

# MASTER THESIS

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**Oil, a Blessing or a Curse? A Comparison of the Socio-Economic and  
Environmental Effects of Oil Development on Indigenous Peoples'  
Livelihood in Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta**

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*For All Indigenous Peoples*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ACFN	Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
BHRRC	Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
CCAB	Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FMGOC	Fort McKay Group of Companies
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MOSOP	Movement of the Survival of the Ogoni People
NAHO	National Aboriginal Health Organization
NARCAN	Natural Resources Canada
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
OSCA	Oil Sands Community Alliance
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company
TNC	Transnational Corporation
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

## **Abstract**

*This study examines the effects of resource development on indigenous peoples, comparing how oil development has affected the livelihood of First Nations in Alberta, Canada and the Ogoni in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. The study aims at analysing the roles of the state and oil transnational corporations in both countries, focusing on how the developments of oil have affected these indigenous people socio-economically and environmentally. The study draws on two theories and one concept namely; resource curse theory, frustration-aggression theory, and the concept of neo-colonialism. Secondary qualitative data have been accessed for this study and the findings of the study show that although the development of oil has been a mixed blessing in both countries, the state and oil transnational corporations in Alberta have taken better steps in mitigating the negative effects of oil development on indigenous peoples' livelihood in northern Alberta, unlike what is happening in the Niger Delta where the oil is recklessly exploited from the indigenous peoples' land and these peoples suffer suppression and oppression by the state and oil transnational corporations, in addition to socio-economic and environmental dislocations.*

**Keywords:** Oil, indigenous peoples, state, transnational corporations, development, resource(s), land, resource curse, neo-colonialism, frustration-aggression.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*“We must protect the forests for our children, grandchildren and children yet to be born. We must protect the forests for those who can’t speak for themselves such as the birds, animals, fish and trees.”* - Qwatsinas (Hereditary Chief Edward Moody), Nuxalk Nation

*“We owe the Aboriginal peoples a debt that is four centuries old. It is their turn to become full partners in developing an even greater Canada. And the reconciliation required may be less a matter of legal texts than of attitudes of the heart.”* - Romeo LeBlanc (Former Governor General of Canada)

*“Today, Aboriginal peoples are gradually regaining control of their own cultural identities, governance and lands, often with the support of judgements from Canada's highest courts.”* - Anonymous

*“...I repeat that we all stand before history. I and my colleagues are not the only ones on trial. Shell is here on trial and it is as well that it is represented by counsel said to be holding a watching brief. The Company has, indeed, ducked this particular trial, but its day will surely come and the lessons learnt here may prove useful to it for there is no doubt in my mind that the ecological war that the Company has waged in the Delta will be called to question sooner than later and the crimes of that war be duly punished. The crime of the Company's dirty wars against the Ogoni people will also be punished. On trial also is the Nigerian nation, its present rulers and those who assist them. Any nation which can do to the weak and disadvantaged what the Nigerian nation has done to the Ogoni, loses a claim to independence and to freedom from outside influence. I am not one of those who shy away from protesting injustice and oppression, arguing that they are expected in a military regime. The military do not act alone. They are supported by a gaggle of politicians, lawyers, judges, academics and businessmen, all of them hiding under the claim that they are only doing their duty, men and women too afraid to wash their pants of urine.”* - Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa (Writer and Ogoni Environmentalist)



## 1.1 Background

There is an enormous literature about resource development. Many authors have argued that countries that are endowed with non-renewable natural resources which have to be extracted for development tend to face a myriad of challenges (i.e. social, economic, environmental, etc.), while many other authors disagree with this notion. It is a widely held view that these resources are found on lands that belong to indigenous peoples, and often requires a certain level of negotiations between states, resource extraction/development companies, and indigenous peoples. “Resource extraction companies worldwide are involved with Indigenous peoples. Historically these interactions have been antagonistic, yet there is a growing public expectation for improved ethical performance of resource industries to engage with Indigenous peoples.” (Lertzman and Vredenburg 2005, 239).

Since the discovery of oil in Nigeria, the country witnessed and still witnesses tremendous changes economically, politically and socially. Some scholars have said this discovery brought about positive changes to the country, while many have opined that the discovery of oil has done more harm than good, labelling it a ‘curse’ to Nigeria. The indigenous peoples of Niger Delta have been affected in unique ways (mainly negative) since the largest chunk of Nigeria’s oil is exploited from their lands, and Nigeria relies majorly on oil production as an income generator for the country (Nwoke, 2010). Just like Nigeria, Canada also has large oil and gas resources located in mainly indigenous areas. But when many authors argue for the ‘resource curse’, Canada is hardly used as an example to support the resource curse theory.

In the existing literature about resource development in the Niger Delta, a lot of emphases have been placed on the negative effects of oil. Several progressive academic scholars have linked this to the resource curse/paradox of plenty, which refers to the paradox that countries endowed enormously with resources like oil, tend to be economically unstable. Judging from the situation in Nigeria, one might agree with the resource curse theory. However, is this the case in a country like Canada? And can this resource curse be avoided? It is a widely held view that oil has been a mixed blessing in both countries. In other words, it has been a blessing and a curse.

Although Canada and Nigeria are both endowed with many natural resources, I will for this study, focus on oil, analysing the environmental and socio-economic effects of resource development on the indigenous peoples in Northern Alberta and Niger Delta. It is important to know the indigenous peoples’ plight/concerns, and how the state and oil transnational

corporations (oil TNCs) have responded to these concerns/how they have engaged the people. In the body of this study, I attempt to provide some answers in comparing the state and oil transnational corporations' (oil TNCs) responses in both countries. In Canada, the state and oil TNCs seem to have done more and channelled more resources towards ensuring that they have cordial and less antagonistic relationships with the indigenous peoples, while in Nigeria, the indigenous peoples suffer a great degree of neglect and non-recognition.

## **1.2 Indigenous Peoples in Canada**

Indigenous peoples play an important role in Canadian history and are relevant till today with a pre-colonial and post-colonial history that cannot be overlooked in Canada. A detailed writing about indigenous peoples in Canada is beyond the scope of this paper, however, Anaya (2014) informs us that 4.3 percent of Canada's overall population are indigenous peoples who amount to 1.4 million of Canada's whole population which is about 32.9 million.

“Around half of these are registered or “status” Indians (First Nations), 30 per cent are Métis, 15 per cent are unregistered First Nations, and 4 per cent are Inuit. There are currently 617 First Nations or Indian bands in Canada representing more than 50 cultural groups and living in about 1,000 communities and elsewhere across the country. Canada's indigenous population is younger and faster-growing than the rest of the Canadian population.” (Anaya 2014, 4).

Several studies have been carried out on indigenous peoples' rights all over the world by various researchers and Anaya (2014) informs us that Canada has a relationship with its indigenous peoples that is guided by a legal framework which is well developed and protects the rights of indigenous peoples in many facets. In addition, Canada's 1982 Constitution was one of the first in the world to include the rights of indigenous peoples, it also recognises and affirms the aboriginal and treaty rights of the Indian, Inuit and Métis of Canada. Aboriginal title is protected by the constitution which acknowledges the historical occupation of indigenous peoples' lands, treaty rights and activities that are culturally important (Anaya, 2014).

## **1.3 Indigenous Peoples in Nigeria**

For this study, it is important to understand that indigenous peoples exist in Nigeria because unlike Canada, indigenous peoples are not constitutionally recognised in Nigeria. Given such circumstance, I argue in some paragraphs below that indigenous peoples do exist in Nigeria.

Growing up in Nigeria, I hardly knew what indigeneity truly meant/the true meaning of indigenous peoples. The majority of Nigerians are referred to, as indigenes of different states across the country. This is because Nigeria is made up of 36 regions (also known as 36 states in Nigeria), and an individual is considered an indigene of his/her parent's state of origin. ‘‘Sub-Saharan Africa is for the most part occupied by peoples who are indigenous to their territories. However, the term 'indigenous people' or 'indigenous population' continues to engender controversy when applied to groups on the continent. The term has assumed meanings which transcend merely being native to specific territories.’’ (Naanen 2012, 150-151). In Nigeria, ‘indigenous peoples’ and ‘ethnic groups’ are often used interchangeably. Although there are several ethnic groups spread across Nigeria’s 36 regions, I argue that it is wrong to categorise these ethnic groups as indigenous peoples because many of the groups do not meet the criteria to be considered as indigenous peoples.

According to the United Nations (UN), it is better to identify indigenous peoples and not define them because there is no single definition of indigenous peoples who are unique in their own ways. However, some important issues inform the definition of indigenous peoples. These include:

- \*Self- identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- \*Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies.
- \*Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources.
- \*Distinct social, economic or political systems.
- \*Distinct language, culture and beliefs.
- Form non-dominant groups of society.
- \*Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2015, 1)

Fagbayibo (2009) informs us that the criteria for identifying indigenous peoples are so many. These include, but are not limited to distinct culture, having a way of life under threat, being dependent on the natural environment, colonial experience/history, being exploited and dominated, marginalised (socially and politically), and being discriminated against. Judging from these criteria, ‘‘three such groups may be identified in Nigeria, namely, the Ogonis, the Ijaws and the Nomadic Fulanis.’’ (Fagbayibo 2009, 3).

There is a possibility that other indigenous peoples exist in Nigeria, but since the Nigerian constitution (which was reported to have been drafted by a military government) does not

recognise indigenous peoples, it becomes difficult to comfortably write about indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta. However, Naanen (2012) informs us that many indigenous communities can be found in the Niger Delta, but they are often referred to as minority ethnic groups.

According to Naanen (2012, 153), “the pioneering resistance against the state and multinational oil corporations (MNOCs), underlined by a highly publicised international campaign, make the Ogoni one of the best-known indigenous groups in the region.” This might be one of the reasons why many authors focus more on how resource extraction have affected the people in Ogoniland. Naanen (2012) informs us that the Ijaw solely occupy Bayelsa state and enjoy state benefits from the federal government, but the Ogoni are a minority in Rivers state. Thus, it is not surprising that more attention has been drawn to the Ogoni.



Map Source: Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People

Kpone-Tonwe (2001) informs us that the Ogoni have been inhabitants/occupants of their present location for so many years dating back to 15 B.C., they practice a unique tradition and they are mainly fishers, farmers, and traders. “Their rich culture and tradition have remained largely intact, despite their experiences under British colonialism. The Ogoni occupy about 404 square miles in the Niger Delta region (Fagbayibo, 2009), and it has been reported, that the current population of the Ogoni is about two million.

The Ijaw have a larger population compared to the Ogoni. They occupy some parts of the Niger Delta region and other parts of Nigeria. Fagbayibo (2009, 5) informs us that “The Ijaws

(also known as ‘Ijo’ or ‘Izon’) are regarded as the oldest settlers in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. The Ijaws are the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria, numbering 14 825 211. They are found in 5 out of the 36 states of Nigeria.’ According to Fagbayibo (2009), the Ijaws have close ties to their environment and they depend to a great extent, on land, which is sacred to them. Like the Ogoni, the Ijaw are traditional fishers and farmers. However, due to the development of oil in the Niger Delta, which has led to pollution/environmental degradation, they find it very difficult to maintain their economic structure (Fagbayibo, 2009).

Many political analysts hold the view that since the indigenous peoples are not recognised by the constitution of Nigeria (a constitution which was drafted by a military regime), it is not appropriate to write about indigenous. However,

self-identification for the Niger Delta groups is so strong that they take their indigenesness for granted. They apparently hardly have any need to prove this assumed historical fact by intellectual means or by linking it to the broader international indigenous movement. Their pre-colonial history and colonial and postcolonial experiences have always made them see themselves as distinct in Nigeria and they have always demanded special constitutional status or separate political institutions to protect their interest and identity. (Naanen 2012,159).

#### **1.4 Motivation and Justification of the Study**

As a Nigerian, having the opportunity to do my mandatory exchange semester (third semester) from September to December 2016, at the University of Northern British Columbia, located in Canada, a country where resource development is also of huge economic importance, with the province of Alberta several hours away from the school, and richly endowed with oil sands that are being developed on Indigenous peoples lands, I am curious to know/interested in knowing how the Indigenous peoples of Northern Alberta have been affected by resource development, comparing their situation to what is happening to the Indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta, and finding out what lessons Nigeria can learn from Canada and vice versa.

In the social sciences, a research can be carried out for different reasons, i.e. to fill a gap in knowledge, proffer solutions to social issues, debunk an existing theory(s), etc. A researcher may also be driven by curiosity. ‘‘After all, curiosity is perhaps one of the defining characteristics of our species, and exploration through the scientific method is a powerful way of satisfying that

curiosity.’’ (Chakradhar 2012, 2). According to Chakradhar (2012), ‘simply curious,’ ‘just wanted to learn,’ or ‘wanted to explore,’ are not uncommon answers that researchers provide when questioned about their research study.

I was fortunate to interact with some indigenous peoples while in Canada, and my curiosity has driven me to carry out this study. In addition, the ongoing disputes over ownership of land/resource allocation and the development of oil sands in Northern Alberta are similar to the Ogoni struggle in the Niger Delta, and there are limited studies (if any) on the comparisons of the effects of oil development in both regions. I am also curious to find out if there is truly a resource curse and if the so-called ‘curse’ applies to all countries that are endowed with natural resources. If the curse truly exists, it is important to know how it can be avoided or mitigated, with more emphasis on indigenous peoples. Thus, for this study, I will focus on First Nations in Northern Alberta and Ogoni in the Niger Delta, comparing how these peoples have been affected by oil development. (In the following paragraphs, First Nations, Ogoni and Indigenous peoples will be used interchangeably).

