Conflict in the Niger Delta: An Analysis of Resource Governance and Human Security

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Abstract

The thesis explores the causes and dynamics of the conflict that has lasted for decades in the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria. I critically examined the main theories that have been previously used to explain the conflict particularly the dominant greed/grievance paradigm. I argue that the greed/grievance theory does not adequately explain the conflict as it is difficult to distinguish behaviours that could be labelled as greed or grievance. Instead, the thesis argues that the human security framework better explains the causes and dynamics of the conflict experienced in this region.

A three month ethnographic study which involved in-depth interviews, observation, group interview and document analysis was carried out in the three highest oil producing states in the region. The ethnography focused on the activities of the three main stakeholders (the government, MNCS and indigenes of selected communities) as well as other stakeholders like NGOs and human rights activists. Two key issues were critically explored: the impact of oil exploration on the human security of the indigenes and whether or not direct distribution of resources could reduce the level of human insecurity and the resultant conflict in the region.

A thorough analysis of the data obtained from the field trip reveals that problems relating to governance of distribution of resources and not necessarily resource scarcity are the key sources of human insecurity in the region. The results further show that the three major stakeholders in the region contributed to the human insecurity experienced in the region. Further analysis of the forms of resource distribution used in the region shows that a bottom-up model of resource distribution with the active participation of all the major stakeholders could help improve on the human security in the region as well as reduce conflict.

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Declaration

This is to certify that this thesis is entirely my own work and that none of the materials has previously been presented for a higher degree at any university. All sources are acknowledged as References

'Dem come fish our water empty

Dem come chop our oil plenty

Come take resources away

Come take all our riches

Dem come use us as dem store

For raw material to make them rich

Oh brother, brother, bross wetin

Sister, sister, sis' (Nneka, 2008)

NOTE: Song title is 'Niger Delta', from album 'No longer at ease' released in 2008

Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increase in violent conflicts in Africa. Although the outbreak of conflict is not peculiar to the African Continent, empirical evidence has shown that conflicts in the continent have fairly markedly increased when compared to other 'developing continents'. According to Jackson (2002), almost one third of all conflicts in Africa began towards the end of the 1980s and the occurrence of conflicts in Africa is rapidly increasing in comparison to other regions. Africa unsurprisingly heads the table for current conflicts as it is described as "the most warring region on the planet" (Van Tongeren 1999:11; Jackson 2000a:210). It is important to state that most of the conflicts experienced in Africa have been attributed to the availability of natural resources. The resources, which have helped many nations achieve development and which several developing nations rely on for their 'transition to development', have allegedly plagued numerous countries in Africa.

One of the major areas in Africa affected by violent conflict is the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The region is home to about 20 million Nigerians and significant not only to the country but also to other countries that rely on the oil (Courson, 2009). The oil produced in the region accounts for about 95% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and 80% of government revenues (Courson, 2009). However, incessant violence and disruption to oil exploration has affected the region negatively thereby increasing poverty in the region. Since the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in 1958, the region has experienced a lot of upheavals with the negatives attested to have outweighed the positives. Subsequent military and democratic governments in Nigeria have tried and failed to achieve peace in the region and it is feared that if adequate measures are not taken the conflict in the region could degenerate into a civil war.

Several initiatives aimed at reducing the conflict in the region and creating an enabling environment for the Multinational Oil Corporations (MNCs) to work peacefully in the region have not yielded much result as most peace accords are often ephemeral. The last of such peace deals was a 2009 amnesty granted to over 20,000 'repentant' militants for laying down their weapons and signing up to one of several initiatives that would improve their standards of living and grant them access to sustainable livelihoods (Obi, 2014). However, this initiative is also ill-planned and tending towards

failure as this research will demonstrate due to improper planning and execution. While the situation in the region remains volatile and the fragile peace is often interrupted by sporadic violence, it becomes imperative to critically explore why it has remained difficult to achieve peace in the region.

This thesis identifies the misunderstanding of both the root causes and the ever-changing dynamics of the conflict as the bane of the conflict that has claimed thousands of lives in the region. First, it is often argued that there are two main actors (the Nigerian government and the MNCs) in the conflict while the indigenes of the region are classified as victims of oppression (Okonta and Douglas, 2003; Courson 2009; Ojakorotu and Gilbert, 2010). Second, the greed/grievance framework has often been used to analyse the conflict and this poses a serious challenge to the understanding of the dynamics of the conflict (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Renner, 1996; Collier and Hoeffler, 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). This thesis will explore these misconceptions and argue that the indigenes of the Niger Delta are active participants in the conflict and not just victims. Also, the thesis will argue that the greed/grievance theory is not an adequate framework in understanding the Niger Delta conflict. As long as researchers, development organisations and conflict resolution specialists continue to fail in understanding the causes of the conflict, the solution to the problem will remain elusive. Although the primary aim of this research is to explore the possibility and the adequacy of a resource distribution model as the solution to the conflict in the region, it is important not to make the same mistakes of misinterpreting or misidentifying the causes of the conflict and its ever changing dynamics. In order to fully understand the conflict, the theoretical part of this research will attempt to define the root causes of the conflict in a different way using a different perspective- the Human security paradigm. This new understanding of the conflict will then be tested empirically using ethnographic methods before going on to explore the efficacy of a resource distribution model as a means to community development and conflict resolution.

Synopsis of natural resources and conflict

Considerable numbers of research have been carried out in order to identify the cause(s) of violence in resource endowed regions and several factors have been identified. According to the resource curse model developed by Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2000) and alluded to by Ross (2004), developing countries endowed with natural resources have a high risk of experiencing armed conflict. Examples include copper related conflict in Democratic Republic of Congo and oil related conflicts in Angola, Morocco and Sudan amongst several others. The resource curse thesis argues that countries that have abundant resources are not able to use the revenue that accrues from the resources to develop their economies. Rather the over-dependence on these resources stifles development of other sectors of the economy (Harford and Klein, 2005) and as a result any shock in the mineral industries negatively impacts the whole economy. Another derivative of the resource curse argument relating to a country's dependence on natural resources is the 'Dutch disease' theory. The 'Dutch Disease' model stated that 'the windfall gains from natural resources, particularly oil, increases a country's average propensity to import, increases its exchange rate, contracts other trade-able sectors thereby causing a crowding-out effect on other sectors of the economy' (Ross, 2003:8).

A considerable number of research projects have also been carried out in order to determine the causes of conflict arising from a country's 'over-reliance' on natural resources in the African continent. Such research projects include: Land scarcity, distribution and conflict in Africa (Bigagaza et al, 2002); coffee related conflict in Burundi (Oketch, J and Polzer, T, 2002); exploration of coltan in the DRC (Moyroud, C and Katunga, J, 2002); Oil conflict in Sudan (Goldsmith et al, 2002) amongst others. One thing that is common to all these research is that natural resources increase the risk of resource conflict. This thesis will be focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa using the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria as a case study. Eminent scholars like Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) argue that the absence of development is one of the main causes of conflict in Africa. The scholars explained that many African leaders have failed to develop their industrial capacity and this in most cases have been due to dependence on natural resources which offer 'quick and easy' access to capital.

Ifeka (2000) argues that resource conflict like the one in the Niger Delta is as a result of political oppression by previous military regimes. He also affirms that repression of the citizens of oil producing communities contributed to violence in the region. In contrast, Akpan (2010) argues that the return of Nigeria to democracy in 1999 has not reduced the violence in the Niger Delta.

Oyefusi argues that inadequate level of education; poor remuneration and reduced access to sources of livelihood are the main causes of armed conflict in resource abundant regions like the Niger Delta (Oyefusi, 2007). He identified two dimensions to resource related conflict in Nigeria. The first is the clamour for political elites to attain public positions by all means and the other is the lack of visible development in the Niger Delta. He linked the former to excessive government dependence on oil revenues, coupled with a poor and unstable system of resource distribution. On the other hand, he attributed the violence in the Niger Delta area to weak institutional arrangements as well as weak enactment of laws that do not benefit the poor people in the region. In his conclusion, the scholar stated that there are three factors that explain conflict in the Niger Delta. These factors are poor level of education, inadequate levels of income and the increase in oil assets owned by people that are not indigenes of the Niger Delta. He discovered that increase in education, income and the possession of asset (in terms of farmlands) all reduces the chance of a person participating in violent conflicts considerably (Oyefusi, 2007).

The availability of resources in a country does not lead to conflict as there are many countries in the world endowed with huge natural resources without the problem of resource conflict. Rather, the governance of the resources, lack of transparency in the extraction process as well as struggles by political elites in the administration of the proceeds from the resources generates conflict (Reno, 2003; Ibaba, 2012). Ejibunu (2007), lists the main causes of the conflict in the Niger Delta to include: deficiency in the structure of the Nigerian Federation; insufficient means of livelihood; degradation of the environment; underdevelopment and lack of employment; social and economic distortions; human right abuse by public and private organizations; divide and rule tactics of oil companies coupled with lack of transparency and government corruption.

In light of the above, it is apparent that the topic of resource conflict and resource conflict resolution is very broad and sensitive. Although a lot of research have been done in this regard, it has proven difficult to reach a consensus on the actual cause(s) of the violent conflict that has been experienced as a result of the availability of natural resources. One important point to note is that resource conflicts though having a similar pattern varies from state to state and different states have their own inherent characteristics.

Research aims

While acknowledging the various causes of the conflict proposed by various authors above, it is argued that Reno and Ikelegbe's stance is most significant. This thesis supports the position that resources on its own should not generate conflict except there are other underlying factors at play and these factors differ from one conflict to another. Furthermore, each of the causes proposed by the other authors above can be collectively categorised into one or more of the theories of resource conflict. Hence, in order to establish the real cause(s) of conflict, this thesis will seek to examine the conflict experienced in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria in light of theories associated with resource conflict.

One major problem associated with many of the conflict theories is that they focus more on the structural conditions that influence conflict rather than the decisions of the actors to engage in acts of violence. This thesis will focus on both factors in order to analyse the actual causes of the conflict in the region under examination. The first part of this thesis will critically analyse the greed and grievance theory and then the state theories and their effect on conflict. The thesis will also explore how these theories relate to the conflict in question. An adequate analysis of the conflict is essential to determine the actual cause(s) of conflict in the region. This is important because no meaningful solutions can be achieved without addressing the immediate causes of the conflict. It is important to state that one of the reasons why previous peace attempts have failed is because they have not addressed the issues that triggered that conflict from the onset. The dynamics of the conflict has changed over time and only a comprehensive analysis of the causes and a well-informed designed network of solutions can make a considerable impact in putting an end to or reducing the conflict significantly.

One line of research that has not been fully researched as far as resource conflict is concerned is the concept of human security and its impact in generating conflict. While this thesis does not intend to confirm or refute the greed/grievance theories of conflict, the thesis will explore the Human Security theory as a better approach to understanding the blurred lines between the greed/grievance theories. Using the case of the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, the paper will examine the issue of human security and its effect

on this conflict critically, considering the unique nature of the region and the Nigerian state. In order to fully understand the reasons behind this conflict, this thesis will explore extensively the history of the region as well as the history of the conflict. This is because as pointed out by Thomas (1999), history is important in order to understand the causes of human insecurity which invariably leads to conflict in Africa and this is particularly true in relation to the Niger-Delta.

Some previous research projects carried out in the past focusing on the Niger-Delta region have identified two major actors involved in the conflict. These are: the Nigerian government and the MNCs operating in the region. There is no consensus on the role of the indigenes of the Niger Delta whether they are active participants or victims (Ifeka,2000; Ikelegbe,2006; Oyefusi,2007; Akpan,2010). These projects have yielded different results depending on the approach used and some have concluded that the Nigerian government and the MNCs are indeed responsible for the conflict in the region. This research will explore the impact of each of the actors on the outbreak of conflict in the region. This is because the dynamics of the conflict has changed over time and depending on the time frame examined and the mode of analysis, the actors in the conflict could be different.

The system of resource allocation and the governance of the system are both important in analysing how the lack of access to resources could be a major causal factor in the conflict. This thesis will critically explore the mode of governance of resource allocation in the Niger Delta and the extent to which this has impacted on the conflict. After a careful analysis of the causes and effects of the conflict in the Niger-Delta, the third part of this thesis will seek to explore different models of distribution of resources using the analysis obtained from the field trip. The analysis of the models can only be done after critically analysing the causes of the conflict over time as well as the reasons why previous resolution initiatives have failed. The analysis will focus not only on the structural conditions that result in conflict but also on the decisions of actors to engage in conflict.

Research Questions:

In order to make a significant contribution to the field of conflict resolution as well as to be able to structure this thesis in a way that the thesis will meet the required standard and also appeal to academics and policy makers, there are some specific questions that must be asked. The pivotal research questions for this thesis are:

1. Can the dominant greed/grievance models explain the dynamics of conflict in the Niger Delta?

2. Can a model of direct distribution of resources address the human security issues explored in this thesis?

3. Who are the main actors in the conflict and what is the relationship between them?

Scope of the research

The research is framed within the context of identifying the underlying causes and proposing solutions to the conflicts ravaging the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It argues that one of the main reasons why there has not been a lasting solution to the problem is because the underlying causes have not been identified and/or understood. Ako (2012) argues that one of the challenges to facing the Niger Delta is the lack of proper definition of the issues facing the region. In order to explore the causes, there is a need to study the associated theories from a different perspective or use a different theory. The Human security theory will be used to explore the conflict because the dominant greed/grievance theory earlier used focus more on the structural conditions that influence conflict rather than the decision of the actors to engage in conflict. This will be followed by identifying the major actors involved in the conflict and the roles played by these actors in the outbreak and sustenance of the conflict in the region. Furthermore, the thesis examines the dynamics of the conflict and the roles played by each of the actors in influencing the change in dynamics of the conflict over the decades.

The thesis undertakes a detailed examination of the background of the conflict that has ravaged the region over the last five decades. In other to achieve this, the thesis examines not only the opportunities for violence but also the motivations. It is essential to critically explore the motivations because the dynamics of the conflict changes rapidly and the causes move swiftly as event changes. Furthermore, most of the research projects that have been carried out in the region focus more on the opportunities rather than the motivations of the actors to engage in acts of violence (Darlington, 2014). Some of the aspects of motivations that will be explored include poverty, issues of human security and livelihood deprivations, resource allocation and environmental degradation. The opportunities include the weakness of the Nigerian state, territorial terrace, illegal wealth accumulations through activities like oil bunkering and kidnapping of oil workers (Okonta and Douglas, 2003; Ako 2011; Obi, 2014).

The allocation and distribution of resources have been identified to be one of the key determinants of conflict in the Niger Delta. Many stakeholders in the region especially residents, civil societies and NGOs argue that oil exploration has impacted negatively on the livelihoods of the people, hence, a need to ameliorate the situation through an increase in allocation and distribution of the proceeds from the oil to impacted communities. This view has been supported by several organisations (including several militant groups) as a means of restoring peace to the region. However, it is important to examine the relationship between resource allocation and the governance of resource distribution which is totally different but equally important. While resource allocation in Nigeria is a term used to depict what percentage of revenue is allocated to each region, the governance of distribution of resources covers the modalities of what is distributed, how it is distributed and to whom the resources are distributed. This thesis intends to fill this gap by analysing issues surrounding the governance of resource distribution and its effect on the outbreak of conflict in the region. This is important because, if the problems are related to the governance of resource distribution, then an increase in allocation without a proper channel would not only render the whole process useless, it could actually escalate the conflict. This is because ineffectively managed distribution of resources could promote the pattern of greed that has been argued to be a major cause of conflict in the region.

Chapter 1

1.1 Natural Resources and Civil Conflict

Since the 1950s, some development economists (Bain, 1956; Caves 1971) suggested that the availability of natural resources will help poor countries develop their economy and achieve growth. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in many resource rich countries. Most of these countries especially in Sub-Saharan Africa have not seen the developments associated with resource endowment. Apart from widespread corruption and the inability of these resource rich states to provide basic infrastructures, violent conflicts have been a bane militating against the development of such states. In this respect, since the late 1980s, several research projects have established a link between availability of natural resources and some socio-economic problems. The availability of natural resources has been associated with dwindling growth, increased inequality and widespread poverty (Sachs and Warner, 1995; Gravin and Hausmann, 1988; Ross 2004b). It also results in corruption of political institutions and the likelihood of civil conflict (Lane and Tornell, 1999; Ross, 1999; Collier and Hoeffler, 2001).

While some of the researchers such as Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2000); Ross (2004); Bigazaza et al (2002) see a direct link between natural resources and conflict, others such as Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000); Reno (2003); Ikelegbe (2006); Ako (2011); Obi, (2014) amongst others argue that natural resources do not create conflicts on its own but poor and ineffective management of the resources lead to tensions within and between groups which invariably leads to violent conflicts. The researchers have postulated various theories on this topic but there seems not to be a consensus regarding the actual role played by natural resources especially oil both in the outbreak as well as sustenance of conflict. This section will evaluate the main research that have been done and the outcome of the studies. Focusing mainly on the greed/grievance and the theory of states and its effect on the outbreak of conflicts, this session will evaluate these theories in line with the case study of the thesis. This section will also analyse the theories to see whether or not they conform to the case of the Niger Delta and if generalisations can be made in this regard.

1.1.1   Greed/Grievance Theory

Although poor governance of natural resources increases the risk of civil conflict, there are some resources whose poor management are more risky than others. Collier and Hoeffler (2005) argue that of all natural resources, oil has the highest risk of generating conflict. This is because the resource offers large rents to the government and the economy of the country. According to Collier and Hoeffler (2002), '23% of states dependent on oil exports have experienced civil war in any 5-year period, while the figure is 0.55 percent for countries without natural resources'(pg. 24). The scholars argued that countries that possess natural resources have more likelihood of experiencing violent conflict. They argued further that one of the main factors in any conflict situation experienced by resource endowed countries is greed. The argument supporting the greed theory is that combatants in armed conflict are motivated by the material resources they will get from the conflict which could help them to improve their situation at the expense of other people (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000).

On the other hand, Burton (1990) developed the 'human needs framework' which explains that conflict erupts as a consequence of altering the balance 'between: total despair and apathy in the struggle to survive; sufficient resources with which to survive plus an acceptable satisfaction of human needs; and adequate material conditions by which to defeat apathy, but the denial, nevertheless of certain non-material satisfaction' (pp.49). The human needs framework concludes that whenever the opportunities for human beings to pursue their needs are being denied, conflict is inevitable. This is a major proposition on which the grievance theory relies whereby it is perceived that when people are not able to meet their needs due to conditions they feel they are not responsible for, they are likely to react violently.

The grievance theory points in the direction that violent conflicts come into being in regard to issues that the actors involved feel personally or collectively but negatively affected by and are therefore seeking redress or restoration of the right state of affairs. Grievance is an explanation for the argument that people protest over issues of perceived identity such as ethnicity, religion or social class and in cases of maltreatment or inequalities. In support of the grievance theory are some explanations that when

people are subjected to pressure which could lead to their discomfort or loss of livelihood, they will react and sometimes the reaction could be violent. It is also argued that an increase in environmental security could result in loss of livelihood especially in cases where the people depend on the environment to sustain their livelihoods. Any shift in this form of security could trigger violence (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Renner, 1996). The argument supporting the impact of grievance on the outbreak of conflict was also supported by Gurr who argues that when a group of people are treated differently by denying them access to basic rights and privileges the members of the group can unite in grievance forming a bond with themselves to fight against such treatments and such situation can indeed lead to violence (Gurr, 1993). For many decades, the indigenes of the Niger Delta of Nigeria have faced several challenges of inequality and lack of development when compared to some other regions despite the fact that the region produces the bulk of the resources that the country relies on. This situation has resulted in grievance against the Nigerian state as well as the MNCs operating in the region.

Another important derivative of the grievance theory in relation to the Niger-Delta conflict is the issue of relative deprivation. The relative deprivation theory was developed by Ted Robert Gurr (1970) and James Davies (1971) to explain the relationship between individual and group violence. The authors argue that deprivation is an important factor in generating grievances which in turn leads to violent conflict. The model explains that a group's grievance arises from unrealised expectations. The authors explain that violence is likely when people are deprived of their basic rights or access to livelihoods. They explain further that a wide discrepancy between what people want and what they get leads to frustration which results either in rebellion or revolution. This in essence implies that continuous relative deprivation could go a long way in defining the agitation in the Niger-Delta. Since 1958 when oil was first discovered in the region, the region has been subjected to series of deprivation both by the Nigerian government as well as the Multi-National Oil Corporations operating in the region. Over the years, a strategy of systematic deprivation has been carried out in the Niger- Delta region by successive governments. The people from the region seek (in vain) ownership of land and other resources and equitable share of the benefits arising from the used resources. The relative deprivation of the people whereby they are

deprived of access to their livelihoods as a result of exploration activities results in violent protests which then result in conflict.

In line with this reasoning, Nicholson (1992) argues that people's attitude to the use of violence comes at a cost (sometimes resulting in loss of lives) which is often ambiguous and it cannot be treated as being absolutely straightforward. This view is also shared by the collective action theory promulgated by Charles Tilly (1978:66) with reference to the onset of revolutions. Tilly argues that 'the passage from individual interests to collective decisions involves a confluence of shared interests that must be organised and mobilised, in possession and use of adequate resources'. He argues further that collective political action or violence will occur if there is enough opportunity but concludes that economic opportunity is not enough rational for such violent action.

The most significant research on the greed theory in the debate of natural resources and civil conflict is that by Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2002). Using a dataset of wars between 1960-1999, they argued that greed rather than grievance is the driving factor for the onset of conflict. Their work covered up to 52 civil wars between 1960 and 1999, covering most of the civil wars and violent conflicts during this period. The scholars' preliminary final result suggests that a state's dependence on natural resources could result in the outbreak of violent conflict. In their research, they discovered that both greed and grievance predict conflict significantly but that greed is a better predictor than grievance. They explained that primary commodity dependence increases the risk of conflict because it provides incentives for opportunist rebels to take up arms with an assurance that the proceeds from these primary commodities will generate revenues for them and that young men in resource endowed regions see the availability of resources as an avenue to generate 'easy wealth' and hence they do not bother to acquire education or the much needed skills to survive. They also argued that there is a positive relationship between a country's dependence on primary commodity and poor governance. This in turn exposes such country to economic shocks and increased risk of conflict. This research was alluded to by De Soysa who also argued 'greed, proxied by the availability of natural resource is substantively a far stronger (five times) predictor of conflict than the proxies of grievance' (De Soysa, 2002:397)

There have been some arguments against the greed theory. Most of the arguments against the greed theory focus on the database used by Collier and Hoeffler as well as the methodology devised for the research. Fearon & Laitin (2003) lead the criticisms and stated that 'neither the share of primary commodity exports in GDP nor its square is remotely significant' to the outbreak of conflict (Fearon & Laitin, 2003: 87). Using a similar database to that used by Collier & Hoeffler (1960-99), and grouping the data in five-year periods like the other scholars, they discovered that the coefficients of primary commodity variables alone does not explain the outbreak of conflict in resource endowed countries. They found that certain conditions favoured insurgency, these include poverty which is prevalent in weak states, instability of the political system and high population density.

The findings of Elbadawi & Sambanis (2002) agree with that of Fearon and Laitin. The authors reveal that while testing different models, a primary commodity exports variable is significant in some of their models but not others. They argue that depending on how the values are imputed in the model, some show a relationship between the availability of natural resources and resource conflict, while some do not. They conclude that the results obtained by Collier & Hoeffler 'appear fragile' and agree with Fearon and Laitin that there is little or no significant relationship between the outbreak of civil war and the dependence of a country on natural resources (Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2002: 324-325). In a similar vein, Hegre argues that depending on the number of deaths used to define conflict, the relationship between a country's export of primary commodity and its susceptibility to conflict remains unclear. He explained that when using a threshold of 1,000 deaths per year there is a result similar to that of Collier & Hoeffler but when the threshold decreases, there are opposite results (Hegre, 2002). Similarly, Ross (2004) admits that when analysing the relationship between a country's dependence on primary resources and the likelihood of civil conflict, the types of variables used are very important. Furthermore, other factors such as the period analysed and the inherent characteristics of different countries could make the results swing either way.

From the above, it is apparent that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to finding the cause(s) of resource induced conflicts. The apparent contradictions in the results obtained by the authors could be as a result of the different variables used in calculating

correlation. Also, different countries have different characteristics and a variable that could result in conflict in one country might not necessarily generate conflict in another. This makes it important to study individual countries differently, considering the characteristics of the country as well as exploring new concepts that could explain the outbreak of conflict associated with natural resources. Furthermore, the greed theory has been judged to have a lot of flaws. According to Berdel and Malone (2000), most of the research that has been carried out on the causes of conflict including the greed theory focus on the structural conditions that increase the risk of a likelihood of the outbreak of conflicts. He explained that the decisions that encourage the actors to engage in acts of violence have not been well researched. This research will seek to explore why the actors engage in violence and what have been the incentives for engaging in resource conflict.

For the purpose of this research, it is important to state that considering the history of the conflict alongside the review of literature about the Niger-Delta region, the greed theory is also rather ambiguous. This is partly because the data used by Collier and Hoeffler does not include this particular conflict. The data included the initial civil war that Nigeria experienced between 1967-1970 which was directly related to the secession of Biafra and not necessarily resource oriented. Apart from the fact that this conflict was not among those analysed by Collier and Hoeffler, generalisations are often difficult when dealing with conflict issues because of the inherent characteristics hence the use of statistics to predict the outbreak of conflict has also been flawed. Nicholson (1992) argues that statistics involves the oversimplification of data, and sometimes misinterpreting the classification of variables. He argues further that oversimplification or using a wrong variable could lead to misleading result. In the formulation for the greed theory, distributional aspect of resources was not available and the authors had to rely on per capital income instead. Porto (2002) explains that the exclusion of the distributional aspects of resources from the analysis of the greed theory implies that the authors are neglecting the fundamental role of the distribution of resources in situations of conflict. Inadequate or unfair distribution of resources within countries could be a potential source of grievance which could lead to the outbreak of conflict. In the Niger-Delta region, resource allocation and distribution have been a very important factor in the conflict. Citizens from the region have complained that despite the huge

resources that the region produces, there is little or nothing to show for it in the region. The region has been described as one of the most deprived in Nigeria.

It is important to state at this point that once a particular conflict has started, there are individuals that benefit from it. This is particularly evident in terms of resource conflicts. Silke (2000) observes that the economic rationale of long-running violent conflicts is so apparent that it is possible to think that armed groups are motivated only by profit. He reckons that economic rationales often become more visible once a conflict is established and once markets and entrepreneurs have determined ways in which to exploit the opportunities of war. This idea of people benefitting from the proceeds of conflict generally makes it difficult to put an end to the conflict as the parties benefiting from it will do everything possible to keep the conflict going. This in essence might explain why there has been prolonged violent conflict in the region. Going by the aforementioned and the flaws observed in the 'greed theory' which sees greed as the 'dominant' factor that leads to the conflict, it has now become necessary to explore other factors that could have been responsible for the outbreak of violent conflict in resource endowed countries.

1.1.2 Gap in the literature

After a critical review of the greed/grievance literature, there is a question that both the greed and grievance theorist of conflict have not explored. There is no clear distinction between what could be labelled greed and what could be classified as grievance. This makes it even more difficult to use the greed/grievance theory to explore resource conflict. The question is - how do we draw the line between greed and grievance and what behaviour leading to violence can be classified as greed and what can be classified as grievance? It is difficult to distinguish between these behaviours as issues of grievance could be classified as greed and treated as such and vice versa. In order to explore this gap, I will explore some sentences that are commonly attributed to people living in areas where the availability of natural resources have resulted in violent conflicts.

Sentence 1- I am angry with the government and MNCs because they take all our resources without giving us anything back in return.

Sentence 2- I am ready and willing to take up arms against the government and MNCs because they have destroyed our environments and sources of livelihoods.

Sentence 3- I hate the MNC workers because they live in big houses and ride big cars while I cannot even afford a bicycle.

Sentence 4- My community is blessed with huge resources and I must get my own share of it even if it is by force.

Sentence 5- The MNCs must employ me even if I don't have the qualifications, at least we own the oil and it is their responsibility to train me and give me a source of decent livelihood.

These five sentences are all real scenarios that operate in violent prone resource endowed communities. While some of the sentences can be classified as fuelled by greed, some may be classified as genuine grievances by impacted communities and hence it becomes difficult to draw the line between both theories when statements like these are analysed. The sentences contain both the structural conditions that increase the risk of conflict as well as the decisions of the actors to engage in conflict. Hence, it becomes apparent that an alternative theory is needed to explain the link between the availability of natural resources and the outbreak of conflict in resource endowed communities. Rather than trying to dispute the greed/grievance theory or building on it in some ways, this research will seek to use the Human Security (HS) theory to explore the violent conflict experienced in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Furthermore, the HS theory focuses more on the motivations of the actors in terms of how they respond to perceived threats to their livelihoods. Before exploring the HS theory fully, the other sections of this chapter will explore other structural conditions that increase the risk of conflict in resource endowed countries.

1.2 Government structures and the Concept of States

1.2.1 Strong Vs Weak States

In order to explore factors that could be responsible for the outbreaks of conflict in resource rich countries, it is important to analyse the states critically in terms of structure, type of government as well as the incentives for resource extraction and violence. This is important because weak states often have problems with the governance of distribution of resources. In a weak state, corruption is high, law enforcement is weak and government structures designed to distribute resources are ineffective.

Government structures that are perceived to be fair and effective are labelled strong states and these states tend to diminish the risk of conflict. In other words, the more effective and responsive the government structure, the lower the likelihood that conflict will break out all other things being equal. Also, the ease of resolving an existing conflict is dependent on the perception of the government by the parties involved (Oberg and Strom, 2008). It has been argued that natural resource wealth could weaken the bureaucratic structures of a state and make it less responsive to the citizens. It could also reduce the desire of a state to uphold transparency especially in the distribution of resources. This lack of transparency could then result in some groups feeling disenfranchised, a situation that can result in conflict (Mahdavy, 1970; Karl, 1997; Fearon and Laitin 2003). A common observation in the literature is that most African states exercise only a tenuous hold over the societies they govern. This gives rise to the notion of 'weak' or 'soft' states. Even though many African states (especially those characterised by autocratic personal rule) have developed a powerful machinery to enforce control, they lack legitimacy among the population, exhibited by the lack of popular support and tendencies towards secession or the emergence of parallel economy (Azarya, 1988).

Resource dependent regimes are weaker in terms of state capacity and not necessarily in regards to their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These governments have a weak presence on ground and are vulnerable to conflict and the formation of insurgencies (Ross, 2001). This is because these regimes practice limited direct taxation of the population and therefore provide few infrastructures and public goods. Corruption and

rent seeking build up around the states' extraction industries and the government faces little financial pressure for openness or transparency (Bates and Lien 1985; Ross 2001). Some studies have found out that the main cause of a state's weakness is the lack of economic development which breeds grievance leading to conflict. According to Fearon and Laitin (2003), low economic development also suggests weak state capacity, hence, greater capacity for insurgency. Poverty and underdevelopment imply a lack of economic opportunities which means that in these circumstances, the opportunity costs of joining a rebellion are low and the gains are sometimes high (Collier 2000; Gates 2002).

The question then is; what are the factors responsible for the weakness of a state? Young (1994) identified four main factors responsible for the weakness of many African states. These are; economic malaise that pervades most African countries, reflected in low or negative rates of development; 'propensity to over-consumption' by the state, fuelled by unsustainable levels of public sector expenditure; growing disjuncture between the state and civil society and undermining of the state's capacity by tyrannical rule and protracted civil war, which have invariably resulted in institutional paralysis. In the case of Nigeria, although the country has experienced a substantial level of growth in recent years, long military rule coupled with poor governance of resource distribution have contributed to the high level of poverty experienced in the country. Furthermore, the country has the problem of high government expenditure. The salaries and allowances of government officials are believed to be one of the highest in the world and this is a major problem because these high wages reduce the money available for capital projects as well as infrastructural development. Slow development has been a bane in Nigeria. Despite the huge resources generated from oil exploration, high level of corruption has made it difficult for the country to develop. According to the 2014 corruption index by transparency international, Nigeria ranks 136 out of the 174 countries analysed (Transparency International, 2015) and the inability of the government to tackle the menace of corruption has been seen as a weakness on its own.

The availability of natural resources can increase the likelihood of violent conflict in countries with weak institutional arrangements lacking transparency and accountability (Ron, 2005). One major problem associated with weak states is the problem of rent seeking. The rent seeking perspective explains that a country's

dependence on natural resources create an environment whereby the elites seek a relationship with the state not for developmental but for predatory purposes. This then hinders development as rent seeking deters productive activities creating a reliance on the income from the resources. (Lane and Tornell, 1999).

The rentier state model according to Engelmann and Sokoloff (1997) explains that mineral resource-rich countries are more susceptible to conflict. The authors argue that such countries encourage corruption and this hinders growth and development. The core argument is that leaders in rentier state rely on 'unearned' income in form of natural resources trade and do not develop other aspects of the economy. The authors argue that the more a country relies on this unearned income, the more corruption is entrenched which could then result in weakness of the state. Nigeria has a government structure that is divided into three categories: Federal, States and Local government but the tax structure is weak and inadequate. Apart from workers in the three tiers of government as well as those in the organised private sectors, most of the 'self-employed' Nigerians do not pay any form of tax. There is no structure in place for all the citizens to pay income tax on their income, hence, the government dependence on income from oil to finance both the capital and recurrent expenditure. Furthermore, the rentier state model explains that rentier states have other problems such as poor resource distribution mechanisms. All of these in essence weaken the state and increases the likelihood of violent conflict (Engerman and Sokoloff, 1997)

Obi asserts that the struggles for survival, access to and control of the resources, or resistance to intensified resource extraction and environmental degradation lie at the heart of the current deepening of resource conflict in Africa as a result of the economic policies 'imposed' on the continent by western forces. In his words, 'The patterns of extraction, production, distribution/ allocation and accumulation being promoted by the economic adjustment programme feed into authoritarianism, the acceleration of environmental degradation, pollution and the production of resources scarcities' (Obi, 1997a). This he stated has diminished the capacity of African states to protect their environment in the face of economic liberalization as the harsh conditionalities as well as the consequences of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), and increased global

demand for African resources have raised the questions of survival, legitimacy and sustainability. As a result of this, for the states to be able to meet these conditions, they have to rely on the use of force to subdue those forces who seek to protect their environment from further pillage. In response to this, the legitimacy of the state has been challenged by social forces seeking equity, social justice and democracy especially where the environmental practice of the state threaten the existence of a particular group (Obi 1997a, 1997b). He concludes that the ongoing environmental conflicts in some parts of Africa are not only contestations for political space but also access to and control of resources (Obi, 2000).

In a similar vein, Homer Dixon (1996) attributes conflict in Africa to structural scarcity created as a result of the exploitation of natural resources especially oil. He explains that there are 3 types of scarcities, supply-induced scarcity, demand-induced scarcity and structural scarcities. Supply induced scarcities results from the reduction in availability of environmental resources, as a result of degradation or over-exploitation; demand-induced scarcity results from population growth rates outstripping the supply or reproduction of resources; structural scarcities on the other hand are basically the outcome of distributional inequalities in which a tiny elite controls resources to the exclusion of the rest of the society who then violently seek a just redress and access to 'scarce' resources. He states further that the distributional inequalities which resulted from the implementation of SAP are being strengthened by the contradiction between the profit motives of global corporations versus the environmental rights and survival of Africans. He also blames the 'ruthless extraction of Africa's natural resources for the purpose of global production and monopoly profits by multinationals' for the surge in conflict. The situation in the Niger Delta is an example of structural scarcity. There is distributional inequalities whereby resources are diverted by the elites as a result of defective governance of the distribution of resources a situation that leads to conflict.

Ross (2001) explains that some conditions favour conflict and the formation of insurgencies more than others. Factors such as poverty as a result of a state's weakness and high population density are better predictors of conflict than factors such as ethnic and religious diversity. Ross maintained that discrimination against ethnic minorities is reduced in countries that have democratic governments and this invariably leads to a

reduction in the outbreaks of conflict. The structure of the Nigerian state can be described as weak going by the happenings since the country's independence. Successive military and civilians regimes have depended mainly on natural resources to power the economy. The advent of democracy in 1999 has not made much difference. Since Nigeria depends on natural resources for a large proportion of government's income, this has led to negative levels of development as well as large disparity between the country's income and expenditure. The south-south region of the country which produces most of the country's wealth is heavily polluted and any form of resistance from the region is met by brutal suppression. This in essence coupled with the high rate of corruption in government has led to a loss of legitimacy of the Nigerian state. These issues will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

1.2.2 Democracy Vs Autocracy

The second issue is the type of government structure in relation to the outbreaks of conflicts. Most research relating governance structures to the onset and dynamics of civil conflict has focused on the forms and degrees of democracy. The studies show that there is no straightforward linear relationship between the level of democracy and civil conflict. However, recent research find a parabolic relationship between regime type and civil conflict such that strong democracies and strong autocracies are less susceptible to civil conflict than other types of regimes (Benson and Kugler,1998; Elbadawi and Sambanis,2002; Ellingsen and Gleditsch,1997). The argument is that in strong autocracies, the government has the capacity to prevent effective mobilisation against civil protests and are able to suppress rebellions before they start. Strong democracies on the other hand are more receptive to grievances and allow for political participation and influence, thereby making rebellion a much less attractive option. The problem with the in-between groups is that they are neither as responsive or open as democracies, nor as effective in preventing and suppressing would-be rebellion as autocracies are. This implies that there are no incentives to rebel in democracies and as for autocracies, there are no opportunities for rebellion, but for states that lie in between, there may be both strong incentives to rebel and the opportunity to act on them.

Furthermore, there is also the issue of consistency and stability of institutional arrangements. Democracies with consistent political institutions have well developed mechanisms for executive recruitment and hence they tend to be stable. Autocracies with consistent political institutions and well developed mechanisms for executive selection are also relatively stable. Regimes with inconsistent political institutions (mixture of democratic and autocratic institutions) tend to be less stable and are prone to conflicts (Gates et al., 2001; Przeworski et al., 2000). Although little is known about how different types of autocratic system of governance affect the likelihood of conflicts, studies have shown on the other hand that some types of democracies reduce the likelihood of conflict more than others. Reynal-Querol (2002) finds out that parliament democracies with more inclusive form of government arrangements are less prone to civil conflict than less inclusive arrangements, such as majoritarian systems. In a divided society like Nigeria in which there are over 250 ethnic groups, Lijphart (1999), explains that consociational democracy (where there is guaranteed group representation) provides better guarantees for minority groups than more majoritarian systems, and hence better prospects for civil peace in divided societies. This is because proportional and consociational democracies tend to impose fewer clear-cut loses on any significant group and may therefore be perceived as fairer. On the other hand, majoritarian system may be more open and competitive and provide better long-run incentives for politicians and those considered to be their allies.

Ross (2001) in a study of 113 states between 1971 and 1997 discovers that oil impacts negatively on democracy and it affects democracy in poor countries more than those in rich countries. The study further reveals that oil wealth has made countries like Nigeria, Mexico and Indonesia find it more difficult to embrace democratic governance. The findings reveal that there are three scenarios that link the availability of oil to authoritarianism. First, there is the rentier effect whereby the governments can use low taxes and high government spending to reduce the clamour for democracy, examples are the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Second is the repression effect by which governments build up strong internal security to ward off clamour for democracy and third, is the modernisation agenda in which case the spate of modernisation and development reduces the call for democratic governance. In terms of democratic credentials, Nigeria has experienced both military and democratic rule since 1960 when the country gained

independence from colonial rule. Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999 and has since been ruled by a single party (People's Democratic Party-PDP). Going by the Democratic vs Autocratic theory, although Nigeria is officially democratic, the country's democracy has been described as 'weak' with substantial level of authoritarianism. The various regimes since 1999 have not fully obeyed the rule of law and have placed partisan politics above the need for development, a situation that has led to the country being listed as one of the poorest in the world despite large availability of resources (Ejibunu, 2007).

This system is described as 'Modern African Authoritarianism' by Jackson and Rosberg (1992). In their words 'Modern African authoritarianism is characterised by the removal of the constitutional rights and protection from political opponents, the elimination of institutional checks and balances, and the centralisation and concentration of state power in presidential offices' (Jackson and Rosberg, 1992:23). This agrees with the earlier work of Zolberg (1968) when he stated that political instability is an intrinsic feature of post-colonial African states because of their failure to develop effective political institutions to mediate between the state, civil societies as well as the general populace. Although Nigeria became a democratic state in 1999, the situation in Nigeria fits well into this concept. Since the advent of democracy, elections have not been free and fair. There is so much power vested in the presidency and elections are just mere political exercises. The constitution is such that the office of the president has the absolute power to exercise authority. The national assembly rarely query the president and opposition parties have been deliberately weakened. This system is different from what operates in other democratic states.

The modernization effect as described by Ross (2001), is also evident in Nigeria. The country has found it really difficult to develop its industrial and service sector capacities. The level of infrastructural decay is alarming and despite the huge resources generated from oil, infrastructural development has been at its lowest since the 1970s. As at the beginning of 2012, the country generates only 4,000MW of electricity a figure that is equivalent of one-tenth of what South Africa generates in 2009 (Reuters, Jan 2009). This situation has made it difficult for the country to develop its industrial capacity. Furthermore, the few companies that previously operated in Nigeria (including indigenous companies) are moving to Ghana because of the high cost of

generating electricity and this has led to incessant job losses and increased poverty. All these issues combine to weaken the Nigeria state and the resultant effect is high level of corruption and predation which then results in poor governance of distribution of resources, a condition that enhance conflict.

1.2.3 Predatory and Developmental states

Evans (1989), classified emerging economies into two categories; Predatory and Developmental states. The predatory states extract such large amounts of surplus from the sale of primary commodities that could have been invested for the good of the public for personal purposes. In return they provide too little to the populace which is not enough to trigger development. Developmental states on the other hand are able to encourage public-private partnership in contributing to the development of the economy without depending on resources. Evans explains that the most effective states utilise what he described as 'embedded economy'. This is a process whereby the state combines a well-established bureaucratic internal organisation with adequate public-private relationship. He explained further that least effective states utilise public goods for the benefit of the few elites with a resource distribution channel that is far from effective or transparent.

In a predatory state, the government is too weak to adequately distribute resources to its populace. According to Hodder-Williams, in the predatory state, there is an absence of a rigorous private sector and the state is perceived by political leaders to be the prime source of personal enrichment and reward. This use of political power for private end has been termed the 'extractive view of politics' by Hodder-Williams (1984:95-99). The leaders have predatory as opposed to developmental aims, they find it easy to accrue wealth to themselves at the expense of the state and this is a main excuse for the onset of violence since the people feel oppressed and marginalised. The situation also leads to high inequality which is also an excuse for violence. The Nigerian state is a typical example of predatory and rent seeking form of governance. An example is a debate about the funds the president allocated for 'refreshment' in the 2013 budget. A total of 1.3billion naira (equivalent of about £5million) was allocated for refreshment for the office of the president, a figure that presidential aides describe as 'not enough'

despite being described as 'outrageous' by members of the senate (The Nation, Nov 2012).

In light of the above, it is apparent that the Nigerian state has been culpable in the violent conflicts that have been experienced in the Niger-Delta region. Predatory factor has an implication on how issues relating to grievances arising from governance of distribution of resources are dealt with. This does not mean that the government is the only actor responsible, the roles played by the other two actors (the Niger Delta Indigenes and The MNCs) will also be explored. Ahead of that, it is important to introduce another theory that has not been fully explored as far as resource conflict is concerned.

1.2.4 The Human Security theory

As stated earlier, different countries have different inherent characteristics and the conflicts that each country has experienced have been caused by different factors. The issue of infringement of rights coupled with acute deprivation of livelihood is one that needs to be explored properly as there could be genuine grievance in several conflict situations. The neglect of the Niger-Delta region over decades coupled with uneven distribution of resources, eventually led to violent protests and conflict which threatened human security in the region. The Human security theory can actually be seen as an alternative to understanding the underlying causes of conflicts in resource endowed countries/communities as it focuses on issues of deprivation of livelihoods which are often associated to exploration activities in resource endowed regions.

According to the UNDP 1994 report, 'Human security means that people can exercise their choices safely and freely-and that they can be relatively confident that the opportunities they have today are not totally lost tomorrow' (pg. 23). The report sees human security from two different perspectives. The first perspective is safety from daily threats such as hunger, disease and repression by the authorities. The second perspective is protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life-whether in homes, in jobs or in communities (freedom from fear and freedom from want). According to the report, 'The poor are not preoccupied with the loud emergencies of global warming or the depletion of the ozone layer. They are

preoccupied with the silent emergencies - polluted water or degraded land, that put their lives and their livelihoods at risk' (UNDP 1994; 19). The report states further that when people perceive that there is a threat to their livelihoods, they often become intolerant as would have been the case in the Niger-Delta region. The Commission on Human Security (CHS), defines human security as efforts to 'protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilments' (Commission on Human Security, 2003).

The concept of human security is different from the human development approach because the human security approach is centred on security of individuals as well as the threats they face such as political repression, identity and various forms of violence while human development focus more on the state (UNDP,1994; Shahrbanou and Chenoy, 2007). According to Shahrbanou and Chenoy 'human security approach to conflict has a people-sensitive lens to viewing conflicts to understand what led to societal violence and who the victims are' (pg.164). The UNDP report categorised the threats to human security into seven different categories; Economic security, Food security, Health security, Environmental security, Personal security, Community security, and Political security. One important thing to note about human security is that threats are interlinked and interconnected (Shahrbanou and Chenoy, 2007). Shahrbanou and Chenoy explains that there is the domino effect in which one form of insecurity leads to another and that the threats quickly move from one region to another. In this respect, they concluded that conflicts rise out of human insecurities where the interaction between growth patterns and denial of rights as well as exclusion of the communities involved combine to increase injustice and inequalities that ultimately lead to conflicts. In a similar vein, MacFarlene and Khong (2006) stated that 'human security is about the freedom from threat to the core values of human beings, including physical survival, welfare and identity' (pg.14).

At the human security conference in Lysøenin in May 1999, delegates from Canada posited that human security means safety for every individual from all forms of threats. It offers freedom from pervasive threats to people's lives or safety as well as taking individuals as the primary focus (Lysøenin conference on human security, 1999; Mcrae, R, 2001). Only when an environment is able to provide its members with stable, self-

determined lives can the individuals be described as having human security (Shahrbanou, and Chenoy, 2007). They conclude that Human security promises a focus on individuals and people, most importantly, on values and goals such as dignity, equity and solidarity.

Most social science research into the cause of violent conflicts especially the popular greed-versus-grievance debate, focus on the structural conditions that increase the likelihood of violent conflict as opposed to the decisions of actors to engage in violence. In most cases, these structural conditions are based on the analysis of states and other institutions. The Human security perspective on the other hand evaluates these conditions in relation to the concern and needs of human beings, rather than those of states and similar institutions (Cramer 2002; Goodhand 2003; Gough 2002; Gleditsch 1998; Bellamy, and McDonald 2002). Issues of violent conflict and human security are treated separately in research studies especially with the greed/grievance theory. This makes it more important to explore resource conflict using a new lens. Shahrbanou, and Chenoy, (2007) suggests that the greed analysis of conflict would plausibly dismiss movements and struggles based on genuine grievances of people as forms of greed. Some of these grievances arise out of oppression and violation of rights of the people involved. Examples of such movements are the struggle for an independent East Timor and the pro-democracy conflict in Nepal. The scholars also pointed that the greed theory does not adequately point to issues such as the violation of rights, the building of stereotypes and the biased nature of states in dealing with sensitive community agitations especially on issues relating to natural resources. Although it is not impossible that greed developed in some quarters during the Niger-Delta emancipation, it is arguable that this was not the basis for the struggle in the first instance.

The conditions that favour insurgency cannot be separated from the decisions of the actors to engage in violence but this has been the case in many previous studies especially the greed/grievance theory. The table below identifies some conditions that favour conflict/insurgency and issues that influence actors to engage in violence. The table is a compilation of sample data of correlating points from the literatures explored above.

Conditions that favour conflict/insurgency	Decisions of the actor to engage in violence
Weakness of the state	Oppression by the state
Corruption/Predation	Poor governance of distribution of resources
Environmental degradation	Loss of livelihoods
Poor law enforcement	Oppression by MNCs
Lack/inadequate level of development	Poverty
Poor level of education	Reduced opportunity for productivity
Availability of lootable income	Inequality

Table 1.1 Greed/Grievance dichotomy

From the table above, it can be deduced that the decision of the actors to engage in violence often arise from the conditions that favour insurgencies. This implies that both issues have to be explored together. The Human security framework with an emphasis on individuals rather than the state could be used to explain how the conditions that favour insurgency lead to the decisions of the actors to engage in violence. For instance, in a weak state, corruption is rife and this could result in poor governance of distribution of resources. Furthermore, poor law enforcement (in this case environmental laws) could result in environmental disintegration and since the inhabitants of the Niger Delta depend on the environment for their livelihoods, the implication is loss of livelihoods. Loss of livelihoods results in grievance which could then lead to violence. In all, the conditions that favour insurgency impact on the human security of the people. Furthermore, the decisions of the actors to engage in violence arise from the human insecurity resulting from the conditions listed above. This makes the human security framework a better approach when analysing resource conflict.

For the purpose of this research, environmental security will be examined focusing on the situation in the Niger-Delta region and how this security or the lack of it has led to a situation of conflict in the region. This is because the issue of environmental security in the region embodies all the other human security issues experienced in the region since oil exploration began. According to Bernett and Adger; in respect to environmental

degradation, the extent and nature of the stresses that people face are determined by the level of dependence on natural resources and ecosystem services as well as the capacity they have to adapt to the changes to these resources. This in essence indicates that when a lot of people directly depend on natural resources for their livelihood, they face immediate risk if there is a change in the balance of these resources. In the Niger Delta region, the traditional occupations of the male inhabitants were farming and fishing while the women engaged in fish smoking and selling as well as the selling of farm produce. Before Nigeria's independence in 1960 the Niger-Delta region was known for large scale production of crops such as oil palm, however, incessant oil spills and pollution of farmlands and the rivers have affected crop production and the once vibrant fish farming (Efe and Abotutu, 2012)

Ohlsson (2000) maintains that in many internal wars, the armed groups are composed of young men who are frustrated by the contractions in their livelihoods as the opportunity of living a better life has been eroded, mostly due to actions that are not perceived to be their fault. According to Ohlsson, 'the common denominator of many, if not most, of the civil wars and conflicts which plagued Africa, South Asia, and Latin America during the last decade, is poverty resulting from loss of livelihoods which, in turn, is often caused or exacerbated by environmental degradation' (pg.3). Ohlsson argues further that environmental degradation resulting in loss of livelihoods often constitutes a missing link in explanations of several patterns of conflict. De Soysa et al (1999), explain further that declining access to land as well as reduced income are key issues that result in loss of livelihood which increases the possibility of youths joining armed groups. In the view of Scheper-Hughes (2004), the decision of a young man to join an armed gang may be as a result of genuine grievance, frustration, and a desire for revenge against people perceived to be their oppressors. It could also be due to identification with a common cause, a need for protection from violence, and poverty caused by a denial of economic freedoms (Mwanasali 2000; Scheper-Hughes, 2004).

As stated earlier in the previous section, the state has been complacent with the welfare of the Niger-Delta indigenes resulting in continuous loss of their livelihoods. Every protest is met by stiff opposition and military might and this is done in total disregard for human lives. According to Bellamy and McDonald (2002), 'since states are more

often part of the problem than the source of the solution' (pg.373), an agenda to protect citizens from the 'clutches' of their states has become imperative. The scholars argue further that under the pretence of sovereignty and sovereign immunity, states have been able to commit crimes against their own people without any form of remorse. However, the Human security paradigm rejects the 'narrow' premise of the pluralist security framework of national security focused on the state and puts individual citizens at the centre of the debate, analysis and policy formations (Thakur 2004: 347). Suhrke (1999:271) and MacFarlane (2004:368) maintains that Human Security have the potential to give 'voice to the voiceless' and 'power to the powerless' especially in regards to women, ethnic minorities or marginalised communities.

Although since the concept of human security was again rebirthed in the 1994 United Nations development report, there has been a lot of criticism regarding the concept. Some of these criticisms are considered strong and worth exploring but the important fact is that the genuine intention of the concept cannot be over emphasized. Thomas and Wilkin (1999) explain that the human security paradigm represents a conscious attempt to rethink the whole idea of humanity in respect to their challenges. This could be done by moving the security discourse from an international system composed of sovereign states to that composed of individuals in a sovereign state. As stated earlier in this thesis, most of the violent conflict (previous and ongoing) in Africa have been intra-state conflicts, and in order to fully understand the causes for these conflict as well as to proffer long lasting solutions to these conflict, it is important to understand the dynamics of this conflicts and this can best be done using the human security approach (Thomas, 1999; Umukoro, 2012).

