role(s) played by the internet not just in terms of amplifying the condition of powerlessness of oil communities on a global scale, but also in transforming the notion of “community” beyond the spatial Niger Delta to include the “virtual community” that is no longer separated or encumbered by space, time or geography. Over all, however, one important lesson from almost one decade of the internationalization of minority, human and environmental rights protests by groups in the Niger Delta is the successful conduct of an international campaign that put multinational oil companies and the Nigerian State on the spot in a highly embarrassing manner. Obi (2001: 93) noted that:

What is interesting is the trend in the Niger Delta where the deeper entrenchment of globalised oil relations is dialectically feeding an equally globalised movement of resistance with very strong popular local roots. A formidable challenge, therefore lies ahead for global oil capital, if it does not change from its *conquistadorial* ways which may turn out to be its waterloo in the Twenty-First Century”

A large number of media houses in many countries are usually on the side of the underdogs, focusing especially on the unusual and painful undersides of the daily lifestyles and discourse of such local communities. This is also true at the international level where the major global networks find the cause of marginalized groups fighting against powerful international capital infectious enough for their audience. In the case of the Niger Delta, expectedly, various phases of the struggle by

oil communities, starting with the Ogonis, attracted a lot of global media attention. It is interesting to note that between January 1988 and December 1990, there was no single entry on the Niger Delta, not even on the Ogoni, in the electronic Newspaper Abstracts of 4 major US newspapers.²⁸⁷ Between January 1991 and December 1993, entries in the National Abstracts were preoccupied with the aborted transition program and the return to full-blown praetorian rule, the first air hijack, human right abuses as well as the strike by oil workers in support of democracy. The first major entry on the Niger Delta was reported in September 1993 in an article by Kenneth Noble that questioned the basis of the acute shortage of basic social infrastructures in the oil-rich town of Kidere²⁸⁸. In the interval between January 1994 and December 1995, however, the National Abstract (UK) made 328 entries on Nigeria, with a handful on the crisis in the Niger Delta. The first major (and front page) entry on oil and the Niger Delta focused on Ogoni and Shell in May 1994.²⁸⁹ What this meant is that at the initial stages of their struggles, oil communities were not able to attract much attention from the global media (unlike the local media in Nigeria) and that it was only a matter of time before this trend changed. The interest of the local and global media received a boost with the arrest, incarceration, trial and eventually, the hanging Saro-Wiwa and eight of his Ogoni compatriots; an incident which stirred world public opinion and media outrage against the Abacha junta and Shell.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ The newspapers that are covered in the National Abstract are: *The New York Times*, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, and the Wall Street Journal. Their focus on Nigeria during this period include the Orkar Coup, religious riots, endless and expensive transition to civil rule program, economic-induced riots, drug trafficking and toxic waste dumping, democratic and anti-military pressures within the CS, fuel crisis, devaluation of the national currency, the Naira.

²⁸⁸ Kenneth Noble, 'Atop a Sea of Oil, Nigerians are Mired in Misery', *The New York Times*, 9-9-93, p. 4

²⁸⁹ The article noted the impoverishment of the Ogoni people, despite the fact that over 30 billion USD worth of crude oil had been extracted from that community. See Geraldine Brook, 'Slick Alliance: Shell's Nigerian fields produce few benefits for region's villagers', *Wall Street Journal*, 6-5-1994, p. 1

²⁹⁰ Kupfer, David, 'Worldwide Shell Boycott' in *The Progressive*, 60: 1, January 1996, p. 13 (1); Beckett, Paul, 'Shell Boldly Defends its Role in Nigeria: Change in PR Strategy Appears to be Working' in *Wall Street Journal (Eastern Edition)* (Nov. 27, 1995) p. A9a; Detlef, Pypke, 'Partners in Crime. (Foreign Oil Company and the Plight of the Ogoni People in the Niger Delta of Nigeria) (Reprinted from Der Spiegel) in *World Press Review*, 43: 1, January 1996, p.16(1); *The Economist*, 'Multinationals and their Morals. (Shell Petroleum in Nigeria) (Editorial), Dec. 2, 1995, 337: 7943, p. 18(2); Hudson, Richard L., and Rose Matthew, 'Shell is Pressured to Scrap its Plans for New Plant in Nigeria amid Protests' *Wall Street Journal (Eastern Edition)*, November 14, 1995, p. A11; Marcia D. Davis, 'The Giant in Turmoil. (Nigeria: Shell Oil Co. and the Execution of Activists) in *Emerg*, 7: 4, Feb. 1996, p. 76 (5); Francis Wilkins, 'Ken Saro-Wiwa: Killed By Shell. (Econotes; Shell Oil Co.) (Includes a final statement from Ken) in *Environmental Action Magazine*, 27: 4, Winter 1996, p. 6(1);

Yet the most controversial of the international reactions to the crises in the Niger Delta in general, and in Ogoniland in particular, was that by prominent countries in Western Europe and North America. It will be recalled that the ratification of the death sentence on Mr. Saro-Wiwa and others coincided with a major international event- the Commonwealth Summit taking place in Auckland, New Zealand. From such a perspective, therefore, the ratification of the death sentence came at a most inauspicious time as the spontaneous reaction of anger and shock by the countries participating in that important global forum could not be ignored. The immediate result was that the hangings evoked a spontaneous and negative media outrage against Nigeria in general, and the leadership of General Abacha in particular. In one of such reactions, the U.K. Prime Minister, John Major, described the trial as “a fraudulent trial, a bad verdict, and an unjust sentence. It has now been followed by judicial murder”.²⁹¹ The opportune Summit of the Commonwealth also allowed the mobilization of concerted international efforts to punish Nigeria through diplomatic isolation and suspension from the Commonwealth, as well as limited visa restrictions on key members of government, and an arms embargo.

The United Nations General Assembly also demonstrated its displeasure and shock by adopting Resolution 50/ 199 by an overwhelming vote of 101 to 14 (with 47 abstentions) which “condemned the arbitrary execution, after a flawed judicial process, of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight co-defendants” in Nigeria. Arising from this resolution, the Secretary General was mandated, in cooperation with the Commonwealth, to undertake discussions with Nigeria and report back to the General Assembly.²⁹² Western nations, including the United States, Canada, the European Union member-states, and South Africa, displayed their anger by recalling their ambassadors and by extending pre-existing restrictions on military relations and the

Vince Bielski, 'Shell's Game' (Shell: Political and environmental aspects of operations in Nigeria) in *Sierra*, 81: 2, March-April 1996, p. 30(5); David Wheeler and Peter Moszynski, 'Blood on British Business Hands' in *New Statesman and Society*, 8: 379, November 17, 1995, p. 14(2); Joshua Hammer, 'Nigeria Crude: A Hanged Man and an Oil-Fouled Landscape (execution of Ken and others)', *Harper's Magazine*, 292: 1753, June 1996, p. 58(11)

²⁹¹ N. Wood, 'Nigeria Faces Expulsion for Hanging Nine', *The Times*, 1995, 11 November

²⁹² *UN Chronicle*, XXXIII (1), Spring 1996, p. 80

sale of military hardware. Even multilateral financial institutions, especially the International Financial Corporation, an affiliate of the World Bank, responded by withdrawing a loan package for the liquefied natural gas project.²⁹³

There are, of course, several other substantive issues arising from the reactions of North American and Western European countries to the misadventures in the Niger Delta. At a level, reactions by the West to popular calls for sanctions were rather half-hearted and belated because similar calls had been consistently made in the last days of the regime of General Babangida, Abacha's predecessor, when the result of the 12 June 1993 presidential polls was annulled, paving the way for another round of full-blown military rule. The reaction was however half-hearted then because the call for full sanctions, including the all-important oil embargo, was taken with a pinch of salt by the major industrialized countries.²⁹⁴ Except for Canada, which suspended diplomatic dealings with Nigeria, and moved its embassy and consular operations to Accra, Ghana, other major western countries developed cold feet in response to the democratic misadventure in Nigeria under General Abacha. Indeed, six months after the hanging of the Ogoni men, the Clinton administration claimed it was still consulting, leaving only a handful of politicians to act as "Washington's conscience on Nigeria".²⁹⁵ Certainly, domestic and global public opinion across the spectrum of the civil society favoured the freezing of the assets of the military leadership in Nigeria, called for the prohibition of fresh investments in the country, and the more importantly, the imposition of oil sanctions as the potent weapon to arm-twist General Abacha. While the call for sanctions against Nigeria was in full swing, however, there was an equally popular opinion in official circles that sanctions would cripple the Nigerian economy, hurt western (especially Washington's and London's) interest by triggering an abrupt increase in crude oil prices, and would perhaps ultimately, lead to the diplomatic isolation of Nigeria at a time when the country most needed international cuddling. In fact, the New York-based Petroleum Industry Research

²⁹³ The ostensible reason for this reaction, which was later renegotiated and disbursed, was that the Nigerian government had yet to satisfactorily respond to key policy decision.

²⁹⁴ Paul Lewis, 'U.S. Seeks Tougher Sanctions to Press Nigeria for Democracy', *The New York Times*, 1996, 12 March

²⁹⁵ 'Nigeria's waiting Game' *The New York Times*' (Editorial), May 6, 1996, p. A14

Foundation Incorporated warned that any unilateral U.S. sanction on Nigeria would be unwise as that would have severe effects on heating oil and diesel fuel prices due to the uniquely high distillate yield of Nigerian crude. Besides, the Foundation argued that the impact would be particularly magnified for the America's northeast because of its heavy dependence on Nigerian supplies. Nevertheless, formidable opposition trailed the call for comprehensive and collectively sanctions from other unexpected non-western sources, including the erstwhile Secretary General of the defunct Organization of African Unity, Salim Ahmed Salim, who argued that much as the OAU would like to see a democratic Nigeria, "we do not subscribe to the campaign to isolate Nigeria... We would not want anything to be done which would have the effect of destabilizing Nigeria".²⁹⁶

One of the prime lessons from the inability to push sanctions through is that there is usually a wide gap between the ambitious expectations of the rank and file of the global civil society and media on the one hand, and the resolve of a few influential countries in North America and Western Europe whose interests- in real terms- are based on cold-blooded calculations of enlightened national interest on the other.²⁹⁷ With the benefit of hindsight, it would seem that only on very rare occasions can there ever be unanimity between and among the major players in the global economic and political arena that sanctions can be a successful and potent tool for enforcing regime compliance. In the case of the Ogoni debacle, however, that unanimity was difficult to achieve because what was involved concerned Nigeria's vital crude oil resources, which at that time were critical in view of the violent flashpoints that were evident in traditional oil sources of the Middle East and the huge investments in the country by western countries.

²⁹⁶ *Reuters*, December 5, 1996, quoted in, Nigeria: A permanent Transition. HRW/ Africa, Sept 1996, 8: 3, p. 49

²⁹⁷ Kamm, Thomas and Greenberger, Robert S., 'Most Agree, Nigeria Sanctions Won't Fly' in *Wall Street Journal (Eastern edition)* (November 15, 1995) p. A16; Kamm, Thomas and Greenberger, Robert S., 'Nigeria Execution Raises Sanctions Threat: U.S. Recalls Ambassador; Military Rulers continue to Export oil, for now' in *Wall Street Journal (Eastern Edition)* (November 13, 1995), p. A10; Samboma, Julian, 'Nigeria: Oil Embargo "Virtually Impossible"', *African Business*, February 1996, p. 27-8; Crow, Patrick, 'PIRINC: Beware of Sanctions' *Oil and Gas Journal*, v. 94 (January 8, 1996) p. 25; Kupfer, David, 'Worldwide Shell Boycott' in *The Progressive*, 60: 1, January 1996, p. 13 (1)²⁹⁷

It is important to note that the weight of political, economic and diplomatic baggage of the different western nations varies considerably. Whereas the Canadians could afford to act in the manner they did, perhaps enlightened national interest made it difficult, if not impossible, for Washington and London to follow suit. But that is not to exonerate the latter two from complicity in the events of that sad era in Nigeria's recent political history. The truth of the matter is that their reluctance and or refusal to act promptly and decisively raised even bigger and more fundamental questions about the role of established democracies in helping to nurture, strengthen and consolidate democratic processes in societies making the painful transition from autocracy. It is all right for major western countries to insist on democracy as the only viable option for non-Western countries. But then, they should also not be found wanting when the chips are down and they must lend support for local pressure groups that are agitating in favour of democracy based on the calculus of enlightened self-interest. The cold shoulders given by London and Washington, the two most important overseas trading partners of Nigeria to the idea of oil sanctions is a testimonial to the insincerity, double standards as well as contempt on the part of the much-touted beacons of western democracy harbour towards countries undergoing difficult political and economic transitions. Had the two countries made even a modest attempt to push sanctions through, that would most certainly have sent stern signals and warnings to the Abacha regime that his actions were unacceptable to the international community. If anything, their refusal was a major setback for the nascent pro-democracy community that was determined to chase the military back to their barracks, and instigate the enthronement of genuine political and economic reforms in Nigeria.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Summary of Research Findings

This study investigated the background to, and the broad dimensions of the violent conflicts that engulfed Nigeria's delta region in contemporary times. It made a departure from extant studies by exploring the critical interface between the historical experiences of the Niger Delta, and the current factors that are germane to the outbreak and spread of violent conflicts throughout the region. It sought to account for several of the variations in the propensity for and intensity of the violent civil conflicts in the Delta by asking important and pertinent questions such as: How European (and later international) capital evolve, maintain and reproduce itself in the Niger Delta, in the past and at present? What are the implications of the evolution and consolidation of international capital for state and society in the Niger Delta in particular, and Nigeria at large? What factors, for instance, accounted for the renewed outbreak of violent civil conflicts among the Niger Delta communities of Nigeria? How had crude oil (and ethnicity) intensified the ambient factors for violence? Are there historical precedents to the current pattern of violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta region? On what specific and general platforms had groups mobilized popular support and embarked on collective actions, and with what resources and results? What factors conditioned the attitudes and reactions of the Nigerian State and/or multinational oil capital to violent conflicts in the Niger Delta? What are the immediate, short and long-term implications of, and solutions to the resurgence of violent and resource-based conflicts in the delta region?

Arising from the above research questions, the broad objective of the study was to trace the historical roots to, and contemporary dimensions of civil conflicts in the Niger Delta, and how these have contributed to, or intensified the crises of governance, law and order in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the dissertation, were among others: (i) to trace the historical backgrounds to contemporary civil conflicts in the oil producing communities of the Niger Delta; (ii) to examine the extent to which civil conflicts in the Niger Delta had fed on the activities of multinational oil capital and/ or ethnicity and vice versa; (iii) to critically account for the emergence and

proliferation of oppositional groups and movements within the oil producing communities against the State and multinational oil companies; and (iv) to suggest innovative strategies for managing civil conflicts in the Niger Delta.

Chapter one presented an introductory background to the study which included the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the justifications for the study, and the organisation of the study. Chapter two focused on a detailed and critical review of the literature along the following sub-headings: Oil, Politics and the Nigerian State; Ethnicity and Ethnic Nationalism in Nigeria; and finally, Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta. This classification was adopted in order to unravel the diversity of relevant literature and to draw attention to their rich multidisciplinary perspectives on and about the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Chapter three, focused on research methodology, a description of the Niger Delta and the scope of the study, while chapter four presented the general framework for the study which identified and evaluated, among other things, the theoretical and conceptual issues that are useful to the study, as well as the major research hypotheses. Chapter five, essentially historical, examined the background to pre-colonial state formations and how the advent of foreign capital and the consolidation of British colonial rule assisted in significant ways, in securing advantages for British (and foreign) capital in the Niger Delta. This chapter also unravelled the strong element of continuity and change in the impact of foreign capital on the Niger Delta against the background of transitions from one mode of production and accumulation- slavery, oil palm, or crude oil- to another. Chapter six explored the nexus between the political economy of crude oil production and the behavioural patterns of the Nigerian State, the nature and impacts of multinational companies' control of oil production activities, as well as the patterns and dynamics of oil-induced civil conflicts in the Niger Delta. The chapter drew a lot of inspiration from empirical data gathered from selected case studies, and other popular community mobilization projects. It concluded by exposing the futility of efforts made thus far to forge a pan-Niger Delta alliance among the various oil communities in the region. Chapter seven focused on the contradictions arising from gaps in the corporate social behaviour of multinational oil companies' vis-à-vis host oil communities, and the various dimensions of coercive and non-coercive responses to community-based violent conflicts. It examined, briefly, the reactions of the international community

(western nations and the global third sector) to these conflicts. The concluding chapter eight presented a summary of the research findings and attempted a futuristic prognosis of the alternatives facing the Niger Delta in the 21st Century and beyond, particularly against the background of the return to civilian rule after long and unbroken years of military dictatorships.

The study demonstrated how at the same time that oil deepened Nigeria's insertion into the international capitalist network, it also significantly altered the character of collaboration, competition, and conflicts between and among critical groups and stakeholders in the Niger Delta: multinational oil companies, the Nigerian State, and local oil-producing communities. The study revealed that at both the global and domestic levels, profound changes occurred with equally far-reaching implications and outcomes: first, for social, political and economic relations within the region and throughout Nigeria; and second, in terms of intensifying the dependent character of the Nigerian State vis-à-vis international capital.

Arising from the above, the study captured the various backgrounds to the persistent expression of grievances and violent protests by oil communities against multinational oil companies and the Nigerian State; either for not addressing aggressively enough the myriad grievances of oil communities, or for operating in ways that undermined genuine and qualitative development in the Niger Delta. Despite the long list of the factors responsible for the collapse of law and order in the Niger Delta, the study highlighted two important and interrelated aspects, viz: (1) the centrality of the political economy of crude oil to the dynamics but vicious cycle of protests and repression in the region; and (2) the continuity in the pattern of domination, accumulation, and official repression by the State and multinational oil companies against host oil communities. The study pointed out that the best approach in explaining the unwholesome behaviour of the State towards oil communities is to proceed with an in-depth analysis of the historical mission of the State as a pliable arm of international capital for securing extraction and accumulation. This is because the successor elites in Nigeria never deviated from that historical mandate; a situation which explained their readiness to turn a blind eye to the selfish, manipulative and corruptive practices of influential multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta.

Unfortunately, it was also this attitude that tilted the disposition of the State towards the use of force from time to time. In order to appropriately position the State in the discourse and process of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, therefore, the work drew attention to its historical evolution, nature, character, role and function in contemporary times.

While there is no doubt that the events of the 1990s, particularly the mass revolt by Ogoni people and the eventual hanging of Saro-Wiwa and others, marked a significant milestone in the history of protest, repression and confrontational politics in the Niger Delta, the study showed that relying on contemporary factors and events to account for the proliferation and intensity of violent conflicts in the region remained rather too restrictive precisely because many of the conflicts have had much longer periods of gestation that are also rooted in the distant past, circumstances and conditions. A major thrust of this study therefore, was to investigate the complementary roles played by history in understanding contemporary violent conflicts and socio-political changes in the Niger Delta. What seemed to have happened, then, was that historically antagonist forces (in this case, the State and multinational companies on the one hand, and local communities on the other hand) continued to reproduce the logic of conflict by engaging themselves in new levels of protracted conflicts. It was clear that the antagonistic forces that have been operating in the Niger Delta for over a Century remained alive to the strains and stresses in their historical relationships giving the fact that nothing fundamental had happened to repair them. The study pointed out that while the State historically developed and reproduced itself as a rentier agency that is contented with serving the interest of international capital; the later remained principally concerned about its role as a trading corporation that is out to make profit at all cost. Thus, in between, the coastal communities of the Niger Delta, over time, realized that the only way they could collectively redeem themselves was through being stubborn and by applying continuous pressures on both the State and oil companies.