### **1.5 Research Questions and Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to find out if the challenges of the indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta is the same for indigenous peoples in other oil producing communities in Northern Alberta, and a comparison will be made between both countries, focusing on First Nations in Alberta and Ogoni in the Niger Delta. The study aims at exposing the misconception of some scholars that mere abundance of natural resources like oil in (especially in developing countries) results in a curse/burden on these countries. Hence, it is imperative to critically analyse the role played by the state and oil TNCs in the development of oil in Canada and Nigeria. The study will also look at several environmental and socio-economic damages caused by oil exploration and exploitation in Canada and Nigeria, and how these have affected the livelihoods of the indigenous peoples in both countries.

The research question has been simplified into three sub-questions:

1. How has oil development by the state and oil TNCs affected the indigenous peoples in Alberta, Canada and the Niger Delta, Nigeria environmentally and socio-economically?

2. What are the roles played by the Canadian and Nigerian state and oil TNCs in preventing or allowing environmental degradation and socio-economic dislocation of the indigenous peoples in Northern Alberta and the Nigeria Delta?

3. What have been the indigenous people's plight/concerns with regards to oil development, how have the state and oil TNCs responded to these concerns/how have they engaged the indigenous peoples in Northern Alberta, Canada and the Niger Delta, Nigeria, and how have the indigenous peoples reacted to these responses?

### **1.6 Organization of the Thesis**

Five more chapters make up the rest of this study. Thus, the rest of this study is arranged in the following way; chapter two is the methodology which discusses how the research was conducted and what could have been done better. Chapter three is the theoretical framework which describes the theories that this study is based on. These theories include resource curse theory which is the pillar of this study. Another theory relevant to this study is the frustration-aggression theory which is important in analysing the nexus between frustration and aggression, applying this to what is happening in Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta is important in understanding some aggressive steps taken by the indigenous peoples. The concept of neo-colonialism has also been used in this study, and this concept helps us to understand if what the indigenous peoples in both regions go through can be compared to what was experienced during colonial times several decades ago. Chapter four is the literature review covering studies that have been conducted on resource development and its effect on indigenous people. In this chapter, literature will be reviewed on the effects of natural resources (including oil and gas) on indigenous people in several countries and indigenous peoples in Canada and Nigeria. This chapter will also define resource development and enable the readers to understand why it is important to have a broad perspective of how these developments have affected indigenous peoples in several countries to enable a better understanding of what is happening in Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta. Chapter five is the empirical chapter five is the empirical chapters. The main issues of this study are discussed analysed in chapter five. Chapter six is the concluding chapter which summarises the study, and in this chapter, I will provide some recommendations based on my research findings

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Berg (2001) informs us that the methodological section/chapter is aimed at explaining how the research was executed, to enable the readers to understand the data gathering process during the research. Methodology can be defined as “a general orientation about how research is done.” (Marvasti 2004, 147). According to Silverman (2006), our methodology guides us as researchers, clarifying how we go about studying any phenomenon. “A methodology refers to the choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis etc. in planning and executing a research study.” (Silverman 2006, 15). In any given study, the methodology section is as important as other sections because it “describes the rationale for the application of specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, and analyze information applied to understanding the research problem, thereby, allowing the reader to critically evaluate a study’s overall validity and reliability.” (USC Libraries 2017, 1).

It is a widely held view that researchers often contemplate on whether it is best to use quantitative or qualitative method for their studies, or which method is more relevant to social science research. With regards to applying qualitative or quantitative methods, Silverman (2011) argues that “the choice between different research methods should depend upon what you are trying to find out.” (Silverman 2011, 7). What can be deduced from Silverman (2014) is that research do not occur in a vacuum/there is no unilateral way of conducting research and for researchers, it is imperative to have a clear view of what is to be studied, to conduct the study properly and not going about it the wrong way because some studies are best conducted using quantitative methods, while others are best conducted using qualitative methods and in some studies, it is best to apply both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Marvasti (2004) argues that it is wrong to view qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches as diametrical opposites because both methods do not represent disciplinary absolutes. In addition, some researchers prefer to apply ‘mixed methods’ which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques (Marvasti, 2004). “Methods are tools for doing research, and one need not be committed to them anymore than is necessary to pledge one’s allegiance to a screwdriver over a hammer.” (Marvasti 2004,9). When we are interested in answering certain research questions or conducting certain research, we ought to use numerical data, but, it is also important to gather descriptive data that will best describe the qualities of a



given situation, i.e. when answering questions about how humans emotionally respond to certain issues (Marvasti, 2004).

## **2.1 Why Qualitative Research Method?**

Tracy (2013) informs us that “qualitative research is about immersing oneself in a scene and trying to make sense of it –whether at a company meeting, in a community festival, or during an interview.” (Tracy 2013, 3). In the words of Berg and Lune (2012), qualitative research “refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things, the extent and distributions of our subject matter.” (Berg & Lune 2011, 3). Qualitative research is imperative to understanding our lives, and events and things derive their meanings from qualities (Berg & Lune, 2011).

Several authors have opined that qualitative research has many strengths, and Tracy (2013) is one of such authors who argues that qualitative research has six main strengths. First, scholars who cannot afford high-class laboratories and offices have the opportunity to venture into the field to gather data; second, qualitative research is perfect when we want to study an issue(s) that we are curious about, but we never had a valid reason to enter; third, with qualitative data, we understand cultural activities that will likely be missed in structured surveys or experiments; fourth, using qualitative methods allows researchers uncover important issues that can be studied later using more structured methods; fifth, through qualitative methods, researchers understand cultural aspects which are important but taken for granted. (Tracy, 2013).

The sixth strength of qualitative methods according to Tracy (2013) is perhaps the most important because “good qualitative research helps people to understand the world, their society, and its institutions. Qualitative methodology can provide knowledge that targets societal issues, questions, or problems and therefore serves humankind.” (Tracy 2013, 5). Summarily, with qualitative methods, a researcher(s) can achieve different research goals either on their own or complemented by relationships with other methods of research (Tracy, 2013).

## **2.2 Data Collection Tools**

This study uses secondary qualitative data. Thus, the sources of data explored include in-depth scholarly books from several libraries, articles, journals, internet/website materials, published scholarly works, news archives, current news reports, etc. Marvasti (2004) informs us that the type of analysis you decide to use depends on your theory, the kind of data available to you, and your research questions. My reason for choosing secondary data is because a lot of renowned authors/scholars have conducted so many primary research about oil development in the Niger Delta and Northern Alberta, analysing the role of the state and the oil TNCs and how these developments have affected the livelihoods of indigenous peoples in these regions. Hence, exploring these rich secondary resources gives me an opportunity to gather adequate information for this study. In addition, the situation in both regions keep evolving and exploring news archives and current news reports in both regions also aids this study to a great degree.

## **2.3 Reliability and Validity of the Research**

In any form of research, it is the duty of the researcher to ensure that study is valid and reliable. This is important to ensure that the readers are not misinformed or misled and, in my view, it ensures neutrality and objectivity in the study. Validity refers to the extent to which our research findings can be confirmed as being accurate and reliable, and the degree to which the conclusions are warranted. (MacDonald and Headlam 2008). Reliability on the other hand, which is intertwined with validity is “the extent to which the same result will be repeated/achieved by using the same measure.” (MacDonald and Headlam 2008, 68).

Marvasti (2004) informs us that the question of validity is very important because volumes of information are produced by social scientists throughout the world which make us understand a topic according in relation to the society. Hence, it is important to have yardsticks for critiquing research findings which allow readers and social scientists to “navigate their way through this sea of knowledge, to tell the good from the bad, or at least, to make some intelligent choices about what kind of science they want to consume.” (Marvasti 2004, 113). In other words, validity entails knowing if we called things by their accurate nomenclature based on the empirical data accessible (Marvasti, 2004). In addition to validity, Marvasti (2004) also agrees with McDonald and Headlam (2008) that reliability is another way to evaluate research findings.

“As a whole, reliability allows us to replicate research results over time and across different investigators or investigations.” (Marvasti 2004, 115).

To ensure that this study is valid and reliable, I have explored only published books and articles that have undergone peer reviews and enough academic scrutiny. In addition to these, I have accessed reliable and verifiable internet materials and news reports to be certain that I and the readers will not be misinformed in this study.

## **2.4 Limitations of the Study**

Although rich and substantial information have been gathered from using secondary data for this study, I believe that adding primary data (i.e. interviews) to the study would have made it richer because that would have given me a firsthand view of what the First Nations in Northern Alberta and Ogoni in the Niger Delta experience from oil development in their communities. Conducting primary research would have also been an opportunity to understand steps taken by the state and oil TNCs in oil development.

I initially planned on travelling to Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta to interview some First Nations and some Ogoni who have been directly affected by the development of oil sands and crude oil respectively. In addition, I planned to interview some government officials/representatives and representatives of some oil TNCs in both countries. But due to the lack of adequate finance, the study used secondary data which took several months of hard work and detailed examinations of various primary and secondary studies, news archives and current reliable news reports.

It is noteworthy that I am only allowed to use a maximum of 60 pages for this study. Comparing the Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta should normally require more pages, but I tried to make sure that all important issues as regards the title of this study are covered. However, if given the opportunity to use more pages for the study, a better analysis would have been done.

### **CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Several theoretical approaches/concepts have been applied in this study in order to understand the roles of the Canadian and Nigerian states and the oil TNCs in resource exploration and exploitation/extraction also referred to as resource development. These theoretical perspectives have also been used in understanding how the indigenous peoples have reacted to the exploration and exploitation of their ancestral lands (during resource development) by the state and oil TNCs in Canada and Nigeria. In this chapter, I will briefly examine the theories applied to this study to guide an understanding of this study.

The resource curse theory is most important for this study because the theory can be related to much of what is discussed in this study. Using this theory helps understand the nexus between resource development and socio-economic and environmental issues. The second theory used in this study is the frustration-aggression theory/hypothesis. Although there have been resistance by the indigenous peoples in both Canada and Nigeria against the activities of the state and oil TNCs, this theory will help understand how these resistances can be linked to the level of frustration among indigenous peoples in resource dependent communities, but majorly, the resistance by the indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta, because of the nature of violent resistance there.

In addition to these theories, the concept/theory of neo-colonialism is also applied to this study because according to research results by several authors, it has been historically proven that the indigenous peoples in both countries experienced colonialism, but in different ways. However, some authors like Nietschmann (1994) argue that what indigenous peoples currently experience in modern states like Canada and Nigeria is neo-colonialism, which is a modernized/systematic form of colonialism because although the era of colonialism (the practice of acquiring political control over another country either partially or fully, and economic exploitation of the occupied country) is no longer feasible in today's world, the modern state continues to unjustly/unfairly occupy and exploit ancestral lands of indigenous peoples. Nwoke (2010) argues that oil TNCs in Nigeria and the Nigerian state can be described as neo-colonial agents because with the assistance of the puppet regimes in Nigeria, oil companies are able to exploit indigenous peoples' lands, and instead of investing in Nigeria and engaging in corporate social responsibilities in the Niger Delta, these oil corporations engage in capital flight because the largest chunk of profit made from oil is invested in western countries where they have their

mother companies/headquarters. This lack of social responsibilities and capital flight are good examples of institutional rot and corruption that proponents of the resource curse theory have argued, is a major reason that the resource curse exists in Nigeria.

### **3.1 Resource curse Theory**

Frankel (2010) informs us that many African countries like Angola, Nigeria, Sudan, and the Congo are richly endowed with oil, diamonds and other minerals, but the majority of their people continue to experience economic hardship and low quality of life. The East Asian economies Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, on the other hand, have no natural resources that are exportable, yet, they have achieved western-level standards of living (Frankel 2010). “Auty (2001) is apparently the one who coined the phrase ‘natural resource curse’ to describe this puzzling phenomenon. Its use spread rapidly.” (Frankel 2010, 3).

It might seem rather mysterious that abundance of natural resources could be a curse, and in trying to uncover this mystery/in trying to find out how the abundance of natural resources (i.e. hydrocarbon deposits, other minerals and agricultural products) could be a curse, Frankel (2010) applied six lines of argument. First, on world markets, prices of these commodities could suffer secular/long term decline. Second, natural resources could make countries abandon manufacturing/industrialisation which could be imperative for economic development. Third, world prices of energy, mineral and agricultural commodities which are usually very high, could change rapidly and unpredictably for the worse and could be problematic. Fourth, countries where the government and hereditary elites physically dominate oil deposits or other natural resources for instant wealth, may not be able to develop the institutions like rule of law and decentralizing decision-making which can easily lead to economic development, unlike countries where moderate taxation and a market economy that thrives is the only way the government is financed. Fifth, resource-dependent countries could be predisposed to armed conflicts which stifle economic growth. Sixth, “swings in commodity prices could engender excessive macroeconomic instability, via the real exchange rate and government spending, imposing unnecessary costs.” (Frankel 2010, 4).

Frankel (2010) might have a valid argument about Nigeria’s resource curse (oil curse), but does this problem also exist in developed countries that are resource dependent (i.e. Canada, where oil development is also of huge economic importance)? Dube and Polese (2015) argue

that there is no strong evidence of a universal resource curse, but in developing nations, “natural resource endowments become a ‘curse’ when they distort the allocation of resources (i.e., away from knowledge-rich industries) and undermine the efficient functioning of political institutions.” Dube and Polese (2015, 39). However, Dube and Polese (2015) further argue that in countries like Australia, Canada, Finland and Sweden, which are endowed with natural resources, these resources have not been a “curse” because it is difficult to find any evidence of a “curse” in countries that combine natural resources with human capital and institutions that function properly, and curse be applicable if specialization hinder development of other activities that have comparable growth prospects.