The concept of human security has met with some stiff opposition especially regarding its 'usefulness' on the international level. Hynek and Chandler (2011), labelled it as 'an amorphous and unclear political concept at risk of becoming an "empty signifier"'. In their view, the concept is a political tool and part of a neo-liberal agenda developed by the western nations against developing countries and has been used to maintain a grip on the developing countries, an example being the legitimisation of attacks on Iraq and Afghanistan. They argued that human security 'presents a dichotomy between state-centred national security and people-centred human security without acknowledging

other types of tension and interconnection. They also argue that the promise of emancipation of the locals by the intervention of external, western actors to challenge structured inequalities neglects the problems of autonomy and agency central to emancipation.

David Bosold in his criticism of the human security agenda argues that there might indeed be an ulterior motive to the agenda. He argues that the intention of the promoters within the United Nations was a push for subscribing to new tasks and to open up new forms of funding for the organisation. In a similar vein, other scholars see the human security paradigm as complicit in the legitimisation of new imperial practices which seeks to control the increasing population of the global western countries using globalisation as a 'tool' (Duffield, 2007). Kaldor (1999), reckons that rather than securing the livelihood or allowing citizens of the south to live a dignified life, the human security agenda has been manipulated to allow 'violent liberal interventionist approach' including 'humanitarian bombing' and 'cosmopolitan police-keeping' of the global south.

Despite the criticisms and arguments against the human security theory, the theory still goes a long way in explaining some salient issues that could have been neglected in the conflict literature. Ohlsson (2000) reckons that loss of livelihoods as a result of environmental degradation results in human insecurity and this often constitutes a missing link in explanations of conflicts experienced in developing countries. This issue will be explored further in subsequent chapters of this thesis especially considering the fact that the Niger Delta region had been relatively peaceful before oil exploration began and principally before the continuous loss of livelihood as a result of oil pollution and environmental degradation. According to Bosold (2011), 'the concept of human security has not come out of nowhere but has been based on earlier thoughts and critiques of existing security policies and is now embedded in a number of changed political practices, such as nation-building, and ways to make a sense of our contemporary world especially in discussions about the security-development nexus'.

Chapter Conclusion

Focusing on the Niger-Delta conflict, it is apparent that the Greed/Grievance theories do not offer the best explanation for the conflict faced in the region. The human security theory on the other hand goes a long way in explaining some of these issues. The continuous loss of livelihood has threatened the human security of the inhabitants of the region. Furthermore, issues relating to the governance of the distribution of resources also impact negatively on the human security of the people. The human security perspective focusing on the role of the Nigerian state, the indigenes of the Niger Delta as well as the MNCs working in the region holds the key in establishing the real cause(s) of conflict in the region.

As stated earlier, for any meaningful solution(s) to be achieved in resolving the incessant violence that has resulted in the loss of thousands of lives as well as billions of Naira in revenue, the causes of the conflict must be determined. Furthermore, the history of the region; the transformation from peaceful protest to violent conflict as well as the role played by the three major participants in the conflict (the Nigeria Government, the MNCs as well as the Niger Delta Indigenes) must be explored in order to have a balanced and unbiased view of the conflict.

CHAPTER 2

Environmental Security in the Niger Delta: An Overview

Introduction

This research will focus on issues of human security and its link with violent conflict as stated in Chapter one. A key aspect of the Human security theory relevant to this region is that of environmental security. Nigeria is the largest oil-producer in Sub-Saharan Africa and a key member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Most of the oil produced in Nigeria is from the Niger-Delta region, however, this has not translated into wealth. In fact, Nigeria is the 45th poorest country in the world out of the 149 emerging and developing countries surveyed by Global finance in 2013 (Global Finance Economic Data, 2015) and the Niger-Delta is one of the poorest regions. The environment has been an issue of grave concern in the Niger-Delta region since the advent of oil exploration as it has borne the brunt of the oil exploration. This has resulted in several issues affecting the livelihood of the people as the absence of environmental security has led to other forms of insecurities experienced by people from the region especially violent conflicts.

Although the conflict experienced in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has not been officially classified as a civil war, the number of people killed annually is equivalent to those killed in civil wars. According to Hamilton et al (2004), the conflict in the Niger Delta is estimated to have killed about 1000 persons a year between 1999 and 2004. It is difficult to estimate the total number of people killed directly or indirectly by the violence, but evidence suggests that between 1995 and 2006, over 1,000 people were killed annually in clashes between the members of the communities and the various military task forces or armed policemen (Folarin, 2007). This chapter will explore issues of environmental security in the Niger Delta in order to lay a framework for the thesis. The chapter will also explore how issues of environmental degradation lead to other form of human insecurity in the region. The roles of the three main stakeholders in relation to issues of human security will also be examined based on evidence from literature.
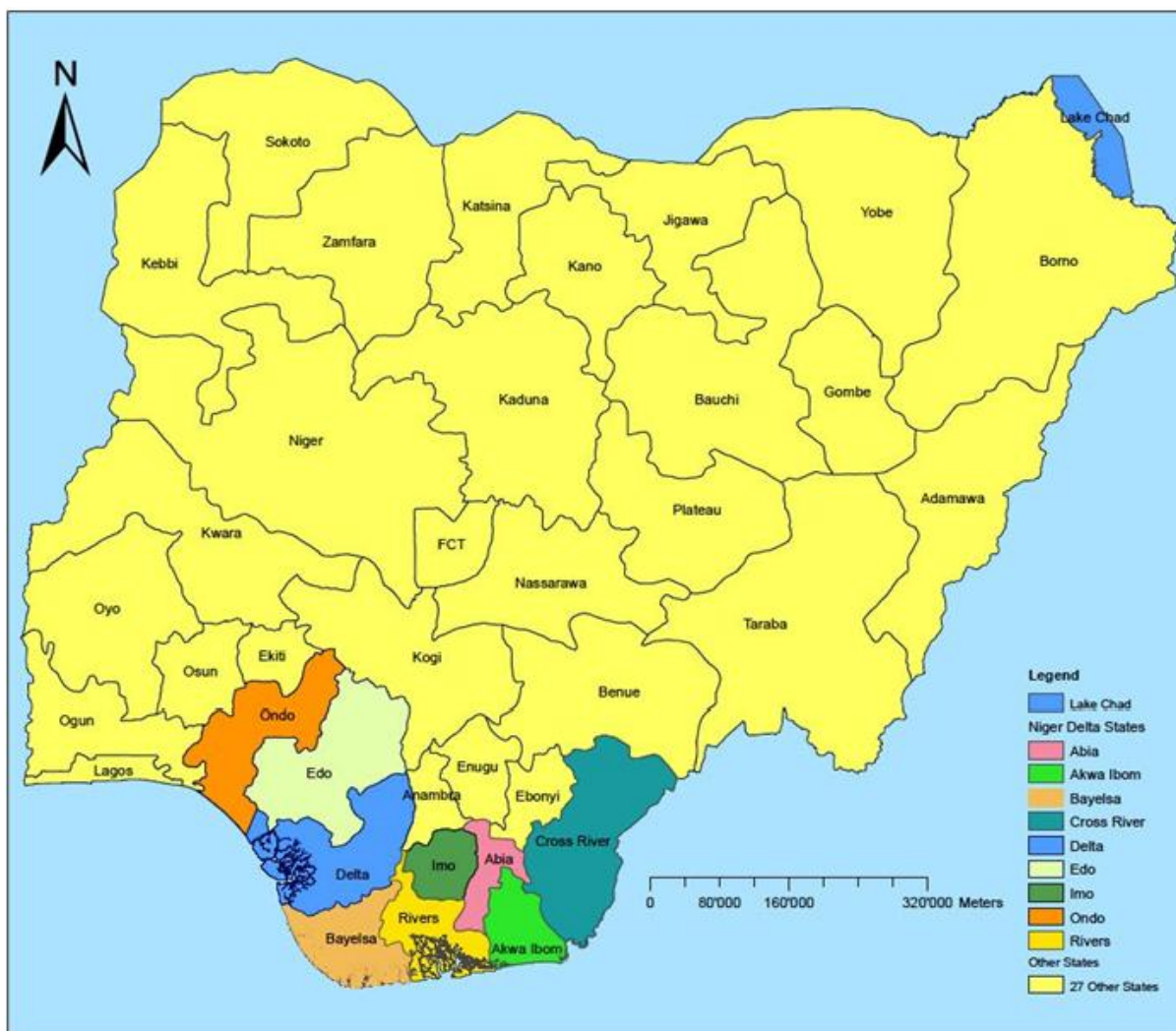
Figure 2.1 Map of Nigeria Showing the nine states in the Niger Delta region

2.1 Environmental security

It is important to state that environmental change does not undermine human security or cause violent conflict on its own, but it can trigger some parameters that sometimes contribute to generating violent conflict. Barnett and Adger (2007) observes that issues such as poverty, suppression by the state and lack of access to economic opportunities all add up to increase the level of intolerance which in turns could result in violent conflict. In the case of the Niger-Delta, outright neglect and insensitivity to the plight of the communities by the government and oil companies is one of the reasons that caused the conflict. During oil exploration, oil spills are not cleaned up, a situation that pollutes

the soil and water which serves as the sources of livelihood of the communities involved. In addition, the government does not audit the activities of the oil companies and this gives them a free hand to neglect relevant environmental laws rendering the communities vulnerable. This situation has led to a reduction in the size of land available for farming as well as limiting the opportunities for fishing a condition that has led to the contraction of the people's livelihood which could potentially be a justification for joining armed rebellion and been a source of violent conflict (Ohlsson, 2000).

Considering the fact that the indigenes rely on the environment for their sources of livelihood, environmental threats as a result of pollution has resulted in both peaceful and violent protests. Shahrbanou, T and Chenoy A.M (2007) categorised the threats to human security into three categories: violence emanating from environmental scarcity or migration; violence inflicted by nature such as natural disasters as well as threats by the states themselves. In the case of the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, the two most important factors that formed the basis of threat to human security are violence emanating from environmental scarcity and threats from the Nigerian state. In the Niger Delta, both threats are related; Environmental threats resulted in protests which the Nigerian state suppressed by force thereby resulting in violent protests and attacks against the MNCs and government forces. Okonta and Douglas (2003) argue that the use of force by the government to crush peaceful protests arising from environmental threats in the Niger Delta escalated the conflict. The resulting conflict then aggravated the Human insecurity of the indigenes from the region.

The first factor posing a threat to human security in the Niger-Delta region is violence as a result of environmental scarcity. There were sporadic protests in the Niger-Delta region few years after oil exploration began but the main protest that caught the attention of the world was the protest led by nine Ogoni activists including Ken Saro Wiwa (a writer, businessman, environmentalist and Human Rights Activists) who founded a grass-root movement in the early 1990s called Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). The group staged its first mass protest on January 4, 1993 after which it became very prominent (Human Right Watch, 1994). The primary demand of the group was to stop the oil companies from polluting the Niger Delta environment. For instance, gas flaring in Nigeria is the second highest in the world despite the fact

that government banned this since 1984, which shows an inability/unwillingness of the government to enforce and the MNCs to abide by the law (Ibitoye, 2014).Other demands of the group which have been reiterated by all the citizens of the region include an increase in resource allocation which would bring meaningful development to the region. After the formation of MOSOP, other groups also sprang up in the region but the demands by the various groups vary depending on their motives and reasons for formation. All the groups involved in the environmental protests seek compensation from the oil companies for four decades (1960- 2000) of environmental degradation which resulted in social, economic and related dislocations (Amorighoye. N, 2000). They also demand that the MNCs put an end to the pollution in the region. In addition to these, some groups advocated for stakes in the oil economy through equity or direct participation in the oil companies. Some seek total resource control while others were simply aggrieved because of the delay in payment of compensation for oil spillages (Egborge 1999, Onah, 2000).

The region gained a lot of international attention and sympathy after the 1995 execution of nine activists from the region. The activists led by Ken Saro Wiwa were protesting the damage done to the environment but were eventually framed up and executed by the then military regime of Gen. Sani Abacha (Human Rights Watch, 1996). The killing of these activists formed part of the struggles that eventually degenerated into violent conflicts in the region. Subsequent chapters of this thesis will explore this issue further. According to Barnett and Adger (2007), environmental change is a cause of human insecurity which in turn leads to the loss of an individual or community's core needs, rights or values. This is explained further in the words of Lonergan et al (1999), 'human security is achieved when and where individuals and communities have the options necessary to end, mitigate, or adapt to threats such as human, environmental, and social rights; have the capacity and freedom to exercise these options; and actively participate in these options' (pg. 1). Lonergan et al concluded that when people do not have enough options to avoid or adapt to environmental change resulting in a situation in which their needs and rights are undermined, they can be said to be environmentally insecure. This particularly applies to situations where the citizens depend mainly on the environment for their source of livelihood.

The second challenge to human security in the Niger-Delta region is the threats from the Nigerian state in conjunction with MNCs operating in the region. The Nigerian government have always resorted to the use of force against any form of hindrance to oil exploration. The government created a task force in January 1994 to reduce violence in the region. The Task Force raided communities that were associated with MOSOP and arrested several people. Within a couple of months, the Task Force raided at least sixty towns and villages in the area (Civil Liberties Organization, 1994). Shortly after this, government troops were deployed to the villages and many people were molested (Amnesty international, 2004). According to Human Rights Watch (2004), during the mayhem, soldiers shot at people randomly, killing several people and arrested many others including women. Many women were raped as security forces randomly arrested and detained several hundreds of villagers. Furthermore, prominent MOSOP activists were declared wanted by the state Police force and the soldiers deployed to the area were also accused of committing several atrocities including robberies. The troops deployed to the region remained there for months committing several human rights violations without any check from the federal government. Human rights abuses continued in the region till May 1999 when democracy returned to the country.

The prolonged violence by government forces against the community inspired some soldiers from the region who just returned from peace keeping operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone to retire from the army to join the protest in the late 1990s. Rather than following the path of peace which they felt has not paid off, they decided to put their military experience to use by 'trying a different option'. Their familiarity with conflict zones in Liberia and Sierra Leone coupled with their knowledge of the creeks made it easy for them to import weapons from these countries and this marked the beginning of military insurgency (Florquin and Berman, 2005). Although several groups were formed around the same time, the ones that are believed to have been the pioneers of militant insurgency were the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC) and the Egbesu boys of Africa (Courson 2007; Florquin and Berman, 2005). Youths in the region realized that closing down production of the oil companies in the region brought attention and this led to repeated occupations of oil facilities. They also resorted to kidnapping for ransom, destruction of properties, and other attempts to

disrupt oil exploration. The formation of these groups and their activities will be explored in the next chapter.

The government of Nigeria turned guns on the indigenes, killing them and destroying their properties in other to keep them from protesting the destruction done to their land by MNCS working in the region instead of protecting the people. According to Thomas (1999:13), 'the government in an effort to facilitate the extraction of oil by Shell, has dispossessed the terrorized villagers in much the same way that the government of Colombia has done to facilitate the activities of British Petroleum (BP)'. This scenario explains Stohl's (2000) theory which states that 'when a state is incapable of fulfilling its sovereign responsibilities vis-a-vis its population, it is often capable of trampling the rights of individual citizens and/or of murdering them'. Threats to human security by the Nigerian state further increased violence in the region. Mack reveals that in the last one hundred years, more people have killed by their own governments than those killed by foreign armies (Mack, 2004). In the case of the Niger-Delta, any form of oil related protest is violently suppressed by the Nigerian government leading to loss of human lives and valuable properties.

The militarization of the Niger Delta region and continued unwillingness of the subsequent governments and the oil companies to heed the demands of the oil producing communities has overtime increased human insecurity and has led to the formation of more violent militant groups including the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF)and Niger Delta Freedom Fighters (NDFF)(Courson, 2009). In 2006, militants belonging to a newly formed Movement of the emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) attacked a Shell oil installation in Delta state, abducted four expatriate workers and killed fourteen soldiers deployed to the area (Ukiwo, 2007). This event marked the beginning of new hostilities in the region. It is believed to have been revenge on the military for years of repression of the citizens from the region. Following this event, the military also responded by blowing up oil bunkering ships as well as properties of residents in the area. The response from MEND was shocking, they blew up two major pipelines belonging to Shell and shot down a military helicopter threatening to completely shut down oil production in the country. A full blown confrontation emerged in which hundreds of lives and

properties worth millions of dollars were destroyed. The result was the loss of about 500,000 barrels of oil daily and this sent shock to oil prices globally (Cesarz et al, 2003; International Crises Group, 2006). Till date, the group has been dominant in their violent campaigns and their main motivations and sponsor will be explored further in the course of this research.

The advent of democracy in 1999 in Nigeria brought hope and joy to the people of the region but this hope was short lived. Just five months after the initiation of democracy, a protest emerged which led to the killing of 12 policemen in Odi (a riverine community in the Niger Delta). In response to the killings, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the president at that time (himself a former military general), wrote to the governor of the state and demanded that those responsible be brought to book. The president threatened to declare a state of emergency in the state if the culprits were not apprehended and gave the state government a 2 week ultimatum to arrest the killers. Before the expiration of the ultimatum, thousands of soldiers marched on the community killing hundreds of young men and destroying their properties. The troops destroyed almost all the houses in the community in a 10 day rampage, leaving only the churches and banks. They also left graffiti on the walls stating that the whole town is paying for the offences committed by their sons. (Human Rights Watch, 2002). In June 2002, a popular Nigerian newspaper *Thisday* interviewed the chief of army staff (General Victor Malu) at the time of the destruction of Odi. The General insisted that the right thing was done, and that he had the approval of the president at the time (This day, 2001). In a recent interview, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo attempted to defend some of the atrocities committed on the indigenes of the Niger-Delta while he was president insisting that he did the right thing to suppress the insurgency. Thousands of people have condemned the incidence including the current president, (Dr Goodluck Jonathan), who labelled the invasion 'a failure' (The Nation, Nov 2012).

Despite the concerted agitation of the different groups, the combined military and civilian regimes in the country believed their agitations were excessive, provocative and sometimes criminal, hence, the justification for the use of force (Ikelegbe, 2001). This continued violence and insecurity has disrupted the economic activities of the region and has made it difficult for people to meet their needs and go about their daily normal

activities. The oil companies have also responded to the activities of militants and civil societies by supporting repression by the Nigerian state. They support the state security forces, which brutally suppress civil protests, by providing equipment and logistics to the security forces (Ikelegbe, 2001). One of the companies allegedly involved in human right abuses is Shell Petroleum Development Cooperation (SPDC). Shell is alleged to regularly request assistance from the security services to defend its installations and often encourage the use of excessive and unjustified forces against the people (Human Rights Watch, 1995). The company is alleged to have capitalized on the weakness of the Nigerian state to violate human rights in the region. In one of the allegations against Shell, the company was said to be in regular contact with the commander of the Rivers state Internal Security Task Force, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Okuntimo, the man regarded as the arrow head of the military operations in the region. Okuntimo was alleged to be directly involved in the massacre of Ogoni indigenes before and after the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa. He allegedly ordered the killing of the Ogonis, the destruction of their properties as well as encouraged the use of rape as weapon of warfare (Human Right Watch, 1995).

Recent evidence in the 2010 law suit brought against Shell by the family of late Ken Saro Wiwa, revealed that Okuntimo was on the pay roll of Shell throughout the conflict and was constantly driven in Shell's vehicle. This evidence was vehemently denied by Shell but the trial did not proceed as Shell reportedly paid $15.5 million dollars to the Saro Wiwa family in settlement just days before the case was scheduled to be heard in New York (The Independent, December 2010). The invitation by Shell to settle out of court goes a long way in explaining their involvement in the matter. Furthermore, the fact that Okuntimo was on the pay roll of Shell shows how the Nigerian state has collaborated with oil corporations to continue oil exploration at all cost not minding the impact on the host communities. Shell is alleged to have participated actively in human rights abuses in Nigeria and one of the allegations is that the company was involved in purchasing weapons for the Nigerian Police (Ghazi and Doudu, 1996).

Environmental security is essential for people especially peasants in order to be able to make a living. According to Badaru, O. (2010), when human societies can feed

themselves and live in peace in the comfort of the environmental resources that nature has provided, the conflict in such areas are not rooted in environmental causes. However, the depletion of a region's natural resources as well as the destruction of the natural environment as a result of deforestation or soil degradation brings about scarcity and environmental insecurity which in turn leads to conflict between contesting groups. This claim is supported by Barnett and Adger that environmental change is a cause of human insecurity which impacts not only on individuals but on societies as a whole (Barnett and Adger, 2010). Furthermore, Sen, (1999) and Goodhand (2003) argue that many conflicts are as a result of poverty arising from contraction in livelihood resulting from environmental degradation. Livelihood security is an important factor for preventing conflict (Gough 2002) and in a situation where there is a threat to people's livelihood, violence could be inevitable. According to (Barnett, et al. 2010) 'When people do not have enough options to avoid or to adapt to environmental change such that their needs, rights, and values are likely to be undermined, then they can be said to be environmentally insecure' (pg. 18). The case of the Niger-Delta region demonstrates that the state has failed to uphold the people's basic rights and freedoms due to the various military attacks. It has also failed to empower the citizens to be self-sufficient and able to cater for their needs without undue interference as environmental laws are not enforced or monitored and the people's means of livelihood has been damaged. These issues directly impact the Human security of the people. The roles of all participants in eroding human security and engendering conflict will be considered.

2.2 Active participants in the conflict

Although several research have been carried out in the past on the causes of the conflict in the Niger-Delta, a vital element that has been omitted in most of these research is the roles and relationship between the actors involved in the conflict. This section of the thesis will explore the various participants in the conflict, their roles as well as their relationship with each other. Evidence obtained from the review of literature as well personal knowledge of the Niger-Delta region reveals that the active participants in the conflict can be divided into three broad categories; The Nigerian state, the communities and indigenes of the Niger-Delta and the MNCs operating in the region. The specific roles of each of these groups will be analysed in this thesis. It is important to state that

although there are other actors such as NGOs and civil liberties organisations in the region, their roles are negligible in the conflict.

An analysis of the impact of the activities of these three actors on the Niger-Delta conflict is important in order to fully understand the dynamics of the conflict. The 2009 report by Amnesty International is one of the most buoyant reports that analysed the situation on ground in the region. The data and case study presented in the report highlights that much damage has been done in the past and this has continued unabated leading to some severe consequences. The source of livelihood of millions of people as well as access to clean water, decent food and a clean environment has been a dream that has not come true and this has seriously threatened the human security of the communities. Due to oil activities in the region, the people living in the region have 'to drink, cook and wash with polluted water' (Amnesty International, 2009). Apart from the loss of livelihood and the inability of the people to live a decent life, there have also been widespread reports of health issues in the region. The people complain of breathing problems, skin lesions and other health problems which have been directly or indirectly linked to pollution and environmental degradation (Ojakorotu, V and Gilbert, L. D. 2010). The song by Nneka (2008) cited at the beginning of this thesis shows the emotion of the people of the region in relation to oil exploration and human security.

2.2.1 The Role of the Multinational Oil Corporations (MNCs)

The main MNCs operating in the Niger-Delta is the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC-British/Dutch). The others are Exxon-Mobil (American), Chevron (American), Agip (Italian), Elf- Alquitine (French) and Texaco (American). In recent years, companies from Brazil, China and South-Africa as well as local Nigerian companies have been involved in oil exploration but these have been in smaller quantities. All these companies operate on a joint-venture basis with the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) which represents the Nigerian government (U.S non-governmental delegation trip report, 1999; Human Rights Watch, 1999).The involvement of MNCs in the conflict that evolved in the Niger-Delta is in various dimensions. Environmental issues such as oil spillage which pollutes the agricultural lands and water, inadequate or non-payment of compensation for lands used for oil extraction, divide and rule tactics by which the companies form alliances with

government organisations as well as the support and assistance given to the federal government for military suppression. All these issues impact on the Human security of the people and explain the reasons for the unrest in the region.

The first and the most prominent issue as far as the conflict is concerned is the issue of oil spillage and environmental pollution. Oil spills are common occurrences in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria and residents argue that sometimes it is a 'daily affair'. There has been numerous arguments and shifting of blame as to who is responsible for the devastation caused in regards to environmental pollution in the Niger-Delta. The MNCs have often alleged that most of the oil spills encountered in the region were as results of sabotage. The MNCs argue that oil thieves attempting to steal from the pipelines end up damaging the pipelines and the resultant effect is the disruption to the flow of crude oil which sometimes result in oil spillage. This claim has been strongly rejected by the communities and the NGOs operating in the region. They disagree with the MNCs regarding the number of spills caused as a result of sabotage claiming that the MNCs are blaming oil spills on sabotage in order to avoid paying compensations (Amnesty international, 2008). According to G.J. Frynas 'there are indeed strong indications that oil companies in Nigeria have used false claims of sabotage to avoid compensation payments' (Frynas, 1999: 128). This claims and counter claims will be considered further in the later stages of this research as there has been some evidence that some people deliberately vandalise pipelines in order to seek compensation from the MNCs or better still to seek for contracts for cleaning up the leaks from vandalised pipelines. In 1999, a group of activists made up of journalists, academics and NGOs from the United State of America visited the region to assess the environmental situation in the Niger-Delta region. They reported that the MNCs operating in the Niger-Delta have demonstrated a total disregard for their responsibility towards the environment and have also connived with the government and security agency to undermine the wellbeing of the inhabitants of the Niger-Delta (U.S non-governmental delegation trip report, 1999). The group concluded that the method of oil extraction and other operations of MNCs in the Niger-Delta pose a serious threat to the livelihood of the people from the region.

Furthermore, estimates reveal that from 1958 to 2010; between 9 million to 13 million barrels of oil have been split through various exploration activities (Baird, 2010).

Although this is an estimate of the reported oil spills that attracted national and international attention, most of the oil spills that occur in the region are not reported. The government estimates that about 7,000 spills occurred between 1970 and 2000 (Baird, 2010). The common causes include corrosion of pipelines and infrastructure decay (accounts for 50% of all spills), third party sabotage (28%), and exploration activities (21%), with the remaining spillage resulting from inadequate or non-functional production equipment. These figures have being disputed by the MNCs arguing that most of the spills are as a result of sabotage resulting from pipeline vandalization. Although the proportion of spills caused as a result of sabotage is being disputed, it is admitted that the majority of the oil spills before Niger-Delta struggles began in the early 1990s were due to the level of infrastructural decay and human errors. SPDC admitted in their own reports that between 1989 and 1994 most of the oil spilt during their operations were due to corrosion and operational problems and that the company will embark on changing their pipelines on a massive scale. They further admitted that only 28% of the spills were due to sabotage (SPDC, 1995).

In the 2009 report of Amnesty International about the activities of MNCs in the region, the organisation reiterates that oil spills, waste dumping and gas flaring are endemic in the Niger Delta. They put the blame of these activities on the MNCs which they argued do not follow due process in Nigeria. The report stated that pollution, has damaged the soil, water and air quality and the resultant effect is on the economic activities of the indigenes from the region (Amnesty International, 2009). Contrary to what operates in the other countries where these MNCs operate, gas flaring is a major form of pollution in the Niger-Delta. In other countries especially the developed ones, during oil exploration the gases are separated from the oil and used for other purposes or disposed of adequately but in the Niger Delta region, these gases are burnt as wastes and released directly into the environment. This sometimes results in acid rain and causes various degrees of illness to the people that live in these areas (Amnesty International, 2009). The damage done to the Niger-Delta environment by the MNCs is summarised by the UNDP report on the region in 2006. According to the report 'The Niger Delta has an enormously rich natural endowment in the form of land, water, forests and fauna. These assets, however, have been subjected to extreme degradation due to oil prospecting (Maiangwa and Agbigboa, 2013). For many people, this loss has

been a direct route into poverty, as natural resources have traditionally been primary sources of sustenance' (UNDP, Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006).

The Nigerian oil industries regulations maintain that in the event of an oil spill, the oil spill sites must be adequately rehabilitated. This implies that the soil or water affected by the spill at the affected sites must be treated to reduce the impact of environmental pollution and also to restore the land or water back to normal as much as possible. To achieve this aim, the federal government of Nigeria in 2006 established the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) to identify all the sites needing rehabilitation in the country (Department of Environmental resources guidelines, 2004). As of April 2008, the agency has identified about 2000 sites (although the actual size of the area was not disclosed) needing rehabilitation. In the initial report submitted by the agency, it was stated that majority of these sites belong to SPDC. This goes to proof the large extent of environmental degradation perpetuated by the MNCs in the Niger-Delta.

The second issue relates to the level of compensation to the indigenes of the region for land acquired by MNCs for oil related activities. Over the years this has also been a contending issue as the indigenes have been disgruntled by lack of adequate payment. The U.S non-governmental delegation that researched this issue discovered that in many communities where oil exploration is taking place, the indigenes have complained that they rarely receive any compensation for their lands from the MNCs. Even when such monies are paid, they are highly inadequate and claims processing takes a ridiculously long time (U.S non-governmental delegation trip report, 1999). Furthermore, lands rendered useless by oil spills, acid rains or some other form of pollution are not adequately compensated. Shell for instance does not have a good record when it comes to land acquisition and payment of compensation and its reported malpractices is not limited to Nigeria. According to Moody (1992), 'Shell's acquisition and subsequent despoliation of the land of helpless people all over the world actually commenced after the company began oil production in British Borneo, Mexico, and Venezuela before the first world war'. Moody claimed further that Shell literally 'bulldozed its way into the lands of the Quicha, Achual and Shuar people in the Ecuadorian Amazon in the 1920s' (Moody, 1992). This left a devastating effect on these communities as their livelihoods were seriously threatened.

The regulations in Nigeria makes it really easy for the MNCs as the licence stipulates that once they have paid the royalties to the central government, they are not legally obliged to pay any compensation to the local communities on whose lands they explore the oil. Although not legally binding, the Nigerian government requires the MNCs to pay 'fair and adequate' compensation whenever there is a spill. The MNCs have relied on this part of the law to exploit the Niger-Delta communities. According to Okonta and Douglas (2003), the Nigerian government in 1987 suggested some statutory minimum payment for compensation to be paid but these amounts were ridiculously small. For instance, the MNCs were expected to pay 50cent for felling a mango tree. This amount is grossly inappropriate as valuers estimated that a single mango tree will produce fruits worth $800 a year and has a life span of 50 years. Even the MNCs understand that these amount of money is too small and after prolonged uproar and protests the companies upwardly reviewed the amount in 1992 (Okonta and Douglas, 2003). Despite the review, the amounts paid as compensation is still small and nothing to compare to the actual values of the land or water bodies being harnessed regularly for oil exploration.

Furthermore, over the years, the MNCs have enjoyed a 'rosy' relationship with government agencies most times at the detriment of the communities. There have been several allegations of corruption in the way the MNCs have dealt with the agencies and this accounts for the reason why the agencies have not been able to properly monitor the activities of the MNCs. In 1992 for instance, after a lot of demonstrations in the region, the military government at the time established a new commission (Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission- OMPADEC) by a military decree (Okonta and Douglas, 2003). The decree increased the allocation of oil proceeds to the region from 1.5% to 3% and transferred the increased fund to the commission to administer on behalf of the people (The Observer, 1992). OMPADEC was under no supervisory authority other than the presidency and after a short period of time, inefficiency and corruption became part and parcel of the commission. Furthermore the structure of the commission was such that there was no emphasis on environmentally sustainable development or framework for project planning or implementation (Okonta and Douglas, 2003). The most worrying of the activities of the commission was its closeness with MNCs. The commission was unnecessarily close to the MNCs it was supposed to

monitor and there were several allegations of cash exchanging hands between the commission members and MNCs.

Another major way in which MNCs have contributed to the conflict in the Niger-Delta region is through the support of the Nigerian Police force as well as the military in suppressing peaceful demonstrations. This was well documented by an American based NGO: Project Underground which worked with civil liberty organisations and NGOs from the region. The group explained that after the trial and execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and the eight other activists in 1995, there was an increase in protests in the region and this captured international attention and criticism of both the Nigerian government and SPDC. In response, the military government of General Sani Abacha allocated a large number of police officers and soldiers to SPDC who happened to be the main target of the protests. Project Underground claimed that SPDC had its own private police force (which they pay and give orders to), imports its own arms and ammunitions and supply vehicles and helicopters to these 'special police force'. It was also alleged that SPDC had their own armouries in Bonny, Warri and Port-Harcourt where weapons such as pump-action shotguns, automatic rifles and revolvers are being kept (Project Underground, 1997; Okonta and Douglas, 2003). Although SPDC maintains that the weapons stored in these armouries are for the police officers attached to the organisation, the mere fact the company procures these weapons was a threat to the human security of the people as well as gross violations of the laws of the country. The Nigerian police force officers assigned to the region (called 'Shell Police' by the communities) were all on the pay roll of SPDC and not the government and they received special treatment like free accommodation, free transport and meals unlike the regular police force (Project Underground, 1997).

From the above it is apparent that the MNCs are culpable in the conflict that engulfed the region. This thesis aims to research further to establish more details on their activities. The second actor identified in the conflict is the Nigerian state.

2.2.2 The Role of the Nigerian State

According to Amnesty International's report on the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria in 2009, 'The Niger Delta provides a stark case study of the lack of accountability of a government to its people, and of MNCs almost total lack of accountability when it comes

to the impact of their operations on human rights" (Amnesty International, 2009: 10). Despite the transition from military rule to civilian governance in 1999, the situation in the Niger-Delta has failed to improve and this is a serious concern for all the stakeholders involved. This section will analyse the roles played by subsequent military and civilian regimes starting from the 1970s and their roles in the violent conflict that erupted in the region.

The Nigerian government has been found culpable of not monitoring the activities of MNCs as well as using excessive force against the indigenes of the Niger-Delta. The roles played by the Nigerian government in the abuse of the human rights of the indigenes of oil producing communities has raised a lot of concerns by NGOs and civil societies both within and outside the country. The destruction of the Niger-Delta environment, the threat to the human security of the people as well as the roles played by the Nigerian government has been well documented. In 1996, a complaint was filed by the Social and Economic Rights Action and Centre for Economic and Social Rights, on behalf of the Ogoni tribe (a large oil producing community in the Niger-Delta) against the federal government to the African Commission. The complaint stated that the Nigerian government has allowed the continued indiscriminate pollution of the Niger-Delta environment. The organisations argue that oil exploration in the Niger-Delta has been taking place with total disregard to the health and safety of the people. The complaint also stated that the task force has engaged in 'ruthless military operations' against the people and the government has totally left the indigenes at the mercy of the MNCs. (University of Minnesota, Human Rights Library, 2001). In 2002, after examining the complaints, the African Commission found Nigeria to be in violation of a number of rights especially Articles 2, 4, 14, 16, 18(1), 21 and 24 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Right guaranteed under the African Charter, and stated that: 'Despite its obligation to protect persons against interferences in the enjoyment of their rights, the Government of Nigeria facilitated the destruction of the Ogoniland. Contrary to its Charter obligations and despite such internationally established principles, the Nigerian Government has given the green light to private actors, and the oil Companies in particular, to devastatingly affect the well-being of the Ogonis' *(*African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2002)

The commission then called on the federal government of Nigeria and the MNCs involved in correcting the lapses by protecting the environment, health as well as ensuring that the livelihood of the indigenes of the region is not further put in jeopardy. The commission also advised that the government should ensure that adequate compensation is paid to the victims of the pollution and those who suffered human rights abuses from armed forces. Furthermore, the government and all the stake holders involved were asked to undertake a comprehensive clean-up of the lands and rivers damaged by various oil exploration activities (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2002). Several years after the ruling, the African Commission's decision has not been implemented. The MNCs continue to pollute the environment and the government does not seem to care. It has been business as usual in the region despite the government's establishment of various agencies to address the issues highlighted by the African commission's report. Hundreds of tonnes of oil together with other potentially toxic substances are still being released into the Niger Delta environment, and Amnesty International found little evidence that either the companies or the government were monitoring the impact on water quality, fisheries or human health (Amnesty International, 2009).

2.2.3 The Roles of the Niger-Delta Communities

A high percentage of the indigenes of the Niger Delta rely on fish farming, subsistence agriculture and small scale processing industries for their livelihood. According to UNDP, about 60% of the indigenes of Niger-Delta depend on their natural environment for the source of their livelihood. For many of the people in the region, the environmental resource base such as land and the rivers are what they use for agriculture, fishing and the collection of forest products, which serves as the main source of livelihood. 'Pollution and environmental damage, therefore, pose significant risks to the human security of the people' (UNDP, 2006).

Since the 1980s, the indigenes of the Niger-Delta had embarked on peaceful protests to voice out their demands which includes; putting an end to pollution by the MNCs, an increased and fair portion of the revenue generated in the region from the central government as well as the development of the region with better infrastructures. Most

of these protests have been met by strong military opposition and brutality. In 1987, the people of Iko (an oil producing community in the Niger-Delta) organised a peaceful demonstration to protest the exploitation of oil in their community and the manner in which the MNCs had been conducting themselves but this demonstration was brutally suppressed by a combined force of the Nigerian police and military (Okonta and Douglas, 2003). Also in a related incidence, in October 1990, the indigenes of Umuechem (another oil producing community) organised peaceful demonstrations in their community to protest the activities of SPDC in the area but similarly as with other protests, armed troops were called in (this time at the request of Shell) to stop the protest. During the process, the people were killed and maimed into submission (Okonta and Douglas, 2003).

There have been several accounts of the transition from peaceful protest to violent militancy in the Niger-Delta. Ojakorotu and Gilbert (2010), explain that towards the end of the 1990s, after perpetual abuse of the human rights of the indigenes of the Niger-Delta and continuous militarization of the region by the federal government and MNCs, several ethnic environmental movements began to form. Most of these organisations were non-state and comprised of youths from the region (Ojakorotu and Gilbert, 2010). Instead of towing the path of negotiations, they began to accumulate arms and ammunitions through the country's porous borders with the help of some indigenes who had served in the military. In a short period of time, groups such as Urhobo Youth Movement (UYOMO), Ikwerre Youth Movement (IYM), and Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) materialized. Other groups like the Federated Niger Delta Izon Communities (FNDIC), the Membutu Boys, the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Coalition for Militant Action (COMA), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) were also formed (Ojakorotu and Gilbert, 2010). The groups though having different agenda all professed to have emerged in a bid to counter the harassment, terrorization, rape and suppression of their communities by the Nigerian state and the MNCs. The activities of these groups grew rapidly and by the end of 2004, there was an estimated 1 to 3 million Small and Light Weapons (SALW) in Nigeria – mostly in the Niger Delta (Agboton-Johnson, Ebo and Mazal, 2004). Apart from confronting the members of the task forces in gun battles, the groups carried out several activities such as bombing of pipelines and oil terminals, disruption of oil

exploration as well as kidnapping staffs of MNCs especially expatriate workers in the region. They employ the use of heavy weapons such as rocket propelled grenades, helicopter gunships and armoured personnel carrier, sometimes, superior to those available to the police and military deployed to maintain peace in the region.

Furthermore, the Niger-Delta indigenes are active participants in the conflict that erupted in the region because of the corruption of their elites and community leaders. Despite the huge allocation paid to the region over the years, there has been little to show for it. There is widespread corruption right through the entire hierarchy of government consisting of the central state governments, the local governments, the traditional rulers and community chiefs. Widespread corruption is rampant in the government as the country currently ranks 139th out of 174 countries in 2012 in the corruption index (Transparency international, 2012). The times of London in 1995 reported that Shell executives were aware that millions of pounds were paid annually to community leaders in bribes and 'unexplained gifts' (Times of London, 1995). Sometimes when there are oil spills and the MNCs are ready to pay compensation, the people involved (who are mostly illiterates) are represented by their community leaders or their agents. When the money is eventually paid, the bulk of it ends up in the pocket of the leaders and their cronies and little or nothing gets to the victims of the leaks. In most cases the victims are told that no compensation has been paid and this then makes them direct their grievances to the MNCs thinking they have been cheated by them whereas the companies have actually made payments. On the allegations of bribes given to community leaders, a Shell executive in Europe admitted that the company pays a lot of money to community leaders who sometimes threaten to mobilise support against the MNCs. In his words, he stated that 'I would go as far as to say that we spent more money on bribes and corruption than on community development projects' (Times of London, 1995).

The flamboyant lifestyles of the people in government is a cause for worry as it is obvious that the money that could have been used for the development of the states have been diverted for personal uses and in most cases, to maintain the luxurious lifestyles of the leaders at the expense of the people. For instance, a former governor of Rivers state, Dr Peter Odili budgeted $1.3billion for the entire state in 2006. Out of the

budget, there was provision for $65,000 a day for transportation for the office of the governor. The budget also included $38million for two helicopters for the governor's office while a mere $22million was allocated for healthcare (Ejibunu, 2007). Another governor of one of the oil rich states (Delta state), James Ibori was in April 2012 sentenced to 13 years in prison for fraud totalling £50million. The former governor admitted 10 counts of conspiracy to defraud and money laundering in a London court after being discharged and acquitted for the same offence in his home state (BBC, 2012). On the local level for instance, in some cases all the actors are linked in one way or the other through corruption and bribery but it is only the masses who suffer as their leaders have betrayed them but instead vent their anger on MNCs alone as the government is out of reach. The issue of corruption in the region raises a question of whether the underlying problems are due to the lack of resources in the region or issues relating to the governance of the distribution of the resources.

A U.S non-governmental organisation visited the Niger-Delta in 1999 and stated that 'as long as people's calls for justice continues to be ignored and resisted by both MNCs and the Nigerian government; the situation in the Delta can only deteriorate (U.S non-governmental delegation trip report, 1999). It is apparent that the indigenes of the Niger-Delta also play a part in the violence in the region and for any meaningful resolution of the conflict in the region to take place; the three main actors must be involved.

Chapter Conclusion

Generally, sustainable development is impossible in the context of conflict or human insecurity because conflict exposes vulnerable people, particularly women and children, to hunger, poverty, and deprivation. For any reasonable development to take place there must be satisfaction of basic needs such as food, shelter, health and education as well as freedom of expression, movement and political participation along with greater equality and social justice, self-reliance together with adequate sustainability (Galtung, 1976; 8). Underdevelopment including poverty and the lack of basic infrastructure increases the vulnerability of individuals, groups, and regions to violent conflict and human insecurity (Kwasi, N, 2010). Despite the huge volume of resources that is being generated from the Niger Delta region, the area lacks basic amenities like good

hospitals, roads, schools and many others. Robert McNamara (1968) argues that development is a precondition for peace and human security. In his view, basic needs such as water, food, basic education, and health, must be available to everyone to ensure human security.

Human security is a significant part of people's well-being and is therefore an objective of development (Stewart, 2004). Conflicts can be caused by underdevelopment and grievances which certainly contribute to aggravation of human insecurities. Shahrbanou and Chenoy concluded that 'underdevelopment may not directly cause violent conflict but poor social, economic and environmental conditions as well as weak or ineffective political structures diminish a state's capacity to manage tensions in a non-violent manner'. (Shahrbanou and Chenoy, 2007; 34). In the case of the Niger Delta, several decades of neglect by the state have impacted on the Human security of the people. The pollution experienced in the region coupled with the weakness of the Nigerian state in curbing the excesses of the oil corporations has led to environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods which in turn resulted in violence conflict. Although the Nigerian government in recent years has given amnesty to some of the agitated youths in the regions, majority of the indigenes have not felt the impact of the programme and human security of the people is still threatened.

It is apparent from the above that the three major actors; The Nigerian state, the communities and indigenes of the Niger-Delta and the MNCs operating in the region are all culpable in the decline of human security and the conflict that ensued. Although over the years the blame for the conflict has been shifted from one party to another, this section has shown that the three actors have all played significant roles in the conflict. For any reasonable solution to be proffered to this conflict, it is important to identify the dynamics of this conflict. The dynamics of the conflict will influence how the conflict can be explored and addressed. The next chapter of this thesis will focus extensively on the effect of the activities of each player on the economic, environmental, development and human security front. The relationship of each actor to each other will be explored as only an understanding of this dynamics can adequately answer some of the questions of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

Natural Resource Governance in Nigeria and the Dynamics of Conflict in the Niger Delta

Introduction

One of the major puzzles in the Niger-Delta conflict is the reason why successive military and civilian governments have not been able to end the conflict and what makes this particular conflict peculiar or different from other resource conflicts experienced in some other parts of the world. This chapter will explore these issues in detail and attempt to provide answers. This conflict bears some characteristics similar to other resource conflicts because it is mainly some aggrieved individuals and communities taking up arms against the government and the MNCs operating in the region. The conflict also has some distinct and salient issues which act to escalate the tension and also makes resolution a herculean task. These issues which can be described as the dynamics of the conflict are important aspects of the conflict that must be considered in order to find a sustainable solution to the conflict.

One prominent issue that has resulted in the violent conflict experienced in the region is the issue of distribution of resources. The region generates most of the foreign exchange earnings that accrue to the country and this result in agitations by the indigenes of the region for an increase in resource allocation. However, a closer examination of the dynamics of the conflict reveals that it might not actually be the distribution of resources that results in conflict. There is a need to explore the governance of the distribution of the resources and how this might actually be a major cause of the conflict. Regardless of the amount that accrues to the region from the federal allocation, as long as the governance of the distribution of these resources remains poor, conflict is inevitable. In the past 10 years, there has been an increase in the clamour for an upward review of the allocation that accrues to the region as a means of ending the conflict in the region. Interestingly, there has not been an equal clamour for transparency and questioning of how the resources are presently channelled and what is being done with the allocation that is being paid to the individual states at the moment. This research intends to fill this gap; to explore the relationship between the governance of the distribution of resources and the outbreak of violent conflict.

In order to explore critically the dynamics of the conflict and how it relates to the governance of the distribution of resources, this chapter will examine the various dimensions of the conflict since oil exploration began in the late 1950s. The chapter will also examine issues related to resource formula and allocation of resources to the region. After a thorough analysis of issues relating to allocation of resources, the chapter will seek to identify the link between the governance of the allocation of resources and issues such as ethnic clashes and communal conflict. The chapter will then analyse the other dynamics of the conflict such as youths' involvement in electoral violence and violence arising from the attacks on women and children in the region which sometimes leads to retaliatory attacks on the military by the youths from the region. Furthermore, the chapter will explore land use laws and the classification of Niger-Delta as ethnic minorities; arms proliferation in the Niger-Delta as well as oil theft commonly referred to as illegal oil bunkering in the region. It is only a thorough analysis of these issues and the impact they have on the conflict that will make it possible to design an appropriate framework for analysis of the intricate causes and dimensions of this conflict.

Furthermore, the analysis of the dynamics of this conflict will lay a good foundation for the second part of this thesis which is the field trip to the Niger-Delta. This is very important in designing the questions for the interviews for this aspect of the research. It is important to put into consideration these dynamics which will also go a long way in understanding why the problems persist and also why it is different to other types of resource conflict.

3.1 Resource formula and the classification of Niger-Delta as ethnic minorities

The problems with the Niger-Delta started long before independence but did not result in violent conflict until the discovery of oil in the region. The history of Nigeria reveals that the former colonial leaders from Britain through their 'divide and rule' system of governance were part of the problem. Before 1914, the country existed as the Northern and Southern regions and was formally consolidated in 1914. In the year 1939, the southern region was separated into the Eastern and Western regions and the arrangement remained like that until 1960 when Nigeria gained independence (The Historian, 2010). Between 1939 and 1960, there were three main ethnic groups; the

Hausa and Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the South-west and the Igbo in the South-East. All other minority ethnic groups fall under these three main regions and were not adequately represented in the federal structure. After the discovery of oil, the federal regional system was orchestrated and skewed to the advantage of the three main ethnic groups which ensured that most of the proceeds of the oil exploited from the Niger-Delta were used to develop these regions at the expense of the minorities even though they generate the revenue. The indigenes of the Niger-Delta were classified as minorities and not a force to be reckoned with until the discovery of oil in late 1950s. Even after the discovery of oil, the people were still treated as minorities and there was no consideration for their human security. According to Ojakorotu and Okeke-Uzodike (2006) 'at present, Nigerian federalism is skewed, and it does not adequately cater for the interests of the minority' (pg. 101). This is the reason why despite the huge resources that emanates from the region, the 'larger' ethnic groups still take advantage of the size of the region.

Following this arrangements of majority and minority ethnic group identification, the Niger-Delta region was split with no definite affiliations. The Delta and Edo states became minorities in the Western region which was dominated by the Yoruba while the inhabitants of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River and Rivers also became minorities in the Eastern region (Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006). This arrangement resulted in the whole of the Niger-Delta becoming ethnic minorities, hence, marginalised by subsequent military and civilian governments which composed mainly of people from the ethnic majorities. This further generated rivalries between the regions as well as between the main ethnic groups and the minorities (The Historian, 2010). Since the independence of Nigeria, one issue that has been very controversial and divisive is the issue of resource control.

The first act of violence carried out by the Niger-Delta indigenes against the government was in 1966. Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro a young graduate of University of Nigeria, Nsukka also a police officer from Kaiama Town (now Bayelsa State) formed a group known as the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS), the group comprised of about 159 youths determined to protest against the massive deprivation and neglect of the oil producing communities. On 23 February 1966, the group took up arms against the Nigerian state

and embarked on a revolution that lasted 12 days in which lots of government and MNCs officials were killed and property worth millions of naira were destroyed. Although Boro as well as most of the youths were killed during the civil war the following year, this was the first major uprising that engulfed the region shortly before the civil war (Boro, 1982). Since the Adaka Boro led struggle, the issue of resource control has been an issue in the country.

Resource control is the term used by the indigenes of the Niger Delta to agitate for either total ownership of the oil resources in the region or increased participation in the governance of the resources. Ako (2011) explored this issue and classified resource control into three categories. These are absolute resource control, principal resource control and increased derivation. Absolute resource control is the argument that all the resources in the Niger Delta should be owned and governed by the indigenes of the region. The proponents argue that under this structure, all the revenues from the sale of crude oil will accrue to the region and the region in return will pay taxes and royalty to the federal government. Principal resource control is defined as a situation whereby the indigenes of the Niger Delta have a 'direct and decisive role in the exploration for, the exploitation and disposal of, including sales of the harvested resources' (Sagay, 2001). Increased derivation refers to the right of the indigenes of the Niger Delta to control and manage the revenue that accrues from the sale of oil and other natural resources in line with the 'tenets of true federalism' (Adesopo and Asaju, 2004).

The agitation for resource control was a major factor that contributed to the Biafra war of succession from 1967 to 1970. According to Kirk-Greene (1975), agitations of uneven distribution of resources and political inequality which triggered constitutional imbalance are two major factors which led to the war. The oil boom in the 1970s shortly after the bloody civil war further increased the agitations for the oil producing communities to demand more revenue from the oil exploited from their region. According to Duru (2010), Nigerians from the southern part of the country especially those from the south-south geo-political zones believe having control of the resources will put an end to the restiveness in the region. It will also ensure that justice and fair play is achieved considering the fact that oil exploration has brought immense environmental instability and human insecurity to the people from the region.

Contrarily, the northerners believe that resource control is a pre-agendum for secessionism. They expressed the fear that behind the south's agenda for resource control is a grand design to seek independence from Nigeria after all most of the country's export revenue comes from the south-south.

The main issue with the regional classification of Nigeria prior to independence and the perceived injustice felt by the people from the Niger-Delta is partly due to the political power of the Hausa/Fulani northern hegemony. Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the northern hegemony has ruled Nigeria for a total 33yrs out of which about 26years have been military dictatorship. This has led to the perception by the people of the Niger Delta that the resources from the region are being used to develop the north at the expense of the Niger Delta. This perception is often shared by the inhabitants of the Niger-Delta and it was mentioned recently during a heated debate in the Nigerian senate over the passage of a new Petroleum Industries Bill (PIB). During the debate, it was alleged that Northern politicians and former military rulers from the north own 83% of all the oil wells in the Niger-Delta (Josiah, 2013). A major component of the PIB is to offer the Niger Delta indigenes an extra 10% of the oil revenue called host community fund. Advocates of the host community fund suggests that apart from 13% derivation being paid to the oil producing states presently, MNCs should pay a further 10% to cover for the environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods of the people (Josiah, 2013). This, however, was rejected by the senators from the northern part of Nigeria.

The realisation of the economic significance of oil coupled with the fact that it is found in the region of Nigeria inhabited by 'the minorities' prompted the federal government of Nigeria (which were mainly composed of people from the major ethnic groups) to promulgate certain decrees to vest the ownership of all land in the country in the government. It has been argued that these decrees were made possible because of the inability of the indigenes of the Niger-Delta to contest them at those periods because they were considered to be minorities and deemed not to pose any significant threat to the federal government. Some of these decrees are:

-- Decree No. 51 of 1969, which was used to transfer the ownership of the totality of petroleum products in the delta region to the Federal government of Nigeria.

-- The Land Use Decree of 1978, which also vested land ownership in Nigeria in the Federal government and held in trust by the state governments thereby dispossessing the People of the Niger-Delta any right to ownership or occupancy of the lands in their regions (Victor Ojakorotu, V and Gilbert L.D. 2010). According to Ojakorotu and Gilbert, 'these laws are systematically deployed as instruments of emasculation, subjugation, domination and expropriation of the Delta resources by the Nigerian state, which has been in the firm grip of the triumvirate major ethnic groups in Nigeria, since the attainment of political independence in 1960'(pg. 8).

