



RECOUNTING OFFSHORE MULTINATIONAL OIL CORPORATIONS' INDUCED CONFLICT COSTS ON THE SURVIVAL OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Multinational Oil Corporations (MNOCs) 'induced conflicts and military raids on local oil-bearing communities in the Niger Delta no longer make headline news in Nigeria. Many may be living in that euphoria as if the issues which usually provoke such conflicts are completely resolved in the country's oil-rich region. Suffice to state that the issues which usually induces them and the costs continue to place heavily burden on the survival of oil-bearing communities across the Niger Delta. This paper recounts Offshore Multinational Oil Corporations (OMNOCs) 'induced conflict costs on the survival of coastal communities in Nigeria. This conflict-cost-survival analysis was appraised using quantitative technique involving 471 respondents from 6 Local Government Areas, 3 each from Bayelsa and Delta States in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The findings show that the OMNOCs' induced conflicts exacerbate costs including death and destruction of properties, forced migration, social disorder, breakdown of families, and total dislocation of businesses in the region. It therefore, recommends that the OMNOCs and the Federal Government of Nigeria should endeavour to avoid use of force to quelling oil-related conflicts in the Niger Delta.*

KEYWORDS: Coastal, Communities, Conflict, Multinational Oil Corporations, Offshore, Survival, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts linking MNOCs are age-long occurrences in the Nigeria's Niger Delta. Their form and magnitude especially in the last two decades assumed incredible dimensions (Abutu & Ejeh, 2017; Babatunde, Norafidah & Zengeni, 2016). Quite a number of explanations and solutions has been offered by scholars and stakeholders to restrain violent conflicts in the region (Osaghae, 2015; Anochie & Mgbemena, 2015; Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2013; Eweje, 2006). However, most of the issues leading to such violent conflicts and the scares emanating from them have not been completely expunged. Most importantly, the costs of the conflicts as they relate to the survival of the oil-bearing communities across the Niger Delta remain a mystery to many around the world.



Suffice to state that the violent conflicts are manifestations of the region's woes - environmental damage through sustained oil pollution, lack of development, poverty, among others. In addition, lack of commitment by the Nigerian government and OMNOCs to issues of remediation of the polluted environment, payment of adequate compensation for resources' damage among others, continue to prick the hearts of the people to change the narrative. Couple with these is the issue of the peoples' quest as their right to own and control the petroleum wealth to better their lives. Many of such issues across the region continue to engender grievances against the OMNOCs and the Federal Government of Nigeria. Many may argue that it is logical at that point for the OMNOCs to seek States' protection for safety of their personnel, operational facilities and other investments, as well as, security of the Nigeria's petroleum resources-based economy. However, it has been observed that it is a general attitude of OMNOCs anywhere they operate to seeking State protection. The purpose is for them to securing stable political environment to have more access to the State's resources without any form of hindrance. It is not for the good intension of the State but for their profiting in business and investment deals. The OMNOCs do so in most cases by influencing regulatory authorities to have their way at the detriment of local communities. An attitude which have made scholars to accuse them of complicity - double standards, corporate irresponsibility, environmental harm/risks and violence against the local oil-bearing communities especially in the Niger Delta (Agbonifo, 2016; Okonkwo, Kumar & Taylor, 2015; Yusuf & Omoteso, 2015).

Such attitude of the OMNOCs across the Niger Delta has engendered series of agitations from the oil-bearing communities. The agitations started as peaceful protests by youths of the oil-bearing communities against the sustained oil pollution and environmental damage in the region by the OMNOCs. The peaceful protests later metamorphosed to militancy with its survival strategies such as hostage taking and kidnapping of staff of MNOCs, oil pipelines vandalization, theft, among others. These actions by the Agitators were suppressed with maximum force by the Federal Government of Nigeria in collusion with the oil firm(s). They took the opportunity and unleashed mayhem on the people and communities in the Niger Delta. What this kind of collaboration suggests to the people is that dialogue and other peaceful means are no longer feasible for the struggle towards emancipation of the people from the stern grip of the Nigerian State and the OMNOCs. As a result, the region witnessed quite a number of violent conflicts between the Niger Delta Agitators (NDAs) and the Nigerian security forces. Though, the guns seem silent for quite some time now and many may be living in that euphoria that all is well in the region. Many have also applauded the arms militancy by the NDAs that it actually paid off to the people of the Niger Delta. That the struggle did not only expose the region's lack of development perpetrated by the Nigerian State and the OMNOCs to the rest of the world (Obi 2009a, 2010; Watts 2007; Ikelegbe & Ikelegbe 2006), but also exposed the human rights record of the Nigerian State and its security agencies as well as the OMNOCs in the region at the time. Furthermore, it has been acknowledged as one of the major factors responsible for the OMNOCs to abandon the onshore area operations to favouring the offshore sector (Dan-Woniowei & Okeke-Ogbuafor, 2019).