Several studies have been based on the resource curse theory and different authors have argued for or against it. Despite the rapid use of this theory by many authors, Sachs and Warner (2001) inform us that the curse of natural resources lack a universally accepted theory, but to a reasonable extent, natural resources have hindered economic growth in countries that are abundant in natural resources since the 1970s, and the term “resource curse” is inspired by this fact. Drawing examples from countries in the Gulf, Nigeria, Mexico and Venezuela, Sachs and Warner (2001) argue that these countries have not experienced a great rate of sustained economic growth, and the resource curse is evident/really does exist. “Empirical studies have shown that this curse is a reasonably solid fact. It is not easily explained by other variables, or by alternative ways to measure resource abundance.” (Sachs and Warner 2001, 837).

Some authors like Mehlum et al (2002) do not agree with Sachs and Warner (1995) that institutions have no role to play in the resource curse. Even though the Asian tigers: South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, which are resource poor countries experience more economic growth than countries like Nigeria, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela, countries which are all resource rich, this should not make us jump into a direct conclusion that there is a resource curse, because resource-rich countries like Botswana, Canada, Australia, and Norway are growth winners (Mehlum et al 2002). In a bid to expatiate their take on the resource curse theory, Mehlum et al (2002) opine that countries which are endowed with natural resources can either be growth losers or growth winners depending on the quality of institutions, because “the variance of growth performance among the resource-rich countries is primarily due to how resource rents are distributed. Some countries have institutions that favour

producers in the distribution of the resource rents, while others have institutions that favour unproductive grabbers.’’ (Mehlum et al 2002, 1).

It is apparent that having natural resources does not automatically translate into institutional rot, but Mehlum et al (2002) argue that the presence of natural resources in a country tend to test the country’s institutional arrangements. Hence, it is important to combine resource abundance and the quality of institutions because in countries that are producer-friendly, they take advantage of their rich resources and engage in production for higher growth, while in resource-rich countries that have grabber friendly institutions, entrepreneurs are not encouraged to produce, which leads to unproductive extraction that implies a lower growth rate. Using Botswana, Norway, Nigeria, Venezuela and Mexico as examples, Mehlum et al (2002) inform us that Botswana had the highest growth rate in the world since 1965 with 40% of GDP from diamond revenues, and Botswana is known for low corruption rate. Mehlum et al (2002) further inform us that Norway evolved from being Europe’s poorest country in 1900 to being one of the richest now, with natural resource led transition that started with timber, fish and hydroelectric power, then moving on with oil and natural gas, and this transition is expected because Norway has a world reputation for very low corruption and a long history of supporting productive enterprises. Nigeria, Venezuela and Mexico on the other hand, despite being endowed with oil, have disappointing economic performances, and the poor economic situations in the latter countries are because they have dysfunctional institutions that encourage grabbing (Mehlum et al 2002).

Di John (2011) focused on the degree to which resource endowment affects economic growth and questions if there is really a resource curse by surveying the Dutch disease, rentier state, and rent seeking versions of the resource curse theory, in concluding the survey, Di John (2011) argues that some shortcomings can be found in the theory. According to Di John (2011), some countries choose policies that enhance growth in some contexts and others don’t, and leaders in some countries correct policies that are ineffective faster than other leaders, since the prospects for economic growth in oil-rich countries are determined by industrial policy and management of exchange rate, but the Dutch disease literature does not address these issues. With regard to the rent-seeking and rentier state models of the resource curse, Di John (2011) argues that

First, the rentier state theory cannot explain the long-run variation and change in growth of mineral abundant economies (e.g., Botswana, Malaysia, Venezuela, Nigeria). Second, the

variation and change in economic growth in non-mineral rich economies are not well explained (e.g., India, China, Tanzania, Malawi) either. Third, recent growth accelerations in aid-dependent economies are not well explained (e.g., Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana). (Di John 2011, 172-173).

Di John (2011) further argues that there is almost no support for the rent-seeking model of the resource curse in terms of the nexus between corruption and growth rate because based on a study from 1965-2000, it is evident that countries that are endowed with minerals do not appear to be more corrupt than those countries that are not endowed with mineral resources. Di John (2011) also argued against the rentier state model of the resource curse theory. It is worthy of note that a leader's power is influenced by political affiliations, which affects the management of mineral rents, and in many least developed countries, low economic performance is more because of mineral dependence, and not necessarily an abundance of minerals (Di John, 2011). "The extent to which mineral and fuel abundance generate developmental outcomes depends largely on the nature of the state and politics as well as the structure of ownership in the export sector, all of which are neglected in much of the research curse literature." (Di John 2011, 180).

When relating the resource curse theory/hypothesis to Canada and Nigeria, it can be deduced from studies in the above paragraphs that mere having/being endowed with natural resources does not necessarily bring a curse to the country, but the way the institutions in the country function and manage these resources go a long way in determining whether natural resources will be a blessing or a curse. And in the case of Nigeria, Sala-i-Martin and Subramanian (2003) argue that the country's poor economic performance, in the long run, has been because of waste and corruption from oil rather than the Dutch disease. The issues of corruption and waste by the state and oil TNCs in Nigeria are rather appalling (a separate/different study is required for these issues), and these problems are evident in the Niger Delta because even though the region is seen as the 'cash cow' of the country, most indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta perceive oil as a curse which has brought nothing but poverty, exploitation, disease and hunger (Nwoke, 2010).

In the words of Papyrakis (2017, 182), "the resource curse is by no means an iron law – several countries, regions and communities have avoided the curse by encouraging economic diversification, investment and an equitable distribution of accrued rents." This is because in a lot of cases, having reliable institutions or following international best practices play an important role in turning the curse into a blessing (Papyrakis 2017).



### **3.2 Frustration-Aggression Theory**

When something blocks you from achieving a goal, the feeling of frustration sets in and this can lead to aggression. “Aggression is a malicious behaviour or attitude towards someone or something, usually triggered by frustration.” (Gonzalez 2017, 1). A group of scholars at the Yale Institute of Human Relations published a study in 1939 that was groundbreaking. These scholars include Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears. In this study, they claimed that aggression is always an upshot of frustration (Shaykhutdinov and Bragg, 2011). “Their work has had an enormous influence on almost all behavioral disciplines.” (Berkowitz 1989, 59). The hypothesis proved to have a significant impact and have apparently influenced Western thinking on aggression to a large degree because, for over three decades, the frustration-aggression hypothesis has in one way or the other, guided important parts of experimental research on human aggression (Dennen, 2017).

The frustration –aggression theory has an orientation basis which is psychological and the basic tenet is that aggression is always a consequence of frustration. In other words, the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the occurrence of frustration and vice versa; hence, the existence of frustration always develops into aggression (Minister, 2012). Although, this theory has been criticised because frustration does not lead to aggression in all cases. “Some people are more predisposed to aggression and find it harder to contain it. For such people, frustration is more likely to that lead directly to aggression than for other people with a calmer disposition or greater self-control.” (Changing Minds 2017, 1).

Minister (2012) argues that in the Niger Delta case, the frustration-aggression theory is relevant because “frustrated individuals or groups in the Niger Delta, due to environmental degradation and other myriad of assorted problems in the region, may resort to breaching socially accepted norms and exhibit defiant behavior, make vociferous demands, threats, and ultimately, violent destruction of lives and property.” (Minister 2012, 3). Hence, this theory will be used to briefly analyse (since the violence in the Niger Delta is beyond the scope of this study) the indigenous peoples’ violent behaviours against the state and oil TNCs.

### **3.3 Neo-Colonialism**

Maekawa (2015) informs us that ‘neo-colonialism’ became a common word in the 1960s when the leaders of newly independent states in Africa woke up to the realisation/started suggesting that political independence did not guarantee economic self-reliance. “A sense of crisis arose around the growing dependence of these nations on single cash crops, mineral extraction and foreign aid, all of which were regarded as symbols of ‘the survival of the colonial system’.” (Maekawa 2015, 317).

Lumumba-Kasongo (2011) argues that the global capitalism and the Westphalian nation-state model was imposed on Africa through the trans-Atlantic slave trade and European colonialism and although many efforts were made to by several segments of African societies in term of resistance, Western institutions still influence states in Africa (i.e. Nigeria) to a large degree.

Over the decades, Africa at large has been strongly armed into liberal globalisation through the complex structures of the African states and their alliances with global transnational financial institutions. The outcomes of these pragmatic ideologies on Africa are reflected in her deep and extreme dependency on Americo-European agencies and institutions of power politics that are dominated by militarism and economic protectionism despite the dogma of free trade. (Lumumba-Kasongo 2011, 236).

It is noteworthy, however, that the concept of neo-colonialism is not limited to Africa alone. Some authors like Naanen (2015) have argued that neo-colonialism exists in different parts of the world where the modern state oppress indigenous peoples. This argument will be expatiated in chapter 5 of this study.

## **CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Impacts of Resource Development**

This chapter aims at understanding resource development and its effects on indigenous peoples in Canada and Nigeria (Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta). This chapter summarises various studies on the impacts of resource development on Indigenous peoples, especially in northern and remote regions. This chapter will look at how the concept of resource development is understood and referred to in the context of this study. Literature will be reviewed on studies that have been conducted on resource development and how resource development affects indigenous peoples. This is mainly because we need to have a broad view of different scholarly works on resource development, and the effects of resource development on indigenous peoples, to understand how the development of oil affects First Nations in Northern Alberta in comparison to Ogoni in the Niger Delta.

There aren't sufficient comparative studies conducted on resource development and the effects on indigenous people in Canada and Nigeria on its own. Most studies focus separately on indigenous peoples in each country, even though both countries are endowed with oil which is extracted from the lands of Indigenous peoples. The chapter will proceed by reviewing the literature on studies that have been conducted with regards to the effects of resource development on indigenous people in northern regions and remote areas including Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta. It is imperative to find out where the focus is and where gaps do exist.

#### **4.1 A Brief Definition of Natural Resource Development**

Sovereign countries all over the world are endowed with various natural resources. However, the share of natural resources varies between countries and some countries are fortunate than others in nature's resource distribution/natural resource endowment. Human resources do not, however, fall into the category of natural resources discussed for the purpose of this study. Resources can be either renewable or non-renewable. In most cases, governments tend to develop their resources for economic, social, political and security reasons. Oil, for example, falls under the category of non-renewable resources and is extracted from the ground either onshore or offshore and developed into products like premium motor spirit/petrol for motor vehicles and many other

products. In this case, countries that embark on the development of oil engage in such development for economic reasons.

In the global community, it has been a widely held view that based on history, some countries tend to develop natural resources such as uranium to become nuclear powers, which will boost their military might, or give such countries the ability to have more negotiating/bargaining powers with other countries (i.e. United States of America) that are referred to as 'nuclear powers' in military terms, while others use same natural resource to generate electricity. Development of natural resources in the extractive sector (i.e. oil and gas) requires lots of efforts by government and private corporations in different countries, and these developments usually have either positive or negative outcomes/consequences. Unlike farming and fishing for example, which can be very labour intensive, requiring low technology, development of oil requires huge amounts of capital, technology and competence. Hence, it is not surprising to find out that different studies have been carried out by several researchers on the impacts of resource development in different parts of the world.

#### **4.2 Studies on the Impacts of Resource Development in Different Countries**

Countries that are endowed with natural resources, and with the ability/opportunity to develop these resources are usually considered more fortunate when comparing them to other countries that have limited natural resources. Many countries who are endowed with natural resources depend on these resources to grow their economy. However, due to a myriad of negative and positive situations linked to the development of resources in different countries, many authors/scholars tend to differ in their opinion about resource endowment and resource development. Some have negative views about it, others have positive views, while many have opined that resources are mixed blessings.

Menaldo (2015) argues that reliance on natural resources affects political and economic development negatively. Using the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as an example, Menaldo (2015) informs us that the country remains underdeveloped and faces a plethora of problems like authoritarianism, lack of advanced industrial and service sector, and the government's inability to establish a good tax system. "Saudi Arabia is one of the few places on earth where citizens have no say whatsoever over their political destiny and women are treated as second-class citizens under an apartheidlike system." (Menaldo 2015, 163). Going beyond the Greater

Middle East, Menaldo (2015) sighted another example of the nexus between natural resources and underdevelopment in Latin-America. Analysing the situation in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, Menaldo (2015) informs us that despite the so-called Bolivarian Revolution championed by Hugo Chavez, Venezuela is plagued by a high level of poverty, in addition to political and social instability. “Gas-dependent Bolivia also suffers from these ills; indeed, it is still plagued by a veritable caste system. Oil-dependent Ecuador is afflicted by environmental degradation and corruption.” Menaldo (2015, 164). In sub-Saharan Africa, Menaldo (2015) argues that the situation is not any better because, for example, oil-dependent Angola and mineral-dependent Congo both face problems like widespread poverty, authoritarianism/dictatorship and poverty.