The regional division of Nigeria after independence resulted in the political exclusion of minority groups. At independence, Nigeria was divided into three regions (Northern, Southern and Eastern) resulting in the dominance of the region by the bigger ethnic groups. The implication of this is that minority ethnic groups are excluded from power resulting in lopsided distribution of resources. Apart from the apparent neglect by the major ethnic groups in terms of developing the Niger-Delta region, Akpomuvire and Egbadju (2010) observe that the way the federal system in Nigeria is skewed undermines the security situation of minority groups in the country. This security as explained by Akpomuvire and Egbaju details the human security situation of the people. The authors explain that crisis in the Niger Delta has been that of land rights, and oil-related crisis which is partly linked to the land use decrees explained earlier. This issue was earlier explored by Ibeanu (2005) who explained the contradiction of securities between the Niger-Delta indigenes and the federal government and attributed this to a major dynamics in the conflict. Ibeanu explained that the issue of security in the region is perceived differently by the actors involved in the conflict. He stated that security to the federal government involves the uninterrupted income from the exploration of oil in the region. The MNC on the other hand attribute security to anything that will ensure an increase in operational profits while security to the indigenes of the delta means the possibility and capacity that their sources of livelihood remain intact and that their natural environment is not threatened by various oil exploration activities. These security contradictions are the causes of the violent conflict experienced in the region (Ibeanu, 2005). Along with these contradictions, there are passions or sentiments attached and this is why it is difficult to find a solution that will be acceptable to all the factions in the conflict (Akpomuvire & Egbadju, 2010).

3.2 The Derivation Principle

The Derivation Principle is the term used to define the distribution of resources that accrues from the petroleum sector in Nigeria. In the early 1960s shortly after the discovery of crude oil and Nigeria's transition from colonial rule to independence, there was a 50% derivation principle that allocated 50% of the proceeds of resources to the states of origin of the particular resources (Victor Ojakorotu and Gilbert, 2010). It is safe to assume that the federal government of Nigeria at the time did not envisage that natural resources especially oil will be really valuable in future and hence agreed to a 50% derivation principle. As the value of oil increased, subsequent governments reduced the percentage of resources accruable to the states of origin. The first reduction came in 1970 when the derivation payment was reduced to 45%. It was reduced again in 1975 to 20%. In 1979 when Nigeria returned to democracy, the derivation principle had been abolished. This left the Niger Delta with no extra resources from the oil produced in the region. In 1982 three years after Nigeria returned to democracy described as the second republic, the government under President Shehu Shagari's civilian administration re-introduced the derivation principle by allocating 1.5% of the revenue accruable to oil producing states. This was later increased in 1992 by the former military dictator (Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida) to 3%. In 1999, the derivation was increased to 13% where it currently stands when the country returned to democracy in the fourth republic. The increase in the derivation in 1999 was as a result of the restiveness in the region which was already affecting the country's economy (Ekpo 2004; International Crises Group, 2006). This increase in derivation has however led to an increase in predation a situation that increases the risk of conflict.

The main factor that worked against people from the Niger-Delta was their minority and political status as the region did not produce a president until 2010. Even before Nigeria gained independence and long before the discovery of oil in the Niger-Delta, there had been issues with the sharing of grants and resources at the federal level that had never favoured people from the Niger-Delta because of their minority status. For instance in 1946 shortly after the division of the country into the Northern, Western and Eastern regions, there had been a derivation principle which did not take into account the ethnic minorities including the Niger-Delta indigenes. Northern Nigeria has always been the most favoured in the country and this was confirmed by the first

derivation principle in 1946 by the Phillipson commission, which allocated 24%, 30%,46% to the Eastern, Western and Northern regions respectively (Ekpo 2004).

After Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 and the realisation that despite the increase in the percentage of resources to the Niger-Delta, the conflict continued unabated, the federal government instituted a special Committee on Oil Producing Areas. The committee also included the managing director of the Nigerian National Petroluem Commission (NNPC), the managing directors of the five major MNCs operating in the country (Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Total and Eni-Agip), all the security chiefs, representatives of all the oil producing states as well as important stakeholders from the communities and government parastatals. The mandate of the committee was to analyse the conflict in the region in light of the impact of the derivation principle and resource allocation. The committee submitted its report to the federal government on 19th of February 2002 but the report was never published or acted upon until 2006 when it leaked to the public (International Crises Group, 2006). The committee in the leaked report produced a comprehensive recommendation which included the following:

Immediate or short term measures

• Upward review of the minimum 13% derivation to not less than 50%

• Government should enact laws that would make it mandatory for the creation of manufacturing companies to produce local content for oil producing companies

• Communities should be made to diversify into agricultural production unique to their environment

• Civic centres should be created for development of sports and extra-curricular activities to engage youths during idle periods

• Mobilisation of youths to form labour vanguard for community developments

• Indigenes of oil producing communities must be trained for employment in the oil companies

• Immediate commencement of Trans-coastal highway from Ondo State to Cross River State

• Provision of marine/Coastal mass transit transportation system

• Dredging of Eastern Obolo (Akwa-Ibom State), Ayetoro water way and establishment of marine transportation

- Establishment of police stations in oil producing communities.

Medium term measures

- Sand filling of swamps to create new towns.

- Erosion Control

- Control of ocean surge of coastal area

- Provision of infrastructure such as electricity, water, roads etc.

- The National Boundary Commission should embark upon and complete boundary demarcation to avoid conflicts.

Long term measures

- Repeal Land Use Act, Petroleum Act, Gas Re-injection Act and other laws which dispossess oil producing areas of their land.

- Industrialization of the area.

Source: The Adaka Boro Centre (14th June, 2008)

As laudable as the report of the committee seems to be, the government of Nigeria did not only ignore it, it ordered the committee never to release its content until it was leaked to the press in 2006, four years after the report was handed over to the president. The leakage of the report as well as the non-implementation and the attitude of the government in hiding it further increased tension in the region in 2006. The report was cited by the people of the Niger Delta as well as activist in the region as partial vindication of community complaints. This further gave the rampaging militants an excuse to continue their armed struggles against the government (International Crises Group, 2006). Chief among the recommendations that the locals clamoured for was the upward review of the derivation principle and the development of the region. In response to the increased violence in the region and the agitations of various local and international civil societies and NGOs, rather than act on the committees report, the federal government of Nigeria decided to set up another 40-man committee to look into all the previous recommendations of previous committees on the region since 1960 and give a recommendation based on all the reports, an act that angered the people further.

However, it is important to state that one important aspect of the resource allocation that the committee failed to explore was the governance of the distribution of the resources. Although the nine oil producing states earn 13% more in terms of allocation from the central government than the non-oil producing states, this has not resulted in any commensurate development. For instance in December 2013, N473.607 billion was distributed among the three tiers of government in Nigeria. The Federal Government received N221.161billion, (52.68%), while the State received N112.176 billion (26.72%) and the Local Government received N86.483 billion (20.60%). The N112.176 billion that accrued to the state was shared by all the 36 states of the federation equally. However, the nine oil producing states received further N48.461 billion representing 13% derivation revenue (Premium Times, 2014). This amount that was added to the revenue of the oil producing states represents about 43% of the total money disbursed to all the other states of the federation. There is no doubt that the oil producing states benefit more from the derivation principle as they clearly earn more from the federation account, the question that readily comes to mind is how is the money been distributed by the state and local government? If the derivation principle is increased from 13% to 50% as recommended by the Ogomudia committee, without an improvement in the governance behind the distribution of the resources will it reduce poverty and conflict in the region? These are some of the questions that this thesis intends to answer.

The issue of resource control was heard in the supreme court of Nigeria on the 5th of April 2002 but the court ruled in favour of the federal government of Nigeria maintaining the current 13% derivation presently paid to the states in the region (Duru, 2010). One of the reasons given by the Supreme Court is that the amount that accrues to the region is 'fair enough' and should generate visible development in the region. However, this ruling did not go down well with the indigenes of the region as they vowed to continue hostilities against the state until their agitations are meant which involves a total control of all the resources in the region. What is imperative is that an increase in the allocation of resources without a proper channel of governance to distribute the resources instead of ameliorating the conflict can actually escalate it. This is because if a section of the state or community feel disenfranchised as a result of the allocation of the resources, it could result in further violence.

3.3 Ethnic clashes and communal conflict

Apart from the community versus MNCs/State conflict being witnessed in the Niger-Delta, other forms of conflict such as intra-community, inter-community and inter-ethnic are also common occurrences (Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006). Although the scales are not as massive as the community versus MNCs/State conflict which is the focus of this study, these conflicts have also been spurred by allegations of unfair distribution of resources. Depending on the ethnic affiliations of the governor of each state at a particular time, other ethnic groups accuse the incumbent governor of favouritism in terms of resource distribution and this result in conflict. Of all the conflicts highlighted above the most significant one that has been particularly violent leading to several losses of lives and valuable properties are the inter-ethnic conflicts. These conflicts are as a result of the increasing division of ethnic identities which in some cases have been attributed to the activities of the MNCs and sometimes as a result of some deliberate acts of the governments in terms of their 'divide and rule' tactics (divide and rule in this respect means the way in which the MNCs break up the communities and prevent them from having a unified voice- sometimes through the use of bribes as explained in the previous chapter).

Most of the ethnic clashes occur in the city of Warri in Delta state. The city of Warri is the second most important city in Nigeria after Port Harcourt since Delta state where Warri is located accounts for about 40% of Nigeria's total oil production (Leton, 2006). The three main ethnic groups in Warri are the Itsekiris, an ethnic group believed to be of Yoruba origin and the most influential of all the ethnic groups in the region; the Urhobos who are related to the people of Benin City and live in the Northern part of Warri and the Ijaws who live in the south in the swampy riverine areas of the state (Leton, 2006). Of the three ethnic groups, the Itsekiris have been the most dominant in terms of access to political powers and influence. Most of the political office holders from Warri are Itsekiris and this has been a source of concern and protests from the other ethnic groups as they believe this has resulted in the political and economic marginalisation of their communities (Human Rights Watch, 2006). The rise of the Itsekiris above the other two ethnic groups dated as far back as the early nineteenth century. The Itsekiris were exposed to colonial traders in the region serving as

middlemen and benefitted commercially from the trade. This also gave them an edge in terms of educational attainment as many of their children were exposed to European education (Leton, 2006). It is important to state that there are also other small ethnic groups in Delta state such as Ogoni, Okrika, Andoni e.t.c and at the same time the Ijaws, Itsekiris and Urhobos can also be found in other neighbouring oil producing states in the Niger-Delta.

The three main ethnic groups in the Niger-Delta had frequent skirmishes dating back to the 18th century relating to the issues of land ownership, ethnic diversity and particularly who is the original settler in the city. The discovery of oil in the region further escalated tensions among the ethnic groups. In the 1960s shortly after the discovery of oil, these communities continued to live in peace because the price of oil was just $6 a barrel and could not compete with the export of agricultural produce. Problems however increased over issues of land ownership and territorial demarcations in the 1970s when the price of oil increased tremendously becoming more valuable than agricultural produce. The country at that time generated a lot of 'oil revenue' to the extent that the then Head of State once said in a press conference — 'Money is not my problem it is how to spend it' (Ojakorotu, 2010). This sudden increase in revenue also came at a cost. Not only did the country's export in agricultural product decline, the increase also led to a rise in ethnic tensions especially in the Niger-Delta over land ownership and resource distribution with different ethnic groups laying claims to the lands in the region and calling the others 'tenants'. Resources distribution lack transparency and the only people that enjoy some benefits are those on whose family lands oil is been exploited.

Although there have been minor clashes between these ethnic groups for decades, the continuous increase in oil prices and revenue coupled with the clamour for access to oil resources has been a main factor that re-ignited ethnic hostilities. Since the mid 1990s, there has been increased divisions and violent conflict along ethnic lines mostly associated to distribution of oil royalties, political influence and electoral representation. Although there has been several violent clashes between various ethnic groups such as Ijaw vs. Itsekiri (Delta State), Urhobo vs. Itsekiri (Delta State), Ogoni vs. Okrika (Rivers State), Ogoni vs. Andoni (Rivers State), Ilaje vs. Ijaw (Ondo State) (Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006), the most significant of these ethnic

confrontations are between the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo ethnic groups in Delta state. There has been several battle of supremacy between these ethnic groups over which group is the original 'landlord' of the area. With each ethnic groups laying claims to original residency and calling the others tenants in the area. Violent clashes are common between the groups with each group having youth militias loyal to them and claiming to be 'protecting' their communities against the others. These youth militias have become increasingly sophisticated, acquiring dangerous weapons thereby increasing arms proliferation in the region (Akinbobola, 2010).

Although most of the armed conflicts have been attributed to issues of land ownerships and oil royalties, the Nigerian government has also been complicit in their involvement in generating ethnic tensions. A typical example of government complicity in the conflict was the violent conflict that erupted after the creation of a new local government in Warri (Delta state) in 1997. Prior to the creation of the new local government, it had been alleged that the government favoured the Itsekiri people over the Ijaws and Urhobos in the state and that this explained why the existing two local governments headquarters are both located in the Itsekiri parts of the town (Ojakorotu and Okeke-Uzodike, 2006). When a new local government was created in 1997, the headquarters was again located in Ogidigben (an Itsekiri settlement) and this was protested by the Ijaws. The protest was ignored and this led to several violent conflicts between the two ethnic groups leading to the loss of lives and properties. During the violence that lasted for over two years, hundreds of people were believed to have been killed on both sides. Several oil infrastructures were destroyed and 127 MNC staff were held hostage. Oil flow stations were shut down, cutting about 210,000 barrels of oil per day for more than a week. The federal government in 1998 set up a committee to look into the violence and one of the recommendations of the committee was that the government should create three local governments (one for each of the major ethnic groups) but this recommendation was rejected by the Itsekiris claiming that the other two ethnic groups were only tenants in the region and should not have individual local governments (Leton, 2006).

The rejection of the panel's recommendation by the Itsekiris together with the contradictory claims over who the original occupants of Warri were led to further violence in 1998 shortly after the publication of the recommendations. According to

Leton (2006), about thirty Itsekiri indigenes were reportedly killed and thirty-five houses burnt by Ijaw youths in a single attack on the Itsekiris on October 22, 1998. This led to retaliatory killings by the Itsekiris resulting in more casualties and the total destruction of the palace of the Olu of Itsekiri (the paramount ruler of Warri) despite the presence of armed soldiers in the town (Human Rights Watch, 2003; Leton 2006). This violence continued until 1999 and only abated for a while after the concerned headquarter was relocated to Ogbe-Ijoh, an Ijaw settlement by the newly elected governor of the state James Ibori (Niger Delta Human Development Report, 2006; International Crisis Group, 2006). The reason behind the long protracted conflict is because of access to resources. The warring factions believe that whoever is in control of the local government is in control of the distribution of resources and since resource distribution lacks transparency, it is an opportunity for personal enrichment.

Apart from the conflict that erupted because of the creation of the new local government, there have also been tensions between the dominant ethnic groups relating to electoral representations and political power. In 1999 shortly after the elections marking the return to democracy, violence again erupted in Warri between the Ijaw and Itsekiri ethnic groups over the winners of the elections in some constituencies. During the clashes over 200 deaths were recorded in raids by the Ijaw and Itsekiri militias. This continued in the 2003 elections and seems to have become a regular sequence. In 2003, the clashes involved the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo ethnic groups. The main cause was as in previous clashes, election results, broken promises and government favouritism of an ethnic group over others. The 2003 clashes was one of the biggest ethnic clashes in the history of Nigeria as it left thousands of people dead and the nation's oil production declined by about 40% for several weeks. Chevron, one of the main oil corporations in Nigeria reported damage in infrastructure to the tune of about $500 million (Human Rights Watch 2003; International Crises Group, 2006; Leton, 2006).

The brunt of the ethnic conflicts in most cases go beyond the groups involved as warring factions sometimes shift their grievances to the MNCs claiming they are the source of all the unrest in the region. Although there has been a lot of social mobilisation against the MNCs since the 1960s, most of these mobilisations were relatively peaceful until the death of Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995 except for the Isaac Boro secessionist agenda

in 1966. The grievances against the MNCs and the federal government of Nigeria provided the impetus for these social mobilisations which often (but not always) occur along ethnic lines (Ojakorotu, V. 2010). Although most of these ethnic groups still collectively engage in the struggle against the state and MNCs demanding the control of resources in the region, this idea of resource control has introduced another dynamic in the conflict which is the inter-ethnic conflict. There have been different arguments regarding the part played by the MNCs in the ethnic tensions ravaging the region. Nwowu (2010) explains that sometimes the MNCs are complicit in these inter-tribal and inter-ethnic unrest so as to divert the attention of the people from oil exploitation. He explains that the MNCs engage in divide and rule methods whereby they deliberately pay a particular ethnic group neglecting the others. This internal strife normally results in crises between the three major ethnic groups in the region and allows the MNCs to operate without any hindrance while the conflicts last. The unfortunate thing is that sometimes the divide and rule tactics backfires and the neglected ethnic groups shift their focus back to the MNCs demanding their own payments. The government on the other hand turn blind eyes when these situations occur and sometimes when they react, they take the sides of the MNCs and attack the indigenes of Niger-Delta a situation that further aggravates the tension. There are allegations that protracted political unrests and ethnic conflicts are instigated by oil companies to divert the attention of the people in the region but in most cases the conflicts are related to resource distribution.

Apart from the conflicts arising from land allocations, local and state government administration as well as issues of elections and representations, there has also been ethnic violence as a result of payoffs from the MNCs in the region. According to Ikelegbe (2005), issues of compensations, payoffs, community development projects and employment quotas have led to violent clashes between the three major ethnic groups in the region. The Ijaws and Urhobos accuse the MNCs of acting in favour of the Itsekiris when it comes to payoffs and this leaves the MNCs entangled in the cycle of violence that erupts after such accusations. On several occasions, youths have attacked oil installations and taken oil workers hostage on the allegations of giving support to the Itsekiris more than others. This results in the MNCs being forced to pay the aggrieved individuals or groups in order for peace to reign. Although sometimes the accusations are cheap blackmails in order to get financial benefits, the MNCs might not have a choice

except to pay out and this leads to a 'matrix of concentric circles of payoffs and rewards built on blackmail and violence' (Ibeanu, 2002: 165). Among all the ethnic groups in the Niger-Delta, the Ijaw ethnic group has been described as 'the most violent, aggressive and warlike when one considers how it has engaged other major ethnic groups and oil multinationals in the Niger Delta' (Ojakorotu and Okeke-Uzodike, 2006: 86-87). This partly explains why they take up arms at any slight provocation whether against other ethnic groups or the government troops. Although the reason for this level of aggression is outside the scope of this study, it is important to state that this further explains why Delta and Bayelsa states (where large populations of Ijaws live) experience more conflict than the other states in the Niger-Delta and are also the most militarised in the region. While other oil producing states like Akwa-Ibom and Ondo states rarely experience any form of oil related violence, the impact of the conflicts is mostly felt in Delta and Bayelsa states.

Another dimension of the ethnic conflict arising from oil exploration is the one believed to have been sponsored by the Nigerian government. The government have been accused on several occasions of using the divide and rule tactics just like the MNCs by inciting neighbouring communities against each other. A typical example was the 1993 division of the Ogoni struggle by the government using ethnic dimension. During the Ken Saro Wiwa led struggle in 1993, the government devised plans to cause ethnic tension in the region in order to implicate Saro-Wiwa and some other Ogoni leaders. It is alleged that the government hired machineries to fight and kill some members of other ethnic groups in the region and then accused the Ogonis of carrying out the killings. This led to reprisal attacks on the Ogonis by neighbouring communities and violent ethnic clashes ensued, a situation which eventually resulted in the indictment and execution of Ken-Saro Wiwa and eight other Ogoni leaders. The types of sophisticated weapons and the standard military tactics involved in all these ethnic clashes eventually proved that it had the involvement of the Nigerian military as the arms used in the operations were similar to those used by the Nigerian army. Furthermore, there were allegations that the government uses promise of enhanced resource distribution to win over certain ethnic groups that are relevant to their agenda (Human Rights Watch 1995; Sha'aba 1998).

Another major issue is that there has never been a time when the government of Nigeria has brought the perpetrators of this ethnic violence to justice. Although the government deploys troops on most occasions to quell these conflicts, the troops either take sides in the conflict or look on while the killings and lootings continue. Everything in the country is politicised and depends on the ethnic affiliation. The commanding officer of the troops deployed to maintain peace in most cases takes the sides of one ethnic group against the other. There have also been reports that in some cases winners of ethnic conflicts are rewarded with oil blocs and juicy contracts in order to support the ruling party in future (International Crises Group 2006). No matter how the conflict is framed, ranging from the establishment of local governments to the creation of wards, one thing that has been established is that the principal factor that has led to the violent conflicts between these major ethnic groups is access to oil resources. It is all linked to resources and resource distribution. The notion of 'winner takes all' in the Nigerian politics makes elections and electoral representation a 'do or die' affair and as long as this notion remains unchanged, it will be difficult to eradicate ethnic conflicts.   Finally, the involvement of the government and the MNCs in fuelling these ethnic conflicts is condemnable in every ramification.

It is important to highlight that although there has been several attempts to find a lasting solution to the incessant conflict between these three ethnic groups; none of these attempts have been successful. For instance in June 2004, several leaders of these three groups were able to declare a ceasefire and sign peace agreements with the intention of finding lasting peace. These agreements did not last long as leaders of Ijaws and Urhobos soon pulled out of the agreements claiming that they were coerced into signing the peace accords and that the fundamental issues causing disaffection amongst the three ethnic groups were not addressed before they were rushed to sign the peace agreements (Leton, 2006). The underlying causes are access to resources and this has not been addressed. The governance of the distribution of resources remains in the hands of a few cabals that are loyal to the federal government. This has resulted in the inability of the stakeholders to find a permanent solution to the ethnic crises and made the situation more volatile.

3.4 Political authority and resource distribution in the Niger Delta

The 1999 elections in Nigeria marked the return of democratic politics after 15 years of military dictatorship. The elections which was organised by the last military president of Nigeria (Gen. Abdusalam Abubakar) were reported to be marred by several irregularities including widespread rigging, electoral violence and violent attacks on political parties' representatives. The Niger-Delta region of Nigeria was reported to have witnessed the highest level of violence. After the formation of the political parties by the previous military government and their civilian allies, the control of the natural resources in the Niger-Delta after the elections was of paramount importance. The ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) which was believed to have been favoured by the ruling military government was accused of perpetuating most of the atrocities performed during the elections. The elections in the Niger-Delta in 1999 which was monitored by thousands of international volunteers were adjudged to be the most violent. In some parts of the region, the elections were monitored by the former American president Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalyn representing the Atlanta-based Carter Centre. In the remarks of Carter after the elections, he stated that 'serious problems were observed in the National Assembly elections of February 20, partially caused by low voter turnout and the unknown status of many candidates who had been nominated by the political parties. Some ballot boxes were stuffed, election officials bribed, and the final results incorrectly tabulated. In addition to our normal reports, I wrote personal letters to the two presidential candidates asking them to urge their supporters to refrain from improprieties during the presidential election' (Carter, 1999).

According to Okonta (2006), the appeal by Jimmy Carter fell on deaf ears and the PDP rigged the presidential and most of the gubernatorial elections in favour of the party's candidates. Rigging of elections continued unabated in subsequent elections and it became worse in the Niger-Delta. Following the widespread malpractices in the 1999 elections, the 2003 election was not any better. In Bayelsa state for instance, it was alleged that the MNCs played a significant role in the elections. Senior executives of Shell and ENI provided cash and other logistics to some political parties in order to ensure that their preferred candidates won the elections in strategic states and local government areas. Furthermore, several politicians and local actors who spoke about

the activities of the MNCs in meddling with the elections were attacked by government sponsored thugs resulting in the deaths of some opposition party members (Okonta, 2006). The involvement of the MNC is argued to be in order for them to be able to 'streamline' their CSR and reduce the percentage of their income they spend on the communities. This is easily achievable when they have people that are loyal to them in the position of authority.

The massive infiltration of arms in the Niger-Delta is partly linked to the electioneering campaigns in the region. Contesting candidates arm several youths who then become militants after the elections due to broken electoral promises. During the 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections, the Niger Delta Vigilante and many other civil societies and militant groups were enticed with promises of cash and government contracts and encouraged to 'assist' governors of the various Niger Delta states during elections as thugs (Okonta and Douglas, 2006). The 'metamorphosis' of the conflict in the region from peaceful demonstration to armed struggle is partly explained by this incidence. Since the proposal often involves a take or leave it phenomenon, youths that refuse to join political groups and 'assist' during elections are the ones that lose out after elections. However, shortly after the elections are over, most of the youths used to perpetuate violence are discarded and the promises of political posts and contracts become a mirage. This situation leads to anger and since they have a lot of weapons, they form militant groups or join existing militant groups in the area (International Crises Group, 2006).

Furthermore, the arms and ammunitions purchased for these youths for the purpose of electoral violence become impossible to retrieve and are used by the youths for criminal purposes. The same weapons purchased for the youths for the purpose of disrupting elections then become weapons for terrorising the states after elections following the dearth of alternative employment (Okonta, 2006; Nwonwu, 2010). The claims of the involvement of political office holders in arming youths for electoral purposes was supported recently by the former vice president of Nigeria Alhaji Atiku Abubakar when he told the BBC that he had warned the governors of the PDP against arming youths for electoral violence but they refused. He attributed the high volume of weapons in the Niger-Delta and some other places in the north to the actions of the governors from the ruling party whom he accused of earmarking large amount of money for buying arms

for youth groups in the country (Isenyo, 2013). This further lay credence to the desperate attempts by the political elite in the region to seek political authority. The politicians in the region since the advent of democracy believe that the control of political offices in the region is the gateway to the states' wealth that could easily be diverted for personal purposes without answering to anyone. In other to achieve this purpose, several politicians in the states maintain armed gangs constantly and clashes between these armed gangs is a common occurrence in the region (Akinbobola, 2010). In the Niger-Delta, issues such as using youths for political violence, arms proliferation and oil bunkering are related to one another and most times militants are engaged in the three acts simultaneously.

Shortly before the 1999 elections, most of the militants groups engaged each other in violent 'superiority context' in which thousands of young men were either killed or maimed. It was alleged that the battles was in preparation for the elections as there was a belief that the strongest militants groups will be used by the politicians for the purpose of electoral manipulations after huge payment has been made (Human Rights Watch 2003; International Crises Group, 2006). In the course of the violent clashes, the former governor of Rivers state (Peter Odili) was believed to have favoured the Asari Dokubo led militia (NDPVF) which were eventually armed by the governor. Shortly after the elections, the governor fell out with Asari Dokubo and then allegedly engaged the services of Tom Ateke (leader of NDV) for the re-election in 2003. Asari was enraged and placed advertisement in newspapers that Odili was involved in arming militants for the purpose of causing mayhem in the 2003 elections. Although the governor denied these allegations, his commissioner for information later admitted that Asari 'worked for them' at a point in the electioneering campaign for the previous election (International Crises Group, 2006). 16 years after the return of Nigeria to democracy, the country's democracy is still weak which is evident electoral violence and non-adherence to the rule of law (Collier and Vincent, 2014). This confirms the research by Gates et al (2001) that a weak democracy weakens the state which makes the state prone to conflict.

3.5 Arms proliferation in the Niger-Delta

Another dynamic of the Niger-Delta conflict is the increased rate of arms proliferation in the region. The rate at which young people are joining militant groups in the Niger-Delta is very alarming. Although the actual numbers of young people engaged in militancy is difficult to verify, there were over 10,000 militants in the Niger Delta as of 2009(BBC, 2009). Considering the fact that the estimates are those who have shown willingness to participate in the ongoing amnesty programme of the federal government, the number is believed to be about 100,000 youths in the region. With the surge in the number of militants came the surge in weapons of war. There has been an unprecedented increase in the amount of weapons in the region. According to Ojakorotu and Okeke-Uzodike, (2006), 'as at October 2006, the situation in the region is far from being resolved as it is easier to get a hand-made pistol than a loaf of bread and the number of hostages taken has tripled'(pg. 87). The level of arms proliferation in the region is one of the main reasons why it has remained extremely difficult to end the conflict in the Niger-Delta. The weapons used in this conflict although small in size, are lethal and easy to use without requiring substantial training. The weapons are very rugged and are usable for a very long time. Furthermore, due to the size of the weapons, they can be easily hidden and transported and sometimes they are hidden in other goods imported into the country (Ojakorotu and Okeke-Uzodike, 2006).

One main reason why the number of weapons in the region has increased is due to the increase in militancy activities. The militants group can easily hold MNCs to ransom and demand for increased resources for their communities or ethnic groups. Although the 2009 amnesty greatly reduced the number of militants bearing weapons in the region, there are still several militant groups causing mayhem in the region. One major way by which these weapons are transported is through the several porous borders and water ways in the region. Nigeria's borders are very porous and unsecured and this makes it easy for militants to sneak in weapons into the country without the awareness of the relevant authorities. Also, during attacks between militants and the task forces, weapons of officers killed are taken away and these weapons are added to the arsenal of the militants. According to Spleeters (2012) 'there's one big problem with small arms: They don't come with an expiration date, these reliable killing machines pass from dead soldiers to living insurgents, and from a country's armoury to a militia's safe house

thousands of miles away' An example of this incidence was the killing of 12 police officers on the 6th of April 2013 by men suspected to be members of the Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in Bayelsa state after laying ambush for the policemen (Reuters, 2013). The rifles of the killed policemen were never recovered and this would further add to the weapons of the militants involved.

It is important to state that the federal government of Nigeria has contributed to the militarisation of the Niger-Delta through the massive armed security built up in the region since the late 1990s. In order to secure oil production at all cost, the government decided to match 'weapons for weapons' and use excessive force on the rampaging militants rather than find means of reducing militancy and arms proliferation in the region. For instance since the late 1990s, the joint task force has increased to over 4,000 consisting of soldiers, policemen, navy and other members of the air forces. Furthermore, the government has acquired modern gunboats, military helicopters, and automatic weapons and have also trained hundreds of Special Forces to engage with the rampaging militants (Ogwude et al. 2004; Ikelegbe, 2005). This action of the government only resulted in the militants also acquiring similar weapons so as to match those of the military. Also, due to the fact that most of the militants were born in the riverine areas and are good swimmers, they are able to stay under water for relatively long time and swim long distance in the creeks a situation that gives them an advantage during battles with the military.

Apart from opposition parties employing several militant groups to assist them in electoral malpractices, the federal government of Nigeria has been accused of indirectly encouraging violence in the region. According to the international crises group 2006 report, the Nigerian government in a bid to stop violence and the destruction of oil facilities in the region rewards militants group with juicy contracts based on how violent the groups are and the level of threat such groups pose. The reports states further that any group in the Niger-Delta that abides by the rules and carries out non-violent protests are ignored and this results in increased violence since the only language the government recognises is violence. For instance, after the 2003 elections, a number of key militant leaders from the Ijaw and Itsekiri ethnic groups were 'bribed' with oil servicing contracts and some were even appointed into key positions in the local and state governments. Furthermore, in 2006, the former president (Olusegun

Obasanjo) gave members of the notorious Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC- an organisation that led the Ijaw militants in coordinated attacks on the Itsekiris in 1997, 1999 and 2003) an oil block drilling license (International Crises Group, 2006). This act of the government, although the motive might be to dissuade the rampaging militants from further violence, may at the same time act as incentive for other groups to engage in similar violence with the hope of being awarded similar rewards.

This high volume of arms and ammunitions provides an incentive for violence and civil disobedience and also makes it difficult to find lasting peace in the region. Furthermore, due to the fact that previous peace accords and promises by the federal government have failed, the militants are believed to have held back some of their weapons while accepting amnesty in 2009 in case the amnesty fails again. Also, a considerable number of youths especially those in large scale oil bunkering did not accept the amnesty given by the government, hence, they are still armed with several dangerous weapons. All these tie to the clamour for the resources in the region. The militants argue that despite the huge resources that accrue to the country through the region, the region remains poor and underdeveloped. On the other hand, the government argues that it has provided enough resources to develop the region and that the militants should hold their leaders responsible if the region remains underdeveloped. Darlington (2014) argues that many of the youths have actually looked inward and realised that the governance of the distribution of the resources is a major problem. However, in order to address the problem, the youths have engaged in several vicious attacks against their leaders leading to the death of many elders in the region. This approach has been counterproductive as it has led to increased militarisation of the region by the government in order to avert further breakdown of law and other.

3.6 The menace of oil theft (bunkering)

Economic sabotage and oil stealing commonly referred to as bunkering has become a major issue in the Niger-Delta and has also added impetus to the conflict in some ways. Oil bunkering is the process of siphoning and transporting stolen oil either crude or refined to be sold in illegal black markets. Although a large proportion of the stolen oil is sold in West Africa, in recent times due to the large quantity of oil that is stolen on daily

basis, the oil has been transported to other parts of the world as far as Europe, Asia and America (Alohan, 2013). According to Ibiba and Etekpe (2013), it is estimated that between $7-$14 billion is lost to oil bunkering annually in Nigeria, a figure that represents about 20% of the country's total oil production.   Apart from the huge losses resulting from oil theft, the menace has led to further environmental degradation in the region (Anderson, 2005). Most of the pipelines in the region are located on the surface and this makes the siphoning of the oil illegally (also known as tapping) easy for the people involved. The argument by most of the young men involved in this nefarious activity is that since the government cannot guarantee equitable wealth distribution, they will take the resources by any possible means.

One of the nemeses of arming youth militias for political purposes is the increase in oil bunkering. During the periods between subsequent elections, armed youth groups engage in nefarious activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom and oil bunkering. Over the years, oil bunkering has moved from the thefts of oil in small canoes as was the case in the 1980s to large organised cartels comparable to the drug gangs in South America and diamond cartels in Sierra Leone. Security chiefs in Nigeria together with the MNCs operating in the region declared that there are influential individuals both Nigerians and foreigners involved in illegal oil bunkering (Human Rights Watch, 2003; International Crises Group, 2006). This claim was further supported by the spokesman for MEND (one of the militant groups in the region) Gbomo Jomo who stated that the government and some MNCs officials are aware of the illegal activities and some of them are even involved. He explained that while diamonds and precious stones stolen in other African countries are small in size and easily hidden in bags, the oil stolen from the region are mostly transported in slow moving barges and ships in the full presence of the police and military task forces employed by the government to prevent these activities. He insisted that this implies that top government officers are involved in this nefarious act as they are determined to make as much money as possible at all cost not minding the consequences of their actions not only on the oil producing communities but also on the country at large (International Crises Group, 2006). For instance the joint task force recently arrested and detained 14 staff of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) for their 'active' involvement in oil bunkering in the region (Channels TV, 2013). In early 2006, a

researcher from the International Crises Group who visited the area counted over 20 small ships that are said to be involved in oil bunkering and was even approached by some people to ask if he had come to purchase some of the stolen oil.

The claim that several local and international actors are involved in oil bunkering was substantiated in 2005 when 95 illegal oil bunkering vessels were seized by the Nigeria military with the arrest of several senior and mid-ranking naval officers (Council on Foreign Relations, 2006). It was estimated that between 70,000 -300,000 barrels of crude oil were stolen per day at a time when oil prices were in the region of $60 a barrel. This implies an average daily loss of between $4.2m - $18m in 2005. In 2012, the managing director of SPDF confirmed that Nigeria loses 180,000 barrels daily which is $5billion dollars a year to oil thieves (Agbu, 2012). The volume of oil stolen however doubled in the first quarter of 2013 as the government claimed that 300,000 barrels of crude oil are being stolen daily costing the country a whopping $1billion a month and threatening the country's budget for the year (Aminu, 2013). The U.S navy indicated their assistance and proposed that the Nigerian government could put in place surveillance equipment and training of military personnel to detect oil theft. The U.S also offered assistance on how to track oil theft vessels, intercept the vessels and maintain adequate security in the region for a cost of about $100million(Council on Foreign Relations, 2006). However, the government of Nigeria simply ignored the offer and this further leaves a suspicion that the government is not interested in putting an end to the menace as it is alleged that senior members of the government are also beneficiaries of the illegal acts.

Apart from the fact that the federal government of Nigeria has not been able to put an end to the problem of oil bunkering, the individual states, local governments and even the MNCs have also been accused of not doing enough to stop the theft. The former managing director of SPDC Chris Finlayson, told journalists in 2003 that since the 1990s, the company had tolerated small scale theft of crude oil by impoverished locals because the company felt the scale of theft was too small to affect the company and also 'to keep the locals happy'. Also, the states and local governments have allegedly ignored the problem thinking that oil theft by the youths will reduce the pressure put on them to provide infrastructural development and economic support to the people. They also feel

that youths' participation in bunkering ensures peace in the region because once the youths are making money, they don't cause troubles. According to one of the state government's officer interviewed by the International Crises Group, he stated that in 2005 when the federal government clamped down on illegal oil bunkering, there was unease in the state but 'when the boys are able to do bunkering, they are quiet' (International Crises Group, 2006).

The inability/unwillingness of the government to curb the menace has been seen as an advantage and several militant groups have capitalised on this. Most groups have now seen oil bunkering as a fast way of making money without being reprimanded. This in turn led to several violent clashes between militant groups in the region over oil bunkering and oil bunkering routes. For example between 2001 and 2004, several militants groups engaged in battles over access to oil bunkering routes. These battles resulted in the death of hundreds of people and destruction of properties worth billions of naira. Strategic towns like Buguma, Bukuma and Tombia were badly damaged and the battles rapidly spread to other locations in the region. Some residents have alleged that the fighting centred on control of areas noted for their oil theft. Both camps were accused of being engaged in oil bunkering and in some cases alleged to be working for top government and military workers who have been fingered to be the brains behind these activities (International Crises Group, 2006; Gilbert, 2009). Most militant leaders interviewed by the International Crises Group about the issue of oil bunkering admitted that they have been involved in it at one point or the other and some boasted that they are still involved in it. For instance when Asari Dokubo was interviewed, he claimed to have been involved in oil bunkering and insisted that it was an avenue for the people to rightly possess what belongs to them that has been stolen by the Nigerian government and the MNCs. He argued that since the government has failed in its distribution of resources to the aggrieved communities, they are the ones filling the void. He further stated that his organisation has a refinery that they use to refine crude oil for the benefits of communities. Although some of the members of the communities interviewed by the International Crises Group were aware of the large scale of illegal oil bunkering in the region and are indifferent about it, others were against it because of the risks involved and the increased clashes among militant groups that has left many people dead (International Crises Group, 2006).

Although the people involved in oil bunkering sometimes make enormous gains, the process itself comes with huge risks. In most cases it leads to leakages and sometimes results in fire outbreaks often with huge casualties. In October 1998, about 1,200 people were killed and hundreds more injured during oil bunkering activities. Also, in December 2006, about 200 people were killed in Lagos in a pipeline explosion when people were trying to steal refined petroleum products from surface pipelines (International Crises Group, 2006; Akinbobola, 2010). Despite the high level of bunkering together with the associated risks, more youths who previously embraced the amnesty are now getting involved and the volume of thefts increases daily as a result of unemployment and also because of the high remunerations it provides. The implication of this is that militants are acquiring more weapons to fight security forces in the region. Although the federal government in 2009 as part of the amnesty gave out contracts worth billions of naira to the ex-militant leaders to secure pipelines, it is obvious nothing is being done as the bunkering continues. Details of the pipeline contracts revealed that ex-warlords were awarded pipeline contracts based on how notorious they were. For instance Government Tompolo Ekpumopolo (an ex militant leader of Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta- MEND) was awarded a contract to the tune of N3.6bn; Asari Dokubo, 1.44bn; Ateke Tom, N560m and Ebikabowei Boyloaf Victor Ben (MEND), N560m. Furthermore in July 2012, Tompolo was awarded a contract to supply 20 patrol boats to the Nigerian navy. Despite this huge amount being paid, the volume of oil stolen is on the increase (Fabiyi, 2012). Recently, the government started making consultations to set up a pipeline protection commission, an act the former president (Olusegun Obasanjo) described as another avenue to steal public funds by the present government (Adedapo, A, 2013). Despite the huge amount of money the government has spent on 'pipeline protection contracts' oil bunkering has continued unabated and the fighting between opposing militants groups as well as attacks against law enforcement agents deployed to stop the menace have further led to increased arms proliferation which in turn increases conflict in the region. This has added a new dynamic to the conflict in the region.

Figure 3.1: Oil Bunkering site in Delta state, Nigeria (Source National Post, April 5 2013)

3.7 Impact of the conflict on children and women

One of the reasons responsible for the increased militancy in the Niger-Delta is the way in which women and children are treated in the crises. In the region, women and children are treated like combatants by the armed forces who in most cases do not obey the rules of engagement. According to Okafor and Oddih (2010), children that grow up in the Niger-Delta especially since the mid 1990s are already accustomed to violence. This in their view is because the only noise the children hear daily is the noise of gunshots and bombs of the militants and the federal troops. The children grow up with fear which later results in hatred and anger against the country and the MNCs operating in the region. In the words of Okafor and Oddih, the Niger-Delta 'child cannot understand why his parents once told him that Nigeria was his fatherland and why his teachers force him to stand up while the national anthem is recited'(pg 119). This is because of the ways they and their parents are being treated. When the military forces are deployed to 'flush' out militants, they kill and maim everybody that come their way including women and children. This is one of the ways by which the children are 'hardened', developing hatred towards the government and MNCs. It also makes it easy

for the teenagers to make decisions about joining militant groups because they can see how their parents are treated when they demand for equitable allocation of resources.

As stated in previous chapters, the advent of democracy did not improve matters but made the conflict worse. Apart from the attack on the militant groups that resulted in the death of thousands of young men in the region, children and women were not left out in the brutal attacks by members of the task forces set up by the government to maintain peace in the region. In 1999 during the attack on the Odi community of the Niger-Delta, hundreds of women and children were killed, a situation described by the indigenes of the communities as deliberate ethnic cleansing by the federal government. A similar attack occurred in 2009 when some other communities in the Niger-Delta were attacked by members of the armed forces. Though not comparable to the magnitude of the Odi massacre, hundreds of women and children were again killed in cold blood. According to Women of Africa (2009), on the 27th of May 2009, nine villages in the region were destroyed by the government troops in the name of flushing out militants. The task force members entered the villages and opened fire on the people, killing everybody they sighted including women and children. The soldiers boasted that the people that escaped were chased into the forests where they believe snakes and other dangerous animals will 'feast' on them. The most appalling thing was that little children unable to run went to meet the soldiers for protection but they injected them with deadly chemicals instead under the guise of preventing them from growing up to becoming militants in future, many children died in the process (Women of Africa, 2009).

In addition to this, the children from the region grow up in poverty although they live in the midst of plenty. Their level of educational attainment is very poor and perhaps one of the lowest in the country. These factors make the children from the region susceptible to violence right from a tender age. Most of them have experienced the death of loved ones in the hands of the state that is supposed to protect them, hence become wild in the most negative ways. The children feel they are being coerced into the 'entity' called Nigeria, a country that does not favour them or their people but is only interested in the oil available in their region (Nwuba, 2008). They do not think twice when the opportunity arises to bear arms against their nation or the MNCs which they

think are the root causes of the problems in the region. Furthermore, joining militant groups guarantee income to the children in a region plagued by high unemployment, diminishing sources of livelihood and lack of any form of welfare package for the indigenes.

The two main reasons why children in the Niger-Delta join militant groups are anger and poverty. The children are angry that the natural resource in their region which is supposed to be a source of wealth has turned to a source of sorrow, frustration and sometimes death. Also, the exploitation of these resources has affected their human security exposing them to decreasing access to sources of livelihood. Ann-Kio Briggs, a former female spokesperson for the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force, one of the militant groups in Port Harcourt explained that children in the region now refer to working with militants during holidays as 'summer internships' (IRIN news, 2008). According to the IRIN report, children as young as 14years old work for militant groups earning up to $340 a month which is a lot of money by the standards in the region. As one of the children interviewed by IRIN put it, "I finished secondary school but there was no job, not even a chance of an opportunity, if you ask me to carry arms, I will in order to survive" (IRIN interview in Niger Delta, February 2008). This story is similar for most of the youths in the region and Okafor and Oddih (2010) conclude that the situation is likely to get worse when these children become adults as the memories of the creeks would continue to linger on in the mind of the youths. In a similar vein, rape has become one of the weapons of oppression by the task force operatives in the region. During invasions such as the Odi invasion of 1999, several women are raped by military forces. These women are mothers, wives, sisters and girlfriends of young men who sometimes end up as militants to take revenge on the police and military personnel when the chance arises (Ojakorotu and Gilbert, 2010). These attacks on innocent children and women often results in retaliatory attacks on the military, MNCs and everyone believed to be associated with the conflict and against the communities.

Chapter Conclusion

In order to find a lasting solution to the conflict in the Niger-Delta, it is important to get to the root of the conflict. The analysis of the dynamics of any particular conflict will go a long way in exploring every minute detail of the conflict and also assist in finding a

lasting and sustainable solution to the conflict. This chapter has identified the main dynamics of the conflict and this makes it easier to understand the scope and inherent characteristics of the conflict. It is however important to state that in any conflict situation, the dynamics may change at anytime depending on several issues involved in the conflict. These dynamics explored in this chapter have been relatively constant for a long period of time and in most cases have been ignored as far as policies relating to this conflict are concerned. Furthermore, for any conflict resolution approach to yield any meaningful dividend in the Niger-Delta, the conflict must be examined in the light of all these dynamics and adequate consideration must be paid to them in a way that will be acceptable to the three main actors involved in the conflict.

One key issue that emerged from this chapter is the fact that it is not actually the distribution of resources that is the problem in the region; it is the governance behind the distribution of the resources. It is apparent that a lot of resources are allocated to the region when compared to the other states in the country. The resource formula ensures that states in the Niger Delta benefit more in terms of allocated revenue from the federal government as they collect 13% more than the other states. However, despite these allocations there is no justifiable level of development. The pattern of resource distribution in the region feeds into the dynamics of the conflict witnessed in the region. For instance, agitations about equitable distribution of resources have resulted in ethnic and communal clashes which are one of the key dynamics of the conflict. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in resource distribution coupled with the poor governance of the distribution of resources has encouraged dirty political antics. The political elites see public positions as a means to enrich themselves at the expense of the people. This then results in a situation whereby political aspirants engage in arming the youths in order to attain or retain political positions.

In a similar vein, the use of ingenious methods of attaining or retaining political positions in the region has resulted in huge arms proliferations in the region. The weapons purchased by the political elites for the youths in order to take unfair advantages over their opponents are never recovered after the elections. These weapons then become instruments used by the youths to terrorise the states. Furthermore, these weapons are used to carry out other nefarious activities such as oil bunkering, kidnapping and robberies further adding to the dynamics of the conflict. The

second part of this thesis including the field work will focus more on issues relating to the governance of the distribution of resources and how addressing this could be a giant step in proposing solutions to the Niger Delta conflict.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

Introduction

Methodology is an important aspect of a research project and the type of method used could impact on the outcome of the project. According to Sekaran, research is a 'systematic and organised effort to investigate a specific problem that needs a solution' (Sekaran, 2007:4) and a good research entails the systematic collection and interpretation of data with a clear purpose in mind (Saunders, et al 2007). In a bid to achieve the aims and objectives of this research, this chapter will present the methods to be used in gathering data and analysing the data. The purpose of the field trip and the methodology employed for this study is to unravel the roles played by the different actors in the outbreak of conflict and explore human security situation in the Niger Delta.

This chapter explains the research design used for this study followed by the analysis of the data collected. Ethical issues guiding the research are also examined to substantiate the fact that this research project was carried out with high level of care and concern for all the respondents that participated in the study. The research aims to focus as much as possible on the view of the participants on the issues being studied. The nature of this research makes the qualitative method-more specifically ethnography suitable as data collection methods such as in-depth interviews, observation, group interviews and document analysis will shed more light not only on the social perspective of the conflict but also on the historical part. Since ethnography focuses on the way in which people live and work, this approach will make it easier to understand the historical and cultural settings of the region.

4.1 Data Collection methods

For the purpose of this research, both primary and secondary data were collected for analysis. The primary data were in form of ethnography which includes in-depth interviews, group interview and observation. On the other hand, the secondary data were documents obtained from the respondents, NGOs, government agencies and oil multinationals. Many of the secondary data which includes information about the

structures and composition of the community development committees, annual general meetings and Memorandum of Understanding have not been digitised and are not available on the internet. This further adds value to the research as I had access to several documents that have not been analysed before.

The choice of in-depth interviews relates to the nature of the research as the method has proved to be the most suitable in directly seeking the opinions and experiences of all the actors involved in the conflict. Due to the nature of subjectivity and sensitivity of the research, the questionnaire method is not appropriate for this research. Furthermore, issues such as the level of literacy of the respondents, the inability of the researcher to explain ambiguous questions as well as the inability of the researcher to observe the body language or verbal tones of the respondent could all affect the response to the questions if a questionnaire is used (Gray, 2009). The nature of the research means that minute details and long conversation with examples of scenarios given by respondents could go a long way in finding answers to some important issues. An example of this was when I initially contacted one of the staff of the MNCs interviewed during my field trip. The respondent first declined an in-depth interview and offered to fill out a questionnaire instead. I developed a questionnaire and sent it to him via email which he filled and returned to me. The responses were short and moderate revealing very few information. However, the respondent called me later and said he finds the research interesting and would like to 'shed more light' on some of the issues addressed in the research. He eventually agreed to have an in-depth interview and the depth of information that came from the interview was very detailed when compared to the questionnaire that he filled out earlier.

According to Gray, 'well conducted interview is a powerful tool for eliciting rich data on people's views, attitudes and the meanings that underpin their lives and behaviours' (Gray, 2009: 370). Furthermore, interviews can provide the researcher with historical information and also allow the researcher to control the line of questioning thereby guiding the respondents as they give answers to the questions (Creswell, 2009). Historical information is really important for this research as it gives insight into the transformation of the conflict in the region from peaceful demonstration to violent conflict. Semi- structured interviews were used for data collection and this gave the respondents the opportunity to interact with me and also ask questions about the

research process. The use of semi-structured interview makes it possible for the researcher to ask for clarification and this often leads to more lines of enquiries as well as a more robust data (Gray, 2009).

The semi-structured interviews used for this research were managed with an interview guide. It also gives flexibility to the interview as it allows the interviewees to respond to the questions on their own terms. It is important to state that although most of the interviews were conducted in English, some of them were conducted in 'pidgin English' which is a common language in the region. Fortunately for me I speak Pidgin English fluently and this made it easy for me to relate with the respondents. Questions like 'what is the cause of the problem?' was asked in pidgin English by saying 'wetin dey cause the wahala?'. This further gives the respondents the chance to relate properly as they did not feel awkward if they are unable to speak the normal English.

The second method of primary data collection used was the focus group interview. The purpose of this method was to see the ways the members of the group discuss some of the themes related to the research as a group rather than as individuals (Bryman, 2012). Although the focus group was not part of the research design initially, the members of a particular community asked for it and the request was granted. The composition of the group which was two elders and two youth representatives offered more light into how the elders and the youths see the conflicts in the region. It opened up different perspectives which were addressed in-depth. Although a disadvantage of the system is that it limited the number of themes that the session was able to address, the themes addressed were however discussed in-depth and I was able to moderate the session effectively. Furthermore, some facts were laid bare during the focus group interview with several examples cited by all the respondents that participated in the session. The main problem with focus group interview is that it is very difficult to arrange because of the schedule of the respondents.

4.2 Research Population

Gray defines research population as 'the total number of possible units or elements that are included in the study' (Gray, 2009:148). It refers to the total number of cases that constitutes the whole and from which the sample is taken. The populations could either be humans, organisations or inanimate things (Saunders et al., 2007). The elements that

constitute this study include the stakeholders of the MNCs, the Nigerian government, the communities of the Niger Delta as well as both local and international NGOs. These stakeholders constitute the research population because of their access to critical information which are important to answer the research questions posed by this study (Hair et al., 2007). Although most of the stakeholders share the same geographical location and interact with each other directly or indirectly (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010), it is important to state that some of them are located hundreds of miles away from the region. For instance, despite the fact that all the MNCs operate wholly in the Niger Delta region, some of them have their headquarters in other big cities like Lagos and Abuja far from their areas of operations.

In relation to the oil producing communities, the research population for this research include all the nine oil producing states in the Niger Delta. These states are Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. For the MNCs, the population includes all the 59 companies operating in the upstream and downstream sectors of the industry at different levels such as joint venture, alternate funding, production sharing, services, independent/sole risk and marginal levels. The population for the government agencies include all the federal government agencies and development commissions, all the state government agencies and organisations associated with the oil industry as well all the regional and local government development commissions. The population from which the other stakeholders were drawn are the NGOs, civil societies and professional bodies that are considered as stakeholders in the oil industry.