Four key concepts- “oil capital”, “ethnic nationalism”, “civil conflicts” and “Niger Delta” were operationalized. However, the most controversial of them all, for obvious political reasons, was the “Niger Delta”. As argued in the work, the Niger Delta

became steadily politicized with the commercial exploitation of crude oil from the 1970s, and the rise of the commodity as the major source of foreign exchange earner for the country since then. Much of the controversy emanated from the conventional assumption in government circles, that the Niger Delta was coterminous with oil producing states. In order to transcend this limitation, the study reverted back to the pre-oil era definition which identified the core Niger Delta as comprising Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States. By adopting this classification instead of the politically slanted one used by government, the study transcended some of the major conceptual and methodological constraints of earlier studies. By so doing, also, the study was able to factor in some of the most important dimensions of competition and conflict that occurred in the Niger Delta over the years, including the subsisting patterns of inter-ethnic relationships between and among groups in the region. Because the study adopted an empirically rigorous methodology, it harvested a rich and diverse body of knowledge that is relevant to understanding the internal logics of the violent conflicts in the Niger Delta. This is important because it was exactly the absence of empirically grounded perspectives on the diverse and overlapping issues affecting the Niger Delta that continued to shortchange the search for lasting peace and security in that region.

At the theoretical level, however, only a handful of scholars gave any serious consideration to their analysis of the conflicts in the Niger Delta. It was in reaction to the paucity of deep theoretical insights on the subject-matter that I adopted the theoretical traditions of the dependent development school as developed by Peter Evans in his thought-provoking analysis of the various outcomes of the alliance between multinational companies, the State and local capital in Brazil. Briefly, Evans' dependent development perspective located the basis for conflict and collaboration within the complex triangular network linking international and local capital with the State. The operational complexity of this relationship, he argued, facilitated the acquisition, monopolisation and dispensation of violence by the Brazilian elite, much the same way that the Nigerian elites are reacting violently to divergent problems in the Niger Delta. The dependent development paradigm believed, invariably, that social change and transition in developing social formations cannot be divorced from, or understood outside the dictations of global capitalism. The school believed that multinational companies, as the quintessential embodiment of international capital,

were constantly in search of ways and means of expanding and deepening their exploitative presence, often at the detriment of host states and communities.

The dependent development approach not only explained and accounted for the historical and contemporary behavioural patterns of the different stakeholders in the Niger Delta, but also gave useful insights into the contemporary pressures that are responsible for the eventual slide into disorder and violence in the region. By ploughing the theoretical field cultivated by the dependent development school in the context of the Niger Delta, it became clearer how the triple alliance that existed between multinationals, the state and local capital became an essential tool for explaining the repressive and ruthless tendencies of not only the Nigerian State, but also how the State spearheaded policies that alienated the majority of the population from the benefits of oil-induced economic growth.

The broad hypothesis of the study was that oil capital exacerbated ethnic nationalism and civil conflicts in the Niger Delta, and complicated the crisis of governance, law and order in the region especially, and in Nigeria at large. Arising from this, the test hypotheses were: [1] that there existed a correlation between the historical antecedents and character of development within the Niger Delta and the outbreak of violent civil conflicts in that region; [2] that the activities of foreign capital, represented in modern times by multinational oil companies, accentuated the crisis of development and civil conflicts facing the Niger Delta; [3] that the intensification of ethnic nationalism, compounded by the oil factor, exacerbated civil conflicts in the Niger Delta; and finally, [4] that the relationship between the state and multinational oil companies on the one hand, and oil-producing communities on the other hand, was a major factor in the exacerbation of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, and a serious limitation to the search for lasting peace and stability in the region.

The first test hypothesis on the correlations between the historical antecedents and character of development within the Niger Delta and recent outbreaks of civil conflicts in that region was the focus of attention in chapter five. It revealed that history provided useful insights and perspectives into how the process of state formation- arising from several waves of migrations into the Niger Delta-, brought

different groups to cohabit together in the same region. The study reckoned at the same time that by virtue of its difficult topography and geographical circumstances, it cannot be expected that the different groups that have lived in the Niger Delta could conveniently meet all their subsistence needs without building socio-economic and political relationships with other groups outside the region. As it revealed, a vibrant network of socio-cultural, economic and political relationships became evident in the Niger Delta region prior to the coming of the Europeans; and as would be expected, on several occasions, these relationships provided the template for competition, friction and violent conflicts among the different groups. Historical accounts pointed clearly to the fact that intra- and inter-group competitions and wars were frequent markers of the relationship between and among city-states in the Niger Delta. During the early periods, much of the social tensions and conflicts that occurred among different groups in the Niger Delta related mainly to questions of access to and control of communal land, fishing ponds and waterways. It remained fascinating how little such patterns of rivalry, competition and conflict had changed- especially their scale and intensity- in contemporary times.

Indeed, several significant and irreversible transformations occurred in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries against the background and imperative of empire building that meant that many big and powerful city-states owed their expansion and strength to their ability to successfully pursue expansionist policies and ambitions. That period also coincided with the development of nascent relationships; first, between the coastal delta peoples and Europeans, beginning with commercial contacts but gradually extending to formal colonial political control; and second, commercial relationships with communities further inland that became major sources of raw materials, especially slaves and oil palm. As shown, however, while transatlantic trade flourished and increased the economic prosperity and political leverage of coastal communities, it left several negative undercurrents, some of which resulted in significant alterations to, and the collapse of traditional socio-cultural, economic, political and religious institutions, through complications arising from the indiscriminate introduction of firearms and ammunitions from Europe as far back as the 1680s. These undercurrents, accordingly, produced far-reaching negative outcomes as shown by the frequency of violent civil wars arising from intra-dynastic

competition and conflicts, and inter-communal conflicts over territories, markets, and fishing sites. At the same time, the transition from one economic mode of production to another (as from slave to oil palm trading) had tremendous implications for the status of coastal city-states. As it turned out, in the scramble to control palm oil markets (apart from the exploitation of land and water resources), trade rivalries and wars became a frequent occurrence between and among different city-states in the Niger Delta.

An important point to bear in mind about the process of incorporating the Niger Delta into the global political economy was that the process was not smooth. Although European merchants were, for a long time, reluctant and discouraged from venturing into or interfering with the internal affairs of the coastal communities, this changed from 1850 onwards when they began to establish fixed commercial outposts that were operated as jointly owned limited liability companies instead of individual businesses. The ultimate consummation of this process of incorporation eventually turned the delta region into one of the most lucrative markets for British commercial ventures in the whole of Africa. As the study revealed, the relationship was patently unequal with European merchants making far more profits than their local partners, and at the same time bringing imported goods of limited and dubious economic value, such as liquor and guns, into the region. The study noted further that the Berlin Conference marked another major milestone in the imperial ambition of colonial Britain towards Nigeria as the Niger Delta assumed a major geo-strategic significance as a veritable bargaining chip with the French who had annexed neighbouring Cameroon in July 1884. Although London was initially skeptical about establishing formal consular and political presence in the delta region due to the anticipated heavy costs of maintaining the paraphernalia of government, this position changed as a result of the huge commercial gains derived from the Niger Delta.

Thus, there are interesting parallels between historical and contemporary events in the Niger Delta as a result of the above dynamics. One of the parallels revealed itself in the operational activities of the Royal Niger Company (RNC) at that time and those of multinational oil companies, especially Shell, in modern day Nigeria. It drew attention to the notorious and ruthless trade monopolies of the RNC especially in claiming land

and property rights throughout its vast areas of operation- actions that made it impossible for local communities to set up markets and erect stores without the express permission of the company. The parallel revealed itself in almost the same way that multinational oil companies operating in present-day Niger Delta have secured unlimited access to land for oil exploration and production activities under the Land Use Act of 1978 without regard to local needs and customs. Apart from this, the RNC also adopted some of the most obnoxious and unfriendly business practices that usually came with such overwhelming power and clout in the hands of a monopolist; again, much like multinational oil companies in contemporary Nigeria are acting towards their host communities. The critical moment, as the study pointed out, came in 1895 when the chiefs and people of Nembe Brass decided they had had enough of exploitation and settled for a final showdown with the company. More than 100 years after, the catalogue of complaints by oil communities against multinational oil companies for despoiling the environment and destroying the subsistence capabilities of host oil communities, had reached a head. The last parallel was drawn between the behavior of British consular and political officials in terms of maintaining law and order, to allow their home companies to enjoy lucrative advantages. This explained why British colonial authorities were more than willing to use military force to support and protect the vast commercial interests of British firms; again, much like the way the post-colonial Nigerian State flagrantly displayed its good disposition towards multinational oil companies by taking sides with them against the restive host communities.

By interrogating history more closely and deeply, therefore, the work revealed interesting continuities and parallels between the historical and contemporary experiences that confronted the different stakeholders in the Niger Delta. As noted in another section, there had been little or no fundamental changes in the behavior of the colonial and post-colonial States in terms of relating with the local people, for at every historical juncture, the State had maintained a kind of aloofness and disinterestedness in dealing with local communities. The study also accounted for the striking similarities and continuity in the behavior of international capital towards the State. Although there may have been occasional disagreements, a degree of warmth had traditionally characterized the relationship between international capital and the

State thus ensuring that one was ever ready and willing to assist the other in times of pressing needs. In the same vein, there were no marked differences between the deep contempt with which the Royal Niger Company typically treated its host communities, and how today, Shell and other multinational oil companies are behaving towards the same communities. When placed side by side therefore, a deeper interrogation of history of the nature carried out here could not but reveal intriguing parallels between the complaints of painful neglect by oil communities in contemporary Niger Delta, marginalization, alienation and exclusion, and those by the Brass people of Nembe against the Royal Niger Company a Century earlier. If anything, both periods and experiences are connected by strings of sorrow, tears and blood.

The police and the army played vital but unenviable roles in the historical and contemporary events that unfolded in the Niger Delta. For instance, both colonial inventions had been widely used by the State and international capital as instruments for control, domination and ruthless pacification. Their activities in the Niger Delta also raised serious concerns over the effectiveness of the mechanisms for the maintenance of law and order, as they were known to cause more harm than good in carrying out their duties. According to the present work, the major reason for this state of affairs could be traced to their historical origins as essentially forces for the preservation and protection of the specific interests of the colonial elites. Because the post-colonial State adopted wholesale, the original functions and roles of the police and the army, the two institutions have remained ruthless enforcers of the whims and caprices of the ruling class against the people they were supposed to serve and protect.

In portions of chapters six and seven, I interrogated the second hypothesis that “the activities of foreign capital, represented in modern times by multinational oil companies, accentuated the crisis of development and civil conflicts in the Niger Delta.” Drawing heavily on historical antecedents, the chapter probed how the primary imperatives of trade and commerce converged with those of politics and security to sustain the imperial appetite of Britain for the control and domination of its vast colonial outposts. As the study pointed out, the Niger Delta came into the picture

not just due to its commercial value, but also as a result of strategic calculations that it could turn out to be a potential source of mineral oil required to power the British naval establishment. Indeed, as explained, of all the colonial aspirations of Britain, only the need to gain more access to and control over lucrative mineral resources marched the insatiable quest for lucrative commercial opportunities. The chapter chronicled some of the major milestones in this long and sometimes frustrating search for mineral oil, and how London made the strategic decision to safeguard its monopoly just before the first discovery was made in 1909. This included making several important policies directed towards securing unencumbered access to land for mining operations, especially the Mining Regulation (Oil) Ordinance of 1907. The Ordinance, among other things, gave control of all land, except those specifically designated and published in the official gazette or by proclamation of government, to the colonial authorities. This, obviously, was a major forerunner to the controversial Land Use Act of 1978 which vested all lands in the government. The 1907 Ordinance stipulated that the holder of licenses and leases for oil shall be British citizens, and that refineries can only be established in His Majesty's domain and owned by British citizens. It went further to stipulate that His Majesty's Government (HMG) shall have the right of pre-emption of all crude oil, enjoy preferential price, and in the event of war, could take over the control of the works and plants. It is important to note that successive colonial and post-colonial governments have merely built on these important provisions to secure advantages for crude oil-based accumulation in the country.

The third hypothesis pointed to the assumption that the intensification of ethnic nationalism, compounded by the oil factor, had continued to exacerbate violent civil conflict in the Niger Delta. A significant portion of this hypothesis was subjected to detailed scrutiny in Chapter 6.3. One critical aspect of the contradiction and crisis arising from colonial rule, particularly for the Niger Delta, related to how colonialism nurtured and reproduced the context for the politicization of ethnicity and inter-ethnic relationships between and among the various communities that eventually emerged in that region. Undoubtedly, ethnicity has played (and continued to play) a pivotal role in defining the dynamics of society and politics in the Niger Delta. Going particularly by the character of state-society relations in a colonial as well as post-colonial

formation like Nigeria- and the frequently unhealthy and bitter rivalries between and among the component parts- there was always the prospect that inter-ethnic relations could degenerate into uncontrollable conflicts. This was particularly so because of the divide-and-rule policies adopted and perfected by both colonial and post-colonial regimes in ensuring that ethnic groups and communities could not collectively muster a credible united front to effectively challenge government policies and misrule. Instead, they could only fight each other to a standstill. As the study revealed, then, rather than policies of the colonial authorities, such as the policy of Indirect Rule and Taxation, resolving the several crises of administration and governance that faced colonial authorities, their poor handling exacerbated the already tense situation in the Niger Delta. This, as the study noted, became the basis for several conflicts, especially those between the Kalabari-Okrika, Ogoni-Andoni, and Itsekiri-Urhobo-Ijaw, to mention a few. Rather than creating the basis for inter-ethnic cohesion and cohabitation, then, one of the fundamental limitations of colonial rule was that it intensified the estrangement and alienation of important groups from one another, and frequently unruffled the delicate social balance necessary for peaceful coexistence, political stability and unity. Even on those rare occasions when the colonial government paid some attention to the grievances of minority ethnic groups in the delta region- for instance, with the inauguration of the Willink Commission- the outcomes often fell short of popular expectations. As the study clearly showed, the failure of the Commission to critically address the fears of the minorities in the delta region paved way for the groundswell of militant movements in favour of greater autonomy ever since the penultimate days of independence.

The fourth hypothesis suggested that the relationship between the Nigerian State and multinational oil companies, on the one hand, and oil-producing communities on the other hand, was a major factor in the exacerbation of violent conflicts (and a stumbling block to peace and stability) in the Niger Delta. There was a convergence of interests between the colonial and the post-colonial successor states vis-à-vis multinational oil companies, especially, Shell: while the former required proceeds from crude oil sales to strengthen its fiscal and accumulative basis, oil companies needed to make huge profit and returns to shareholders. It was this mutuality and convergence of interests between the two dialectically linked forces that determined

and conditioned how they related and reacted to one another; and how they responded to exogenous threats, especially from local communities. Whereas the Colonial government relied heavily and for a long time, on the Royal Niger Company to achieve its colonial ambition of unlimited resource extraction to the benefit of Britain, the post-colonial State cultivated an intimate relationship with Shell (and other multinational oil companies) to facilitate oil-based accumulation in a manner that was patently unhealthy to the host communities.

The study also raised questions about the potential and actual impacts of the activities of multinational oil companies on environmental, cultural, human, political and economic rights of host communities in the context of an existing but very weak administrative structure for regulating the oil industry by government. The study revealed that multinational oil companies have perfected the art of evading allegations of sharp practices not only because of the inherent weaknesses in the existing regulatory mechanisms, but also because they continuously supported and tolerated stable but highly repressive authoritarian regimes instead of a chaotic democratic alternative. Whereas the former could secure the basis for accumulation and profit by imposing a regime of coercion and repression, the later lacked the same goodwill and capacity.

The study drew attention to several competing perspectives in explaining the rise and mobilization of ethnic nationalisms and rivalries in the Niger Delta. The first argument, from the class perspective, suggested that ethnic nationalism is functionally tied to the interest and ambition of the ruling class who have at their disposal privileges, resources and the public appeal to employ ethnicity in pursuit of their private interests. The second perspective came from scholars who believed that socio-economic factors played pivotal role(s) in sustaining ethnic nationalism and violence. They therefore insisted that the prevailing conditions of poverty, insecurity and the dwindling access to satisfactory employment opportunities would precipitate dangerous ethnic nationalism and political protests. As clearly noted earlier, factors that frustrated healthy ethnically based development also invariably intensified the politicization of ethnicity as they enlarged the scope for discrimination, discontentment and frustration among the different groups. What was paramount in

terms of explaining the resurgence of ethnicity and ethnic nationalism therefore was the need to take note of the complexity of ethnic consciousness and orientation in the Niger Delta; how they have evolved over time; and why alliances were constructed and defended along ethnic lines. Finding convincing answers to these important questions, according to the study, could only begin when historical and contemporary political, economic and social processes are brought together.

Of course, there was an important caveat to the violent outcomes arising from the political mobilization of ethnicity, especially given the fact that ethnic grievances alone hardly ever sufficient factors for inducing violence; rather they were acted upon by a host of other forces before they could serve as the basis for violent conflicts. In the context of the Niger Delta, it was the prevailing experience of living in abject poverty in the midst of plenty that was principally responsible for the implosion of ethnic identities. As pointed out, the centrality of identity in the discourse and understanding of ethnicity and ethnic nationalism cannot be underrated as identity-related ethnic conflicts have made society and politics in the Niger Delta quite unpredictable and volatile. The study revealed that most politically assertive minority ethnic groups in the Niger Delta desired qualitative and affirmative access to political and economic opportunities, and the protection of their rights against the tyranny of the majority, more than a negotiated exit from the Nigerian State as presently constituted. It was in this regard that the study suggested that the management of communal conflicts should necessarily involve a mixture of innovative strategies that would ensure broad-based and balanced participation by all ethnic groups, devolve more powers to local governments in order to ensure effective citizens' participation, and finally, reconstruct the State in such a way that territorial boundaries would correspond closely with existing social and cultural boundaries.

Therefore, the study sounded a note of caution regarding some of the issues that have not only beclouded much of the judgments and views on violence within the oil communities, but also made them overly broad and inconclusive. There was need, first, to reconcile and put in proper context, those diverse experiences of different demographic groups (for instance, women and youths) in the oil-rich Niger Delta. Are such experiences, for instance, similar across the Niger Delta, or indeed, in other parts

of the world where international capital seemed to be playing the same devastating roles? Second, the study challenged the common assumption that every agitation by an oil community within the delta region is oil-related. In many instances, oil was not necessarily the sole cause of conflicts, although it tended to aggravate existing disputes. Even on those occasions when oil companies did not trigger land disputes, their ignorance of, and disrespect for customary land rights and local customs, compounded and intensified existing disputes. Lastly, the point was made that much of the existing literature tended to focus mainly on the experiences of the Ogoni people, even though their struggle was not unique in the annals of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta, as other ethnic groups also embarked on similar ventures about the same time. Unfortunately, because the Ogoni experience is very popular, scholarship made the mistake of using it as the benchmark for evaluating other equally important but distinct community mobilization projects that were embarked upon by other ethnic groups. Thus, the study suggested the need to place the experiences of Ogoni and non-Ogoni peoples side-by-side, and not to allow the experiences of one to overshadow the others.