Although some countries are more endowed with natural resources than others, Daniele (2012) informs us that it is important to know the difference between resource dependency and an abundance of natural resources when analyzing how resources affects development of nations, because dependence on natural resources tend to be connected to failures of development, not the resources themselves. Daniele (2012) argues that government and non-government institutions (i.e companies that engage in resource development) in countries play a major role in determining if resources will become a blessing or a curse because in Botswana for example, the growth and significant level of improvement in standards of human development have been sustained by huge rents from diamonds. Also, oil rents in Equatorial Guinea have led to applaudable growth in the economy, but the effects on the people's welfare are rather appalling. And on the contrary, an abundance of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo have triggered conflicts, violence and corruption which results into economic underdevelopment. However, “natural resources can be a blessing for countries, but the blessing can turn into a curse when rents serve to fund conflicts, to corrupt institutions or are simply wasted.” (Daniele 2012, 568). Thus, for Daniele (2012), the resource curse concept is not totally correct in this regard, because it does not reveal the real problems some nations face, which are simply the mismanagement of natural resources. Papyrakis (2017) argues that resource curse can be found at different levels; the country, regional or at the local level, and we cannot directly quantify its effects. In addition, regions that are rich in resources have different experiences in terms of performance in their economy or conflict (i.e the ongoing Niger Delta conflict where many indigenous peoples have been left with no choice but to express their discontent with violence).

Fujita et al (2014) conducted a study on the impacts of resource development in Laos, a South-east Asian country and concluded that resource development affected rural areas negatively in terms of food security, and increased the rate of poverty in rural communities. Fujita et al (2014) informs us that even though the government claims to have a vision of boosting the agricultural and forestry sectors and promote foreign direct investments in the agricultural sectors, which will see small farmers engage in agricultural production for export markets, and also claim to support small farmers' rights to land for purposes of agriculture, these farmers have been increasingly excluded from productive land (taking Feuang District for example) because of the implementation of resource developments on a large scale. Examples of these developments include mineral production and mining (Fujita et al 2014). In Russia, extraction of natural resources forms a major part of the country's economy, and after the 1998 economic crisis, natural resources extraction and exportation (i.e. oil and gas in Northern Russia) were the mainstays of Russia's upsurge in economic growth in the 2000s (Tuomas 2015). In addition, mining also plays a major role, and drawing examples from Kovdor, a resource town in Russia, Tuomas (2015) informs us that "in the Kovdor district there are no conflicting interests between the land use of resource industries and indigenous people because the small local Sami population has not practiced intensive reindeer herding since the beginning of mining history of the Kovdor district." (Tuomas 2015, 107).

What can be deduced from Tuomas (2015) is that the reactions of locals to resource industries such as mining, tend to vary in different countries and communities, depending on different circumstances. If the land where development takes place is not being used by the peoples, or if the indigenous peoples can benefit positively or be adequately compensated for loss of their livelihood, (i.e. providing them with good jobs, or development can be carried out in ways that are not harmful to their environment), it is expected that there will be fewer tensions between the peoples, the state and development companies (i.e. oil TNCs).

The question of 'who owns the resources?' is also important when trying to understand how resource development affects peoples of different countries. In other words, how governments and peoples perceive resource endowments and rights to these resources vary in different countries. Oil is a good example of these resources, and Collier (2017) informs us that

Most governments assign ownership of subsoil assets to the nation, with revenues accruing to the national government. Others, such as Canada, assign ownership and revenues to

subnational authorities, Nigeria splits them between the federation and the states with a bonus share for the oil-producing states, while in the United States ownership is private. Such legislation is sometimes embedded within the constitution, to give it more permanence. (Collier 2017, 219).

However, Collier (2017) further argues that even though it is efficient and equitable to assign ownership of resources to the nation, its political acceptability varies to some degree. Drawing an example from Tanzania, Collier (2017) informs us that four people lost their lives within a year because of riots in the Mtwara region of Tanzania, and these riots sprang up after gas was recently discovered off the coast of the Mtwara region of Tanzania, where the Mtwara people claimed that the gas belonged to them. The issues of resource development and who should control these resources has been a source of conflict in many countries, especially in developing countries. “The control of natural resources has often been the root cause of war – and a serious impediment to peace. Diamonds, for example, were the main source of conflict in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Sierra Leone; oil was the disputed commodity in Sudan.” (Castillo 2014, 1914).

#### **4.3 Studies on the Impacts of Resource Development on Indigenous peoples in Different Countries**

The impacts of resource development on indigenous peoples have been regarded negative to some authors/scholars, while for others, resource development does not necessarily spell doom for indigenous peoples. Kernan (2015) opines that the popular term/theory ‘resource curse’ does not sound appropriate when discussing what indigenous peoples go through because of resource development. Thus, for Kernan (2015) the correct term/theory should be ‘resource nightmare.’ This is because “the extraction of resources does not just leave an ugly physical imprint, the scarred landscapes of indigenous and nomadic lands are also mirrored by an equally negative cultural and social imprint-endemic poverty, low-level conflict and ecological collapse, amongst other serious effects.” In most cases, governments perceive indigenous societies as uncivilised, backwards and primitive, people who hinder development, and organisations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have ideologies that support the perception of these governments (Kernan 2015).

Lertzman and Vredenburg (2005) inform us that resource extraction companies all over the world deal with indigenous peoples and from history, these involvements have been hostile. However, it has been increasingly expected by the public that resource extraction companies should improve their ethics when engaging with indigenous peoples, and “it is unethical to forfeit the viability of Indigenous cultures for the benefit of industrial resource extraction.” Lertzman and Vredenburg (2005, 251). Bebbington (2013) informs us that the Chaco indigenous peoples (Guarani and Weenhayek) in lowland Bolivia are severely marginalised, have unequal opportunities compared to other Bolivians, they do not have a say in the ecosystem governance structure, and they are restricted in economic opportunities. In addition,

hydrocarbon companies’ property rights have taken priority over indigenous claims to territory and land; indigenous populations have not had access to the information that states and companies control regarding natural gas extraction, even when this extraction occurs in spaces occupied and used by indigenous people; and in negotiations over benefit sharing and compensation, companies have had privileged access to economically significant information regarding the subsoil. (Bebbington 2013, 444).

According to International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169, it is the right of the indigenous peoples to be consulted before approval of natural resource development projects that are likely to affect them. (Costanza, 2015). Thus, I can say that Bebbington (2013) has a valid argument when he refers to the situation in Bolivia as marginalisation. However, this form of marginalisation is not limited to the indigenous peoples in lower Bolivia. Costanza (2015) informs us that in Guatemala, hundreds of indigenous communities and activists use the ILO Convention 169 as a tool to protest the development of natural resources (i.e. open-pit mining) which they perceive as being harmful to their environment, health and culture. However, it is rather disappointing that “in Guatemala, indigenous activism is indeed well organised but, thus far, has failed to block even one unwanted natural resource development project.” (Costanza 2015, 261).

Recent researches show that in Latin America, extractive industries have been expanding, creating new opportunities for development of natural resources. However, Savino (2016) argues that these opportunities have spread into areas that hitherto had little or no experiences with such economic activities (i.e. extraction of hydrocarbons). “As a result, many of the social conflicts taking place in Latin America today are over control and access to the territories affected by



extractivism. In the specific case of indigenous peoples, communities resist not only agents of global capital (e.g. transnational corporations) but also against states that support them.” (Savino 2016, 406). Resisting transnational corporations and their supporting states is for the indigenous peoples, resistance against environmental degradation, loss of livelihoods, pollution of water which is their source of health and wellbeing, dispossession of their lands and stealing of their subsoil resources, and dispossession of their ancestral lands. In addition, Savino (2016) further informs us that the resistance is also a form of decolonization, and in many Latin American countries, including Argentina, indigenous peoples have formed organisations to discourse with nation states about these colonial practices.

It is a widely held view that in Russia, the state claims to protect indigenous peoples livelihoods on paper, but in practice, the indigenous peoples are marginalised. Yakovleva (2011) informs us that from the Soviet period to the present, resource development has had no regard for the environment of Russia’s indigenous peoples, even though the environmental legislation in Russia is relatively comprehensive. “Since the 1960s, the extractive industry has been persistently harming the natural environment that supports the economies of indigenous minorities.” (Yakovleva 2011, 710).

In Australia, indigenous peoples and indigenous communities play major roles in networks of resource development, which are run by public and private sector organizations to a great extent, however, policies regarding resource development projects have usually been controversial most of the lands that have been used, or proposed to be used for resource development are usually areas that are significant traditionally and spiritually to Aboriginal people, and these leads to intense conflicts over development (Lane and Rickson 1997). In most cases, the indigenous peoples in Australia do enjoy enough socio-economic benefits from resource extraction and development, even though these resources are extracted from their lands, which is unacceptable. Thus, “a continuing dilemma in situations where development is based on resource extraction is that localities tend to suffer most of the social and economic costs, but enjoy few of the benefits. Injustices are intensified when indigenous communities are resource-dependent and have deep-seated religious ties to traditional lands, and those lands are proposed sites for development.” (Lane and Rickson 1997, 126). Despite the argument by some authors like Lane and Rickson (1997) that there is a link between resource development and socio-economic problems for indigenous peoples, some authors have tried to debunk such claim. O’faircheallaigh (1998)

argues that resource development does not necessarily increase inequality because in Australia for example, indigenous communities can engage in negotiations which influence policies made by resource developers, and these have led to high level of Aboriginal employment in Australia. Quoting Kruse et al. (1982), O'faircheallaigh (1998) used Alaska as an example and informs us that “oil development on Alaska’s North Slope has not been accompanied by increasing disparity in incomes among local Inuit communities. Longitudinal data indicate that the income share of the poorest 20% of families has not changed, while income distribution is no more unequal than for the rest of Alaska.” (O'faircheallaigh 1998, 384).

#### **4.4 Studies on the Impacts of Resource Development on Indigenous peoples in Canada**

Canada can be compared to Nigeria in terms of resource dependence. In other words, in both countries, oil development is key to the economy. In addition, recent researches have shown that the main resources developed for economic growth (i.e. crude oil in Nigeria, and forestry and oil sands in Canada) are exploited from the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples in both countries. But have the indigenous peoples in both countries been affected by resource development in the same way?

In their article about the tar sands/oil sands in northern Alberta, Huseman and Short (2012) inform us that in the Treaty 8 region, development of the tar sands might have been a mixed blessing, but the negative impacts on indigenous communities outweighed the positives. This is so because some people could earn income from the project and few became wealthy. However, the impacts on the environment and indigenous peoples’ livelihood were sources of concern. The Treaty 8 is the eighth Treaty between First Nations of Northern Alberta, Northwestern Saskatchewan, the Southwest portion of the Northwest Territories, and the Queen of England which was signed on June 21, 1899, promoting co-existence between peoples on the land base and the sharing of the resources, both renewable and non-renewable (Treaty 8 Tribal Association, 2015). Unfortunately, “tar sands development has entirely changed the Athabasca delta and watershed landscape with massive de-forestation of the boreal forests, open-pit mining, depletion of water systems and watersheds, toxic contamination, destruction of habitat and biodiversity, and the severe forcible disruption of the indigenous Dene, Cree and Metis trap-line cultures.” Huseman and Short (2012, 230). Hence, both authors called on the government for a

halt to the expansion of tar sands, address the issue of environmental pollution, and attend to the health issues facing the indigenous peoples.

The National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) conducted a study on the social impacts of resource extraction on Aboriginal communities and reported that the modern resource extraction has a tendency of bringing a boom-and-bust cycle to these communities, and the consequences of these projects can either be positive or negative. In addition, the study informs us that new social problems are not created from these problems, instead, they add to the existing problems. For example, mining and pipeline development have complex effects on northern communities because there is an increase in population, burdens on the infrastructure of the community and pressure on the traditional and cultural values (NAHO 2008). “These must be weighed against the prospects of an improved standard of living, new training, and the opportunities for new businesses and valuable work experience.” NAHO (2008, 3). Parlee (2015) also perceives resource development in Canada as a mixed blessing for indigenous communities, because these developments have both opportunities and challenges for these communities, including indigenous peoples who live in northern Alberta. Although, there should be a guarantee of economic growth in the Canadian regions that are endowed with natural resources, “socio-economic statistics, as well as Aboriginal leaders, tell a much different story. Many Indigenous communities in Alberta suffer disproportionately from the adverse socio-economic and ecological implications of resource development and see few socio-economic benefits.” (Parlee 2015, 433)

It is evident from these studies and a widely held view that resource development in Canada has so far, been a mixed blessing for the indigenous peoples. But, is this also the case in Nigeria?

#### **4.5 Studies on the Impacts of Resource Development on Indigenous peoples in Nigeria**

In the existing literature, it is difficult to find studies on how resource development have affected indigenous peoples in Nigeria. However, many authors have unconsciously written about resource development and indigenous peoples in Nigeria. I use the word ‘unconscious’ because indigenous peoples in Nigeria (i.e. Fulani, Ijaw and Ogoni) are not recognised by the Nigerian constitution as indigenous peoples. Hence, when most authors write about these peoples, they fail to acknowledge them as indigenous peoples. Despite such unfortunate situation, some

authors/scholars have refused to be constrained by the Nigerian state's failure to recognise indigenous peoples, but instead, carried out researches on resource development and how it affects indigenous peoples in Nigeria

Naanen (2012) informs us that many indigenous communities can be found in the Niger Delta region, but they are often referred to as minority ethnic groups, and the Ogoni are one of the best known indigenous people in Nigeria who pioneered the resistance against oil TNCs and the Nigerian state's development of oil in the region. Kalu (2008) informs us that before oil was discovered in the Niger Delta, indigenous communities depended on their natural resources for survival, and used these resources (i.e. forestry and water) in a way which was sustainable, and these resources were properly managed. However, oil discovery has been an environmental nightmare for these peoples. Jike (2004) argues that exploitation and spillage are the main causes of environmental problems in the Niger Delta. This is because "intermittent oil spillages have rendered vast stretches of indigenous farmlands useless. Aquatic life is viciously threatened and virtually exterminated by the resultant toxicity of oil spillage. As important as oil might seem to the nation's economy, the people perceive the discovery of oil as a threat to their life-support system, the land." (Jike 2004, 691).