4.2.1 Research sample

Samples play an important role in the way we obtain and process information. Samples can be used to 'stand in' for a larger population and offers a practical solution to the problem of studying an entire population. It is also the process of using a few to represent the many (Ruane, 2005:105). For this study, the sample includes stakeholders representing all the actors in the conflict as explored in the previous chapters. For the MNCs, three companies (Shell, Chevron and Amni) were selected as the sampling frame. The sampling frame is defined as a list of all the elements in the population (Gray, 2009). The choice of these companies as the sampling frame is based on two main

factors. First, Shell and Chevron are the first and third highest producer of oil and gas in the region respectively and they both operate under the joint venture with NNPC while Amni is one of the independent oil producers in Nigeria (NNPC, 2014). Second, the three companies all operate in the states where this research was carried out (Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers). In order to reduce bias and to make sure that the information collected from the respondents from the MNCs are genuine, I included Halliburton (an oil service company that works for almost all the oil companies) in the sampling frame. This is because the company staffs are aware of the activities of the other oil companies because they work for most of them.

According to Saunders et al (2007), there are two techniques of sampling that can be used for research purposes; these are the probability or representative sampling and the non-probability or judgemental sampling. The probability sampling technique is one where the possibility of selecting any element from the entire population is known while for the non-probability sampling, the possibility of selecting an element from the whole population is unknown (Ruane, 2005). The type of sampling used for any type of research is based on the purpose of the research, availability of resources, and time frame for data collection as well as the level of access to respondents. For the purpose of this research, a combination of both probability and non-probability techniques were used. This is to reduce bias and also to increase the quality of data generated. In order to achieve this, the two sampling methods that were used are the snowball (non-probability) and stratified random methods (probability).

The snowball method is basically built around referrals (O'Leary, 2005) and is commonly used when it is difficult to identify the members of a particular population (Saunders et al, 2007). The snowball method is effective because the topic under this study is a very emotional one and there are large numbers of people in the population that have suffered some form of loses during the conflict. Furthermore, there is still a level of insecurity in the region and it is difficult to approach anybody randomly to ask questions as they might be suspicious of the researcher. To use the snowball method, the first step is to identify a contact (Saunders et al, 2007). Many contacts were identified from each group of stakeholders representing the actors under this study. For the indigenes, a NGO called Environmental Rights Action (ERA) was used as the main contact. This NGO works with many of the other NGOs, community organisations and

civil society organisations and they were influential in identifying a list of potential respondents through their database. Based on this database, stratified random sampling was carried out in order to identify people to be interviewed. The snowball method was also used to identify respondents from the other groups identified. Lee (1993) identified one major problem associated with the snowball method as the possibility of the respondents nominating people similar to themselves leading to bias in the data; this is one of the reasons why the method was combined with stratified random sampling which helped to reduce the bias.

The stratified sampling method is a probability sampling method that involves dividing the population into various sub-groups and then taking random samples from each group (O'Leary, 2005). The database of communities and residents in the states included for this research has been divided into strata by ERA based on the geographical location of the communities. This made it easy to select respondents randomly based on the division. Saunders et al (2007) explains that such division of the population into strata means that the samples signify a better representation of all the elements in the population. Although this process could only be used for this group of stakeholders, the level of bias for the entire data collected is reduced drastically as this group of respondents form almost half of the entire data collected. One hindrance to using the stratified sampling method is that researchers must have a lot of information about the research population (Ruane, 2005), this was however not an issue because of the database of ERA used which had already been stratified.

The data were collected in line with the categories of respondents identified earlier. For the government agencies, the sampling frame consists of government agencies representing the two tiers of government (federal and state) because there are no government agencies working in the oil sector at the local government levels. The agencies where the samples were taken from were Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC- federal), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC- federal), Delta state oil producing development commission (DESOPADEC- state), Bayelsa state ministry of Energy resources (state) and Bayelsa state ministry of oil and gas (state). For the indigenes of the Niger Delta, 12 local government areas were selected as the research frame out of a total of 56 local government areas representing these three states. Furthermore, 3 NGOs and 2 civil society organisations were selected as part of

the sampling frame for this study. The respondents were taken from the sampling frame above as these frames represent the region to a large extent. These samples are representative of the whole region because the respondents cut across all the stakeholders in the region as well as all the actors in the conflict and it is considered a representative sample because information from these groups can be generalized (Ruane, 2005).

For the purpose of this research, a total of 52 in-depth interviews, 1 group interview (4 respondents) and 2 online interviews were carried out with 58 respondents. As this research focus on the roles played by different actors in the conflict and human security in the region, the samples were taken from all the stakeholders in the region. In relation to the stakeholders in the MNCs, 8 members of staff of the companies and 3 members of staff from the oil service company were interviewed. Furthermore, 8 government officials representing both the federal and state government organisations were interviewed. For the indigenes of the local communities, 27 respondents from 18 communities were interviewed in the 12 local government areas that form the sampling frame and this cut across the three states selected for this research. For the NGOs and civil societies, 10 respondents were interviewed from different NGOs, civil society organisations, human rights agencies and media organisations. According to Ruane (2005), for an heterogeneous population like the Niger Delta, the more element included in the sample, the more representative of the diversity of the population.

Figure 4.1: Map of Bayelsa State showing data collection areas.
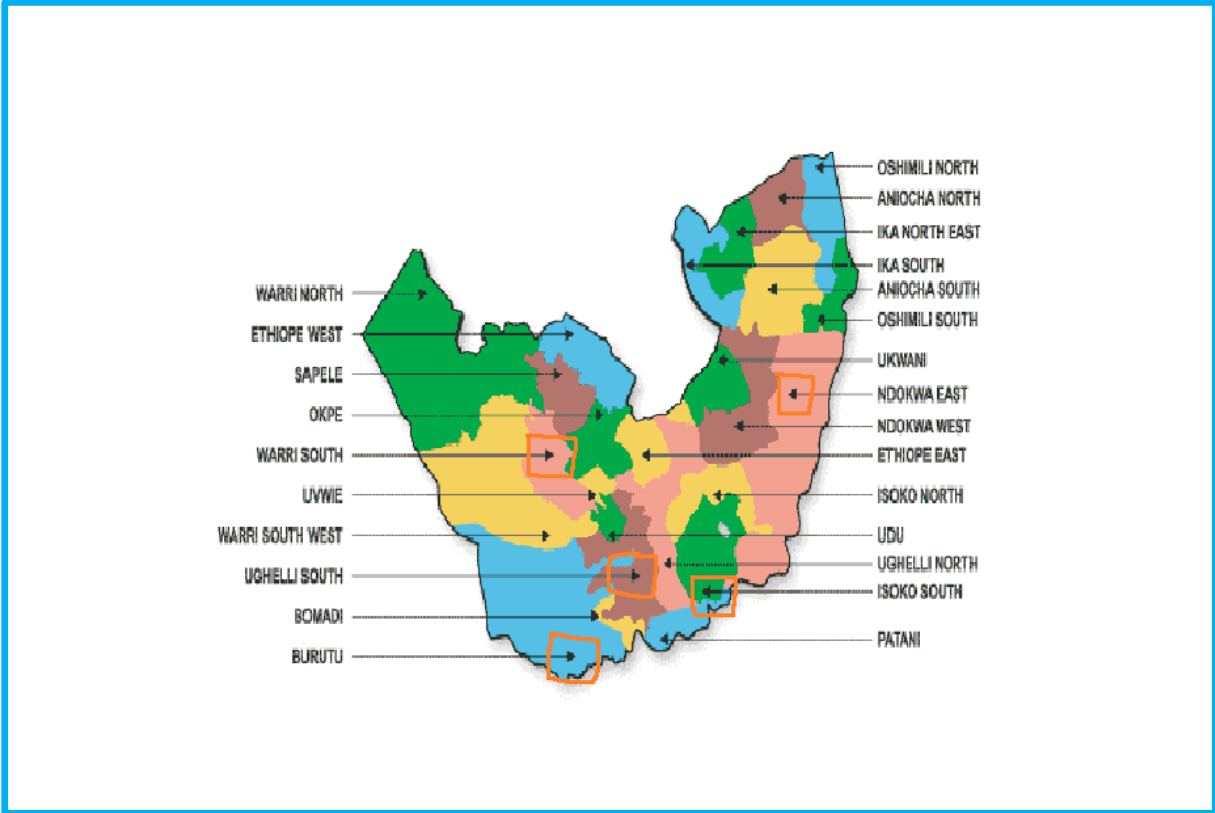
Figure 4.2: Map of Delta State showing data collection areas.

Figure 4.3: Map of Rivers State showing data collection areas.

4.3 Challenges of getting access to respondents in the region

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is a difficult terrain especially with regards to sharing information. Through discussions with researchers in the region as well as those who have carried out research previously in the region, I understand that it is difficult to get access to information for three reasons: first, there is an element of trust as the people would not like to discuss issues with a stranger or if they are not sure what the information is needed for. Second, the region is highly militarised and very volatile, hence, the residents are very reluctant to grant interviews or fill questionnaires as they fear it might be used against them in future. Third, for the members of staff of the MNCs, there are strict codes of conducts regarding disclosing information to third

parties especially for research or journalistic purposes. These all make it very difficult to schedule interviews or carry out research in the region.

However, bearing in mind these challenges, I made several preparations before and during the field trip to make sure I get access to the right set of people in the right organisations or communities. Before embarking on the field trip, I tried to contact some key people who could help me get access to the three main categories of people I intended to interview (the representatives of local communities, staff of MNCs and government officials). I used a network of friends and families to identify key people in these categories and also used the same networks to gain access to the respondents. For instance, when I was in Bayelsa, I stayed with a family friend who is a senior government official in the state and who has close links with the governor and this made it easier for me to get access to several government officials. Furthermore, I registered as a visiting researcher with Environmental Rights Action (ERA) in Bayelsa and the organisation assisted me in identifying and locating key gatekeepers in most of the communities I visited in the Niger Delta. I was also given a research assistant (who I paid) and an intern who both assisted in locating key respondents in the communities.

The church also played a significant role in identifying respondents especially in government agencies and MNCs. Through my Pastor here in the UK, I was able to link up with some churches in the Niger Delta and since the people in the region are predominantly Christians, I was able to get access to some of the church members who work either for the government or the MNCs. After the initial contacts had been established, I then used the snowball technique by asking each respondent to refer me to other people I could interview in their organisations. This proved very effective as I was able to get many referrals outside of the church circles and then choose which ones to interview as I was keen to avoid a situation whereby I would interview people with the same perspectives or mind-set on the issues being researched. It is worth mentioning that not all the people I contacted were interested in granting an interview. Some of them simply declined while some argued that they had done similar interviews in the past so they are not interested. Also, some scheduled interviews were cancelled at the last hour or some simply didn't turn up at the scheduled time of the interview. However, I was able to overcome these challenges because I had already scheduled

alternative interviews and in cases where it was an organisation, I simply asked if there were other people I could interview and there was some success this way.

A good example of the importance of networking while conducting interviews was an experience I had in Delta state. The most important government organization in the Niger Delta is the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). I previously sent an email to the organisation to explain my research and then asked for an interview but the email was not responded to. When I got to Warri (Delta State), I met a junior staff of NDDC who gave me the contact details of the Project Director, who is one of the most influential people in NDDC. I called the director but he told me about his 'extremely busy schedule' and apologised that he will not be able to grant the interview. When another senior government official previously interviewed called me an hour later, he asked me about my progress and I explained to him that I was unable to secure an interview with NDDC officials. He then asked for the name of the director and promised to try and find someone that could convince him to grant the interview. The following morning, the NDDC director sent a text to me and asked if I could come that afternoon for the interview, the previous government official later told me that the director is a nephew of one of his colleagues and immediately he got a call from someone he trusted, he decided to grant the interview. The interview happened to be one of the most important interviews I carried out in the region as the director explained several flaws in the modelling of the government organisations designed to alleviate poverty and prevent conflict in the region.

Furthermore, one other issue was that some interviews were cancelled because the respondents asked for money before granting an interview. I declined any form of payment for two reasons: first, paying respondents can compromise the relationship between myself and the respondents, second, the respondents could decide to lie in order to please me and this could skew the responses gathered (Mitchel, 2013). In addition to these, researchers from ERA warned against such practice and argued that it could become a norm in the communities whereby the people will demand for monetary compensation in future not just for interviews but for any form of interactions.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

According to King and Horrocks (2010), reliability refers to the accuracy of the variables being measured while validity is concerned with the type of measurement used to explore a variable and the extent to which the variable is accurately measured. Although issues of validity and reliability are more relevant to quantitative research where the replication of experiments is of paramount importance, some aspects of these criteria can be transferred to qualitative research in order to increase its quality (Bryman, 2012). Validity is defined as 'the degree to which data in a research study are accurate and credible' (Gray, 2009:582). Gray argues further that to endure validity in a research, the research instrument must measure what it was designed to measure. This means that since the main research instrument used for this study is in-depth interview, the questions for the interview must be structured in such a way that they answer the questions relating to study effectively.

One of the main differences between qualitative and quantitative study is that for qualitative research, there is difficulty in ascertaining the quality of the data using specific measurement framework (Ruane, 2005 and Gray, 2009). However, King and Horrocks (2010) argue that for any qualitative research to be able to engage outside academia especially for policy making, there is need for some form of measurements for validity and reliability. Some of the common measurements of validity are internal validity, external validity, criterion validity, content validity, construct validity, predictive validity and statistical validity (Gray, 2009). On the other hand, measures of reliability include reliability check, multiple forms, split half technique, intra and inter judge reliability (Ruane, 2005; Gray, 2009). However, most of these techniques are only suitable for quantitative studies although they are sometimes used in qualitative research. King and Horrocks (2010) explored some techniques of quality measurement which are predominantly suitable for qualitative studies and can be used to measure validity and reliability of data used for a research study. These techniques are: the use of independent coders and expert panels, feedback from respondents, triangulation and provision of concrete description and audit trials.

The use of independent coders is a technique that is used by researchers not only to ensure reliability but also to assist the researcher in forming a standard thematic

structure for the thesis. King and Horrocks (2010) explain that researchers can use two systems in achieving this aim. The first system is called 'code defining' whereby different researchers code the same interviews at the same time to see if they both come up with the same code. The second system is called code-confirming whereby researcher first codes an interview then another researcher looks at the code to see if they conform to the interview. However, this technique cannot be used in this case because this is an individual research involving just myself and employing another researcher for this process will be too expensive and also cannot be achieved within the period of this study.

The second technique (feedback from respondents) involves a situation whereby the researcher carries out a research and takes the analysis of the research back to the respondents for them to see the outcome and also to access the interpretation of the researcher and confirm if their thoughts have actually been expressed. This technique cannot also be used in this research because of the time frame of this study and the cost of going back to Nigeria to show the respondents the analysis of the research considering the fact that the analysis of the research was done in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Ashworth (2003) faults this technique on two grounds: the first critique is whether the researcher will be able to locate all the respondents one by one to show them the analysis and if the researcher selects some of the respondents, on what basis will the selection be done. Second, Ashworth argues that many of the respondents can actually deny the results of the analysis as not being representative of their thoughts simply because they do not like the outcome.

The third technique is triangulation. This is a process of employing multiple sources of data in the study of some social phenomena (Bryman, 2012). There are four different types of triangulation, these are; data, methodological, investigator and theory triangulation (King and Horrocks, 2010). The first two are particularly relevant to this study. Data triangulation involves using a variety of data for a single study. For instance, in exploring the issues of conflict and human security in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, this study included all the actors represented in the conflict and stakeholders from all the actors were interviewed as part of this research. This means that information from each actor can be analysed and compared to other actors and this is a main source of reliability for this research. Furthermore, a combination of different

ethnographic methods such as indepth interviews, group interview, observation and document analysis were used for data collection for this research. This is the idea behind methodological triangulation and this increases the validity of this study.

The final technique called 'thick description and audit trials' King and Horrocks (2010:164) involves the qualitative researcher providing detailed description of the phenomena being studied and the context under which they are studied. Although the authors argue that thick description does not guarantee quality on its own, its use with other techniques can be an important measure of validity and reliability. This study also follows this technique because the phenomena under investigation have been critically explored starting with a detailed literature review then followed by intensive data collection methods and finally a detailed analysis. All the concepts under study have been adequately defined and the results from the field trip have been clearly presented. This gives validity and reliability to this study as many important issues were either confirmed or refuted and other salient issues were discovered.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an important aspect of a research project. No matter how rich the data is, poor analysis will not produce the correct results. According to Gray, 'qualitative data can provide rich descriptions and explanations that demonstrate the chronological flow of events as well as often leading to serendipitous (chance) findings' (Gray, 2009:493). This in essence implies that accurate data analysis is important as part of the research process. Although Gray explains that one of the challenges of qualitative research method is that there are no generally recognised rules regarding how qualitative data should be analysed other than the general inductive approach of data coding, it is important to emphasise that coding is just one of the stages in data analysis. The first stage in the data analysis process is identifying the data analysis technique to be used and explaining the suitability of the technique for the data collected. For this research thesis, thematic analysis will be used using a template method (King and Horrocks, 2012). Before exploring the use of this method of analysis critically, it is important to state the stages of data analysis that was applied to this research as advocated by Gray (2009).

Audio Data transcription- Most of the data gathered for this research were recorded using digital recording devices that is able to record the date, time and name of respondents. This makes transferring of interviews to the computer easy for identification process. In order to begin to understand the perspective of the respondents and also to comprehend the context by which the respondents answered the questions (Saunders et al. 2009) I transcribed all the interviews recorded for this project. Although it was a time consuming and tedious process, transcribing the interviews myself gave me an insight into the content of the respondent's analysis and also reminded me about the circumstances that surrounded the interview. It also reduced the cost I would have incurred if I had hired the services of a touch typist.

Interview protocol transcription- In addition to the audio data, I used an interview protocol for asking questions and recording answers during the interviews. The interview protocol was useful to record the points which the respondents emphasised and in some few situations where the respondents did not agree to recording the interviews. The interview protocol sample I used followed the example of (Creswell, 2009) and included information such as the date of the interview, the place (name of community and local government area) and the name of the respondent. It also included the instructions given by the respondent for example where the use of recording devices was not permitted and information on anonymousity. I also used the interview protocol schedule to record the questions and concerns of the respondents. The interview protocols were also transcribed fully as part of the data analysis process.

Coding- a code is 'a label attached to a section of the text to index it as relating to a theme or issue in the data which the researcher has identified as important to his or her interpretation' (King, 2004b:257). It can also be defined as the process of 'transforming raw data into a standardized format for data analysis' (Gray 2009:574). Coding is the process of identifying the recurrent words, phrases or concepts used by the respondents. The codes that were identified in the transcripts falls within four categories: codes on topics that I expected to find based on literature review and previous knowledge; codes that were surprising and were not anticipated at the start of the research; codes that are unusual but which I found to be interesting and codes that address a larger theoretical perspectives in the research (Creswell, 2009). The process

of coding was a continuous one whereby codes were identified and merged and new codes identified throughout the data analysis process.

Familiarization- Familiarization is a process whereby the researcher reads through all the field notes, secondary materials and transcripts but suspends the temptation to interpret the data. It is a process of getting familiar with the data to identify what is interesting, unusual, normal or significant (Gray, 2009). After the transcription and coding of the data, I spent a lot of time reading the transcripts and identifying the categories listed above in preparation for the actual data analysis. I also spent some time to analyse some of the secondary materials like newsletters, records of annual general meetings, pamphlets and other materials I was given by my respondents in order to identify which ones would be useful for the analysis.

4.5.1 Template thematic analysis

This research was analysed using thematic template analysis. The template analysis was developed by King (2004b) as a system of thematic data analysis. The approach focuses on the construction of a coding structure called the template which is applied to the data. The template is revised from time to time until it captures a full picture of the situation being researched and answers the research question (King and Horrocks, 2010). The first stage in template analysis is the creation of initial codes (template) which represents the themes identified in the data. Some of these themes are a priori (themes identified in advance) but they are modified and expanded as the researcher reads and interprets more texts. The organisation of the templates represents the relationships between the themes that were defined earlier and further themes are developed as the templates are revised in a way that is focused on the issues being examined (King, 2004b). King explains that this method of analysis is best used in a research whereby the researcher has intent of discovering the 'underlying causes of human action which seeks to achieve researcher objectivity and to demonstrate coding reliability' (King, 2004b:256). The author stated further that template analysis works very well when the aim of the research is to compare the perspectives of different actors within a specific context.

4.5.2 Developing the initial template

A prominent feature of the template thematic analysis is the organization of the codes in a hierarchical manner (King, 2004b). It is done in such a way that similar codes are grouped together to form 'higher-order codes' (King, 2004b:258). The aim of this method is to allow the researcher to be able to analyse texts at different levels of specificity. It also gives a general direction of the interviews as the hierarchies of the codes denote specific levels of the research framework. The initial codes as suggested by King begin with a few pre-defined codes to help guide analysis. Furthermore, the author explained that the best starting points for developing an initial template are the interview topic guides, questions areas, prompts and guides used at the initial stage of the interviews. Other aspects of the research where codes for the initial templates can be taken are literature review, informal evidence and previous research done in the field.

According to King, the highest category coding which could also represent the initial themes to be discussed as part of the research is called the 'highest-order codes' (King, 2004b:260). These codes are usually broader and sometimes form the basis of the discussions for the texts. These codes are then sub-divided into one, two or three lower level codes depending on the depth of the analysis of the research. For the purpose of the research, the levels of the codes are labelled as: Level one codes (indicating the highest hierarchy and the broad theme to be discussed), level two codes and level three codes. The level two codes are sub-categories of level one codes, while the level three codes are sub-categories of level two codes. This forms the hierarchy King described in the model and it continues like that for all the categories of the codes used for the analysis of this research. It is important to state here that the transcripts were coded manually in order to increase my familiarity with the codes developed for this thesis.

4.5.3 The initial template

Level 1- Community structure and leadership

    Level 2(i) Community development

        Level 3 Lack of development

            Level 4 (i) Poor education

                4 (ii) Lack of basic infrastructures

    Level 2(ii) Distribution of resources

        Level 3 Corruption

            Level 4(i) MNC induced corruption

            Level 4(ii) Godfatherism

Level 1- Oil Exploration

    Level 2(i) Environmental disintegration

        Level 3 Pollution

            Level 4(i) Gas flaring

            Level 4(ii) Pollution of land and water bodies

    Level 2(ii) Loss of livelihoods

        Level 3 Destruction of agricultural lands

            Level 4(i) Alternative sources of livelihoods

            Level 4 (ii) Competition for lands

Level 1- Government dependence on oil revenue

    Level 2 Distribution of resources

        Level 3 (i) Militarisation of the region

            Level 4(i) Conflict between government forces and communities

            Level 4(ii) Demonstrations and disruptions of oil activities

        Level 3 (ii) Private public partnerships

Once the initial template was constructed, the initial themes for discussion were defined and then there were lots of revisions that the template went through before all the

interviews were coded. Some of the revisions includes: insertion (addition of new codes to different levels of the template), deletion (a few of the initial codes were deleted because they were no longer relevant to the thesis), re-definition (I discovered that some of the codes were either too broad or too narrow in scope, hence, some of them were re-defined) and re-ordering (some of the codes moved to either a higher or lower hierarchy based on their importance to the research thesis). A final template was developed only after all the interviews had been coded and the transcript read at least twice (King, 2004b). This is important in order to make sure that no aspects of the interview is left out and no important facts are missed.

4.5.4 Interpretation

In order to avoid a descriptive data that does not fully answer the thesis question, it is important to interpret the coded template and relate it to the thesis question (King and Horrocks, 2010). The themes were analysed according to their level of prominence in the transcripts and then linked back to the initial questions of this thesis. Furthermore, new themes that emerged within some segments of the research were also explored to add quality to the interpretation of the data. According to King (2004b: 267) 'through summarising detailed notes about themes, selecting illustrative quotes, and producing a coherent story of the findings, the researcher continues to build his or her understanding of the phenomena the research project has investigated'. Through the use of the template, themes that emerged were critically explored by first relating them to the literature then explaining the perspectives of each respondent to the themes under investigation. This method made it easier to understand the perspectives of the respondents and then analyse the perspectives in relation to relevant literature. Quotes from the respondents were also used to illustrate the meanings attached to specific themes. The thematic analysis proved useful while answering the research questions as the analysis of both the a priori themes and other themes that emerged helped in answering the specific questions set out at the beginning of the research.

4.6 Ethical issues guiding research decisions

For any social research with human participants, the ethical practice is very demanding and involves a lot of responsibilities (King and Horrocks, 2010). According to Gomm (2008), research ethics are the rules of morally good conducts which the researcher

must follow in a research process. This research is grounded in sound ethical standing right from the initial stages to the data collection stage and finally the data analysis stage. The first step in the ethical process for this research was obtaining a 'clearance' from the university's ethical committee to travel to the research area for data collection. A comprehensive safety assessment was undertaken and permission was granted to travel to the region after some initial questions were asked by the committee which were duly answered.

This research thesis has been carried out with the highest standard of academic integrity. Gomm (2008) argues that it is a moral requirement for every researcher to produce a truthful and transparent research. Interviews were arranged and carried out as scheduled (except for some few cancellations) and most of the interviews were recorded except for those who declined to have their interviews recorded. Before any interview was done, the respondents were duly briefed on the purpose of the interview and they were all given a consent form to fill and sign before proceeding with the interview. Permission by the respondents to take part in a research process after de-briefing amounts to informed consent and adds credibility and transparency to the research (Bordens and Abbott, 2008).

The selection of the research areas was done in a way to avoid any form of repercussions or harm to the respondents of the research. It is important to select communities that have been relatively peaceful since the 2009 amnesty and also individuals that are not at risk through their participation in the research. Any research that could lead to physical, psychological or emotional distress to the respondents is ethically untenable (Ruane, 2005) and should be discouraged by all means. In Ikwerem community of Delta state, one respondent who also happens to be one of the youth leaders advised that he was not comfortable to grant the interview in the community as the people are always suspicious of strange faces so we decided to have the interview at a safe location in Warri town with his anonymity fully guaranteed. If it was not possible to have the interview in a safe location, it would have been cancelled to avoid harm to the respondent.

Furthermore, all the respondent of this research were promised full anonymity and confidentiality with their names not appearing anywhere in this research project. This

is important because of the nature of the research and the need to ensure that the respondents are not exposed to any form of risk before, during and after their participation in the research. Anonymity and confidentiality were also important in gaining access to some of the participants of this research project (Saunders, et al, 2009). For instance, most of the respondents working for the MNCs and government gave these as conditions to participate in the research. Few of the respondents also insisted that the interview must not be recorded and only allowed me to take written notes. All these requests were granted to protect the respondents from harm which could arise as a result of their participation in this research.

Finally, most of the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and then securely transferred to the computer in the university as part of the ethics condition for approval to undertake the research. This is important because of the need to protect the vital information given by the respondents which still contained their names and details as a means of identifying and transcribing the interviews for analysis.

4.7 Reflections on Kidnapping

Although maintaining good research ethics could protect both the researcher and respondents from potential harm, there is no guarantee that the research would be hitch free. During this research process- at the data collection stage I narrowly escaped being kidnapped. On Friday 9th of August, 2013, I went out with the staff of ERA and we went into some communities for interviews. At the end of the day, we went back to ERA office in Bayelsa where I met the project officer. He asked me if I could follow him and his team to some creek communities the following day to carry out some interviews and I happily accepted the offer. The next day was a Saturday and I got to the ERA office about 7am. The project officer allocated all the members of staff into two groups. The first group was scheduled to go to some villages on land while the other group would go to some creek communities. I was allocated to the second group but suddenly before we left, the officer who was in my group suddenly changed his mind and moved me to the other group because he felt there are some key people I would meet with the other group as the communities to be visited were having some important meetings. I ended up going out with the first group and met with some important community leaders. The following morning, I got a text from my group leader that all the people in the second

group were kidnapped the previous day. They spent four days in the kidnappers' den as they were accused of being spies. They were eventually released but the project officer told me it was a very frightening experience as they were almost killed at some point. Kidnapping is a big business in the Niger Delta. At the peak of the conflict in the region in 2006, 200 oil workers were kidnapped and ransom ranging from $160,000 to $4,000,000 was demanded by the kidnappers. Since the amnesty in 2009, attention has shifted to local indigenes and many Nigerians have been kidnapped for ransom (Ajayi, 2013). This shows that no matter how prepared a researcher is there could be moments when things could go horribly wrong and specific training rather than ethical approval is necessary to carry out field work in conflict regions (Mitchell, 2013).

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter contains a detailed analysis of the methodology employed for the purpose of this research project. The chapter explains the rationale behind the choice of the qualitative- ethnographic method. After a thorough explanation of the reasons behind the methodology used, the chapter explained the importance of this methodology in answering the thesis research questions. The chapter then explained other important issues such as case study selection, data collection methods, data analysis and issues of validity and reliability. The penultimate section of the chapter focused on the ethical issues that impacted the research from the beginning till the end.

The use of ethnography for this research proved successful as important information was gathered which made it easier to answer the thesis question. Furthermore, ethical issues represent a major part of the research framework and were taken seriously throughout this research. The final section was a reflection on kidnapping and the volatility of the region. In all this research has been carried out in an ethical manner and the methodology employed is deemed appropriate based on the aim of the research as well as the research questions expected to be answered at the end of the study.

CHAPTER 5

The Role of the Government in the development, Human security and conflict in Niger Delta Communities

Introduction

The three tiers of government (federal, state and local government) are responsibility for developing the Niger Delta, creating an enabling environment for oil exploration activities as well as ensuring that the human security of the indigenes are being protected. Over the years, literature has revealed that the government who is supposed to be responsible for promoting law and order is sometimes abusing it (Jackson and Rosberg, 1992, Fearon and Laitin 2003 and Leftwich 2005). As indicated in the previous chapters, there has been accusations and counter-accusations about the actual role of the government in the outbreak of violence as well as its indifferent attitude towards the human security of the indigenes of the region.

This chapter will critically explore the role of the three tiers of government in regard to upholding (or violating) the human security of the Niger Delta indigenes based on the ethnographic study carried out in three oil-producing states of the Niger Delta region (Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states). In order to evaluate these roles, particular attention will be paid to the environmental laws; the near total dependence of the government on the revenue generated from the region for a large chunk of its budgetary allocations; the impact of the numerous development agencies created by the federal and state governments for the development of the region; government's militarisation of the region after any slight disturbance as well as 'oil corruption' in the government. Another important theme that will be explored is the 'obvious' underdevelopment in the region as well as the government's perception about who is responsible for development of oil producing communities. In order to be able to critically evaluate these issues, excerpts from the interviews carried out in these states will be used to analyse previous literatures on this issue.

5.1 Environmental laws governing oil exploration in the Niger Delta

Since the discovery of oil in Oloibiri in 1956, the federal government of Nigeria has put in place several laws to govern the administration of natural resources. The main source of Nigerian law is the 1999 constitution which was drafted shortly after the return of Nigeria to democracy in 1999. It is important to state that although the 'new' constitution was drafted in 1999, there are several laws in Nigeria that remain unchanged since the independence of the country in 1960. This section will analyse these laws in order to determine their effectiveness or otherwise and then relate how these laws have impacted on the human security of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta.

5.1.1 The Nigerian Land use Laws

The history of the oil industry is embedded in the colonial oil and mineral laws of 1887, 1907 and 1914 (amended in 1925, 1950, and 1958 respectively). The laws vested the ownership of oil in the colonial state and gave an oil exploration monopoly in Nigeria to British or British-allied firms (Omeje 2006, 35–36). This however was to continue after Nigeria gained independence. In 1959, one year before the independence of Nigeria, the monopoly held by Shell-BP ended when other oil companies were granted exploration licence (Obi, 2010). According to Obi (2010), despite the end of the monopoly of Shell-BP, the first civilian government of Nigeria did little or nothing to adequately manage the activities of the MNCs and this resulted in the total control of the sector by the oil companies. The 1967-1970 civil war in Nigeria changed the entire landscape of the oil industry in the country. In 1969, the military government vested the control of all the oil and gas resources in the country to the federal government through the Petroleum act of 1969. The Petroleum act of 1969 marked the beginning of the travails of the Niger Delta people. Section 1 of the acts states that 'The entire ownership and control of all petroleum in, under or upon any lands to which this section applies shall be vested in the State' while section 2 reserves the right of only the minister to grant oil prospecting or exploration rights (1969 Petroleum act; Onigbinde 2008 and Obi, 2010).

Although the 1969 Petroleum act caused a lot of uproar in the Niger Delta where oil was being explored, another law called the Land Use Act of 1978 added to the plight of the people. Prior to 1978, the land under which oil is situated was perceived as belonging to

the local communities where the oil and gas was found (Ako, 2009). The implication of this was that although the oil and gas is being administered by the federal government, the MNCs were required to consult with the local communities regarding the use of the land in order to pay the 'appropriate' compensation before oil exploration began. However, this was to change with the promulgation of the 1978 Land Use Act shortly before the then military government handed over to civilians in 1979. Section 1 of the act states that 'subject to the provision of this act, all land comprised in the territory of each state in the federation are hereby vested in the Governor of that state and such land shall be held in trust and administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians in accordance with the provisions of this act' (Land Use Act, 1978).

The implication of this act is that government can dispossess the indigenes of the land at any time. Section 28 of the act states that 'It shall be lawful for the governor to revoke a right of occupancy for overriding public interests' which the act explains as 'the requirement of the land for mining purposes or oil pipelines or for any purpose connected therewith' (Land Use Act, 1978). Since oil is the main backbone of the Nigerian economy (Obi, 2010), there is always 'overriding public interest' in depriving the people of their land which serves as their main source of human security. This act was described by many of my interviewees as one of the principal causes of the conflict in the Niger Delta as it removes every right of ownership of the oil from the indigenes of the region. They argued that since the decree was promulgated, payment of compensation for the use of lands became at the discretion of the MNCs and if the communities decided not to allow them carry out oil exploration activities, they resorted to force with the support of the military stationed permanently in all the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta.

One of the main issues in the Land Use Act which has resulted in conflict in the region is the section of the act that authorises the local government to allocate land for either public or private use. This clause in the act has been a source of chaos since the late 1970s (Francis, 1984), and coupled with political patronage and sharp ethnic divisions which influence land allocations has led to violent conflicts. Local government officials use this power to allocate land to their political cronies who in most cases are from their ethnic groups and this generates conflicts. A typical example of this was given by a

respondent, an indigene of Imiringi community in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa state. He explained that there is always violent conflict anytime oil is discovered in the communities forming the cluster in the region as the most influential people in the community often lobby the local government officials to allocate such lands to them and this leads to conflict between the families that originally owned the land and those to whom the land is allocated by the local government officials. He further stated that most of these conflicts continue until lives are lost before the state government take steps to ameliorate the situation. This is an example of rent-seeking behaviour explored earlier in this thesis (Ross 2001).

Prior to the advent of democracy in 1999, the Land Use Act barred courts from addressing any concerns about the adequacy of the compensation paid to people who lost access to their land or fish ponds under the terms of the Act. Clause 47 (2) of the Act states: "No court shall have jurisdiction to inquire into any question concerning or pertaining to the amount or adequacy of any compensation paid or to be paid under this Act."(Land Use Act CAP 202, 1990). However, the advent of democracy in Nigeria in 1999 resulted in some changes to the law. In revising the 1978 land use Act, the government retained control of all the resources in the region but amended the part of the constitution that deals with issues of compensation (Ako, 2014). Clause 44 (a) of the 1999 Constitution states that "the entire property in and control of all minerals, mineral oils and natural gas in, under or upon any land in Nigeria or in, under or upon the territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria shall vest in the Government of the Federation and shall be managed in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly."(Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). In the Constitution, the government empowered the indigenes to seek redress in the courts if they felt they had not been adequately compensated for their lands or fishponds. Clause 44(b) of the 1999 constitution states that ' No moveable property or any interest in an immovable property shall be taken possession of compulsorily and no right over or interest in any such property shall be acquired compulsorily in any part of Nigeria except in the manner and for the purposes prescribed by a law that, among other things – (a) requires the prompt payment of compensation therefore and (b) gives to any person claiming such compensation a right of access for the determination of his interest in the property and the amount of compensation to a court of law or tribunal or

body having jurisdiction in that part of Nigeria (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Although the change is supposed to bring succour to the people, the effect of the change has not been significant. First, the compensation does not take into account the future earnings on the land because the judge can only make decisions based on the current value (Ako, 2014). Second, many of the indigenes of the region are very poor and cannot afford to take their cases to the courts to seek redress.

Furthermore, prior to the Land Use Acts, land was held in trust by the community leaders and elders on behalf of the people and this made it easier to settle land disputes as the communities lived in family units. However, the Land Use Act changed this structure and land allocation, negotiation and dispute resolution were transferred to the government. The fact that the indigenes were aggrieved with the sudden removal of the access to their main sources of livelihoods (fishing and farming) coupled with the fact that every land dispute can no longer be settled by community leaders and the people have to wait for months for the government to attend to these issues was one of the main reasons for conflicts and the advent of militancy in the Niger Delta (Ebeku, 2001 and Ukeje, 2001). These events further led to the erosion of traditional values and culture in the region.

Since the government rather than the communities through the elders now take the place of arbitration on land issues (which results in the highest number of disputes), cultural security has been impacted. Respect for elders which used to be the accepted norm has now been eroded and communal harmony has been destroyed. One of the respondents from Delta state (HRADELTA02) attributed the conflict in the region to the attitudes of young people to the elders in the region. He lamented that several legislations over the years have ignored the part played by elders in the region which used to include maintenance of law and order as well as guidance to younger generations. According to HRADELTA02 'Before now we were living among ourselves and we respected elders because we know that it is through hard work that we can get anything done…..we no longer respect elders anymore because there is nothing more to respect elders for, because the money is coming in and I am getting it, so if I have access to the companies I can have access to money and build a skyscraper so what is the business I have with an elder….. I don't need your advice anymore, where will your advice take me to?

Your advice can't even take me to Chevron, you don't know anybody in Chevron to call for me to get contracts so what do I need you as an old man for? So if you travel the length and breadth of these oil producing areas respect for elders is almost near zero when compared to the West where there is still so much respect for elders because they feel the elders are no longer important for them and they can't get anything from them' (HRADELTA02). He concluded that the roles of community elders in conflict management cannot be overemphasised.

Obi (2010) argued that the Land Use Act was formulated to deliberately disenfranchise the indigenes of the Niger Delta who are minorities in Nigeria by the main ethnic groups (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) who have been the dominant powers since independence. The act makes it difficult for local indigenes to seek compensation either for the loss of the land or for the sources of their livelihoods and this further enraged the people. Section 29 (2) of the act states that 'If a right of occupancy is revoked for the cause set out in paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section 28 of this act [overriding public interest: the requirement of the land for mining purposes or oil pipelines or for any other purpose connected therewith], the holder and the occupier shall be entitled to compensation under the appropriate provisions of the minerals and mining act or the Petroleum act or any legislation replacing the same'. For the purpose of compensation, the Petroleum act proposes 'fair and reasonable compensation for any disturbance of the surface rights of that owner or occupier and for any damage done to the surface of the land upon which his prospecting or mining is being or has been carried on'. In most cases, the MNCs determine what 'fair and reasonable' compensation is and sometimes it is paid to the state government rather than the indigenes or communities concerned and therefore the communities hardly receive any compensation (Ebeku 2001 and Muller 2010).

This issue of lack of inadequate compensation was confirmed by most of the respondents in the three states I visited. Apart from the land used for farming, the indigenes explained that sometimes when pipelines are laid, it transverses their fish ponds and this means that the ponds have to be covered. Some residents lamented that even if they are paid any compensation, it covers just the cost of the stock they have at that particular time and does not include the value of the land, cost of digging the ponds or the lost income due to inability to continue using the pond. In Igba-Ama community,

the indigenes complained that due to ongoing excavation by Shell, the only access road to their farms has been blocked and this implies that the farmers are unable to go to farm throughout the period of construction. The resultant effect is that the whole period of planting is lost and they are not being compensated for these losses. All these issues impact on the human security of the people and also lead to grievances and bitterness against both the government and the MNCs. This sometimes results in violent confrontations between the indigenes and state security forces as well as destruction of oil infrastructures which in turn degenerates into violent conflict. The argument by the indigenes that the land use laws in Nigeria have deprived them of their access to livelihoods because of oil exploration is a major human security issue and cannot be labelled as greed. It is arguable that if adequate compensations are paid to the indigenes and pollution resulting from oil exploration does not impact on their livelihoods, the conflict could have been avoided or reduced.

5.1.2 Poor law enforcement in the region

Apart from the inadequate laws put in place by various successive governments in Nigeria, the problem of law enforcement is another key issue that leads to the outbreak of conflict. While the government and MNCs are quick to act on the aspects of the laws that work in their favour, there is a general nonchalant attitude when it comes to the rights of the indigenes of the Niger Delta. This section will examine some of the laws put in place by the government to protect the indigenes of the region and how these laws have been enforced over the years.

In 1968, the government enacted the Oil in Navigable Waters Act of 1968 to 'prevent' and 'punish' individuals and corporate organisations from polluting the water ways both within inland waters as well as on the sea. Events over the years have indicated that this law does not in any way act as a deterrent to pollution of water bodies in the Niger Delta. A well-documented example is the pollution of water bodies in Ogoni communities which resulted in the destruction of a large area of mangrove, pollution of rivers and creeks which is having a 'severe impact on the ecosystem and human health' (Linden and Palsson, 2013) in the communities. Other forms of direct pollution of water bodies and indirect pollution of rivers through oil exploration, transportation, illegal bunkering activities have been well documented in several communities of the Niger Delta (Owamah et al, 2013; Agbalagba, Avwiri, and Ononugbo, 2013; Aghalino and

Eyinla, 2009). Despite the high level of pollution in this region, the response of the government has been grossly inadequate. Cases of major pollution of water bodies are ignored by the relevant authorities involved despite the huge negative impact of these pollutions. For instance, the UNEP report on environmental pollution in Ogoni land has not been acted upon. This issue will be explored further in chapter seven of this thesis. According to Aghalino and Eyinla (2009), 'the leniency of environmental laws and government inertia in enforcing same seems to have informed the lukewarm attitude of the oil majors to environmental protection and conservation'. (Aghalino and Eyinla, 2009: 180).

Despite the formulation of several anti-pollution laws, evidence of environmental abuse by MNCs is rampant in almost all the communities in the Niger Delta. A typical example of this was highlighted by respondent BAYELSALIND02. According to the respondent, '*We had an oil spillage in 1996 around June/July. Till today (September, 4, 2013: Date of interview) Shell has not made any permanent clean-up, they just did it haphazardly. The contractor connived with Shell and they said they have finished the job. There was no remediation and that has been a problem between this community and Shell. The problem was taken to Hague and since Shell is from that area, they moved around the matter and turned the whole thing upside down and ERA (Environmental Rights Action) is the people that bear the whole responsibility. If up till today Shell has not done anything and they claim they have done it, Shell have not been compromising with Igba-ama community. Not only in our community, all the places where they operate is the same thing*' (BAYELSALIND02). Although the Shell officer I interviewed denied this allegation, evidence of widespread environmental pollution is visible in some of the communities I visited in the Niger Delta where Shell operates. For instance I noticed a large river totally covered with oil in Otuasega community.

Another good example of the inability of the Nigerian government to enforce environmental laws in the Niger Delta is the menace of gas flaring. The government issued the Associated Gas Reinjection Act in 1979 which required all the MNCs in the region to submit a detailed plan of how they would utilize associated gas that evolves from oil exploration with a view of ending gas flaring by 1984. Section 2 (1) of the act states that 'Not later than 1 October, 1980, every company producing oil and gas in

Nigeria shall submit to the Minister detailed programmes and plans for either- (a) the implementation of programmes relating to the re-injection of all produced associated gas; or (b) schemes for the viable utilisation of all produced associated gas (Associated Gas Reinjection Act in 1979). Furthermore, section 3 of the act states 'no company engaged in the production of oil or gas shall after 1 January, 1984 should flare gas produced in association with oil without the permission in writing of the Minister' (Associated Gas Reinjection Act in 1979). As good as this law seems to be, gas flaring has continued in the Niger Delta region unabated. Despite the fact that many of the bye-products of the gas flared are carcinogens with serious health implication for the inhabitants of this region (Leahey et al. 2001; Ishishone 2004), the Nigerian government has been unable to stop gas flaring, further displeasing the people from the region. While standing in front of Chevron headquarters in Warri Delta state during the field trip, three of such gas flares are clearly visible. Some of the residents of the communities interviewed maintained that there has been gas flaring continuously for years in their communities unabated. In Iwhrekan community, Ughelle south Local government area of Delta state, there are two large flares located less than 200 metres from the communities and the residents lamented that they have taken Shell to court regarding the flare but to no avail.

In a similar vein, the government established the Federal Environmental Protection Agency through the (FEPA Act) of 1998. The Agency was the first in the history of Nigeria to be given responsibility for protecting and managing the environment in the country. The bill states that the agency shall 'have responsibility for the protection and development of the environment and biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of Nigeria's natural resources in general and environmental technology, including initiation of policy in relation to environmental research and technology' (FEPA Act, 1998). Although the act just like any other law in Nigeria did not yield much dividend (Omofonmwan and Osa-Edoh, 2008) it gave hope to the people of the Niger Delta as an avenue to bring the MNCs to account in the region. This rising hope was cut short in 2007 when the FEPA Act was repealed, replaced by the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act (NESREA Act). The NESREA act has been described as the most contentious law ever enacted in the history of Nigeria as the act protected the MNCs from prosecution no matter the level of damage

done to the environment. Part 2 section (7) and (8) of the act empower the agency to 'enforce environmental control measures', 'conduct environmental audit and establish data bank on regulatory and enforcement mechanisms of environmental standards' in all industries 'other than in the oil and gas industry'. It also empowers the agency to 'conduct public investigations on pollution and the degradation of natural resources, except investigations on oil spillage. This law sums up the attitude of the government towards the protection of the environment especially in the oil and gas sector. Some of my interviewees especially those in the legal sector condemned this law and argued that the law is one of the reasons why the MNCs act with impunity which then creates conflict between the MNCs and local communities. A human right lawyer interviewed in Delta state attributed this to the weakness of the Nigerian state and its over- reliance on the oil industry. It is apparent from the analysis of the laws governing oil exploration and exploitation that the government of Nigeria is lacking in the aspect of regulation of the oil and gas industry. The impunity with which some of the MNCs operate further give credence to the fact that they often capitalise on the inadequate laws regarding their operations and this has been a constant source of conflict in the region. The reactions of the communities to these issues will be explored further in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

5.2 Lack of Development in Niger Delta Communities

Most of the rural communities in Nigeria are classified as underdeveloped (UN, Human Development Index, 2015). There is a lack of basic amenities like good roads, electricity, pipe-borne water, good schools as well as other basic infrastructures. Although most of the communities in other regions of the country have simply resigned to 'fate' and do not engage in violent protests against the government to press for development, the case of the Niger Delta is different for two main reasons. First, there is increased level of awareness and realisation of the huge volume of resources taken from the region while the people remain in abject poverty. Second, the Niger Delta is a tale of two totally different scenarios playing out at the same time; while the people live in utmost darkness and poverty, the MNCs operating in the region live in 'absolute affluence' where there is 24 hour electricity, water, internet and all modern facilities just next door to the impoverished communities. This section of the thesis will explore how the lack of development and the absence of basic infrastructures in Niger Delta

communities led to agitations for development, part of which resulted in the formation of insurgencies in the region. Evidence from my field trip to the region suggests that the continued pillage of the resources in the region without any visible development impacted on the human security of the indigenes which in turn resulted in violent conflicts. For instance, lack of development could result in grievance but the overall picture is that lack of development often results in poor level of productivity and poverty which impacts on the human security of the people.

5.2.1 Poor standard of Education

Level of educational attainment has been argued to be one of the most significant factors in determining the willingness of young people to join insurgencies or be involved in crimes against the state (Azim, 2001; Barakat and Urdal, 2008). In further support of this, Oyefusi (2010) carried out a research in the Niger Delta to examine the relationship between educational attainment and participation of young people in organised violence and concluded that 'schooling, higher formal educational attainment, and higher earnings reduce the odds of willingness to participate in low-level violence and oil-related crime, and in militarized struggle, among individuals' (Oyefusi 2010: 343). This issue was explored during the ethnography and I observed that the link between educational attainment and propensity to participate in violence is the opportunity for viable employment. Youths in the region with at least a first degree have better opportunities to get good jobs not only in the Niger Delta but throughout the country. This explains the recent campaign in the region for higher education. What is missing in most of these research is the role of the government in providing education in the Niger Delta. From my observation while visiting several communities in the region, I discovered that although the state governments, federal government development agencies as well as several NGOs have recently been more involved (Since 2007) in the provision of educational infrastructures in the region, the development is coming a bit late as there is already a 'lost generation'. The inability of the various governments to provide quality secondary education in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in thousands of young men and women missing out on education and invariably falling prey to the antics of political officer holders and seekers who use them to carry out nefarious activities. This relates to the participation of youths in activities such as oil

bunkering and working with politicians to destabilise elections as explored in chapter 3 of this thesis.

Some of my respondents argued that political elites in the region deliberately 'killed' the educational sector in order to perpetually 'keep the people in the dark'. They argued that various sincere attempts by community leaders in the region to resuscitate the educational sector (especially secondary education) met stiff opposition from some government cronies. They argued that a lot of the political elites in the states have private secondary schools which in most cases are not affordable to the common people and hence prevailed on the government to 'deliberately underfund secondary education' in the states. Evidence of these allegations is several large private secondary schools in the states surveyed. Some of the respondents maintained that political elites in the states see education as a tool that could empower indigenes in the communities to become enlightened, hence, gaining the ability to question those that are in positions of authority. Travelling round the three states (Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers), there are several newly refurbished secondary schools (some model schools) across the states sponsored by either the government or MNCs but 18 of the respondents argued that the response is 'too little too late'.

Furthermore, poor level of supervision of the teachers is another bane of educational development in the Niger Delta. The teachers in government schools are not regulated and this results in underperformance which invariably leads to poor students' performance in the schools. When asked what the government was doing about the situation, one of my respondents who is a teacher in a popular secondary school in Bayelsa state lamented that the government is not doing anything about it and 'are even part of the problem'(BAYELSALIND09). She explained that many of the teachers also have political positions like local government councillors and this means they only go to school once or twice a week. She also explained that a lot of the politicians secure teaching jobs for most of their wives so that they can have monthly salaries whereas they have other jobs or businesses and only go to the school once in a while without anybody to challenge them. This view was corroborated by six other respondents who argued that the reluctance and inability of the government to monitor public secondary

schools in this region resulted in the decay of the schools which led to low levels of educational attainment in the region.

One other main issue that lowers the standard of education in the region is the 2009 amnesty given to the ex-militants in the region. As part of the programme (which has continued in phases since the first amnesty) ex-militants are paid monthly wages of 60,000 naira (£250), 100,000 naira (£400) for the foot soldiers and even more for the 'officers' (senior officers). In a country where the monthly income of federal civil servants is less than 25,000 naira (£100), paying ex-militants such a large amount of money (by Nigerian standards) reduces the incentives for going to secondary school as many students believe joining militants group with a view of being given amnesty, hence, getting monthly wages is more rewarding than going to school (GOVTOFFBAYEL01). One of my respondents- an undergraduate in one of the state universities stated that whereas the government does not offer any bursary or support for students in secondary schools and universities, it gives so much to ex-militants and this results in hundreds of students dropping out of school to join militant groups. This results in a cycle of school dropouts and amnesty payments by the government, a cycle that is not sustainable in the long run. This is seen by many as encouraging young people to join insurgencies in the region.

5.2.2 Inadequate Social and Economic infrastructures

One of the main problems of development in the Niger Delta is the poor state of infrastructural development in the region. According to (DELTAIND02), the government in the Niger Delta states would rather engage in 'white elephant' projects rather than develop social and economic infrastructures in the states. Projects such as new residents for public officials, construction of multi-billion naira government lodges, continuous renovations of secretariats are given preference to basic provision of infrastructures in the states. For instance, when I was in Bayelsa, I stayed in a new multi-billion naira legislative quarters complete with modern facilities but this does not reflect the situation in the communities. The political elite live in affluence while the other citizens live in dilapidated buildings where I conducted most of the interviews. While the complete lack of basic infrastructures such as good access roads, pipe borne

water, electricity, health services and facilities, good and affordable shelter are evident in some communities, other communities have some of these facilities albeit they do not function properly most times. Although billions of naira are budgeted every year by the federal government, state governments, local governments, government funded development agencies as well as MNCs operating in the region for developmental purposes, it is imperative to state that the most visible infrastructures (where present) in these communities were in most cases provided by the MNCs operating in the region. This issue will be explored further in the next section of this thesis.

One interesting fact about the level of infrastructures present in these communities is that since the three tiers of government have failed in their responsibility to provide basic socio-economic infrastructures for the people, some communities have developed ingenious means to demand for these basic infrastructures and this accounts for the varying levels of infrastructural development in the communities. Some of the reasons why some communities benefit more than others include; access to the state or local government officials, proximity to oil installations, the ability of individual communities to cause trouble for MNCs and thereby disrupt oil flow, presence of a 'big man' in the community as well as the level of education of individual community members.