Currently, the Nigeria's Niger Delta is experiencing relative calm. However, the issues and scares of violence remain a great concern to the coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities in the region. More worrisome is the fact that the conflicts in the last two decades have continued to frustrate the survival of the communities across the region. As a result, this paper chronicles some of the violent conflicts in the region to showcase their cost on the survival of the coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities in the Nigeria's Niger Delta. It conducted a field survey



involving 471 respondents from 6 coastal oil and gas bearing Local Government Areas, 3 each from Bayelsa and Delta States in the Niger Delta to determine the costs. The theory of environmental externality provides the bedrock of analysis in determining the origin/causal factors of the conflicts and the heavy burden they place on the survival of coastal communities in the Nigeria's Niger Delta. The results show that conflicts induced by OMNOCs exacerbate costs including death and destruction of life and properties, forced migration of the affected population/communities, social disorder, breakdown of families, and total dislocation of businesses in the region. It therefore, recommends that the Federal Government of Nigeria and the OMNOCs operating in the region should endeavour to avoid use of maximum force to resolving oil-related conflicts in the Niger Delta.

Conceptual Clarification and Analysis

A full understanding of the key concepts as used in this paper will be quite desirable. The concepts include offshore multinational oil corporations (OMNOCs) in Nigeria, OMNOCs' induced conflicts in the Niger Delta, survival of coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities, and the theory of environmental externality.

Offshore Multinational Oil Corporations in Nigeria

The OMNOCs in Nigeria are not different from the wider known category of multinational oil corporations (MNOCs). However, in the context of this paper, the OMNOCs are offshore based oil and gas exploiting companies in Nigeria. Their exploitation activities take place along the coastal barrier islands and extending seawards but not exceeding the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Nigeria. They are major petro-business partners of the Federal Government of Nigeria through its Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The NNPC is charged with the responsibility of government petro-business in the country. The operations of the OMNOCs are seeing everywhere in the Niger Delta, but their corporate and commercial offices as well as tax revenues goes respectively to Lagos and Abuja. Suffice to state that the hydrocarbon business preferences of the Nigerian government position the OMNOCs to be very powerful, influential and dominant in the country. As argued by Gilpin (2016), and Goldstein & Pevehouse (2013-2014), such preferences can greatly constrain the sovereignty of Nigeria like most other resources endowed States in Africa. The reasons are not farfetched, the OMNOCs have economic power and advancements in technology to propel the petro-business and other commercial interests beyond the national limits of Nigeria (Omorede, 2014). Such great potentials enable them access to vital energy resources and exploit them anywhere and market them accordingly with overwhelming profits anywhere in the world, even sometimes at the detriment of some of national governments.

That notwithstanding, exploitation of oil and gas will continue to increase in all producing countries in the world due to increasing demand and the major advancements in technology. It has been argued that these factors also stimulated the interest of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the major MNOCs such as Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), ExxonMobil, among others (collectively called OMNOCs in this study), to beam their satellite on the coastal/offshore and deepsea areas of the Niger Delta (Dan-Woniwei & Okeke-Ogbuafor, 2019). Though, their emergence in the offshore sector seems to be in sharp contrast with known global perceptions (Dan-Woniwei & Okeke-Ogbuafor, 2019). Their studies revealed that the OMNOCs in Nigeria sell off their interests in marginal onshore and shallow water fields to mostly Nigerian and smaller companies and



relocate to high-sea due to instability, drying up onshore wells, theft, and sabotage within the onshore and shallow water operations, among others (Dan-Woniowei & Okeke-Ogbuafor, 2019). In recent years, their (OMNOCs) activities in the offshore sector have continued to increase across the region.

The local oil-bearing/fishing communities were very critical about the relocation agenda of the OMNOCs. They accused them of running away from their responsibilities concerning remediation of polluted lands and water bodies, payment of reparation, among others (Dan-Woniowei & Okeke-Ogbuafor, 2019). There were also fears regarding increasing damage to the environment, particularly, as it concerns depletion of ecological resources that are vital for the survival of the coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities in the Niger Delta (Dan-Woniowei, 2020; Dan-Woniowei & Okeke-Ogbuafor, 2019). In addition, their fears appear genuine going by the fact that the OMNOCs anywhere in the world they are operating, are noted for environmental damage and therefore, will do the worst offshores now that they will be completely out of sight of the communities to monitor their operations. The fears of the coastal communities were further justified by the number of devastating offshore incidents caused by the OMNOCs from 1980 to date in the region (Abowei & Ogamba, 2013).

