

Youth Coping Strategies Resulting from the Niger Delta Oil Crisis

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Abstract

YOUTH COPING STRATEGIES RESULTING FROM THE NIGER DELTA OIL CRISIS

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This thesis examines the survival strategies of youths living in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria amidst the deteriorating environmental, social and political conditions of the region. This study provides a historical background of oil exploration in Nigeria, using the Niger Delta as a vivid example of how an abundance of oil does not guarantee the overall well being of a nation. In addition, this thesis examines the roles played by youths and youth organisations, and the strategies they employ to ensure their survival, within the dynamics of environmental activism in the post-independent Niger Delta. Using semi-structured interviews and participant observation, it was discovered that, despite the volatility of the Niger Delta region, the youths devise spontaneous and long-term survival strategies that help them cope in the face of violence and poverty. During the course of this research, it was discovered that spontaneous strategies were developed to aid day-to-day survival, while long-term survival strategies embody the hope for personal and societal changes that would alleviate the conditions of environmental degradation, poverty and violence in the Niger Delta region. This thesis argues that, due to the nature of violence in the Niger Delta, youths develop spontaneous and long-term coping strategies in order to survive in their environment.

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Introduction

On November 10, 1995, I learned that my uncle (Ken Saro-Wiwa) was killed by hanging. All I remember from that time is that many people visited my grandmother's house and candles were lit in the villages in Ogoniland at night. At seven years old, I had no idea what kind of a man my uncle was or what he had done for the Ogoni people. Three years later, I heard that the President of Nigeria (Sani Abacha), who had ordered my uncle's hanging, died. There was a big celebration in Bori, the town where I lived in. That is when I started to ask questions about why the dead President hung my uncle in the first place, but no one gave me a clear explanation regarding what happened. My maternal grandmother said I was too young to understand the situation. In Bori, the town where I lived until I was 10, there were many military men with guns patrolling the area. I thought at the time that they were there to protect us, not realizing that they were the reason why my grandma took me with her to hide in the bushes.

I first experienced the devastation caused in Ogoni by oil companies and the Nigerian government when my father (Owens Wiwa), who had to immigrate to Canada for safety reasons, came back to Nigeria in 1999. He took me to villages where oil had destroyed the land that people farmed and also the streams and rivers, which were filled with crude oil, preventing people from fetching clean water and fishing. On that day I questioned him, why was he showing me all of this, and what does it have to do with our family? After visiting the villages, there was a large celebration welcoming my father back to his motherland. There were lots of MOSOP (Movement of the Survival of the Ogoni People: a non-violent movement) people there; they were singing songs I have

heard a thousand times, without ever knowing their meaning, and shouting the MOSOP encouragement chant. The songs were songs of encouragement for the people to stand up and fight for their land, using their knowledge to defend themselves against being taken advantage of. Before that day, I had not realized how important my uncle was or what MOSOP and Ken Saro-Wiwa meant to the Ogoni people. At that event, I learned the meaning of MOSOP and its impact on our land. I also learned that my uncle was hanged because he fought for the freedom of the Ogoni people, including me, so we could have a better life. Visiting villages and seeing how the oil in Ogoniland has damaged the people made me aware of what my region has gone through. The protests I witnessed growing up, and the t-shirts and caps with maps and flags of the six Ogoni kingdoms, opened my eyes to how the Ogoni have come together in the face of devastation. Seeing pictures of women, men, and children with legs missing, serious burns to their faces and bodies, or their houses burned to the ground, alerted me to the violence in the area. I learned that the soldiers that I once, as a child, thought were there to protect us perpetrated these violent acts. This made me lose all faith in the police, military officers and government of Nigeria.

In my 12 years of living in the Niger Delta region, I learned that the Nigerian government inflicted violence in my homeland due to its oil resources, and the Shell oil company damaged our environment through the extraction of oil from our land. The state hung my uncle because he peacefully protested against the environmental devastation of the land of the Ogoni people. Being aware of oil spills and violence perpetrated against protesting villagers at an early age, as well as the impact this devastating situation had on my family and friends, inspired me to investigate the impact it had on youths in the

region. Migrating to Canada and undertaking undergraduate studies in International Development at the University of Guelph gave me the opportunity to further pursue my interest and increase my awareness of the oil conflict in the Niger Delta region from whence I emigrated.

Another motivation behind my decision to research Niger Delta youth was the frequent mention in Canadian newspapers, radio and television of youth involvement in perpetrating violence in the region. Literatures that I came into contact with during my undergraduate studies highlighted the consequences of oil exploration in the Niger Delta. These consequences include realities such as societal tensions resulting in violent communal crises, restless youths and what many consider to be the evil alliance of the oil companies' greed and the state's brutal oppressiveness. On the topic of Niger Delta violence, several sources indicate that Niger Delta youth inflict violence in the region because of the unequal distribution of oil revenues, unequal and undemocratic control over oil production, and the lack of development in the region. The study conducted by Ajiboye, Jawando and Adisa (2009) indicates that poverty in the region is a key economic problem influencing the youth to inflict violent attacks on oil workers in the region (Ajiboye, Olayiwola & Babatunde, 2009, p. 224). According to Oluwaniyi (2010), Niger Delta youth rebel because of the socio-economic and political deprivation that is due to exploration by multinational oil corporations in partnership with the Nigerian governments. Obi (2010) argues that oil extraction and the inequitable distribution of its benefits are the reason for the dissatisfaction of the Niger Delta people and the conflict between them, the oil companies and the Nigerian governments who benefit from oil production. The findings of Chukwuemeja and Aghara (2010) demonstrate that the

people of the Niger Delta, particularly youths, are restive due to their annoyance with the lack of attention given to the region's development and the damage done to their ecosystem by oil spillages. Based on the sources mentioned above, it seemed that Niger Delta youths would be suitable research subjects for this project because I was interested in investigating youths who did not engage in violent activity but experienced oil-related violence during the time they spent living in the region. Within the context, the definition of youth is derived from the Nigerian National Youth policy (NNYP) (2001). The NNYP defines youths "as comprising all young persons between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age who are the citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Nation Youth Policy 2001:3). I chose to adopt this definition because this demographic tend to be the most vigorous, volatile and vulnerable segment of Nigerian population and also prone with exacerbated challenges such as poor educational system, unemployment and poverty among other social problems.

While the bulk of the existing literature focuses on youths involved in violence in the Niger Delta region, my research examines how youths who do not participate in the violence survive within the violence through the use of spontaneous and long-term survival strategies. This research explores the survival of these youths through narratives and observations. The thesis argues that, due to the nature of violence in the Niger Delta, youths develop spontaneous and long-term coping strategies in order to survive in their environment.

The purpose of this thesis is to describe the various conditions that make it possible for youths to develop these strategies. In order to understand these conditions, I conducted a qualitative study of Niger Delta youths' daily life experiences, physical

mobility, education and economic opportunities, and the importance of religion and family to sustaining their coping strategies. The main research question addressed in this study is: how does the nature of violence in the Niger Delta enable Niger Delta youths to develop coping strategies in order to survive in their environment?

The above section offers a description of my connection to the oil conflict in the Niger Delta. It also explains part of the reason why I decided to study Niger Delta youths instead of Sudan youths, who are similarly fighting for control of the oil in their country. I also decided to investigate Niger Delta youths because of the information I encountered while reviewing the existing literature on the topics of youths and violence in the region. The sources mentioned above imply that a relationship exists between the oil conflict and changes in youths' behaviour in the region. Most youths turn to violence as a means to survive in the region, while others use their experiences to develop alternative coping strategies. This thesis focuses on youths who use their experiences and environments to develop non-violent coping strategies amidst the violence in their environments.