Bearing in mind that a lot of interesting studies have been carried out on the political economy of crude oil production vis-à-vis the Nigerian State, the present work highlighted instead, five major elements that are central to the understanding of the salient outcomes of those relationships. These are: the monopoly of technical expertise in oil exploration and production activities by multinational oil companies; the weak regulatory capacity of the Nigerian State; the centrality of oil in the political economy of Nigeria, and the dwindling emphases on non-oil sectors that previously accounted for the bulk of foreign exchange earnings; and finally, the gradual but ultimate exclusion of the non-elite segments of the Nigerian society from the material benefits of increased crude oil production and sales. In the same respect, the study addressed the manner in which the relationships between oil capital and the Nigerian State have significantly marked up the spectacle of coercion and repression against militant oil communities in the Niger Delta. Thus, when a State found itself in a situation of dependent development either by design or default as it is the case with Nigeria in the context of the oil industry, it must cooperate with international capital by willingly engaging itself in repressive acts, if need be, to subjugate these militant

elements who threaten the peace and stability. This, according to the study, accentuated the profound paradox of oil-induced economic growth which merely answered the material dreams of a relatively few Nigerian elite but which also left the ordinary and toiling masses in the lurch. In a nutshell, this contradiction stimulated and sharpened politicized forces that have become difficult to appease especially in the Niger Delta. It was indeed, the cavalier attitude of both the State and multinational oil companies on matters affecting the survival and well being of host oil communities, that remained at the heart of the many troubles facing the oil region. Although they began with non-violent means to draw attention to their various plights, many oil communities have graduated to very violent methods as a result of their frustration with the failure of non-violent, non-combative approaches.

Four of such combative encounters by oil communities against the State and oil capital were examined in great detail in the study: the short-lived Boro 'Revolution' of February 1966, MOSOP and Ogoni nationalism, Ijaw nationalism, and the Itsekiri-Ijaw and Urhobo rivalries over ownership and control of Warri. What came out from entire study was the pivotal role(s) played by multinational oil companies and the Nigerian State in the exacerbation of violent conflicts in Nigeria's Delta region. By focusing on the distinct behaviours and pathologies of international capital, and how the State had consistently assisted it, it became much easier to predict, with some accuracy, continuity and change in the historical and contemporary relationship and experiences of coastal oil communities in Nigeria's Delta. The point was clearly made that even though oil companies and successive governments would like to paint a contrary picture, the devastation that petroleum production inflicted on the Niger Delta remained a central factor in understanding the etiology of conflicts in the region. On their part, oil companies have consistently demonstrated lack of tact and sensitivity on a range of issues directly affecting their host communities. The study concluded that in retrospect, multinational oil companies operating in Nigeria seem to have learnt little, if any lessons at all, from the experiences of the last decade of widespread community anomie and official repression that, in turn, widened the concern for insecurity and instability in the Niger Delta region. They seemed to have internalized the notion that they could do no wrong; and on occasions that they erred,

cared little about the consequences of their actions knowing fully well that they could be sanctioned by the subordinate Nigerian State. .

This conclusion led to another level of concern from the perspective of public policy for illuminating present understanding of the dynamics of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta. This had to do with the notions of security, law and order in the context of the prolonged and vicious cycle of violent conflicts in the oil region. Whereas government did not consider the environmental problems of the Niger Delta as a security problematic, it nonetheless consistently elevated the community disturbances that resulted from them to a level of national security threat. Accordingly, there was an urgent need to have a holistic understanding and definition of security in an all-embracing manner beyond the militaristic approach that currently prevailed. By broadening the scope of “security” to include a variety of issues that have political, economic, social, cultural and environmental ramifications, many of the irritations that exacerbate violent conflicts would be better understood and avoided.

One of the conclusions of the study related to the growing consensus among a broad spectrum of the civil society in the Niger Delta in particular, and Nigeria at large, was that either by omission or commission, a significant part of the responsibility for the developmental crisis and chaos in the Niger Delta could be heaped on the doorsteps of government. Indeed, as I pointed out in another section, the general perception among inhabitants of the oil-producing communities was that past and present attempts by governments- through the NDDB, OMPADEC, NDDC, etc- to alleviate the myriad developmental problems facing oil communities have failed mainly because they were for nothing more than short-term political palliatives to “create jobs for the boys.

This conclusion also invariably led to the second one about government’s disposition to apply coercion in dealing with oil communities that were considered as too troublesome. But, then, as pointed out in the study by way of a caveat, there were little or no differences in the behaviour of the Nigerian State under different regimes- military or civilian. This conclusion resulted from the fact that the Niger Delta was yet to achieve the much-expected dividends of democracy almost five years into civilian rule. Rather, the incumbent administration merely continued with the

repressive traditions of its military predecessors as boldly demonstrated by the rash and high-handed punishment meted out to Odi village on Christmas Eve of 1999. This situation led to the perception, with some justification, that the Niger Delta crises became chronic mainly because of government's reluctance to experiment with other peaceful options and means for curtailing the free flow of anger among oil communities. According to this increasingly pervasive opinion, it is only when government and multinational oil companies water down their over-bloated ego in dealing with the Niger Delta, that genuine and lasting peace could be restored in that region. Unfortunately, much should not be expected either from the huge attention paid by the international community to the plight of oil communities in the Niger Delta. This is particularly so because in the context of dependent development, the major western countries are more likely to pitch their politico-diplomatic and economic tents on the side of their multinationals operating abroad, than on that of the so-called "underdogs" that are agitating in some remote parts of the world. Thus, even when there was some measure of willingness on the part of the international community to act decisively by imposing sanctions on the government to compel it to mellow infringements on the fundamental rights of oil communities, the heavy weight of their economic baggage in the country often dissuaded them from taking such a decisive but also costly step.

8.2. The Niger Delta in the 21st Century: Alternative Scenario and Futures

Unlike the luxury that sorcerers enjoy by gazing into the crystal ball to predict the future, it is practically impossible (if not dangerous) for a social scientist to do the same. This is so because social events and conditions are usually marked by such a high degree of volatility and uncertainty that predictions cannot be made with any degree of accuracy. This is even more so in making prognosis about dynamic events such as those occurring on a daily basis in the crises-ridden Niger Delta of Nigeria. Indeed, as the study has demonstrated all along, part of the major challenges arising from any in-depth empirical investigation of past events in the Niger Delta (not to talk of making predictions for the future), is that the events not only happen so fast, but are also constantly influenced by a multiplicity of factors which require that assumptions must be revisited and adjusted constantly to accommodate the new developments.

At a broad level, therefore, there are mixed feelings about what becomes of the Niger Delta in the future, given the far-reaching political, economic, social and security implications of the increasingly violent conflicts in that oil region. On the one hand, are pessimists who believed that given the dangerous kinds of social crisis that is taking place in the region, the Niger Delta would most likely end up as an embarrassing disaster for the entire country if genuine efforts were not made to stem the present tide of decay and collapse. Other keen observers and commentators have given room for cautious optimism, premising their conclusions on the argument that in spite of the grave dangers, the Niger Delta region also “demonstrates the opportunities offered by democracy”.

Nevertheless, a few predictions can be made based on informed and existing knowledge, as well as sustained and deep interest on the Niger Delta. The first- and perhaps the most obvious scenario- is that there are no indications that the conditions and circumstances precipitating violent conflicts in the region would change significantly in the near future to give the different stakeholders the opportunity to sheath their swords. Indeed, it is clear today that each of the major stakeholders- local communities vis-à-vis multinational oil communities and the Nigerian State- have boxed themselves into positions that can only allow each of them limited leverage for reconciliation. While oil communities continue to demand that multinational oil companies add value to their business and operational activities by investing more in community development initiatives based on priorities set by host communities themselves, the oil companies have' persistently insisted they would not take up municipal responsibilities that are strictly speaking, those of the government. The Nigerian State, on its part, has continued to insist that it cannot bite more than it can chew in the light of other competing needs if it is to achieve a balanced development throughout the country. In the light of these divergent perspectives, it can be expected that in the near future, existing competition and conflicts are likely to continue, and even intensify, as the different groups lock horns to challenge and gain advantages over the other.

In the light of the above, there are certainly no hard and fast rules about the best options for addressing the problems facing the Niger Delta. Perhaps the first thing to

do is to take sincere steps to re-inflate the space for popular and democratic participation by all stakeholders in the oil region. This point should not be misread to suggest that democracy does not matter as a prerequisite for the qualitative development of the Niger Delta. Rather, it showed that the current practice of democracy, almost five years after the inauguration of a civilian administration, still clearly falls short of the ideal. As far as the oil communities are concerned, the much expected dividends of democracy can only begin when genuine and transparent efforts are made to accept and treat them as partners-in-progress, and by allowing them to play leading roles in identifying and implementing their own developmental priorities. It is realized, of course, that genuine democracy will cause a fundamental orientational shift on the part of government and multinational oil companies, away from their present narrow conception of national security. Over the years, as this study has shown, the conception of security particularly in the context of the Niger Delta, has narrowed down significantly to that of military security that is, keeping the peace through the use of force, to the exclusion of other social, political, economic, community, environmental, cultural aspects of security that pertain to the welfare needs of the people. Because of its narrow pre-occupation with military security, successive governments have foreclosed existing opportunities to close ranks and build bridges of understanding, harmony and cooperation with, and among the various oil communities.

The above leads to the next possible scenario, and that is, very little is likely to change in the attitude of, and willingness on the part of the Nigerian State to continue to use police and military forces against local oil communities believed to be breaching the peace as defined by government. Clearly, each time the State employed force to coerce or intimidate restive oil communities, it is also exposing its inability to exercise credible self-restraint and engage in initiatives aimed at peacefully handling matters affecting oil communities. An important addition to this observation is that the much-envisaged demilitarization of the Niger Delta has yet to commence almost six years after the inauguration of a civilian administration. In fact, it remains today the most militarized region in Nigeria with virtually every area covered by swarms of police, army, naval and secret service personnel, as well as permanent police/military posts and garrisons. Without any doubt, the day-to-day activities of the security

personnel stationed in the Niger Delta continue to be a major source of social irritation for host communities as they constitute themselves into a sort of army of occupation; extorting, harassing, and intimidating innocent members of the public. Expectedly, there is virtually no part of the Niger Delta where clashes between state security personnel and local communities have not occurred in the last decade. However, such 'minor' encounters could, in the long run, lead to major conflagrations that would hurt peace and stability in the region in particular, and Nigeria in general.

Another dimension to the problem of the Niger Delta and the heavy militarization of the region is that government seems to be bent on ensuring that nothing adverse should happen to the business and operational activities of multinational oil companies; even if that meant putting the oil communities on the leash. The appropriate signal to this effect was confirmed by the report that the Federal Government took delivery of small military patrol boats from the government of the United States of America in 2003, ostensibly to complement efforts by the navy and police to effectively patrol Nigeria's territorial waters. Given the nature of the seacrafts, and the fact that there are no real threats to Nigeria's territorial integrity from the Atlantic Ocean, the real use of the gifts would be for effectively patrolling and monitoring the dense creeks and rivers criss-crossing the region. Over the years, police duties in the oil region have been significantly constrained by the lack of basic facilities and infrastructure, particularly enough functional boats. Thus, before now, the security services had relied on logistic and material support from multinational oil companies in order to maintain law and order in the region. By accepting the offer of small military boats, government was obviously trying to acquire an independent capacity, and at the same time it was re-affirming its determination to be in the good books of multinational oil companies and their home governments.

The final scenario deals with what would likely become of the Niger Delta Development Commission, the arrowhead of current government policy towards the Niger Delta. It would be recalled that the birth of the Commission was almost stalled by inter-governmental disagreements on a range of statutory, administrative, financial and procedural issues. Almost four years after its creation, however, the Commission still finds itself embroiled in distracting controversies. For instance, oil communities

have complained that it is doing far little to alleviate their plight, instead carrying out its activities in a selective and preferential manner. State Governments belonging to the NDDC have also claimed that the Commission unduly meddles in their respective affairs, especially in determining the areas of priority needs in the allocation of basic social amenities, and for carrying out the biddings of the Federal Government. Multinational oil companies claim the NDDC is a difficult “partner” to satisfy, always asking for more. Obviously, these controversies are going to intensify as each of the major stakeholders continues to find faults in the Commission. There are also fears that the Commission might suffer poor performance whenever government and multinational oil companies find themselves unable to meet or increase their financial commitments to the NDDC. Already, the leadership of the Commission has openly complained that government and oil companies are interfering unduly with their programme deadlines by under-funding them. Quite recently, government hinted that a substantial cut in funding allocation to the NDDC was imminent. Without adequate funding, however, there is no doubt that the huge responsibilities placed on the shoulders of the Commission may become difficult, if not impossible, to achieve; or in the long run, cause its collapse. There are clear indications that the Commission may be looking outside the country for support to actualize its blueprint for the integrated development of the Niger Delta. Already it is collaborating with the German agency for international development, GTZ, in this regard. While there is nothing wrong with such partnership on the surface, the possible danger is that an externally oriented and donor-driven development agenda might be foisted on the NDDC. Whereas, what is badly needed now and in the future, is a conscientious effort and goodwill on the part of all concerned to ensure the success of the Commission and the qualitative development of the Niger Delta.

Although much can be achieved by allowing oil communities to have an authoritative voice in, and representation on matters affecting their lives and well being, it will be too much to expect that violent protests and conflicts would seize spontaneously. This is particularly so given the high degree of distrust, suspicion and social fragmentation among key groups, especially the youths and the older generation of traditional and business elites. Without any doubt, the oil communities can only re-invent themselves by embarking on a sincere process of internal self-assessment that restores confidence

among groups, and brings traditional institutional structures and authorities to their former position of acceptance and respect. What may however, likely happen in the context of improved participation by the various oil communities in defining their collective priorities, will be the gradual restoration of a sense of ownership and partnership- two critical ingredients for sustainable growth and development in any society that are at the moment absent in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. In this context, there is an urgent need to commence without further delays, a systematic and sustained investment drive to create and expand human and social capital that will eventually turn violent options into a huge disincentive among oil producing communities. Considering the extent of decay and rot that is so glaring in the Niger Delta, building and expanding social capital will involve making genuine commitment and huge investments in employment and income generating opportunities for the inhabitants of oil communities, facilitating the provision of basic social infrastructure, and ensuring that multinational oil companies make redeemable commitments to their host communities. Perhaps the government should take the first step by revisiting certain controversial laws perceived by the oil communities as unjust, including the Land Use Act of 1978 which completely deprived them of access to, and use of communal lands and resources. In the past, efforts in these various areas have floundered because government never demonstrated a credible political good will to invest adequately in human resource development in the oil basin. Significantly, it is exactly that genuine political will on the part of government, multinational oil companies, and the host oil communities, that is required to move the Niger Delta forward in the years ahead.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Journals

- Adamantial, Pollis, 'State Repression and Development: The Case of Turkey', George A. Lopez and Michael Stohl (eds.), *Dependence, Development, and State Repression*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989, p. 155-184
- Ade- Ajayi, J.F., and Ian Espie, *A Thousand Years of West African History*. Lagos: Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited, 1965
- Adibe, Clement Eme, 'Weak States and the Emerging Taxonomy of Security in World Politics'. *Futures*, 26: 5, June 1994: 490-505
- Adejumobi, Said, and Abubakar Momoh (eds.), *The Political Economy of Nigeria Under Military Rule, 1984-1993*. Harare: SAPES Books, 1995
- Afigbo, A.E., 'Revolution and Reaction in Eastern Nigeria, 1900-1929', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 3: 3, December 1966
- Afigbo, A.E., *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria, 1891-1929*. London: Longman, 1972
- Afigbo, A.E., 'Economic Foundations of Pre-Colonial Igbo Society' in Akinjogbin and Segun Osoba, *Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History*. Ile-Ife: University Press Limited, 1980
- Aflatooni, Afra and Michael Patrick Allen, 'Government Sanctions and Collective Political Protest in Periphery and Semiperiphery States: a Time Series Analysis', *Journal of Politics and Military Sociology*, 19: 1, summer 1991: 29-45
- Agbese, Pita Ogaba, 'The Military as an Obstacle to the Democratization Enterprise: Towards an agenda for Permanent Military disengagement from Politics in Nigeria', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, XXX: 1-2: 1996: 82-98
- Agbese, Pita Ogaba, 'The Military and the Privatization of Repression in Nigeria', *Conflict*. 10: 3, 1990: 239-266
- Ahiakpor, James C.W., *Multinationals and Economic Development: An Integration of Competing Theories*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Ahire, Terdoo Philip, *Imperial Policing: The Emergence and Role of the Police in Colonial Nigeria, 1860-1960*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1991
- Aina, Tade Akin, *Globalization and Social policy in Africa: Issues and Research Directions*. Senegal: CODESRIA Working Paper Series 6/ 1996
- Ajato Gandou, 'Nigeria's 250 Ethnic Groups: Realities and Assumptions', Holloman, Regina E., and Serghei A. Arutiunov (eds.), *Perspectives on Ethnicity*. The Hague: Mouton Press: 243-269
- Ake, Claude, *A Political Economy of Africa*. London: Longman, 1981

- Ake, Claude (ed.), *The Political Economy of Nigeria*. London and Lagos: Macmillan, 1985
- Ake, Claude, 'The Nigerian State: Antinomies of a Periphery Formation', in Ake, Claude (ed.), *Political Economy of Nigeria*. London: Longman, 1985
- Ake, Calude, *Democratization of Disempowerment in Africa*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited (CASS Occasional Monograph No. 1), 1994
- Ake, Claude, 'The Unique Case of African Democracy', *International Affairs*, 69: 2: 239-244.
- Akinmoladun, Rufus Olufemi, *Oil in Nigeria: A Study in Political Economy of Development*, Washington: 1976
- Alagoa, E.J., F.N. Anozie and Nwanna Ezewunwa (eds.), *The Early History of the Niger Delta*. (SUGIA- Beiheft 8 + University of Port Harcourt). Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1988
- Alagoa, E.J., 'Long Distance Trade and States in the Niger Delta', *Journal of African History*, 11: 3, 1970: 319-329
- Alagoa, E.J. and Tekena, Tamuno N., *Land and People of Nigeria: Rivers State*. Port Harcourt: Riverside Communications, 1989
- Alagoa, E.J. (ed.), *The Land and People of Bayelsa State: Central Niger Delta*, Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research Publications, 1999
- Alagoa, E.J. and Fombo, A., *A Chronicle of Grand Bonny*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972
- Alagoa, E.J. 'Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta States and Calabar', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN)*, V: 4, 1971: 565-573
- Alagoa, E.J. 'Oprozo and Early Trade on the Escravos: A Note on the Interpretation of the Oral Tradition of a Small Group', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN)*, V: 1, 1969: 151-157
- Alagoa, E.J., *A History of the Niger Delta: An Historical Interpretation of Ijo Oral Tradition*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972
- Alao, Abiodun and 'Funmi Olonisakin, 'Economic Fragility and Political Fluidity: Explaining Natural Resources and Conflicts', *International Peacekeeping*, 7: 1, winter 2000: 23-36
- Alemika, Etannibi E., 'Colonialism, State and Policing in Nigeria', *Crime, Law and Social Change*. 20: 3, 1993: 187-219
- Alemika, E.E., 'Policing and Perceptions of Police in Nigeria', *Police Studies*, 11: 4, 1988, 161-176
- Amadi-A, Abbey-S-D, Nma-A, 'Chronic Effects of Oil spill on Soil Properties and Microflora of a Rainforest ecosystem in Nigeria', in *Water, Air and Soil Pollution*, 1986: 1-11
- Amin, Samir, 'Social Movements at the Periphery' in Ponna Wignaraja (ed.), *New Social*