Nevertheless, Nigeria's path to growth and development from independence to date could not be divorced from the OMNOCs. It is worthy to mention that their collaboration with the State-owned NNPC provides about 95 percent of export earnings, and over 80 percent of government revenue, as well as, over 40 percent of the country's GDP (Iwejingi, 2013). In addition, Nigeria benefits from the technology of the OMNOCs in the oil and gas sector, and the employment opportunities for the citizens in the network of subsidiaries (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2013-2014; Roach, 2007). Furthermore, the OMNOCs help to provide foreign investment and infrastructure for the country through tax revenues from the natural resources (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2013-2014). However, it has been argued that through such avenues, the OMNOCs impact on the living standard of the people in the many countries they exploit resources from, but often in a very complex and imperceptible manner (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2013-2014; Roach, 2007). They are also capable of creating friendly relations with foreign governments (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2013-2014). Such practices greatly influence regime change in some resources endowed countries.

Survival of Coastal Oil-bearing/fishing Communities

The concept of survival of coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities links ecological wellbeing and the continuous existence of the communities that have lived for centuries on the coastal barrier islands of the Atlantic Ocean within the Bayelsa and Delta States axis of Nigeria. In addition, the concept is a determinant or a measure of the ecological or ecosystem wellbeing, cultural, political, and economic conditions of the rural household as well as the larger community across the region. Most importantly, it scales these conditions on the plank of negative environmental externalities of offshore petroleum exploitation activities ongoing in the region.

Undoubtedly, the survival mechanisms of the inhabitants of the coastal communities clearly differentiate them from their onshore or inland counterparts (McElduff, 2016). The ecosystem consisting of the Atlantic Ocean and estuarine seas, barrier islands or coastal landmass and beaches as well as the different organisms or species, among others of the region are quite unique to the people of the coastal communities. The ecosystem and the services mean much



to the survival of the communities in the region. Undeniably, the environment is *sine qua non* to the survival of human life and other living things all over the world. It consists of all complex systems of interactions including the atmosphere, land, bodies of water, living and non-living things. The environment provides the physical milieu and resources required by man for all facets of development. The point must be made therefore, that this very vital source of livelihood for the Niger Delta communities depletes daily as a result of OMNOCs' activities in the region. It is important that the sustenance of the quality of the environment must be key while exploiting resources from the region for the development of the country (Oyebamiji & Mba, 2014). The quality of the marine environment must remain unique as one with the diverse network of habitats and species, interwoven by complex physical and ecological processes that interact with humans and their activities at many levels (IPIECA-IAOGP (2015). In addition, this complex network of habitats and associated communities, including the open ocean, deep sea, coral reefs, estuaries, saltmarshes, mudflats, beaches among others, which consists the ecosystems, must all be connected and influence the Ocean (IPIECA-IAOGP, 2015). Ivanova (2014) states that the ecosystem and the economies of the local communities are closely intertwined. It implies the ecosystem of the Niger Delta and economies of the communities are closely intertwined. Evidently, the people heavily depend on them as the main source(s) for their subsistence living (Ejiba, Onya & Adams, 2016). The coastal ecosystem provides many services including the provision of fish stock and other seafood for the people to consume, derive recreational or aesthetic and spiritual fulfilment and enjoyment, as well as other benefits such as disease management and climate regulation from these habitats (UNEP-UN Environment, 2017; IPIECA-IAOGP, 2015).

Unfortunately, human activities especially, petroleum exploitation has continued to degrade the ecosystem and the services the communities depend for their wellbeing (UNEPFI, 2011; WBCSD, 2010). The most critical of all known human activity that have much impact on the marine environment is pollution caused by extractive industries such as the OMNOCs (WWF International Report (2015). Pollution from the activities of OMNOCs causes environmental risks. Environmental risks are the direct and indirect or cumulative pollution impacts (negative environmental externalities) of the OMNOCs on the environment, which manifests in the forms of ecosystem depletion, climate change, coastal erosion, among others, borne by the people of the coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities in the Nigeria's Niger Delta. Vinogradov (2013) affirms that the global development of offshore petroleum activities has increased pollution accidents in offshore locations, and have tremendously impacted marine lives to a large scale.

Chronicle of OMOCs' Induced Conflicts in Nigeria

Records show that the very first notable conflict between an OMNOC and a coastal oil-bearing/fishing community was in 1987. It was Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) against Iko community in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Essential Action (1999), reported that the community approached SPDC to ask for their rights in a peaceful protest to reverse the deteriorating environmental and socioeconomic conditions the company's operations was impacting on the community. According to the report, two major issues formed the bedrock of their protest, which were;

- Closure of creek/stoppage of regular fishing activities by SPDC, and
- Health hazards on the community from gas flaring.



The report also stated that Iko community asked for remediation of the environment and jobs for their youths and women in order to mitigate the prevailing conditions. Instead of responding to these genuine demands positively, the company used the Nigerian military to burn down many houses and tortured the people of Iko community. It was also reported that in 1995 (i.e. eight years after the first protest), the community organized another protest and a team of Mobile Police (code named Kill and Go) invaded the village at night, burnt down many houses and killed a school teacher. This attack is a scare that will ever remain indelible in the heart of Iko community (Essential Action 1999).