Oil, Economics and Politics

In contemporary times, the need for energy is increasing and oil has become extremely prominent as a means of sustaining current economic activities. Oil is connected to the wealth of industrial countries and also to the economics of developing nations. There is a demand for nations with oil resources to increase production due to the high level of consumption among the developed nations. This need for oil has led to continuous oil extraction in developing nations without any gains in terms of their efficient use of energy. Hallock et.al. (2004) argue that the oil-producing/exporting countries will soon no longer be able to produce sufficient oil to meet the world's current

oil consumption demands. This will affect each oil-producing country's economy dramatically, including the economies of African countries that rely on oil in order to participate in the global economy. African countries such as Nigeria are affected by this situation because the country's revenue depends almost solely on oil production. Nigeria, located in West Africa, has an estimated population of 174 million (CIA: World Fact Book, 2013) and has been politically independent since 1960. During this period, democratically elected civilian governments have been in power for only seventeen years. The remaining 35 years have witnessed military rule by various regimes that seized power through military coups, which were either bloody or bloodless. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is also the largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, the fifth largest exporter of oil to the United States, and the eighth largest oil exporter in the world (Ploch, 2012:2). Like many other African countries rich in natural resources, Nigeria has a long history of poor microeconomic management and social and political instability, making it one of the poorest countries in the world (Giroux, 2008:2). According to Turner and Badru (1985, cited in Omeje, 2005), the alliance between oil companies and the Nigerian government has brought about the destruction of the nation and its people through military coups, creating a high level of political instability in the country (2005:1). Turner and Badru (1985) assert that instability in the nation, as well as the Nigerian way of conducting business, has contributed to the instability of oil market prices, thus putting pressure on the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) while hindering its efforts to maintain a firm international oil price (1985:12). The world depends on oil from oil-rich countries like Nigeria for global energy, and these countries consequently depend on oil revenues to sustain their economies.

Nigeria's dependency on oil has wrought havoc in terms of the country's economy and created environmental devastation in the Niger Delta region where oil is being exploited. The people of the Niger Delta have witnessed environmental conflicts, political tensions and various violent outbreaks, such as those supported by the Movement for the Emancipation of the People of the Niger Delta (MEND) whose attacks on the oil industry, the backbone of the Nigerian economy, continued into 2013 when this thesis was being written. MEND is an organization created by youths in 2004 in order to fight for control of the oil production in their region.

This research identifies points of intersection between resource wealth, environmental violence and youth militancy in the evolution of the Niger Delta predicament. In addition, this research addresses youths' non-violent participation in the Niger Delta crisis. Youth participation is discussed in this research study with respect to both their role in the violence and militancy within the region as well as the strategic influence of those youths who do not resort to violence to support the day-to-day and long term survival of the region. This thesis further argues that the various shades of violence experienced in the region are community specific.

Youth's Involvement in the Niger Delta Oil Crisis

People are most vulnerable when their livelihoods and coping strategies are undermined, or when their group identity or political position makes them particularly exposed to violence. Violent responses to government neglect and environmental degradation became more vivid in Nigeria in 2004 when youth embarked on a mass protest against the alliance between the Nigerian state and Shell. During this protest, the

youth clamoured for an overhaul of Nigeria's federal system, which disadvantaged their oil-bearing communities in the Niger Delta.

Nigeria has been politically unstable for many years due to corruption and conflicts over oil exploitation in the Niger Delta. Oil revenues in Nigeria have led to internal political conflicts and violence. This is due in part to the high stakes of political competition, whereby rival leaders and parties resort to using force to gain control over oil revenues. The World Bank (2003) has reported that there seems to be a strong correlation between outbreaks of armed conflict and a country's dependence on readily exploitable natural resources" (Ofem & Ajayi, 2008:140). This quotation can be readily applied to the situation in the Niger Delta region in Nigeria, where armed conflicts due to oil exploitation are common, both resulting from and leading to the unequal sharing of oil revenues (Volman, 2003:2). Cyril Obi argues that,

There should not be any inevitability in the relationship between oil, corruption and violence. Oil alone does not lead to violence or corruption, but conflict occurs as a result of the politicisation of the oil factor, in ways that make the control of oil and its distribution the exclusive preserve of 'a few' to the exclusion of others. (Obi, 2007:1)

Although the Niger Delta's oil production accounts for most of Nigeria's oil revenue, the region's ethnic minority groups have borne a disproportionate share of the cost of oil extraction, for which they believe they have been inadequately compensated. Governments lacking in financial transparency manage the oil revenues in Nigeria. The money generated by oil production rarely contributes to the national economic development of Nigeria, due to government officials diverting the money into their personal bank accounts (Volman, 2003:2). The region's population has suffered from government repression, low levels of or no social service services, and unemployment.

Many scholars, such as Obi (2009) and Frynas (2001), argue that violent conflict persists in Niger Delta communities—despite efforts from governmental and international organizations to negotiate peace in the area—due to the uneven distribution of oil revenues, which has resulted in high-level poverty and environmental degradation. The situation surrounding oil production in Nigeria demonstrates the kinds of challenges that are confronted by multi-ethnic African oil-states that seek to use oil wealth as a catalyst for fostering national unity and development (Obi, 2007:1). The misuse of oil revenues has exacerbated political discontent and provoked internal political violence in Nigeria. Caught in the middle of this political violence in the Niger Delta are the youths who are born into it. Oil production has led to the worsening of living standards and the loss of income for inhabitants, as employment lost in the dwindling agriculture sector is not being replaced by employment in other industries (Ikelegbe, 2005:5–6). The young men who heavily populate the Niger Delta region are challenged by the realities of poverty and the loss of their means to earn a livelihood (Obi, 2009:4). According to Giroux (2010), this has generated feelings of “social-cultural alienation, humiliation, frustration and deprivation” (2010:4). Giroux also notes that these factors contribute to the advent of armed resistance and criminal activities undertaken by Niger Delta youth.

Chukwuemeja and Aghara (2010) examined the reasons underlying Niger Delta youth’s restiveness and the challenges it poses to development strategies. They argue that youth restiveness manifested in violent demonstrations and protests is caused by the limited level of attention given to the development of the region, specifically in response to the degradation of the environment, poverty, unemployment and poor social conditions. According to Ofem and Ajayi (2008), youth involvement in violence can be

reduced if empowerment strategies are implemented and entities such as infrastructures, educational programs and credit facilities are made available to youths. These researchers emphasize that empowerment strategies have to be sustainable in order to have a reasonable impact in terms of conflict management (2008:139). Empowering youth also requires equal formal education and job opportunities for both males and females, as argued by Omorodion (2011), who examined the influence of gender and sexuality on youths' occupations in the Gelegele and Ogulagha communities of the Niger Delta region. Omorodion asserts that work performed in these communities is gendered due to the unequal job and pay opportunities that are available to male and female youths. Thus, youth in the Niger Delta require equal educational and economic opportunities, to foster development in the region.

The oil companies and the government of Nigeria, both of which limit youth's potential to advance and succeed in the region, have put Niger Delta youth in a limited position. These limitations have also resulted in violence and other criminal activities. The 2009 study conducted by Ajiboye, Jawando and Adisa took a critical look at poverty as a key economic problem predisposing youth to violent attacks on oil workers. These violent responses include acts of domestic terrorism, the kidnapping of oil workers and incessant attacks on oil plants. Ajiboye et al. (2009) argue that marginalization and poverty cause youths to act this way in order to earn money, as these activities, especially the kidnapping of oil workers, are becoming a significant source of financial income. Youth have moved from kidnapping oil workers exclusively to also targeting government officials, or anyone for whom they can get a ransom. The studies referred to in this introduction, spanning the period between 2001 and 2011, show different aspects of the

research that has been conducted on youth in the Niger Delta region. The findings in the above literature suggest that more research needs to be done in order to fully understand youth's motivations and what strategies may be developed to reduce youth involvement in violence in the region.

Although these studies acknowledge that youth violence can be reduced through the provision of beneficial opportunities to the youth population, they focus on societal issues that affect youth and society in general. These studies fail to critically examine how Niger Delta youths survive on a daily basis given their violent environment and the lack of opportunities in the region. To help fill this gap in the existing literature, this thesis makes a contribution by expanding on existing information regarding Niger Delta youths and the coping and survival strategies they adopt. The research provides current accounts of youth behaviours in the Niger Delta region. Through fieldwork carried out between May and July of 2012, consisting of interviews and participant observation within the community of Choba, near Port Harcourt (the most eastern major oil town in Nigeria), data related to the daily experiences of youths and their survival strategies were obtained. Most of the data in this thesis about youths that perpetrates violence were reported to me by youths who were not involved in the violence. This thesis thus seeks to give voice to the youth to ensure that their experiences are viewed in greater depth and more detail, in order to better facilitate the development of an understanding of their struggles and survival mechanisms.

Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

- How does the nature of violence in the Niger Delta enable Niger Delta youths to develop coping strategies in order to survive in their environment?
- What are these coping strategies that Niger Delta youths use to survive in their environment?

Outline of Thesis

Chapter one reviews the relevant literature on the history of oil exploration in Nigeria and its connection to violence in the region.