- Movements in the South: Empowering the People*. New Jersey and London: Zed Books, 1993: 76-100
- Amirahmadi, Hooshang, Oil at the Turn of the Twentieth First Century', *Futures*, 28: 5, 1996: 433-452
- Anene, J.C., 'The Foundations of British Rule in Southern Nigeria, 1885-1891', in *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 1:4, December 1959
- Anene, J.C., 'Slavery and the Slave Trade', J.C. Anene and Godfrey Brown, *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. New York: Humanities Press, 1972: 92-109
- Anene, J.C., 'The Peoples of Benin, the Niger Delta, Congo and Angola in the Nineteenth Century', in J.C. Anene and Godfrey Brown, *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. New York: Humanities Press, 1972: 270-290
- Apena, Adeline, *Colonization, Commerce and Entrepreneurship in Nigeria: The Western Delta, 1914-1960*. New York: Peter Lang, 1997
- Arifalo, S.O., *The Egbe Omo Oduduwa: A Study in Ethnic and Cultural Nationalism*. Akure: Stebak Books and Publishers, 2001
- Ashton-Jones, Nick (with Susi Arnott and Oronoto Douglas), *The Human Ecosystems in the Niger Delta: An ERA Handbook*. Benin City, Environmental Rights Action, 1998
- Asiegbu, J.U.J., *Nigeria and Its British Invaders, 1851-1920: A Thematic Documentary History*. New York: NOK Publishers International, 1984
- Auster, Amy, Review of Human Rights watch 'Slaughter Among Neighbours: The Political Origins of Communal Violence', in *Journal of International Affairs*, 1996: 50 (1): 314-138
- Ayandele, E.A., 'The Relationship Between Church Missionary Society and the Royal Niger Company, 1886-1900', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN)*, IV: 3, 1968: 397-419
- Ayandele, E.A., 'External Influence on African Society', Anene and Godfrey Brown, *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. New York: Humanities Press, 1972: 133-148
- Ayomike, J.O.S. *A History of Warri*. Benin City: Ilupeju Press Limited, 1988
- Azar, Edwards E., *The Management of Protracted Social Conflicts: Theory and Cases*. Brookfield, Vermont: Gower Publishing Company, 1990
- Baker, G.L. 'Research Notes on the Royal Niger Company- Its Predecessors and Successors', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN)*, II: 1, 1960: 151-161
- Bangura, Yusuf, *The Search for Identity: Ethnicity, Religion and Political Violence*. UNRISD Occasional Paper No 6 prepared for the World Summit for Social Development. Geneva: November 1994
- Benka-Coker, M.O. and Ekundayo, J.A., 'Effects of an Oil Spill on Soil Physico-Chemical Properties of a Spill Site in the Niger Delta Area of Nigeria' in *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*, 36: 2, 1995

- Benka-Coker, M.O. and Olumagin, A., 'Effects of Waste Drilling Fluid on Bacterial Isolates from a Mangrove Swamp Oilfield Location in the Niger Delta of Nigeria' in *Bioresource Technology*, 55: 3, 1996
- Biersteker, Thomas, *Multinationals, the State and Control of the Nigerian Economy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987
- Bottomore, Tom, *Elites and Society*. New York, Routledge, 1977
- Bratton, m., 'Beyond the State: Civil Society and Associational Life in Africa', *World Politics*, 41: 1989: 407-480
- Berry, Sara S., 'Oil and the Disappearing Peasantry: Accumulation, Differentiation and Underdevelopment in Western Nigeria', *African Economic History*. 13: 1984, 1-22
- Beckman, Bjohn, 'Whose State? State and Capitalist Development in Nigeria' *Review of African Political Economy (ROAPE)*, 23, January-April: 1982: 37-51
- Beckman, Bjohn, 'Neo-Colonialism, Capitalism, and the State in Nigeria', in Bernstein, Henry and Bonnie K. Campbell (eds.), *Contradictions of Accumulation in Africa*. Beverly Hills, California: SAGE Publications, 1985: 71-113
- Beckman, Bjohn and Jega Attahiru, 'Scholars and Democratic Politics in Nigeria' in *ROAPE*, 64 (1995)
- Berman, Bruce, 'Bureaucracy and Incumbent Violence', in *British Journal of Political Science*, 6: 2, 1996: 143-175
- Bhikhu, Parakh, 'Marxism and the Position of Violence', *Development and Change*, 23: 3, July 1992: 103-120
- Bindloss, Harold, *In the Niger Country*. Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1898
- Blumer, Herbert, 'Social Unrest and Collective Protest', *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, V: I, 1978: 1-54
- Boswell, Terry and William J. Dixon, 'Dependency and Rebellion: A Cross-National Analysis' in *American Sociological Review*, 55, 1990: 540-559
- Brown Michael E., 'Causes and Implications of Ethnic Conflicts', Michael E. Brown (ed.) *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993: 3-26
- Burns, A.C., *The Nigeria Handbook* [Containing Statistical and General Information Respecting the Colony and Protectorate] 3rd Issue. Lagos: Government Printer, 1921
- Bush, Ray and Morris Szeftel, 'The Struggle for Resources in Africa', *ROAPE*, 51: 1991; 3-8
- Bradshaw, York W., and Zwelakhe Tshandu, Foreign Capital Penetration, State Intervention and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa', *International Studies Quarterly*, 34: 2, 1990: 229-251
- Bayart, Jean-Francois, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. London: Longman, 1993

- Callaghy, Thomas M., 'Internal and External Aspects of Repression by a Lame Leviathan: The Case of Zaire', Lopez, George A. and Michael Stohl (eds.), *Dependence, Development and State Repression*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989
- Carls, E.G., Dennis B. Fenn and Scott A. Chaffey, 'Soil Contamination by Oil and Gas Drilling and Production operations in Padre Island National seashore, Texas, U.S.A. in *Journal of Environmental Management*, 45, November 1995: 273-286
- Carland, John M., *The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914*. London: The Macmillan Press, 1985
- Chalmers, Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (Second Edition). Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982
- Chabal, Patrick, *Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994
- Chazan, Naomi, R. Mortimer, J. Ravenhill and D. Rothchild, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1988
- Chess, Caron, and Frances Lynn, 'Industry Relationships with Communities: Business as Usual? In Peter Groenewegen et. al., *The Greening of Industry Resource Guide and Bibliography*. Washington D.C: Island Press, 1996
- Chevalier, Jean Marie, *The New Oil States*. London: Allan Lane, 1980
- Choucri, Nazli., "The Global Environment and Multinational Corporations." *Technology Review*, April 1995: 52-59
- Clapham, Christopher, *Africa and the International System: the Politics of State Survival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996
- Clough, Raymond Gore, *Oil Rivers trader: Memories of Iboland*. London: C. Hurst and Company, 1972
- CLO, *Minority Rights and the Environment*. Civil Liberty Organization Publication, Lagos, 1994
- Collier, Paul, 'Living Down the Past: Redesigning Nigerian Institutions for Economic Growth', *African Affairs*, 380: 95, 1996: 325-350
- Colburn, Forrest D., (ed.), *Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1989
- Civil Liberties Organisation, *Ogoni: Trials and Travails*. Lagos: CLO Publications, 1996
- Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), *Land, Oil and Human rights in Nigeria's Delta Region*. Lagos: CRP, 1999
- Cook, Arthur Norton, *British Enterprise in Nigeria*. London: Frank Cass and Co. Limited
- Cookey, Sylvanus, *King Jaja of the Niger Delta*. New York: Nok Publishers Limited

- Craig, Jenkins J., and Bert Klanderman (eds.), *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on State and Social Movements*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1995
- Crawford, Steven, 'The Ogoni Uprising: Oil, Human Rights, and the Democratic Alternative', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1996
- Crowther, Michael, *The Story of Nigeria*. London: Faber and Faber, 1962
- Dabirian, Shan and David C. Wong, 'Uncertain Environmental Costs and the Optimum Rate of Oil Recovery' in *Journal of Environmental Management*, 45, October 1995: 135-141
- Dappa-Biriye, H.J.R., *Minority Politics in Pre- and Post-Independence Nigeria*. Port Harcourt: University Press, 1995
- Dara,, O'Rourke, 'Oil in Burma', *Multinational Monitor*. October 1992: 7-11
- Dark, Ken, 'The Changing Form of Post Cold War Security', Dark, K.R. (ed.), *New Studies in Post-Cold War Security*. Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1996: 1-28
- Davies, James, 'Violence and Aggression: Innate or Not?' in *Western Political Quarterly*, XXIII: 3, September 1970: 611-623
- Davies, James, 'Towards a Theory of Revolution', *American Sociological Review*, XXVII, 1962: 5-19
- Davies, K.G. *The Royal African Company*. London: Longman, 1957
- Dembo, D., et. al., *Abuse of Power: Social Performance of Multinational Corporations: The Case of Union Carbide*. New York: New Horizons Press, 1990.
- De Nevers, Renee, 'Democratization and Ethnic Conflict', Michael E. Brown (ed.) *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993: 61-77
- DeFronzo, James, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991
- De Vos, T., *Multinational Corporations in Democratic Host countries: U.S. Multinationals and the Vredelins Proposal*. Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1989
- Diamond, Larry, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of the First Republic*. London: Macmillan, 1988
- Diamond, Larry, and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Democracy*. Baltimore, MD.: John Hopkins University Press, 1994
- Diamond, Larry, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995
- Diamond, Larry, 'Nigeria: The Uncivic Society and the Descent into Praetorianism', in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995.

- Dike, K.O., *Hundred Years of British Rule in Nigeria, 1851-1951*. Lagos: Nigerian Broadcasting Corp., 1956
- Dike, K.O., *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962
- Domenach, J.M., 'The Ubiquity of Violence', *International Social Science Journal*, XXX: 4: 717-726
- Doornbos, Martin, 'Linking the Future to the Past: Ethnicity and Pluralism', *ROAPE*, 52: November 1991: 52-65
- Dorraj, Manochehr, 'State, Petroleum and Democratisation in the Middle East and North Africa', in Dorraj, Manochehr (ed.), *The Changing Political Economy of Third World*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1975
- Dudley, Billy, *Instability and Political Order: Politics and Crisis in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1973
- Eckstein, Harry, 'Theoretical Approaches to Explaining Collective Political Violence', in Ted Robert Gurr (ed.) *Handbook of Political Conflict: Theory and Research*. New York: The Free Press, 1980
- Egba, Ndoma B., *Foreign Investment and Economic Transformation in West Africa, 1870-1930*. Ph.D. Thesis. Department of Economic History, 1974
- Egwu, Samuel G. 'Ethnicity, Economic Crisis and National Development in Nigeria', Okwudiba Nnoli (ed.), *Dead-End to Nigerian Development: An Investigation on the Social Economic and Political Crisis in Nigeria*. Dakar: CODESRIA book Series, 1993
- Ejituwu, Nkparon C. 'The Atlantic Trade', in Alagoa, E.J., *The Land and People of Bayelsa State: Central Niger Delta*. Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research Foundation, 1999
- Ejitiwu, N.C., *A History of Obolo (Andoni) in the Niger Delta*. Oron: Manson Publishing Company, 1991
- Ekeh, Peter P., 'Minorities and Historically-Dominant Minorities in Nigerian History and Politics', in Oyediran, Oyelere (ed.), *Governance and Development in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Professor Billy J. Dudley*. Ibadan: Agbo Areo Publishers, 1996
- El-Kenz, Ali, 'Youth and Violence', Stephen Ellis (ed.), *Africa Now: People, Policies and Institutions*. Portsmouth (N.H.): 1996: 42-57
- Enloe, Cynthia H., *Ethnic Conflict and Political Development*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973
- Enloe, Cynthia, H., *Police, Military and Ethnicity: Foundations of State Power*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1980
- Eteng, Inya A. 'Minority Rights under Nigeria's Federal Structure' in *Constitution and Federalism. Proceedings of the Conference on Constitution and Federalism*. University of Lagos, Lagos, 23-25 April, 1996: 111-165
- Etu-efetor, John O., 'Anticipation and Management of Crisis: A Case Study', in Soremekun,

- Kayode (ed.), *Perspectives on the Nigerian Oil Industry*. Lagos: Amkra Books, 1995
- Evans, Peter, *Dependent Development: The Alliance of Multinational, State, and Local Capital in Brazil*. Princeton: University Press, 1979
- Fatton, Robert, 'Liberal Democracy in Africa', *Political Science Quarterly*, 105: 3, fall 1990: 455-473
- Fatton, Robert, *Predatory Rule: State and Society in Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992
- Falk Richard, *A World Order Perspective on Authoritarian Tendencies*. New York: Institute for World Order, 1980
- Feierabend, Ivo K. and Rosalind L. Feierabend, 'Systematic Conditions of Political Aggression: An Application of Frustration-Aggression Theory', in Feierabend, Ivo K., Rosalind L. Feierabend and Ted Robert Gurr (eds.), *Anger, Violence, and Politics*. Englewoods Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972
- Flint, John, E. 'Chartered Companies and the Scramble for Africa', in Anene, J.C., and Godfrey Brown (eds.), *African in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. New York: Humanities Press, 1972: 110-132
- Flint, John, E., *Sir Goldie and the Making of Nigeria*. London: Oxford University Press, 1960
- Forrest, Tom., 'The Political Economy of Civil Rule and the Economic Crisis in Nigeria, 1979-1989', *Review of African Political Economy (ROAPE)*, 35, May 1986
- Frynas, Jędrzej George, 'Political Instability and Business: Focus on Shell in Nigeria', *Third World Quarterly*, 1998b, 19 (30): 457-478
- Frynas, J. G. and Matthias P. Beck, *Corporate Hegemony and Colonial Heritage: The First Mover advantage of Shell-BP in Nigeria*. Paper presented at the annual Conference of the African Studies Association (ASA), Chicago, Illinois, 29 October-1 November 1998a
- Frynas, Jędrzej George, 'A Socio-legal Approach to Natural Resource Conflicts- Environmental Impact of Oil Operations on Village Communities in Nigeria'. Paper presented at the 'African Environments: Past and Present' Conference, University of Oxford, 5-8 July, 1999
- Forrest, Tom and Lucas, John, 'Politics and Economic Development in Nigeria' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 34: 2, 1996
- Franke, Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics: Since Time Immemorial*. Newbury Park, CA.: Sage, 1993
- Freund, W., 'Oil Boom and Crisis in Contemporary Nigeria', *ROAPE*, 13: 1978: 91-101
- Freeman, Michael, 'Theories of Revolution: A Review Article', *British Journal of Political Science*. 2: 3, July 1977
- Fischer, Ronald J., 'Towards a Social-Psychological Model of Inter-group Conflict', Larsen, Knud S., *Conflict and Social Psychology*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993: 109-122
- Finkel, Steven E. and James B. Rule, 'Relative Deprivation and Related Psychological

- Theories of Civil Violence: A Critical Review. *Research on Social Movements, conflict and Change*, 9: 1986: 47-69
- Francisco, Ronald a., 'The Relationship Between Coercion and Protest: An Empirical Evaluation in Three Coercive States', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 39: 2, June 1995: 263-282
- Fuller, Graham E., *The Democracy Trap: The Perils of the Post Cold War World*. New York: A Dutton Book, 1991
- Galtung, Johan, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 3: 1969: 167-191
- Gamson, William A., *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey, 1975
- Gamson, William A., *Power and Discontent*. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1968
- Gatner, Scott Sigmund and Patrick M. Regan, 'Threat and Repression: The Non-Linear Relationship between Government and Opposition Violence', *Journal of Peace Research*, 33: 3, August 1996: 273-287
- Gause, F. Gregory, *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States*. New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1994.
- Gedicks, Al, and Zoltan Grossman, 'Tailing Exxon and Rio Algon', *Multinational Monitor*, November 1995: 22-25
- Gedicks, Al, *The New Resource War: Native and Environmental Struggles Against Multinational Corporations*. Boston: South End Press, 1993
- Gboyega, Alex, 'Nigeria: Conflict Unresolved', in Zartman, William I., (ed.), *Governance as Conflict Management: Politics and Violence in West Africa*. Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 1997
- Gilpin, Robert, *U.S. Power and Multinational Companies: The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment*. New York: Basic Books, 1975
- Graeger, Nina, 'Environmental Security: A Review Essay', *Journal of Peace Research*, 1996: 109-116
- Graf, William, *The Nigerian State*. London: James Currey, 1988
- Green, Jerrold D., 'Countermobilization as a Revolutionary Form', *Comparative Politics*. 16: 2, January 1984: 153-169
- Gupta, Dipak K., Harinder Singh and Tom Sprague, Government Coercion of Dissidents: Deterrence or Provocation? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 37: 2, June 1993: 301-339
- Gurr, Ted Robert (ed.), *Handbook of Political Conflict: Theory and Research*. New York: The Free Press, 1980
- Gurr, Ted Robert, 'The Political Origins of State Violence and Repression: An Agenda for Research', Stohl, M. and Lopez, G.A. (eds.), *The State as Terrorist: The Dynamics of Governmental violence and Repression*. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1986: 45-72

- Gurr, Ted Robert, 'Communal Conflicts and Global Security', *Current History*, 94: 592, 1994: 212-217
- Gurr, Ted Robert, 'A Causal Model of Civil Strife: a Comparative Analysis Using New Indices', *American Political Science Review*, LXII (4), 1968: 1104-1125
- Gurr, Ted Robert, 'Third World Minorities at Risk Since 1945; in Sheryl J. Brown and Kimber M. Schraub (eds.), *Resolving Third World Conflicts: Challenges for a New Era*. Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace Press, 1992
- Haas, Richard N., and Robert E. Litan, 'Globalization and its Discontents: Navigating the Dangers of a Tangled World', *Foreign Affairs*, 77: 3, 1998: 2-6
- Hanspeter Kriesi, 'The Political Opportunity Structure of New Social Movements', in Jenkins, Craig J. and Bert Klandermans (eds.), *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on State and Social Movements* (Volume 3), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995
- Harff, B., 'Genocide as State Terrorism', Stohl, M. and Lopez, G.A. (eds.), *The State as Terrorist: The Dynamics of Governmental violence and Repression*. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1986: 165-188
- Harberson, John W., and Donald Rothchild (eds.), *Africa in World Politics: Post-Cold War Challenges*. Boulder; Westview Press, 1995
- Harrison, Godfrey, *UAC: A Story of Cooperation*. London: Newman Neame Limited for the UAC Limited, 1960
- Heal, Geoffrey and Graciela Chichilnisky, *Oil and the International Economy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Herbst, Jeffrey, (1996), 'Is Nigeria A Viable State?' *The Washington Quarterly*, 19: 2, spring 1996: 151-172
- Hibbs, Douglas A. Jr., *Mass Political Violence: A Cross-National Causal Analysis*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973
- Hill, Stuart, and Donald Rothchild, 'The Contagion of Political Conflict in Africa and the World', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 30: 4, December 1986: 716-735
- Hodgkin, Thomas, *Nigerian Perspectives: A Historical Anthology*. London, 1975
- Holden, Robert H., 'Corporate Officials Embrace Latin American Dictators at Private Chamber of Commerce Session', *Multinational Monitor*, 12: 5, 1982
- Hoffman, Adonis (1995-96), 'Nigeria: The Policy Conundrum' *Foreign Policy*, No. 101, Winter 1995-1996: 147-158
- Holsti, K.J., 'War, Peace, and the State of the State', *International Political Science Review*, 16: 4, October 1995: 319-339
- Horton, Robin, 'From Fishing Village to City-States: A Social History of New Calabar',