Sawyer and Gomez (2012) conducted studies on how resource extraction affects indigenous peoples in different countries including Nigeria and opined that states and oil TNCs do not carry out their activities in favour of the indigenous peoples, neither do they help in reducing poverty in indigenous communities. "There is ample evidence that the implementation of jointly undertaken projects has contributed to the creation of a 'new poor', that is, impoverishing a community that has a sustainable way of life (India, the Philippines, Chad/Cameroon, Nigeria, Peru)." (Gomez and Sawyer 2012, 41).

Another study was conducted by Onwuka (2005). The study analysed the nexus between oil extraction, environmental degradation and the rate of poverty in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The study revealed that efforts were underway in Nigeria to create a pattern of development that would eradicate poverty and ensure that resources are developed in an environmentally friendly way. Despite these steps, however, Onwuka (2005) informs us that natural resources in Nigeria have not been managed efficiently and the consequences of such mismanagement in the Niger Delta have been rather devastating. The Niger Delta region of Nigeria generates huge wealth for the country, but "in that region, crude petroleum activities

damage the fertility of the soil, and destroy wildlife and the breeding ground for marine fishes because of the toxicity of oil and gas. Consequently, the indigenous people are impoverished, with attendant increase in environmental abuse occasioned by their struggle for survival.’’ (Onwuka 2005, 655).

#### **4.6 Contribution of the Study**

Many studies have focused on how resource development have affected indigenous peoples in different parts of the world, in terms of the peoples’ environment and traditional economy, which is very relevant to this study. However, there are limited studies comparing, for example, two countries in different parts of the world (i.e Canada and Nigeria) that are endowed with similar resources which are exploited in areas where indigenous peoples rely on for survival, but having a wide cleavage on how the indigenous peoples in these countries are affected by these developments/being engaged by the state and resource development companies.

In addition, since it is evident from the above studies that indigenous peoples are always against the state and resource development companies that do not put the peoples’ livelihood into consideration, it is imperative to understand what steps the peoples take to express their views, the counter-actions by the state and resource development companies, and results of these counter-actions. Thus, this study will attempt to fill these gaps.

## **CHAPTER 5: OIL DEVELOPMENT AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOODS IN NORTHERN ALBERTA AND THE NIGER DELTA**

This chapter focuses on the main issues of this study which include oil development in Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta and how the livelihoods of indigenous peoples have been, and are affected by these developments. In addition, comparisons will be made between both regions, looking at several steps taken by the state and oil TNCs during oil developments. The key issues are the socio-economic and environmental effects of oil development on indigenous peoples, analyzing how the development of oil have affected indigenous peoples (First Nations and Ogoni) in both regions either positively or negatively, and comparing both regions to see if there are any similarities in the way the peoples have been affected by these development activities. To that purpose, some case studies will be presented in the following sections of this chapter. The socio-economic and environmental effects will be analysed together but in different sections for each region, while other comparisons will be in the same sections for both regions. It is, however, important to proceed by having a brief description of oil before delving into the issues that come along with its development in Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta.

### **5.1. Conventional and Non-Conventional Oil**

Oil can be either conventional or unconventional. Conventional oil/conventional crude oil is a naturally occurring liquid mixture of hydrocarbons. “It typically includes complex hydrocarbon molecules – long chains and rings of hydrogen and carbon atoms” (Bott 2004, 4).

Unconventional oil is petroleum extracted using techniques which are different from the conventional (oil well) process. More financial commitment is required to extract unconventional oil. The oil sands in Northern Alberta can be categorised as unconventional oil, while crude oil found in the Niger Delta is referred to as conventional oil. According to Investopedia (2016), “crude oil is a naturally occurring, unrefined petroleum product composed of hydrocarbon deposits and other organic materials which can be refined to produce usable products such as gasoline, diesel and various forms of petrochemicals”. (Investopedia 2016, 1)

According to Bott (2004) oil sands mines in the Athabasca region very close to Fort McMurray, Alberta, have provided an increasing share of Canadian crude oil production from

1967 till today. “Thick, sticky bitumen – a semi-solid form of petroleum – is extracted from the



Expanse of oil sands mining. Source: Kopp (2017)



Outlined in orange are the oil sands deposits in Alberta. Map source: Kopp (2017)

sand and upgraded into a synthetic crude oil similar to light, low-sulphur conventional crude oil.” (Bott 2004, 10). In Nigeria, crude oil which is sometimes called ‘sweet crude oil’ (because it is largely Sulphur free and requires fewer techniques to produce) was discovered in 1956 at Oloibiri in Niger Delta by Shell-BP, and Nigeria joined the ranks of oil producers in 1958

(Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, 2016). It is, therefore, evident that both countries have a long history of oil production.

## **5.2 Oil Companies in Alberta and the Niger Delta**

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the constitutions of Canada and Nigeria give some amount of surface rights to land owners, but people do not have subsurface rights. This means all resources exploited from the land are controlled by the state. The Land Use Act of 1978 gives the Nigerian state absolute authority over land considered to be ‘in public interest’ (Nwoke, 2010). “With the Land Use Act, the interests and concerns of indigenous communities are placed beneath those of oil TNCs and the Nigerian state, which limits the Niger-Delta people’s ability to make decisions about their own surroundings.” (Nwoke 2010, 89).

The state and oil TNCs (national and international companies) are responsible for the production of oil (resource development) in both countries. Roberts and Abbakumov (2014, 1) inform us that “the oil sands comprise more than 98% of Canada’s 173 billion barrels of proven oil reserves. According to Natural Resources Canada, oil sands reserves are spread in 3 distinct areas of northern Alberta that cover a total area of 140,200 km<sup>2</sup>.” The 3 distinct areas where the oil sands reserves spread include Athabasca deposits (which have the largest reserves), Cold Lake deposit and Peace River deposit, and the companies responsible for oil production in the region include, but are not limited to, Suncor Energy Inc.; Imperial Oil Ltd., Husky Energy Inc., Cenovus Energy Inc., Canadian Natural Resources Ltd., Encana Corporation, Talisman Energy Inc., Nexen-CNOOC Ltd., Harvest Operations Corp., and Canadian Oil Sands Ltd. (Roberts and Abbakumov, 2014).

The Niger Delta is the delta of a river in Nigeria, which is known by many Nigerians, as the “River Niger”, otherwise known as the “Niger River”, and the river sits directly on the Gulf of Guinea, on the Atlantic Ocean. It has been reported that according to the Nigerian government, the Niger Delta makes up 7.5% of Nigeria's land mass. It has also been reported that historically and cartographically, it consists of Bayelsa, Delta, and the Rivers States, but, in the year 2000, Olusegun Obasanjo, who was then Nigeria's president, included Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River State, Edo, Imo and Ondo States in the region. The Ogoni are located in Rivers State (Naanen 2012). In the Niger Delta, the Nigerian state relies on certain oil corporations, including the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to develop the crude oil in the region. These



oil TNCs include Royal Dutch Shell; Chevron Corporation, ELF, Agip Group, and Total (Environmental Justice Atlas, 2016).

Although Canada initially voted against the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) after it was adopted by the General Assembly on the 13th of September 2007, this position was reversed in 2010 when Canada endorsed the UNDRIP. In addition, the Canadian Constitution recognises three groups of indigenous peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Nigeria, on the other hand, declined to vote in favour of, or against the UNDRIP and has failed to recognise the Ogoni and Ijaw in the Niger Delta as indigenous peoples. Instead, they are referred to as ethnic minorities. Hence, the Nigerian government categorises the Niger Delta indigenous peoples as a minor fraction of the Nigerian population, even though crude oil, which is currently the mainstay of Nigeria’s economy, is exploited from the communities in the Niger Delta that are, and have always been inhabited by these peoples.

It is noteworthy, however, that recent researches have shown that before the white settlers in Canada, before the amalgamation/formation of Nigeria, and before the discovery of oil in both countries, indigenous peoples had their unique ways of life and were the original occupants of the land. Therefore, it is only normal for the indigenous peoples to demand that the state and oil TNCs ought to acknowledge this fact and expect a high level of social responsibility because the resource is exploited from lands within the indigenous communities. But have the state and oil TNCs been responsible enough?

### **5.3 Oil Development and First Nations in Northern Alberta**

According to Natural Resources Canada (NARCAN) (2016), the government of Canada will continue to take steps to ensure that indigenous peoples are not negatively affected by oil sands development, and before undertaking any projects relating to the oil sands, adequate consultations will be made with the indigenous peoples. In addition, “the oil sands industry works closely with Indigenous peoples in support of economic security and well-being in their communities. The industry also provides significant opportunities for Indigenous owned businesses, entrepreneurs and individual community members to supply goods and services to oil sands companies.” (NARCAN 2016, 2). These are steps (according to the government of Canada) showing that the state and oil TNCs have been accountable to the indigenous peoples, ensuring that they are protected as much as possible in several facets.

Canada's Oil and Natural Gas Producers (CAPP) (2016), inform us that during oil sands development, they strive to ensure the indigenous peoples' needs are attended to, and steps are taken to ensure that the people in the communities, who originally owned the land, can benefit meaningfully. To that extent, "member companies work with aboriginal communities to seek ways to mitigate the impacts of oil and gas development in their traditional territory." (CAPP 2016, 1). Several bodies like Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB); Fort McKay Group of Companies (FMGOC), and Oil Sands Community Alliance (OSCA) have been formed to engage the indigenous peoples in terms of skills and finance. These organisations, with the support of the state and oil TNCs, have been set up to ensure good relations with the indigenous people in Northern Alberta. For example, the OSCA mandate, as published on their website is to: a) Promote Aboriginal community well-being b) Enhance economic participation and c) Improve education capacity & employment (Oil Sands Community Alliance, 2016).

Despite the positive pictures that have been painted by the state and oil TNCs, showing that they have been responsible and accountable to the First Nations in Northern Alberta, several scholars and indeed First Nations do not seem to agree that enough is being done. A recent report by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) titled *Alberta failing aboriginal people in the oilsands area*, discovered that the government of Alberta has failed to protect indigenous peoples' health, land and rights from industrial development. The government and oil TNCs have been accused of using the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP), which came into force in 2012, to gradually destroy traditional land use. According to the Alberta government, the purpose of the LARP is to "set the stage for robust growth, vibrant communities and a healthy environment within the region over the next 50 years." (Alberta Government 2012, 2). But according to the CBC report, the government has been taking steps that do not correspond with the purpose of the LARP, and the government has not been transparent enough. Martin Olszynski, a professor of resource law at the University of Calgary also opined that the government needs to be more transparent to the indigenous peoples. In his words: "When there are exceedances in air or whatever, it's not clear at all what's going on in government. We still don't have that transparency around how the ambient environment is being managed." (CBC, 2017)

The government of Alberta claims that the indigenous peoples are consulted before embarking on projects relating to the developments of oil sands. This consultation process means that the

community is informed about projects and the impacts of these projects on the indigenous peoples (Alberta Government 2012). However, Huseman and Short (2012) inform us that “to date there is no legal framework within the Constitution of Canada that recognizes the international principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for the right of First Nations to say ‘no’ to a proposed development, a central tenet of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).” (Huseman and Short 2012, 228). It might have been easy for the government to ignore these rights earlier because there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Canada initially voted against the UNDRIP but later decided to ratify it. However, Annand (2016) informs us that although the state currently holds legal rights to the oil sands reserves, oil sands regions in Alberta belongs to 23 aboriginal groups and fall within Treaty 8 which requires consultation with the indigenous peoples before government leases out the land for development. “But the government's approach to resource extraction still carries the colonial vestiges of dispossessing indigenous groups from their land in order to maximise economic gains - whether that involves extracting oil resources or constructing infrastructure to get those resources to world markets.” (Annand 2016, 2).

Huseman and Short (2012) argue that what First Nations in Northern Alberta face is a form of contemporary genocide caused by the development of oil sands. Most indigenous groups continue to raise awareness about their connection and dependency on their traditional land bases which are vital to their physical and cultural survival, meaning they cannot be forcibly isolated from their land without genocide being committed, because through large-scale resource extraction, indigenous people are driven off/alienated from their land to enhance industrial activities and this industrialization jeopardizes the lives, cultures and health of indigenous communities who rely on these resources for their continuous existence (Huseman and Short, 2012). “The ongoing tar sands mining ‘project’ in Northern Alberta is, without a doubt, the most disastrous instance of this specifically contemporary genocidal phenomenon in North America to date, producing a ‘virtual catalog of environmental destruction’ and an attendant litany of social ills.” (Huseman and Short 2012, 224).

Although the claims made by the oil TNCs in Northern Alberta is that they put the environment into consideration, they have been accused of causing pollution which adversely affects the landscape that has for centuries, been cherished (physically and spiritually) by the

indigenous peoples, and which is also an integral part of their lives.