Communities that have access to government officials or where one major politician or government official hails from the community benefit in one way or the other depending on the level of access to resources that particular official has. It is a common thing in Nigeria and more importantly in the Niger Delta for people who are from a particular tribe, ethnic group or community and are in government to channel infrastructural development to their communities sometimes at the expense of other communities. This particular scenario plays out not only in the government sector but also in government agencies saddled with the development of these communities. For instance, in Iwhrekan community, Ughelle local government area of Delta state, the only access road in the community was constructed when one of the indigenes of the communities who was a commissioner in the state government wanted to bury his father and realised the road would be un-motorable for his elite guests. This scenario plays out in several other communities whereby indigenes from such communities channel resources to their own communities. In a similar vein, indigenes from particular communities who are board members of government funded development agencies

alter the provision of infrastructures to favour their communities. One of my interviewees, a senior manager in Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) explained that board members deliberately alter the budget for provision of infrastructures to favour particular communities and ethnic groups. He explained further that since the budgets are presented by members of the NDDC board and written in Abuja (Federal Capital) projects are imputed by the board members, members of the houses of assembly, senators and senior civil servants and in most cases the projects favour the communities where these people come from at the expense of others. The implication of this is that when infrastructures like roads or water are provided in one community, neighbouring communities protest and this often leads to conflict between the communities and law enforcement agencies. In extreme cases, such infrastructures are sabotaged by aggrieved neighbouring communities which then results in inter-community conflicts.

Proximity to oil installations is another factor that determines the level and type of basic infrastructures in many of the communities I visited. Two main reasons account for this; first, the MNCs need access to their facilities such as oil rigs, platforms and pipelines making it imperative for them to provide access roads which is then used also by the communities close to such oil installations. Second, many of the communities use threats to force the MNCs to provide them with basic infrastructures. A typical example was evident in Ikarama community, Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa state. In an interview with a women leader of the community (BAYELSALIND03) she stated that after many years of lack of electricity the community women protested to Shell and Agip who were the MNCs working in the community and demanded the provision of electricity. After many protests were ignored, the women blocked the access road to Shell oil wells (the access road was constructed by Shell) and stopped the MNCs from accessing their oil infrastructures. She explained further that in less than two weeks, Shell and Agip came up with a structure whereby Shell provided a large generator for the community while Agip is responsible for the supply of diesel and maintenance of the generator. This scenerio is similar to what happened in Otuasega community in the same Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa state. In an interview with the paramount ruler of the community (BAYELSAGROUP01) he explained that there is no single infrastructure provided by the government in the community and most of the

infrastructures were provided either by MNCs or international donors. He gave an instance of when Shell wanted to lay pipelines in their communities to link some of their stations and the communities demanded for construction of access roads before they allowed Shell to lay the pipes. These are examples of how the communities use proximity to oil infrastructures to demand for the provisions of infrastructures in their communities.

In the light of this development, it is important to state that many communities have now deliberately moved closer to oil installations to seek provision of basic socio-economic infrastructures and this has led to severe consequences in some cases. I visited Ubeji community, a community very close to Warri refineries and petrochemical plants in Delta state and interviewed the secretary to the council of elders in the community. In the interview, he explained how the activities of the refinery have totally destroyed the economic activities of the indigenes of the community. He stated that the refinery has a waste water treatment system and whenever it rains heavily the waste water overflows and empties into a creek which was the main source of livelihood of the people since they were mostly fishermen. The waste water which contains crude oil pollutes the creek and destroys fishes and other aquatic animals which in turn impacts on the livelihood of the people. The problem with waste water management is a serious human security issue in the region as eight other respondents highlighted this problem. He stated further that in 1977 (a year after the construction of the refinery started, there was a bloody conflict between his community and another community over land boundaries and this resulted in the death of several people. Subsequently, I interviewed one of the senior managers at the refinery who was in charge of community relations and he explained that when the construction of the refinery started in 1976, none of those communities were located where they are today. He stated further that the indigenes believed that living close to oil installations will guarantee access to jobs and the provision of socio-economic infrastructures and that is one of the reasons why many communities suffer untold consequences because they live too close to oil installations. This view was corroborated by respondent HRADELTA02, a human right activist and environmental consultant, who stated that in the 1960s and 1970s, most of what they call communities today were temporary fishing camps set up by friends or family members during the fishing periods. He explained further that the people later felt that

the discovery of oil in commercial quantities would lead to both economic and infrastructural development and then began to settle down close to oil installations but the reverse was the case after decades of oil exploration. The fact remains that the inability of the government to fulfil its obligation to the people by providing basic amenities and socio-economic infrastructures has resulted in the people sometimes 'helping themselves' which in some cases has led to loss of sources of livelihoods and resultant human insecurity in Niger Delta communities. All these happen as a result of the inability of the government to provide basic infrastructures. The draw of MNC-provided infrastructure causes the indigenes to make decisions that increase their exposure to pollution which invariably decrease their human security.

Another means whereby some communities forcefully obtain socio-economic infrastructures is what I term 'pipeline destruction mechanism' a situation whereby community youths deliberately sabotage crude oil pipelines to get the attention of the MNCs. This bargaining tool was developed recently by some communities especially in Bayelsa state in order to draw attention to them and then forcefully obtain infrastructural development. In the interview with one of youth leaders in Ikarama community, Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa state, he described how youths in the region have used pipeline destructive mechanism as a tool to seek for development in their community. In his words he stated that '*they (referring to the other youths standing with him) are doing it deliberately, for example, if somebody from this community goes to another community and discovers that the company has erected a bore hole for them and this community knowing that since they have crude oil they deserve such development, if they call on such company to come and do such project for them and the company refuse after some tries, they may use that as a way to drag the company to that community*'(BAYELSALIND04). At the time of the interview, there was a fresh spill in the community as a result of deliberate destruction and the youths boasted that they will not allow Agip (the owner of the pipeline) to stop the flow of oil by repairing the pipes until the company sends representatives to come and discuss their present needs. The implication of these acts of vandalism is that the communities themselves bear the brunt of the damage to the environment. While the effect on the company involved is limited to the loss of revenue through the leak, the community suffer the effect mostly through pollution of land and water and in some cases the effect is felt in other

communities further away as the oil eventually empties into the drainage systems and eventually into creeks and water bodies. This also decreases the human security of the people as pollution of water bodies further destroys the fishing industry.

Finally, the level of educational attainment in the communities also determines the access to socio-economic infrastructures from the government or other agencies. Communities with well-educated and highly skilled indigenes find it easier to deploy resources towards acquisition of infrastructures in their communities. Such communities are able to use advanced means of communications such as emails, proposals, phone calls to get resources from the government, MNCs and sometimes international NGOs. A typical example of such community is Igba-Ama community in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa state. Respondent BAYELSALIND02 explained how the community was able to secure funding from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2009 for the construction of teachers' quarters in the community. He stated that the community discovered that their main problem was the inability to get quality teachers in their secondary schools to teach their children due to the absence of quality accommodation. After several attempts to get the state and local government construct such quarters for them failed, they decided to seek external funding for the development of this housing infrastructures. The community succeeded in securing grant from UNDP which was then used for the construction of decent accommodation for teachers. He stated further that while some other neighbouring communities were also offered the same grant; some of them declined and said that the UNDP must first pay them in order for them to accept such development. He concluded that due to the level of illiteracy in some communities, they become hostile to the extent that they miss several opportunities to develop their communities.

5.2.3 Responsibility for the development of oil producing communities

The oil producing communities of the Niger Delta are obviously lacking in all spheres of development. Ranging from economic, infrastructural, educational, health to mention a few, these communities are behind especially when compared to some other communities in Nigeria that are not oil producing. A common question asked by most of the researchers in the region is 'why is this region so poor in the midst of plenty?' although this question has not been adequately answered, it is imperative to ask

another pertinent question regarding the level of development of the Niger Delta. During my field trip in the region, I asked a question that generated a lot of controversy among some of the stakeholders in the region. The question is 'Whose responsibility is it to develop the Niger Delta?'. This is a question that has not been asked by previous scholars and all the respondents applauded the question. This section of the thesis will explore this question further looking at the role of the Nigerian state as well as the corporate social responsibility of the MNCs in order to establish which of the stakeholders is/are lacking in their responsibilities. It is important to state at this point that although this question was not part of my original interview question, events in the field necessitated the question and all the government officials and MNCs workers interviewed were asked this question. I inserted this question because all the stakeholders in the region agreed that lack of development triggered most of the other factors that impacted on the human security of the people which later resulted in violent conflict. This question is explored further in chapter seven of this thesis.

According to Leftwich (2005), the functions of the state include; 'defence against external attack and internal security, the promotion and protection of the economy, democratisation, and the associated demand for state provision of welfare' (Leftwich 2005: 143). This in essence means that it is part of the role of the Nigerian government to promote and protect the economy of the Niger Delta as well as provide amenities that will enhance the development of the region. The case of the Niger Delta is somewhat different as the government have left the development of oil producing communities entirely in the hands of the MNCs working in the region. Evidence from my ethnography which involved in-depth interviews, participant observation and document review indicates that the MNCs have been responsible for the provision of basic infrastructures and the development of oil producing communities for decades without the active involvement of the government. Although the government has created several development agencies such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta as well as several other state development organisations, the development of the region has remained stagnant. These organisations were set up primarily to transform the Niger Delta into an economically viable and secured region as well as to regenerate the ecology of the region while maintaining peace (NDDC, 2004). Unfortunately, these organisations have not been able to render any significant

development in these communities as they are embroiled in massive corruption (Omotola, 2007). In an interview with one of the senior managers of NDDC, he asserted that there is widespread corruption in the organisation and that the commission achieves less than 20% budget implementation each year. He lamented that when the commission was created in year 2000, they were mandated to visit the oil producing communities, carry out a sustainable livelihood assessment (SLA) and draw a budget based on the needs of the people. Presently, however, projects are being imposed on the communities by the commission based on how much the members can make by executing such projects and in most cases the projects are not in line with what the people really want.

Going back to the initial question of whose responsibility it is to develop the Niger Delta, both the Nigerian government and the MNCs operating in the region shift the responsibility to each other and this has left the communities in what can be described as a 'development imbroglio'. The government insist that since the MNCs are profit oriented and they are making profit in the region, they should be saddled with the responsibility of developing the areas where they exploit oil. The argument of the government is that the development of oil producing communities is one of the Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) of the MNCs operating in the region and anything the government does in terms of development and provision of infrastructures is just to complement what has already been done by the MNCs. In an interview with the special adviser to the governor on oil and gas matter, he stated that although it is the primary responsibility of the government to develop every community in the Niger Delta, the onus rest on the MNCs to develop the oil producing communities. He stated further that every oil company operating in the region is expected to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the communities which will state the needs of the communities and how the MNCs will address the needs. Furthermore, he argued that since oil exploration results in water, land, air and noise pollution, the MNCs must develop the communities as a means of compensating them for the inconveniences oil exploration might have caused them. When reminded of the fact that the MNCs pay taxes and royalties to the government and that the law does not require them to primarily develop the communities, the official argued that the MNCs do not pay commensurate royalties to the government and that it is part of the CSR of the MNCs to

provide infrastructures for the communities. He stated that rather than primarily developing the communities, the primary responsibility of the government is to provide 'enabling environment' for the MNCs to operate and develop the region. He concluded that since the MNCs will not develop all the communities and just focus on those that is oil producing, it is imperative for them to develop oil producing communities while the government focus their attention on communities that are not oil producing.

On the contrary, several interviews with some staff of the MNCs reveal otherwise. MNCs staff also admitted that the lack of development in these communities have impacted on their activities negatively. They stated that the government have not lived up to its responsibilities of providing basic infrastructures for the people and that since the government are far from the people, the only 'government' the indigenes of the Niger Delta see are the MNCs. This is the reason why the people sometimes go to the extreme when making demands on the oil companies. For instance, a senior manager in Chevron stated that '*We go by the laws of the land and that is what we operate on. Sometimes they shift the blame on us because of developmental and other issues, some of these things are statutory and the responsibility of the government. For example development is the responsibility of the government and our joint ventures with the federal government does not give us any room to develop communities but because they don't see anything and they cannot fight government they fight us, so we take responsibility for everything and it is not meant to be……. that is not our responsibility our agreement with the government does not have that clause. The law of the land does not say so but we also know that if we don't do what we can and we wait for the government then we will stop our operations because the government will not do it because if we wait for the government we will not do business*' (MNCCHEV03). Four other senior staff in the oil companies reiterated this fact and insisted that the CSR of the MNCs is supposed to compliment the development effort of the government and not to be the primary providers of these infrastructures. They argue that the government knows that they do not have a choice than to develop the region if they want to continue working in the region and this is unfair to them because they pay royalties and all the necessary taxes to the government.

The implication of this issue of development in the Niger Delta is that the region remains underdeveloped. Although some infrastructures put in place such as school

buildings, boreholes, cottage hospitals, access roads are visible in some of the communities visited, the fact remains that these infrastructures are not adequate to push for the required economic development. For instance, in Iwhrekan community, a company built some blocks of classrooms for the local secondary school but the inability of the state and local government to staff the schools implies that the buildings remain empty while students from the community travel several miles to another community to attend a school. Furthermore, in instances whereby the MNCs refuse to attend to the needs of the communities or when the MNCs explain to them that their demand would have to go into their budget for the following year, the communities protest by stopping the MNCs from reaching their flow stations and this sometimes result in violent confrontations between the protesters and security agents. As long as the government and other agencies in the region do not take responsibility for the development of these oil producing communities, it is inevitable that conflict will sometimes erupt between oil producing communities and the security agents stationed in the region to guard the facilities of the MNCs.

In conclusion, the apparent lack of development in many Niger Delta communities is a major source of conflict in the Niger Delta region. The predatory nature of the Nigerian government whereby the huge resources that accrue from the sale of oil does not result in development is a major source of conflict in the region (Evans, 1989). Poor level of education, lack of basic infrastructure as well as the inability of the government and the MNCs to agree on whose role it is to develop the region has left the region in a perpetual state of underdevelopment. The level of poverty in the region coupled with the fact that they wake up daily to see the affluence in the residential camps of MNCs increase the grievance and anger the people feel towards the MNCs and the government which in some cases leads to violent protests. For a lasting solution to conflict in the region, the grievances of the people must not only be identified but addressed in such a way that will favour all the stakeholders in the region.

5.3 Government community development agencies.

In response to the level of degradation experienced in the Niger Delta as well as the clamour for development in this region, the federal government as well as some of the states in the Niger Delta created some agencies to deal with the problem of

underdevelopment as well as the inadequate level of infrastructures in the Niger Delta region. This section of the thesis will examine some of the agencies saddled with the development of local communities in the Niger Delta region. Based on some theoretical analysis of these development agencies coupled with some empirical details obtained from my ethnographic studies, this section will explore the success and failures of these agencies, the limitations, as well as the indigenes' perception of these government 'created' agencies. It is important to state that although several researchers in this region have been able to explore the activities of these agencies, there has been no detailed analysis of the interference in the activities of these agencies by government officials, politicians as well as 'the big men' from these states. Furthermore, the role of these agencies in the escalation/resolution of conflict in this region is another important aspect that has not been explored and this will be examined. Although the principal mandate of these agencies were/are to develop local communities in the Niger Delta, empirical studies have shown that not only are the agencies lacking in this regard, they have inadvertently in some cases been the primary cause of conflict in some of these communities.

5.3.1 Federal Government development agencies

The first approach towards the development of the Niger Delta was the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) in 1959 by colonial administration (Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2010). NDDB was created by the government to accelerate the development of the region especially in the agricultural sector (Frynas, 2001). Unfortunately for the people in the Niger Delta, the failure of these development agencies dates back to the 1960s- starting with the first agency as the NDDB was a failure and was regarded as 'little more than a public relation exercise' (Frynas, 2001:36). More than three decades later, and after a sustained campaign by a group of ethnic Ogoni leaders led by late Ken Saro Wiwa, the federal government under General Babangida established another development agency, the Oil Mineral Petroleum Development Agency Commission (OMPADEC) which was again saddled with the responsibility of developing the Niger Delta (Omotola 2007, Idemudia et. Al., 2010).

OMPADEC was created by the government as an agency that would not only be involved in the development of the oil producing communities but also to act as a mediator

between the MNCs and the communities (Okonta, 2006). Other aims of the agency included: addressing the challenge of human insecurity as a result of environmental degradation due to oil exploration, receiving and channelling monthly allocations from the federal government to develop oil producing communities as well as tackling ecological problems arising from oil exploration and exploitation (Omotola, 2007). In order to fund the agency and to ensure that the agency was able to carry out its statutory duties, the federal government increased the derivation formula from 1.5 to 3% of total government revenue with the money intended solely for development through OMPADEC (Frynas, 2001). Unfortunately for the indigenes of the Niger Delta, OMPADEC was not different from NDDB as the organisation was encumbered with corruption on a very large scale. Several projects embarked upon by the agency were left unfinished (Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2010).

The advent of democracy in 1999 offered the people of the Niger Delta fresh hope that there would indeed be a change in the way they have been treated by the successive military governments. Many of my respondents from the three states interviewed admitted that general impression was that moving from years of military dictatorship to democratically elected government would actually bring the much needed succour to the indigenes of the Niger Delta. An indigene of Bayelsa who is an ex-militant and currently benefitting from the amnesty programme explained that the thoughts of Nigeria returning to democracy coupled with several promises of the candidates contesting for political offices was enough to reduce militancy in the region at that time. He stated that although some of the youths were employed by politicians to carry out electoral malpractices, many others were of the opinion that the entrenchment of democracy would bring the much needed development and eradicate poverty in the region. Shortly before the 1999 elections, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (who eventually became civilian president) visited the region with his campaign train and acknowledged the level of human insecurity in the region (Omotola, 2007) and promised that if elected president, he will develop a programme that will urgently deal with the insecurity, youth restfulness, environmental degradation and poverty in the region (Jike, 2002)

Immediately after being elected president and in fulfilment of one of his campaign promises, President Obasanjo sent a bill for the creation of the Niger Delta Development

Commission and the commission was created in year 2000. The mission of the organisation is to facilitate 'the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful' (NDDC, 2000). The mandate of the organisation is to develop the whole region in terms of provision of infrastructure and also to ameliorate the damage done to the environment that has impacted on the human security of its inhabitants. Furthermore, one of the main reasons for the creation of the commission was to put an end to youth restiveness in the region. While the moribund OMPADEC was entirely funded through the derivation principle whereby 3% of the oil income accruable to the government was paid to the commission, NDDC on the other hand was expected to be funded by the federal and states government as well as with contributions from the MNCs operating in the region (Brandtzæg, et.al, 2008). Furthermore, an act establishing the NDDC states that in respect to the funding of the commission, the federal government shall deduct from source 15% of the total monthly statutory allocations due to states and this will represent the contribution of the federal government (every state in Nigeria receive monthly allocation from the federal government); 3% of the total annual budget of all the MNCs operating in the region including gas processing companies and 50% of the money due to member states from the ecological fund[1] (NDDC, 2000). The implication of this is that the commission is expected to be well funded unlike the case of OMPADEC where the issue of funding for the organisation was an issue from the onset.

According to Omofonmwan and Odia (2009) between 2000 and 2009, about 2trillion naira (£8 billion) had been channelled to the NDDC for the development of the region. Previous empirical analysis of NDDC indicate that the organisation was successful in the first few years of its creation as it executed about 800 various types of developmental projects such as building of classroom blocks, basic healthcare delivery, youth empowerment initiatives and other forms of infrastructural development (Omotola, 2007; Idemudia, et. Al, 2010). It is important to state that although some of the communities I visited have benefitted from the activities of the commission, the number of communities that have actually benefitted is small compared to those who do not

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[1] The ecological fund was established in 1981 to ameliorate ecological problems such as soil erosion, flood, drought, desertification, oil spillage, pollution, general environmental pollution, storm, tornadoes, bush fire, crop pest, landslide and earthquakes

have any developmental programme that could be attributed to NDDC (only 4 of the 18 communities visited). It is also important to state that considering the fact that the Niger Delta region has over 3,000 communities most of which have been totally neglected for decades, it will take a very long time for all the communities to benefit from the activities of the organisation. Considering the fact that development agencies have a lifespan that seems rather ephemeral (as evident in NDDB and OMPADEC), many communities will actually not benefit from the commission before it gives way to another agency which will then start again from scratch and this is bad for the development of the region.

The first lapse of the NDDC was that the people of the region affected by resource exploitation and who the commission was directed towards were not involved in drafting the bill setting up the commission. This has given people from the region a feeling that the organisation was not created for their development and that it is another opportunity for the governing elites to siphon state funds. One of the organisations that out rightly rejected the commission was the Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). They argued that the commission was another plot to steal money on the premise of the development of the region (Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2010). This scepticism was also shared by many of my respondents as they argued that any development agency that does not involve the indigenes who are the ones suffering the direct consequences of oil exploration and exploitation is bound to fail as such agency will not address the plights of the people. Three of the respondents argued that previous development agencies have failed because of their top-down approach and only an agency that adopts a bottom-up approach, whereby the people are involved at every phase from planning to implementation, can succeed in the region. A senior government official in Port Harcourt explained that the main reason why NDDB and OMPADEC failed was because developmental initiatives were designed in Abuja and that the people usually have no input in these initiatives. She stated that unless the people are actively carried along and a sustainable livelihood analysis (SLA) is carried out to determine what the needs of the people are, NDDC is bound to fail as did the previous developmental agencies set up for the region. Furthermore, there is no performance guidelines in the bill neither is there any means to control the activities of

the organisation (Frynas, 2001) and this gives room for poor performance as far as the activities of the organisation is concerned (MNCCHEV03).

As with several government agencies in Nigeria, corruption has been a huge stumbling block to NDDC. Corruption is rife in the organisation as three managing directors of the organisation were sacked because of corrupt practices in a period of three years (Idemudia, et al, 2010). Corruption in the organisation has various facets which will be explored in detail in this section. One major avenue for corruption is through patronage in the commission. The structure of the organisation is such that the president appoints the chairman of the board as well as the other members of the board while the state governors of the nine oil producing states also appoint state representatives to sit on the board. The implication of this structure is that since all the members of the board are appointed by the federal or state governments, their loyalties are primarily towards the people that appointed them. Four of my interviewees alleged that the government appoints only people that are loyal to them to these boards and appointments are not based on merit or level of competence. This system of appointments is similar to what obtains in the federal and states' government executive cabinets where members are appointed based on either loyalty to the president or governor as the case may be or compensated for the roles they have played in the election of the president or the concerned governor. Some of my interviewees further stated that there has been cases where known political thugs have been appointed as board members in other to compensate them for their roles in supporting the election of the people that appointed them. A senior government official explained that sometimes the appointees for the NDDC board have been mandated to make sure that contracts are awarded to companies that are affiliated to the presidency or senior government agencies and this has sustained a high level of corruption and impunity in the commission.

Furthermore, the ways and processes of contract allocation in the agency is also a source of concern. The mode of contract allocation in the commission lacks transparency and most contracts do not follow due process (Idemudia, et al, 2010). This might be attributed to the fact that many senior government officials benefit from the 'secrecy' in contract allocation whereby there is total disregard for due process (DELTAGOVOFF01). The official interviewed explained that contract allocations are

done in such a way that board members benefit monetarily in the process. He alleged that most of the national assembly members as well as board members have registered companies that they use to bid for contracts through third parties. He noted that contract allocation has become 'family affairs' whereby contracts are awarded to board members without any form of checks. Another dimension to the story is that the national assembly members also double as supervisors for the contracts they have awarded. Although the NDDC bill stipulates that there should be 'adequate supervision', the bill does not put in place any form of checks on the people saddled with the responsibility of monitoring the commission and this is a major problem with the bill establishing the agency. The implication of this is that since the supervisors are in charge of *'marking their own scripts'*, uncompleted projects go unquestioned and litter the whole Niger Delta. When asked why it is difficult for the organisation to have checks and balances in its operation, the NDDC official stated that '*since all the people that are supposed to monitor project delivery and ensure that projects are delivered and measure to a high quality are the same people who 'indirectly' executed the project, there is no way the commission can be answerable to the people from the region*' (DELTAGOVOFF01).

Several attempts to reduce corruption in NDDC have been frustrated by those people benefitting from the massive corruption in the organisation. For instance, in 2001 Transparency International organised a conference in Port-Hacourt to try and sensitise the oil industry in Nigeria on the benefit of using Integrity Pact (IP) tool (a system developed by Transparency international to help public organisations, businesses and civil society organisation in addressing corruption related to public contracting) to address the high level of corruption associated with the awards of contracts. Although some of the participants at the conference including some of the MNCs operating in the regions, government officials, civil society organisations as well as some staff of NDDC see this tool as a welcome development, many of the organisation's board members and senior staff were sceptical about the adoption of the tool as they do not see the need for any external support in fighting corruption in the organisations (Idemudia, et al, 2010).

Another problem facing NDDC is the issue of funding for the commission. According to Muller (2010), between 2001 and 2007, the commission were underfunded not only by the federal government but also by the MNCs involved in the partnership. This view was

corroborated in an interview with one of the senior staff of the commission. He explained that although there remains issue with corruption in the commission, the commission remains underfunded. He stated that all the partners (federal and state governments as well as the MNCs) are always found wanting when it comes to funding the commission and this accounts for the low completion rates of project by the commission. In a similar vein, a senior manager in Chevron stated that although his organisation endeavours to fulfil its obligation of contributing its share to the commission, the government on its own deliberately underfunds the commission expecting the MNCs to cover for their shortcomings. He alleged that there is no single year in which the government meet up with the remittance to the commission and this accounts for the commission having a project completion rates of just about 20% for all the projects embarked upon. This view of low project completion rate was upheld by several other respondents. In some of the communities I visited in the region, most of them complained that they have not benefitted from the commission in any way and those that felt the 'presence' of the commission argued that most of the projects by NDDC are left uncompleted. In Gbaramatu kingdom of Delta state, several uncompleted projects embarked upon by NDDC are visible in the area and another senior engineer in NDDC agreed that the commission has a poor project completion rate.

In a similar vein, an interview with a senior engineer with the commission in Warri revealed that the commission was indeed able to deliver several developmental projects in the early years of its creation before being taken over by 'greedy politicians'. He stated that *'I will say initially when NDDC was established, we were requesting projects from communities directly based on the need of the communities before executing such projects. After the pioneer board finished its tenure, we don't go down to the communities again, now they put in projects from Abuja in the budget, they put the community projects from Abuja and now it has become a thing of which project will make money more, it is like most of these projects are imposed on these communities, so they just pick project for community and put it there. For example, a community may not need a foreshore wall but because foreshore wall will make more money in billions they just put those ones in the budget from Abuja'* (DELTAGOVOFF01). Although the projects are good for the people in the long run, they are not the priorities of the people and do not cater for their immediate needs.

Another factor responsible for poor completion rates of projects which has also generated a lot of conflict in the past is what an official of NDDC describe as 'auto power'. Auto power is common in several government agencies in Nigeria and it simply means a situation whereby whoever is at the helm of an organisation has the power to do whatever he/she likes without being questioned. It has gradually become a culture in Nigeria whereby even the subjects do not question the leaders when they are in power for two reasons. The first reason is because they have a naïve belief that whoever is in power will not be there forever and that it is just for a period of time and 'hope' that the next person will correct any anomalies. The second is that people keep quiet because of issues relating to ethnicity so that they will not be seen as opposing someone from their ethnic group regardless of whether the person is doing something wrong and should be cautioned. This sentiment is common in the Niger Delta partly due to the low level of awareness or due to the fragile issue of ethnicity in the region. An example is the fact that despite the fact that many of my respondents do not support the leadership of the current president of Nigeria (President Goodluck Jonathan) because they feel his policies have not impacted on them positively, they still want him to remain in power because he is of the same ethnic origin as them. In NDDC, the scenario is the same, whoever is the chairman of the board holds the day and decides what is done and what region is developed. In some cases some previous chairmen have been accused of diverting resources to their own communities and this has triggered violent conflict between the communities for which the resources were originally intended and where they were eventually located. A senior manager in NDDC stated that projects are normally based on budgets, and the law establishing the commission clearly stipulates this, however, there has been instances where the chairman will use his 'auto power' to initiate a project that was not budgeted for in a fiscal year. In many of such instances, the contractors are paid initial mobilisation fund to embark on the project but they are unable to continue the project as the commission cannot continue its funding because it was not originally budgeted. These sorts of projects also account for many of the abandoned projects in the region and this causes grievances among the indigenes.

Although some organisations such as Traditional Rulers of Oil Minerals Producing Communities of Nigeria (TROMPCON) have assessed NDDC and argue that the

commission has been able to fulfil most of its mandates to the communities in the Niger Delta, several organisations think otherwise. The Homestead Study group which is an advocacy NGO at the forefront of sensitising the indigenes of the Niger Delta, the Urhobo National Association of North America as well as several other NGOs, civil society organisations and prominent indigenes in the Niger Delta have all passed a vote of no confidence on the commission and called for its immediate scrapping by the federal government (Omotola, 2007). This view of scrapping the commission was shared by many of my respondents who argued that the commission was set up only to satisfy the intent of the elites in the Niger Delta. In a group interview I conducted in Otuasega community in Bayelsa state which was attended by the caretaker paramount ruler and some chiefs, the participants argued that NDDC is an avenue to steal resources and that very few communities benefit from the commission. According to the paramount ruler *'The NDDC has been collecting all the money without us getting anything in form of development, the other day when I went there to demand for some things, I met a woman who told me that they just awarded a contract to my community but we later discovered that the woman awarded her company the contract which is worth 50million (about £200,000) for a small 6 classroom block that was never completed'* (BAYELSAGROUP02)

5.3.2 State Government Development Agencies

Apart from the various initiatives of the federal government to set up development agencies in the Niger Delta with the mandate of developing the region and giving something back to the people where oil in explored, some state governments in the region also embarked on parallel development initiatives in order to reduce poverty in the region. This section will explore the activities of these development agencies, their funding as well as their relationships with the federal government established development agencies. The section will also use empirical details from my ethnography to assess the impact of these agencies on the human security of the indigenes of the Niger Delta states.

There are nine states in the Niger Delta region that are also classified as oil producing. These states are Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. One other distinguishing factor between these states and the other states in Nigeria is the fact that these nine states is the derivation fund explored in chapter three.

Since the law establishing the derivation fund states that the fund must be specifically channelled to oil producing communities to ameliorate the sufferings of the people impacted by oil exploration, the states' governments are required by law to utilise the funds for the development of these oil bearing communities. In this regards, five of these oil producing states created state development commissions in order to manage these funds while in the remaining four states the funds are directly managed by the states' governments.

The five states that have set up oil producing areas development commissions are Abia, Delta, Edo, Imo and Ondo while Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River and Rivers states do not have any commission to manage the funds and the funds are directly managed by the government or the ministry of oil and gas. Ondo state was the first state to set up the state's development commission in 2001 and it was called Ondo State oil Producing areas Development Commission (OSOPADEC). The state commits 40% of the 13% derivation to intervene in the development of the oil producing areas in the state (OSOPADEC, 2001). The other four states have similar agencies such as: Delta State oil Producing areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC); Abia State oil Producing Development areas Commission (ASOPADEC); Imo State oil Producing areas Development Commission (ISOPADEC) and Edo State Government oil Producing areas Development Commission (EDOSOGPADEC). While Delta state and Edo state commit 50% and 40% of the 13% derivation to these 'PADECS', Abia and Imo states do not disclose the percentage of their derivation funds committed to the commissions. It is important to state that all the commissions have the same mandate which is to develop the areas where oil is explored in their various states. Full details of the activities of these commissions are beyond the scope of this study but I will explore the activities of DESOPADEC as only Delta state has a development commission out of the three states covered by this research.

DESOPADEC was established in 2007 after several allegations by the indigenes that the government is diverting the 13% derivation which was meant for the development of oil producing areas. The commissioner for finance in Delta state revealed that between 2007 and 2013, the government paid the commission a total amount of N179.4 billion (about £700m) and stated that the fund was released annually during the period

(Punch, 2014). He stated further that the money represents 50% of the 13% derivation that accrued to the state during the period although he did not state the exact amount that was remitted to the state within the period. In an interview with a director in DESOPADEC (DELTAGOVOFF02), he stated that the commission has done a lot in alleviating the sufferings of the people. He explained that the commission has 3,000 staff and have assisted oil producing communities in areas such as health, education, infrastructural development, agriculture, sports as well as assisting youths to become self-employed. While noting that the commission could have done more for the communities if not for the limited funding, he stated that the agency have commissioned several projects like schools, cottage hospitals, water projects as well as rural electrification schemes. One important point made by respondent DELTAGOVOFF02 is the fact that conflicts have actually reduced in Delta state compared to neighbouring Bayelsa state which does not have such a commission. He concluded that although the mandate of the organisation was for the development of only oil producing communities, they have also assisted other impacted communities. According to the director *'we have also extended our hand of fellowship to non-oil producing communities in the state and that is why we have been able to drastically reduce conflict'* (DELTAGOVOFF02).

During my interviews in the communities, I asked some community members about the activities of DESOPADEC and some confirmed that they have seen 'few' projects completed by the commission. A respondent from Gbaramatu kingdom in Delta state explained that although the commission is '*trying in some areas such as granting foreign scholarships to indigenes, you need to know someone influential from the state to be able to get any benefit from these organisations'* (DELTAIND01). He stated that the commission is too bureaucratic and added that contracts allocation and bidding processes are done in secrecy to favour only the 'big men' in the state. In another interview with another respondent who is the publicity secretary of an NGO called HOSTCOM (Host communities of oil producing areas) NGODELTA01, he agreed that the establishment of DESOPADEC in Delta state has actually reduced the incidence of conflict in the state relative to Bayelsa state. He explained further that HOSTCOM works with over 1,000 communities in the Niger Delta and has discovered that states with

active oil producing areas development commissions are relatively more stable and economically more vibrant than states where the state government administers the resources accruable through derivation directly. He stated that although the 'PADECS' have their own problems as well, something is still given back to the people through the commission and the awareness that the states are channelling these funds through the commissions alone reduces incidence of conflict.

Bayelsa and Rivers states which are part of this study do not have any of these development commissions. In my interviews with senior government officials in these two states, they stated that since they have ministries of oil and gas, they see the commission as a duplication of efforts by the government. They argued that states that have these commissions do not have a clear mandate for them and that developmental activities are being duplicated. However, indigenes of these states accuse the governments of corruption and insincerity in dealing with the people. 15 respondents from the three states agree with the fact that since the establishment of DESOPADEC in Delta state, the people have been more involved in their own development and there is visible evidence of development in some of the communities. Respondent NGODELTA01 stated that when his organisation challenged the governor of Bayelsa state in 2007 to create a state oil area development commission, the governor simply answered that such initiative will create 'two governments' in the state. He explained further that the governor believes that the resources are enormous and creating such commission will only split the state into two with two governments. Although some government officials said they have tried to prevail on subsequent governors to establish such commission, they have not been able to get a positive response. A senior official in Bayelsa state stated that oil resources and income in the state are shrouded in secrecy and it is only the governor and his inner cabinet that knows how much exactly accrues to the state and how the money is being spent.

From the aforementioned, it is clear that many states in the Niger Delta are not transparent with the management of oil proceeds that accrue to the state. Although the extent to which the creation of state oil area development commissions reduces incidences of conflict and address the issue of human security is unclear, the creation of these commissions could certainly go a long way in addressing issues of human security

in these states. Despite the fact that the law establishing the 13% derivation states that the fund is meant for the development of oil producing areas, some of the governors feel otherwise. Most of them do not see any reason for establishing such commissions and the ones that did are not sincere in their funding. A question that is constantly asked by indigenes of the states that have the commissions is the reason why the state is committing only 40% or 50% of the fund to the agencies considering the fact that the fund is specifically for the development of these areas and it is separate from the allocation that accrues to the state from the federal government. According to Mbamalu (2013), between 1999 and 2013 the federal government has paid over N7.28 trillion (about £30billion) to the region through the derivation fund but there is nothing to show for it. The region has remained impoverished with millions of people from the region living below the poverty line. In 2013, several communities from the oil producing states protested at various times regarding the fund, demanding full explanation on how the money is being spent. In most cases the protesters were dispersed by the police who use maximum force to subdue any form of protest.

5.4 Militarisation of the Niger Delta

Since the agitations by Ken Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni ethnic group in the early 1990s, the militarisation of the region has reached an all-time high. The advent of democracy in 1999 offered renewed hope to people from the region who thought that a democratic regime would be different from previous military regimes that militarised the region in the name of protecting oil infrastructures thereby killing thousands of people in the process. The 1999 raid on Odi community as well as the 2009 massacre in Rivers state by the military all point to the fact that even democratic governments in Nigeria do not respect the dignity of the people living in the Niger Delta. Chapter three of this thesis offered a comprehensive analysis of the militarisation of the region by subsequent military and democratic governments as well as the reaction of the indigenes to the militarisation of the region. This section of the thesis will explore the role the government has played in the continuous militarisation of the region as well the effect of the militarisation of the region on the human security of the people. Empirical evidence from the my ethnographic studies will be used to explore the use of armed forces by incumbent governments as a source of political oppression in the region

which in most cases lead to incidences of sporadic violence. The 2009 amnesty offered repentant militants will also be analysed to determine its result four years after its inauguration. Based on recent empirical evidence from the region and the attitude of the government to use its military might at any slight provocation in the region, it can be argued that the fragile peace being experienced in the region could change swiftly leading to violent conflicts the likes of which has never been experienced before in the history of Nigeria.

5.4.1 Political Oppression in the Niger Delta

Since the advent of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, contestations for political positions have been really fierce in the region. Due to the fact that the resources that accrue to the region in the form of oil derivations, royalties and taxes exceed those of other regions in Nigeria, battles for political posts in the region are also very intense. From local government representation to elections to houses of assembly and governorship elections, most elections in the Niger Delta are keenly contested with many resulting in violent conflicts.

The impact of political oppression in the Niger Delta is not felt by the indigenes alone as MNCs operating in the region sometimes also bear the brunt of this problem. According to Human Rights Watch (2002) some politicians and former military personnel sponsor militants, many of whom are used regularly to cause havoc in the communities, and hold MNCs operating in the region to ransom. In an interview with a youth leader in Ikarama community in Bayelsa state (BAYELSALIND04), he alleged that several youths from the communities and neighbouring communities have been armed by prominent government officials in the state to oppress whoever they see as a threat. When asked how the officials fund the militant groups, respondent BAYELSALIND04 alleged that the officials fund their escapades through direct stealing of states resources as well as through the procurement of arms for militant groups to hold MNCs' operatives hostages in return for ransom. He added that the implication of this act is that when the youths commit any atrocity, *'they run back to the community to hide and there have been cases where the military have come to flush (sic) out the youths leading to the harassment of other people in the community including other innocent youths, women and children who in most cases know nothing about what has happened'* (BAYELSALIND04).

In discussions with some community members in the three sample states, some of them explained how influential government officers like local government chairmen, commissioners and even incumbent governors seek to consolidate their political positions by using militants to oppress their political opponent or whoever they perceive as threats to their political ambition. They explained that the issue of militancy in the region has been sustained by government officials in the state who patronise militants in their quest to either gain or hold on to their political positions. A very good example is the relationship between the current president of Nigeria (President Goodluck Jonathan) and a very notorious 43-year-old ex-militant general, Oweizide Ekpemupolo (aka Tompolo). According to most of my interviewees in Rivers state, Tompolo is not only the most feared man in the state; he is also the most influential person in the state- even more popular than the state governor. Before President Jonathan assumed the post of the presidency in Nigeria, he visited the camp of Tompolo in the creeks at the time when he was the vice- president. According to Ileowo (2013), Tompolo was so powerful to the extent that when Jonathan visited his 'Notorious Camp 5 terrorist quarters in 2009, he ordered all the security details of the vice president together with his entourage to stay outside while he met with the vice president alone'. Many of my interviewees in Rivers state alleged that Tompolo played a large role in the emergence of President Jonathan as President in 2011 as he personally led the 'rigging machinery' of the President supported by other ex-militants like Mujaheed Asari Dokubo who was also a militant leader at the time.

Not long after Goodluck Jonathan emerged as the president of Nigeria, his government awarded Global West Vessel Specialist Limited (GWVSL) a company owned by Tompolo a contract worth $103.4 million (over N15 billion) to supply 20 vessels which is to be used by the Nigerian Navy for surveillance in the Niger Delta (Odunlami, 2012). The terms of the contract includes: provision of security for oil pipelines, repelling pirates and oil thieves from the region, guarding the country's water ways as well as collecting levies on behalf of the federal government (Ileowo, 2013). The contract was for a period of five years and will be automatically renewed when the period expires. Many of the indigenes of the Niger Delta see the 'juicy' contract as a form of payback to Tompolo for the 'hard work' he put into the election of President Goodluck Jonathan. Although the federal government of Nigeria has consistently denied the fact that the presidency has

any relationship with the ex-militants, both Tompolo and Asari Dokubo at separate interviews with journalists have vowed to 'destroy' Nigeria if Goodluck Jonathan was not re-elected president in 2015. According to Ileowo (2013) 'Tompolo's militant colleague, Asari Dokubo has threatened to destroy Nigeria and match his opponents' bullet for bullet, bomb for bomb, and missile for missile if Dr. Goodluck Jonathan isn't re-elected in 2015, because only his stay in office will guarantee Tompolo's business which will in turn guarantee continued oil bunkering and theft in the Niger-Delta'.

The story is similar on the state level as state governors also maintain a steady 'army' of militants used to perpetuate electoral violence and oppress electoral opponents. Most of these militants (although they are now called ex-militants since the amnesty granted them in 2009) are being maintained on state's resources with some of them even on the payroll of the government. I interviewed a senior government official in the Ministry of Energy in Bayelsa state who gave a vivid explanation of how previous governors of Bayelsa state aided militancy in the state. He explained that in 2002, former governor of Bayelsa state Diepreye Alamieyeseigha assembled a group of youths known as Bayelsa Volunteers to address the issue of sea piracy in the state. The governor selected 10 'hard' youths from each community and trained them to tackle the problem. These boys were armed by the state government and were on the government's payroll throughout the period. Respondent GOVTOFFBAYEL03 explained that as the boys were working to tackle sea piracy, the governor was also preparing them for the 2003 elections in the state. The 2003 elections in Bayelsa state was one of the most violent in Nigeria as weapons such as guns and grenades were freely used (Human Rights Watch, 2004) and several government officials including commissioners were fingered to have actively been involved in the violence. After the 2003 elections which Alamieyeseigha won, he dissolved the Bayelsa volunteers without retrieving the guns from them. Being his second term he was not eligible to contest again and no longer needed the services of the group. Respondent GOVTOFFBAYEL03 stated that immediately after the government dissolved the Bayelsa volunteers, armed robbery became the order of the day in Bayelsa state. Other social vices such as oil bunkering, kidnapping expatriates for ransom as well as the destruction of oil installations became rampant. The tale is similar to both Rivers and Delta states as 16 respondents alleged that the state governors 'breed' militancy by arming youths to perpetuate electoral violence. The implication of

this phenomenon is that there are frequent clashes between different militant groups due to issues of supremacy, access to oil bunkering routes and territorial demarcation. This is another dynamics of the conflict in the Niger Delta. The response of the federal government to the issue of militancy has always been the use of force which in most cases results in the death of innocent citizens. All the communities I visited for the purpose of this research have at one time or the other experienced military invasion in the guise of 'flushing' out militants and in most cases it has resulted in the killing of innocent civilians.

5.4.2 Government Support of the MNCs

Since the government of Nigeria rely on the revenue generated in the Niger Delta, it is easy to understand why the government will do anything to protect the MNCs and oil installations in the region sometimes at the detriment of the indigenes. Allegations of human rights abuse in the Niger Delta have been well documented and there is hardly any community in the region that has not experienced armed forces brutality on issues relating to their relationship with the oil companies operating in the region. This section of the thesis will explore the issue of militarisation of the Niger Delta by the government to 'protect' the MNCs as well as oil installations in the region. It is safe to conclude that the government of Nigeria value the activities of the MNCs in the region more than the lives or livelihoods of the people from the region. This feeling of helplessness by the indigenes have also resulted in violent protests against the MNCs which again propel further militarisation of the region and the resultant effect is always the use of force on the inhabitants of the region.

It is understandable that due to the billions of dollars invested in the region in terms of oil infrastructures, the government should play a vital role in protecting these infrastructures. What is difficult to understand is the enormous powers that these MNCs wield in the region. In an interview with a programme officer, Environmental Rights Action- ERA (Friends of the Earth), the respondent stated that many people have lost their livelihoods and many are still losing their livelihoods as a result of oil exploration in the Niger Delta. He explained that during exploration and exploitation of oil, the land and water bodies are being impacted and since these constitutes the sources of livelihoods of the people; they invariably lose their sources of livelihoods. When people

lose their livelihoods, they become angry and protest against the destruction of their livelihoods, but these protests in most cases are crushed by armed forces present in the region even when it is a peaceful protest. A prominent chief in Gbaramatu Kingdom asserts that '*when the government use the military to suppress peaceful protests, it makes the people more determined and resolute and this sometimes constitutes a shift from peaceful protests to violent disruptions. In some cases where peaceful protests relating to the loss of livelihoods were crushed by the military, some communities have turned their aggression against MNCs staff and facilities, by attacking oil workers or destroying their equipments. The result of such confrontation is better imagined as the government typically respond by further militarising the region which again leads to loss of lives and property. There have been instances where MNCs have been alleged to have sponsored military invasions of communities in retaliations for the destruction of their facilities*' (DELTAINDO9).

In some instances, military men are assigned directly to some MNCs and the military men take orders from the company instead of the government. An official from ERA explained that '*since 1999 they also use the military to intimidate the people, recently we were going to monitor a spill and Shell and JTF accosted us and harassed us, they wanted to beat us up and attempted to arrest us, even the military man was asking Shell if they should allow us to go and inspect the site. So that means Shell now has the authority to tell them not to allow us to go and that was just last month(August, 2013), a spill that occurred in Bisini which affected the whole of Tailor creek, we were not even on their facility, we were on a public road and they even slapped someone from the community, you can imagine the power of Shell………the Shell man (sic) said you people should leave this place, we asked him some questions but he couldn't answer our questions. Their role in community conflict is a lot, they can order to arrest anybody and the soldiers are like hunting dogs for the companies which they use anytime against the people*'(NGOBAYELSA01). Several other similar scenarios were talked about in the interviews in some of the communities I visited during the research.

As long as the human security of the people of the Niger Delta is impacted and the government continues to resort to force, there is bound to be conflict. Government support of the MNCs over the indigenes not only results in grievance but further impacts on the human security of the people. Militarisation results in grievance,

however, the impact of militarisation which often results in deaths or injuries further impacts on the human security of the people. This is because many young men killed or maimed by security agents provide the income which is the main source of livelihood of some indigenes. An interviewee stated that the government make them feel 'less than humans' sometimes with the way they treat them when issues relating to the MNCs arise. Furthermore, there has been allegations that the MNCs do not maintain high standards in Nigeria as they do in other countries and because the government relies too much on the proceeds from the industry coupled with the fact that the agencies saddled with the responsibilities of maintaining these standards are engrossed in corruption, the plight of the people is likely to continue. The response to the allegations of not maintaining high standards in Nigeria by senior members of staff of some MNCs operating in Nigeria will be explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

5.4.3 Militarisation of the Niger Delta: The impact of the 2009 Amnesty programme

In August 2009, over 10,000 youths surrendered their arms and participated in the amnesty programme of the federal government. A government officer involved in the amnesty programme explained that depending on the position of the militants; they were paid between 60,000- 90,000 naira (about £250-£400) monthly 'for doing nothing'. Although some of the ex-militants were enrolled in various skill acquisition programmes by the government, the percentage of those that are gainfully employed remains very low as most of them are unable to find jobs after the completion of their vocational training. One of the respondents who is an ex-militant lamented that the government is not genuinely interested in the development of human resources in the region. He stated that the purpose of the amnesty was to stop the youths from disrupting oil exploration and not to develop the region and this is the reason why many of the youths are still angry with the government. Despite the fact that many of the youths are still being paid the monthly stipends as at the time of this field work (July-September, 2013) they are still aggrieved that they have not been gainfully employed and have to depend on the money for survival. Many of the indigenes of the Niger Delta express doubt about the success and sustainability of the amnesty programme as they believe that it is not the solution to the problems of the Niger Delta. According to respondent GOVTOFFBAYEL03, a senior government officer in Bayelsa state, *'the amnesty is the worst thing that ever happened to this region because the militants were*

granted amnesty without anything for them to do and someday this payment will stop then the crises that is above what we envisage will erupt'. Several other residents share this same view and the question they all ask is what will happen in the region if or when the government stop the payment of this monthly stipends which is inevitable.

Although the amnesty granted the militants in 2009 reduced the number of Small and Light Weapons (SALW) considerably, it has been alleged that there are still many more weapons in circulation as the militants did not surrender their entire arsenal (GOVTOFFBAYEL01; BAYELSALIND05). This is evident with the sporadic inter/intra community violence in the region where youths use sophisticated weapons such as AK47s and machine guns freely. The scenario discussed above whereby politicians use the militants (some now ex-militants) for electoral purposes also support this claim as the youths at various times have used SALW against perceived political opponents. Furthermore, the spate of kidnapping in the region assumed a new dimension. When kidnapping started in the region at the peak of the crises between 2005-2007, it was directed at MNCs officials who were kidnapped for ransom. Since the amnesty in 2009, attacks against the MNCs have reduced drastically and the rate of kidnap of expatriates has gone down considerably. However, kidnapping in the region has continued with the focus now on wealthy indigenes from the region and most of the people who are fingered in these nefarious activities are either the ex-militants or other youths that are not benefitting from the amnesty programme. In February 2014, heavily armed kidnappers abducted the cousin of President Goodluck Jonathan and demanded a ransom of N500million (£2million) from the president's family (Punch, 2014).

Since the amnesty programme started in 2009, oil bunkering in Nigeria has reached an all time high with the government stating that about 400,000 barrels of crude oil was being stolen daily in 2013 (Osun Defender, 2013). One of the agreements the government reached with the leaders of the militants before they accepted the amnesty was that they will be employed to guard the country's pipelines. As part of the agreement, the militant leaders signed pipeline protection contracts worth millions of dollars depending on the perceived strength of the group as well as the numbers of their foot soldiers. Tompolo has the biggest contract of $22.9million a year; Asari Dokubo, $9million a year while Victor Ben and Tom Ateke have a $3.8million a year contract each (The Wall Street Journal, 2012). Despite these huge contracts, oil bunkering has

continued unabated and a resident lamented that *'it is as if the boys are being given lucrative contracts to steal all the oil in the Niger Delta'* (DELTAIND04). Some of the former ex-militants that also accepted the amnesty but were unhappy that they did not secure any contract have also gone back to the creeks to continue their oil bunkering (The Wall Street Journal, 2012) and it seems there is no end in sight to this menace.

Since the amnesty in 2009, the government embarked on a fierce clampdown on the 'unrepentant' militants as well as those who took the amnesty but returned to the creeks to commit several atrocities. Furthermore, more young people that were not part of the militants earlier have also started forming militant groups in order to be considered for the next round of amnesty (BAYELSALIND05) as the programme was done in stages. Many people now see identifying with militant groups as rewarding and the best way to get state handouts. The extravagant lifestyles of the ex-militants also attract young boys to become militants as some of them see it as a way of making 'free money'. For instance, Tompolo in 2013 bought a private jet costing a whopping sum of $13.3 million -N2.12 billion (Ileowo, 2013) and many young people in the region see him as having a 'successful career'. One of my interviewees who is a teacher in a secondary school in Rivers state lamented that the children now see the ex-militants as their role models and many of them are not interesting in schooling because they argue that they do not need education to become a militant leader.

The militarization of the region has continued and clashes between armed officers and the communities is a common occurrence in the region. Although clashes between the communities and MNCs have reduced drastically, the indigenes are still aggrieved for two main reasons. First, that the government still use force against the indigenes at any slight provocation which in most cases result in the loss of lives and second, because of the fact that the government has given ex-militants undue recognition and resources which in most cases result in the ex-militant using their wealth to oppress indigenes of the Niger Delta with the backing of military personnel. The irony of the situation is that the ex-militant leaders who previously claimed that they were fighting for the rights of the indigenes (a situation that led to the militarization of the region resulting in the amnesty) now go about in convoys of fierce looking security officers and policemen causing chaos and pandemonium whenever they pass through the streets of these states.

Chapter Conclusion

Although most of the government officials interviewed in this research argued that the government is not complicit in the conflict in the Niger Delta, this research has shown otherwise. Since 1978 when the government enacted the land use law to put all the land in the country under the direct control of its agencies, the human security of the indigenes of the Niger Delta has been continuously impacted. The land and rivers in the region which served as the sources of livelihoods of the people have been taken away without adequate compensation and without giving the people alternative sources of livelihoods to fall back on. Furthermore, the communities in the region are deprived of basic infrastructures such as electricity, good roads and adequate human development. While the government and MNCs shifts the responsibility for the development of the region to each other, the region remains lacking in basic developmental projects that could enhance the livelihood of the indigenes.

The response of the communities to these issues of underdevelopment and the threat to their human security through the deprivation of their livelihoods quickly turned from peaceful protests to violent conflict against the state and the MNCs operating in the region. These confrontations led to the formation of several militant groups who took up arms against the state as well as the MNCs resulting in the loss of thousands of lives and reducing the country's oil production to an all time low. The government first responded with militarization of the region but resulted to amnesty in 2009 after the militarization failed. The amnesty although reduced the attack on the MNCs and oil facilities in the region thereby resuscitating the oil industry, it generated another problem of oil bunkering which is another source of environmental pollution and conflict in the region. The human security of the people continues to be impacted and despite all the attempts of the government to secure the region, sporadic violence is common which continues to impact on the lives of the people negatively.