- Douglas, Mary and Phyllis M. Kabery (eds.), *Man in Africa*. London, 1969
- Horowitz, Donald L., *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985
- Hubbard, Waddington John, *The Isoko Country,, Southern Nigeria*. A Paper at the Evening Meeting of the Society on 1-12-1930. Geographical Journal, February 1931
- Hubbard, Waddington John, *The Sobo of the Niger Delta*. Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1953
- Hutchinson, T.J., *Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda and Benue Exploration*. London: Frank Cass Co. Limited, n.d.
- Hutchful, Eboe, 'Oil Companies and Environmental Pollution in Nigeria', in Claude Ake (ed.), *The Political Economy of Nigeria*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1985
- Human Rights Watch, *The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities*. Washington D.C.: Human Rights Watch/ Africa, 1999
- Huntington, Samuel P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996
- Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991
- Hyden, Goran, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and the Uncaptured Peasantry*. London: Heinemann, 1980
- Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), *Democracy in Nigeria: Continuing Dialogue (s) for National Building*. Stockholm: IDEA, 2000
- Idris-Soven, Ahamed et. al., *The World as a Company Town*. The Hague: Mouton, 1978
- Ifemesia, C.C., *British Enterprise in the Niger, 1830-1869*. University of London, Ph.D. Thesis, 1959
- Igbinovia, P.E., 'The Police in Trouble: Administrative and Organizational Problems in Nigeria Police Force', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 28: 2, 1980: 334-372
- Ihonvbere, Julius O., 'The Military and Political Engineering Under Structural Adjustment: The Nigerian Experience Since 1985', *Journal of Politics and Military Sociology*, 20: 1, 1992: 107-131
- Ihonvbere, Julius O., 'The State and Environmental Degradation in Nigeria: A Study of the 1988 Toxic waste Dump in Koko', *Journal of Environmental Systems*, 23: 3, 1994-1995: 207-227
- Ihonvbere, Julius O., 'The State and Underdevelopment in Nigeria', J.O. Ihonvbere, *Nigeria: The Politics of Adjustment and Democracy*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1994
- Ikime, Obaro, 'The Western Ijo, 1900-1950: A Preliminary study', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4: 1, 1967: 65-87

- Ikime, Obaro, *The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest*. London: Heineman, 1977
- Ikime, Obaro, 'Colonial Conquest and Resistance in Southern Nigeria', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, VI: 3, 1972: 251-270
- Ikime, Obaro, *Niger Delta Rivalry: Itsekiri-Urhobo Relations and the European Presence, 1884-1936*. New York: Humanities Press, 1969
- Ikime, Obaro, 'The Anti-Tax Riots in Warri Province, 1927-1928', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, III: 3, 1966: 559-573
- Ikime, Obaro, 'Nana Olomu: Governor of the Benin River', *Tarikh*, 1: 2, 1966: 39-49
- Ikime, Obaro, 'The Western Ijo, 1900-1950: A Preliminary Survey', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, IV: 1, 1967: 65-87
- Ikime, Obaro, 'Chief Dogho: The Lugardian System in Warri, 1917-1932', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, III: 2, 1965: 313-333
- Ikime, Obaro, *The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest*. London: Heinemann, 1977
- Ikime, Obaro, 'The Western Delta and the Hinterland in the Nineteenth Century', in Ikime, Obaro (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980
- Ikime, Obaro, *Merchant Prince of the Niger Delta*. London: Heinemann, 1968
- Imobighe, T.A., Celestine Bassey and Judith Burdin Asuni (eds.), *Conflict and Instability in the Niger Delta: The Warri Case*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2002
- International Labour Organization, *Safety and Health Practices of Multinational Enterprises*. Geneva: ILO, 1984
- Isichei, Elizabeth, *The Ibo People and the Europeans: the Genesis of a Relationship*, 1977
- Isichei, A.O. and W.W. Sandford, 'The Effects of Wastes Gas Flares on the surrounding Vegetation in South-Eastern Nigeria', *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 13: 1, 1976: 177-187
- Isumonah, Victor Adefemi, *Oil and Minority Ethnic Nationalism in Nigeria: The Case of the Ogoni*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 1997.
- Iyayi, Festus, 'The Primitive Accumulation of Capital in a Neo-Colony: The Nigerian Case', *ROAPE*, 35: 1996: 27-39
- Iwayemi, Akin, 'Nigeria's Internal Petroleum Problems: Perspectives and Choices' in *Energy Journal*, 5 (4), October 1984: 45-54
- Jaiyesimi, O.O. and Thomas Pogh, 'Oil Pollution and Its Control in the Niger Delta', *Environmental Education and Information*. 13: 3, 1994
- Janeway, Elizabeth, *Power of the Weak*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980
- Jenkins, Joseph Craig, 1983, 'Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements' in *Annual Review of Sociology*, 9: 527-553

- Jenkins, Rhys, *Transnational Corporations and Uneven Development: The Internationalization of Capital and the Third World*. London and New York: Methuen, 1987
- Jochnick, Chris, 'Amazon Oil Offensive', *Multinational Monitor*, January-February, 1995: 12-15
- Joseph, Richard (1996), 'Nigeria: Inside a Dismal Tunnel', *Current History*, 601, May 1995: 193-200
- Kakulu, Samuel E. and Osibanjo, Oladele, 'Pollution Studies of Nigerian Rivers: Trace Metal Levels of surface water in the Niger Delta Area' *The International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 41: 3-4, 1992: 287-292
- Kalu, Ume E., *The Rise of British Colonialism in Southern Nigeria, 1700-1900*. New York: Exposition Press, 1980
- Kappeler, Susanne, *The Will to Violence: The Politics of Personal Behaviour*. New York: Athene Series, 1995.
- Kenneth, Davies G., *The Royal Niger Company*. London and New York: Longman, 1957
- Kerbo, Harold, 1978, 'Foreign Involvement in Preconditions for Political Violence' in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 22: 363-391
- Kerbo, Harold R., 'Movements of "Crisis" and Movements of "Affluence": A Critique of Deprivation and Resource Mobilization Theories', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 26: 4, December 1982: 645-663
- Khan, Sarah Ahmed, *Nigeria: The Political Economy of Oil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994
- Kieh, George Klay Jr. and Agbese Ogaba Pita, 'From Politics Back to the Barracks in Nigeria: a Theoretical Exploration', *Journal of Peace Research*, 30: 4, 1993
- Kingsley Mary, *Niger Delta Studies*. London, 1897
- Killingray, D., 'The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa', *African Affairs*, 85: 340, 1986: 411-437
- Kirme, William P., *Unscrambling an Empire: a Critique of the British Colonial Policy, 1956-1966*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1966
- Kowaleski, David, 'Asian State Repression and Strikes Against Transnationals' George a. Lopez and Michael Stohl (eds.), *Dependence, Development, and State Repression*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989
- Krapels, Edward N., 'The Commanding Heights: International Oil in a Changing World', *International Affairs*, 69: 1, 1993: 71-88
- Kretzman, Steve, 'Nigeria's Drilling Fields', *Multinational Monitor*, J-F, 1995: 8-11 and 25

- Kreuger, A., 'The Political Economy of Rent-Seeking Society', *American Economic Review*, 64, 1979: 291-303
- Kumar, Krishna, *Transnational Corporations: Their Impact on Third World Societies and Culture*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980
- Kwarteng, Charles, 'Babangidaization After Babangida: The Nigerian Military and the Politics of Incumbency', *The Round Table*, 338: 1995: 183-204
- Lake, David A. and Rothchild, Donald, (1996) 'Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict', *International Security*, fall, 21: 2: 41-75
- Lall, S. and P. Streenten, 'Transnational Corporations and Welfare of Host Countries: Analytical Considerations', Sanjaya Lall (ed.) *Transnational Corporations and Economic Development*. New York: Routledge, 1993: 43-75
- Latimer, E., *Europe in Africa in the Nineteenth Century*. Chicago: A.C. McClung and Company, 1898
- Lax, Howard L., *State and Companies: Political Risks in the International Oil Industry*. New York and London: Praeger, 1988
- Lawrence, P. Frank, 'Two Responses to the Oil Boom: Iranian and Nigerian Politics after 1973', *Comparative Politics*, 16: 3, 1984: 295-314
- Leatherman, Janie and Raimo Vayrynen, 'Conflict Theory and Conflict Resolution: Directions for Collaborative Research Policy', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 30: 1, March 1995: 53-82
- Leites, Nathan and Charles Wolff Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: an Analytical Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*. Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1970
- Lester, Edwin and J. Ruiz, 'An Archaeology of State Terrorism: the Philippines Under Marcos', George a. Lopez and Michael Stohl (eds.), *Dependence, Development, and State Repression*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989: 127-154
- Leis, Philip E., *Enculturation and Socialization in an Ijaw Village*. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, inc. 1972
- Lewis, Peter M., 'Endgame in Nigeria? The Politics of a Failed Democratic Transition', *African Affairs*, 93: 372, 1994
- Lewis, Peter M. (1995), 'Nigeria: Domestic Crisis Challenge International Influence', *SAIS Review*, summer-fall 1995: 16-37
- Lewis, Peter, 'From Prebendalism to Predation: The Political Economy of Decline in Nigeria', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 34: 1, 1996: 79-104
- Lichbach, Mark Irving, 'Deterrence or Escalation?: The Puzzle of Aggregate Studies of Repression and Dissent', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 31: 2, June 1987: 266-297
- Lindstrom, Ronny, and Will H. More, 'Deprived, Rational or Both? 'Why Minorities Rebel' Revisited', *Journal of Politics and Military Sociology*, 23 (Winter), 1995: 167-190

- London, Bruce and Thomas D. Robinson, 1989, 'The Effect of International Dependence on Income Inequality and Political Violence', *American Sociological Review*, 54: 305-308
- Lopez, G.A., 'A Scheme for the Analysis of Government as Terrorist', Stohl, M. and Lopez, G.A. (eds.), *The State as Terrorist: The Dynamics of Governmental violence and Repression*. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1986: 59-81
- Lucas, John, 'The State, Civil Society and Regional Elites: A Study of Three Associations in Kano, Nigeria', *African Affairs*, 370: 93, 1994
- Lynn, Karl, Terry, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991
- Mamdani, Mahmood, Thandika Mkandawire and E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, 'Social Movements and Democracy in Africa', Ponna Wignaraja (ed.), *New Social Movements in the South: Empowering the People*. New Jersey and London: Zed Books, 1993
- Marenin, Otwin, 'The Nigerian state as a Process and Manager', *Comparative Politics*, 20: 2, 1988: 215-232
- Marenin, O., 'Policing Nigeria: Control and Autonomy in the Exercise of Coercion', *American Sociological Review*, 28: 1, 1985: 73-93
- Martera, Philip, Chevron: The Big Oil Boys', in *Multinational Monitor*, April 1992: 27-30
- Martin, Eveline C., *The British West Africa Settlements, 1750-1821*. London: Green and Co. Limited, 1927
- Mason David T. and Dale A. Kane, 'The Political Economy of Death Squads: Towards a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror', *International Studies Quarterly*, 33: 2, June 1989: 175-198
- Mbaku, John Mukum, 'Military Coups as Rent-Seeking Behavior', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 22: 1994: 241-284
- McCamant, John, 'Governance Without Blood: Social Sciences Antiseptic View of Rule; or The Neglect of Political Repression', Stohl, Michael and Lopez, George A. (eds.), *The State as Terrorist: The Dynamics of Governmental Violence and Repression*. West Port, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1984
- Meacham, Charlotte and Stewart Meacham, *Imperialism without Invading Armies*. New York: Amber, 1976
- Meszáros, Istvan, *Marx's Theory of Alienation*. London: Merlin Press, 1970
- Meyer, William H., 'Human Rights and Multinational Corporations: Theory Versus Quantitative Analysis', *Human Rights Quarterly*, 18: 2, 1996: 368-397
- Middleton, Lamar, *The Rape of Africa*. New York: H. Smith and R. Haas, 1936
- Midlarsky, Manus I., 'Scarcity and Inequality: Prologue to the Onset of Mass Revolution', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 26: 1, March 1982: 3-38
- Minkow, David, and Colleen Murphy-Dunning, 'Assault on Papua New Guinea',

Multinational Monitor, June 1992: 7-11

Mitchell Ronald B., *Intentional Oil Pollution at Sea: Environmental Policy and Treaty Compliance*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994

Mokhibor, Russell, and E. Virgil Falloon, 'The 10 Worst Corporations of 1988', *Multinational Monitor*, December 1988: 12

Montville, Joseph V. (ed.), *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1990

Moffat, David, and Linden, Olof, 'Perception and Reality: assessing Priorities for Sustainable Development in the Niger River Delta', *Ambio: Journal of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences*, 24: 7-8, December 1995: 527-538

Momoh, Abubakar, 'Popular Struggles in Nigeria, 1960-1982', *African Journal of Political Science*, 1:2, December. 1996: 154-175

Monga, Celestin, *The Anthropology of Anger: Civil Society and Democracy in Africa* (Translated by Linda Fleck and Celestine Monga) Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996

Moore, Will H. and Keith Jagers, 'Deprivation, Mobilization and the state: A Synthetic Model of Rebellion', *Journal of Developing Societies*, VI: January-April 1990: 17-36

Moran, Theodore, *Multinational Companies and the Politics of Dependence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974

Moran, Theodore H., *Government and Transnational Corporations*. London: Routledge, 1993

Moynihan, Daniel Patrick, *Pandemonium: Ethnicity in International Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994

Muller, Edward N. and Mitchell A. Seligson, 1987, "Inequality and Insurgency." *American Political Science Review*, 81: 425-451

Muller, Edward N, 'Income Inequality, Regime Repressiveness, and Political Violence.' ASR 50. 1985

Muller, Edward N, 1998, 'Inequality, Repression, and Violence: Issues of Theory and Research Design', *American Sociological Review*, 53:799-871

Muller, Edward N. and Thomas D. Jukan, 'Discontent and Aggressive Political Participation', *British Journal of Political Science*. 13: 2, April 1983: 159-179

Muller, Edward N., 'The Psychology of Political Protest and Violence' Ted Robert Gurr (ed.), *Handbook of Political Conflict: Theory and Research*. New York: Free Press, 1980: 69-99

Multinational Monitor, 'Indigenous People Versus Multinationals' (editorial), 3: 12, December 1982

Multinational Monitor, 'Union Carbide and the Devastation of Bhopal', April 1987: 6-8

Mustapha, Abdul Raufu, 'Structural Adjustment and Multiple Modes of Social Livelihood in

- Nigeria', Gibbon, Peter, Yusuf Bangura and Arve Ofstad (eds.), *Authoritarianism, Democracy and Adjustment: The Politics of Economic Reform in Africa*. Uppsala: nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1992 [Seminar Proceedings No. 26]: 188-218
- Mufutau, Iyiola Raheem, 'Assessing and Managing External Debt Problems in Nigeria', *World Development*, 22: 8, 1994: 1223-1224
- Naanen, Ben., 'Oil Producing Minorities and the Restructuring of Nigerian Federalism: The Case of the Ogoni People' in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 32: 1, 1995, pp. 65-75
- Nardin, T. *Violence and the State: A Critique of Empirical Political Theory*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications
- Nash, Manning, *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989
- Nair, Kannah K., *Politics and Society in South Eastern Nigeria, 1841-1906*. London: Frank Cass, 1972
- Ndoma-Egba, B. *Foreign Investment and Economic Transformation in West Africa, 1870-1930 (with Emphasis on Nigeria)*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Economic History, University of Lund, Sweden, 1974
- Ntalaja, Nzongola, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Africa: Essays in Contemporary Politics*. London: Zed Books Limited, 1987
- Newbury, Colin W., *British Policy Towards West Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965
- Nicholson, Michael, 'Conceptual Problems of Studying State Terrorism', in Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez (eds.), *Government Violence and Repression*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986
- Nkemdirim, Bernard, *Social Change and Political Violence in Colonial Nigeria*. Elms Court, Ilfracombe: Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd., 1975
- Nnoli, Okwudiba, *Ethnic Conflict in Africa*. Senegal: CODESRIA Working Paper, 1/ 1989
- Nnoli, Okwudiba (1977), *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers
- Nnoli, Okwudiba (ed.), *Dead-end to Nigerian Development: an Investigation on the Social, Economic and Political crisis in Nigeria*. Dakar: CODESRIA, 1993
- Noah, Monday Effiong (1980), *Old Calabar: The City States and The Europeans, 1800-1885*. Uyo, Nigeria: Scholars Press
- Nordstrom, Carolyn and JoAnn Martin, 'The Culture of Conflict: Field Reality and Theory in', in Nordstrom, Carolyn and JoAnn Martin (eds.), *The Paths to Domination, Resistance, and Terror*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992
- Nwabueze, Goddy, 'Contextualizing the Niger Delta Crisis'. *CASS Newsletter*, 6: 2, 1999
- Nyananyo, B.L., 'Vegetation', in Alagoa, E.J., *The Land and People of Bayelsa State: Central Niger Delta*. Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research Publications, 1999

- Nzewunwa, Nwanna, *The Niger Delta Pre-Historic Economic and Culture. Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 1. B.A.R. International Series*, 1980
- Obi, Cyril, 'Globalization and Local Resistance: The Case of the Ogoni Versus Shell', *New Political Economy*, 2: 1, 1997
- Obi, Cyril I., *Resources, Population and Conflicts: Two African Case Studies*. Lead paper prepared for presentation at the CODESRIA Governance Institute, August 18-22, 1997
- Obi, Cyril I., *Structural Adjustment, Oil and Popular Struggles: The Deepening Crisis of State Legitimacy in Nigeria*. Dakar: CODESRIA Monograph Series, 1/97
- Ojo, O.J.B., *The Niger Delta: Managing Resources and Conflicts* (Ibadan: DPC Research Report No. 49, 2002
- Obi, Cyril I., *The Changing Forms of Identity Politics in Nigeria under Structural Adjustment: The Case of Oil Minorities Movement in the Niger Delta*, Research Report No. 119, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2001
- O'Kane, H.T. Rosemary, *The Path from Modernity*. Cheltenham, Glos.: Edward Elger Publishing Limited, 1996
- O'Kane, Rosemary H.T., *Terror, Force and States: The Path from Modernity*. Cheltenham, Glos: Edward Elger Publishing Limited, 1996
- Okereke, Godspower, A., 'Public Attitude Towards the Police Force in Nigeria', *Police Studies*, 16: 3, 1993: 113-122
- Okogu, Bright Erakpoweri, 'Oil Spill Hazards at the Upstream Level: A Risk Management Paradigm for a Developing Country' in *Energy Policy*, 22(5) May 1994; 393-402
- Okpu, Ugbana, 'Ethnic Minorities and Federal Character', Ekeh, Peter P. and Osaghae, Eghosa E. (eds.), *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Limited, 1989: 347-383
- Okpu, Ugbana, *Ethnic Minority Problems in Nigerian Politics: 1960-1965*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell international, 1977
- Okolie, Andrew C., 'Against Theoretical Dualism: Ralph Miliband and the Question of the autonomy of the Nigerian State', *Coexistence*. 29: 3, 1992: 305-318
- Okolie, Andrew C., 'Oil Rents, International Loans, and Agrarian Policies in Nigeria, 1972-1992', *ROAPE*, 64: June 1995: 199-122
- Okereke, Godspower, A., 'Public Attitude Towards the Police Force in Nigeria', *Police Studies*, 16: 3, 1993: 113-122
- Okonkwo, Cyprian O., *The Police and the Public in Nigeria*. London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1966
- Okonny, I.P. 'The Historical Geology of the Niger Delta', Alagoa, E.J., F.N. Anozie and Nwanna Ezewunwa (eds.), *The Early History of the Niger Delta*. (SUGIA- Beiheft 8+ University of Port Harcourt). Hamburg: helmut Buske Verlag, 1988: 21-29