Chapter two utilizes theories of the rentier state and the resource curse, to explain the interplay between resource (oil) wealth, bad governance, environmental decadence and youth violence in the Niger Delta. This chapter further utilizes George H. Mead's (1934) concept of self, and James Marcia (1950) ego identity to explain how youth survive in violent environments. Mead's conceptualisation of self is used in this study to show how youths' interactions with society help them to survive in their environment, and Ego identity theory is used to show Niger Delta youths' commitment to surviving within their circumstances. The chapter also describes the qualitative methods used in this study and some of the ethical concerns that were involved in executing this project. The following three chapters (chapters three through five) are data chapters, which describe the research findings.

Chapter three utilizes Peluso and Watts' argument that violence is site specific, as it focuses on different shades of violence in different regions of Nigeria using eyewitness accounts of violence provided by my study participants. In addition, chapter three examines the multifaceted ways in which the socio-economic and political lives of the

residents of the Niger Delta, particularly the youths, are affected by violence and oil production.

Chapter four examines the spontaneous and long-term survival strategies of youths living within the devastating environmental, social, and political conditions of the Niger Delta region. Utilizing Mead's concept of the self and Erikson's identity theory, this chapter looks at how youth survival strategies are shaped by their interactions with their environments. The first section of this chapter demonstrates how youths' daily survival instincts and tactics have become routine. The second section of this chapter examines youths' long term strategies with respect to developing and acting on various positive outlooks regarding how they might change their personal and social lives.

Chapter five assesses survival strategies that appear to be more sustainable, identifying the roles played by specific value systems in youths' survival strategies. The conclusion of my thesis summarizes its research findings and contributions. In my conclusion, I state how the findings contained within this thesis are relevant to the study of Niger Delta youths, and I suggest some ways in which the information gained through this research project might be applied to address some of the issues of social concern.

Chapter One

Literature Review

Background of Study: Oil Exploration in Nigeria and the Niger Delta

Nigeria joined the league of oil-producing nations in 1956 when oil was discovered in Oloibiri, in what is now Bayelsa state, and since then the country has become the leading oil and gas producer in Africa (O'Neill, 2007:4). Prior to independence in 1960, oil had already been discovered in the nation, but the economy was stable with many agricultural exports, such as cocoa, peanut oil and palm oil acting as the mainstays of the Nigerian state's revenues. During the 1970s, an increase in the petroleum sector prompted rapid growth in the nation's economy (Falola & Heaton, 2008:181). This rapid increase made Nigeria the highest per capita gross domestic growth (GDP) country in Africa and positioned it as a major oil exporter. As oil production grew, so did oil revenues, which did not, however, benefit the well-being of very many Nigerians. As mentioned above, Nigeria has transitioned through several civilian and military governments amidst several economic and political upheavals fuelled by the mismanagement of government funds (Falola & Heaton, 2008:181).

Nigeria joined the OPEC in 1971, which set the country up for major oil profits when oil prices rose from \$3.00 per barrel in October 1973 to \$14.76 per barrel by January 1974 (Falola & Heaton, 2008:182). Increased oil production in Nigeria was fuelled by the global scarcity of oil due to the Middle East war of 1973 (Adedipe, 2004:3). Nigeria's revenue from oil increased from 166 million Naira in 1970 to 5.3 billion Naira in 1979 (Falola & Heaton, 2008:182). According to Akinlo (2012), oil

production in 1970 was about 395.7 million barrels annually, but the figure increased to 919.3 million by 2006 (2012:1). Due to this massive increase in oil production and the subsequent increase in oil revenues, Nigeria has come to largely ignore its other sectors, especially agriculture, which accounted for 70% of Nigerian exports prior to independence (Adedipe, 2004:2). The oil boom led to a rise in food imports because much of the rural population moved to urban areas due to the shift in the country's employment policy in the 1960s (Adedipe, 2004:15). The employment policy shifted from focusing on labour in the agricultural sector to labour in the manufacturing sector (Adedipe, 2004:15). This negatively affected agricultural production, making Nigeria largely dependent on oil exports for its income and largely dependent on food imports for its domestic food supply. Since the 1970s, oil has accounted for 80% of the Nigerian government's revenues and 95% of the country's export earnings (Courson, 2009:9). Oil revenues, however, only benefit those with access to state power, such as politicians as well as industrialists and business people, leaving the rest of the country in a poor state, especially in the Niger Delta region where the oil is primarily found.

Niger Delta Region: A Brief Introduction

The Niger Delta region houses Nigeria's oil wealth and is mostly occupied by indigenous people who, before the arrival of British colonial rule, had a well-established social system that placed great value on the environment (Ifedi & Anyu, 2011: 3). The region now includes nine oil-producing states within Nigeria, which contain 1500 communities that host the oil industry (Banks & Sokolowski, 2010:9). There are approximately 30 million people living in these small community settlements in the region (Zabbey, 2009:3). According to Banks and Sokolowski (2010), "this region has

the highest population diversity in the world with over 40 ethnic groups living in approximately 27,000 square miles” (2010:9). The Niger Delta region is the third largest wetland in the world, rich with freshwater swamp forests and biological diversity (Zabbey, 2009:3). Niger Delta traditions and customs have helped this area’s population to protect and preserve the environment for many generations. Since the discovery of oil in 1956, however, oil production has damaged many social and ecological systems.

Despite the fact that the region is Nigeria’s main oil and gas centre, producing around 2.2 million barrels of oil per day at \$100 per barrel, 70% of the indigenes of the Niger Delta live in abject poverty (Banks & Sokolowski, 2010:9). According to Banks and Sokolowski (2010), one in three citizens in the region is illiterate, and 90% of the citizenry earn less than two dollars per day. Due to uneven development in the region, the economy is characterised by social stratification whereby farmers in rural areas live in extreme poverty due to a lack of land to farm (Banks and Sokolowski, 2010:10). With 60% of the population depending on the natural environment, environmental degradation has left only 27% of the population with access to potable water, 30% with access to electricity, and 80% of the populations has been left unemployed (Banks & Sokolowski, 2010:9). Due to the amount of oil exploitation in the region, a lack of development, high unemployment and the erosion of traditional livelihoods, the people look for other means to ensure their survival, such as illegal bunking and the theft of crude oil (Zabbey, 2009:3). The government believes that the Niger Delta’s inhabitants have no claim to the natural resources on their land, and this has created a sense of outrage and stoked the fires of insurgency amongst many elements within the Delta population. The question on the minds of many Delta peoples remains, “Who owns the oil in the Niger Delta?”

Who Owns Oil? Niger Delta Peoples Against the State and Oil-producing Companies

Due to the high value of oil as a natural resource, governments and foreign companies became interested in acquiring the land in the Niger Delta region, which led to the appropriation of lands by the government. Land ownership in the Niger Delta area is unclear due to the land being inherited through the generations and informal ownership patterns. Through the unspoken rules of regional communal land ownership, people are entitled to the land given to them by their parents; in most cases, the land has been in their family for years. Before oil was discovered in this region, the people depended on agricultural production to sustain their livelihoods. After oil was discovered, they lost their source of livelihood, and the Nigerian government appropriated their lands without adequate remuneration. The Land Use Act of 1978 gave the government control over all land in Nigeria, permitting the acquisition of lands for public purposes and oil exploration. This act places a lot of power in the hands of the government and deprives minority populations of the opportunity to regain control over their land (Obi, 2006:5). The act is viewed as an act of injustice by the indigenes of the Niger Delta because it allows the government to give oil companies the rights to acquire their land without giving the people adequate compensation. The Niger Delta population views this method of acquiring land for oil production as unjust because it ignores their demands for fair treatment and places them in the hands of the oil companies, which have brought nothing but destruction with regards to the local environment and the traditional livelihoods of the individuals who live there.

The people of the Niger Delta believe that the oil belongs to them, since it is on their land. They also believe that the profits from oil extraction should be used to help communities, but since 1978, the Nigerian government has had control over the majority of the oil-containing land, and this government has done little to share the wealth gained from oil production with the Niger Delta population. Beachler (1998) argues that relationships between members of the centre (powerful class) and the periphery (lower class) in developing countries often assume precarious forms owing to environmental transformation, and this is clearly the case in terms of Nigeria (1998:4).

Oil exploitation in the Niger Delta is contracted out to large petroleum corporations such as Shell and Chevron, who have used the influence of the Nigerian government to try to stop any resistance on the part of the Niger Delta community. According to Zalik (2010), the Nigerian government “has introduced legislation that claims more or less control over the oil sector and also the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) which holds the majority of the shares in both onshore and off shore ventures.” While foreign companies such as Shell run the oil industry, they receive protection from the Nigerian government (2010:5), which provides a low-cost site for oil extraction (Zalik, 2010:5). Oil companies take advantage of the Nigerian government’s relative laxness in terms of regulations and have failed to clean up oil spillages that have occurred during oil production, which have resulted in environmental degradation. At the same time, oil production has failed to bring significant economic benefits to Niger Delta communities because of the power-related issues that exist with regards to the ownership of the oil.