Another memorable incident was the one involving Texaco (now Chevron) and youths of Koluama communities between January 20th -27th 1995. The youths of the community occupied Funiwa 5 platform operated by Texaco, and shut down the facility for that period. It was reported in that incident that Texaco lost its daily production of about 55,000bpd, but at the time Texaco blocked every effort of publishing the incident (Dan-Woniowe, 2005). The grievances of the youths were unemployment, non-compensation for environmental damage and the construction of social infrastructure including pipe-borne water and hospital. The protest was mainly because of long time destruction of their environment (pollution of the Ocean, estuaries and adjoining rivers) by Texaco offshore operations. Oil slicks are still a common feature in area.

The youths of Koluama communities organized a second protest and forceful closure of the Texaco's Funiwa 5 platform between March 10th – 20th 1998. This time around, the youths asked for an immediate compensation for a spillage which the company was cunningly avoiding. They argued that the spill hampered their fishing rights and livelihood. The action by Texaco was a slap on the communities. As a result, the youths of the communities occupied the platform and stopped workers from working, and eventually seized two vessels and expatriate crew on board at the time. Lives were not lost in this incident but the protest caused the Pennington terminal of the company an eleven-day stall of export loading schedules.

Another outstanding conflict was the one between Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) and Opia and Ikenwa communities of Delta State in Nigeria's Niger Delta. It took place on the 4th of January, 1999. The communities alleged that CNL aided an attack by the Nigerian military on them in response to their public protest for reparation and compensation from the company. Goodman & Scahill (1998) reported that the military injured and killed persons and livestock, destroyed religious shrines, canoes and other fishing equipment, water wells, as well as burnt down homes in both communities in that incident.

Chevron/Texaco and Escravos community also had their share of conflict in the region on the 8th of July 2002. It all started after the company ignored the community's correspondence in June 2002 concerning demands relating to compensation of an oil spill in the area the company was trying to conceal. It was reported that about 600 women of the community occupied the company's export terminal and tank yard to express their grievances concerning the company's attitude on the issue. It was also reported that the ten-day event of the women disrupted the flow of 450,000 barrels a day (b/d) of the terminal. Most importantly, the women were able to make 26 demands from the company's management. The most prominent of all the demands was the establishment of a permanent tripartite conflict resolution body of stakeholders, government officials, representatives of CNL management and the women leadership of the community. Women involvement in the protest could be that they bear most of the burden of the negative environmental externalities from the operations of the OMNOCs in the region. It



was also a firm belief of the women that since their husbands and sons were the greatest enemies and victims of the Nigerian security forces, seeing them at the forefront may change the attitude of the company and the security forces to considering the demands of the community. Actually, some commitments were made by the company through negotiations with the women. According to Turner & Brownhill (2004), a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the CNL and women at the time. It contains the following issues:

- 15 members of the communities on contract staff to be appointed permanent staff;
- Building of one house each for the elders - Oloja Ore and the Eghare-Aja of the communities;
- Provision of vital infrastructure;
- A monthly allowance of at least N50,000 (U.S.\$375; 1 Naira = U.S.\$0.0075) for the elderly aged 60 years and above;
- Employment of one person from each of the five Ugborodo villages every year; and
- Establishment of income generating schemes.

There was no objection from the company negotiators for those requests however, a key demand from the women that says CNL should cease operations in the area was not accepted by the company negotiators. Nevertheless, the incident was quite remarkable in the sense that it marked another epoch of women protests in Nigeria. It enabled the women to express their predicaments to the world in this manner:

“We want Chevron to employ our children. If Chevron employ our children, we the mothers will survive; we will see food to eat. Our farms are all gone due to Chevron’s pollution of our waters. We used to farm cassava, okro, pepper and crops, now all the places we have been farming are sinking, and we cannot farm. We cannot catch fishes and crayfish, that is why Escravos women and Chevron are in conflict” (Turner & Brownhill, 2004).

This particular incident encouraged twelve different women occupation of OMNOC facilities in the Nigeria’s Niger Delta. It was reported that before the Escravos group concluded negotiations, well over 1,000 women occupied six Chevron/Texaco flow stations at Abiteye, Makaraba, Otutana, and Olera Creeks among others (Wamala, 2002). It was also reported that about one hundred women paddled a massive canoe covering a distance of five miles into the high seas to take over the company’s production platform in the Ewan oil field operated by Chevron/Texaco. It led to the evacuation of the company’s staff, shut down production and refused to negotiate with the women, claiming that, “the women were not from their host community” (Turner & Brownhill, 2004).