- Olagunju, Tunji, Adele, Jinadu and Sam Oyovbare, *Transition to Democracy in Nigeria, 1985-1993*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993
- Olokesusi, Femi., 'Environmental Impact Assessment in Nigeria: Current Situations and Directions for the Future', *Journal of Environmental Management*, 35: 1992: 163-171
- Olorode, Omotoye et. al. (eds.), *Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Crises of the Nigerian State*. A CDHR Special Publication, 1998
- Olukoshi, Adebayo and Tajudeen Abdulraheem, 'Nigeria, Crisis Management Under the Buhari Administration' (Briefing), *ROAPE*, 34: 1985: 95-101
- Omoweh, Atime Dan, *The Role of Shell Petroleum Development Company and the State in the Underdevelopment of the Niger Delta of Nigeria: 1937-1987*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Department of International Relations, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, 1994
- Omoweh, Atime Dan, 'Shell, Environmental Pollution, Culture and Health in Nigeria: The Sad Plight of Ughelli Oil Communities', *Afrika Spectrum*, 95/ 2, 115-143
- Onimode, Bade, 'Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria: the Dialectics of Mass Poverty', *ROAPE*, 31: 1984: 110-113
- Opp, Karl-Dieter, *The Rationality of Political Protest: A Comparative Analysis of Rational Choice Theory*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1989
- Oremade, Tunde, *Petroleum Operations in Nigeria*. Lagos: West African Book Publishers, 1986
- Osaghae, Eghosa E., 'Human Rights and Ethnic Conflict Management: The Case of Nigeria', *Journal of Peace Research*, 33: 2, 1996: 171-188
- Osaghae, Eghosa E. (1995), 'The Ogoni Uprising: Oil Politics, Minority Agitation and the Future of the Nigerian State', *African Affairs*, 94, 1995: 325-344
- Osoba, Segun, 'The deepening Crisis of the Nigerian National Bourgeoisie', *ROAPE*, 13
- Otite, Onigu, 'Resource Competition and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Nigeria', Despres, Leo A., *Ethnicity and Resource Competition in Plural Societies*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1975
- Otite, Onigu, *Ethnic Pluralism and Ethnicity in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Shaneson Press, 1990
- Otite, Onigu, *Autonomy and Dependence: The Urhobo Kingdom of Okpe in Modern Nigeria*. London: C. Hurst and Co., 1973
- Otite, Onigu, 'History as a Process: A Study of the Urhobo of the Midwestern Nigeria', *African Historical Studies*, IV: 1, 1971: 41-57
- Oyebade, Adebayo and Abiodun Alao (eds.), *Africa after the Cold War: The Changing Perspective on Security*. Trenton, NT.: Africa World Press, Inc., 1998
- Oyerinde, Olaitan, 'Oil, Disempowerment and Resistance in the Niger Delta', Omotoye

- Olorode et. al. (eds.), *Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Crises of the Nigerian State*. Lagos: CDHR Publication, 1998): 55-76
- Oyovbaire, S. Egite, 'The Politics of Revenue Allocation', Panter-Brick, Keith (ed.), *Soldiers and Oil: The Transformation of Nigeria*. London: Frank Cass, 1978
- Owugah, Lemmy, 'Phases of Resistance in the Niger Delta', *Centre for Advanced Social Sciences (CASS) Newsletter*, 6: 2, 1999
- Paehlke, Robert and Douglas Torgerson (eds.), *Managing Leviathan: Environmental Politics and the Administrative State*. London: Belhaven Press, 1990
- Panter-Brick, S.K., 'Nigeria and the Uncertainties of Pluralism', Ehrlich, Stanislaw and Geraham Wooton (eds.), *Three Faces of Pluralism: Political, Ethnic and Religion*. Hants, England: Gower Publishing Company, 1980
- Patchen, Martin, 'Ethnic Group Loyalties and Societal Strife', *International Journal of Group Tensions*, 25: 3, Fall 1995, pp. 227-245
- Parlow, Anita, 'Of Oil and Exploitation in Ecuador', *Multinational Monitor*, Jan-Feb. 1991
- Pearson, C.S. (ed.), *Multinational Corporations, Environment, and the Third World: Business Matters*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987
- Perham, Margery, *Native Administration in Nigeria*. London, 1937
- Pury, David 'The Multinationals in a Changing Revolutionary Global Environment', *The World Today*, 50: 3, 1994: 49-53
- Rahmato, Dessalegn, *Peasant Organizations in Africa: Constraints and Potentials*. Dakar: CODESRIA Working Paper Series, 1/ 91
- Ravenhill, John, 'The New Disorder in the Periphery', in Richard Leaver and James L. Richardson (eds.), *The Post-Cold War Order: Diagnoses and Prognoses*. Canberra, ACT.: Allen and Unwin, 1993
- Razeen Sally, *States and Firms: Multinational Enterprises in Institutional Competition*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Reno, William, 'Shadow States and the Political Economy of Civil Wars', Mats Berdal and David M. Malone (eds.), *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agenda in Civil Wars*, Boulder Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2000: 43-68
- Robin, Alison Remington, 'Repression, Dependence and Political Decay: The Case of Poland', George A. Lopez and Michael Stohl (eds.), *Dependence, Development, and State Repression*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989: 185-210
- Robinson, John, *Multinationals and Political Control*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987
- Rosenburg, Justin, 'A Non-Realist Theory of Sovereignty?: Giddens' The Nation-State and Violence', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 19: 2, Summer 1990: 249-259
- Rothchild, Donald, 'Conclusion: Management of Conflict in West Africa', in Zartman,

- William I., (ed.), *Governance as Conflict Management: Politics and Violence in West Africa*. Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 199: 197-241
- Rouse-Amadi, Hilary, 'Women and Work in an Oil Exporting Community', in Turner, Terisa (ed.), *Arise Ye Mighty People: Gender, Class and Race in Popular Struggles*. New Jersey: African World Press Inc., 1994: 179-192
- Rouse-Amadi, Hilary, 'Servicing Mankind: Women and Domestic Labour in Port Harcourt, Nigeria', in Turner, Terisa (ed.), *Arise Ye Mighty People: Gender, Class and Race in Popular Struggles*. New Jersey: African World Press Inc., 1994: 161-178
- Richard, Paul, 'Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone: A Crisis of Youth?', O. W. Foley (ed.), *Conflict in Africa*. London: Tauris, 1996
- Richard, Paul, 'Youth, Food and Peace: A Reflection on some African Security Issues at the Millenium', Tunde Zack-Williams, Diane Frost and Alex Thomson (eds.), *Africa in Crisis: New Challenges and Possibilities*. London: Pluto Press, 2002
- Richardson, John M., Jr. and Jianxin Wang, 'Peace Accords: Seeking Conflict Resolution in Deeply Divided Societies', de Silva, K.M. and S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe (eds.), *Peace Accords and Ethnic Conflicts*. London: Pinter, 1993
- ROAPE, 'Nigeria in Crisis: Nigeria, Oil and the Ogoni', 64: 22, 1995: 244-245
- Rosenau, James N., 'Security in a Turbulent World', *Current History*, 94: May 1995: 193-200
- Rosenau, James N., 'The Dynamics of Globalization: towards an Operational Formulation', *Security Dialogue*, 27: 3, September 1996: 247-262
- Ross, Marc Howard, *The Culture of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997
- Rothgeb, John J., 'Investment Penetration, Agrarian Change and Political Conflict in Developing Countries', *Studies in Comparative International Development (SCID)*, 30: 4, Winter, 1995-1996: 46-62
- Rounfeldt, Carsten F., 'Three Generations of Environment and Security Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 34: 4, November 1997: 473-482 (Review Essay)
- Rubner, Alex, *The Might of the Multinationals: The Rise and Fall of the Corporate Legend*. New York: Praeger, 1990.
- Rule, James B., *Theories of Civil Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988
- Rupensighe, Kumar and Valery A. Tishkov (eds.), *Ethnicity and Power in the Contemporary World*. New York: UN University Press, 1996
- Ryan, Stephen, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*. Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1990
- Ryder, A.F.C., 'Dutch Trade on the Niger Coast During the 17th Century', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, III: 2, 1965

- Salubi, A., 'The Establishment of British Administration in the Urhobo Country, 1891-1913', in *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 1:3, December 1959
- Salubi, Adogbeji, 'The Origins of Sapele Township', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 2:1, 1960: 115-131
- Sanda, A.O. (ed.), *Ethnic Relations in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects*. Ibadan: The Caxton Press (West Africa) Limited, 1996
- Saro-Wiwa, Ken, Nigeria: *The Brink of Disaster*. Port Harcourt: Saros, 1991
- Saro-Wiwa, Ken, *A Month and a Day: A Detention Diary*, London: Penguin Books, 1995
- Schatzl, L.H., *Petroleum in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1969
- Schatz, Sayre P., 'Pirate Capitalism and the Inert Economy of Nigeria', *Journal of Modern African Society*, 22: 1, 1984: 45-57
- Skocpol, Theda, 'What Makes Peasants Revolutionary? (Review Article)', *Comparative Politics*, 14: 3, April 1982
- Semau, Scott, 'Economics of Exclusion: Economic Change and the Global Underclass', *Journal of Developing Societies*, XII: 1, June 1996: 38-51
- Sesay Amadu and Charles U. Ukeje, (1997), 'The Military, The West and Political Instability in Nigeria in the 1990's', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 11: 1, 1997: 25-48.
- Sesay, Amadu, Charles Ukeje, Olabisi Aina and Adetanwa Odebiyi (eds.), *Ethnic Militias and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 2003
- Sethi, Harsh, 'Survival and Democracy: Ecological struggles in India', Wignaraja, Poona (ed.), *New Social Movements in the South: Empowering the People*. New Jersey and London: Zed Books, 1993
- Shaw, Timothy, 'Oil Crises, Power Bases and Foreign Policy' in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 18(2), 1984: 393-405
- Shahidullah, Shahid M., 'The Third World After the Cold War: Global Imperatives and Local Peculiarities', *Journal of Developing Societies*, XII: 1, 1996 (June): 119-135
- Shefner, Joe, 'Moving in the wrong Direction in Social Movement Theory', *Theory and Society*, 24: 4, August 1995: 595-612 [review Article]
- Siemsen, Cynthia, 'Oil, War and Semiperipheral Mobility: The Case of Iraq', *Studies in Comparative International Development (SCID)*, 30: 4, winter 1995-96: 24-45
- Singh, Chaitram, *Multinationals, The State and the Management of Economic Nationalism: The Case of Trinidad*. New York: Praeger, 1989.
- Singh, Gurnam, 'Modernization, Ethnic Upsurge and Conflict in the World', *International Journal of Group Tensions*, 24: 4, winter 1994: 405-421
- Shin, Chill Doh, (1994), 'On the Third Wave of Democratization: A Synthesis and Evaluation

- of Recent Theory and Research', *World Politics*, 47: 1, October: 135-170
- Sklar, Richard L., (ed.), *Nationalism and Development in Africa: Selected Essays by J.S. Coleman*. Berkeley, California: University Press, 1994
- Smith, Philip, 'Civil Society and Violence: Narrative Forms and Regulation of Social Conflict', in Turpin, Jennifer and Lester R. Kurtz (eds.), *The Web of Violence: From Interpersonal to Global*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997: 93-116
- Smith, Anthony D., 'Introduction: ethnicity and Nationalism', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, XXXIII (1-2), January-April 1992
- Snyder, David, "Collective Violence" in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 22, 1978: 499-534
- Soremekun, Kayode, 'Oil, Nigeria and Mexico: Parallels and Non-Parallels' in *Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternatives*, 5(4) December 1986; 34-44
- Soremekun, Kayode 'Oil and the Military', Sanda, A.O., Ojo, Olusola, Ayeni Victor (eds.), *The Impacts of Military Rule on Nigeria's Administration*. Faculty of Administration, University of Ife. Ile-Ife, 1987
- Soremekun, Kayode, 'Oil and the Democratic imperative in Nigeria', in Olowu, Dele, Soremekun Kayode, and Williams, Adebayo (eds.) *Governance and Democratisation in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1995
- Soremekun, Kayode (ed.), *Perspectives on the Nigerian Oil Industry*. Lagos: Amkra Books, 1995
- Soremekun Kayode and Obi, Cyril, 'The Changing Pattern of Foreign Investment in the Nigerian Oil Industry', *Africa Development*, XVIII: 3, 1993: 5-20
- Soremekun, Kayode, *Nigerian Petroleum Policy and External Relations*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, 1984
- Soyinka, Wole, *The Open Sore of a Continent: A personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996
- Soysa Indra, 'The Resource Curse: Are Civil Wars Driven by Rapacity or Paucity?', Mats Berdal and David M. Malone (eds.), *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agenda in Civil Wars*, Boulder Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2000: 113-136
- Smith, Anthony D., 'The Ethnic Sources of Nationalism', Michael E. Brown (ed.) *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993
- Stavenhagen, Rodolfo, *Ethnic Conflicts and the Nation-State*. London: Macmillan Press Limited, 1996
- Stewart, Charles J., Craig Allen Smith and Robert E. Denton, Jr., *Persuasion and Social Movements (Second Edition)*. Illinois: Waveland Press Inc., 1989
- Stohl, Michael and George, Lopez (eds.), *Government Violence and Repression: An Agenda for Research*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986

- Struthers, John J., 'Nigerian Oil and Exchange Rates: Indicators of Dutch Disease', *Development and Change*, 21: 1990: 309-341
- Suberu, Rotimi, T., 'The Struggle for New States in Nigeria, 1976-1990', *African Affairs*, 90: 1991: 499-522
- Talbot, P.A., *Peoples of Southern Nigeria*. London: Oxford University Press, 1926
- Talbot, P.A., *Tribes of the Niger Delta*. London: Oxford University Press., 1932
- Tamuno, T.N., *The Police in Modern Nigeria, 1861-1965*. Ibadan: University Press, 1970
- Tamuno, T.N., *The Evolution of the Nigerian state: The Southern Phase, 1898-1914*. London: Longman, 1972
- Tamuno, T.N., *Peace and Violence in Nigeria: Conflict Resolution in Society*. Lagos: Federal Government, 1991
- Tarrow, Sidney, *Power in Movements: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996
- Tanzer, Michael, 'Globalizing the Economy: The Influence of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank', *Monthly Review*, 47: 4, 1995: 1-15
- Tekena Tamuno, *The Evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase, 1898-1914*. London: Longman, 1978
- Treece, Dave, 'Brutality in Brazil: the Human Cost of Cheap Steel', *Multinational Monitor*, February 1988: 24-26
- Timberlake, Michael and Kirk A. Williams, "Dependency, Political Exclusion, and Government Repression: Some Cross-National Evidences" *American Sociological Review*, 49, 1984: 141-146
- Timberlake, Michael and Kirk A. Williams, 1987, "Structural Position in the World-System, Inequality, and Political Violence" *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 15: 1-15
- Turner, Terisa E., and M.O. Oshare, 'Women's Uprisings Against the Nigerian Oil Industry in the 1980s', in Turner, Terisa (ed.), *Arise Ye Mighty People: Gender, Class and Race in Popular Struggles*. New Jersey: African World Press Inc., 1994: 123-160
- Turpin, Jennifer and Lester R. Kurtz (eds.), *The Web of Violence: From Interpersonal to Global*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997
- Turner, Terisa, 'The Transfer of Oil Technology and the Nigerian State', *Development and Change*, 7, October 1976: 353-390
- Turner, Terisa, 'Commercial Capitalism and the 1975 Coup', Panter-Brick, Keith (eds.), *Soldiers and Oil: The Political Transformation of Nigeria*. London: Frank Cass, 1978: 166-197
- Turner, Terisa, 'Multinationals and the Instability of the Nigerian State', *ROAPE* 5: 1976
- Turner, Terisa, 'Nigeria: Imperialism, Oil Technology and Comprador State', Noire, P. and T.

- Turner (eds.), *Oil and Class Struggle*. London: Zed Books, 1980
- Turner, Terisa and Bryan J. Ferguson (eds.), *Arise Ye Mighty People: Gender, Class and Race in Popular Struggles*. New Jersey: Africa world Press, Inc., 1994
- Turpin, Jennifer and Lester R. Kurtz (eds.), *The Web of Violence: From Interpersonal to Global*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997
- Udo E.J. and Fayemi, A.A.A., 'Effect of Oil Pollution of Soil on Germinization, Growth and Nutrient Uptake of Corn', *Journal of Environmental Quality*, 4: 4, 1975: 537-540
- Udogu, Emmanuel, 'National Integration attempts in Nigerian Politics, 1979-1984', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*. XVII: 1-2, 1990: 157-175
- Ukeje Charles, Olabisi Aina, Adetanwa Odebiyi and Amadu Sesay, *Oil, Violence and Conflicts in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, 2001
- Ume, Kalu E., *The Rise of British Colonialism in Southern Nigeria, 1700-1900*. New York: Exposition Press, 1980
- UN. 1993. *Environmental Management in Transnational Corporations: Report on the Benchmark Corporate Environment Survey*. New York: UNCTAD, Program on Transnational Corporations
- UNCTC, *Environmental Aspects of the Activities of Transnational Corporations: A Survey*. ST/CTC/55. New York: United Nations Organization, 1985
- UNEP, *The Status of Oil Pollution and Oil Pollution Control in the West and Central African Region*. Geneva: UN, 1982
- UNPO, *Ogoni: Report of the UNPO Mission to Investigate the Situation of the Ogoni of Nigeria*, February 17-26, 1995 (Report prepared by Richard Boele)
- UNRISD, *States in Disarray: The Social Effects of Globalization: A Report for the World Summit for Social Development*. London: Bawson Production, 1995
- Uvin, Peter, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1998
- Van den Berghe, Pierre L., (ed.), *State Violence and Ethnicity*. Colorado: University of Colorado Press, 1990
- Van Dessel, J.P., *The Environmental Situation in the Niger Delta, Nigeria*. (Internal position Paper prepared for GreenPeace Nederlands. February 1995
- Vernon, Raymond, *Sovereignty at Bay: The Multinational Spread of U.S. Enterprises*. New York: Basic Books, 1971
- Vanguard, Olufemi, 'Assessing Grassroots Politics and Community Development in Nigeria', *African Affairs*, 377: 94, 1995: 501-518
- Watts, M. and P. Lubeck 'The Oil Boom and the Popular Classes', Zartmann, W. (ed.), *The*

- Political economy of Nigeria*. New York: Praeger, 1983: 105-145
- Watts, M., 'State, Oil and Accumulation: From Boom to Crisis', *Society and Space*, 2: December 1984: 403-428
- Watts, Michael J., 'Oil as Money: The Devil's Excrement and the Spectacle of Black Gold', in Stuart Corbridge, Nigel Thrift and Ron Martin (eds.), *Money, Power and Space*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994
- Walter, E. V., 'Violence and the Process of Terror', *American Sociological Review*, 29: 2, April 1964: 248-257
- Walton, John, *Reluctant Rebels: Comparative Studies of Revolution and Underdevelopment*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984
- Wapner, Paul, 'Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics', *World Politics*, 47: 3, April 1995: 311-340
- Warren, Kay B., (ed.), *The Violence Within: Cultural and Political Opposition in Divided Nations*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993
- Weede, Erich, 'Income Inequality and Political Violence Reconsidered' in *American Sociological Review*, 51, 1986: 438-441
- Welch, J.W., *The Isoko Clans of the Niger Delta*. Ph.D., Thesis, No. 811, University of Cambridge, 1936
- Welch, Claude E. Jr., 'The Ogoni and Self-determination: Increasing Violence in Nigeria', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 33: 4, 1996: 635-649
- Welch, Claude E. Jr., *Anatomy of Rebellion*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995
- Welch, Claude (1995), *Protecting Human Rights in Africa: Roles and Strategies of Non-Governmental Organizations*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
- Welsh, David, 'Ethnicity in sub-Saharan Africa', *International Affairs*, 72: 3, July 1996: 477-492
- Whitaker, C.S., 'The Unfinished State of Nigeria', *Worldview*, 27: 3, 1984: 5-8
- Wilkins, Mura, 'Multinational Corporations' *LARR*, XXII: 2, 1982: 185-198
- Wiwa, Owens, 'A Call to end the Shelling of Nigeria' (an Interview with Dr. Owens Wiwa), in *Multinational Monitor*, July-August 1996, p. 27-29 + 33
- Wolff, Hans, 'Language, Ethnic Identity and Social Change in Southern Nigeria', Sanda, A.O. (ed.), *Ethnic Relations in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects*. Ibadan: The Caxton Press (West Africa) Limited, 1976
- World Council of Churches (1996), *Ogoni: The Struggles Continues*. Geneva: World Council of Churches.
- Wright, Steven, 'State-Consolidation and Social Integration in Nigeria: The Military's