Cold Lake in northern Alberta. Source: Kopp (2017)

In the words of Elsie Fabian, a Native Indian community elder along the Athabasca River: “The river used to be blue. Now it’s brown. Nobody can fish or drink from it. The air is bad. This has all happened so fast.” (Huseman and Short 2012, 230). The negative impacts of oil sands development on the environment and consequently the people was further explained by Holroyd and Simieritsch (2009) who inform us that large amounts of water are needed for the extraction of bitumen from the sand to raise the bitumen to a higher standard. Part of the water is drawn from the Athabasca River and underground aquifers which reduce the water available for local and downstream ecosystems. In addition, waste/toxic water also known as leach which is stored in ponds/deep wells may leak and pose a risk to that quality of water in the region, the health of the people and the ecosystem. This is because “Any changes to water quality can significantly impact the health of residents in the region. A number of studies have found higher levels of arsenic and other metals in the Athabasca River Delta. Arsenic exposure is associated with bile duct, liver, urinary tract, and skin cancers, vascular diseases, and Type II diabetes.” (Holroyd and Simieritsch, 2009,1).

Despite these setbacks, however, several writers, and representatives of the state and oil TNCs in Northern Alberta continue to defend the development of oil sands because, in their opinion, this development has done more good than harm to the indigenous peoples. Others opine that the development of oil sands in Alberta has been a mixed blessing and not just a curse. According to

Best and Hoberg (2008, 14), “the amount of business flowing to First Nations-owned companies (such as trucking and construction) has been extremely large. Furthermore, many of the larger oil sands companies have strategies and targets for hiring specific numbers of First Nations employees.” The indigenous peoples still demand that the state and oil TNCs be more responsible because “these economic benefits, however, have not been sufficient to mute the resistance of many First Nations members to the scale and pace of development in their ancestral lands.” (Best and Hoberg 2008, 14).

According to NARCAN (2016), the government of Canada, and provincial and municipal governments work in partnership with the indigenous peoples to ensure huge economic benefits for the indigenous peoples. In addition, necessary training for jobs and business opportunities are provided to them and the indigenous peoples play key roles in the management of environmental safety projects. NARCAN (2016) further provided (on its website) some concrete examples of the economic benefits of oil sands development for indigenous peoples, which are listed below:

- “Suncor has spent nearly C\$2.5 billion on contracts with Indigenous companies since 1999.”
- “To date, Syncrude has spent more than C\$2 billion procuring contracts with Indigenous-owned businesses.”
- “Shell Canada, operator of the Athabasca Oil Sands Project, has spent over C\$1.7 billion in business with about 70 Indigenous-owned businesses and contractors since 2005.”
- “Since 2009, Cenovus has spent more than C\$1.5 billion on goods and services supplied by Indigenous businesses, including nearly C\$384 million in 2014 alone.”
- “The Fort McKay Group of Companies – 100 percent owned and operated by the Fort McKay First Nation – provides a variety of services to oil sands companies, generating more than C\$150 million in revenue annually.” (NARCAN, 2016)

From the examples listed above, one might believe that the development of oil sands have only benefited the First Nations in Northern Alberta positively. But that is not the case. Parlee (2015) argues that symptoms of the resource curse are evident in Northern Alberta, which is home to some of the poorest indigenous communities in Canada. Using four indicators – educational attainment, employment, income, and housing conditions, Parlee (2015) informs us that “the well-being of Indigenous communities in the prairie provinces is in the bottom 1/3 percentage of the Indigenous population as a whole. In addition, some of the highest disparities between the

well-being of non-Indigenous and Indigenous people have been found in northern Alberta.” (Parlee 2015, 429).

It is evident that in Northern Alberta, the state and oil TNCs cannot be regarded as ‘saints’ because the environment, which the First Nations hold sacred is being tampered with and many First Nations’ means of survival have been altered, which has made the peoples suffer a lot of health problems and economic issues. However, in terms of engaging the First Nations, the state and oil TNCs continue to take many steps to ensure that the negative effects of oil sands developments on the First Nations can be mitigated to some degree. In addition, “Alberta’s energy industry is required to conserve and reclaim the land disturbed by its activities (known as specified land) and, unless exempt, obtain a reclamation certificate.” (Alberta Energy Regulator 2017,1).

#### **5.4 Sweet Crude Oil and Bitter Experiences: Oil Development and Ogoni in the Niger Delta**

Gomez and Sawyer (2012) inform us that the extractive industries in both developing and developed countries have records of colonial and postcolonial exploitation. And the extraction of resources has been hand in hand with violence and brutality, mostly against indigenous peoples. “This violence occurs in many forms: outright repression of indigenous peoples, their removal and resettlement, or through the 'paradox of plenty' that haunts many mineral dependent states where the co-production of enormous wealth coexists with unspeakable economic inequality.” (Gomez and Sawyer 2012, 38). In addition to the economic dislocation of the Ogoni in the Niger Deltas, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the indigenous peoples are faced with devastating environmental hazards. “About 2,370 square kilometers of the Niger Delta area consist of rivers, creeks and estuaries while stagnant swamp covers about 8,600 square kilometers. The region’s ecosystem is highly diverse and supportive of numerous species of terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna. As a result of its delicate nature, it is susceptible to adverse environmental change.” (Odoemene 2011, 124).

With five decades of oil and gas production bringing close to \$500bn in revenue to the Nigerian exchequer, the constant stream of petrodollars ought to have provided the West African country with the financial muscle to transform itself into a global economic powerhouse, in which its citizens, especially those from the oil-producing regions of the Niger Delta, would have been guaranteed a high quality of life. But the ordinary citizens of that region, particularly those from

Ogoniland in Rivers State, would find it hard, if not impossible, to do anything else other than to curse the day that oil production by Shell began in their homeland, as they are forced to live with the unending horrors of oil pollution. (Obayiuwana 2012, 11).

The negative socio-economic and environmental impacts of oil development in the Niger Delta cannot be over emphasised. According to Watts (2004, 68), “the consequences of flaring, spillage and waste for Ogoni fisheries and farming have been devastating. Two independent studies completed in 1997 reveal that total of the petroleum hydrocarbons in Ogoni streams at 360-680 times the European Community permissible levels.” Watts (2004) informs us that the ethnic minorities who were neglected prior to the discovery of oil in Oloibiri, Bayelsa State, were hopeful that the discovery of petroleum and the beginning of its commercial production in 1956 would ensure a brighter future for them. “But the presence of the transnational oil companies in joint ventures with the Nigerian State (the Nigerian National Petroleum Company, NNPC) presided over enormous environmental despoliation and a crisis of forms of traditional livelihood.” (Watts 2004, 59). Apparently, the Ogoni who were hopeful for rapid development (since what many authors have labeled the ‘black gold’ was discovered on their lands), have been left in a state of hopelessness and frustration, because “crude petroleum activities damage the fertility of the soil, and destroy wildlife and the breeding ground for marine fishes because of the toxicity of oil and gas. Consequently, the indigenous people are impoverished, with attendant increase in environmental abuse occasioned by their struggle for survival.” (Onwuka 2005, 655).

In their article titled: *Environmental degradation and cultural erosion in Ogoniland: A case study of the oil spills in Bodo*, Fentiman and Nenibarini (2015) inform us that Bodo creek (an Ogoni territory) was long known as a leading periwinkle collecting bed in the Niger Delta, and the creek was greatly endowed with multispecies of fin and shellfish like the bloody cockle, oyster, swimming crab, razor clam, land crab, and mangrove purple hairy crab. Traditionally, according to Fentiman and Nenibarini (2015), the Ogoni in Bodo were fishers and subsistence farmers who were blessed with salt and fresh water, and they took advantage of their geographical location to trade with other communities. Also, there was communal ownership of resources and the creek and waterways could not be demarcated because they belonged to the whole community.

Many scholars hold the view that creek water served traditional/spiritual purposes like bathing, domestic chores, food preparation and cooking, recreation, honouring the water spirits through

several rituals, etc. However, it has been reported that the Ogoni in Bodo community and other communities in the Niger Delta have not been able to sustain these traditional livelihoods because of the environmental hazards from oil spills, gas flaring, and other forms of pollution from the development of oil in the Niger Delta. “Observations at several waterfront areas revealed that these methods are no longer viable in the polluted creeks. Many of the fishermen have lost their access to fish in nearby creeks and waterways. The impact of this has had a detrimental decline in the quality of life for many fishing people.” (Fentiman and Nenibarini 2015, 618).

Before he was sentenced to death by hanging and killed in 1995, it was reported that Ken Saro-Wiwa, an activist and the spokesperson for the Movement of the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) accused Shell (a major oil TNCs in Nigeria) of waging a war against his people (the Ogoni), leaving them on the brink of extinction. According to Human Rights Watch (1999, 56), Saro-Wiwa maintained that the Ogoni environment was “completely devastated by three decades of reckless oil exploitation or ecological warfare by Shell... An ecological war is highly lethal, the more so as it is unconventional. It is omnicidal in effect. Human life, flora, fauna, the air, fall at its feet, and finally, the land itself dies.” It is a widely held view that with the support from the state, oil TNCs operate double standards in the Niger Delta, engaging in practices that will never be accepted in Europe and North America (where they have their headquarters/parent companies).

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the indigenous peoples have never been adequately consulted before oil TNCs embark on projects to develop oil and construction of pipelines that pass-through indigenous peoples lands, and when accidents happen during oil exploration and exploitation, the indigenous peoples are not properly compensated for their losses. According to international best practices, when accidents happen (i.e. oil spills), the peoples ought to be compensated for their losses, and their lands should be cleaned in cases of oil spills (this is realised with pressure from the state). But in Nigeria, several scholars like Nwoke (2010) have argued that the state creates avenues for the oil TNCs to carry out their activities in the Niger Delta with unaccountability and impunity. Hence, the impact of oil development on indigenous peoples family, economic and community life have been extremely destructive. “More specifically, productive farmlands have been lost to oil production operations. Sometimes ancestral homelands have been desecrated and converted as was the case during the Ogoni/Shell



crisis in the late 1990s, thus severing the link between the living and the pantheon of forbears.’’ (Jike 2004, 690).

The Nigerian state, despite claiming to practice a democratic system of government, acts in an authoritarian manner towards the Ogoni and other indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta, and the oil TNCs unethically take advantage of the attitude of the state. Unlike Canada, where the peoples consent is required/the peoples ought to be adequately informed before oil is developed on their lands (even though it is not a perfect process), the oil TNCs are protected by the state, and with this protection comes the ability of the oil TNCs to carry out their activities with so much impunity, unaccountability and irresponsibility.

With Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) being the largest oil TNC in Nigeria, in terms of oil production, the company has been accused of committing (with the help of the Nigerian state) unimaginable socio-economic and environmental atrocities in the Niger Delta. Also, it is noteworthy that Nigeria witnessed several years of military rule since 1966, but from 1999 to date, the country has been practising a democratic system of government. However, the indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta (i.e. Ogoni and Ijaw) are faced with the same problems regardless of the governmental system, either military or democratic (Nwoke, 2010). Although, some authors have defended oil TNCs like Shell, praising them for embarking on projects that benefit the indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta, Frynas (2001) informs us (using Shell as an example) that most the oil TNCs sought community development projects for propaganda/public relations purposes, and not for the good of the peoples. According to Frynas (2001):

In an apparent effort to maximise the PR effect of the projects, the oil company figures released to the public appear to have been artificially inflated. For instance, the 1996 community budget of SPDC (Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria) included US\$7.4 million spent on roads. However, the company’s advertising brochures failed to mention that the oil companies require roads for access to oil fields as part of their business operations. Most of these roads lead to oil installations, by-passing the local villages (Frynas 2001, 48).

It is a widely held view that the military era in Nigeria (before the transition to a civilian government) was the reason for the government’s unaccountability to the indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta, perceiving the military governments and oil TNCs as agents of neo-colonialism. Hence, people hoped that there would be positive changes as soon as Nigeria became a

democratic state. According to Schulman (1997), “Greenpeace states that at least 1.6 million gallons of oil were spilled between 1982 and 1992 which have left long-lasting environmental damage. In the absence of a democratic government, the oil industry has apparently failed to clean up many of the spills, or to conduct environmental impact assessments that respect international norms.” (Schulman 1997, 1). Nigeria was ruled by oppressive military juntas from 1966 until 1999, and many scholars argued that a democratic government would see an end to the environmental damage in the ND. However, AfricaFocus Bulletin (2005) informs us on their website that “despite the return to civilian rule in 1999 and pledges by oil companies to implement voluntary corporate responsibility standards, new reports by Environmental Rights Action and Amnesty International document only limited action to correct abuses and deliver benefits to the residents of the oil-producing areas.” (AfricaFocus Bulletin, 2005).

Kadafa (2012) also argues that “approximately 1.5 million tons of oil has been spilled within the Niger Delta region over the span of several decades, most of which was partially cleaned or not cleaned totally, making some areas wastelands.” (Kadafa 2012, 38). Apart from oil spills, during oil extraction, the oil TNCs engage in the flaring of gas. This is done to avoid time and resources to process the gas separately. According to Ajugwo (2014,2), “Nigeria flares 17.2 billion m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas per year in conjunction with the exploration of crude oil in the Niger Delta.” Thus, the indigenous peoples are faced with acid rain; low soil fertility due to acidification, health problems (cancer, lung damage, deformities in children, etc.), water pollution, and so on (Ajugwo, 2014).

The issues of oil spills and gas flaring in the Niger Delta is beyond the scope of this study. However, the point being made is that after Nigeria became a democratic state in 1999, the situation in the Niger Delta did not change for good, and this has continuously had negative socio-economic and environmental effects on the Ogoni who traditionally are farmers and fishers, but also engaged in a variety of other occupations offered by modern society.