Among all the twelve new women takeovers, the Abiteye incidence was quite remarkable. Turner & Brownhill (2004) reports that when the Environment Rights Action (ERA) investigated it on July 22, 2002, one 67-year-old Felicia Itsero, spokesperson for the women



narrated their ordeal thus:

“We are tired of complaining, even [i.e. and moreover] the Nigerian Government and their Chevron have treated us like slaves. Thirty years till now, what do we have to show by Chevron, apart from this big yard and all sorts of machines making noise, what do we have? They have been threatening us that if we make noise, they will leave our community and stop production and we will suffer, as if we have benefited from them. Before the 1970s, when we were here without Chevron, life was natural and sweet, we were happy. When we go to the rivers for fishing or forest for hunting, we used to catch all sorts of fishes and bush animals. Today, the experience is sad. I am suggesting that they should leave our community completely and never come back again. See, in our community we have girls, small girls from Lagos, Warri, Benin City, Enugu, Imo, Osun and other parts of Nigeria here every day and night running after the white men and staff of Chevron, they are doing prostitution, and spreading all sorts of diseases. The story is too long and too sad. When you go (ERA) tell Chevron that we are no longer slaves, even slaves realize their condition and fight for their freedom” (Turner & Brownhill, 2004).

Accordingly, Turner & Brownhill (2004) reports that the Niger Delta is “exploited, misused, abused, polluted, underdeveloped, and almost completely dead; like a cherry fruit sucked and discarded.” Their conclusion was that the “death economy” operated by the government and the OMNOCs was behind the depletion of the environment, high magnitude of unemployment, prostitution, and general absence of social amenities in the host-communities (Turner & Brownhill, 2004).

Undoubtedly, the agitations of the women triggered some commitments from CNL and SPDC in July 2002 to many affected communities across the region (Turner & Brownhill, 2004). However, the communities reported that such commitments made by the SPDC were not implemented. Due to that, over 4,000 women of Warri demonstrated at the regional headquarters of SPDC on the 8th of August 2002. It was in demand for the fulfilment of the promise made by SPDC managements on July 2002. In response, it was reported that police and soldiers attacked the women, which was affirmed as stated:

“...we were just singing; we didn’t destroy anything. We were peaceful. The police and soldiers misbehaved. Look at me, seven armed men pounced on me and reduced me to nothing. I found myself in a Shell clinic a day after the protest” (Turner & Brownhill, 2004).

In addition, Turner & Brownhill (2004) affirm that police killed a woman during the attack. This was denied by SPDC in a local media, stating that there was no such killing during the protest (Turner & Brownhill, 2004). Adebayo (2002) however, reports that the protest was widely published, in which about 4,000 women demonstrators gave an ultimatum to the corporation to pay medical bills of those of them were injured during the protest, without which, they would parade themselves naked and place a curse on SPDC. It was also reported that the women were ready to give up their lives if their demands were not met, and threatened to undress themselves before officials of the company. The act of a woman undressing before a man in protest is believed in most parts Africa as a bad omen to the man concerned. It is believed that when a woman makes naked herself in publicly protest and swears to a man with



her private that, “this is where your life come from, I hereby revoke your life”, especially by an elderly woman, can affect the life of the man negatively. The belief is that such a curse has some spiritual powers to inflict madness or even cause death of the foe. It was reported that many men subjected to this “social execution” may eventually die when exposed to serious life-threatening situations. It was also reported that this spiritual strategy was widely used by the Gokana people of Ogoni in the 1980s for compelling Shell to meet their demands (Turner & Brownhill, 2004).

Another conflict yet took place in Warri on March 2003 (Nzeshi, 2003). In addition, the report stated that the communities involved lost over 100 people while struggling to take over oil facilities belonging to CNL because the corporation expelled its contract workers who were members of the communities. Nzeshi (2003) further reported that SPDC and CNL at the time shut down their operations and evacuated expatriate staff from facilities that were producing a total of 817,500 b/d.

The protest story in the area assumed a new dimension on April 16, 2003. This involved the lower workforce of Transocean, a contract firm of CNL and their management. Workers of the firm stopped CNL operations in four offshore platforms after it sacked five union leaders who were allegedly organizing members against the firm’s transport policy, which workers of Nigerian origin were transported to workplace in boats, while their expatriate counterparts were conveyed in helicopters. As a result, the workers on board rig MG Hulme staged a strike in protest of the discriminatory transport policy. The protesters argued, boats conveying local staff takes at least four hours to arrive at offshore production platforms, and this was not healthy for them as they are susceptible to attacks for hostage taken/kidnapping by aggrieved community members. They also argued, this was not the case with the expatriates who took just 45-minute flight to land at the offshore production platforms. In addition, Oyawiri (2003) reports that on April 19, 2003, a general strike was called by the staff union in solidarity with staff of Transocean, and three additional CNL’s deep-sea platforms joined their colleagues in the protest. Furthermore, it was reported, protesting union members stopped work at offshore platforms and held hostage over 200 foreign and Nigerian workers (mostly management cadre) of Halliburton, Schlumberger, TotalFinaElf and SPDC across the region. However, Vidal (2003) reported that the protests were called off on May 2, 2003 about the time British and Nigerian security forces were planning to use force to stop it.