The level of inequality that is present in terms of oil ownership in the Niger Delta region is a result of corruption and the exploitation of oil by people in power. This has left the marginalized class (the people of the Niger Delta) in extreme poverty. Inequality in the Niger Delta has become incapacitating, in that it has limited or eliminated the provision of opportunities to those who find themselves at the lower end of revenue distribution. Thus, the exploitation of oil in the Niger Delta by oil companies has resulted in poverty and environmental degradation, which is discussed in the next section.

Environmental and Social Impacts of Oil Exploration in the Niger Delta

Although the Niger Delta accounts for most of Nigeria's oil revenue, the region's minority ethnic groups have borne a disproportionate share of the cost of oil extraction, for which they believe they have been inadequately compensated. As noted above, the region's population has suffered from government repression, a lack of social services and unemployment. Much of the literature has argued that violent conflicts persist in Niger Delta communities, despite the efforts of government and international organizations to negotiate peace in the area, due to the uneven distribution of oil revenues, which has resulted in high-level poverty and degradation of many local and trans-regional environments.

Oil exploitation has wreaked havoc on the Niger Delta ecological system. This environmental degradation includes the destruction of farmlands and fisheries that have been the means of maintaining a livelihood for generations in the Niger Delta (Osaghae, 1995:1). Oil pollution includes oil spills, gas flares, and effluent and waste discharges. Spills affect vast stretches of land and waterways, polluting not only crops but also marine life and the domestic water supply (Courson, 2009:2). This affects human health

because crop yields have diminished as a result, making food shortages a serious problem. Pollution also increases malnutrition due to a lack of nutrients in food, thus increasing the incidence rate of various diseases. Gas flares have contributed to some of the worst air quality in the world, negatively impacting the local ecology and climate as well as people's health and property. Chemical waste from oil companies is discharged into the water and sinks, which may kill local bottom-living plants and animals. Oil companies have inflicted millions of dollars' worth of damages on the Niger Delta region, leaving behind ecological devastation, destitution, environmentally induced illness and a shorter life expectancy.

The situation in the Niger Delta goes against the United Nations' International Statute of Human Rights, which entitles everyone to a safe environment. All humans need clean air, clean water and a secure environment that promotes survival. The United Nations International Statute of Human Rights (1948) is intended to protect individuals from abuses such as state-induced starvation, torture, violence and deprivation of people's means of subsistence (Francis, 2000:3). Human rights include the assurance of people's means to earn a livelihood, so any threats to the environmental basis of livelihoods could be considered a violation of basic human rights. Thus, the people of Niger Delta have experienced environmental injustice due to the policies and practices of the Nigerian governments in alliance with the oil companies. The following section examines resistance movements in which the Niger Delta population has become involved in an effort to secure justice.

Revolutionary Responses of the People to the Niger Delta Oil Crisis

There have been several thoughtful analyses of the conflict in the Delta region since the conflict became known internationally in the early 1990s. Both NGOs and independent researchers have studied this region, which has brought awareness to its situation. These studies have included analyses of state violence against the Niger Delta people and violence on the part of the youths of the Niger Delta against the state and multinational oil companies. Since the early 1990s, government management of the oil producing regions has led to large-scale protests and civil disobedience. According to Giroux (2010), the repressive actions of the police, the government's lack of initiative to regulate oil production in the area, and unemployment were the key reasons why young men turned to violent action (2010:4-5). While involving individual actors, violent resistance to the government and the government-backed oil companies has taken the form of various larger resistance movements, some of which are briefly discussed below.

Ogoni Resistance and MOSOP

Ogoni elites, like many other elites, have recognized the political advantages of having a united ethnic region as they compete for state power and resources. As earlier emphasised, oil was discovered in the Ogoni territory in 1957, when Shell found oil in one of the villages of the Niger Delta. The Ogonis are a minority ethnic group of approximately 500,000 people living in Rivers State in Eastern Nigeria (Osaghae, 1995:3). The Ogoni Central Union was formed in 1945 to secure the creation of an Ogoni division and they participated, with other minorities, in demanding to separate Rivers State from the rest of the eastern region (Osaghae, 1995:5). This shows that the Ogoni people have a history of organizing as a unified minority group to fight for what they

believe to be right. The Ogoni State Representative Assembly (OSTR) helped launch some Ogoni individuals into state and federal decision-making structures, and it fostered Ogoni interest in the creation of Rivers State (Isumonah, 2004:9). Other than the Ogoni Central Union, the only organization that has represented Ogoni interests since the 1990s is the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP).

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)

The MOSOP is a campaigning organization created in 1990 to advocate for the Ogoni people in their struggle to have their ethnic and environmental rights upheld. The organization is non-violent and aims to promote democratic awareness, protect the Ogoni people's environment, and promote the social, economic and physical development of Ogoni land. In addition, it protects the cultural rights and practices of the Ogoni people and seeks to promote their right to self-determination. The basis of MOSOP's appeal to the government to end oil exploitation was personal deprivation in the form of the loss of farmlands and crops resulting from the activities of oil companies. The Ogoni leaders protested that the Ogoni people had received nothing "but misery, hunger and pain" from the oil industry, and that the oil companies and the state have done too little to compensate the Ogoni for this devastation (Isumoahi, 2004:9-11). Ken Saro-Wiwa, the late president of the MOSOP movement, referred to Ogoni exploitation as a case of genocide, defining genocide as anything done to destroy a group of people and drive them to extinction. He stated,

If you take away all the resources of the Ogoni people, you take away their land, you pollute their air, you pollute their streams, you make it impossible for them to farm or fish, which is their main source of livelihood, and then what comes out of their soil you take entirely away. (Osaghae, 1995:6)

The negative impacts of oil production in the region are causing genocidal results. According to Osaghae (1995), more people are dying in Ogoniland than are being born, boys and girls are not attending school, and those who manage to make it through school cannot find jobs. This lack of resources will eventually lead to the extinction of the Ogoni tribe (Osaghae, 1995:6). The Ken Saro-Wiwa quotation above draws attention to the gravity of the situation and the effect of oil exploitation on the Ogonis. This quotation also illustrates the violations of the United Nations International Statute of Human Rights (1948) that are occurring among the Ogoni.

Despite the immense wealth generated from oil in Ogoniland, the Ogoni people continue to have little representation in the federal government; due largely to this lack of political representation, they have no pipe-borne water, no electricity and no job opportunities in the federal, state, public sector or private-sector companies, nor is the federal government implementing any social or economic projects to aid in the development of the area. Despite this region being a tremendous source of wealth, its people are among the most poor and destitute in the country (MOSOP, 1991).

The Ogoni Bill of Rights

Because of ongoing violations of the rights of the Ogoni people, the chiefs and other members of the Ogoni population developed the Ogoni Bill of Rights in 1990. This bill, while acknowledging that the Ogoni want to remain part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, calls for political autonomy so that the Ogoni people are able to have control over their resources and the development of the region, as well as being able to protect the region's environment. In addition to the above-mentioned requests, the bill also calls for adequate representation in national institutions, the use and development of Ogoni

languages, the full development of Ogoni culture, and the right to religious freedom (MOSOP, 1991). This bill was presented to the President, General Ibrahim Babangida and his council in 1990, but the outcome was not positive from the Ogoni perspective. The federal government was unresponsive, choosing to ignore the issues raised (Civil Liberties Organisation (Nigeria), 1996:43). Although the bill had no discernible impact in terms of alleviating the suffering of the Ogoni people, it did result in a major campaign led by Ken Saro-Wiwa to publicize the devastation in Ogoniland, bringing the human rights and environmental concerns of the MOSOP to international prominence (Bob, 2001:7).

Partly because of Saro-Wiwa's overseas activism, which included being the vice-chair of Unrepresented Nations and Peoples (UNPO), the MOSOP had significant backing from foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (Bob 2001:7). With this backing, the MOSOP was able to stop Shell from drilling oil in Ogoniland; however, the damage done to the land and waterways still exists (Bob 2001:7). The MOSOP in Nigeria, with the help of international human rights bodies, has encouraged deliberate confrontation with Shell. As the MOSOP's fight for environmental and human rights became global, this demonstrated the lengths to which the Ogonis were willing to go to fight for their land. Some of the countries that have helped the Ogonis in their fight against Shell are Britain, Canada and the United States of America.