When the land is polluted by oil in this way, it makes growing crops very difficult. Photo credit: CNN

Aworawo (2010) argues that the oil TNCs play a major role in the socio-economic and environmental dislocation of the indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta because their activities have kept the peoples in a state of hopelessness. According to Aworawo (2010),

Regarding the effects of oil development in the Niger Delta region, one of the indicators of poverty in the region is the constant disruption of the mainstay of the traditional economy of the people by the activities of the multinational oil companies operating in the communities which has led to the problem of environmental degradation and loss of livelihood. Hence, the people today live in poor health conditions and environmentally polluted atmosphere that constrains good standard of living Aworawo (2010, 12884).



A man jumps across water dirtied by oil pollution in Ogoniland, Nigeria. Photo Credit: CNN

It is not surprising that when many proponents of the resource curse theory argue for the validity of the theory, Nigeria is in many cases, included with other countries as examples, when these authors claim that many countries endowed with natural resources are affected by the curse. One of the reasons Nigeria can be used as an example is because of the negative effects of oil development in the Nigeria Delta. “The region’s economic and human deprivation stands in contrast to other parts of the country, creating a paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty” (Nwoke 2010, 91).

It is noteworthy that accidents might be inevitable in during exploration/exploitation of oil. But the attitudes of the state and oil TNCs in trying to avoid or reduce these accidents matter a lot. In Alberta, for example, there was a pipeline breach that occurred on 18 June 2012, outside the town of Elk Point, Alberta. Enbridge Inc. was responsible for the pipeline which stretched across Alberta from Fort McMurray to Hardisty. The line was temporarily shut down when about 1,450 barrels (60,900 gallons) of crude oil derived from oil sands-derived leaked, and a small amount of the spilled oil reached private land, but most remained at the Enbridge site. The company did not waste much time in taking steps to clean up the spill, but the indigenous peoples still feel the companies can do better to avoid such accidents (Oil Spill Intelligence Report, 2017).

Dawodu (2013) compared the attitude of the state and oil TNCs in the Niger Delta to what happens in California and this comparison shows the level of institutional impunity, irresponsibility and neglect which can also be linked to the level of corrupt practices by the Nigerian state and oil TNCs in the Niger Delta (this is also beyond the scope of this study).

According to Dawodu (2013):

California has over 51,000 producing oil wells; some are pumping oil a few blocks from residential homes and businesses. In my 30 years of living in California, I can't recall an oil spill of major proportions that threaten the livelihood of Californians. If you spill oil in California, you have one week to clean t up or face the consequences. But in the Niger Delta, the lives of most citizens that depend on fishing and farming have been destroyed for decades and yet the oil companies pass the buck back and forth between themselves and the Nigerian government (Dawodu 2013, 3).

Although several oil TNCs operate in the Niger Delta, more emphases have been laid on Shell because the company is a major oil developer in the Niger Delta and has played significant roles (mostly negative) in the lives of the Ogoni peoples. I recently went through the website of Shell and read the companies statements on social investment, sustainability and oil spillage data in Nigeria. The company had these to say on its website:

- Social Investment: “Shell Companies in Nigeria work with government, communities and civil society to implement programmes that have a lasting impact on lives in the Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole.”
- “Sustainability: “Shell Nigeria places great importance on making a difference in the environment in which people live and work, fostering and maintaining relationships with communities, taking care to be a good neighbour and contributing to sustainable development initiatives.”
- Oil Spillage Data: “The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) as operator of SPDC Joint Venture (SPDC-JV) facilities is committed to operating SPDC-JV facilities in a responsible manner with due regard for the environment.” (Shell Nigeria, 2017).

The ironies of these statements are rather apparent because there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Shell has done the exact opposite of what it claims in these mission statements. It is also

noteworthy that there was no provision/special plans made for indigenous peoples on whose land the company conducts its operations in the Niger Delta.

## **5.5 Indigenous Peoples Dissatisfactions and Responses of the State and oil TNCs**

### ***I. Indigenous Peoples reactions against oil development and response of the state and oil TNCs in Northern Alberta***

Scott (1990, 72) argues that “for the pluralists, the absence of significant protest or radical opposition in relatively open political systems must be taken as a sign of satisfaction or, at least, insufficient dissatisfaction to warrant the time and trouble of political mobilization.” Hence, seeing the indigenous peoples in Alberta protest the development of the oil sands shows a sign of dissatisfaction.

Audrea (2016) informs us that in the summer of 2014, Nancy Scanie, (a First Nation) elder, led a march/walk through the heart of the oil developments in northern Alberta. This was attended by hundreds of supporters and activists. According to Audrea (2016, 63), “the Healing Walk was an indigenous-led procession seeking to renew the participants’ spiritual connection with the land and allow them to bear witness to the destruction wreaked by tar sands mining.” The walk attracted so many people the world over and after the first walk, subsequent walks were attended by more people.

Narine (2014) reported that on the 5th of September 2014, the Beaver Lake Cree Nation (a First Nations Band) protested oil sands development in Alberta, and a crowd gathered on the steps of the Alberta Legislature. According to Narine (2014, 8), “the group’s stop in Edmonton came one day after the National Energy Board concluded its first Aboriginal oral traditional evidence gathering in its hearings to make recommendations on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.”

In trying to reiterate that the indigenous peoples have the right to be consulted before projects are carried out on their land, Annand (2016) informs us that “the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) has filed for a judicial review of the approvals issued to TransCanada Corp. for the Grand Rapids project in 2014, due to the provincial government's consultation office's failure to instruct TransCanada to consult with the band about the project. This is a perfect example of the flawed system in the heart of oil country.” (Annand 2016, 1). This is yet another case out of many other cases, that shows that many indigenous peoples are not happy with the projects



relating to oil sands in northern Alberta, and expressing dissatisfaction through peaceful protests is a democratic right. In most cases, the people's voices are heard and the state and oil TNCs always see the need to respect the voices of the indigenous peoples and engage in some form of dialogue with them. For example, when the First Nations protested the Enbridge Northern Gateway access pipeline project, (a project that was proposed to run oil pipes through First Nations land) there was a court ruling that was finally in favour of the indigenous peoples. A report by CBC in 2016 states that: "The Federal Court of Appeal has overturned approval of Enbridge's controversial Northern Gateway project after finding Ottawa failed to properly consult the First Nations affected by the pipeline." (CBC, 2016). This shows that regardless of different controversies surrounding oil development, the First Nations remain hopeful that their voices can be heard when they go against certain projects that pose danger to their environment. But is this the same situation in the Niger Delta?

## ***II. Indigenous Peoples reactions against oil development and response of the state and oil TNCs in Niger Delta***

Nietschmann (1994) argues that "the modern state is an outgrowth of European kingdoms, overseas colonialism, and the division of large colonial empires into smaller and smaller neocolonial pieces." (Nietschmann 1994, 227). Applying Nietschmann's argument to the situation in Nigeria, what can be deduced according to recent reports is that, after the end of British colonialism which brought untold hardship to the Niger Delta indigenous peoples, the Nigerian state continues to exploit resources from the indigenous peoples' traditional territory without significant benefits for the indigenous peoples (this is a form of internal colonialism/neo-colonialism), which has led to continuous privation in the Niger Delta, because with the state's assistance, the oil TNCs in the Niger Delta have continued for decades, to degrade the environment, leading to poverty and loss of livelihood among the Ogoni and Ijaw, and in many cases, when the people peacefully protest the ills of oil development in ND, the state reacts violently against them (Nwoke, 2010).

The Nigerian state has been perceived as an agent of neo-colonialism because according to Nietschmann (1994), it is not acceptable that a state should derive authority through force and two-thirds of the world's states use their armies against their citizens/people they claim as citizens. Intimidation and countless human rights violations are committed by states against

nation peoples (Nietschmann, 1994). This is a huge problem because a country's army/military should protect the citizens against external aggression for example, and not treat the citizens as adversaries.

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) reported on its website that in May 1998, some indigenous peoples demonstrated against Chevron, one of the oil TNCs in Nigeria, on its offshore oil platform. This was to protest the environmental practices of Chevron. After some days of demonstration/occupation, the Nigerian military boarded the platform. According to BHRRC,

Larry Bowoto, one of the protesters and lead plaintiff in the subsequent lawsuit, said that "Nigerian military and police forces...opened fire on us; it is our contention that they did this without warning. Two of the protesters were killed; I and more than 10 others were wounded. Still, others were arrested and beaten by the Nigerian authorities." One protester was taken into custody and claimed that the military tortured him. (BHRRC, 2016).

Based on several news archives in Nigeria and different news agencies all over the world, it is no longer news that Ken Saro Wiwa, popular Ogoni activists and eight of his colleagues were killed by hanging on the 10th of November 1995, during the military regime of General Sani Abacha. Many reports have revealed that this killing was a strategy used by the state and oil TNCs to silence the people who were against the reckless environmental damage in the Niger Delta. It is noteworthy that this killing occurred few years after the military occupation of Ogoniland, a military occupation that was in response to a peaceful protest by the Ogoni. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the oppressions by the state have also continued under civilian governments and this has made many frustrated indigenous peoples, especially the youth, to protest violently against the state and oil TNCs. Thus, proponents of the frustration-aggression theory might be correct in the case of violence experienced in the Niger Delta.

Until today, the Nigerian state (instead of admitting its mistakes and maltreatment of the Ogoni and Ijaw, and engaging in peaceful resolutions and meaningfully engaging the people) still militarily occupy the Niger Delta, giving full protection and support to the oil TNCs as they continue oil development on indigenous peoples lands. Although, it has been reported that the recent government has taken certain steps to listen to the peoples who have been negatively affected by development of oil in the region (i.e. ordering for the cleanup of oil spills and instructing oil TNCs operating in the Niger Delta to relocate their headquarters/head offices to



the Niger Delta), many indigenous peoples claim that the government has not matched words with actions.

### **5.6 Indigenous Peoples Struggle in Northern Alberta and The Niger Delta: Mere Violence or Re-territorialization?**

According to the Frustration-Aggression theory, it is expected that humans display acts of aggression when their hopes of achieving a goal(s) are stifled. Interestingly, in Northern Alberta and the Niger Delta, the development of oil has led to aggressive reactions from the indigenous peoples but the level of aggression in the Niger Delta has been more violent as compared to what is happening in Northern Alberta. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that in Canada, where indigenous peoples occupy several territories, and resource development is of huge economic importance, the state takes certain steps to ensure that they peacefully engage the indigenous peoples who are the traditional occupants of lands where resources are extracted.

In Northern Alberta for example, where oil sands are developed, it has been reported that the state and oil TNCs provide employment and other economic incentives for the indigenous peoples (i.e. First Nations and Metis). Also, it is a widely held view that in some countries like Canada, when indigenous peoples express dissatisfaction and protest certain projects, the state and oil TNCs ensure that their voices are heard (the protest against the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project in British Columbia is a good example). However, the situation in Northern Alberta is far from perfect. In a report made by Oil Daily newspaper in 2005, the government of Alberta was accused of being adamant to consider negotiating the allocation of revenue made from oil to the indigenous peoples, and this led to a threat of roadblocks (although as a last resort). In the words of Joe Whitehead, grand chief of the Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta: “We hope we don't have to use roadblocks any time soon. They are only one solution but that's the sad part -- it seems that something negative has to happen before the government listens to us.” (Oil Daily 2005, 1).

The Ogoni in the Niger Delta suffer almost the same fate as the First Nations in Northern Alberta. I used the word ‘almost’ because based on research findings, it is evident that prior to applying violent approaches in trying to make their voices heard about their dissatisfaction with the way and manner the Nigerian state and oil TNCs carry out their oil development activities in the Niger Delta, the Ogoni and indeed, other indigenous peoples engaged in peaceful protests, but

these protests were met with repression from the Nigerian state, in collaboration with the oil TNCs. And just as the frustration-aggression theory posits, aggression usually becomes the result of frustration. Hence, we can strongly apply this theory to the different levels of violence that have and are still being witnessed in the Niger Delta. In Northern Alberta, there is yet to be a report where the state directly/openly killed First Nations because the peoples expressed their dissatisfaction with oil development. But many indigenous peoples have been killed by the state just for protesting peacefully. Hence, my reason for emphasising more on the indigenous peoples' violent struggles in the Niger Delta.

Nigeria witnessed several years of military rule, but in May 1999, there was a transition to civilian government, which made Nigeria a democratic state. Several scholars argue that the indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta (during the military era in Nigeria) were not given opportunities to protest the reckless environmental damage caused by oil development in the region because of the military rulers. The BHRRC report where some villagers were killed in May 1998 by the Nigerian military police forces, just because they peacefully demonstrated against Chevron (a major oil TNC operating in the Niger Delta), is a good example of the repression meted against the Ogoni by the Nigerian authoritarian state. However, judging from the current events in the Niger Delta, it is evident that the situation failed to improve after so many years of democratic governments in Nigeria, and the region still witnesses military occupation. Nietschmann (1994) questions why many states use their military against people they claim as citizens. According to Nietschmann (1994, 227), "the most widespread and numerous human rights violations are committed by states against nation peoples." Indigenous peoples all over the world fall under Nietschmann's definition on nation peoples, because under the UNDRIP these peoples have the right to self-determination. Sadly, many authors argue that the Nigerian state falls under the category of repressive states.

The indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta still protest the activities of the state and oil TNCs in their region till date, which is a sign of their sufficient dissatisfaction. It is rather unfortunate that the peoples now engage in violent protests since according to recent research, their peaceful protests against the activities of the state and oil TNCs in the Niger Delta have yielded no positive results. There is some evidence to suggest that many Ogoni and Ijaw youths have formed various militant groups that have taken up arms and demand for land rights and more economic development for their territories in the Niger Delta. Osaghae (1995) informs us that

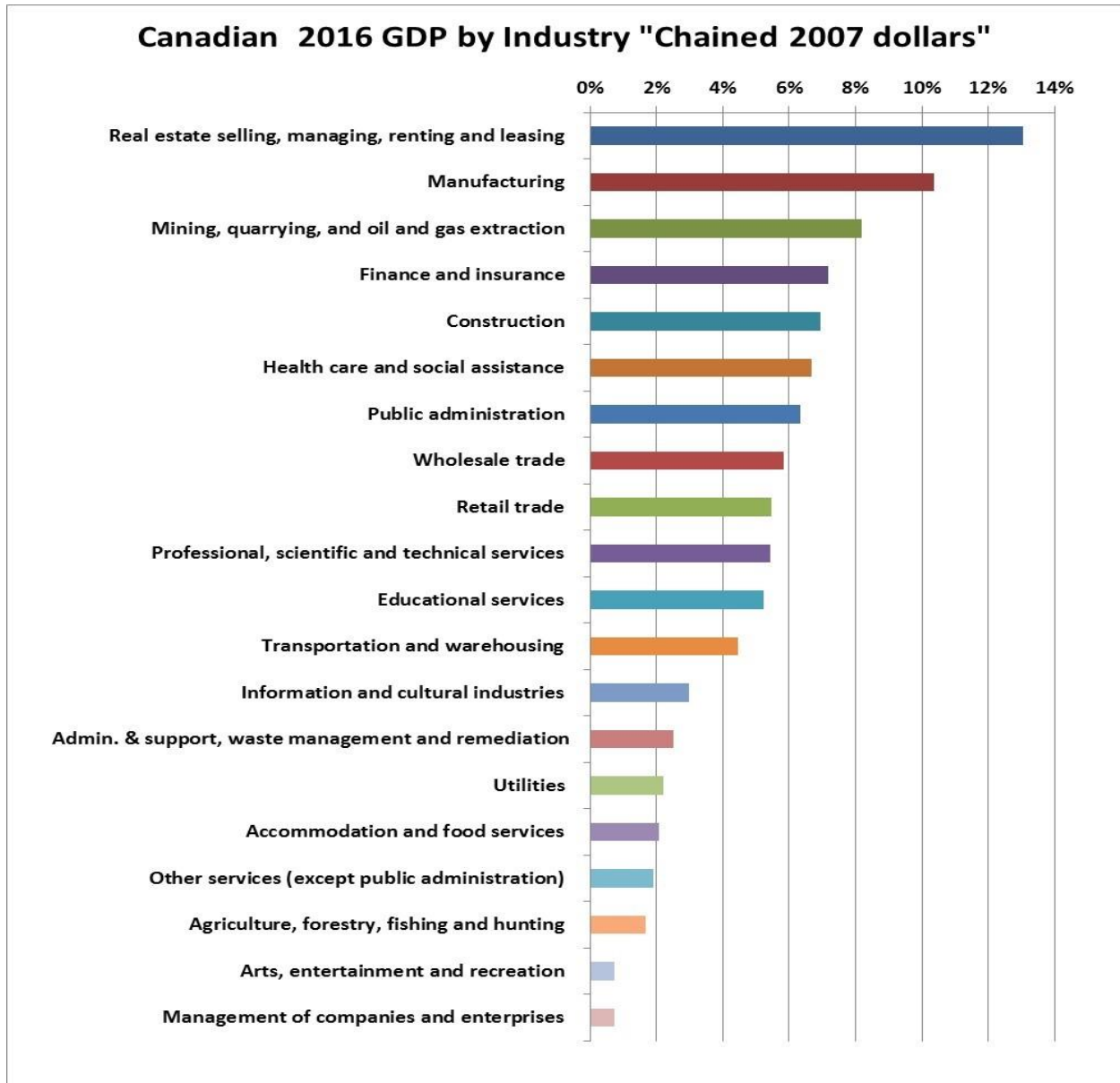
most theoretical treatments of the Nigerian state suggest that it is a political actor that remains neutral and acts in the common interest of all, but the Ogoni episode clearly makes these assumptions faulty because it is evident that the state exists to further the interests of majority groups against the minorities (i.e. indigenous peoples) and the state colludes with oil TNCs in exploiting the minorities in the Niger Delta. Osaghae (1995) further informs us that involving the military to subjugate, harass, arrest and detain Ogoni leaders who are against the ills of oil development in the Niger Delta underscores the state as violence and terrorism instruments.

Although it has commonly been assumed by several authors that these militant groups were formed for selfish economic reasons, Ukiwo (2007) argues that “the explanations for insurgency in the region, especially among the Ijaw of Warri and Ijaw generally, can be found not in the greed of militant groups or their leaders but in the longstanding history of marginalization and inequality, as well as the failure of the state and oil business to redress these grievances except at gunpoint.” (Ukiwo 2007, 610). There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the Ogoni also suffer the same fate as the Ijaw and have been left with no other option but violence. It is noteworthy that violence is certainly not the best option, but we can evidently relate these violent cases to the arguments in the frustration-aggression theory. “It was just in 2007 that Oloibiri (where oil was produced in commercial quantities) was rewarded with tarred road. Thus, the history of underdevelopment and regional conflict in the Niger Delta begins with multinational oil exploration” (Azaiki 2007, 267). It is important to note that Oloibiri is the community where oil was first discovered in Nigeria in 1956, and it is rather shameful that the indigenous peoples in this region continue to suffer so much hardship and neglect, even though Nigeria’s economy relies almost solely on the Niger Delta region.

### **5.7 The Resource Curse, Myth or Reality**

I have tried to compare the socio-economic and environmental effects of oil development on First Nations and Ogoni to know if these indigenous peoples are affected by oil development in similar ways. This is one way to know the validity or invalidity of the resource curse theory which guides this study to some degree because several scholars have argued for, while others have argued against this theory. In Canada, oil development is key to the economy, but the

country also relies on other sectors for wealth generation. As shown in the data below.



Data Source: InvestorsFriend (2017). Accessed from Statistics Canada

Proponents of the resource curse theory argue that this ‘curse’ is evident in countries that; have a high level of institutional rot, are corrupt, are dependent on resource development (mono-economies), ignore the manufacturing sector, etc. All these are sadly the situation in Nigeria and in order to avoid this curse, institutional discipline, and economic diversification is some of many solutions which should be applied (these solutions are visible in Canada). Nigeria’s economy on the other hand, depends on crude oil exploited from the Niger Delta (Nwoke, 2010). Hence, the reason for the socio-economic and environmental pressure, contestations and violence

in the region that. These problems can be avoided with disciplined leadership which Nigeria is yet to have since her independence in 1960.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study has made an effort to describe and analyse how the livelihood of indigenous peoples (First Nations in Northern Alberta and Ogoni in the Niger Delta) have been affected in socio-economic and environmental aspects, by the development of oil. Since the state and oil TNCs are responsible for the developments of these resources (oil sands in Northern Alberta and crude oil in the Niger Delta), the study has also attempted to analyse and describe the roles played by the state and oil TNCs in the course of developing the resource (oil).

Several theories were used to aid better understanding and analyses of the study. The resource curse theory has been used mainly understand why indigenous peoples in Northern Alberta have not been affected as adversely as those in the Niger Delta and why the so-called 'curse' is visible in Nigeria and not Canada, even though both countries are endowed with oil. The concept of neo-colonialism has also been used to explain how the indigenous peoples in both countries have been subjugated by the state (this subjugation is higher in Nigeria). While the frustration-aggression theory has helped in guiding our understanding of the violent approaches applied by the indigenous peoples (especially in the Niger Delta) in order to express their disapprovals of the socio-economic and environmental dislocations they face as a result of oil development on their land.

The study shows that the development of oil has been a mixed blessing in both for countries and for the indigenous peoples, the First Nations have benefited to some extent while the Ogoni do not really have positive stories to tell about how the oil exploited from their land has done them any good. Most indigenous peoples (if not all) depend on the environment and this has been tampered with in both regions, but the state and oil TNCs in Canada have tried to compensate the peoples for their loss and steps are being taken towards reclamation, even though many scientists have posited that the reclamation process does not restore the land to its original state. In the Niger Delta, however, it has been a case of total neglect and severe environmental damages by the state and oil TNCs that have shown so far, that the peoples' well-being is not a priority. It is really sad to hard to comprehend why a region that gives so much to the country has to suffer so much hardship and neglect and the issue of corruption also plays a major role in trying to solve this riddle. (The level of corruption in the oil and gas sector in Nigeria is way beyond this study and deserves a separate study). Thus, it is not surprising that the level of

violence in the Niger Delta continues to escalate and such violence is hardly experienced in northern Alberta.

Resource development (oil development in this case) no doubt, has come to stay until alternative sources of energy that can replace fossil fuels are discovered/innovated. The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) informs us that “fossil fuels, including coal, oil and natural gas, are currently the world's primary energy source. Formed from organic material over the course of millions of years, fossil fuels have fueled U.S. and global economic development over the past century. Yet fossil fuels are finite resources and they can also irreparably harm the environment.”

The world relies to a great degree, on fossil fuels for energy, and countries endowed with a natural resource like oil, always see the need for resource development to generate wealth and grow their economies. However, during such development, countries who care about their citizens are aware that accidents that can harm the environment and consequently the citizens are likely to happen. In Canada, the state works with the oil TNCs to ensure that these accidents are avoided the best way possible, and try to innovate new technologies to develop their oil in an environmentally friendly manner.

In Canada (Northern Alberta), the indigenous peoples have a say, and influence regarding activities carried out by the state and oil TNCs on their ancestral lands. They are not killed or oppressed when they protest or oppose development projects in their communities, and they are duly compensated, to avoid the thought of marginalisation (although, this has not been perfect in Canada, and the state and oil TNCs can do better). Hence, Anaya (2014) argues that “with respect to treaty and aboriginal rights, Canada is an example to the world. Settlement agreements and other arrangements achieved provide important examples of reconciliation and accommodation of indigenous and national interests.” (Anaya 2014, 15).

When accidents like oil spills occur, the state ought to ensure that oil TNCs are held accountable and act swiftly to clean the spills. But this has not been the case in Nigeria for several decades now, and this situation has led to environmental and socio-economic dislocation of the indigenous peoples which with negative effects like violence in the Niger Delta. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the youths in the Niger Delta communities now take up arms to challenge the state and oil TNCs (since the state has been antagonistic towards the peoples’ peaceful opposition to the degradation of their environment).

## **Recommendations**

Although the situation in Northern Alberta is far from perfect, I believe that Nigeria can borrow a leaf from Canada in several facets. This study has been a comparison of both countries, but I wish, however, to recommend some steps that can be taken by the Nigerian state and oil TNCs in the Niger Delta and also for academics who hope to see the situation improve in the Niger Delta

### **I. Cleaning up the Niger Delta**

The United Nations, under the United Nations Environmental Programme conducted an independent research on the environmental damages in the Niger Delta and came up with a report (the UNEP report) in 2011 and the report revealed that it could take up to 30 years to clean up the Niger Delta. “Numerous oil spills and abandoned infrastructure has left high levels of carcinogens in drinking water, contaminated soil with hydrocarbons and had what the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) described as a “disastrous” impact on the delta’s mangroves. Funded by a polluters pay policy, the project is expected to take up to 30 years.” (Churchill 2016, 1). This might sound like a huge task that requires a lot of patience, but just like the saying goes “a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” It was reported all over the Nigerian and international media in 2016 that a 1 billion dollar clean-up of the Niger Delta was launched by the Nigerian government in order to try fixing to 50 years worth of damage done by oil exploitation. However, recent reports show that words have not been followed up with actions by the Nigerian state in terms of the cleanup and it is imperative that the promise to clean up the Delta is actually actualized. In addition, the oil TNCs and other resource development companies operating in the Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole should be compelled to apply world best practices when they develop these resources. Certain actions that cannot be accepted/tolerated in Western countries where most of these companies have their headquarters should not be tolerated in Nigeria.

### **II. More Research on Indigenous Peoples**

I went through the websites Shell and other oil TNCs operating in the Niger Delta and none of them made any special provision for, or acknowledgements of indigenous peoples in the Niger Delta region. It can be a valid argument that since the constitution of Nigeria fails to recognise indigenous peoples, the oil TNCs can easily ignore the fact that these peoples exist. Hence, more



research on indigenous peoples is needed in the Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole. More research on indigenous peoples in Nigeria will go a long way in helping the Ogoni and other indigenous peoples gain recognition and respect. The state and oil TNCs in Nigeria should admit their wrongs against the Niger Delta indigenous peoples and learn from some countries like Canada that keep on engaging the peoples to achieve a more stable society with fewer contestations, even though it has not been a perfect process in Canada.

### **III. Diversification Informed by the Principle of Value Addition**

The Nigerian economy has been described as a mono-economy because it depends solely on oil, even though the country is blessed with arable land and other resources that can be developed. Hence, the Nigerian economy needs to be diversified by applying the value addition principle. For example, Nwoke (2010) informs us that Nigeria is greatly endowed with solid minerals and massive fertile land for agriculture, natural gas (which is mostly flared recklessly), to mention but a few. The manufacturing sector in Nigeria is currently moribund, and judging from world leading economies, countries become more advanced and development is inevitable in countries that have flourishing manufacturing sectors.

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