The most significant fact in all the conflicts or civil unrest recorded in the Niger Delta points to one critical fact, which is that the OMNOCs were mostly responsible. The OMNOCs encourages and sponsors civil unrests in the region by engaging in acts inimical to the environment and resources of the coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities. The incidents show that the OMNOCs on occasions collude with the Nigerian state and security agencies by not keeping to safe environmental conditions, using excessive force to quell communities’ peaceful protests, killing and destroying lives and property at will, and dishonouring agreements reached with the communities. This is a clear indication of a superior power (the Nigerian State-MNOCs coalition) imposing itself on the weak and helpless Niger Delta oil-bearing communities. However, the region is currently, experiencing relative calm.

Theory of Environmental Externality

Those who propounded the theory of environmental externality or spillover effects were Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900) and Arthur C. Pigou (1877-1959) (Sandmo, 2015). This theory explains



the costs and benefits of human productive activities on the environment. It defines and clarifies what environmental problems are, where they come from and how to solve them. An externality occurs when some of the costs or benefits of the activity are externalized or imposed on a third party without compensation. This could take two forms, namely; negative externality (also called, external cost or external economy) and positive externality (also called, external benefits or “external economy”) (Sandmo, 2015).

Negative externality refers to an economic activity that imposes a negative effect on unrelated third party. It could arise either during the production or consumption of a good or service (Goodstein & Polasky, 2005). It can also arise when the welfare of one party adversely affects the action of the other party, and the loss in welfare uncompensated due to lack of liability to the third party(s) who suffered the damages. This explains why pollution from the OMNOCs which the coastal communities suffer in the Niger Delta are inadequately compensated, for the OMNOCs are not liable to the communities as third parties in the petro-business. Pearce (2002) argues that pollution, as far as polluters force others to pay for something from which they get no benefit, is an injustice, having “caused damage to third parties [without being] required paying for that damage”. Codato (2001) considers it as a “by-product of a product or consumption process that harms or otherwise, violates the property rights of others”. Accordingly, Mitchell (2003) state that:

“...it is a kind of theft, a theft of well-being for the fact that whether it is committed reciprocally to each other or not, does not stop it from being a theft; though situations of reciprocal externalizations are somewhat distinct from those where the externalization runs one way”.

However, in situations of reciprocal pollution, issues such as those relating to environmental protection are strongly dependent on the sociological concern of trust. Fairbrother (2016) and Irvin & Berigan (2013) argue that trust and public support for policies that protect the environment expect others to make efforts to offsetting the damages as well as protecting the environment. This is because they have confidence that public authorities will implement systems for environmental protection as promised, since they have the requisite level of expertise and administrative capacity and without corruption, will be willing to pay for the environmental damage. In this regard, the views of Boyce (2017) and Malesios & Botetzagias (2009) are quite relevant when they separately maintain that the imposition of an externality by one party on others, but not reversed, are based on power imbalance and inequality. The ongoing environmental impacts in the Niger Delta can be inferred that the government and OMNOCs are the winners while the indigenous people of the Niger Delta are the losers. This is because the power to impose costs on the OMNOCs for pollution damages rely with the government who have major stakes in their businesses. This is detrimental to the people as their means of survival is eroded continually. Nonetheless, the problem of distribution of the cost of benefit to an individual or group or society as a whole (including future operations as it affects a company), may therefore imply that some people benefit at the expense of others, and so it might not want externalities internalized for they stand to lose out.

Negative environmental externality can also be possible when producing corporations fail to consider the cost of environmental harm in their business models (Baumol & Oates, 1988; Meade, 1973; and Coase, 1960). Undoubtedly, the process of oil and gas production involves transformation of matter to energy (inputs into products as outputs), which generates wastes and causes pollution that severely impact ecosystems (WWF International Report, 2015;



Kadafa, 2012). Considering the value of ecosystems to life, the OMNOCs' business models are expected to recognize the cost of harm on the environment in the event of pollution caused by them in the Niger Delta. It appears, the current economic and business models of the OMNOCs in Nigeria never considers this fact wherefore, excluded the cost of environmental damage from oil spills and gas flaring in the Niger Delta to be borne by a third party (the oil-bearing communities). Odoemene (2011) and Edino, Nsofor & Bombom (2010), as well as Emoyan, Akpoborie & Akporhonor (2008) highlighted the negative externalities orchestrated by OMNOCs and borne by the oil-bearing communities in the Niger Delta to include loss of fishing grounds, forced migration, persistent health and shelter problems, social tension and other forms of deprivation. These negative externalities have severely impacted on the quality of life of the people in the region.

Positive environmental externalities are benefits derived from an activity by an unrelated third party. Better still, positive externalities could be regarded as benefits or costs generated as unintended outcomes in a given economic activity, which attracts no compensation as they accrue not directly to the parties involved in the transaction. The benefits or costs could come either on the production side or on the consumption side (Varian, 2010). In addition, the unintended outcomes can manifest themselves in the form of changes in the physical or biological environment. Furthermore, positive externality arises when actions of an individual or a group confers to others, benefits or rewards. For example, a technological spill over is a positive externality which occurs when a firm's invention not only benefits the firm but also enters into the society's pool of technical knowledge and benefits the society as a whole. Nigeria has enormously benefited from the technical knowledge of the OMNOCs operating in the country, but not significant in the area of preventing the invading Atlantic Ocean and seas from washing away the barrier islands and host communities.