After becoming president of MOSOP, Saro-Wiwa created the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), which became deeply involved in the uprising in Ogoniland. The NYCOP is described as a militant part of the MOSOP, created to stop

any new oil projects by Shell or other prospectors in Ogoniland. The creation of this group did not sit well with the formal president of the MOSOP, Garrick Leton, and other members of the MOSOP who claimed that the NYCOP used militant methods despite Sara-Wiwa's claim that the MOSOP's activities and those of any group under the MOSOP were non-violent (Cayford 1996:9). Steven Cayford (1996) reported that Leton further claimed that the NYCOP had become Saro-Wiwa's private vigilante army, carrying out attacks that killed four Ogoni leaders (1996:9). Whether this is true or not, by creating a section of the MOSOP specifically for youths, Saro-Wiwa aimed to include everyone in the fight, because it impacts them in the present and will in the future as well. He wanted youths to take up their ethnic identity and fight for their land.

Currently in Ogoni, Shell does not extract oil from the region (though it continues to transport oil in pipelines), but the people still demand compensation for the damage that was caused previously. The Ogoni struggle gave other oil communities, Bayelsa and Delta, the motivation to form their own activist groups. These groups include the Chikoko Movements, the Ijaw youths council, Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta and Movement for the Emancipation of the People of the Niger Delta, among others. The MOSOP and the NYCOP motivated these groups and gave them direction to fight against the injustices thrust upon them by the oil companies and the state (Courson, 2009:15).

Challenges to the Survival of MOSOP from 1990 to the Present

The decline of the MOSOP reduced youths' activities in Ogoniland, but it inspired youths in other regions, such as the Ijaws, to become more aggressive in response to the devastation in their region. The violence in the Niger Delta started when

the Nigerian military government cracked down on the MOSOP after General Sani Abacha came to power in 1993. Violent repression became prevalent: the destruction of Ogoni villages, massacres, rape, detentions and torture became commonplace across Ogoni lands (Bob & Nepstade, 2007:5). This laid down the foundations for the violence that youths must deal with today. This violent campaign resulted in many women and girls facing harassment on their farms, on their way to the markets, in their villages when minding their homes and at night when they were asleep (Brownhill and Turner, 2007). In 1995, the military government brought the Ogoni leaders to trial. They faced an unfair military tribunal where all but one leader was convicted of conspiracy to murder (Bob & Nepstade, 2007:6). On October 10, 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine other Ogoni leaders were hung despite vigorous efforts made by NGOs and world leaders to see them freed. Following the execution, there was antagonism and protests against the Nigerian government occurred around the world.

Although Nigeria has not been under a military dictatorship since 1999, the MOSOP remains fragmented and has failed to reorganize effectively in Ogoniland. It exists now, in 2013, as a small political force in the Niger Delta region. The movement has never regained the strength that it had in the early 1990s, and the Ogoni's demands (from the Bill of Rights) were never met. Although the Nigerian government's aggressive response permanently weakened the Ogoni resistance, other ethnic-based resistances have arisen in the Niger Delta region. These resistances are more threatening to the communities and the Nigerian state as a whole than the MOSOP movement was. Militant groups emerged in 2004 as a result of the failures of the state and the oil companies to respond to peaceful protests in previous decades.

Ijaw Youth Council (IYC)

The Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) was one of the many youth movements that came to light after the MOSOP's decline. The IYC youths protested against the lack of development in their region, the unequal sharing of oil revenues, the lack of the region control over oil and the devastation that oil production has caused in their environments. The IYC was one of the first movements organized by youths after the NYCOP of the Ogonis activities became lessen. The IYC is a group made up of 5,000 youths from 500 communities, including members from more than 40 Ijaw clans and 25 organizations (Ikelegbe, 2005:12). These youths tended to represent the thoughts of the Ijaws and, to an extent, those of the people of the Niger Delta more generally. The IYC set the pace for youth-based social movements in the region. This was the first time youths from different clans came together in support of a common goal: to reclaim control over their land and resources. This group was formed in 1998, in Kaiama town where youths held a youth conference (Ukeja, 2002:27). At the conference, delegates from various oil communities in Ijaw adopted the Kaiama declaration, which was very much like the Ogoni Bill of Rights. These documents detail the political struggle in Nigeria, mainly concerning the struggle for the control of oil and against the environmental devastation caused by oil companies. The Kaiama declaration also included the rights to self-determination, resource control, environmental suitability and the right to safeguard the Ijaw culture. This goal is stated in one of the clauses in their declaration:

Ijaw youths in all the communities in all Ijaw clans in the Niger Delta will take steps to implement these resolutions beginning from the 30th of December, 1998, as a step towards reclaiming the control of our lives. We, therefore, demand that all oil companies stop all exploration and exploitation activities in the Ijaw area. We are tired of gas flaring; oil spillages, blowouts and being labelled saboteurs and terrorists. It is a case of preparing the noose for our hanging. We reject this

labelling. Hence, we advise all oil companies' staff and contractors to withdraw from Ijaw territories by the 30th December, 1998 pending the resolution of the issue of resource ownership and control in the Ijaw area of the Niger Delta. (Kaiama declaration, 1998:3)

The IYC youths came together with the aim of promoting peaceful co-existence within their region despite the conflictual actions of the Nigerian governments (Kaiama Declaration, 1998:3). However, protesting in support of their declaration in 1998 at Bayelsa, the IYC youths were met with violence from the Nigerian Army and the Nigerian police. Many people were killed and some injured (Ikelegbe, 2005:13). The government of Nigeria deployed troops to Bayelsa because they claimed that the IYC killed 12 policemen in Odi (Ikelegbe, 2005:14). The response of the Nigerian government prompted the IYC to take a violent turn, whereby youth organizations, such as the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, came together and started violently attacking the governments, the army and the police (Ikelegbe, 2005:14). While the IYC gave youth and the Niger Delta region hope for control over their land and the right to self-determination, again the demands of this protest movement were met by government-backed violence. The IYC thus led to the founding of the Movement for the Emancipation of the People of the Niger Delta (MEND), which was formed by many Ijaw youths from different clans who met in support of a common interest, this time with a more militant approach.

Movement for the Emancipation of the people of the Niger Delta (MEND)

The Ijaw, the largest ethnic group in the Niger Delta, formed various militant groups in 2005 to launch operations against both energy infrastructure and workers in the Delta, as well as against government authorities (Marquardt, 2007). The initial militant groups this ethnic group formed were the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Forces (NDPVF), which was headed by Alhaji Mujahid Asari, and the Niger Delta Vigilante

(NDV), headed by Ateke Tom (Giroux, 2008:4). The Nigerian government arrested Asari and charged him with treason, and in response to this arrest the MEND stormed into the public eye by raiding Shell's offshore EA oilrig and kidnapping oil workers (Marquardt, 2007). The MEND, connected to the NDPVF, emerged in 2005 during the rule of President Olusegun Obasanjo (Giroux, 2008:5). President Obasanjo was elected in 1999, the democratic election in Nigeria bringing an end to military rule. According to Courson (2009), however, president Obasanjo deployed military troops to some trouble spots in the Niger Delta (2009:15). These troops destroyed the oil bearing community of Odi, where many people lost their lives and women and girls were raped and harassed (Courson, 2009:15).

This military attack on the people of Niger Delta brought about renewed protests against oil companies and the Nigerian government, this time in a violent form. The MEND received support from the local populations, making it difficult for the government to isolate and eliminate the organization. Their success in damaging oil infrastructure and frightening international oil workers resulted in Nigeria's oil exports being cut by approximately 500,000 barrels per day throughout much of 2006 (Marquardt, 2007). The government has been unable to neutralize the Ijaw militant group because of their large population, which is composed of approximately 14 million Ijaw (Marquardt, 2007). They are the country's fourth-largest ethnic group after the Igbos, Yoruba and Hausas. The major complaint of the Ijaw people is with regards to the distribution of oil revenues. For example, while most of the country's revenue originates from the Niger Delta region, the Ijaw, like the Ogonis, live in poverty, face oppression from the Nigerian government and suffer from extensive environmental degradation as a

result of frequent oil spills and gas-flaring operations, which contribute to air pollution and acid rain (Omeji, 2004:15).