In response to the agitations of the indigenes and partly because of the dwindling income that accrues to the government through oil sales, the government set up several development agencies at various times to alleviate the sufferings of the people as well as to see to the development of the region as a whole. From NDDB in 1959 to NDDC in 2000, these development agencies were the direct responses of the government to

address the issue of neglect and development which has resulted in violent conflicts against the state and the MNCs operating in the region. These institutions however were created not because the government was genuinely interested in developing the region but to make it look as if it is actively dealing with the issues and also to reduce the disruption to oil exploration. However, the half-hearted nature of the government's creation of these organisations results in their ineffectiveness. Poor planning in the establishment of the agencies coupled with the lack of adequate supervision has encouraged corruption in these agencies. Apart from not being able to alleviate the suffering of the people, the activities of the organisations have sometimes impacted negatively on the human security of the people by creating other forms of violence like inter/intra community conflicts.

When the actions of the government is compared to the reaction of the indigenes of the Niger Delta, it becomes difficult to explain whether the response of the indigenes amount to greed or grievance. While the corruption of the political elite and government organisations could be classified as greed, the resultant effect of the activities of these elite create grievances which then results in conflict. It is important to highlight that some responses of the government to the conflict like the amnesty programme created greed whereby some political elites in the region see this as an opportunity to enrich themselves. Furthermore, issues such as environmental degradation resulted in grievance which was not well managed by the government using militarisation which then impacted on the human security of the people. All these issues impact on the human security of the people and shows that the situation in the Niger Delta cannot be adequately explained by either the greed or grievance approach. This makes the human security framework a more holistic approach in explaining the conflict experienced in the Niger Delta. The following chapter of this thesis will explore the roles of the indigenes in relation to the outbreak of conflict in the region.

Chapter 6

Local communities in the Niger Delta: Perception of Human security, other stakeholders and the effect of oil exploration

Introduction

Several scholars that have researched the Niger Delta have varying illustration and analysis of the conflict in the region since oil exploration started in the late 1950s. Some of the scholars including Frynas (1999); Okonta and Douglas (2003) and Newson (2011) believe the MNCs are more responsible for the crises rocking the region than either the Nigerian government or the indigenes of the oil producing regions. On the other hand, scholars such as Ifeka(2000); Oyefusi (2007) and Courson (2009) see the activities of the Nigerian State as more influential in explaining the conflict in the Niger Delta. Although many of these scholars highlight the part played by the indigenes and communities in the region with regards to the outbreak of conflict, the level of involvement of the indigenes especially at the community level has not been adequately explored. This chapter of the thesis will explore in details the specific roles played by indigenes and communities in the conflict that have engulfed the region.

Drawing from the ethnography carried out in the region, this chapter will critically analyse the level of involvement of the local indigenes. Contrary to the picture that has been painted through previous research on the region that the indigenes play 'little' or 'insignificant' role in the conflict (Ike and Okonta, 2006; Aaron and Patrick, 2013) this chapter will show that the part played by the indigenes especially the elites, elders and youths in the region have indeed been significant. Although there is an argument that the activities of the MNCs and the government has led to grievance which the indigenes reacted to that eventually led to the outbreak of conflict, it is important to address these claims through empirical illustration to determine the level of culpability of the indigenes and the oil producing communities themselves.

Focusing mainly on the analysis of the empirical research carried out in the region in 2013, the first part of this chapter will analyse the contribution of the local communities to the pollution, underdevelopment and corruption rampant in the region. The second part of the chapter will explore the economy of conflict in the region from the perspectives of the local communities while the final part of the chapter will explore the

effect of the erosion of culture and its impact on the outbreak of conflict in the region. This is important because the role of culture in local communities in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised as culture plays an important role in the survival of many communities around the world. The chapter will conclude that although it is arguable that the part played by local resource producing communities is a direct response to the activities of the other actors, the roles played by the local indigenes have indeed contributed to creating a cycle of violence which ultimately sustain the conflict in the region and blends into the roles of the other actors in the conflict.

6.1 Environmental Pollution

Since oil exploration began in the region, environmental pollution has been one of the main challenges faced by oil producing communities. Despite the fact that Nigeria has comprehensive environmental pollution laws which intends to protect the fauna and flora of all parts of the country, poor implementation of these laws have made the environmental agencies moribund. Corruption, inadequate training of environmental enforcement agencies coupled with the ineptitude of the leadership of these agencies which are mostly state-run have resulted in several companies both foreign and local taking advantage of the situation thereby polluting the environment with impunity. Although the role played by the MNCs in polluting the Niger Delta will be explored in detail in the next chapter, this part of the thesis will examine the role played by the indigenes and community of the Niger Delta themselves.

6.1.1 Deliberate pollution through destruction of pipelines

Despite the fact that the Niger Delta is among one of the top ten most important marine ecosystems and wetlands in the world, it is also one of the top five ecosystems that have been severely damaged by oil exploration in the world (Kadafa, 2012). According to Kadafa, since oil exploration began in commercial quantities in Nigeria in 1958, the volume of oil that has been split in the Niger Delta is between 9-13million barrels. As stated earlier in this thesis, there has been accusations and counter-accusations between the MNCs and the local communities about who is responsible for oil spills which are the primary source of environmental pollution in the region. Although the MNCs have been accused of gross negligence and culpability in environmental pollution in the Niger Delta (UNEP report, 2012), the indigenes of some of the local communities

are also responsible for this menace. Following my extensive field trip in the region in 2013, it is apparent that in some of the communities in the Niger Delta, deliberate vandalization of pipelines and other oil infrastructures are common occurrences. The field research showed that in order to advocate for their needs (real or perceived), people living in affected communities often feel compelled to engage in actions that worsen their environmental conditions, and ultimately their livelihood. It was found that the such occurrences has increased overtime as more youths are convinced that it gets more response and they stand to benefit from the response and this clearly demonstrates a cycle of human insecurity in which they have become ensnared. These deliberate acts of vandalism are carried out for three reasons. First, many of the youths are involved in the sabotage of oil pipelines for economic reasons-oil bunkering. Second, some communities destroy oil pipelines to seek the attention of the oil company operating in their communities. Third, due to the law of 'local content' (The local content law states that local indigenes should be given preference when awarding contracts in the Niger Delta) in Nigeria, many youths in oil producing communities deliberately vandalise pipelines in order to be awarded contracts to clean up the area. The issue of oil bunkering and its implication on the human security and outbreak of conflict will be discussed further in this chapter.

6.1.2 Destruction of oil infrastructure for attention

The phenomenon whereby youths from oil producing communities deliberately destroy oil installations within their territory in order to seek the attention of the MNC operating in that community is now a common scenario in the Niger Delta. Whenever there is a pressing need in the community, the community public relations officer is normally saddled with the responsibility of reaching out to the MNC they are 'hosting' in order to discuss such pressing issue with them. Depending on the composition and the level of organisation in the community and their belief in the use of force as a strategy to achieve whatever they want, the youths could give a notice period of up to 6 months and write as many as five letters before they embark on destroying the facilities. In other communities however, the destruction could be just two weeks after writing a first letter to the MNC in question. Most of the letters often contain warnings of disruption to oil production if the needs of the communities are not accommodated but this does not deter the MNCs as they often ignore the letters (BAYELSALIND04).

Figure 6.1: Environmental pollution Niger Delta (Source National Post, April 5 2013)

Case Study 1: The case of Ikarama Community- Yenogoa local government area of Bayelsa state

On 6th August we travelled to Ikarama community, a community about 40 miles south of Yenogoa town. On getting to the town, there was oil gushing out from one of the surface pipes that run across the community. The community play host to both SPDC and Agip and the ruptured pipe belonged to Agip. The youths had just finished demonstrating against the refusal of Agip to come and fix the pipe and award contracts for the clean-up process. They accused Agip of neglecting the community and complained that the ruptured pipe had been pumping out crude oil for over a week and that the oil has polluted the creek close to the community. I was in the company of the staff from Environmental Rights Action who were also in the community to evaluate the level of damage done to the environment. Getting to the creeks, the river was badly polluted with the whole surface covered with thick crude oil still being washed from the damaged pipe through the natural drainage system into the river. In an interview with one of the youth leaders, he revealed that the particular pipe was destroyed by the youths in order to draw the attention of Agip to come and repair a generator they

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donated to them previously but was now faulty (Also another sabotage- another youth explained that the generator was deliberately destroyed by the people usually contracted by Agip to service it). The youth leader blamed Agip for not responding to three letters sent to them earlier notifying them about the breakdown of the generator and that it was this agitation that led to the destruction of the pipes knowing fully well that the company will have no choice but to come when they hear that their pipeline is broken.

Furthermore, in another interview with the public relations officer of the youths, he also admitted that the oil companies do not respond to the plight of the people. Although he didn't accept or deny the claims by another youth leader who alleged that the pipe was broken intentionally by the agitated youths, he was quick to blame Agip for not coming to fix the generator and also for not coming to fix the pipe. When asked again whether or not youths deliberately destroy oil infrastructures to compel MNCs to come, he stated: '*sometimes they are doing it deliberately…. for example if somebody from this community goes to another community and discovers that the company has erected a bore hole for them and this community knowing that since they have crude oil they also deserve such development,…… if they call on such company to come and do such project for them and the company refuse after some tries, they may use that as a way to drag the company to that community*'(BAYELSALIND04).

Another youth interviewed in the community also alluded to the fact that youths destroy pipelines to seek attention although he was not happy about it as he felt concerned about the destruction to the environment. According to the youth '*they are doing it deliberately but it is very unfortunate and I feel sad about it. For instance it is a case of if you are trying to get the attention of your dad but he is not listening and you decide to shoot your own foot in order to get his attention, he must be responsible for the things that are going on in his family. I think it is bad that it has gotten to that situation that they will vandalise pipes to get the attention of the companies but what else will they do? Protesters are killed without vandalising pipes, people like Ken Saro Wiwa never vandalised pipes, they used placards to protest but he was still killed, so it has gone to that extent and over time people had to strategize and think of one way or another to get to these companies and they have been succeeding. There is a community close to this place called Oya lake……recently there was a leak from a pipeline, I don't know if it is a genuine*

spill or sabotage but because the crude oil came from the pipe and spread around that place, now the company has given a contract which has led to the employment of some of these youths so no matter how much they are able to make, it is something for the boys. It will help them to be confident that they have received something and got the attention. If the company was doing well from the beginning, I don't think anybody will get to the extent of shooting his own foot to get attention because this is in no means adequate. So it is a whole cycle of youths destroying the pipes, contracts are awarded for the clean-up, the boys make some money and the cycle continues. Most times the community liaising officers for the company don't even step their foot on the community, I have seen a situation where the officer didn't even know the name of the community or the community does not know the name of the officer in charge of that area…… so it is really bad' (BAYELSALIND11)

Case Study 2: The case of Oya Lake, Yenogoa local government area

After the interview in Ikarama community, I decided to visit Oya lake mentioned above (Oya lake is about 25 miles from Ikarama community). The scenario in this community was also similar to that of Ikarama community. In March 2013, the community woke up one day to discover that the lake which serves as the source of water for domestic use as well as for irrigation purposes for the community has been badly polluted. According to the ERA staff present during the interview with a community chief in the area, he described the pollution as one of the 'heaviest' he has ever seen. The chief also confirmed the fact that due to the size of the river and the level at which it had been polluted the issue generated a lot of chaos and anger in the community. But unlike the case of Ikarama community where the pipe was left for over a week without any attention, the pipe at Oya lake was clamped in less than 24hours but despite that a lot of damage had been done to the primary source of livelihood of the people. Although the chief insisted that it was not an act of vandalism and that it was an equipment failure which in this case also encouraged the MNC to act quickly, he stated that the community decided that the youths from the community must be in charge of the clean-up process.

Some days after the pipeline was clamped, hundreds of youths from the community marched to the office of the company in question and demanded compensation for the destruction of their sources of livelihood. The company was said to have paid a 'substantial' amount of money to the community and also awarded a multi-million naira

clean-up contract to a company owned by one of the chiefs in the community. The resultant effect of the situation was that after the clean-up process, pipelines around the community became targets for youths who were encouraged by the initial protest that delivered a huge compensation and a clean-up contract. There were many pipeline destruction around the community in subsequent months and this is probably why the MNCs refuse to attend to some cases of pipeline 'rupture' in many of the communities because they believe that most of the cases are acts of vandalism which will subsequently result in agitation for contracts. The issue of deliberate vandalism is a serious problem in the Niger Delta. In an interview with a senior manager at Chevron, he explained that '*what we are experiencing now that the oil spills come rarely out of equipment failure, maybe once in many years, right now what we are experiencing is the community themselves are cutting our pipes also tapping from our oil. If you fly across the river you see oil all over the river because of vandalization because the pipes deliver oil from one place to another so they cut the pipes, put their own holes and sometimes leave the oil to flow and in the night they come again, so you can imagine the environmental impact…….we follow international standards and also Nigeria regulatory authority to remedy the environment and that is part of our duty and their own side of impact is always on the negative side from the oil company but that is not always true, the truth is that when you're talking about the negative impacts now most of it is done by the community people, not everybody but the bad eggs in the community*'(MNCCHEV03).

Case Study 3: The case of Andoni, Rivers state

The oil company operating in Andoni is AMNI. AMNI is one of the smaller MNCs operating in the Niger Delta with a share of production less than 10%. One of the managers of AMNI interviewed in Lagos explained how the company regularly experiences cases whereby the communities deliberately pollute their environment and then go back to the MNCs to seek compensation and clean-up contracts from the company. He explained that in August 2012, there was an alleged pollution in one of the rivers close to Andoni and the community accused AMNI of being responsible for the spill despite the fact that company does not operate in the community. The community had alleged that the flow of the oil indicated that it was from an AMNI facility. The manager explained that the oil spill happened 11 nautical miles away from the community and that the trajectory of flow of the oil could not have been from their own

facility because of the location of their facility. He explained further that due to the new law enacted by the government that MNCs are expected to first clean-up the environment before investigations begin, his company started the clean-up process. The contract was not given to any member of the community and the company cleaned up using their own contractor.

When the job was completed, the contractor took pictures to serve as evidence that he had completed his job and then left the community. Few days after the clean-up, the community started protesting that the contractor did a poor job and that oil was visible everywhere in the community. After conducting a visit to the community to ascertain their claim, the team were astonished to find out that not only was oil flowing on the river, there was oil on the trees and on the roofs and walls of buildings in the community. He said that when the community representatives were asked how oil that was presumed to have been flowing down the river got to the top of trees and houses, they were unable to answer the question.

The implication of this deliberate vandalization is that the people are causing more destruction to the environment. The second perspective of the human security framework states that people seek 'protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life-whether in homes, in jobs or in communities' (UNDP 1994; 19). The case studies above illustrate the indigenes' attempt to cushion the effect of oil exploration on their livelihoods by taking actions which ultimately worsen their environmental conditions, and therefore their livelihood. In cases where the MNCs perceive sabotage and refuse to clamp the pipeline or clean-up the area, it is the people that suffer the consequences of these actions. The land and water which serves as the sources of livelihoods of the people are being further destroyed and this leads to more pains and poverty for the people especially those that are not involved in these activities and do not benefit from either the compensation or the contract for the clean-up process. Although some community members see this act as means of exhibiting their grievance, the resultant pollution created by this act further worsens the human security of the people.

6.2 Role of local communities in the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta

There is no doubt that the Nigerian government and the MNCs have not done enough as far as development in the Niger Delta region is concerned. As discussed earlier in section 5.2.3 of this thesis, both the government and MNCs shifts the responsibility for the development of the region to each other a situation that further drags the communities into what I describe as a 'lost in development' scenario. Although the other stakeholders in the region are lacking in their responsibility to adequately develop the region, communities and the indigenes of the region also have a role in the underdevelopment of the region. Ranging from the political elites who dine and wine with the government and MNCs operating in the region to the youths growing up in the communities, the local indigenes themselves have not been able to play the desired role expected of them in developing the region. Although it can be argued that the people are victims of circumstances, nevertheless, for the region to experience the much needed level of development that can reduce human insecurity and make the region economically viable again, an holistic approach to development fully committed to by the people is important. These issues will be explored in this chapter and the subsequent ones.

6.2.1 Educational attainment and the formation of militancy in the Niger Delta

Several studies have found that countries with large population of youths generally referred to as 'youth bulges' have an increased risk of internal armed conflicts or the outbreak of civil war (Cincotta et al, 2003; Staveteig 2004; Urdal 2006). With over 33million young people representing about 20% of the population between the age range of 15-24 years (Index mundu, 2013) and the number rapidly growing, Nigeria can be described as also undergoing youth bulge. When a country has large number of youths as in the case of Nigeria, it could either be to the country's advantage if they are economically engaged or a disadvantage if the youths are not in education or economically engaged (Urdal, 2006). It is important to identify the factors that drive youths- particularly young men towards participation in armed conflict or what motivates them to join rebel or insurgent groups. Barakat and Urdal (2009) argue that greater educational attainment increases the opportunity cost of young people to engage in positive economic activities which then reduces the likelihood of the youths

being recruited into rebel organisations, what is missing from the research is the implication of a situation whereby the youths are not gainfully employed after acquiring the education. The study concludes that the incentive for highly educated youths to participate in violent conflict is lower than those with little or no education, but with the inclusion of availability of employment as a control factor, the reverse may be the case.

The value placed on education by many of the indigenes of the Niger Delta is very low when compared to some other regions of the country. According to Oyefusi (2010), higher formal education and increased earnings reduce the propensity of youths to participate in low level violence, oil related crime or militarized struggle. The author stated that although higher level of educational attainment reduces the possibility of youths engaging in oil related crime, a combination of high educational attainment and unemployment increases the predisposition of a young man to engage in militarized struggle. There are two categories of youths in the Niger Delta; those that are uneducated or with minimum education and hence unemployed/unemployable and those that are well educated but also unemployed. The situation in the Niger Delta suggests that although there is high level of unemployment, the vast majority of the unemployed are those that are either uneducated or with minimal level of education. These are often the ones used as foot soldiers by the more educated militant leaders, some of whom are educated to university degree level. Although the overall number of people with higher education qualifications in the Niger Delta is still lower when compared to some other parts of the country, there has been an increase in the number of youths that have university education. My interviews with four ex-militants- all graduates (one of them a leader who claimed to have over 500 youths in his organisation) shows that the youths participating in the struggles are not all uneducated 'violent poor' people.

In an interview with one of the militant leaders who graduated from the same university I attended for my first degree with an upper second class degree in law, he explained that although he cannot engage in criminal activities such as rape, kidnapping or robbery because he sees himself as a freedom fighter, he believes in the militarized struggle as that is the only 'language' the Nigerian government respond to. Citing the case of Ken Saro Wiwa (a case normally cited by most people that believe in armed struggle against the government and MNCs) he explained that the youths in the region

have been disenfranchised by the activities of the MNCs and the government. He argued that while the government does not provide adequate educational infrastructure in the communities for the children to benefit from, the MNCs on their part are not doing enough to develop the educational abilities of the people but claim that they are not employable because they do not have the requisite skills to operate in the oil industry. This illustration confirms the argument by Oyefusi (2010) that a combination of unemployment and high level of formal education increases the tendency for young men to engage in militarized struggle. Although an increase in educational attainment in the region is important, provision of employment opportunities is even more important. Education without employment opportunities could create more problems for the region.

The situation whereby youths that are more educated lead militarized struggle in the Niger Delta is a new phenomenon in the region known as 'intellectual militancy'. One respondent who is a constitutional lawyer and human right activist explained this concept during an interview with him in Warri Delta state in August 2013. He explained that contrary to the previous situation in the region in the 1990s when the youths were mostly 'uneducated and docile' there are now quite a few educated youths that are able to incite others to form organised militias in the region. He stated that the new sets of youths are becoming more militant. Due to the fact that more youths are educated now than at any time in the history of the region, there is increased enlightenment and the youths are more aware of their rights. He added that the increase in education and awareness however is being utilized in a negative way. The youths are becoming more restive and so the conflict is likely to become more vicious in the future except there is the creation of employment opportunities for the youths which will then allow them to channel their education to productive activities. He stated further that the organised armed struggle against MNCs, the destruction of oil pipelines and flow stations and the kidnappings are all retaliation and the response of the frustration of the people especially the youths. According to the respondent *'the approach used by the youths now has been a double barrel approach which is arms struggle as well as intellectualism and this is a very pathetic situation for the oil bearing communities'(HRADELTA01).* The situation is pathetic because any use of arms by the youths in the region will be an invitation of attacks by the military which does not have a good record as far as human

rights is concerned (Human rights watch, 2012). The increase in the number of graduates joining militant groups in the Niger Delta negates the research by Barakat and Urdal (2009). As stated above, increased level of education without a corresponding increase in employment opportunities could increase the likelihood of the youths being recruited into militant organisations.

Although there is visible evidence that the government since the amnesty in 2009 has invested more in primary and secondary education in the region, not much has changed in terms of educational enrolment in the communities. In a visit to some of the schools in Bayelsa and Delta states, many of the classrooms were half full and the level of motivation for schooling in the states are very low. One of the teachers interviewed in a secondary school in Bayelsa explained that primary and secondary school enrolment and completion rates especially in the state owned schools are appalling. She explained that since the late 1990s, there has been an increase in the number of students that complete secondary education but when compared to the number of youths in the region, the rate of enrolment in public schools has decreased tremendously. She stated that the situation has deteriorated in the last couple of years and can be attributed to three reasons. First, many people who can afford private schools do not send their wards to public schools because of the poor level of education in the schools. The most unfortunate factor in this is that many political elites have capitalised on the situation by establishing their own private schools and deliberately keep the public schools below standard so that they can get patronage from the public.

Second, once many of the youths complete primary school, it is difficult for their parents to keep them in secondary school as they become exposed to generating income. This is a particular source of concern to many of my interviewees as this issue was discussed by several people. They explained that the situation in the Niger Delta is such that many youths become exposed to generating income either by doing legitimate or illegitimate businesses and once they have a source of income, it becomes very difficult to keep them in school. According to another teacher interviewed in Rivers state '*the situation is pathetic and it is like that in the whole local governments, all the secondary schools are the same, the students are just like touts and they ride okada (commercial motorbikes)....... they don't listen in the class and when you try to discipline them they warn you not to talk to them anyhow. They will ask you where your car is and that since you are not rich you*

are not qualified to tell them anything. They will say that Tompolo and other militant leaders have money and they didn't go to school so it is not compulsory to go to school. They see the militant leaders as their role models and sometimes they aspire to be militants as well because they see it as an easy avenue to make money' (RIVERSIND09).

Third, there is little or no monitoring and high level of corruption in many of the states' education boards. Each state has an education board that is saddled with the responsibility of employing teachers, monitoring teaching quality as well as maintaining the records of both primary and secondary enrolment and achievement levels. Unfortunately, these boards are practically non-existent. In many of the secondary schools, the teachers do not attend classes as many of them have other businesses to attend to. They merely bribe the education officers who are supposed to monitor their attendance and this reflects on the quality of the education in this region.

The implication of the poor enrolment rates, poor standard of education as well as limited number of students graduating from the schools is that there are limited numbers of people that are able to get tertiary education. Furthermore, there have been several allegations that the MNCs do not employ locals for the white collar jobs in the oil companies and that most of the people employed by MNCs in the region are outsourced from outside the oil producing states. This is another source of strife against the MNCs and sometimes leads to attacks against staff of the MNCs. A total overhaul of the educational system in the region especially at both the primary and secondary levels is important in order to reduce conflicts associated with low level of educational attainment in the region. Furthermore, it is important for both the MNCs and the government to support youths with adequate educational attainment to be able to fulfil their aspirations and get engaged in productive activities not related to the oil industry as there is too much dependence on the oil industry in the region despite the fact that the industry cannot employ all the youths that are able to graduate from the universities.

6.2.2 Community Structure and its impact on Conflict in the Niger Delta

One of the dynamics of the conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, is inter/intra community conflict as examined in chapter three of this thesis. Apart from conflicts between youths representing oil producing communities and security forces, conflicts

between and within communities have claimed the lives of thousands of people in the region (Leton, 2006). Analysis from my field trip reveals that despite some communities having similar topography, number of oil wells and infrastructures, some communities experience more violent conflict than others. One of the important factors that determines the outbreak of violent conflicts in the region is the structure of individual communities. This section of the thesis will examine different types of community structures represented in the region and how communities manage issues in order to avoid conflicts. According to Haider (2008), in order to develop a holistic approach to peace building in a region ravaged by violent conflict, it is important to address both the tangible and intangible effects of the conflict. The tangible effects are the visible aspects of the conflict such as, environmental insecurity, destruction to infrastructures, the people killed or wounded during the conflicts as well as disruption to the sources of livelihoods of the people. The form of disruption in the Niger Delta is in relation to environmental security and the pollution of the land and rivers which serves as the primary sources of income to the people considering the fact that the people from the region are predominantly farmers and fishermen. The intangible aspect includes collapse of community structures, fear and trauma experienced by the people during the crises, lack of trust in government and state institutions and the MNCs, as well as the psychological effects associated with the loss of livelihoods. In any conflict situation, violence transforms both the social and political foundations of the community and this makes it imperative to develop a 'community-oriented analytical approach' which should help understand how communities re-emerge and organize despite the challenges involved (Pouligny, 2005: 509).

In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, most of the conflicts experienced in the region have been on the community level. Since the amnesty granted the 'repentant' militants in 2009, the dynamics of the conflict has changed significantly. There has been fewer clashes between indigenes of oil producing communities and security forces and most of the clashes recorded have been intra/inter community conflicts. While some of the conflicts have been resolved through the help of mediators, some have degenerated into violent conflicts that have claimed the lives of hundreds of people. One of the important factors that determines whether a disagreement within or between communities degenerates into conflict is the structure of the community. Evidence from this research

indicates that communities that are well structured in terms of leadership composition, involvement of women and youth groups as well as transparent in their dealings are able to resolve their differences without resulting to violence as a means of conflict resolution. This study is based on empirical analysis carried out in 18 communities spread across 3 states in the region. Most of the communities explored in this research are similar in terms of population, level of development, percentage of youths, number of oil infrastructures as well as level of environmental security. Preliminary results from the analysis show that communities with good structures especially in terms of leadership and transparency experience less conflict within their communities and with neighbouring communities. The structures explored here are intangible effect of a conflict as analysed by Haider (2008). An emphasis is placed on issues such as governance structure level of transparency, communication mechanisms and avenues for dispute resolutions. The evaluation of these structures is based on reports by ERA, individual assessment through interviews and personal observation.

The case of Opolo and Uzere communities

Opolo community is located in Yenogoa local government of Bayelsa state and has a population ranging from 20,000-30,000 indigenes. The community was one of the most violent in the region at the height of the agitations for development and environmental security in 2006. Shortly before the amnesty granted the militants in 2009, some leaders emerged in the community and they reformed the entire structure of the community. The indigenes formed a community development committee, led by a retired petroleum engineer called Engineer Moses, which was fully supported by the traditional ruler of Opolo. The committee included some other leaders and has developed into what is now seen as a model community in the Niger Delta. The leadership team empowered the youths and women groups by allowing them to form vibrant organisations which are funded through the community development funds that accrue to the community (Most oil producing communities get some allocation from the MNCs operating in the community). Unlike previous leaderships of the community which refused to disclose the income that accrues to the community from the MNCs and the government, the present leadership publishes the income and expenditure of the community and hold monthly community meetings open to all the members of the community to decide on what developmental structure to be pursued at any given time.

This gives the indigenes a sense of belonging as they are aware of the happenings in the community and they have cultivated a habit of supporting the leadership and maintaining peace so as to encourage the investment needed for the development of the community. The committee members developed a comprehensive and transparent system for the governance of distribution of resources that accrue to the community.

In an interview with one of the residents of Opolo community, he explained that the organisation of the community is key to maintaining peace in the community. According to a member of the community *'when there is a spill, some people are contracted to mop it and some people are involved in compensating the farmers but now it is a business where some are involved in oil bunkering to make money, but in an organised community where you expect to become a worker tomorrow, you will not be involved in these kinds of things. For instance in Opolo, we normally share our chances, if we have 50 chances to work at Shell, we will throw it open. We will write down yes or no and have 50 yeses, so all the people in the community seeking employment will come together on a certain day and pick the numbers and once the yeses have been picked everyone is satisfied because it is an open process. So the other people will know that they will get there one day so they don't go about vandalising infrastructures or causing troubles. If there is transparency, then the people will be satisfied with what they have been given. Shell through the help of the community leadership built a modern market for us, a cottage hospital, water system, secondary school and teachers' quarters for all the teachers in our secondary schools. If you are teaching in our secondary school, you will be given a house and you will pay rent to the community' (GOVTOFFBAYEL03).*

One of the leaders of Opolo community explained that *'Opolo community is so organised that if you come to our community, there is a form that you will fill stating your details and what you have come for, so after sometime they know the type of people that come to their community and what they came for'(*BAYELSALIND07). The community leader stated that in 2012, the community sold a large chunk of land to one of the oil companies, before the sale there were wide consultations in the community and the community held a 'mini' referendum on whether to sell the land or not. After majority of the people decided that they should sell the land, they sold it and held consultations again on what they should do with the money and this further gave legitimacy to the leadership of the community as they have been able to gain the trust of the people. Compared to some

other communities visited during the research in 2013, Opolo community stands out in terms of community organisation and structure and this has reduced the incidence of violent conflicts in the community. Opolo community provides a good model for community leadership and governance of distribution of resources and this is confirmed in the annual community development survey carried out by ERA in 2012.

Unlike Opolo community where the indigenes have been able to form a vibrant community development committee with the help of the monarch, the case is different in Uzere community in Isoko south LGA of Delta state. The community has experienced violent conflicts since November 2011 when the indigenes of the community demanded that Shell Petroleum development corporation (SPDC) enters an agreement with the community regarding their operations. In an interview with one of the indigenes in September 2013, he explained that there was never a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the community and SPDC since 1958 when the company started oil exploration in the community. Due to an increase in awareness in the region the indigenes demanded a MOU from SPDC stating the terms and conditions of their operations and plans for the development of the community. However, SPDC refused to grant the request and the people engaged in a peaceful demonstration on the 29th of November 2011. Although the indigenes insisted that the demonstration was peaceful, they were confronted by fully armed security officers who killed two of the youths. The indigenes believed that the security officers were invited by the monarch who opposed the MOU as it would stop the monthly allocations he gets from SPDC. After the killings by the security officers, the youths marched to the palace of the king and burnt down his palace but the king narrowly escaped death and went into exile. The king had earlier been accused of preventing the formation of a community development committee because most of the income that accrues to the community goes through the king and he only declares whatever he likes (DELTAINDO6).

According to one of the elders in the community, *'the former king was in support of the company because he was getting money from the company which was due to the community, the man never wanted the community to benefit and the reason why you can really say that there is a conflict in some communities is because of the leaders. In a situation where the leaders are saying leave the MNCs and let them work whereas they have collected something at the back, there will be problem' (DELTAIND08).* Contrary to

what obtains in Opolo community where there is a well-defined structure of authority from the monarch to the community development committee which is independent of the traditional ruler, in Uzere there is no such committee. All the income and royalties that accrue to the community are paid to the office of the monarch and it is mostly unaccounted for. The attack on the Uzere king eventually resulted in his removal and he has been in exile since 2011 compelling the community to install a new king. Since the incidence in 2011, there has been sporadic violence in the community between supporters of the dethroned king and his opponents. In February 2013, there was a bloody clash between the two parties which resulted in the death of two people (Sahara Reporters, 2013). This scenario is often the case in many other communities in the Niger Delta. Communities with a well-defined leadership structure, exhibit high level of transparency and governance of resources with a blueprint for development. Such communities experience fewer conflicts when compared to those that do not have a well-defined structure. It is important to state that the level of education and population density in the communities represented in the study is quite similar and this was taken into consideration during the case selection.

6.3 The impact of corruption on communities and its effect on the outbreak of conflict

Corruption is a broad subject and there have been several scholarly issues about the concept in terms of definition, scope and effects. In the case of the Niger Delta and in the broader Nigerian context, it is important to state that the perception of corruption differs and sometimes it is discussed more in terms of culture and this makes it difficult to define and differentiate between what is seen as corruption under different circumstances. For instance if a procurement officer is given money by a contractor, it is seen as a 'gift' and not a bribe. The menace has bitten deep into the Nigerian system at all levels to the extent that several acts of corruption are not seen as such but are accepted as gratification to all the parties involved hence turn into an acceptable norm. This aspect of the thesis will discuss corruption in regards to the Nigerian context. According to Olopoenia (1998:17), 'theoretically, the literature distinguishes among political, bureaucratic and economic corruption; practically however, these three typologies are no more than different perceptions of the same monster. But all these manifestations are motivated by the desire to use the instrumentality of office for

private gains for the benefit of the official, his relations, ethnic group or friends at the expenses of the general good'. In a similar vein, Otite (1986:12) sees corruption as the 'perversion of integrity or state of affair through bribery, favour or moral depravity. It involves the injection of additional but improper transaction aimed at changing the normal course of events and altering judgments and positions of trust. It consists in doers and receivers' use of informal, extra-legal or illegal act to facilitate matter'.

Corruption in Nigeria is sometimes seen as a norm as it is rampant at all levels of governance, business as well as on the community levels. Osoba (1996) argues that corruption in Nigeria was entrenched during the period of decolonisation (1952-1960) when British colonialists used bribes to 'perpetuate themselves in dominant positions over the wealth of Nigeria' (pp.373). She argued further that political elite saw the money as a means for private accumulation. Corruption in the Niger Delta is of two forms; first, an alternative source of livelihood and second, a tool in the hands of the MNCs to exploit the people. Many scheduled interviews for this thesis were cancelled because of this issue as some of the respondents declined to be interviewed unless they were paid despite the research team explaining that the data from the interview are for research purposes only. In the Niger Delta region which is the focus of this research, the menace of corruption is rampant and in some instances it has resulted into conflict. Corruption by those in positions of authority deprives the entire community of resources that were intended for their development as it is being diverted by some of the people in charge. Almost all of the respondents for this research describe corruption as one of the primary determinants of conflict in the Niger Delta as some believe that the awareness about the level of corruption in the region is one of the things that instigated some youths to carry arms against people believed to have deprived them of their collective resources. Starting from the community levels, corruption is perpetrated in several ways and based on my research analysis; this section will explore some of the ways by which corruption is carried out in the region.

6.3.1 MNC induced corruption- the concept of 'divide and rule'

One of the phrases that were widely used during the course of the interviews was 'divide and rule'. Forty respondents from the three categories explored in this thesis mentioned this phrase during the interviews. Paraphrasing the view of divide and rule

from the perspective of the indigenes, the respondents explained that divide and rule is a tactic used by the MNCs to cause chaos and divisions in the communities where they operate. They explained that before the start of oil exploration in any of the communities, representatives of the MNCs visit the leaders of such communities to explain their missions. During the meetings, the MNCs state the purpose of their visit which in most cases is to sensitize the people that they have discovered substantive volume of oil in their communities and that they have fulfilled all the legal requirements to carry out oil exploration in the region. The MNCs would explain their modus operandi to the people and tell them what the likely impact of the oil exploration would be. In response, the community leaders or representatives of the communities involved would state their demands in exchange for the oil exploration to be carried out in their area. Depending on the estimated volume of resources to be exploited, the MNCs and community representatives will agree on projects to be done in the communities by the MNCs in return for the exploration and an agreement will be signed between the representative of both communities and the lawyers representing both parties. The document signed is called the Memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two parties. This is supposed to be the case in all the communities of the Niger Delta where oil exploration is carried out.

There are two main problems with the MOU. First, it is not legally binding; it is more of a social agreement under CSR than a contractual agreement. The only contractual agreement is signed with the government and this means that there are no forms of enforcement mechanisms or modes of appeal if the agreements in the MOU are broken. Second, depending on the organisation of community structures, the community members that are authorised to sign the MOU varies. In well-structured communities with good governance like Opolo, only elected community representatives are granted the responsibility of signing any agreements with the MNCs. In other communities however, different groups emerge as the authorised representatives of the community and this sometimes results in conflict. The MNC might opt to sign the agreement with a faction they reckon will make their operations go smoothly. In some communities like Iwhrekan, the godfather and his cronies signed all the MOU with Shell and this further compounded the conflict in the community.

However, instead of the MNCs honouring the agreements signed as stipulated by the MOU which forms part of the corporate social responsibility(CSR) of the MNC involved, the companies sometimes renege on the agreement and this is where the 'divide and rule' tactics set in. The MNC rather than carry out the projects agreed would go behind and bribe influential figures in the communities with a fraction of the money they are supposed to spend on the project and then continue oil exploration as normal. This action of paying some of the influential people in the community creates division in the community when people challenge the MNC of not carrying out the projects agreed in the MOU. While some members of the community who are unaware of the bribes demand that the MNC fulfil their part of the agreement or stop exploiting oil in the area, those that have been paid insist that oil exploration must go on and that the company involved should be left alone to continue their operations. This create division and discord in the community and in most cases results in intra/inter-community conflicts where the community is polarised and divided along the part of those that support or oppose altercation with the MNC. This issue sometimes results in violent conflict as opposing parties take up arms against each order within or between communities as the case may be. According to Nwogwugwu et. Al (2012:28) 'oil producing companies operating in the Niger delta have adopted a divide and rule method in which they identify for compensation, people in the host communities they believe have the capability to influence the indigenes to ensure that they have a peaceful environment to operate in, at minimal cost'. The authors argued that a fraction of the amount that the companies are supposed to use as part of their CSR for the development of the communities involved are paid to such individuals or group in order to protect the interest of the company at the expense of the host community. This has created several conflicts in the past and some communities visited are still having conflicts because of this issue.

According to respondent BAYELSALIND02, the community secretary of Igba-ama/Oruma community of Bayelsa state, *'Shell is a very crafty company. If they want to come and explore oil within the community, they will come very loyal and discuss issues with you and enter into agreement with MOU or whatever means. After the whole thing, to fulfil the agreement is a problem for Shell. Before you know it they will now turn around, meet some group of persons in the community keeping the agreement with the community*

aside, discuss with some elites, pay whatever is agreed to the elites and then they will now start their activities. When the community challenge them they will say they have paid certain amount of money to some people who claim to be the owner of the land or in the chiefs cabinet or are the chiefs, the CDC and the youths which is not in the original agreement. The people who come to discuss the terms of agreement with the community are always different from the people who will come and execute the projects. Then the community will confront the people and the people will say they don't know about it and from there conflicts erupts in the community. Shell has not been cooperating with Igba-ama community, not only in our community, all the places where they operate it is the same thing. They always set confusion, get what they want and after achieving their aim, they abandon whatever agreement is in place in the community and they refuse to fulfil it. This has been a reoccurring issue, everywhere they go. If you go to Otuasega, it is the same thing. Except the youths of the community attack them violently or destroy their properties which is not the best thing to do but they caused it so those are the lingering issues between Shell and their host communities' (BAYELSALIND02).

In a similar vein, another interviewee respondent BAYELSALIND05 explains that the tactic is also used if there is a disagreement between the company intending to carry out oil exploration and the community on the modalities for the work to be done by the company and the corresponding development to be brought to the people. According to the interviewee *'If Shell is going to a community to do something and the community says no, what they do is to look at the strong men within the community and they try to buy those people they feel can do something for them. They either give them contracts or money to see that they influence the decision of the entire community and if they cannot influence, they don't mind using violence and that is how Shell has been doing.......Shell promotes violence to make sure that their operation goes through. At the moment there is a crises that is building up, an oil company called Next oil is planning to lay some pipelines for Shell, Daewoo came and worked and the money that they were supposed to pay to some family, they didn't pay....they work and they left using the soldiers to work through their land without paying a dime. Now a new company is coming and the family is saying that except they pay what they damaged before, they are not going to work on the land. Shell is very much ready to use the military because if the family say they are not going to work, the family is willing to mobilise their children and youths to block the forest and the*

only way Shell will work is to face the family with violence because they know they are guilty because they are not willing to pay for what they damaged. So if they cannot get indigenes as their agents for the fight, they bring in the military and that is what they normally do' (BAYELSALIND05)

Furthermore, an interview with a project manager with a NGO called Host Community of Nigeria Producing Oil and Gas (HOSTCOM) reveal that the issue of divide and rule is rampant in many oil producing communities. The officer explained that *'one of the reasons why we have this violence in our system is that most of these oil companies use divide and rule system, or the carrot and stick system; they look at the communities and they see that some communities are more politically stronger than the other then they will give the politically strong communities what they deserve and leave the other that is not, whereby they put these communities at loggerheads and then the communities begin to fight. Even in a single community, sometimes they just draw some chiefs to themselves and settle them at the expense of the whole community and before you know it, in that community, you discover that the youths begin to fight against the chiefs or a section of the youths fight against another section and those are one of the reasons why the Niger Delta is a bit volatile. I came from one of those communities and I have seen it happen. Sometimes within a community they will come and meet some of the people in the community that they know have some influence, they will just come and pay them little money and problems will start in the communities. So these are the basic causes of crises in the ND' (NGODELTA01).* In the words of another interviewee who is a local chief in Uzere community of Delta state, he stated that *'If a community is in peace and they are together as one, they will have the mind to sit down and discuss and plan but the oil companies will look for a poor and hungry community chief that has an ambition to be rich and they will empower him and give him funds to cause problems in the communities and that is why Uzere community insisted that the new company coming in should sign the MOU before they start operation because once they come in, that MOU will never be signed. The oil companies will empower someone from the communities with contracts and this start the problems. One man sued Shell last year but his brother was a Shell contractor so they told his brother to tell him to drop the suit or lose his contracts and that is how they use divide and rule in these communities. In every chaos in the communities the oil companies gain because while you are killing yourselves the oil exploration*

continues' *(*DELTAINDO8). Furthermore, in cases where there is a crisis in any community and there are factions, the MNC support any faction that has the capacity to hinder its oil exploration activities and this sometimes aggravates the conflict.

6.3.2 Political godfatherism and violent conflict in the Niger Delta

According to Edigin (2010:176), 'A Godfather could refer to a person who sponsors or provides care or support for a person or project. In the same token, it could be used to describe a person directing an illegal and criminal organization'. In a similar vein, Adeoye (2009:269) defines a godfather as a kingmaker, boss, mentor, and principal, while godson is the beneficiary and recipient of the legacy of a godfather. A godfather is someone who has built unimaginable respect and followers (voters) in the community, and possessed a well-organized political platform, and general acceptance from electorate that could secure victory for candidates of his choice. The phenomenon is common not only in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria but throughout the whole country. Since the advent of democracy in 1999, godfathers have been an important part of the democratic system to the extent that very few contesting politicians are able to attain office without the support of political godfathers (Majekodunmi and Olanrewaju, 2013), a situation that threatens democracy in the country. The issue of godfatherism although more rampant in the political sphere is evident in almost every institution in Nigeria- where it is almost impossible to achieve anything without the 'connection syndrome' (Familusi, 2012:22). The connection syndrome is a situation whereby merit and competency are side-lined in order to favour a friend, family or associate at the expense of a qualified individual. For instance, many civil service jobs, contracts or even university positions are shared on the basis of relationship and not on merit and this also creates conflict. A Godfather sometimes referred to as 'big man' is different from a 'respected elder' because they often use force to achieve their aims and sometimes perceived to be above the law because of their political positions. Furthermore, godfathers often have both financial and political influence due to their relationship to MNCs and political elites. On the other hand, respected elders in most cases are apolitical and perform the roles of dispute resolution within the communities.

Although all over Nigeria godfathers are mostly funded by their political parties and their roles often limited to electoral activities, this is different in the Niger Delta region.

Most godfathers in the region enjoy support not only from incumbent political authorities but also from the MNCs operating in the region. They play a dual role of assisting politicians to fulfil their political ambitions as well as help MNCs to sustain their oil exploration. Furthermore, the godfathers in the Niger Delta are often contractors working for the MNCs and hence they are more powerful than other political godfathers in other regions of the country. Godfathers particularly in the Niger Delta wield a lot of influence and sometimes employ large numbers of youths as political thugs. The vast amounts of wealth they have coupled with the large numbers of unemployed youths in the region create an avenue whereby they can easily pay the youths stipends to use them for their own personal interest and aggrandisement. They are responsible for several intra/inter-community conflicts in the region and contribute to the conflict dynamics of the region. This is because they sometimes stand as agents of the MNCs against their own communities when there is a disagreement between their communities and the companies and this has resulted in several bloody clashes between their thugs and other youths in the communities.

However, unlike the other regions of Nigeria where godfathers are only popular at the level of individual states, the case is different in the Niger Delta. 14 out of the 18 communities visited for the purpose of this research have experienced godfatherism at some point. Furthermore, godfathers are common at the community level and this is often in relation to the oil production capacity of the community involved. Communities with high levels of oil exploration activities are more likely to have more godfathers with greater influence than communities with less oil exploration activities. One important case that was widely mentioned in several communities in Delta state was in Iwhrekan community in Ughelle south local government area. The community has witnessed several clashes between youths working for a purported godfather and the resultant violence has claimed many lives. The community is one of the most volatile in the Niger Delta and it was so rampant to the extent that during this research while interviewing in the community, a conflict suddenly broke out and we had to vacate the community in a hurry. However, the youth secretary of the community granted us an interview and explained the issue of godfatherism in the community.

Below are excerpts from the interview:

There is a policy Shell is using, when they discover that there is a spill as a result of sabotage; they call it sabotage when there is a third party involved in the spill. To pay for that they will give that contract to a foreigner (a non-indigene) but if it is an equipment failure maybe because the equipment fails due to old age, then they will give it to an indigene to do and to secure the area, clean the environment and preserve it. I remember the problem in this community started in 2006, there was a contract that was to be awarded by Shell and the community decided to give it to an indigene who resides in the community but because of influence, Shell decided to give somebody else so there was a conflict in the community as a result. The youths were on one side and the other group on one side and as a result of this there was a division in the community, a very strong division and the man who was given the contract by Shell mobilised and he brought soldiers in and at the end of the day a boy was shot and after 3 months he died. This led to serious conflict where cars and houses were burnt and before we knew it we have entered into crises, political tussles and the powers that be did not rest……it has been on and it has been ongoing…..we have had a lot of war and battle, I have been under water for about 3hrs, they chased us out of the community and to survive we had to be under water because during the raining season the whole is place is flooded. My whole body was under water and I just lift my nose up briefly at intervals to breathe in order to survive……the powers that be, I mean the man in question is very influential and rich in the community and when you have such people, they want to be in power and they want to dominate the affairs of the community and that is the problem we are having in this community. As I am talking to you today, the problem has been on since 2006 and it has continued till date, he is the godfather of the community and nobody dares question him. He is very autocratic, if we go to the other side of town, you will see about three ships and these are his guys there in the community. Right now 6 community boys are in the prison with our king who is awaiting trial as we talk now; the same godfather single-handedly rejected the appointment of a new monarch chosen by the entire community and used his connection to put the king in prison without option of bail, in conclusion I want to tell you that oil has brought more harm and problem to this community than good (DELTAINDO7).

Similar stories were shared in eight of the other communities visited about how these godfathers torment the communities, killing and maiming people at will without the law

enforcement agencies taking any concrete actions against them. One main reason why the godfathers are so powerful is because of their relationships with political office holders. In many instances, the godfathers 'help' political office holders to win elections by using their paid thugs to carry out several electoral malpractices. Intending political office holders also pay and seek the assistance of these godfathers and this result in almost an unending cycle of violence in many communities in the Niger Delta.

6.4 Attitude to paid employment

The main attitude of the people that the respondents highlighted to have been eroded was the attitude to hard work. Since the commercial exploration of oil began in the region, many land holding families with stakes in oil production simply neglected their farming activities to depend on royalties that accrue from oil. Arguably oil production affected some of the productive lands in the region; thousands of acres that were not affected were also abandoned with several families depending solely on the stipends that accrue from the oil companies. In a state like Bayelsa, many people are directly or indirectly dependent on the proceeds from the royalties that accrue to 'host families' for a living (host families is the term used to describe families on whose land oil exploration takes place). This issue is compounded by politicians who give 'hand-outs' to the youths in order to gain their support during elections. It is interesting to state that throughout the period of data collection in Bayelsa, I did not meet any indigene of the state working as a taxi driver or bus driver. Most of the people doing these kinds of jobs are people from other tribes, one taxi driver told me that *'the indigenes don't do those kinds of jobs; they prefer to be either militants or political jobbers rather than do menial jobs'* (I *translated this sentence from pidgin to English*)

The view that oil exploration has made the people of the region lazy was echoed by eight other respondents during the ethnography. A senior government officer stated that *'I don't seem to understand the attitude of my people when it comes to work; they are not interested in working at all. They also have this diminishing mentality of entitlement where people will say because they are from a particular place they must get something not minding whether they work or not. For instance in Bayelsa farms where I manage, all the people working there are not Bayelsans, the indigenes will not work. They feel the line of the resistance is just to hang around and say "we are loyal" to politicians for them to*

*give them money or for them to harass the multinationals (*GOVTOFFBAYEL02)*.* Another woman interviewed in Bayelsa state also confirmed the above statement, she added that all the youths want is 'free money' (money they don't work for) and if they cannot get it they begin to cause trouble in the communities. She concluded that the culture of the people which used to be 'diligence and hard work' has been bastardised resulting in a new culture of 'laziness and shamelessness' among the youths.

6.4.2 The culture of respect for elders

The place of elders has always been taken seriously in many communities in Nigeria. The elders usually play an important role in every community and they are always regarded as the final point for conflict resolution starting from the family unit. Nigerians are generally religious and an average person professes to be either a Christian or Muslim, both religions puts emphasis on the importance of respect for elders also adding value to the positions of the elders. However, the culture of respect for elders in the Niger Delta has also been eroded. Most of the youths would only respect someone that gives them money regardless of the age of the person. Many of the older and some few young respondents mentioned this issue as one of the reasons why most misunderstanding in the communities result in violent conflict. One of the respondents (a politician and human rights activist from Delta state) explained that in the past, there was a lot of respect for the elders and most of the younger ones believed that if they wanted to live long, they have to respect elders. However, the love of money coupled with the fact that some of the elders too out of poverty have abused their positions of authority by taking bribes from MNCs and godfathers have relegated the roles of the elders to 'ordinary figures' in the communities. He also admitted that the inability of the elders to intervene in several minor disagreements has led to many violent conflicts that could have been easily avoided (HRADELTA02).

One youth leader from Rivers state also agreed to the fact that there is no more respect for the elders in many communities and this has resulted in needless conflicts. He argued that the attitude of the youths from the region is different from those of the youths in other regions of Nigeria. He stated that even young children that are not yet teenagers all aspire to be like one ex-militant leader or another to the extent that most of them do not listen to their parents. He stated that youths will only respect elders that

can give them money or introduce them to people that can give them contracts in oil companies and if any elder cannot do any of those things for them, they are not respected. He concluded that for the region to experience lasting peace there must be a re-orientation of the youths not only to respect elders but also to imbibe the original culture of the people which was diligence and hard work (DELTAINDO9). Apart from the fact that respect for elders is decreasing, many young people in the region now look up to the godfathers and militant leaders as role models rather elders of good repute and this is a source of concern in the region.

6.5 Territory and community: Demarcation, access to resources and conflict

Both the State and individual ethnic groups place a premium on controlling their territories as they believe it is relevant to their survival (Toft, 2003). The stakes are even higher when the control of these territories is dependent on political authority which guarantees access to oil resources as in the Niger Delta. It is important to highlight that political authority in the Niger Delta has a unique categorisation. Apart from the central government which governs the country, the Niger Delta states to a large extent control the resources that accrue to them both from the central government and the MNCs operating in the region. The states are further divided into local government which also benefit from direct allocation of funds from the central government. The local governments are made up of communities which serve as the lowest rung for political authority and sub-divided into compounds. Although there have been instances of conflict on the state and local government levels on issues of territorial demarcation, most of the conflicts experienced in the regions are at the community levels since these are the blocks for ethnic identity.

Since oil exploration began in Nigeria in 1956, many of the communities in the Niger Delta have devised several means to get access to the resources emanating from oil exploration. The form of resources varies from direct royalties to oil bearing communities from the federal government to employment opportunities from the MNCs. Access to territories are seen as the gateway to resources and issues of territorial demarcations have sometimes resulted into violent conflict.