The theory of environmental externality is expedient in judging the impact of the OMNOCs (negative or positive) on the survival of coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities in the Nigeria's Niger Delta. Suffice to state that the OMNOCs negatively impact the natural environment. Pollution from oil spills and gas flaring provoke negative environmental externalities of global dimension (WWF International Report, 2015). It reduces the ability of ecosystems to absorb wastes and/or pollutants as well as provide the goods and services needed for the survival of the earth's inhabitants. It is quite appalling that the negative externalities of pollution tormenting the communities are not considered either in the State legislations or business models of the OMNOCs. The fines prescribed in the State legislations for remediation of the negative environmental externalities caused by the OMNOCs are even inadequate. To control pollution, the external costs should be internalized as a tax or with other instruments that may require both producers and consumers of the polluting good to account for. The instrument of tax can reduce the effects of pollution. However, it can raise the price of goods and the quantity of it produced. Nigeria cannot boast of any of these measures for either safeguarding the wellbeing of the environment or the coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities in the Niger Delta.

Certainly, the theory of environmental externalities has provided explanation to the link between petroleum exploitation and environmental consequences in the Nigeria's Niger Delta. It justifies the grievances of the communities which result to violent conflicts and impinges costs on the survival of the people in the region.



METHOD

Data Collection

The data for this study was obtained from a field survey. It involves a sample size of 471 respondents who were selected from the total population of Bayelsa and Delta States (see Table 2.1), using Raosoft online software calculator that was set at a minimum error margin of not more than 5%. The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire. The questions it contains, were rated on a four-point Likert ordinal/rating scale as indicated: Strongly agree = 4 points; Agree = 3 points; Disagree = 2 points; Strongly disagree = 1 point. In addition, stratified and snowballing sampling techniques were used to randomly select the respondents from 23 coastal communities and 12 institutions/agencies in the 6 coastal Local Government Areas (LGAs), 3 each from the States (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.1 Population distribution of the States by LGAs.

Bayelsa State		Delta State	
LGA	Population	LGA	Population
Brass	184,127	Burutu	207,977
Ekeremor	269,588	Warri North	136,560
Southern-Ijaw	321,808	Warri South-West	116,538
Total	775,523		461,075

Source: NPC, 2010 (2006 census projections 2015).

Table 2.2: Sample distribution [study population] per LGA and institutions/agencies

State/ Institutions	LGA	Community	Number of Questionnaire	Sample size using proportional distribution
Bayelsa	Brass	Sangana	20	36
		Fish-town	16	
	Ekeremor	Ajamabiri	10	50
		Ogbointu	10	
		Agge	15	
		Amatu	15	
	Southern-Ijaw	Ekeni	19	110
		Ezetu I	19	
		Ezetu II	19	
		Foropa	21	
		Koluama I	20	
		Koluama II	22	
Delta	Burutu	Beniboye	11	51
		Ogulagha	15	
		Odimodi	14	
		Sokebolor	11	
	Warri North	Ajamogha	13	46
		Abegborodo	18	
		Ayogboro	15	



	Warri South-West	Ogidigben	20	58
		Olusumere	12	
		Ugborado	15	
		Yokriegbe	11	
Institutions/ agencies	Chevron		8	120
	NNPC		20	
	DRP		5	
	NCDMB		5	
	NESREA		5	
	NDU		20	
	DELSU		21	
	ENV/CIVIL RIGHTS		5	
	MIN. OF ENV. BYS		10	
	MIN. OF MIN. RES. BYS		5	
	MIN. OF ENV. DELTA		10	
	MIN. OF OIL & GAS DELTA		6	
Total	6 LGAs, 23 comm. & 12 institutions			n=471

Source: Authors design, 2019.

Research Design

The quantitative (survey research technique) and qualitative designs were concurrently adopted for easy collection, integration and analysis of the data. The mixed design was appropriate for non-experimental studies of this nature that was intended to describe reality (Nigel, Fox & Hunn, 2009). It enables frequent collection of data as well as relating it to the attitudes, behaviour and/or conduct of the targeted audience each time. In addition, it gives opportunity to select the audience and focus groups randomly, sometimes for either ethical or practical reasons. As affirmed by Nigel, Fox & Hunn (2009), the design helped in restricting the representatives of each focus group, for reasons of practicality and cost-effectiveness.

RESULTS

The various degree of responses to each item/ question from the 471 respondents were organized, computed, analyzed and presented with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Nonparametric statistics of mean and standard deviation were captured in the process to ascertain the degree of closeness of the opinions of the respondents at a test conducted with a benchmark of 2.50 (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2 respectively). The tools and the process used, greatly enhanced not only the correctness of the results, but also the integrity of the outcome of this study.