- Elusive Search for the Elusive', Dietz, Henry, Jerrold Elikin and Maurice Roumani, (eds.), *Ethnicity, Integration and the Military*. Boulder: Westview, 1991
- Wrong, Dennis H., *Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979
- Wunsch, James S. and Dele Olowu (eds.), *The Failure of the Centralized State: Institutions and Self-Governance in Africa*. San Francisco, California: ICS Publications, 1995
- Young, Crawford, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*. Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1993
- Zaidi, Sarah, 'Human Effects of Oil Development in the Ecuadorian Amazon: A Challenge to Legal Thinking', *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 14: 5-6, 1994, p. 337-348
- Zartman, William I. (ed.), *Governance as Conflict Management: Politics and Violence in West Africa*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1997.
- Zartman, William I., 'Putting the State Back Together', *SAIS Review*, 13: 2, 1993, p. 49-58
- Zimmermann, Ekkart, 'Macro-Comparative Research on Political Protest; in Ted Robert Gurr (ed.), *Handbook of Political Conflict: Theory and Research*. New York: The Free Press, 1980

Archival Documents

Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Warri Division [Itsekiri Communal Land Trust] by Hon. Mr. Justice S. P. Thomas (Chairman) and S.O. Ogunyemi (Member). Official Document No. 2 of 1963, Ibadan: Government Printers (CSC 515/ 150)

Bendel State, Nigeria. The Report of the Commission of inquiry into the Riots and Clashes between Ekpan and Ubeji Communities. Justice B.A. Omosun (Chairman). Official Document No. 3 of 1978 (CSC 520/ 235)

Federal Republic of Nigeria. Views of the Government of the Federation on the Report of Presidential commission on the Revenue Allocation- The Okigbo Commission. Apapa, Lagos: Federal Government Press, 1980. (CSC 520/ 260)

Federal Republic of Nigeria, Report of the Presidential Commission on Revenue Allocation v. iii: Official Memoranda Submitted by the Government of the Federation, State Government, State Houses of Assembly and Local Government Councils. Apapa, Lagos: Federal Government Press, 1980. (CSC 520/ 262)

Federal Republic of Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Mines and Power: Annual report of the Petroleum Division for the Year 1963-64. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information Printing Division, 1965. (CSC 488/ 6)

Federal Republic of Nigeria, Annual Report of the Mines Division of the Ministry of Mines and Power for the Year Ended 31-3-1962. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division. 1963 (CSC 488/ 60)

Federal Republic of Nigeria, Establishment of Oil Refinery in Nigeria [Miscellaneous Official Publication]. Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1960. Lagos: FG Printer, 1960. (CSC 515/ 132)

Summary of the Report and Recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into Outbreak of Violence at Okrika. Official Document No. 23 of 1963. Enugu: Government Printer, 1963. (CSC 472/ 21)

Nigeria, Eastern Region, Report of the commission of Inquiry into the Kalabari Chieftaincy Dispute. Enugu: Government Printer, 1959. (CSC 505/ 36)

Nigeria, Eastern Region, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Nembe Chieftaincy Dispute. Official Document No. 24 of 1960. Enugu: Government Printer 1960

Colonial Office, London, 'Notes on the Kalabari-Okrika Dispute: The Robinson Inquiry', London, December 8, 1950

Inquiry under the Collective Punishment Ordinance (Chapter 34). CO 537/ 7173

West Africa, The West African Oil Palm Industry: The Eastern Menace and the Western Defense, No. 548, volume XI, July 30, 1927. [CO 583/ 146/ 9]

West Africa, July 30, 1927. (On the land question in WA)

Memorandum of instructions for dealing with the difficulties in the Asaba Hinterland and in the Agbor Area of the Benin District'. CO 520/ 16

CO 583/ 168/ 14; Southern Nigeria (Disturbances). Answer to Parliamentary Questions by the

Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Dr. Shiels, 23-12-1929

CO 520/ 120: On Earliest Efforts to Exploit the Potentially Rich Bitumen (and Oil) Resources of Nigeria.

FO 371/ 110840: For versions of treaties between the National African Company Limited (RNC) and Natives

FO 371/ 110840: Memorandum by Mr. Clement Hill Respecting Oil Market Squabbles' [Liverpool African Association, May 27, 1882].

FO 403/ 131: Statement of Grievances Against the RNC (Chartered and Limited) by A.A. Whitehouse, Chief Agent for Messrs. Thomas Harrison and Co., Brass River.

FO 403/ 12: Grievances of Brassmen

FO 403/ 86: Correspondences respecting King Jaja of Opobo (1885-1887)- Vice-Consul Johnston to the Marquis of Salisbury, 15-1-1886

FO 403/ 86: Lt. Cdr. Goodrich to Rear-Admiral Sir W. Hunt-Grubbe, Bonny 30-3-1886

FO 2/ 84: MacDonald, annual Report, Niger Coast Protectorate, 1894-95

FO 403/ 215: Further Correspondence Respecting the Niger Territories. January to June 1895. No. 46: G.A. Moore (Oil River Trading Company) to the Earl of Kimberly, 4-2-1895

FO 403/ 215: The King and Chiefs of Brass to Sir C. MacDonald. 4-2-1895

CO 54/ 988/ 2: George watts to earl Granville, Liverpool October 29, 1884. Correspondences Respecting Affairs in the Oil River Districts of the West Coast of Africa and the Increase of Consular Supervision and British Responsibilities.

F.O. 2/ 83/ 11 (containing the list of all 20 persons acting as British VC or consular agents, judicial officers within the district of the Consul General MacDonald at Old Calabar, Niger Coast Protectorate as at 11-1-18950)

F.O. 2/ 50: 1893- Niger Coast (Oil Rivers) Protectorate: Report on the Bonny District Oil Rivers Protectorate for the 6 Months Ending June 1892.

F.O. 403/ 376: Correspondence Respecting 'Arms and Liquor Traffic in East and West Africa' (1906) Part 1 [Also F.O. 403/ 376/ 5: R.L. Antrobus (C.O. to F.O.) Received 24-1-1906].

F.O. 403/ 156 (1891): Further Correspondences... Royal Niger Company (Part V) Foreign Office, March 1892 (Containing incl., such as those on boundary adjustment and texts of treaty signed between RNC and Natives)

F.O. 403/ 133: Memorandum by Major MacDonald on the Oil Rivers Establishment. Foreign Office, December 23, 1890

F.O. 403/ 131: Report by Major MacDonald of his Visit as Her Majesty's Commissioner to the Niger and Oil Rivers. Foreign Office, March 1890

F.O. 403/ 149 (1890): Further Correspondence Respecting the RNC. Foreign Office, 1891

[Contained details of the RNC infrastructures in the ND, especially in Akassa]

- F.O. Further Correspondence Respecting the RNC. 1889 (especially incl. 1 in No. 48; incl. 5 in No. 146; etc)
- F.O. 403/ 86: Correspondence Respecting King Jaja of Opobo. 1885-1887 (+ inclusions.
- F.O. 403/ 77: Correspondences between Jaja and the Foreign Office.
- F.O. 93/ 6/ 1922: 'Revoking the Charter of the Royal Niger Company', Westminster, London. 28-12-1899 [Original Version]
- F.O. 403/ 34 (1883): Inclusion no. 34 (December 31, 1883)- document prepared in the Colonial Office in 1876 on the proposed exchange of territory with France on the West Coast of Africa.
- F.O. 403/ 31: Correspondence Respecting Affairs of the Oil Rivers District. November 1883-June 1884. Incl.
- F.O. 403/ 20: Further Correspondence Respecting Affairs of the Oil River District. 1883 (this document contained mostly issues relating to French action on the West Coast of Africa, especially in the OR.
- F.O. 403/ 19: Correspondence Respecting Affairs in the Oil Rivers District. December 1882-June 1883 (+ incl. 1: Holt to Earl Granville. December 11, 1882; No. 2- Herbert to Lister. Downing Street, 16-1-1883; No. 10- Commander McLeod to the Secretary to the Admiralty. April 1883; etc. on Anglo-French rivalries)
- F.O. 97/ 432 (incl. 2, no. 25): Engagement with the King and Chiefs of the Bonny, August 21, 1841
- F.O. 93/ 6/ 20A: Africa, (West Coast) Treaties with Cross Rivers Chiefs. January- March 1888. [See F.O. 93/ 6/ 20B, for treaty with Okrika; F.O. 93/ 6/ 16, with Opobo]
- F.O. 93/ 6/ 11: Africa, West Coast, Treaties, October-November 1884: Asaba, Okrika, Abo, Onitsha, Ase, Brass, etc. (For treaties, see F.O. 93/ 6/ 8-20)
- F.O. 93/ 6/ 3: Africa, west Coast. Treaties. Slave Trade for 1884-1850
- C.O. 544/ 1121: Representations on Behalf of Rivers Chiefs, Eastern Region (C.O. 544/ 1121/ 1: 19-7-1956- CO letters 'Re: London Conference on Nigerian Constitution, Cause of the Rivers Chiefs and Peoples'.
- F.O. 403/ 18: Correspondence Respecting Affairs of the Oil Rivers District on the West Coast of Africa and the Question of British Protectorate. June 1883, (Covering 1897-1883).
- F.O. 403/ 18/ 2: King Jaja to Earl Granville. Dated 26-May 1881
- F.O. 403/ 18/ 4: Prince James Eyamba V and Others (21 chiefs) to Consul Hewett. 24-6-1881
- F.O. 403/ 18/ 4: Commander Hammick to Commodore Sir F. Richards. 21-11-1881 (debunking allegations against Jaja)
- F.O. 403/ 18/ 11: Earl Granville to King Jaja, 21-1-1882

- F.O. 403/ 18/ 12: Earl Granville to Jaja
- F.O. 403/ 18/ 12 (incl. No. 15): Hewett to earl Granville, 17-2-1882
- F.O. 403/ 18/ 12 (incl. No. 16): Hewett to Earl Granville, 17-2-82
- F.O. 403/ 18/ 12 (incl. No. 14): Holt to Granville, 16-2-1882
- F.O. 403/ 18/ 12 (incl. No. 21): Holt to Granville, 12-4-1882
- F.O. 403/ 18/ 12 (incl. No. 23): Remarks by Mr. Nugent upon British Trade in the West Coast of Africa, and on Court of Equity Established there'. 29-4-1882
- C.O. 537 (1842): Civil Disturbance: Scheme of Reorganization (acting Governor A.G. Boyle to Right Honorable Viscount Miller, Secretary of State for the Colonies)
- C.O. 537/ 123/ 160: George Tubman Goldie to Churchill, Admiralty, Whitehall
- C.O. 537/ 3554: Mineral Royalties in Nigeria
- C.O. 537/ 3554/ 30: H.M. Foot to A.B. Cohen esq. The Colonial Office, 9-9-1948
- C.O. 537/ 3554/ 8: M.V. Backhouse, (Secretary Northern Province) to The Honorable, The Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos. (Appendix A to Memo. No. 22206/ 182, Kaduna 5-7-1947
- C.O. 537/ 7170: Disorders in Eastern Province
- C.O. 537/ 7170/ 44: Petition from the chiefs and Peoples of Okrika to the Rt. Hon. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, the CO, London, 17-7-1951
- C.O. 537/ 7173: [Contained detailed evidence given be 20 witnesses to the Kalabari-Okrika clash]
- C.O. 537/ 7170/ 4: Governor, Nigeria to Secretary of State, CO, ref. # 30819/ 51 of 3-4-1951 on the Okrika-Kalabari Dispute
- C.O. 583/ 148/ 3: Lands Vested in government in Trust for HM by Niger Lands Transfer Ordinance (Cap 86 of the Laws of Nigeria, 1923 [Confidential memo: Governor Johnson to The Rt. Hon. L.C.M.S. Amery, Secretary of State for Colonies]
- C.O. 537/ 5783/ 1: Memo from Police Advisor to the secretary of State, CO to HE. Governor Sir John Macpherson on his visit to Nigeria.
- C.O. 537/ 5784 and C.O. 537/ 7165: Police Department, Organization of, Under New Constitution (Macpherson Constitution)
- C.O. 583/ 143/ 3/ 55: Captain H. Burgess Watson to Crown agent for the Calabar, Tembura, 27-1-1926
- C.O. 583/ 143/ 3: Nigerian Coal and Lignite: Production of the Oil from
- C.O. 583/ 146/ 9: H.B. waters to Flood. Dispatches to West African Governors- W.O.G. 18-1-1927 [On oil palm and palm oil plantation, establishment]

- C.O. 583/ 159/ 3: Petroleum Ordinance (Cap. 134)- Ordinances, Orders-in-Council, rules, and Regulations made under
- C.O. 583/ 161/ 1: Oil Concession: Application by Major and Seaborn Marks through Chief Secretary to the Governor of Nigeria, Lagos, 16-6-1931
- C.O. 583/ 181/ 1: A.W. G. Bleck, Oil in Nigeria
- C.O. 583/ 181/ 1/ 10: Petroleum Department (Mines, department, London) to Under-Secretary of State, CO, London, 26-2-1932
- C.O. 583/ 188/ 8: Governor of Nigeria to the rt. Hon. Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 18-1-1933
- C.O. 583: Disturbance at Sapele in Warri Province
- C.O. 583/ 158/ 4: Disturbances in Warri Province- J.E.W. Flood to Governor Deputy Baddeley, 13-3-1928
- C.O. 538/ 168/ 14 (1929: Native Unrest in Nigeria
- C.O. 583/ 173/ 2: Wounding of Natives at Amobi on 14-12-1929 by Captain Nunn's party
- C.O. 583/ 176/ 9: Native Unrest in Calabar and Owerri Provinces, December, 1929: Correspondences Arising out of the Report of the Commission
- C.O. 583/ 176/ 9-5b: Memorandum on the Action of the Royal West African Frontier Forces During the Aba Disturbances by Aubery Cooke, 17-12-1930
- C.O. 588/ 2: Southern Nigeria Certified Ordinances, 1906-1907
- C.O. 520/ 39/ 46021: Imperial Institute to Under-secretary of State, CO, 13-12-1906
- C.O. 520/ 54/ 15523: Southern Nigeria, 1907, vol. 12: Captain W.E. Rudkin, Royal Artillery to Secretary, W. O. London
- C.O. 520/ 54/ 14548 (25-4-1907): Aborigines Protection Society to Under-Secretary of State in the Colonies.
- C.O. 520/ 73: Southern Nigeria, 1908, vol. 16: Manager BBWA Limited to Under-Secretary, Colonial Office
- C.O. 520/ 73/ 47820: Oil Drilling- Prospecting License, No. 7, 30-12-1908
- C.O. 520/ 120: Southern Nigeria, 1912, v. 8 [C.O. 520/ 120/ 33433: Oil Mining Leases...
- C.O. 520/ 120/ 34245: Oil Mining: Government assistance to Enable Further drilling Operations, 29-10-1912
- C.O. 520/ 120/ 35742 (12-11-1912): Report on Mineral Specimens from a well of the Nigerian Bitumen Company, Southern Nigeria.
- C.O. 520/ 120/ 34245: Chairman, Nigeria Bitumen Company to Lord Emmatt. 20-10-1912

- C.O. 520/ 66: Southern Nigeria, 1908, v. 9
- C.O. 520/ 66/ 33869: Egerton to SS Colonies, 15-09-1908 (Telegram)
- C.O. 520/ 87/ 17056: Oil struck in Bore No. 9', 19-05-1909 [NBC Limited to R.L. Antrobus, First under-Secretary for the Colonies, CO, 19-5-1909
- C.O. 520/ 87/ 24005: Qua Iboe Mission: Punitive Expedition at Enen on Qua Iboe River
- C.O. 520/ 87/ 31740: Oil Struck, 24-09-1909- Bergheim to Crewe (Secretary of State for Colonies, 24-09-1909
- C.O. 520/ 87/ 32427 (1-10-1909): Oil Industry- British Col. Petroleum Corp. Limited.
- C.O. 520/ 87/ 39083: Secretary, BCPC to Crewe, 1-12-1909: Oil Mining License
- C.O. 520/ 55/ 40763: Bergheim to Governor of Southern Nigeria [copy to under-secretary of state for colonies. 19-11-1907
- C.O. 520/ 14: Southern Nigeria, 1902, v. II [dominated by issues relating to the Aro expedition]
- C.O. 520/ 14/ 25447: Mineral Prospecting. 23-06-1902
- C.O. 520/ 32: Southern Nigeria, 1905, v. 4
- C.O. 520/ 32/ 36872 (17-10-1905): Punitive Expedition to Kwale Country

Appendix: Research Instruments

Structured Questionnaires

Consent Procedure

" I am carrying out a doctoral research project on " Oil Capital, Ethnic Nationalism and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta of Nigeria". Your participation will enable me to carry on with the study. The information that you would give be treated with absolute confidentiality. I would need your consent to proceed with the study. Thank you."

Name of State.....

Name of Community.....

Date of interview.....

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondent

1. Age (last birthday)years

2. Sex :

Male.....(1) Female.....(2)

3. Marital Status:

Single(1) Married(2)

Widowed(3) Separated(4)

Divorced.....(5)

4. Religion:

Christianity(1) Islam.....(2)

Traditional Religion.....(3)

5. Educational background.....

Illiterate.....(1) Primary(2)

Secondary(3) Tertiary.....(4)

Any Other(5)

6. Occupation.....

Professional.....(1) White Collar(2)

Skilled(3) Unskilled(4)

Jobless(5)

7. Average Income per month (please specify income from all sources in Naira):

#.....

8. Residence:

Rural(1) Urban.....(2)

9. Ethnic Affiliation:

10. Distance to the neighboring ethnic group: (Specify in Kilometer)

11. Distance from residence to oil fields/ wells sites: (Specify in Kilometer)

12. When did your community start producing oil ? Year.....

13. What per cent of the total oil produced in Nigeria is derived from your community?

14. How many oil fields are located in your community? Specify number.....

15. What are the name(s) of the oil company that are operating in your community?

- (1).....
- (2).....
- (3).....
- (4).....

16. When did it (they) start the production?.....

17. Do you have any idea as to how many barrels of oil have been produced in your area(s) to date?

YES..... NO....

If Yes, how many? (Specify)

18. Can you make an estimate of how much government is making from oil currently produced from this community?

YES..... NO.....

If Yes, how much? Naira.....

19. How would you describe the relationship between the State, oil companies and oil producing communities?

- Peaceful.....(1)
- Co-operate.....(2)
- Stable..... (3)
- Violent.....(4)

20. What would you say are the main complaints that your communities have against oil companies who operate here (Tick as many of these as possible, if applicable)?