Case study: Ekpan and Ubeji Conflict

Issues of territorial demarcation and access to resources have been a major source of intra/ inter community conflict in the Niger Delta for decades and in most cases have been fought along ethnic lines. Since access to resources could lead to economic development in terms of employment opportunities or local patronage, territorial advantages or disadvantages can easily lead to violent conflicts once issues of resources come into play. One of such conflicts was between Ubeji and Epan communities in Warri South local government area of Delta state (Bendel state at the time). Ubeji is an Itsekiri community founded over 500years ago under the leadership of Olu of Warri while the Ekpan community is an Urhobo community. The two communities are fishing and farming communities (Ikelegbe, 2013) and they have lived side by side peacefully for centuries before oil activities started in the region. However, trouble started between the two communities in 1976 when the federal government acquired a land close to both communities to build a refinery. The Ubeji community went to court against the federal government to seek compensation for parts of their land that has been harnessed for the building of the refinery. In 1977, during the legal tussle with the federal government over the payment of the compensation, the Ekpan community heard 'rumours' that the federal government has awarded the Ubeji community a sum of N8million and youths from Ekpan community attacked Ubeji on August 15, 1977 killing unarmed indigenes and destroying 50 houses. The Ubeji youths also retaliated the attack days after the first invasion by the Ekpan youths and a conflict ensued which claimed the lives of several people with many more wounded. The motive behind the attack according to Ekpan community was that the land acquired by the government belonged to both communities and that any compensation should have been equally shared among the two communities. This conflict was directly as a result of land tussle and territorial demarcation over the land to be used for the construction of the refinery (Ukiwo and Naagganton, 2012).

The problem of territorial demarcation has been an issue in Nigeria for a long time (Ostien, 2009) but does not often result in conflict except it has a political undertone. In recent years, apart from the Ife/Modakeke and the Jos conflicts that have been adjudged to be politically motivated (Ostien, 2009; Oyeniyi, 2010), most intra/inter community conflicts experienced in the country have been related to issues of access to resources

or access to political positions which in most cases are also related to access to resources. In most of the Niger Delta region for instance, access to political positions invariably means access to oil resources and in several instances conflicts in this regard are often based along ethnic lines with a typical example of the Ekpan/Ubeji conflict illustrated above. However, the scale of conflict that could arise as a result of issues of territorial demarcation is not limited to conflict between different ethnic groups. There have been instances where intra-community conflicts have been between families within the same ethnic group. Despite the 1978 land use act that puts all the land in Nigeria under the federal government, most of the lands are still claimed by families who have been using the lands for farming for many generations. Since oil exploration is a continuous process, oil can be discovered anytime on any part of the Niger Delta and in some cases the discovery of oil is enough to spark a conflict. Issues such as territorial demarcation and the sharing formulae for oil revenue that accrues to the families in relation to the communities are the main causes of intra-community conflict in the Niger Delta.

A case of intra-community conflict based on issues of territory and resource sharing was illustrated in interviews carried out in Imiringi community, Ogbia Local government area of Bayelsa state. Imiringi community has 20 functioning oil wells located on the lands of three compounds in the community. One of the compounds has a single oil well; the other has two while the third compound has 17 oil wells, but the composition and location of these oil wells always generate controversy. According to one of the elders from the compound that has 17 oil wells on their family lands *'I can tell you categorically that as it is, the community is jealous of my family because for the past five years, all the oil activities that happened have taken place in our compound'* *(BAYELSALIND05).* The arrangement in Imiringi community is such that when oil royalties are paid by SPDC, the community gets two thirds of the amount while the compound where the oil wells are located gets one third. In 1996, oil was discovered on the land belonging to another compound called Okubigbo. The families in Okubigbo compound then held a meeting and decided to jettison the original arrangement of two third of the royalties going to the community but instead decided to take two thirds of the money and remit one third to the community. This led to the termination of the initial arrangement but the community was not able to sanction the compound because

of their influence in the leadership of the community. Some years later, the oil wells in the Okubigbo compounds dried up and other compound including the Afagha compound struck oil. Tension however developed in the community when the Okubigbo compound insisted that the community reverts to the initial arrangement whereby two thirds of the royalties is remitted to the community. The new compounds on whose lands oil had been struck rejected the proposal and a violent conflict erupted in the community which led to the death of a youth. The violence continued for months before the state government stepped in and the matter was eventually settled after a protracted court case. Another indigene interviewed stated that every time oil is struck in any location in the community, issues of territorial demarcation sets in which often result in violent conflict. By the end of 2013, many compounds have embarked on territorial demarcation in anticipation of oil being discovered on their lands and in order to avoid conflict in future but this exercise is too expensive for some compounds to undertake.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has shown with evidence that indigenes of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria also play a part in the conflict ravaging the region. Contrary to earlier literatures that have painted a picture of the indigenes always being at the receiving end of the conflict, it is obvious that all the three main actors in the conflict all have a part to play in the outbreak of violence in the region. Social structures such as leadership and governance, culture and actions of some communities contribute to the elements that trap communities in conditions of human insecurity and conflict. These structures, culture and actions are all linked to the method of resource extraction and distribution of resources in the region. Furthermore, the environmental security of the indigenes has been further threatened by deliberate attacks of oil infrastructures by some of the indigenes of the impacted communities in the Niger Delta. While communities that are well organised with clear leadership structures and transparent dealings experience less conflict, this chapter has shown that other communities with poor leadership structures which are also corrupt experience more conflict. This conclusion is based on case studies of selected communities in the region with similar demographics and level of education and youth bulge.

The erosion of culture in the region is also an important factor that has increased conflicts in the Niger Delta. In the past when there was regard for culture and tradition, the elders played a significant role in mediating on issues that could have resulted in violent conflict. Presently, total disregard for culture and tradition coupled with an increasing dependence on oil royalties as opposed to finding gainful employment are some of the issues that have contributed to the conflict ravaging the region. Furthermore, resources are linked with territories and territories are controlled by political authorities. This makes the struggle for political authority and territorial demarcation issues of grave importance in the region. Territorial demarcations often result in violent conflict between and within communities and this is also linked to access to resources.

Although it is often argued that the part played by the indigenes is often in reaction to the way they are being treated by both the government and MNCs, the fact remains that this form of reaction often contributes to human insecurity in the region. For instance, when pipelines are broken deliberately either to catch the attention of the MNCs or to steal oil products, the effect is eventually felt more by the indigenes. This is because the region is connected by vast networks of lakes and rivers, and oil spill in one community can affect other communities miles away from the site of the pollution. In summary, there needs to be a balance between changing the structural conditions that trap people into cycles of poverty and in their ranges of responsiveness to it. This makes focusing on the human security of the people paramount as the framework address not only the structural conditions that create conflict, but also the reactions of the indigenes to the conditions. In order to find a lasting solution to issues of human security, environmental degradation, governance of distribution of resources and violent conflict in the Niger Delta, a holistic approach involving the three actors is required and this will be the focus of the next chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 7

Multinational companies and the politics of oil in the Niger Delta

Introduction

The Nigerian petroleum industry operates under a joint venture agreement between the country's petroleum commission; the Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC) and several MNCs. The joint venture is such that the NNPC controls about 60% of the stakes in the industry while the MNCs control about 40% (NNPC, 2014). With a production capacity of 2.5million barrels, Nigeria is the highest producer of oil in Africa and the 10th   highest producer in the world (NNPC, 2014). Considering the fact that crude oil has hovered above $100 per barrel between 2010 and 2014 (BP, 2014), the sector is a multi-billion dollar industry with huge stakes for the Nigerian economy.

Due to the importance of the oil sector to the Nigerian economy, the sector over the decades has been plagued by politics not only by the Nigerian state but also by the MNCs operating in the country. The MNCs under the joint ventures with NNPC are: Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC); Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL); Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPNU); Nigerian Agip Oil Company Limited (NAOC); Elf Petroleum Nigeria Limited (EPNL) and Texaco Overseas Petroleum Company of Nigeria Unlimited (TOPCON). For the purpose of this research, this chapter will concentrate on the activities of SPDC and Chevron for two main reasons. First, SPDC and Chevron are the first and third largest MNCs in Nigeria in terms of daily production (NNPC, 2014) and second, these are the two companies operating mainly in the three states (Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers) selected for the purpose of this research. These three states produce more than half of Nigeria's total crude oil and have also been the most affected in terms of violent conflicts.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the activities of the MNCs in Nigeria focusing but not limiting analysis to the two oil companies mentioned above. This chapter will analyse the activities of the MNCs in relation to the human (in)security in the region as well as explore the politics behind oil production in Nigeria. This chapter will also explore the MNCs focusing on their activities, exploration techniques, corporate social responsibility (CSR), relationships with other stakeholders as well as their compliance

with rules and regulations governing the oil sector. Information obtained from the in-depth interviews conducted as part of this research, previous publications on the subject matter as well as newspaper articles will be used to analyse the activities of the MNCs. Furthermore, in order to answer one of the main questions of this research which is to determine the impact of direct distribution of resources as a means to ending the conflict in the Niger Delta region, this chapter will compare the development initiatives carried out by the MNCs and their effect on the human security of the indigenes of the region.

7.1 The Genesis of oil bunkering and pipeline vandalization

As explored earlier in the previous chapters of this thesis, one of the hazards facing the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is the issue of illegal siphoning of oil from pipelines popularly referred to as oil bunkering. Although the amnesty granted militants fighting in the region has reduced the conflict in the region to a large extent, the menace of oil bunkering on the other hand has actually increased exponentially. This shows that people benefitting from the proceeds of conflict generally makes it difficult to put an end to the conflict (Silke, 2000)

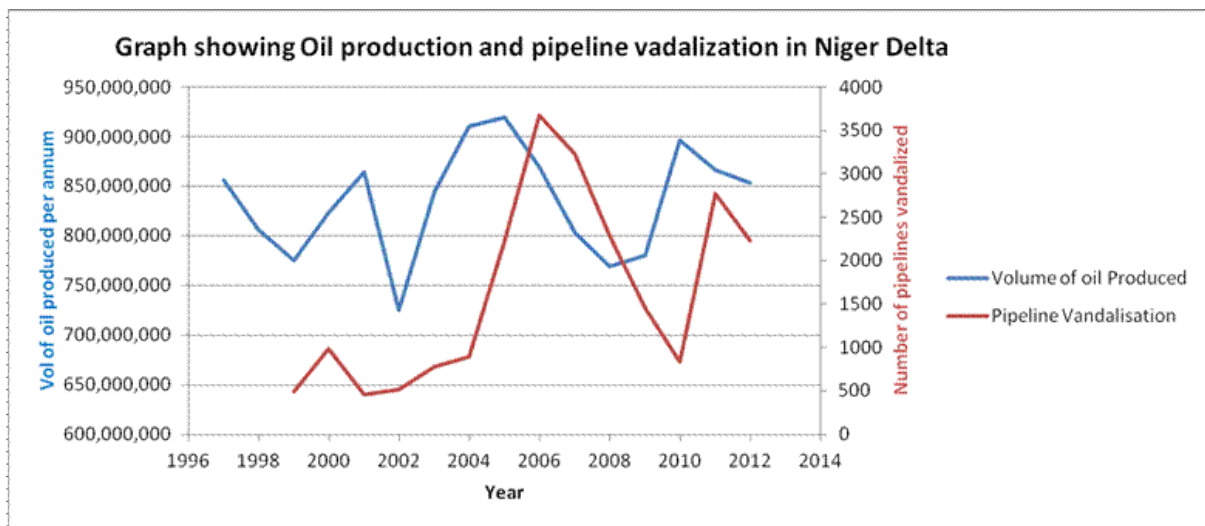Figure 7.1: Oil production and pipeline vandalization in the Niger Delta

The table above shows the analysis of the volume of oil produced in the Niger Delta region in relation to the number of pipelines vandalised each year. According to data obtained from the NNPC, in 2012 there was a total of 2,256 pipeline incidence out of which 2,230 were as a result of deliberate vandalization either due to oil bunkering or

vandalization for attention (NNPC, 2014). This figure indicates that of all the pipeline incidences that happened in the region in 2012, 98.8% were deliberate sabotage. One important analysis of the figure above is that pipeline vandalization was actually reduced from an all-time high of 3,674 incidences in 2006 to 836 in 2010. This was actually due to the full implementation of the amnesty programme which began in 2009. One of the staff of NNPC interviewed during the fieldwork for this research explained that the amnesty was the best opportunity for the government to end the insurgency in the region once and for all. He explained that in 2010 after most of the militants laid down their weapon and embraced the amnesty programme, there was a drastic reduction in pipeline vandalism because most of the youths fighting the government and the MNCs were also the ones responsible for pipeline vandalization. The youths briefly stopped vandalizing the pipelines thinking that the government would fulfil its promise by not only giving them monthly stipends but also by providing them with gainful employments. However, by 2011, it was becoming clearer that the government was not sincere in implementing most of the agreements signed with the youths when they accepted the amnesty and this was why many of the youths went back to the creeks to resume their oil bunkering activities. Furthermore, some other youths not benefitting from the amnesty are also involved (NG0DELTA03). By the end of 2011, the number of pipelines vandalized had increased sharply from 836 the previous year, to 2,768 which represent an increase of over 300%.

Although oil bunkering and pipeline vandalization became more prominent in the late 1990s soon after the struggle by the indigenes became militarized, pipeline vandalization for the purpose of seeking compensation has been a practice since the 1970s. Furthermore, contrary to the insinuations by many scholars including the NNPC that pipeline vandalization was one of the strategies adopted by aggrieved indigenes to disrupt oil production in the region, the menace was actually introduced to the communities by employees of the MNCs. In an interview with a senior government official who is also an elder in the region, he argued that pipeline vandalization was introduced to many communities in the region by employees of Shell called 'damage clerks' in the late 1970s. He explained that in late 1970s, Shell employed and trained some people known as damage clerks to go round their communities of operation to assess their pipelines and then report any leak or spill to the company for repairs as

well as assess any damage the spill might have caused for adequate compensation. In any situation where there is a spill that affected farmlands or fish pond, the owners of the farmlands or pond are expected to fill a form with the assistance of the clerks to state the sizes of their lands or ponds as the case may be and also an estimated value of the crops or fishes destroyed.

After some years, the clerks began to teach the people on how to lie and exaggerate when filling the forms so that the farmers can claim more money from Shell. In return the damage clerk will go back to the farmers involved after Shell has paid the compensation to collect a percentage of the payment based on an initial agreement. By 1985, the practice became so common to the extent that even people that did not have farms or fish ponds were given forms to fill by the damage clerks to collect compensation from Shell and the money obtained is shared equally between the so called farmer and the clerk involved. This practice went on for over 10years before the management of Shell discovered and then cancelled the 'damage clerk system'. By the time the system of compensation was cancelled, the indigenes had already realised that they could make a lot of money through compensation if there was a spill on their lands and then they began to destroy the pipelines in order to get some money as compensation from the MNCs. Although after the system was cancelled there was a reduction in the act of pipeline vandalization, the renewed agitation since 1998 coupled with the awareness that crude oil can either be sold in the black market or refined locally for sale further increased the practice of pipeline vandalization.

7.2 MNCs and Environmental degradation in the Niger Delta

One of the main factors affecting the human security of the indigenes of the Niger Delta and also responsible for conflict in the region is the issue of environmental pollution. Several scholars including Aghalino (2001), Okonta and Douglas (2003), Aghalino and Eyinla (2009), Amnesty international (2009) have all documented the level of oil pollution in the Niger Delta with most of the scholars and organisations accusing the MNCs of complicity. Although the MNCs often argue that most of the pollution in the region are caused by vandals who break the pipes in order to steal crude oil (BBC, 2010), it is important to explore the actual roles played by the companies in order to establish their roles in the degradation of the environment in this region.

Figure 7.2: Gas flaring in Rivers state (Source National Post, April 5 2013)

Figure 7.3: Picture of women drying food with fire from a gas flare (Source National Post, April 5 2013)

7.2.1 Environmental pollution and the UNEP report

The most comprehensive analysis of the extent of pollution in the Niger Delta was carried out in 2011 by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) at the request of the Nigerian government. The study focused on Ogoni land (the birthplace of civil right activist, Ken Saro Wiwa, who was executed by former dictator ,Sani Abacha); an area covering about 1,000km2 and one of the areas where oil exploration began in the 1950s (UNEP report, 2011). The project was carried out by both local and international experts who surveyed 122km of pipelines. The team visited all the oil wells and oil spill sites since oil exploration began in the region. Furthermore, the team identified 69 sites for detailed water and soil investigations, collected samples of drinking water as well as rain water, examined the fishes in the rivers and also collected air samples for laboratory experiments. Altogether, the project analysed more than 4,000 samples of soil and water from different areas and sources, 5000 medical records

and held 264 meetings attended by over 23,000 people in the region (UNEP report, 2011).

Major findings from the report

- There is widespread oil contamination in the region which has severely impacted many components of the environment
- There is heavy contamination of Ogoni land and some of the contamination have been for over 40years
- There are several overlapping responsibilities between ministries and government parastatals with each one shifting responsibilities to the other
- There is lack of resources for the agencies and this hinders their ability to function effectively
- Pollution due to oil bunkering and illegal refineries has increased tremendously over the years
- There is extensive pollution of groundwater, farmlands and swamps caused by oil exploration activities
- Pollution has damaged crop production and agricultural activities in the region
- Fishing has become more difficult because the fishes leave polluted water and fishermen have to travel farther into the high sea for fishing
- Ogoni community is exposed to hydro-carbons in the air and water at concentrated levels and this has led to a reduction in their life expectancy
- Hydro-carbon concentration in some wells is more than 1000 times the average drinking water in other parts of Nigeria
- The control, maintenance and decommissioning of oil infrastructures in Ogoni land is inadequate and SPDC have fallen short of both international standards and its own operative standards
- SPDC have been found wanting and their actions have created 'public safety issues'
- Remediation techniques have not been effected and the research found that 10 out of 15 sites remediated by SPDC contained pollution which is more than the expected national limit
- The environmental restoration of Ogoniland will take between 25-30years if it starts immediately   (UNEP report, 2011).

This research is a damning report on the activities of SPDC the main oil company operating in the region. Although most of the MNCs have claimed that they operate at the highest standards in Nigeria and that international practices are observed during their operations, the UNEP report states otherwise. Information gathered and analysed for the purpose of this thesis also shows that there are lapses and non-adherence to the required standards in Nigeria. Although some of the respondents from the MNCs maintained that they observe international standards in Nigeria and that most of the pollution recorded in the region are as a result of sabotage, some respondents from other stakeholders such as oil service companies, community members, NGOs and even some government officials claim otherwise. A respondent who is a staff at SPDC stated that *'Shell as a company, we have an international standard and our guidelines is even more stringent than international standards. We have a design and engineering guidelines (DEG) which is even more stringent than international standards. So anybody saying that we don't have a standard is not saying the truth because our design and operational standards are very strict. The problem we are having with spillage result from illegal bunkering. It has nothing to do with process safety, design integrity or technical and operational integrity, and our staffs are the best trained engineers in the world. For me as a person I have been trained in UK, US in many places and there is nobody from any other company who is an engineer that will say he is better than Shell staff so that story is not true. If there is an illegal bunkering, it has nothing to do with the technical integrity of our facilities because if you construct a pipeline that is well designed and secured and somebody hacks into the pipeline and there is a spillage it has nothing to do with operational integrity, it is purely sabotage'* (MNCSPDC01).

This claim was supported by another MNC official from Chevron who stated that *'Quite unfortunately we have witnessed a lot of impact as regards oil operations but most of this impact is caused by third parties and not by operations of the company. Without defending the oil companies because me too I am from an oil producing community I think oil companies are trying their best to contain these things but because of the lack of understanding on the part of some of the communities they think vandalizing pipes and getting illegal crude is the best way for them to make money quickly so they indulge in all sorts of things and I think that the government is also concerned about what is going on and want to see how they can stop the sabotage to ensure that the environment is safe.*

The oil companies as well, we are making effort and taking out a campaign to make sure that the people understand the adverse effects of polluting the environment because of the selfish means so we are working with the government to a large extent and also ensure that the integrity of our equipment is intact at every point in time and we engage in routine maintenance to make sure that all of the things are in place. We are mindful of the concerns that might be raised by other stakeholders like NGOs so basically we are working hard to make sure that the environment is not impacted and to ensure that it is a safe as we met it and keep it safe before we leave' (MNCCHEV01)

In a similar vein, another MNC official explains that although there are some negative impacts as a result of oil exploration, most of the pollution is as a result of deliberate vandalization. According to the respondent *'naturally apart from oil company, any organisation in this kind of capacity and size would definitely impact on its environment. Like I said before, impact is both negative and positive….. occasionally you have oil spills and no matter how much you clean up there will be impact on the environment but what we are experiencing now that the oil spills come rarely out of equipment failure, maybe once in many years, right now what we are experiencing is the community themselves are cutting our pipes also tapping from our oil. If you fly across the river you see oil all over the river because of vandalization because the pipes deliver oil from one place to another so they cut the pipes, put their own pipes and sometimes leave the oil to flow and in the night they come again, so you can imagine the environmental impact…….we follow international standard and also Nigeria regulatory authority to remedy the environment and that is part of our duty. Their own side of impact is always on the negative side from the oil company but that is not always true, the truth is that when you're talking about the negative impacts now most of it is done by the community people, not everybody but the bad eggs in the community. We go by the laws of the land and that is what we operate on'* (MNCCHEV03)

Although most of the employees of the oil companies argue that the bulk of the pollution comes from the indigenes themselves, respondents from oil service companies and other stakeholders put some of the blames on the activities of the MNCs. The first respondent from an oil service company operating in Nigeria argues that *'these standards sometimes are not being adhered to. For instance sometimes in Nigeria you will see companies still flaring gas whereas such companies that are operating in other*

companies that have their standards they will not flare gas in those places. But here they feel there are holes in the law system and that they can do as they wish......to a great extent they are not respecting the standards in this place' (MNCHAL01). The second respondent added that sometimes the MNCs think that the cost of putting in place the required international standards will increase the operating costs too much and then decide to cut corners. Other respondents from the oil services companies also expressed similar thoughts, they argued that although the incidences of pollution caused by third parties have increased over the years, the MNCs too also take advantage of the poor level of regulations in Nigeria to operate without taking due attention to the environment or the people that live there.

Some respondents from the NGOs also stated that the MNCs in Nigeria operate differently in Nigeria when compared to other places where they operate in the world. In an interview with one of the project managers of friends of the earth, Nigeria (ERA) the officer explained that the activities of some of the MNCs have brought untold hardship to the people from the region. In an interview with the respondent, he explained that *'There is also the issue of pollution of the water, land and air......there are instances of gas flares which last for days and it affects young birds, the trees and also have health implication on the people and experts have said the life expectancy of the people in the Niger Delta is shorter than other regions. The people have complained that the fish they kill in some of the waters smell of kerosene or crude oil. There are instances where whole lakes or water is covered with crude oil and some of those lakes are harvested yearly and it helps the people to sustain themselves and all these deny the people of their sources of livelihoods. Our experience is that the people have lost and are continuing to lose their sources of livelihoods and it has endangered their health and environment' (NGOBAYELSA01)*

Other respondents from the NGOs also described the activities of the MNCs in terms of their attitude to the environment:

'....the oil companies feel they are too big to be prosecuted because of their contribution to Nigeria's economy. They know that the whole economy depends on oil and that the government is too lazy to diversify the economy so they use that to their advantage. For instance, Shell feel that they are the giants of Nigeria oil industry and they are bold to say

that there is no office they cannot enter or send representatives, all the ministers in Nigeria for oil activities are always taken from Shell, even the king of NEMBE kingdom Edmund Dakoro is from Shell even Diazani the current minister of petroleum resources is from Shell so that is why they are arrogant' (NG0DELTA03)

' the truth is that the government of Nigeria is scared of the oil companies pulling out of the country and that is one of the reasons why the government finds it difficult to enforce pollution legislations on the companies. Every time the government tries to wield its stick, the MNCs will argue that the pollution is as a result of pipeline vandalization by the community members and if the government wants to force them to comply with environmental regulations, they simply threaten to leave the country. Even the state high courts do not have jurisdiction to try the MNCs, for instance in 'Gbemre against Shell' where the federal high court ordered the closure of gas flaring and stopped it because it was violating the right of Mr Gbemre, it was the federal high court Benin....there has been some wonderful judgements but majority of the judgements have not been quite welcomed and encouraging and that is why people have to move away from here and look for a visa to go and get better judgement outside the shores of this country and why they do so is also because the MNCs respect the international community because laws are enforced there and the rule of law is enforced and they cannot mess about in that environment. But when we come here even when you get a judgement against them, to enforce the judgement becomes another problem because they violate the rule of law and the government turns its face to another direction once it has paid its royalties, so you find out that first of all section 251 of our federal constitution has vested exclusive jurisdiction on the issues of pollution in the federal high court and the federal high court is far away removed from these communities so the people find it difficult to get justice' (HRADELTA02)

Most of the government workers interviewed as part of the thesis admitted that oil exploration has not only resulted in large scale pollution in the country, it has also resulted in the loss of livelihoods of the people. The first respondent GOVTOFFBAYEL04 argued that environmental pollution is the key issue that led to the violent conflict in the Niger Delta. He stated that the genesis of the problem was the issue of environmental pollution which led to the loss of livelihoods and hence hindered the human security of the people from the region. He also admitted that the MNCs have 'not done enough' to

reduce the problem of environmental degradation in the region and the problem still persists. Other respondents also argued in similar direction:

'It is a fact that communities of the Niger Delta especially Ijaw communities are predominantly fishermen, they do fishing and they do farming, apart from that there is craftsmanship, carving of canoes etc. if you move through the Niger Delta you will see all of these playing out, unfortunately the coming of the oil companies and the exploration for oil has impacted negatively on the occupations of the people. The water, creeks and streams are polluted; the land is polluted and destroyed by oil. Even from the explorative stages and not from the oil itself, the process of looking for oil involves the use of dynamites, the clearing of land and forest and all of these destroy the farmlands and the rivers. I also worked for a Seismic company (Western Geophysical) and I know we use dynamite to blow the land to look for oil, cause explosions and anywhere that is done especially in the river just give a period of about 30min, you will see fishes that have been killed and hours later possible 6-7hours you will see lots of fishes floating that have been killed, not just fishes, crabs, crayfishes etc are all destroyed and so it affects our occupation, the farm yields reduced greatly because of the pollution and oil activities, the catches reduced etc so people now run away from these occupations that we normally use in maintaining and sustaining our families, training our children and supporting one another. The unfortunate thing is that the MNCs are not doing enough to arrest the situation and they have been found wanting several times when their activities have been questioned' (GOVTOFFBAYEL01)

'...the MNCs have not responded well to the plight of the people. It is true that sometimes the pollution is as a result of vandalization by a third party, but sometimes the companies hide under this guise in order not to do clean up or to avoid compensation. The MNCs sometimes cut corners and this often results in violent conflict. As long as the country fails to diversify its economy and continue to depend on oil, I am afraid we will continue to be under the bondage of these MNCs. I work with the government and I feel very sorry for the people in the communities but because the central government is in charge of all oil related activities and also make the laws of the land, we at the state level are very limited in terms of what we can do to reduce the incidence of pollution which is a major determinant of conflict in this region' (GOVTOFFBAYEL02)

The response from almost all the stakeholders in the oil industry except those that work for the MNCs are similar and all point to the fact that the MNCs are complicit in the pollution that have ravaged the Niger Delta. The MNCs use the tactics of resistance by (some) indigenes to shift the blame for environmental degradation off of themselves. This is further supported by the UNEP report explored earlier in this chapter. Although many of the MNCs staff interviewed disagree with the assertions from the other stakeholders about their complicity, there is an indication that more needs to be done by the MNCs operating in Nigeria to curb the menace of oil pollution in the country especially in the Niger Delta. Three years after the UNEP report on Ogoniland, not much has changed regarding the environmental pollution in the region (Guardian, 2014). A joint analysis of the recommendations of the UNEP by ERA and Amnesty international indicated that none of the 27 recommendations have been acted upon after three years (Environmental Rights Action, 2014). The region remains highly polluted with none of the stakeholders doing anything about the situation.

7.3 Oil Exploration and Community Settlement

The land use act explored earlier in this thesis plays a significant role in oil exploration in the Niger Delta and has been a source of conflict in the region. While the MNCs argue that the land belongs to the government and they only need to obtain permit from the government and pay necessary royalties in order to carry out exploration activities in the region, the indigenes of the local communities see things differently. They argue that despite the land use law, the land remains their ancestral property which have been in their respective families or communities for generations and that if the MNCs want to carry out oil exploration on those lands, they have to pay adequate compensation based on the market value of the land as well as give them royalties as well. This disagreement often results in violent conflicts because in cases where the indigenes refuse to grant the MNCs access to a piece of land, the MNC then report the situation to the government who often use military might to force their way through further deepening hostilities between the MNCs and their host communities.

After oil has been confirmed to be present in commercial quantities in any given area, the standard procedure used by the MNCs in getting access to a new site for oil

exploration is divided into six steps drawing from information obtained during my field work. These steps are;

Step 1: The Company sends members of staff to inform the community leaders about the impending exploration activities and show them the necessary documentation they have obtained from the government

Step 2: The representatives of the community confirms from the government agencies that all necessary conditions have been met

Step 3: The community members then draw a list of demands they want from the MNCs in return for the inconveniences the exploration will cause them especially regarding the impact on their human security and livelihoods

Step 4: The Company involved in most cases send representatives back to the community to discuss the demands and possibly negotiate with the community

Step 5: An agreement is signed between selected community representatives and the company stating the terms and conditions that both sides must fulfil and this agreement is called the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Step 6: The Company begin oil exploration activities.

In cases where the indigenes grant MNCs access to the lands within their communities for the companies to explore oil, there are three possible scenarios that could unfold. These scenarios are based on factors such as the composition of the community members in terms of their level of education, poverty level or previous experience with oil companies and the company's previous reputation.

The first scenario is that the communities will grant the company access to carry out their work with little or no conditions. This scenario has become very rare as awareness of the communities increase. Between 1960 and 1990, most of the communities in the Niger Delta were not aware about the value of the oil explored in their communities hence they allow the MNCs to operate freely and gladly accept whatever was given to them as compensation. One of the respondents explains that *'in the past we did not know the value of the oil taken away from our community. Illiteracy is truly a disease because*

we have been cheated by these companies in the past. I remember in the 1960s, we were told by one of the company workers that the crude oil is a waste product that needs to be removed from under our lands as it is very toxic and can lead to the outbreak of diseases or disability in the future. We foolishly (although gladly) accepted their demands and even thanked them for helping us to prevent the outbreak of diseases in our communities not knowing that we were being deceived. However, that is a thing of the past as there is now awareness and enlightenment in this region. We now know better even to the extent that we know how much the crude oil is sold in the international market so nobody can come and take us for a fool any longer. And that is one of the causes of the problem, they want to keep us perpetually in darkness so that we will not know what is happening in the industry but that cannot happen again, it is either the companies accede to our demands or leave our area...'(BAYELSALIND01)

The second scenario is when the communities draw a list of demands on the MNC and the company accepts the demand but fail to do anything. This is common in many communities in the Niger Delta and it is a major cause of strife between the communities and the MNCs. This is where the issue of divide and rule sets in because when the MNCs perceive the demands of the communities to be more than they can cope with, they simply promise them to do all the things they asked for instead of negotiating with the communities to draw down their demands. In some cases, the officers from the company device some ingenious means to get around the demands of the communities and this is termed 'divide and rule' which then results in conflict in the communities. The employees of some of the MNCs interviewed during this project had different opinions regarding the modus operandi of their organisations and whether or not it fits into what the communities describe as divide and rule.

According to the first respondent' *When you say divide and rule, to me methodology is very important and most times when people don't understand the methodology they can call it anything they like. Like the word divide and rule, for me I wouldn't say that is totally correct or that is not correct because every company has a system of doing things and methodology and when the community don't understand their system of doing things, they can use the word divide and rule as a matter of fact when a company moves into a system, they have ethics and the ways in which they do things and they try to stick to their rules and guidelines. For me as an insider to interpret that as a divide and rule, it will be very*

difficult maybe somebody that can throw more light will be somebody who interface with the communities directly but for me, I will call it methodology style. They may not be happy with the style and I always tell people don't bother about the style, bother about the content and delivery which is more important and not the style. What you are talking about is the style and not the delivery so I don't think I have anything to say about the style, I rather consider the delivery anywhere I go rather than the style....'(MNCSPDC01)

The second respondent also argued in a similar vein and explained that *'Bargain is a function of your strength and ability to convince the other person, and the approach and technique of bargaining varies. Two different companies have two different set of people working for them and these people have different backgrounds......the approach for one could be easy for instance some companies are very generous, they don't want you to get involved in unnecessary or prolonged negotiations. They just go to the communities and find out what they want and whatever they say they just give them. In such companies it is easier to raise funds, the approval process is easier.......within the system too suspicion is not much. It is different in a company where the approval is difficult and it has to go through some form of bureaucracy. For instance somebody in a sister company can get approval from a manager here but in the other company approval has to come from Dubai and the man in Dubai does not know what operate here and he doesn't understand why you have to pay homage or contractor entry fee to operate so it becomes relatively difficult to convince a man who is not aware of the terrain here and then it is difficult to get funds. So if you are the one exposed to such situation it simply pushes you to negotiate further and try to cut cost because you know if you don't cut cost you will not get approval for the money you need to pay. So it is two different scenario; one in which the company do not want to get involved in too much negotiation while the other company wants to negotiate further so it simply exposes the other man to longer negotiations that the communities do not like. So if you sample opinions in those communities they will tell you the person that pay them and employ them is a better person. So the reasons are different background, different approval process and management styles' (MNCHAL02)*

The third respondent who is a senior staff at an oil servicing company (working for all the main MNCs) explained that although the issue of divide and rule was one of the main things that caused division in the communities in the past, it is been addressed now and some of the companies are reviewing the ways they relate with people in oil producing

communities. The respondent stated that *'I will say yes, the companies did use the technique but I don't think it is official….. based on certain allegations that I have heard from some people in the communities where I have worked and also from some colleagues working for the multinational companies. In those days we have heard that some companies will stir up rivalries within the community. For example money is supposed to be paid to a community for something; they align more to one side rather than being neutral and trying to ensure that the money goes to everyone that is supposed to get it. They tend to favour one side more than the other and this has caused issues in the past by not applying equality rule and sees them as the same as long as they have a representative which is agreed by all parties. Normally when the communities have a misunderstanding and they cannot agree on a representative, the companies don't deal with anybody but that is sometimes not the case as company officials just try to figure out which representative is stronger or has a stronger hold and they deal with them and that way they are causing grievance among those community members and those are the things that cause the violence' (MNCHAL03).*

On the other hand, three respondents working for the MNCs argue that what the communities argue to be a 'tactical method of avoiding responsibilities' or divide and rule actually exist in the communities but is caused by some 'greedy community members' themselves. The respondents maintained that sometimes some community members agree that the demands of the community are outrageous and then see the situation as a means of going behind the community to assist the companies and in the process also enriching themselves at the expense of the whole community. The respondents argue that since there is a job to be done and most times the employees of the MNCs are under pressure not only to deliver projects but to deliver it on time and in the process they sometimes take advantage of the community members that are willing to 'assist' them in achieving their purpose.

According to the first respondent that argued in this line, *'For me it is just an issue of human nature wanting to be circumventive so to say…..if as a community you know you truly want a company to do a particular project for you, it is important to come to an agreement to ensure that the project is executed. But when you see a group of persons being paid by the companies so that they will cut corners and not do the right thing, then there is a problem…….most times it is the members of the communities who are grouped*

into fractions that actually promote such things, maybe they feel we can allow these guys to do their job if they can give us a particular amount since we are more powerful than other groups and we can allow them to go ahead.......such money is collected just for a selected few who feel they are more powerful and suppress others but for the companies it is not a wise thing to do because you will face agitations tomorrow as those guys will not be there forever to protect you and you never can tell the agitations tomorrow might even be the one that will shut you down permanently. So it is good that as a policy what the company needs to do, they do it properly and document it. Because whatever you are going to give by the side (to some few people) you might not be able to document it and that might be another audit issue too' (MNCHAL01)

This view was substantiated by another respondent who also works for one of the MNCs. He explained that, *'a company in Delta state needed to site a worksite and they met the paramount ruler of the area who told them this particular plot of land will not be sold, you can use the land but you need to employ our youths and train our young people and don't just train them fix them up after the training. They were at the point of drafting a MOU when another chief came and said that place they want to stay is not good enough, they should come and take a better plot of land and pay a certain amount of money and they can stay there for as long as they want. He told them they don't even need to employ anybody from the community they should just continue to give him his Christmas present, send his wives abroad for shopping and that is all he wanted. So the company would prefer to go the other way and just pay one person rather than taking 50 people to work on the project. By the time the company went the way of the chief, there was chaos and the company had to pull out.....at that point that is where greed comes in when someone wants something for himself alone at the expense of the wider community'* (MNCAMNI01). He explained further that these sorts of things have created tensions in several communities and some have even resulted into violent conflicts.

It is important to state that one of the usual practices of MNCs whereby community groups are given cash hand-out (payment) in order to facilitate projects also contributes to conflict in the Niger Delta. After the six steps stated above have been completed and the company has mobilised to begin work, some companies then also go ahead to give money to various groups in the name of corporate social responsibility. This practice is unsustainable and once money is given to a particular group, other groups also spring

up and sometimes the companies get overwhelmed with demands for cash hand-outs. If the company does not heed to the demands of the groups, violent protest usually erupts which sometimes result in all out conflict if the police is involved. Respondent MNCAMNI01 explained this in more details:

'We went to commission some projects in some communities recently and because of the locations of these projects we didn't go first directly to the palace of the paramount ruler. We accessed the place by water then came back on the land and when we were through we went to do a commissioning there and then proceed to the palace of the paramount ruler. It would have made no sense to first go by road to see the paramount ruler and then come back again the other way, now the paramount ruler and his people were angry that we didn't see the paramount ruler first. In this part of Africa you have to give respect to whom respect is due, if you go to see the paramount leader you don't go empty handed and that kind of thing cannot be meted out to everybody in the community and that is the truth, so if that is what people say is divide and rule......on the other hand, I did a little project for Total some years ago and at that time there was this thing called the EGI community master plan project which is supposed to last for about 50yrs, so at that time Total decided to stop all form of cash hand-out to people in the community because it can also be termed divide and rule. Total decided to try a different approach; they employed a consultant and did a NEEDS assessment of all the LG and Total told the community to form a community development forum that will be the ones to engage contractors to develop the areas and Total will pay. So when money stopped entering the hands of people, the communities turned around and revolt against Total, so is this divide and rule then? The communities are a really delicate place to work with' (MNCAMNI01)

The third scenario is when the community place a huge demand on the MNC and rather than negotiate and decide on what is reasonable enough to do for the community; the company decides to give the community all they asked for in order to get projects done on time. The implication of this is that the company sets a high standard and raise the expectation of that particular community. So when another company or a different manager returns to such community or a neighbouring community to execute a project, the community will refer to the previous work that has been done and refuse to negotiate on their demands. This sometimes leads to companies seeking assistance from security operatives to carry out a project and this infuriates the community further.

Respondent MNCSPDC02 argues that unless all the MNCs operating in the region have a standard procedure of carrying out projects in the region, there will always be disagreement and conflict regarding their CSR.

According to the respondent *'I am not saying that the MNCs should not give anything back to the community where they operate but there should be a standard procedure that must be followed by all members of staff. At the moment different companies have different methods of operation and some of those methods are really poor. For instance in my own company and in many other oil companies, promotion is tied to performance. The more the numbers of projects you are able to carry out, the quicker your promotion will be. So what happens is that managers that are closer to the managing director or top directors in the company might not need to negotiate a lot with the community because they know that whatever the demands of the communities are, they can easily speak to the managing director to approve funds so that they can carry out the projects. When this happens, such managers are able to get their work done in record times and hence get promoted quicker. On the other hand, any manager that does not have such relationship with the managing director will have to negotiate more and this upsets the communities especially when they have had instances where previous managers did not argue with them. This then leads to a situation where the manger will have to look for the influential people in the communities or the godfathers that can help him carry out the project. The manager in question will pay the few people at the expense of the entire community and this is what is termed divide and rule by community members. Such situations are common in the region and it has led to violent conflicts in the past where the individuals thought to have benefitted from the company are killed or maimed by irate youths in the community. If the person that benefitted from the money is a godfather who also have thugs working for him, the result is division in the community and violent conflict which often hinders the company from carrying out their work' (MNCSPDC02).* The approach of MNCs in assessing and executing projects in the communities could be a source of conflict if not properly handled. It is important to create standardised method for all the MNCs operating in the region in order to reduce disagreement between communities and MNCs. If a standard procedure is in place which is ratified by all the stakeholders, the issue of divide and rule will not arise and conflict could be reduced in the region.

7.4 Community driven development approach: The Akassa Model

The perceived failure of the development approach used by the MNCs operating in the Niger Delta coupled with an increase in oil related violence led to the development of a different model of resource distribution by Statoil (one of the MNCs operating in the region). The model was piloted by Statoil in 1997 across 19 communities where the company operates (Statoil, 2014). The community development model involved all the 19 communities contributing to the drafting of a development plan which was submitted to Statoil for implementation. The first stage of the development model was the merging together of all the existing community development groups such as the council of elders, the women groups and the youth groups to form a single community development group called Akassa Development Foundation (ADF). Every year, the ADF designs a community development plan which is entirely funded by Statoil. The plan is based on consultation from several organisations within the participating communities. A distinguishing aspect of the model is that projects are suggested by specialist bodies within the communities. Some of the projects include:

- Health facilities (identified by health institutions in Akassa)
- Educational support (identified by schools and PTAs in Akassa)
- Women in development projects (identified by women)
- Youth in development projects (identified by youth)
- Natural resource management programmes
- Micro credit schemes, capacity building programmes for various institutions including the Council of Chiefs and infrastructure projects
  (Statoil, 2014)

The model is entirely bottom-up with the ADF involved at every stage of the development of the model. An evaluation of the model in 2014 by Kimenyi et al suggests that the Akassa model is a successful community development model due to three main reasons. First, community members are involved in project design and implementation, second, the community members are involved in setting the goals of the ADF and third, community members are involved in discussing and approving the rules of the projects with little or no interference (Kimenyi et al. 2014). Furthermore, many of the goals of the ADF have been successfully implemented thereby fostering economic development

and reducing conflicts in the target communities (Idemudia, 2009; Oluduro and Oluduro, 2012).

Although the Akassa model has been described as an efficient bottom-up community driven resource distribution model in the Niger Delta, the replication of the model is debatable for three main reasons. First, the model is used in only 19 communities in the Niger Delta and considering the fact that there are over 3000 communities in the region, it is difficult to see how the model can be replicated. Second, all the communities are located offshore, hence, it is important to consider a model that can also be applicable onshore. Third, Statoil is a relatively small company with less than 2% of the total oil production in the Niger Delta. Despite these issues, the bottom-up approach to development used by Statoil has yielded positive dividends.

7.5 Making a difference? Chevron's GMOU process

According to Haider (2008), in order to develop a holistic approach to peace building in a region ravaged by violent conflict, it is important to address both the tangible and intangible effects of the conflict. The tangible effects are the visible aspects of the conflict such as, environmental insecurity, destruction to infrastructures, the people killed or wounded during the conflicts as well as disruption to the sources of livelihoods of the people. The problem in the Niger Delta relates to environmental security and the pollution of the land and rivers which serves as the primary sources of livelihood to the people considering the fact that the people from the region are predominantly farmers and fishermen. The intangible aspect includes collapse of community structure, fear and trauma experienced by the people during the crises, lack of trust in government, state institutions and the MNCs, as well as the psychological effects associated with the loss of livelihoods. In any conflict situation, violence transforms both the social and political foundations of the community and this makes it imperative to develop a 'community-oriented analytical approach', which should help understand how communities re-emerge and organize despite the challenges involved (Pouligny, 2005: 509).

Previous attempts at resolving the Niger Delta conflict have failed mainly because the design and implementation of such initiatives did not include all the stakeholders involved. In many of the peace initiatives set up either by the government or the MNCs,

the communities are often left behind and when the communities are involved, the involvement is limited to a few influential people or godfathers who in most cases do not have the interest of the populace in mind. Furthermore, development initiatives often go through third parties and not directly to the communities. An increase in awareness in the local communities coupled with the emergence of several youth groups with some taking the path of violent agitations has made it increasingly difficult to achieve peace and sustainable development in the communities. The emergence of such groups has also led to a situation whereby it is increasingly difficult for a few influential people or the so called godfathers to maintain a grip on the increasingly volatile communities. This implies that any peace process that must be initiated must involve the full acceptance of all the stakeholders especially the community members who form the bulk of the stakeholders in the oil producing communities. Such peace process must also go directly to the communities involved with little or no interference from third parties.

One of the respondents explained that '*the cause of the problem in the ND is the people explaining how they have been marginalised and that the government is not doing anything for them while the MNCs are getting oil from their place without giving anything back to the community. The only government the people can see are the MNCs who are taking oil from them and sometimes they hinder their operations by blocking their pipelines, kidnap their staff etc but eventually Chevron agreed to come up with a new developmental model called the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) model. The basis of this model is to deal directly with the communities through a comprehensive resource distribution strategy. Before now they have been given money which was also generating crises in the community because the leaders of the communities are the ones collecting the money and they won't do anything, when Chevron go to the community they used to give money to the leaders. Furthermore, the people were not asked what they wanted and the oil companies would just design a project and execute for them and these projects were not even sustainable because the people see it as a Chevron oil company's project so they don't care if the project is destroyed*' (NGOLAGOS01)

In order to address the issue of conflict faced in the Niger Delta as well as create an enabling environment for the company to operate, Chevron in 2005 with the assistance of some NGOs developed a new sustainable approach to development in the areas

where they operate. The new approach called the GMOU process gives the communities greater roles in determining how and what should be done regarding development. The company decided to change its method of resource distribution by dealing with the communities directly through committees selected by the community members. The main objective of the initiative was to ensure peace and stability in the areas where the company operates, (Chevron,2014) as well as, to understand the reasons behind the agitations of the people with a view of finding solutions to the problem of the people. Before the GMOU process started, some of the people that represented the oil producing communities in the negotiations did not have the interest of the communities at heart and only represented their own interests. Darlington (2014) explains that since the 1990s, an increase in the level of awareness of the youths from the Niger Delta has resulted in deeper scrutiny of the activities of the elders who often act on behalf of the communities during negotiations with the MNCs. This increase in the level of scrutiny has resulted in unravelling several misrepresentations of the communities by those in position of authority and the situation has further increased the conflict in the region. Darlington observed that apart from short-changing the communities they represent, some of these elders and representatives have sometimes actually instigated violent actions on the communities while acting on behalf of the MNCs and government. This led to a situation whereby many of the elders were killed or sent into exile and those that survived often have to violently defend themselves by any means possible.

This and many other issues prompted many of the MNCs to change the ways they relate with their host communities especially in issues relating to exploration and CSR. The GMOU model is designed to address most of the challenges faced by Chevron while operating in the communities. The model which was only used in Nigeria by Chevron (at the time of the ethnography) is a bottom-up approach where the communities are given the privilege of deciding the projects to be done in their communities based on the needs of the people. Before the GMOU process, the oil companies hired development experts to analyse the situation in each community and then send the analysis to the company's community development units (CDU). The CDU in conjunction with some influential members of the communities then design the projects which are often carried out by selected community members (often the godfathers) or companies owned by friends of the CDU members which in most cases are not affiliated to the

communities. The table below explains the development process in host communities by MNCs before and after the GMOU process.

Pre 2005 MOU (Chevron and other MNCs)	GMOU Process (Chevron)
Influential community members decide what the community needs	A team of experts and NGOs carry out a comprehensive sustainable livelihood assessment (SLA) to assess the needs of the communities
Contracts are awarded to community godfathers and close associates of MNC staffs in charge of the process (sometimes non-indigenes)	Contracts are awarded to only the indigenes of the communities after a transparent bidding process
No transparency in the amount of money given to the community by the MNCs for developmental process	There is total transparency as the communities know exactly how much is available for projects; the figures are published annually
Communities were grouped based on geographical location and this caused inter-ethnic conflicts as some ethnic groups argue that they are not well involved	The communities are grouped into 8 regional development councils (RDC) based on ethnic affiliations and with separate governing units all from individual ethnic groups
Direct chain of command between the MNCs and contractors/community leaders and godfathers	There are more stakeholders involved including Chevron, RDCs, government representatives, Banks, NGOs etc
Contracts were often left uncompleted or not done at all as there was nobody to question the people involved, sometimes community members don't even know that contracts were awarded	Structures are in place to ensure that all contracts are executed to a high standard and verified in stages by representatives of the stakeholders before funds are released in instalments
Top down approach from the MNCs to the	Bottom up approach from the

communities	communities to the MNCs
There were over 400 MOU agreements signed between Chevron and all the communities where they operate and it was simply unmanageable	There are just eight GMOU agreements signed between Chevron and each of the RDCs and this makes community development manageable for both parties
Projects were seen as Chevron's project because they had little or no input from the indigenes of the communities and hence many projects are not utilized	Projects are seen as community projects and the people play important roles in the design, construction and management of all projects

Table 7.1 Differences between the MOU and GMOU development models

7.5.1 Key drivers of the GMOU model

According to Hoben et al (2012), there were five important reasons why Chevron needed to change the way the company relates with the communities where they operate, these reasons include:

1. The need for the company to reduce the disruptions to its operations- Considering the fact that daily oil exploration runs into millions of dollars, each day of disruption cost the company millions of dollars and this sometimes affects employment because the company often lay off workers when it is unable to meet its production quotas

2. The need to promote unity rather than competition among host communities- Previously the companies community engagement processes have resulted in competition among communities and it had resulted in situations where communities demanded for equal treatment.

3. The need to streamline community development approach- Prior to the evolution of the GMOU, Chevron had about 480 individual agreements with all the communities where they operate and this was difficult for both the company and the communities to manage. The GMOU streamlined the process and

Chevron now has to deal with the executives of the RDCs that represent the communities.

4. The need to achieve visible development- Development initiatives were often channeled through community leaders and few individuals who in most cases diverted the resources for personal use. Despite the huge sum the company spends on community development, there was little to show for it and this increased the grievances the communities had against the company

5. The need for collaborative development- It is obvious that MNCs alone cannot develop the region without the collaboration of other stakeholders. The GMOU process was intended to give the other stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to the development of the region and help in reducing conflict.
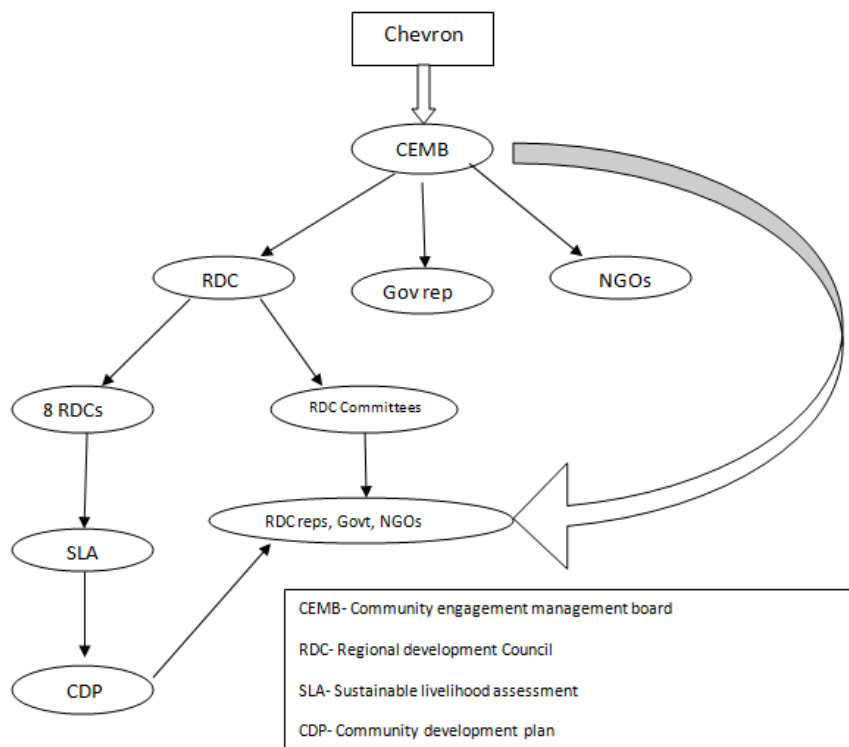
Figure 7.4: The GMOU process

The community engagement management board (CEMB)- The CEMB is the overall body that oversee the implementation of the GMOU. Members of the CEMB are drawn from the 8 regional development councils where Chevron operates and the process is through elections into the RDCs by community members. Other members of the CEMB

are Chevron representatives, government representatives as well as NGO representatives. The representatives of the government are mostly from the government established community development agencies like DESOPADEC for Delta state. The functions of the CEMB are:

- Oversee the development of all the communities where Chevron operates
- Examine the SLA carried out by the RDCs in order to decide which projects are feasible
- Decide projects to be executed based on the funding provided by Chevron
- Liaise with Chevron on the needs of the RDCs and the amount needed in terms of funding
- Assess projects carried out by the contractors
- Serve as link between Chevron and all the RDCs where the company operates
- Oversee all the activities of the RDCs

The CEMB has a chairman, a general secretary, a treasurer and further divided into 6 committees for effective functioning. These committees are involved in various aspects of community development and the members are from all the communities where Chevron operates and also involved in running the CEMB.
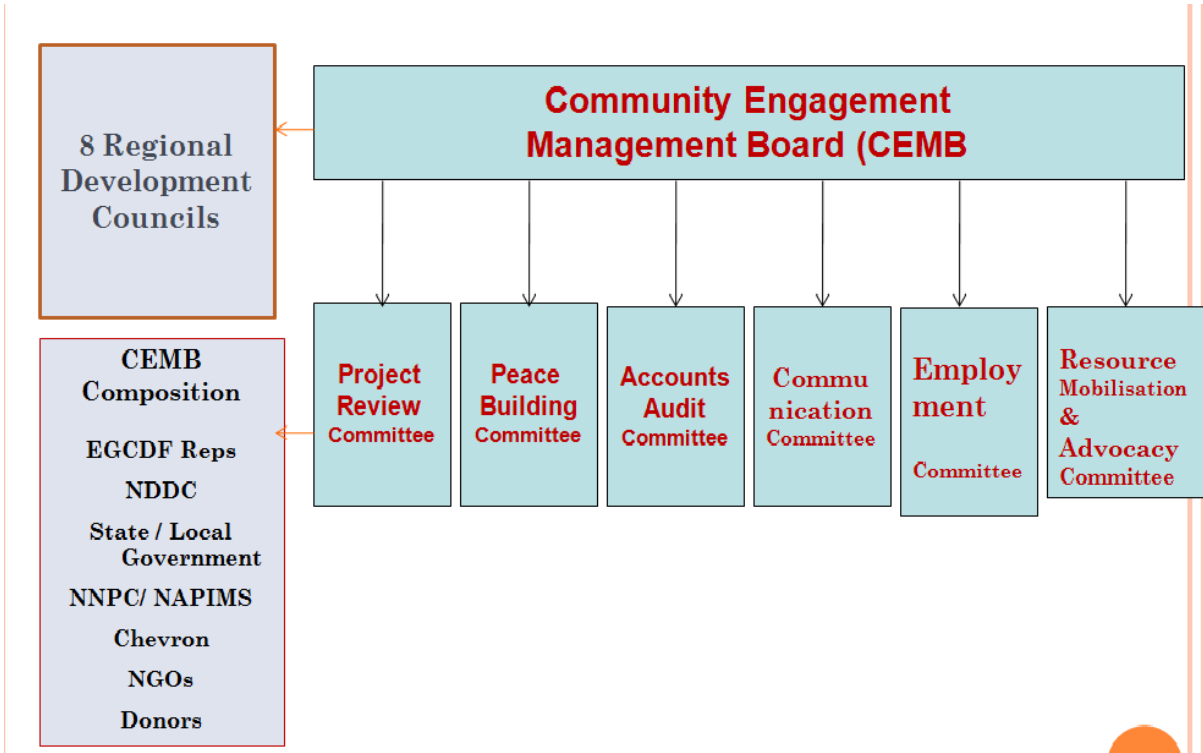
Figure 7.5: CEMB Composition

Sub-committees of the CEMB

1. Project review committee- This committee is responsible for the technical aspect of the project. They are responsible for screening the contractors, vetting the projects generated by the RDCs through the SLA and make recommendations to the CEMB for approval, monitor all projects from start to finish in order to make sure that all projects are completed within the required time period. They also ensure that all projects carried out meet the necessary quality standards.