The Ijaw clan, through the MEND, are demanding that a larger proportion of Nigeria's energy wealth be spent on their communities, rather than distributed throughout the country. They have used vandalism of oil pipelines, kidnapping of oil workers and other forms of violence to get their message across. For example, on Sunday, January 15, 2006, the MEND militants “attacked and destroyed one flow station and two military house-boats belonging to SPDC in Benisede, Bayelsa State” (Courson, 2009:19). Violent attacks like these occurred largely because of the perception of the communities from which oil was extracted that they did not benefit from the extraction and that revenues were squandered by corrupt regimes (Marquardt, 2007).

The MEND attacks have led to many innocent people dying and increased damage to the environment. They have successfully reduced the amount of oil exported from the region; for example, the MEND attacks reduced oil output from 2.6 million bpd to 1.8 million bpd in 2009 (Courson, 2009:25). However, there has been no improvement in terms of people’s well-being. The people in the region are still not benefitting from the oil revenue. Furthermore, these attacks bring military troops to the region, which results in women being raped and more innocent people dying in the crossfire between the militants and Nigerian army (Asuni, 2009:4). The MEND continues to attack in any way it can to gain recognition and force the government to meet their demands. For example, during Nigeria’s 50th Independence Day celebration, the MEND attacked the festivities, claiming that there was nothing to celebrate while most of Nigeria still lives below the poverty line and the government does nothing to improve the people’s living standard,

especially in the Niger Delta where most of the country's revenue comes from (Batty, 2010).

The attacks on pipelines, etc., demonstrate that the government is wasting the nation's resources in combatting militancy without addressing the underlying causes of agitation in the Niger Delta. It can be argued that the MEND's goal was to completely destroy the Nigerian government's capacity to export oil, but their approaches have not proven effective. The MOSOP was somewhat successful in driving Shell out of Ogoniland, but at the cost of their leaders being killed. Both the MEND and the MOSOP aimed to expose the exploitation and oppression of the people of the Niger Delta, and the devastation of the natural environment that has occurred due to partnerships between the federal government of Nigeria and oil corporations involved in the extraction of oil in the Niger Delta region. Although the MEND and the MOSOP have brought global awareness to the situation in the Niger Delta and have received support from many communities, they have been unable to achieve the equal distribution of oil revenue. However, they have shut down significant oil and gas production facilities in the region.

On a more positive note, these organizations—especially the MEND—brought Niger Delta youths to the forefront of the fight against the oil companies. Many sources, such as Courson (2009) and Obi (2009) have asserted that the MEND is composed of youths from the Niger Delta fighting for their land and an equal share of oil revenues, which they are being deprived of. This group demonstrates how youth organisations are involved in environmental activism in the Niger Delta. It is against this historical backdrop that this thesis recognises the indispensable role played by youth and youth organisations within the dynamics of the Niger Delta crisis. Beginning with the Ogoni

revolution down to the military activism of the MEND, it can be inferred that the region's youth population has been significantly involved in resisting oil exploitation in the Niger Delta.

Niger Delta youths participated in the movements mentioned above as a way to respond to and cope with the violence and devastation prevalent in the Niger Delta region. These types of responses are similar to those of youths that use gang violence as a survival strategy in the Davidsonville community located on the West Rand of Johannesburg (Burnet, 1999:1). According to Cora Burnet (1999) "violence is one of humanity's universal traits that poses an effective survival option for young men and boys living in the context of poverty to satisfy their needs, to use as a strategy, to solve problems and assist themselves" (Burnet 1999:1). Although the MEND cannot be described exactly as supporting gang violence, the inclusion of various youths in such a violent organization resonates with the idea of violent gangs acting as havens for disgruntled youths.

While the bulk of the documents examined in this literature review highlight the involvement of youths in violence via their participation in militant organisations, this thesis seeks to address the strategies devised by youths who did not participate in violence during their daily survival and the general development of their communities. This chapter has demonstrated the challenges faced by the people of the Niger Delta who are being exploited due to the existence of oil in their region. The lack of development in their region and the suffering of their people confront youth in this region every day. To bring awareness to their struggles, they have used a violent approach to protest in an effort to force the government of Nigeria to respond through the amnesty program, which

was created in 2009 by President Umaru Yar' Adua. This program aimed to end the armed insurgency in the Niger Delta region. The amnesty program was designed to bring about the disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation/reintegration of Niger Delta militants (Ubhenin, 2013:5). Through this program, militant youths are paid monthly through their leader, provided that they can prove they were part of the militant group (Ubhenin, 2013:6). Although militant youths are given a monthly income, the rest of the youths in the Niger Delta who did not participate in violence are suffering economically due to a lack of development in the region. This thesis examines the everyday violence experienced by youths who did not participate in violent protest and the coping strategies they used to survive.

In the next chapter, I analyze the Niger Delta violence in relation to oil abundance using theories of the rentier state and resource use. I also use symbolic interaction theory and Identity theory to examine how youths develop survival strategies based on their interactions with their environment. In addition, I discuss the methods used to gather data from the field and the limitations faced during the course of the fieldwork.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework: Defining Violence

Central to an understanding of the Niger Delta predicament is a conceptualization of violence. The Collins English Dictionary (2003) defines violence as “the exercise of physical force, usually effecting or intended to effect injuries, destruction.” Bishop and Philips (2006) describe violence as a “force exerted by one thing on another, [that] harbors serious problems, especially when it comes to a consideration of its source or cause” (2006:1). They further note that violence erupts among people engaged in motivated personal and political struggles, and it usually leaves its victims dead or wounded. In *Violent Environment* (2001), Peluso and Watts see violence “as a site specific phenomenon rooted in local histories and social relations yet connected to [a] larger process of material transformation and power relation” (2001:5). This thesis will use Peluso and Watts’s definition of violence to argue that violence in the Niger Delta region is a function of the state due to resource abundance and political mismanagement of resources. This thesis also adopts Bishop and Philips’ notion that violence is stimulated by both personal and political conflict. Personal conflict in this context stems from the long-term choices Niger Delta youths make as well as the choices they have to make in an instant. In addition, this thesis emphasizes that both personal and political conflict can be manifested through physical violence, which Mahler (2010) describes as constituting “violent internal conflict and revolts as well as violent state repression and human rights violations” (2010:11). Mahler, in her description of the dynamics of violence, notes that physical violence is an inherent part of the Niger Delta crisis because of the abundance of oil in the region. The historical background provided in Chapter One

articulates how internal conflicts, repression and human rights violations are core features of the Niger Delta crisis experienced by the people of the Niger Delta.

The Niger Delta region can be characterized as a violent environment, considering Peluso and Watts' (2001) feature of resource abundance, which can create a violent environment. The violence in the Niger Delta is a direct result of oil abundance, the mismanagement of oil revenue and ecological devastation. It can, therefore, be argued that the violence in the Niger Delta is a lens through which the poverty, frustration and anger of the people can be viewed. Specifically focusing on the violent experiences of youths in the main oil-producing area of Nigeria, the Niger Delta region, this thesis will use a key characteristic of violent environments, "resource abundance," to argue that there is a connection between oil abundance and the violence that penetrates the Niger Delta region. It will also be argued that, in response to this violence in the region, Niger Delta youths have developed survival strategies through societal interactions in order to survive in their region.

Overview of Theories Related to Oil and Violence

Theories of the rentier state and the resource curse are useful when trying to understand connections between natural resources and political violence. Mahler (2010) provides two theoretical explanations for the prevalence of violence in oil-rich countries. Utilizing the ideas of the rentier state and resource curse, Mahler asserts that resource abundant countries are prone to political and economic instabilities (2010:7). Resource curse is defined as the tendency of states with an abundance of natural resources, such as oil or diamonds, to develop less than similar states that lacks such resources (Mahler 2010:7-8). According to Mahler (2010), this idea of the rentier state has been used in

Mahdavy's 1971 study of pre-revolutionary Iran in an effort to describe the government of Iran (Mahler, 2010:7). Mahler (2010) further asserts that the rentier model points out the linkage between oil rents and authoritarianism, which results in two fundamental mechanisms. The first mechanism assumes that oil rents expand beneficial networks, such as the network of elites in communities and chiefs in villages, which lessens the pressure from the population to democratize the country (Mahler, 2010:7). The second mechanism assumes that the country does not need to tax its citizens due to the abundance of oil revenues. Mahler argues that when nations that tax their citizens their leaders are made accountable to the citizenry, and it becomes necessary for elites to give in to the demands of the citizens (Mahler, 2010:7).