- a. Political/ economic domination.....(1)
- b. Neglect..... (2)
- c. The way the federal system is being operated.....(3)
- d. Poor social amenities.....(4)
- e. Revenue sharing formula.....(5)
- f. Environmental degradation.....(6)

- g. Ecological degradation.....(7)
- h. Oil spillage.....(8)
- i. The attitude of the oil companies' executives.....(9)
- j. The attitudes of the oil workers towards your women, culture, traditions.....(10)
- k. Gas flares....., (11).

L) List other complaints.....

21. What would you say are the main complaints that your communities have against the government?

- a). Political/ Economic domination.....(1)
- b). Neglect.....(2)
- c). The way the federal system is being operated.....(3)
- d). Poor social amenities.....(4),
- e). Revenue sharing formula.....(5),
- f). Environmental degradation.....(6),
- g). Ecological degradation.....(7),

21a. Are these problems or issues common to all oil communities in the country?
Yes.....no.....

21b. If the answer is No, what do you consider to be the special problem(s) in this community?
.....

22. Put differently, would you say the problems in other oil communities are similar to those in your own community? Yes..... No.....

23. Would you say that the problems and experiences are different because

- a) Your community is a major oil producer.....
 - b) Your community is only producing skeletally at the moment.....
- (Pick one answer)

24. Exactly what changes would you like to see in the relationship between the government /oil companies would change operation styles?

.....

.....

24a. Would you agree that the oil communities have genuine grievances against the state and oil companies?

Yes.....no.....

24b. What are there grievances?

.....

.....

24c. Are they justified? Please explain

25. How would you interpret the Niger Delta Question?

- a. Self-determination.....(1)
- b. Minority Rights.....(2)
- c. Resource Control(3)
- d. Autonomy.....(4)
- e. Environmental Degradation.....(5)
- f. Cultural Rights.....(6)

26. Which of the following is the major problem in your community?

(Tick all relevant answers)

- Uncontrolled gas flares.....(1)
- Environmental/ecological pollution.....(2)
- Interference with your cultural practices, traditions...(3)
- Sexual harassment of the women in your community.....(4)
- Any other.....(5)

27. Why do you consider items ticked in No.24 as important issues in the relations between the government/oil companies and your communities?

.....
.....
.....

28. What steps have been taken by your community so far to bring these problems to the notice of the following:

- a) Local Government.....
- b) State Government.....
- c) Federal Government.....
- d) Oil Companies.....

How would you describe the responses of each of these agencies/bodies?

- a) LGA.....b.) State government.....
- c.) Federal government.....d) Oil companies.....

29. How would you describe the responses of the local government to problems identified by your community?

- Favorable.....(1) Most favorable.....(2)
- Unfavorable.....(3) Most unfavorable.....(4)

30. How would describe the responses of the state government to problems of oil exploration in your community?

- Favorable.....(1) Most favorable.....(2)
- Unfavorable.....(3) Most unfavorable.....(4)

31. How would describe the responses of the federal government to problems of oil exploration in your community?

- Favorable.....(1)
- Unfavorable.....(3)
- Most favorable.....(2)
- Most unfavorable.....(4)

32. How would you describe the responses of the oil companies to problems of oil exploration identified by your community?.

- Favorable.....(1)
- Unfavorable.....(3)
- Most favorable.....(2)
- Most unfavorable.....(4)

33. Are you satisfied with their responses or solutions to the problem(s)?

Yes.....No.....

Please give reasons for your answer.....

33a. How would you describe the relationship between the government and oil producing communities?

- i) Cordial.....(1)
- ii) turbulent.....(2)
- ii) Confrontational.....(3)
- iv)Specify others.....(4)

.....
.....

33b. How would you describe the relationship between the oil companies and the oil communities?

- i) Cordial.....(1)
- ii) turbulent.....(2)
- iii) Confrontational.....(3)
- iv) Specify others.....(4)

.....

33c. Please identify what you consider to be the main issues at stake in these relationships.

.....

34. Does the government provide any social amenities in your local communities?

Yes.....No.....

If the answer is yes, please name those facilities:

- i)
- ii)
- iii)
- iv)

34a. How would you rate the facilities?

- a) adequate(1)
- b) inadequate.....(2)
- c) functional(3)
- d) non-functional.....(4)

Please give reasons for your answer, noting specific examples.....

35. Do you think that the oil companies owe it a duty to your community to provide social amenities?

Yes..... No.....

35a. Do the oil companies feel the same way? Yes..... No.....

If the answer is no, what are the reasons given by the oil companies for their attitude?

.....
.....
.....

36. What are the major facilities that have been provided by oil companies in your community?

i)..... ii).....
iii)..... iv).....

36a. How would you rate the facilities?

- a) adequate(1)
- b) inadequate.....(2)
- c) functional(3)
- d) non-functional.....(4)

Please give reasons for your answer.....

36b. If the amenities are not satisfactory, what would you say is (are) basically wrong with them?

- a) the inadequate number of facilities available.....1),
- b) the quality.....(2),
- c) the location.....3),
- d) the design/concept.....4),
- e) technology applicable.....5),
- f) the cost.....6)

37a. Would you say that facilities provided by government, whether local, state or federal, are much more appropriate/useful than those provided by the oil companies?

Yes..... NO.....

37b. Please give reasons for your answer.....

.....

38a. Are the local communities generally consulted about any project in their community? YES..... NO.....

38b. If yes, at what stage is the local community consulted?

- i) before the project.....1)
- ii) at the planning stage.....2).
- iii) At the execution stage.....3)

iv) At the commissioning of the project.....4)

39a. Has your community ever embarked on violent protest to bring the attention of the government and the oil companies to your predicament?

Yes.... No.....

39b. If the answer is no, please give reasons.....
.....

39c. If it is yes, please give details of the methods that you have used in your protest.
.....
.....

40. Would you say that the protests were successful in bringing about the changes desired in your relationship with the government and oil companies?

YES.... NO.....

41. Which of the following do you think is the main solution to the problem of oil producing areas in the country? (You can tick more than one answer)

- a) Self-determination.....1)
- b) Devolution of powers.....2)
- c) Better revenue sharing formula.....3)
- d) Better ecological and environmentally friendly policies.....4)
- e) Better consultation between them and government/oil companies.....5),
- f) Provision of amenities.....6),
- g) Provision of employment opportunities to local community.....7),
- h) Any other (s):
 - i).....8)
 - ii).....
 - iii).....

42. What should the government and oil companies do to ensure a harmonious relationship with the oil communities?

- 1)..... 2)..... 3).....
- 4)..... 5)..... 6).....

43. What should oil companies do to ensure peaceful co-existence with the oil communities?

- 1)..... 2).....
- 3)..... 4).....
- 5)..... 6).....

44. What do you consider to be the role of the oil communities, e.g. the local movements, chiefs, peer groups, and the individual in ensuring peaceful co-existence with the government and oil companies?

.....
.....

45. Do you think that OMPADEC has been able to promote development, peace and stability in the oil communities? Yes..... No.....

If no, please give reasons for your answer.

.....
.....

46. Would you say that OMPADEC has been more successful in some oil communities than in others?

Yes.....1) No.....2)

Please give reasons for your answer(s)

.....
.....
.....

47. What was it that OMPADEC did that was basically wrong?

Please identify the wrong doings

1)..... 2).....
3)..... 4).....
5)..... 6).....

48. What areas should the proposed responsibilities do you think the proposed Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) focus its attention?

a. c.....
c..... d.....
e..... f.....

49. Which of the following do you think should be done to make the proposed NDDC much more responsive to the yearnings of the oil communities in the country?

Please list them

1)..... 2).....
3)..... 4).....
5)..... 6).....

50. Do you think that oil communities must have the final say in who should head the proposed NDDC?

Yes.....1) No.....2).

Please give reasons for your answer.

.....
.....

51. What would you suggest to be the most imaginative and effective ways of eradicating domination, violence and conflict in the relations between the government/oil companies and oil communities in Nigeria now and in the foreseeable future?

1).....
2).....
3).....
4).....
5).....

52a. Would you say the military government was the biggest obstacle to peaceful co-existence in the oil communities? YES.... NO.....

52b. Give reasons:.....
.....

53. Would you say that the present civilian democratic government is likely to listen to the complaints of oil communities?

Yes.....1) No.....2).

Please give reasons for your answer

.....
.....

54. Do you believe that there is a role for the international community to play in redressing the present situation? Yes.....1)

No.....2)

If no, please give reason for your answer:.....

.....

If yes, which steps can be taken by the international community to accommodate the changes being advocated.

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1)..... | 2)..... |
| 3)..... | 4)..... |
| 5)..... | 6)..... |

55a. Would you, for example, say that there is a role to be played by NGOs.?

YES.....1) NO.....2)

Please State them:

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1)..... | 2)..... |
| 3)..... | 4)..... |
| 5)..... | 6)..... |

56b. Please make any other suggestions that could promote peace and development in your community

56c. Have you ever heard of the following NGOs/ Agencies?

- 1) Unrepresented Nations Peoples' Organization: YES.....1) NO.....2)
- 2) World Council of Churches: YES.....1) NO.....2)
- 3) Amnesty International: YES.....1) NO.....2)
- 4) Human Rights Watch/Africa: YES.....1) NO.....2)
- 5) Civil Liberties Organization: YES.....1) NO.....2)
- 6) Committee for the Defense of Human Rights: YES.....1) NO.....2)
- 7) Constitutional Rights Project: YES.....1) NO.....2)
- 8). Niger Delta/ Human and Environmental Rescue Organization:
YES.....1) NO.....2)
- 9). Chikoko Movement: YES.....1) NO.....2)
- 10). Environmental Rights Action: YES..... 1) NO.....2)

57d. Identify which of these will be relevant to your local need, and exactly what you think they can do for your local community.

- 1) Unrepresented Nations Peoples' Organization
- 2) World Council of Churches
- 3) Amnesty International
- 4) Human Rights Watch/Africa
- 5) Civil Liberties Organization
- 6) Committee for the Defense of Human Rights
- 7) Constitutional Rights Project
- 8). Niger Delta/ Human and Environmental Rescue Organization:
- 9). Chikoko Movement
- 10). Environmental Rights Action

ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC VIOLENCE

58. Does your community belong to the same ethnic group as the neighboring community? YES..... (1) NO.....(2)

59. Would you agree that ethnic political mobilization has been on the rise in your community, and in other communities around you? YES..... (1) NO.....(2)

Please give reasons:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

60. What are the impacts of the rise of ethnic mobilization on your community, and on neighboring communities?

- Most favorable.....(1)
- Favorable.....(2)
- Unfavorable.....(3)
- Most unfavorable.....(4)

61. How would you describe the relationship between your ethnic group and those of your immediate neighbors?

- Very cordial.....(1)
- Cordial.....(2)
- Not cordial.....(3)
- Most uncordial.....(4)

62a. Has your community ever had an inter-communal dispute with neighboring communities? YES..... (1) NO.....(2)

Please identify the major issues of contention?

- a).
- b).
- c).

62b. What forms did the inter-communal dispute take?

- Violent.....(1)
- Dialogue.....(2)
- Court Litigation.....(3)
- Petition to government.....(4)
- No action taken.....(5)

62c. Please specify the major conflict resolution mechanisms adopted?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

62d. Did any of the conflict involve the intervention of the state security (police/ army/

navy)? YES.....(1) NO.....(2)

62e. At what stage did the state security intervene?

- a). Before the conflict.....(1)
- b). During the initial stage of the conflict.....(2)
- c). Late into the conflict.....(3)
- d). No intervention all(4)

62f. How would you describe the outcome of the intervention in the inter-communal disputes?

- a). Most favorable.....(1)
- b). favorable.....(2)
- c). Unfavorable.....(3)
- d). Most Unfavorable.....(4)

63. What factors do you think are responsible for inter-communal disputes:

- a) oil companies.....(1)
- b) Land dispute.....(2)
- c) Water or fishing grounds.....(3)
- d) Historical enmity.....(4)
- e) Environmental pollution.....(5)
- f) Government policy.....(6)
- g) The role of politicians.....(7)
- h) The role of traditional chiefs.....(8)
- i) Others (Please Specify.....)

64a. How many communal associations or movements are in your community?

- a). Please specify number.....
- b). Please name them:
-

65b. Please identify the factors responsible for the emergence and proliferation of communal associations and movements?

.....
.....
.....
.....

66a. Have you ever seen a weapon (especially gun) before?

YES.....(1) NO.....(2)

66b. How do you think the proliferation of light weapons and ammunitions among youths can be controlled?

.....
.....
.....

66c. What should be done in order to discourage the youths from the possession of dangerous weapons and the use of violence?

.....
.....
.....

67. How would you describe the peacetime relationship between your community and the police or soldiers stationed here?

- a. Very cordial(1)
- b. Good.....(2)
- c. Bad.....(3)
- d. Very bad.....(4)
- e. No relations.....(5)

68a. Are you satisfied with the activities of the security services (army/ police/ navy) during communal disturbances? YES.....(1) NO.....(2)

68b. If the answer to (22a) is No, please specify the major problems?

.....
.....
.....
.....

In-depth Interview Schedule for Police/ Army/ Navy Personnel in the Niger Delta

Consent Procedure

I am carrying out a doctoral research project titled: "Oil Capital, Ethnic Nationalism and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta of Nigeria". Your participation would enable me to carry out the project. The information you would give would be treated with absolute confidentiality. Your name and address would not be disclosed to anybody or security agency. I would need your consent to proceed with the study. Thank you.

Name of Station/ Post.....

Name of Community.....

Date of Interview

Socio-Demographic Characteristics/ Data of Respondents.

Age (last Birthday).....

Sex.....

Marital Status

State of Origin.....

Educational level attained: primary school, secondary school, university.

If university; name of institution

Type of degree(s)/ Date of Graduation

Rank.....

Branch: Army/ Navy/ Police/ Air Force Amphibious Unit

1. How would you interpret the Niger Delta Question?
2. Do you think the grievances of the oil communities are legitimate?
3. Why do you think oil-producing communities are increasingly violent?
4. Do you think that the reactions of your Organization to the on-going conflict have had the desired effect? If no, why?
5. Do you think that the reactions of the State to the crisis among oil communities have had the desired effect? If no, what do you think should be done to correct the situation?
6. Which force (police/ army/ navy) has been most involved in the conflicts in the ND?
7. At what stage of the crisis did the army/ police become involved?
8. Assess the type of weapons used and the operational tactics of the military/ police?
9. What major differences are there in the types of weapons used and the operational tactics of the military/ police?
10. What is your perception of the police/ army/ navy involvement in the ND? Would you say that their interventions have reduced or escalated the conflict?
11. Describe a typical police/ army/ navy operation you participated in or witnessed?
12. How would you describe the peacetime relationship between your community and the police or soldiers stationed here?
13. What is the policy (or criteria) of the police (or army, navy) in troop deployment to crisis zones?
14. Do you consider non-professional factors, for instance, language, religion and ethnicity in such postings? Give reasons for your answer

15. How long are troops (a platoon) supposed to be stationed in a particular conflict zone?
16. What is the policy of the police and the army on the use of firearms during civil conflicts?
17. Are you satisfied with the activities of your force during internal peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions?
18. In what areas have you identified problems, and how can they be corrected?
19. What problems (housing, equipment, patrol boats, weapons etc.) do you usually encounter in your operation within the oil Delta? What efforts are currently being made to solve the problems?
20. What is your force's perception of the community in which you have intervened to maintain peace?

Thank you very much for your time.

In-depth Interview Schedule for Oil Company Workers in the Niger Delta.

Consent Procedure

"I am carrying out a research project titled: "Oil Capital, Ethnic Nationalism and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta of Nigeria". Your participation would enable me to carry out the project. The information you would give would be treated with absolute confidentiality. Your name and address would not be disclosed to anybody or security agency. I would need your consent to proceed with the study. Thank you.

Location of Interview

Name of Employer

Date of Interview

Socio-demographic characteristics/ Data of respondents.

Age.....

Sex.....

State of Origin.....

Educational level attained: primary school, secondary school, university.
If university; name of institution

Type of Degree(s)/ Date of Graduation

Full Name of Employer.....

Years of Employment with Oil Company.....

Present Job Status/ Description.....

1. Are you satisfied with your company's oil production activities over the years?
Yes/ No.
If no, what has been the major problem facing the realization of its corporate goals?
2. Have you ever visited an oil producing community? If yes, how frequent and for how long on an average?
3. What is your impression of a typical oil community visited? Are your impressions similar to those of typical non-oil producing rural communities in other parts of Nigeria visited?
4. What would you say are the fundamental differences between an oil producing community in which your company operates and a typical non-oil producing community visited?
5. What factors are responsible for the current atmosphere of insecurity and communal disturbances among oil communities in the Niger Delta?
6. How would you interpret the increasing recourse to violence by oil communities?
7. Would you say that community disturbances affect the oil production activities of your Company? In what specific ways?
8. Have you had any experience of cordial relations with an oil producing community? If yes, what factors account for this situation?

9. What have been the efforts of your Company in addressing the grievances of oil communities?
10. How do you generate and pursue community based projects?
11. What are the major challenges your Company faces in addressing the grievances of oil communities?
12. What do you think can be done to reverse or completely avoid communal strife among oil communities?
13. Has your company ever had any experience of attack against its staff and production sites? Please give anecdotal examples?
14. What policy interventions do you think the State should put in place in order to address the grievances of oil communities?
15. Do you think that the reactions of the State to the crisis among oil communities have had the desired effect? If not, what do you think should be done to correct the situation?
16. Have you had any experience of cordial relations with an oil producing community. If yes, what factors account for this situation.
17. Do you think that the reactions of your Organization to the on-going conflict have had the desired effect? If no, why?
18. How would you interpret the Niger Delta Question?
19. Do you think the grievances of the oil communities are legitimate?
20. What is your perception of the police/ army involvement in the Niger Delta?
Would you say that their interventions have escalated or reduced conflicts?

Thank you very much for your time.

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Consent Procedure

I am carrying out a doctoral research project on "Oil Capital, Ethnic Nationalism and Civil Conflicts in the Niger Delta of Nigeria". Your participation will enable me to carry on with the study. The information that you would give be treated with absolute confidentiality. I would need your consent to proceed with the study. Thank you."

Name of Discussion Leader.....

Name of Oil Community (please request for organogram showing traditional hierarchy of power and authority)

Number of People in the discussion Group.....

Date discussion was held.....

Duration of the Discussion.....

- What are the major highlights of the grievances of oil communities?
- How would you describe the operational presence of oil and gas companies in your community?
- What factors are responsible for the current atmosphere of insecurity and communal disturbances among oil communities in the Niger Delta?
- What do you think can be done to reverse or completely avoid communal strife among oil communities?
- What factors account for the rise in ethnicity and ethnic nationalism among oil producing communities?
- What are the impacts of the rise of ethnic mobilization on your community, and on neighboring communities?
- What do you think are the factors responsible for the emergence and proliferation of communal associations and movements in oil communities?
- Has your community ever had an inter-communal dispute with neighboring communities? If yes, what were the major issues of contention?
- What are the major conflict resolution mechanisms available or adopted?
- What is your perception of the reactions of: (a) the State; (b) Oil Companies, to the crisis in oil communities?

- What is your view on the use of force by the state to pacify restive oil communities?
- Please give account of any history of violent inter-communal conflict involving your community and neighboring communities?
- What steps should be taken to prevent any such conflict in the future?
- What are the major socio-economic problems facing your community?
- Whose responsibility do you think it is to address these socio-economic problems
- What is your view on the on going attempts by the government to alleviate the socio-economic problems facing oil communities?
- What factors account for youth violence in your community?
- How do you think the proliferation of light weapons and ammunitions among youths can be controlled?