2. Peace building committee- Responsible for settling disputes in all the communities where Chevron operates in the Niger Delta. The committee consists of lawyers as well as experts in conflict resolution. They are the first arbitrator for any form of conflicts within and between communities. The committee is required to try as much as possible to resolve disputes before escalating to the government or Chevron as the case may be. The committee designs its own 'in-house brand' of peace-building strategies based on the situation in the region.

3. Communication committee- they are responsible for all the communications between the RDCs and the CEMB as well as between the CEMB and Chevron. They are also required to publish magazines highlighting the achievement of the RDCs annually.

4. Accounts and audit committee- This is the committee saddled with the responsibility of running the accounts of the CEMB. They are also responsible for distribution of funds to the RDCs as agreed by the CEMB. The audit committee is required to audit all the accounts of the RDCs in order to avoid corruption and ensure accountability.

5. Employment community- All the employment needs of the community are channeled to the RDCs who then forward it on to this committee. The committee works with all the other committee to reduce unemployment in the communities. They also allocate employment opportunities that come from Chevron in a fair manner to all the communities where Chevron operates.

6. Resource mobilization and advocacy committee- This is a new committee that was formed due to the need for the communities to seek for more funding outside Chevron. At the moment, all of the funds utilized for the development of the communities are sourced from Chevron but the CEMB has realized that Chevron alone cannot fund all the projects required by the communities. The committee is also responsible to liaise with other government owned development agencies in order to avoid project duplication and to get more funding.

The regional development councils (RDCs) - The RDC just like the CEMB has a chairman and other executive members. The RDCs are eight in number and the members consist of indigenes from all the communities where Chevron operates. For ease of operation and in order to solve one of the problems in the region which is inter-ethnic conflict, the RDCs are formed along ethnic lines. Respondent DELTAIND01, who was the immediate and pioneer general secretary of one of the RDCs explain that one of the main reasons why the GMOU has achieved success so far is because they are organized along ethnic lines. He argued that when communities that speak the same language and who understand their needs sit down together to dialogue, they are able to achieve a better result and nobody feels that they might be cheated by others because they see

themselves as equals. He stated that *'it is for purpose of needs because I as an Ijaw man might not know the needs of the Itsekiris and Urhobos as I don't belong to their community. The issue of acceptability is there and that is why each tribe has to form its own development council so that they can demand and execute projects based on their unique needs. In the past there has been several conflicts when all the development committees were grouped based on their geographical location but now each RDC can decide what is best for them. Furthermore, since all the communities cannot be developed at the same time, it is important for the RDC to decide the sequence of development and which one should be given a priority. This was difficult to achieve when all the communities were grouped together because every ethnic group or community wants its project to be executed first and most times we could not even get anything at the end of the day'* (DELTAIND01)

Another respondent added that *'the grouping of the RDCs along ethnic lines is one of the most intelligent things to do. Different ethnic groups operate differently and have different chains of command and authority. For instance, I am an Itsekiri man and every Itsekiri man must obey the instruction of our paramount leader (the Olu of Warri) so when the RDC started and we heard that it has been ratified by the Olu himself, we were all happy because we respect his authority and believe in his integrity'* (BAYELSAIND02). Most of the communities have 2 or 3 members in each RDC depending on the sizes of the communities. Furthermore, depending on the number of communities in each RDC, some have between 80-100 members while some have between 40-60 members. The RDCs also have committees which are similar to the CEMB committees and work in synergy with the CEMB committees. The executive members of the RDCs are elected after rigorous screening. After the community have nominated or elected their members to serve in the RDCs, the RDC members then nominate other members to be voted in as executives. Some of the qualities and qualifications that the aspiring leader must possess are:

- Sound educational attainment
- Exposure to upper room management
- Experience
- Articulation and presentation
- Flare for documentation

- Selfless
- Integrity
- Excellent management of information
- Focus on GMOU success
- Commitment
- Trust
- Balanced judgement on issues
- Feedback and follow up
- Good time management (New Nigeria Foundation, 2013)

After the leaders have been elected, they are saddled with the responsibility of representing the interest of not only their own communities but the RDC as a whole. In order to ensure that the leaders maintain accountability, they are not eligible to bid for contracts or help their friends and relatives to secure contracts. Furthermore, they are paid salaries during the tenure of their office which usually last 3years. Some of the functions of the RDCs are:

- To carry out SLA in all the communities in the RDC in order to determine the needs of the community and develop a community development plan (CDP)
- They serve as the first point of contact between the communities and the company
- They ratify projects based on the SLA and make recommendations to the CEMB
- To try and seek alternative funding from other organization for the development of their communities and not depend on Chevron
- To assist the CEMB in project monitoring and evaluation
- Implement training programmes for members of the communities as ratified by the RDCs
- Engage in trainings and conflict resolution in all the communities where they cover

Apart from the members of the communities where Chevron operates who make up the CEMB and RDCs, there are other stakeholders who also have representatives in both the CEMB and the RDCs. First, the government has representatives who are experts in all the departments of these organizations and also involved in the running of these organizations. There are professionals such as lawyers, engineers, architects, and

surveyors who also sit on the board of the CEMB and also consult for the RDCs. Some of them are also signatories to the account of these organizations in order to ensure accountability. In return for their services, these professionals are paid sitting allowance each time they attend meetings. Second, there are representatives of NGOs both within and outside Nigeria such as Consensus Building Institute (CBI), Research Triangle International (RTI), Niger Delta Professionals for Development (NIPRODEV) and New Nigeria Foundation (NNF).

7.5.2 The GMOU community development process

Since the GMOU started in 2005 and rolled out in 2006, the process of development has been more straightforward in communities where Chevron operates. The GMOU is a shift from patronage-based to technocratic means of community development based on a bottom-up approach. The process is clear and transparent and although it is still undergoing a 'refining' stage and the process can be improved significantly, it has been commended by many of the stakeholders in the region as the most impactful as far as community development is concerned. By using this new model, Chevron is able to distribute resources directly to the communities through the CEMB and the RDCs which are seen as the genuine representatives of the communities. The model has also improved the governance of distribution of resources in the communities where Chevron operates. This section of the thesis will explain how the GMOU model works, the problems that is being faced as well as suggest how the model can be improved.

Stage 1- SLA and CDP

After the formation of the CEMB and the RDCs, the first thing that was done was to carry out a SLA in all the operational communities of Chevron. The SLA was very comprehensive and lasted for about one year. During the period, 10 NGOs were involved in the process (New Nigeria Foundation, 2013) and thousands of indigenes from the communities were interviewed. The NGOs also assessed previous development initiative as well as considered the future plans of other development agencies in order to avoid duplication of projects. After conducting the SLA, the NGOs developed a thorough CDP which serves as a blueprint for development. The CDP is carried out every three years and the first one was carried out in 2006 (DELTAINDO1).

Stage 2- RDCs decides CDP priority

After the CDP has been conducted for each RDC, the RDC then arrange the CDP based on the needs of the communities and its urgency. Each RDC decides how the projects should be prioritized and which communities should be addressed first. The RDC then sends the list to the CEMB who has the final say on the projects. Factors considered while allocating projects include the size of the projects and feasibility, the impact of the project both in the long and short run, the funds available from Chevron as well as the time period required to execute the projects. Since most of the RDC positions are for three years, projects that will be completed within this period are considered ahead of other projects

Stage 3- CEMB ratifies projects

The CEMB ratifies the projects for all the RDCs at the same time. This is to avoid tension in some RDCs if others are approved before their own. Also, the CEMB allocate projects in such a way that all the RDCs get a fair share of the funds available. All the projects allocated are published in the CEMB magazine and this reduces questions that could have been asked by individual RDCs as the whole process is transparent (I was given some of the RDC magazines when I visited the RDC offices).

Stage 4- Project allocation

Once the CEMB has allocated the projects, funds are released to the accounts of the RDCs for project implementation. Each community then nominates contractors who are indigenes to bid for projects. Although the process of bidding and allocation of contracts is quite transparent, there were allegations that some members of the RDC committees take bribes in order to allocate projects to particular firms. This has resulted in conflict in some RDCs and this is one of the areas that need to be improved on.

Stage 5- Project execution and monitoring

After the allocation of projects to individual contractors, the project review committee of the RDC then monitors the project to ensure that the fund is not diverted. They also make sure that they work with the project review committee of the CEMB to ensure that the quality of the projects is not compromised and that they are delivered within the scheduled period.

7.5.3 GMOU funding

The funding for the GMOU is done primarily by Chevron. Although in the structure of the GMOU itself, the development initiatives are supposed to be co-funded by the company and government agencies, all the contribution between 2005 and 2013 have been mainly from Chevron. Respondent (MNCCHEV01) stated that several attempts have been made by Chevron to get the government involved financially but it has not been possible. He explained that despite the company's attempt to get the government on board in terms of the funding for the model, the government has 'simply ignored' its proposition. According to the respondent *'although the government agencies agree that this model is the best that has ever been developed in the Niger Delta, they have not committed financially. Even when they send their representatives to the CEMB and RDCs, they insist on collecting sitting allowance despite the fact that they are all fully employed by the government. But we cannot do without involving the government because we must ensure legitimacy in the model as well as accountability'* (MNCCHEV01). He added that apart from the government, the RDCs are also expected to seek external funding from international NGOs because Chevron cannot cater for all their developmental needs. While some of the RDCs have been making attempts and some of them have actually been successful in getting funding, some have refused and insisted that the development of the community is the sole responsibility of the oil companies and the government and if the government refuse to develop the region, then the MNCs must be prepared to take on the full responsibility alone (MNCCHEV01).

7.5.4 GMOU transparency initiatives

In order to ensure that the GMOU development model does not go the same way as previous development models, there were some initiatives put in place by Chevron and the NGOs involved in the design of the model.

First, is the adequate remuneration for the people involved in the process. The principal officers of both the CEMB and RDC are employed full time for the duration of their offices while the other members are paid daily sitting allowance anytime they seat. This reduces the overhead for the running of both offices. In order to run the offices, 10% of the total fund disbursed by Chevron goes to the RDCs for the running of their offices and payment of staff salaries as well as seating allowances for the other members,

government officials and NGOs. 5% goes to the CEMB for the same purpose leaving 85% of the total fund for financing projects. Although this formula ensures that people are adequately compensated for the time and energy they put into the process, it has created another problem. The competition for these offices have become more intense as more people want to get into these offices and elections to the offices are increasingly marred with violence and allegations of rigging.

Second, it is impossible for individuals or groups to singlehandedly obtain money for projects. After a project has been allocated, a representative of all the stakeholders are expected to sign before 25% of the fund is released for project mobilization. This implies that for any amount of money to be released, a representative of the CEMB, RDC, NGO, government and Chevron must sign the cheque before the bank can accept it. Furthermore, other representatives of these stakeholders must also visit the project site to ensure that the work is ongoing and that the contractor has actually utilized the first instalment of the money before the next is signed for. This ensures that all the stakeholders are actively involved in the process and this has reduced the incidence of abandoned projects significantly. Respondent (MNCCHEV03) also explained that all payments are done through the bank using Advance Payment Guarantee (APG) and this ensures that the bank also inspects the project before releasing the next instalment or else the bank will be held liable for any misappropriated fund.

Third, all the executives of the CEMB and RDCs are not eligible to bid for projects although the ordinary committee members can bid. Although this is to ensure that the leadership of these bodies are free of bias when projects are allocated, there have been some allegations that some of the leaders influence the bids in favour of their friends or relatives and there was an incidence in Bayelsa state where one of the leaders registered a company in the name of his brother to bid for contracts (DELTAINDO1).

Finally, in order to encourage the communities to ensure peace and stability in their regions, there is an incentive called 'peace bonus' that Chevron gives any RDC that is able to maintain peace and order for a whole year. This ensures that communities goes an extra mile in order to make sure that agitations do not result in violent conflict and the amount given as peace bonus is made public to all the RDCs in the region.

7.5.5 Gaps in the GMOU model

Although the GMOU represents the most viable development model initiated in the Niger Delta so far, there are some gaps that needs to be filled in order for the model to fulfil its potential. Although many of the respondents for this research agree that the model is viable and that it has actually reduced the incidence of violence confrontations between the MNCs and security forces on one side and the communities on the other side, there were some reservations in some quarters about the model. The principal issue is whether the model is genuinely focused at developing the region or it is just an avenue for Chevron to be able to work freely without being impeded. After a thorough analysis of the model and a study of the review by Faleti (2009), this research observed some gaps in the GMOU model. If these issues are addressed the model has the potential to be a comprehensive development model which can then be adopted by the Nigerian government for all the MNCs operating in the region.

The first issue is that the GMOU does not address environmental issues in the region. The model is only focused on the development of selected communities in the form of physical development and empowerment of the indigenes. Considering the fact that one of the main issues that led to the conflict in the region is the issue of environmental degradation, any developmental model that will be sustainable must address this issue because environmental sustainability still remains an important aspect of development in the region.

Second, communities in the Niger delta close to the operations of MNCs are divided into two categories; the host communities and the impacted communities. The host communities are those communities where oil installations are situated and where the actual oil explorations are carried out. Impacted communities on the other hand, are the communities close to the host communities that are not considered oil producing but also suffer the impact of oil exploration. Respondent NGODELTA01 explained that in some cases, impacted communities suffer as much as host communities especially when there is oil spill because the oil can flow from one community to the other and damage the farms or ponds of communities that are not oil producing. Before the GMOU model kicked off, impacted communities can claim compensation for damage done to their livelihoods as a result of oil spills in neighbouring host communities but because they

are not part of the RDCs, they are no more catered for. Chevron insists that they no longer deal with individual communities and every correspondence must be between the RDCs or CEMB and the company, this leaves the impacted communities without any form of redress. There have been instances where impacted communities in Chevron operating areas have violently protested against the company for the destructions caused by the activities of the company. A comprehensive model must include plans for the participation of vulnerable communities that are impacted by oil exploration in the region.

Third, there were allegations that Chevron dominates the decision making process of the CEMB and that the organization is not independent. One of the respondents (DELTAIND01) who was a former member of the CEMB stated that although it looks as if the CEMB is in total control, it is not so as the executives take orders from Chevron and are not totally in control of the projects executed in the communities. This claim was supported by another respondent who works for one of the NGOs that carried out the SLAs in the communities. Respondent NGOLAGOS02 argues that *'although the GMOU model is a good start to reducing conflict in the Niger Delta, this can only be possible if the people running the programme have total independence in making decisions. At the moment Chevron interferes with the decision making process and will only support projects that will enhance their image. In 2009 when elections were conducted to replace the RDCs and CEMB executives, Chevron fought tooth and nail to ensure that all the CEMB members were returned to their positions because many of these men have compromised and the people already accuse them of working for Chevron'* *(NGOLAGOS02).* The independence of these organizations is important if the model is to be sustainable in the long run.

Fourth, there are still problems regarding the previous MOUs signed between Chevron and some of the host communities and this is still generating controversies in some communities. Some of the communities argue that the GMOU model was designed by Chevron in order to avoid previous agreements between the communities and the company. Faleti (2009) cited an example of tensions between Chevron and Ugborodo community in Delta state. The community rejected the GMOU model and insisted that Chevron should honour previous agreement before the implementation of the GMOU model. This disagreement led to violent confrontations between the community

members and security forces guarding Chevron's installations in 2007 and 2009. Some other communities also follow the same path by not signing up to the GMOU model and insisting that all pre-2005 agreements between Chevron and the communities must be implemented. It is important that all the communities and Chevron find a common ground on this issue because sporadic conflicts could ignite further violence in the region if not addressed.

Fifth, the GMOU like the previous MOUs are not legally binding and the programme is at the discretion of Chevron. It is a CSR initiative and not a contractual agreement and this means that it is not guaranteed to last. Issues such as fluctuations in the price of oil in the international market, reduction in oil exploration or sabotage attributed to the indigenes can impact negatively on the financial commitment of Chevron and also the activities of the RDCs and this could be a potential source of violent protest of conflict.

Furthermore, the model is too bureaucratic containing several layers of governance which also increases the cost of paying the people running the programme. First, there is the CEMB, then the CDC followed by other local groups that constantly try to influence the CDC. It is necessary to streamline the governance of the GMOU in order to achieve maximum productivity and reduce bureaucracy. A single governance model that will consist of all the stakeholders representing Chevron, the communities, government officials and all other interest groups will be more productive. Also, such single governance structure will reduce the overhead cost and free up more funds that can be used for the development of the communities involved.

Finally, the funding for the programme is inadequate. Chevron commits only 2% of its revenue to the programme and this is inadequate considering the huge revenue of the company and the low level of development in the region. The level of funding needs to increase in order to achieve a reasonable level of development in the region. Furthermore, there is need for the government to contribute to the programme as it is the only bottom-up development model in the region. Funding can be made through the 13% derivation that accrues to all the oil producing communities and runs into hundreds of millions of pounds annually.

7.5.6 Impact of the GMOU model

Despite the gaps identified in the GMOU model above, it is important to state that many of the indigenes of the region believe that if the model is properly developed, it could be a solution to the problem of poverty and incidences of conflict in the region. After the initial trial run in 2005 and two renegotiations in 2008 and 2011 respectively, there have been some successes recorded by the GMOU process. Some of these successes include improved relationships between Chevron and the communities, reduced violence in the communities where Chevron operates, visible development outcomes in the RDC communities as well as greater transparency in the delivery of projects (Hoben et al 2012). An analysis of newsletters obtained from one of the RDCs (Egbema Gbaramatu –Ijaw RDC) reveal that between 2006-2012, the RDC has completed 89 projects ranging from town halls to community health centres and teachers' staff quarters. 215 youths have been empowered in various skills acquisition programmes and 1,367 women were granted micro credits in all the communities represented by the RDCs. One main difference between the GMOU model and other development models is that the involvement of third parties is minimal. Resources are distributed directly to the communities from Chevron through organisations that were selected by the community members themselves. Furthermore, the transparent governance of the distribution of resources has increased the legitimacy of the programme.

Most of the stakeholders interviewed for the purpose of this research agree that the GMOU model is a step in the right direction. Eight respondents from communities where other MNCs operate also said they desire to have a similar model as there are visible developments initiated by the indigenes in other communities where Chevron operates. They also added that conflicts have indeed reduced in many of the communities that have signed up for the model. According to a respondent who is a senior employee at one of the MNCs interviewed as part of this research *'the GMOU model today is recognized as the best practices in the oil industry and other oil companies are trying to adopt it. One positive aspect of the features is that it has helped us to bring community people into our business more……… we now deal with the communities directly through their representatives and we have discovered that without a social license you cannot freely operate as an oil company and the license from the government alone cannot*

guarantee your operations. The social license we are talking about is an understanding with the community people' (MNCCHEV03)

Respondent MNCCHEV02 who is also an employee from Chevron added that *'the model has made us understand the dynamics of community politics much better. It has also helped us restructure our community development process. Before now we used to deal with individual community as a stakeholder but because of this conflict issues and difficulty of getting across so many communities at the same time we came up with the concept of GMOU where we grouped communities of the same ethnic group and geographical location under one umbrella and set aside some money for their development every year. We also set up a governance model structure for communities and it is to determine and execute community projects. Before this time we were in the middle of the crises and we spent so much money but the money was going into private pocket and communities and government accused us of not developing communities because we did not see the evidence of the money. Then we came up with the GMOU model where we insisted that communities must have a structure like the local government in the communities. Now we are able to operate in a peaceful environment and the conflict has reduced drastically' (MNCCHEV02)*

*A third MNC respondent added 'basically GMOU has brought about some level of control, it is still a work in progress but we will get there because I know some of the community people do not understand what the GMOU process is all about but through education and enlightenment some of them are now trying to appreciate what it is about especially the ones that are not greedy who are interested in the development of the communities. It is the greedy ones who benefited from the previous process that want to scuttle the GMOU process but by and large I think there is acceptance of the GMOU process and it is bringing peace and development' (*MNCHAL02)

Some of the government officials interviewed also welcomed the development of the GMOU process. Respondent MNCGOV1 agrees that the GMOU when perfected will bring the much needed help to the communities as it is *'the first time that the MNCs genuinely came up with a plan to develop the communities' (MNCGOV1).* Another respondent who is a government worker added that *'the GMOU initiative by Chevron is a good step in the right direction. My department is involved in issues of conflict resolution and the statistics*

available indicate that there has indeed been a reduction in violent conflicts where the GMOU process is operating. Although there is still a lot to be done especially in regards to the independence of the committees and the inclusion of some aggrieved communities, I think the model should be adequately developed and then replicated in all the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta' (GOVTOFFBAYEL04).

Many of the respondents in the communities where the model is being used agree that the model is working and that when perfected it will reduce the incidence of conflict drastically in the communities. Respondent DELTAINDO4 argued that the GMOU process has resulted in visible development and that the communities where projects have been executed have been impacted positively but noted that it will take time for development to reach all the communities due to limited funding. In an interview with a respondent who is a journalist with one of the main newspaper companies in Nigeria (the Vanguard newspaper) he stated that '*In the course of the problem, when the agitation came to a climax, instead of Chevron settling each individual community differently, they now came up with a system where they now classified communities based on ethnicity in their areas of operations. This has actually reduced the conflict experienced in communities where Chevron operates but there is still some issues with the GMOU process that needs to be addressed*' (DELTAJOURL01). Some of the respondents in areas operated by other MNCs also talked about the GMOU process and the need for such models to be replicated throughout the whole region. In a group interview with four community leaders in Bayelsa state, three of the respondents mentioned the GMOU process and all the four respondents agreed that the model should be replicated by all the MNCs and that the government should use it as a criteria for the development of the region.

The GMOU model seems to work for some reasons. First, the approach offers a transparent system of governance in the distribution of resources. Each RDC know exactly how much Chevron is contributing for the year and how the money is spent. This explains my argument in the introduction that a major cause of conflict in the region is the governance of the distribution of resources which was seen as inadequate. Second, the GMOU model has reduced the influence of godfathers in the communities as the CEMB and RDC executives are voted in by the community members and are the only authorised parties to sign the GMOU. Third, the communities feel that they are treated

more equitably by Chevron and they also contribute to project design and allocation. Finally, some of the projects especially the micro finance scheme has improved the human security of the people because many beneficiaries who were impacted by pollution could now venture into other businesses and not rely on farming or fishing.

A respondent from a ERA stated that the GMOU model currently presents the only sustainable development platform for the Niger Delta region. He also argued that although there are still *'gaps in the model that needs to be plugged, a sincere application of the model should in fact replace all the moribund development agencies in the region that have not been able to make an impact in the lives of the indigenes of the Niger Delta. If the government and other MNCs are able to distribute resources directly to the communities through their own approved representatives, then there will be peace in the Niger Delta' (NGOBAYELSA01).* This view was also substantiated by three other respondents from other NGOs interviewed in the three states under this study.

As promising as the GMOU model looks especially in terms of reducing conflict, it seems the model now undermines the local government in the states where it operates. The model is constituting a form of government that is essentially provided by MNCs thereby reducing the legitimacy of local government in the region. There are two major implications of delegating the roles of governance to MNCs. First, it reduces the presence of the Nigerian government in the region thereby rendering government structures illegitimate. Second, there will be no means of sustaining this development when the oil dries up and the MNCs vacate the region and this could lead to another round of human insecurity and conflict. This makes it imperative that if the model is to be rolled out to the other oil producing states, it must be championed by the government (with the local government taking a lead role) thereby reducing the roles of the MNCs to partners and not primary stakeholders.

Chapter Conclusion

Although the MNCs operating in Nigeria insist that the environmental degradation which has impacted on the human security of the people from the region is indeed caused by the people themselves, this chapter has proved otherwise. Evidence from the field trip as well as other published research including the UNEP report on oil pollution in Ogoni communities have shown that the MNCs are complicit as far as issues of

pollution and environmental degradation are concerned. Right from the 1970s when the company employed damage clerks to monitor environmental degradation to the present moment where managers engage in various tricks to carry out projects, the region has been a theatre of various ingenious experiments by some of the MNCs operating there.

One of the main problems of oil exploration in Nigeria is that there is no set rule in place regarding oil exploration and community settlement. While it is important for the MNCs operating in the region to engage in CSR and try as much as possible to reduce the effect of oil exploration on the human security of the people, some of the methods used by the companies have actually resulted in violent conflict. Ranging from what the indigenes term as 'divide and rule' whereby some members of the communities benefit from oil exploration at the expense of others to the marriage of the MNCs and government agencies, it is apparent that many things need to change as far as CSR and community engagement is concerned.

An important model explored in this chapter is the GMOU development model initiated by Chevron Nigeria Limited. The core principle of the model is to take development initiatives, planning and execution back to the people the development is targeted at. The model which was piloted in 2005 and rolled out in 2006 involved the formation of eight regional development councils (RDC) each representing the ethnic groups in the communities where the company operates. The RDCs are the channels through which all the development commitments of Chevron are now executed. Contrary to previous development initiatives where oil companies decide what project is best for the communities and hire contractors to carry out the projects, the GMOU process is a bottom-up approach where the communities decide what is to be done, how it is done and practically carry out the projects themselves. Although the model is still undergoing refining and is far from being perfect, there is some evidence that the model has reduced the incidences of violent conflict in the region especially in the areas where Chevron operates. This goes a long way to prove that direct distribution of resources to local communities through adequate structuring remains the best solution to the menace of violent conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The Niger Delta region is undoubtedly one of the most important regions of Nigeria- not only to the country but to other countries of the world that depend on the oil resources that emanate from the region. However, despite the importance of this region, violent conflict has been a major issue that has impacted on the region as well as the country. This study analysed many studies by several scholars on the causes of this conflict and how it can be eradicated. Despite several propositions, the conflict has persisted and the region remains highly volatile. This study has identified the three main actors in the conflict as the Nigerian government, the Multinational companies working in the region and the indigenes of the oil producing communities.

Despite several attempts by the three actors over the years to resolve the conflict, there has not been any real solution to the conflict. The last attempt at resolving the conflict was in 2009 when amnesty was offered by the government to militants willing to lay down their weapons and embrace peace. Although the initiative reduced the spate of violence in the region, there is still sporadic violence in the region and the region remains highly precarious. There are still cases of violent intra/inter community conflicts, destruction of oil infrastructures and kidnappings in the region. The situation is so dangerous that I narrowly escaped being kidnapped during the data collection phase of this research (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, the dynamics of the conflict has changed since the amnesty granted the 'repentant' militants in 2009.

8.1 Explaining the main causes of the conflict in the Niger Delta

As explained in the first part of this thesis, one of the main reasons why the conflict in the Niger Delta remains elusive is because of wrong diagnostics of the problem. This study argues that the human security paradigm better explains the conflict in the Niger Delta than any other theory of resource conflict. When people are faced with serious threats to their livelihoods, they are bound to react and in some cases, these reactions could be violent in nature. One of such reactions as explained in this thesis is an increase in oil bunkering in the region. Evidence from my ethnography reveals that poverty and unemployment leads to bunkering which then compounds human insecurity by polluting the environment and causing violent conflict among competing groups. This

has further increased arms proliferation in the region and there is widespread tension in anticipation of what lies ahead when the government ends the amnesty programme in 2015. All these issues give credence to the fact that there is no end to the conflict in the region at the moment.

In the Niger Delta, apart from the fact that the people are faced with livelihood deprivation arising from environmental degradation, they are also faced with threats from the state. The Nigerian state in an attempt to maintain oil exploration and income from the region employs several measures. These measures include harassment and intimidation of resource endowed communities, militarisation of the region, and deliberate use of excessive force amongst other vices. The Multinational companies in connivance with the government also engage in several negative practices against the people. They support and sponsor security agents against the indigenes of the communities and often ignore environmental laws governing oil exploration in the region. Apart from the interviews carried out as part of this study whereby the respondents analysed the role of the MNCs in destroying the Niger Delta environment, the 2012 UNEP report also lay credence to the role of the MNCs.

Furthermore, conflicts could change in dynamics and this is evident in the Niger Delta case. The Niger Delta conflict over the years has changed from community vs security forces to inter/intra community violence and sometimes conflict involving different militant groups. This makes a strong analysis of not only the conflict but also the dynamics of the conflict important. This study has analysed the conflict in the region since 1956 when oil was discovered to 2014. Close analyses of the conflict reveals the changes in dynamics and maintain that the HS theory explains the conflict more than other theories.

8.2 Main Findings

This study was set out to explore two main questions. First, the best theoretical framework by which we can understand the real causes of the conflict. This is important because as long as the main underlying causes of the conflict are not understood, the chance to offer a solution will prove elusive. There are several theoretical frameworks that have been used to analyse the causes of this conflict and most of these theories have been critically explored in this study. Some of the theories include the

greed/grievance theories, the theories of state, resource curse amongst others. Of all the previous theories, the greed/grievance theories have been identified by several scholars as being the most persuasive when discussing the relationship between resource endowment and the outbreak of conflict. The proponents of the greed theory maintain that natural resources offer 'lootable' income which generate and sustain violence. On the other hand, proponents of the grievance theory argue that issues of oppression and suppression by the state on indigenes of resource producing communities result in violent reactions which breed conflict. Critiques of these theories argue that the proponents of the theories especially the greed theory focus on the structural conditions that favour violent conflicts rather than the decision of the actors to engage in conflict. One important addition to knowledge offered by this study is the fact that there is a blurred line between actions that can be categorised as greed and those that can be labelled grievance. This study has shown that it is difficult to analyse different conflicts relating to resources with the same theoretical framework. Every conflict has significant properties that make it different from another one. The variables that could result in a conflict in a particular situation would not necessarily result in conflict in other situations. This makes it important to explore individual conflicts differently in order not to overlook or miss important pointers.

Proponents of the greed/grievance theories tend to equate the motives of communities with those of the MNCs, but this is not the situation in the Niger Delta. This thesis argues that the MNCs and the indigenes of the Niger Delta have different motives. While the motive of the MNCs is profit maximization, the motive of the indigenes is access to sources of livelihood. Furthermore, the greed/grievance perspective suggests a situation whereby the locals are fighting the MNCs for access to resources. This thesis shows the complex relationship between the three actors in the region. Furthermore, the thesis explain that the indigenes are not just victims of circumstances but also active participants in the conflict and this answers my third question that the three active participants are the MNCs, Nigerian government and citizens of oil producing communities in the Niger Delta.

This makes it imperative to explore another theory that best explains the causes of this conflict as the greed/grievance framework does not adequately explain the dynamics of the conflict in the region. The human security framework offer a better explanation to

this interlinked situation between all the three actors involved in the conflict. The human security theory explains both the structural conditions that favour insurgency as well as the decisions of the locals to engage in violence. Furthermore, the human security theory explains how the conditions that favour insurgency and the decisions of the actors to engage in conflict are interlinked and cannot be explored separately. The theory also makes it easier to understand the cyclical nature of the conflict whereby the action of one actor results in a reaction by another actor. This answers my first research question that the dominant greed/grievance models does not explain the dynamics of conflict in the Niger Delta

The second question is to explore if a model of direct distribution of resources can address the human security issues explored in this thesis in the region. The reason why it is important to research this issue is because most scholars, policy makers and several stakeholders in the region argue that this is the best way to resolve the conflict in the region. Since Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999, the government in a bid to resolve the conflict that has claimed thousands of lives set up several committees to analyse the causes of the conflict and proffer solutions. Most of the committees were unanimous in recommending an increase in the resources allocated to the region. This is in line with previous research carried out in the region as well as recommendations from both local and international scholars. Currently the region benefits from a derivation principle whereby the nine oil producing states get more allocation than the other states in Nigeria. In total the nine states get an extra 13% allocation due to their special status, as 'oil producing', in the country.

This thesis argues that the conflict experienced in the Niger Delta is not as a result of inadequate resources, but due to problems in the governance of distribution of resources. This is evident in the analysis of the structures and agencies responsible for the governance of the distribution of these resources. Issues such as corruption, top-down approach to development, political patronage and uneven distribution of resources have all negatively impacted on the human security of the people resulting in violence. Furthermore, on the part of the MNCs, issues such as divide and rule, use of godfathers, non-adherence to environmental laws and support for militarisation of the region have all led to the human insecurity of the indigenes resulting in violence. A detailed analysis of the GMOU process introduced by Chevron reveals that effective

governance of the distribution of resources can improve the human security of the indigenes and also reduce conflict in the region. There is evidence of the workability of the model as confirmed by respondents from all the categories of stakeholders interviewed for this research. This answers my second research question that an effective model of direct distribution of resources can address the human security issues explored in this thesis.

8.1.2 The impact of the resource distribution on the outbreak of conflict

The lopsided distribution of resources and not resource scarcity resulted in the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta, creating endemic poverty. The dynamics of the conflict are related directly or indirectly to issues regarding uneven distribution of resources. There are three main causes of conflict in the region. First is environmental degradation as a result of non-adherence to environmental laws by the MNCs operating in the region. This is due to corruption and the inability of the government to enforce environmental laws. The results of this non-compliance with the laws result in the pollution of the land and water bodies which serve as sources of livelihood to the people. The resultant disruption of the livelihood of the people coupled with violent acts of aggression on the people by law enforcement agents is a major cause of the conflict in the region. Second, the uneven distribution of resources whereby certain individuals or communities benefit at the expense of others create issues such as godfatherism, inter/intra community conflict and militancy. Third, due to an increase in environmental degradation, there has been a shift in the means of livelihood of the people. The people from the region now rely more on the income that accrues to the region from the federal government in order to survive. The distribution of these resources creates a pattern of violence through the quest for political positions. Since political positions are seen as a means to control the distribution of resources, the quests by the elite to either gain or retain political authority results in violent conflict.

This thesis argues that it is not the scarcity of resources rather it is the governance behind the distribution of resources that results in conflict in the Niger Delta. Contrary to cases whereby the scarcity of natural resources result in conflict such as the 1994 Rwanda conflict (Percival and Homer Dixon, 1996), the governance of the distribution of resources is a major cause of conflict in the Niger Delta. Although the resources that accrue to the region might not be adequate as argued by some scholars, the main

problem is with the distribution of resources. Despite the fact that the nine oil producing states in the Niger Delta earn 13% more revenue than the other 27 states in the country, the region remains one of the poorest. As analysed in chapters five, six and seven of this thesis, the system of resource distribution remains poor. There are several layers of development agencies on the federal and states governments' levels without much development in the region. Issues such as duplication of projects, high level of corruption and total neglect of the local government structures negatively impact on the governance of resources in the region sometimes resulting in violent conflict.

Furthermore, the land use laws in Nigeria are major sources of conflict and unrest in the region. The laws are skewed in favour of the central government and states that all lands and the associated resources in the country belong to the federal government. Hence, lands which were previously used for agricultural production in the region are allocated for oil prospecting without adequate compensation to the owners of the farmlands. In addition to the government laying claim to all the lands in the country, the formula for resource distribution in Nigeria further put the indigenes of the Niger Delta at a disadvantage. The resource distribution formula in Nigeria is such that the federal government allocates 52% of the resources to itself while all the 36 states and 774 local government areas share the remaining 48%. This low level of resources coupled with the environmental degradation that reduces agricultural productivity in the region is a source of tension in the Niger Delta. However, the low level of resources does not generate conflict; it is the distribution of the resources that results in violent conflict.

8.1.3 Increase in resource allocation and its influence on conflict.

This study has shown that an increase in resource allocation without a proper governance structure for the distribution of resources will not reduce the conflict. In fact, an increase in resources could actually result in increased conflict in the region. This is because an increase in resource allocation will increase the quest for political authority which is seen as an avenue for resource distribution. This could lead to a situation whereby more political elites will continue to seek more ingenious means to access political positions. Furthermore, the number of development agencies set up by the federal and states government with little or no coordination is a clear example of poor governance of resources. The agencies instead of working together to develop

programmes that would benefit the region and lift the people out of poverty work separately without any coordination. The result is project overlap which then leads to non-implementation of projects. An increase in resources in the region without a proper channel for resource distribution will only increase the resources available for bureaucracy which will not reduce poverty in any way.

In order to reduce human insecurity thereby breaking the dynamics of conflict in the Niger Delta, there is need to overhaul the process of resource distribution in the region. There must be clear structures in place to channel the distribution of resources in a clear, transparent and less bureaucratic ways. The case study of Opolo highlighted in chapter six is a clear indication of how communities with good governance especially in the distribution of resources can attain peace. This is further supported by the Chevron model of resource distribution analysed in chapter seven of this thesis. Although the Chevron model is not perfect and needs to be explored in further details, it is currently the best model of governance and distribution of resources in the region. The direct distribution of resources could be a means to reduce poverty and guarantee a decent source of livelihood in resource endowed regions like the Niger Delta. The next section will explore other models of resource distribution in relation to the Chevron model.

Summary of research findings

1. Many initial studies concluded that the two main actors in the conflict are the Nigerian government and the multinational oil companies operating in the region while the indigenes are victims of marginalisation and oppression by the two actors. However, this study argues otherwise and expounds on the role played by the oil producing communities in the outbreak and escalation of the conflict in the region. The study argues that the indigenes of these communities although not complicit are active participants in the conflict that has ravaged the region

2. One important addition to literature offered by this study is the fact that there is a blurred line between actions that can be categorised as greed and those that can be labelled grievance. This makes it imperative to find another theory that best explains the causes of this conflict so that the best solution can be defined. The human security theory offers a better approach to analysing the conflict in the region.

3. The conflict in the Niger Delta is not as a result of resource scarcity but that of inadequate governance of resource distribution. This is evident in the fact that the region gets more money but remains poor.

4. A critical review of the Chevron model of community engagement shows that a transparent and well-structured governance of distribution of resources could reduce human insecurity and conflict. This shows that direct distribution of resources to the community could reduce human insecurity and conflict as well as enhance the relationships between the MNCs and the communities.

5. The increase in the number of graduates joining militant groups in the Niger Delta negates the research by Barakat and Urdal (2009). An increased level of education without a corresponding increase in employment opportunities could increase the likelihood of the youths being recruited into militant organisations rather than reducing it.

6. Communities with a well-defined leadership structure, exhibit high level of transparency and governance of resources which provides a blueprint for development. Such communities experience fewer conflicts when compared to those that do not have a well-defined structure.

7. The approach of MNCs in assessing and executing projects in the communities could be a source of conflict if not properly handled. It is important to create standardised method for all the MNCs operating in the region in order to reduce disagreement between communities and MNCs. If a standard procedure is in place which is ratified by all the stakeholders, the issue of divide and rule will not arise and conflict could be reduced in the region.

8. A revamped Chevron model championed by local governments in the region offers the best form of resource distribution directly to the indigenes of the Niger Delta.

Concluding Remarks

This thesis explains that existing frameworks of analysis of resource conflict are misleading, and evaluates some alternatives, both theoretical and practical. In this vein, the thesis has demonstrated that the popular greed/grievance framework is not sufficient for analysing resource conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The cyclical nature of the conflict whereby the activities of a stakeholder influence the reaction of other stakeholders which then impacts on the other stakeholders explains the complex relationships between the stakeholders in the region. The human security paradigm which focuses more on individuals and issues relating to their livelihoods offers a more comprehensive approach to understanding the dynamics of the conflict in the region. This thesis argues that it is only after a thorough analysis of a conflict that a viable solution can be proffered.

The ethnography used during the data collection stage of this proved to be very successful. I was able to get unprecedented access to all the stakeholders identified by this thesis. The major stakeholders are the Nigerian government, the MNCs operating in the region as well as the indigenes of selected communities in the Niger Delta. The three month ethnographic studies which included in-depth interviews, group interview, observation and document analysis offered a range of perspectives on the situation in the Niger Delta. One major success of the ethnography was the discovery of a resource distribution model which I had not come across earlier in the literature review of this thesis. A comprehensive analysis of the model shows that an adequately planned resource distribution model could go a long way in reducing human insecurity and conflict in the region.

The final part of the thesis explored the implication of this resource distribution model. This thesis conclude that the Chevron model should be re-designed in such a way that it does not undermine government structures or create a parallel government in the Niger Delta. The initial analysis of this research has already generated interest among some stakeholders in the oil industry. For instance, the Combating Terrorism Centre of the United States Army invited me to a conference in 2014 to share my research experience as well as study how a resource distribution model could be used to reduce insurgent activities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Recommendations for future research

The analysis from this case study as well as current literature shows that there are three main issues that can be further researched in order to expand the literature on resource conflict and conflict resolution. The first issue is the relationship between increased educational attainment and the formation or participation in insurgency. Barakat and Urdal (2009) argue that greater educational attainment increases the opportunity cost of young people to engage in positive economic activities which then reduces the likelihood of the youths joining rebel groups. This study has shown that several members of different militant groups in the Niger Delta have a first degree or equivalent with some having higher qualifications. Respondents for this research argue that increased education in the Niger Delta resulted in an increased awareness of the activities of the other stakeholders and this resulted in more educated people either joining militant groups or participating in militant activities.

Second, Chevron is the only company in Nigeria to use a system of direct distribution of resources coupled with the fact that the model has only been used in Nigeria, it is imperative to explore how this model can be replicated by other MNCs. Such further study could also explore how this model can be replicated in other countries where issues relating to resource extraction have impacted negatively on the human security of the locals. The proposed modifications offered by this research could also be explored to see if the model would appeal to all the stakeholders in the industry in order to improve the human security situation of the indigenes.

It is evident from this research that the amnesty granted the militants in 2009 have not solved the problem. The culture and identity of the people have been impacted, hence, it is important for any scheme designed to address human security to focus on changing the orientation of the people- especially the youths. Exploring the impact of human insecurity on the culture and identity of the indigenes of the Niger Delta would be another interesting research.

Furthermore, this research has an implication for peace-building literature. The dynamics of the conflict in the Niger Delta identified in this research needs to be explored in relation to peace-building initiatives. Any further research could focus on the relationship between the causes of conflict analysed in this thesis and the modes of

peace-building initiatives that can be designed to enhance the literature on peace-building. The different models of resource distribution explored in this thesis can also be explored further in studying what forms of peace-building might best help based on individual country scenario. This research has shown that all hope is not lost in the Niger Delta and the years of human insecurity can be reversed if the right approach is taken to ameliorate the conditions of the people living in the region.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Communities visited in the Niger Delta (27 Respondents)

State	Local Government Areas	Communities Visited
Bayelsa	Yenogoa LG Ogbia LG Nembe LG Kaiama LG	Ikarama community Imiringbi Community Igba-Ama Community Otuasega Community (Group Interview) Bassambiri Community Amassoma Community
Delta	Burutu LG Ughelle LG Isoko LG Warri South LG Ndokwa East LG	Ayakoromo Community Ubeji Community Gbaramatu Kingdom Iwhrekan Community Uzere Community Beenikrukre Community Agbaro Kingdom Ureji- sin sin Community
Rivers	Port-Harcourt LG Ogba/Egbema LG Andoni LG	Obio/Akpor Community Rumuola Community Omoku Community Ikuru Community

Appendix 2: MNCs visited in Nigeria (13 Respondents)

State	MNC	No of Respondents
Delta	Chevron	3
Delta	NNPC	1
Rivers	Shell	4 (2 Questionnaires)
Rivers	Halliburton (Oil Servicing)	3
Lagos	NAPIMS	1
Lagos	Amni	1

Appendix 3: Government Agencies Visited

State	Federal/State Government/Local	Name of organisation	Position of Respondent
Bayelsa	State	Ministry of Energy Resources	Engineer
Bayelsa	State	Bayelsa State Government	Commissioner for Youths and Culture
Bayelsa	State	Bayelsa Farms	Group Managing Director
Bayelsa	State	Bayelsa State Government	Senior Adviser to the Governor
Delta	Federal	NDDC	Director
Delta	State	DESOPADEC	Director
Rivers	State	Rivers state Government	Senior staff
Rivers	Federal	Ministry of Justice	Barrister

Appendix 4: NGOs visited in the Nigeria

State	Name of NGO
Bayelsa	Environmental Rights Action (Friends of the Earth-Nigeria)
Delta	Leadership Initiative Transformation and Empowerment (LITE)
Delta	Host Community of Nigeria Producing Oil and Gas (HOSTCOMM)
Rivers	Environmental Rights Action (Friends of the Earth-Nigeria)
Lagos	New Nigeria Foundation (NNF)

Consent Form

Project Title: Will Direct Distribution of resources end the cyclical human security dilemma of the Niger Delta?

This leaflet provides information for a research project on the issue of resource distribution in terms of the potential impact of direct distribution of resources to the indigenes of the Niger-Delta as a means of achieving peace in the region. The second part of the leaflet is a research questionnaire which is strictly anonymous. The research has two main aims:
-To determine the underlying causes of the conflict especially relating to the issue of greed/grievance and human security
- To explore if the direct distribution of some of the proceeds of oil to the indigenes of the region will put an end to the conflict experienced in the region.
The research involves interviews with selected staff of the Multinational Oil Companies operating in the region, representatives of the Nigerian government (federal, state and local) and the indigenes of Niger-Delta. It is hoped that an adequate understanding of the conflict will make it easy for policy makers to end the conflict in the region hence allowing all the actors involved to fulfill their potentials.

Following are some important facts about the research;
- The research is being carried out by Olayinka Ajala, PhD candidate from the University of York. The email of the researcher is oaa511@york.ac.uk and the full details of the research are available on request.
- Participation is entirely voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time with a request that any of their records be destroyed.
- This research process does not pose any risk or harm to the participants and it has been designed to avoid any negative consequences to both researchers and participants.
- Information provided for the purpose of this research is totally confidential and for research purposes only.
- The data collected is primarily for a PhD research project and may later be used for future academic and research purposes with the confidentiality of participants guaranteed.
- Please be aware that you cannot withdraw from the project after 31/12/2013 as the thesis would have been written then.
- Further information is available by contacting the researcher using the email above.

This research is part of a study for a PhD degree in politics from the University of York, United Kingdom and as passed an ethical review by the Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology (ELMPS) committee at the university of York. For further information please contact elmps-ethics-group@york.ac.uk

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Interview Questions

Questions for staff of MNCs
1. How has your organisation been affected by the conflict in the Niger-Delta?

2. The communities argue that oil exploration has impacted on their livelihoods, what do you think about this?

3. Can you explain the relationship between your organisation and the communities where you operate? How would you characterise the relationships or please describe

4. Why do you think some areas experience violence more than others in the same state?

5. People from the region have agitated for more control of oil resources; do you think this is the solution to the problem?

6. Do you think direct distribution of resources could end or reduce the conflict? Write a summary of what I discussed in relations to the proposal, or ask them what they know about it and if it will end the conflict (be unambiguous)

How do you think your organisation can improve the lives of the people? The wellbeing of the communities (follow up to number 3)

Do you think the communities are complicit in this conflict? How if yes?

What do you think is the best way to eradicate the conflict?

If yes, how do you think this can be done?

In what states and local government do you operate?

How would you describe the level of violence (i) Before 1999 (ii) Between 1999 and 2009 (iii) 2009 till date?

What are the demands of the communities?

Do you think the communities have been reasonable in their demands?

Do you think the government is doing enough for the people?

What do you think is the role of the government in the conflict?

Questions for the local residents

1. What was the effect of the oil exploration on your land, water, health, vegetation, culture and peace? Use number 2 as sub question for number 1

2. How has oil exploration and the resulting conflict affected your income?

3. Can you please explain the role played by the government, MNCs, communities in the conflict? Too open question—break into couple of smaller questions—what do you think the government did in a community….how has the complicit being complicit

4. People from the region have agitated for more control of oil resources; do you think this is the solution to the problem? What problem---the conflict issue

5. Do you think direct distribution of resources could end or reduce the conflict?

6. Can you please explain the role of ethnicity in the conflict?
What do you feel about the level of infrastructure in your community? Is the level of infrastructure in your community adequate?

How has the conflict affected you and your family?

What do you think of the oil in your community? Any benefit at all?

How did the oil companies and government agencies communicate with you before and during oil exploration?

How do you compare the conflict before 1999, between 1999 and 2009, between 2009 till date?
What are the roles played by different ethnic groups in the conflict?

Do you think the government is doing enough for the people?

What do you think is the role of the government in the conflict?

What do you think is the best way to eradicate the conflict?

Questions for government agencies and staff

1. In what ways has your organisation been affected by the conflict in the Niger-Delta?

2. In your own perspective, why do you think some areas experience more conflict than others?

3. The communities argue that oil exploration has impacted on their livelihoods, what do you think about this?

4. In what ways do you think the government and MNCs have been complicit in the conflict? Rephrase this

5. People from the region have agitated for more control of oil resources; do you think communities have been reasonable in their demands?

6. Do you think direct distribution of resources could end or reduce the conflict?

What do you think is the best way to eradicate the conflict?

Do you think the communities have been reasonable in their demands?

Do you think the MNCs are responsive to the plight of the people?

What do you think the MNCs can improve on?

What is your role in this organisation and what are your main responsibilities?

What are the difficulties and challenges faced in this role?

How do you handle those challenges?

How would you describe the level of violence (i) Before 1999 (ii) Between 1999 and 2009 (iii) 2009 till date?

What are the demands of the communities?

Do you think the communities are complicit in this conflict? How if yes?

Can you explain the relationship between your organisation and the communities where you operate?

How do you think your organisation can improve the lives of the people?

Do you think the government is doing enough for the people?

What do you think is the role of the government in the conflict?

What do you think the government can improve on?

What do you think are the roles of the MNCs in the conflict?

List of abbreviations

CEMB	Community Engagement Management Board
CDU	Community Development Unit
CDP	Community Development Plan
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DESOPADEC	Delta State Oil Producing Area Development Commission
ERA	Environmental Rights Action
GMOU	Global Memorandum of Understanding
HOSTCOM	Host Community of Nigeria Producing Oil and Gas
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MNCs	Multinational Oil Corporations
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organisations
NDDB	Niger Delta Development Board
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDPVF	Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force
NDV	Niger Delta Vigilante
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Commission
NOSDRA	National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency
OMPADEC	Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PFD	Permanent Fund Dividend
PIB	Petroleum Industries Bill
RDC	Regional Development Council
SALW	Small and Light Weapons

SAP   Structural Adjustment Programme

SLA   Sustainable Livelihood Analysis

SPDC   Shell Petroleum Development Corporation

UNDP   United Nations Development Programme

UNEP   United Nations Environmental Protection

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