Di John (2011) suggests that the rentier state theory deals with economic performance in the context of oil abundance and is an outcome of historically specific institutional arrangements (2011:4). He notes that this theory is state-centred, linking natural resources to poor economic governance as well as authoritarian rule. Di John claims that the "rentier state model attempts to explain why state decision makers in natural resource rich economics create and maintain growth restriction policies" (2011:4); invariably meaning that state decision makers assume ownership of the natural resource (oil) and shape the production of that resource. The rentier state theory therefore establishes a relation between oil resources and political governance.

Oil abundance has allowed the government of Nigeria to use violence in the form of political repression. For example, the MOSOP, in the 1990s, met with brutal government repression. The MOSOP and the Ogoni people protested peacefully and demanded a greater share of oil revenues. The Nigerian government responded by killing

their leaders and destroying houses and villages, resulting in the death or injury of many Ogoni people. The authoritarian rule of the Nigerian government triggered violence in the region. Bagaji et al. (2011) claim that the “Nigerian state spends large amounts of oil money to recruit the support of indigenous chiefs and elites in the Niger Delta region, and to uphold the state security fight against militancy in the region” (2011:4). Bagaji et al. suggest that this proves the connection between oil abundance and authoritarianism. Thus, the theory of the rentier state explains how the government management of oil abundance triggered violence in the Niger Delta region.

Although the rentier state theory can be used to explain the relationship between oil abundance and violent environments, the resource curse takes this discussion further by implying that oil abundance creates violent environments. The resource curse occurs when natural rich countries focus all its energy on its single natural resource such as oil and abandon its non-renewable resource. The link between natural resources and violent environments is evident in resource-rich countries like Angola, Sudan and Nigeria, which have all experienced violent conflicts due to the discovery of natural resources, such as oil and diamonds. Angola, for instance, has both oil and diamonds, which has led to internal political conflict and violence in a three-way fight between the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Union Front of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) (Rajan, 2011:262). In Sudan, oil has played a central role in their civil war since 1983, after oil was discovered there in 1979 (Kobrin, 2004:1-3). Oil in Nigeria has disrupted the country’s social stability, provoked extensive violence on the part of government forces

and created political conflicts between local peoples; for example, oil resources led to the armed resistance and criminal activities undertaken by groups such as the MEND.

Consequently, it can be inferred that, in these three countries, the main issue with regards to oil is the control of its production and revenue. Although oil accounts for about 90% of government revenues in each country, oil revenues have not been fully used to develop the country, especially in the regions where oil was found. In the case of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, oil exploration and extraction, and poor government standards and regulations surrounding these processes, have caused severe environmental degradation in a region where much of the population was formerly employed in the labour-intensive agricultural sector. Oil production has led to a lower standard of living and lost income for the Niger Delta's inhabitants, as the employment lost from the dwindling agriculture sector is not being replaced with employment in other industries. The loss of livelihoods and increased poverty have generated feelings of humiliation, frustration and deprivation among the people of the Niger Delta, especially among the youths who came together to form the violent MEND.

Thus, rentier state theory and resource curse theory demonstrates that there exists a symbiotic relationship between the existence of natural resources and youth violence perpetrated in the Niger Delta. Although these theories are relevant in explaining the situation in the Niger Delta, they do not provide a framework for studying how youths develop coping strategies, through their relations with their environments, in order to survive within violent environments. The following section explores how Niger Delta youths develop survival skills in order to survive in their environment by applying Horney's (1937) interpersonal theory and Mead's (1934) perspectives on the "self".

Using Erikson's (1970) definition of identity, I argue that the Niger Delta youth's process of finding their identity through societal interactions helps them to cope with their violent environment.

Theories of Survival Skills development in the Niger Delta

Youths in the Niger Delta who did not participate in the MEND or other movements try to survive within their precarious environments by adopting different kinds of coping strategies. These strategies include utilizing their limited resources to create positive change in their lives. The mechanisms that the Niger Delta youths use to survive are similar to those used by youths who live on the streets in places such as South Africa or even here in Canada. Margaretten (2011), in her article on street youths in South Africa, looks at the "everyday ties of social belonging to the spatial and temporal configurations of relatedness that make street survival a meaningful possibility for youths." In other words, youths are able to survive on the streets due to the social interactions they have with other people on the streets. On the other hand, Erickson et al. (2012) investigates the coping strategies of street-involved youths in terms of resilience. In their paper, Erickson et al. describe resilience "as a process that changes over time and by environments" (Erickson et al. 2012:1). These two studies show how youths cope from different perspectives. Erickson et al. is more focused on how environmental changes help youths cope, while Margaretten focuses on how social belonging and interactions help youths survive on the streets. Although the resilience framework Erickson et al. uses allows for street-involved youths utilizing their skills and strengths to cope with their current problems, it does not allow for the use of new skills to survive on the streets. Margaretten's focus on social belonging allows for youths developing their

own strategies based on their interactions with other people, and it also allows for kinship with other people on the streets. Of the two, Margaretten's perspective is more similar to the one used in this study, as it attempts to describe how Niger Delta youths cope within their violent environment. This section employs Mead's conceptualization of the "self" and identity theory to identify how Niger Delta youths develop their coping strategies.

The concept of self has been studied by many sociologists, such as Mead (1934) and Goffman (1959), while identity has been investigated by Erikson (1950). Mead's conceptualization of the self presupposes social interaction. Goffman perceived the self as a product of the dramatic interaction between actors and audience (Ritzer and Goodman, 2004:224). These theorists claim that the relation between the individual and society is mutual, where neither can exist without the other, although neither accounts for the origins of society, as they suggest that the individual and the society are both created through the social process. Mead and Goffman developed the concept of the self from the theoretical orientation of symbolic interactions. Symbolic interactions occur when an individual's ability to think is both developed and expressed (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004:218). According to Ritzer and Goodman (2004), people possess the ability to think, which is shaped and refined through the process of social interaction called socialization. People's ability to socialize allows them to learn a common language and develop who they are as individuals (self). According to Erikson, identity formation emerges from early adolescence as an exploratory process. Through this exploratory process, individuals are able to obtain a sense of self (Chen est. 2012:2). Using these definitions, I argue that Niger Delta youths aim to achieve their goals by gaining a sense of who they

are (their self) and how who they are as a person (their identity) through their societal and symbolic interactions, in order to help shape the way they behave in society.

Niger Delta youths like to present themselves in a manner that would be accepted by others in their environment. For example, this study's participants reported that they like to look good and feel powerful so that their peers will not look them down upon in a social setting. This supports Goffman's dramatic approach to the concept of the self, whereby he asserts, "in order to maintain a stable self-image people perform for social audiences" (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004:224). Although Goffman's understanding of the "self" captures some aspects of Niger Delta youths' interactions with their environment, Mead's conceptualization of the self in relation to the generalized other from the (*Mind Self and Society*) embodies Niger Delta youths' goals to achieve both personal and environmental change. For Mead, "me" is the primary product of the process through which a "self" is developed. Mead defines the concept of the "me" as involving the organized set of attitudes of others, which the individual assumes, making themselves an observable object. Mead claims that the "me" process is necessary for an individual to become a "self," by creating the capacity for cooperation with others by taking on the attitudes of others to anticipate responses to one's actions (Mead, 2004:181-182). Mead asserts that through "me" understanding others actors' attitudes, an understanding of the generalized other is achieved, allowing the individual to know what kind of behaviour is appropriate in a given social setting. Thus, the "me" is both the process and product of the "self".

Mead also asserts that social interactions are facilitated through sets of recognized symbols that have the same significance for each individual within a given social group.

The shared meaning provided by language allows the individual to examine their own thoughts and attitudes in order to interpret the actions of others. The existence of recognized symbols is necessary for social interaction, and without it communication with one another is not possible. In applying social interaction through symbols, cults use secret symbols, codes and languages. to communicate thus forming secret society where they understand each other.

There are a number of strengths and weakness in the symbolic interaction perspective. First, symbolic interactions improve people's ability to think and perceive their environments. Second, they allows for individual free will, providing individuals with opportunities to choose whom they interact with and also to change their behaviour. More importantly, this theory gives an individual the determination to verify the self in the eyes of others, which is our identity. A weakness in their theory is that it downplays the roles played by the larger social structures, and it does not give the origin of the meaning of symbols used within those structures. According to Ritzer and Goodman, this perspective has been criticized for only focusing on meanings, symbols and interactions, while ignoring psychological factors such as needs, motives, intentions and aspirations that might impel actors to acts (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004:232). Although interactive symbols lack emotions and ambitions, they allow for the development of the self, which helps create our identity.