**Table 3.1 Conflict situation of OMNOCs and coastal communities.**

Item statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Decision
Your community for any reason that bothers on oil exploitation have being at conflict with a neighbouring community?	3.26	0.66	Accepted
Social conflicts between oil company workers and community members have caused breakdown of families.	3.27	0.68	Accepted
Several deaths recorded and properties destroyed in conflicts.	3.26	0.64	Accepted
Inhabitants ran for safety, which indicates loss of man-hour and dislocation of businesses.	3.29	0.68	Accepted
Military invasion causing unrest and social disorder.	3.23	0.64	Accepted
Dehumanization and torture by security agents giving rise to hatred and unrest in the oil industry.	3.28	0.69	Accepted
Oil operations have caused forced migration through military invasion and conflicts.	3.24	0.63	Accepted
Grand mean/std. dev.	22.83	4.62	

Table 3.2: Case processing summary.

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
Conflicts	471	1.71	4.57	1533.76	3.26	0.66	Accepted
Valid N listwise	471						

Table 3.2 reveals that the OMNOCs induces conflicts in the oil-rich Nigeria's Niger Delta. The parties involved in the conflict are the coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities, the OMNOCs and the Nigerian government through its security forces. This was confirmed by the mean response of the respondents 3.2564 and the standard deviation 0.65736, which indicate that the mean was above the benchmark of 2.50. The standard deviation corroborated this fact also by demonstrating the closeness of the responses of the respondents one to another.



DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings reveal that the OMNOCs' induces conflicts in the Nigeria's Niger Delta.

Researches conducted at various times confirms that conflicts between OMNOCs and host-communities are age-long occurrences in the Niger Delta. These studies also state that such conflicts have equally assumed several forms and magnitudes (Abutu & Ejeh, 2017; Babatunde, Norafidah & Zengeni, 2016). The result also confirms the study conducted by Goodman & Scahill (1998), which reported that the military injured and killed persons and livestock, destroyed churches, religious shrines and water wells, burnt down homes as well as destroyed canoes and fishing equipment in the affected communities. Some respondents from Koluama 1 and 2 affirmed that the Clan had in the past, involved in conflict with Chevron/Texaco on a number of occasions. In one particular incident, a respondent claimed, *"youths who were in a peaceful mission to plead with Chevron at Funiwa 5 platform to negotiate with the Clan on a spillage matter in 2000 were tagged as sea pirates and killed on the high sea by Nigerian Armed Forces employed by the company. Because they know that when an oil spill occurs, the communities will come for them. The bodies of the youths were not seen for burial up till today"* (Authors' Field Survey, 2019).

From the foregoing, it is clear that the OMNOCs induces conflicts in the Nigeria's oil-rich region. It is also clear that such conflicts undermine the survival of the communities as a result of the costs including death and destruction of their properties/villages, forced migration of the surviving population to other communities that are sometimes hostile to them, social disorders, breakdown of family ties and kinship structures, and total dislocation of their subsistence businesses. These conditions further bring about a pathological hatred towards the oil companies and the Federal Government of Nigeria across the region.

Undoubtedly, the people of the coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities have over the years, living in great pain. The family bread winners of the communities are indiscriminately killed or got injured during slight provocations. However, the OMNOCs and government have come to terms with the fact that the use of force cannot bring peace in the region for free flow of the petro-business after much encounters with the Agitators. As a result, the Federal Government have made some commitments to peace and development of the region, which are the establishment of the Amnesty Programme, Niger Delta Ministry and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The OMNOCs have equally made some commitments such as the establishment of Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOUs) with clusters of host communities to engender peace and development in the host communities. Undoubtedly, these commitments are the reasons for the relative peace in the region, but in aspect of development, the region and communities still have their gory looks.

CONCLUSION

It has been revealed that the OMNOCs operating in the Niger Delta induces conflicts that exacerbates costs on the survival of coastal oil-bearing/fishing communities in Nigeria. The OMNOCs are described as offshore oil and gas exploiting firms, and are major business partners of the Federal Government of Nigeria. A chronicle of violent conflicts involving the OMNOCs in the region were examined to demonstrate the fact that such conflicts impinge heavy burden on the survival of the coastal communities in Nigeria's Niger Delta. It relied on



primary data from 6 oil and gas bearing Local Government Areas, 3 each from Bayelsa and Delta States in the Niger Delta to evaluate the costs. It shows that the costs exacerbated by the OMNOCs' induced conflicts are death and destruction of properties, forced migration, social disorder, breakdown of families, and total dislocation of businesses in the region. It recommends that the Federal Government of Nigeria and the OMNOCs should more committed to avoid use of force to quelling oil-related conflicts in the Niger Delta. It is also imperative that their commitments must cover urgent measures to conserve the fast degrading ecological resources of the region to ensure the continuous survival of the people of the region.

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