According to Weigert and Gecas (2003), identity refers to the "typifications of self as...defined by self or other, and often the focus of conflict, struggle, and politics" (Weigert & Gecas, 2003:268, as cited in Weigert & Gecas, 2005:3). This suggests that our societal interactions help define who we are, and also that how we are seen within

society defines our identity. For example, youths in the Niger Delta are mostly seen as violent due to the conflicts in the region. Much of the literature I came into contact with during my research associates violence with these youths. Steph Lawler (2008) argues that identities do not only involve social definitions that embody our deities, ethnic groups, corporations or nations but also personified narratives that explain our experiences (Lawler, 2008:17). Through their daily experiences, Niger Delta youths have been able to cope with their environments.

Erikson (1970) claims that our identity is our gender (sex), which we acquire when we are born, and then, as an individual grows up, they adapt to their environments, which helps shape who they are. Erikson describes an individual's exploration of where they fit within their society as their identity crisis. Identity crisis involves how an individual explores himself or herself in order to achieve personal development. Most youths go through this formation or process of self-discovery during adolescence. Adolescence marks the time youths explore their society and find out who they are and what they believe in. According to Marcia (1966), Identity statuses are used to depict and determine the process of adolescence identity development. Marcia (1966) describes identity as involving whether an individual experiences identity crisis or makes a commitment to either an occupation or a specific sexual orientation (1966:2).

Marcia describes four prominences in which individuals examine themselves. They are: foreclosure (a person has not experienced identity crisis but has chosen a commitment), moratorium (a person has a commitment although it is very vague), diffusion (a person has not experienced neither an identity or a commitment) and ego identity or identity achievement (when a person has experienced identity crisis and is

committed) (Marcia, 1966:2). According to Marcia, all adolescents goes through each phase, but the phase that best describes Niger Delta youths is the ego identity crisis. This is because Niger Delta youths have made a commitment to survive in their environments, using various methods. Youths survive on a daily basis, using their instincts as they interact with their environments. Youths also survive by selling various goods to earn money. Youths in urban locations use education as a means to survive in their environments and develop their personalities, while rural youths use traditional gender roles to cope within their environments. Ego identity is our sense of self we develop through social interactions. Youths use their interactions with society to develop their spontaneous and long term coping strategies, which they use to survive. Youth's sense of self and identity enables them to survive in their environments.

Violence in the Niger Delta region is the result of how the state and oil companies poorly treat communities. Thus, violence in Niger Delta results from oil abundance. Due to the lack of development and consistent violent in the region, it is necessary for youths to develop coping strategies in order to survive. My findings suggest that what coping strategies are developed depends on where the youths live, since they experience different kinds of violence depending on where they live (this is explained further in the next chapter). Although most youths survive by using spontaneous strategies and having long-term goals, I found that urban youths are more education-oriented and tend to use spontaneous strategies more often than rural youths. Using semi-structured interviews, this thesis discovered that the violence that penetrates the Niger Delta region is different in every town, and also that youth responses to violence varied according to where they were located. Youths in rural areas demonstrated different

survival strategies as compared to urban youths. Youths in rural areas were more focused on environmental change/clean-up, while urban youths used education to survive and change their lives, largely by using it to try to gain work in the oil industries or to otherwise become part of the working class. Although their approaches to survival over the long term differ, these youths' daily survival strategies and, in particular their sense of using a small business as a means to survive, are similar. Rural youths are also similar to urban youths in terms of how they use family and religion as means to cope and survive in the region.

Using rentier state and resource curse, this thesis demonstrates that the Niger Delta is prone to violence due to its oil resources, how the government controls the resources and the lack of development in the region. The lack of development in the region has left youths feeling marginalized, causing them to join several groups, such as the MEND, the MOSOP, etc., in response to the government's oppression and also as a means to survive. Youths also joined these groups to gain a sense of belonging and to feel powerful, in order to survive in their environments. Niger Delta youths were able to develop survival strategies through their interactions with their environment. These youths interact with their environments by going about their daily activities, which includes schooling, fishing, farming, traveling and interactions with others. This thesis uses Mead's concept of self to explain how youths' societal interactions help them survive in their environment. Living and interacting socially in their environment helps Niger Delta youths 'find their identity, which in turn helps shape, their behaviour in society. It became necessary for Niger Delta youths to develop spontaneous and long

term coping strategies in response to the violence in their region, which resulted from the mismanagement of oil resources, in order for them to survive.

Methods

Introduction

The research methodology employed in this thesis includes participant observation, semi-structured interviews and secondary data. This section describes the data collection methods used for this thesis, the rationale for my choices and the manner in which these methods were used to gather data for this research project.

I gained valuable insights for my research topic during the fieldwork phase because of the effectiveness of the research methods I employed. Unforeseeable circumstances also shaped the direction of this research and the information gathering process. These circumstances are described in greater detail later in this chapter. This section also outlines and addresses potential ethical risks involved in this research, how I obtained informed consent from my participants, and how I protected the confidentiality of participant information while conducting this research project.

The Research Site

I conducted my research in the Choba locality of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Choba is one of the many communities in Port Harcourt. Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, is divided into three main ethnic groups: the Ogoni, Ijaw and Igbo. Port Harcourt is located along the Bonny River in the Niger Delta, approximately 50 km from the Gulf of Guinea. Port Harcourt is the Gulf of Guinea's oil and gas hub. It is also the centre of Nigeria's oil industry and holds the largest accumulation of heavy and light industrial technology in Nigeria (Agbor & Onukwu, 2011:1).

I decided to approach this topic by researching a site that would help me to become acquainted with youths' experiences and help me to gain a deeper understanding of their daily lives. I selected Choba as the site for my research because it houses the University of Port Harcourt, and it provided me with the opportunity to find a diverse concentration of youths in one region. In addition to providing me with a large youth population, this choice of location gave me access to my extended family network in Choba, which would ultimately assist me in navigating the community and gaining easy access to residents easily, since I was acquainted with community insiders (my cousins).

Finding Participants and Field Work Plan:

This project took me approximately two months to complete, from May 20th to July 20th of 2012. This length of time was necessary for me to rent a room at the research site, conduct interviews, and build a rapport with the research participants. I spent a week in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, preparing to go to Port Harcourt. Once I reached Port Harcourt, I spent a week becoming familiar with my surroundings and meeting my neighbours in the student apartment building I was staying at in Choba. I spent two weeks trying to reach my Environmental Rights Activist (ERA) contacts; it was very difficult to get in contact with them because most of them were engaged in field research elsewhere. Although I was discouraged by the lack of communication with my ERA contacts at the beginning, I managed to get in contact with them after about three weeks in Port Harcourt. ERA is a Nigerian non-governmental organization that deals with environmental right issues in the country. It represents Nigeria within a larger organization, Friends of the Earth International (FOEI). ERA has been at the forefront in fighting against oil pollution in the Niger-Delta region since 1993 and it has brought

awareness and encouragement to the people of the Niger Delta as they fight for their rights.

Prior to my arrival in Port Harcourt, Professor Turner, put me in contact with a person at ERA who could guide me in collecting data for my research. Emem, my contact at Port Harcourt, is a women's rights activist and the president of the Kebetkache Women Development and Resource Center. My conversations with her made me realize that I could collect a broader range of data if I travelled to different regions of Port Harcourt. Port Harcourt extends to eight local government regions, including the core city (Port Harcourt), with each region having a council (represented by a mayor) that represents their interests to the government of River State. I decided to visit the regions of Bodo, Okrika, Omo and Kolo. I also recruited two students who lived in the city of Port Harcourt; one student attended the University of Port Harcourt while the other attended Rivers State University of Science and Technology. These students provided me with information on life and education in the city of Port Harcourt.

Contacting my participants was easy, but planning a time and place to meet proved to be difficult for some of them. I had to reschedule about five interviews due to time conflicts or heavy traffic on Port Harcourt Road. For example, for my first interview it took me about three to four hours to reach my participant's house because of the traffic, and when I arrived he was not home but stuck in traffic as well, so we had to reschedule; travelling back and forth took a total of eight hours, with no interview. Traveling around Port Harcourt is somewhat difficult; it took too long to get anywhere, and at the end of the day, it was tempting to stay home rather than go on a journey. Travelling to different towns in Rivers State was easier than travelling within Port Harcourt because I could take

one bus to the town I was going to, while in Port Harcourt I found myself constantly changing buses and taxis to get where I was going. Travelling within Port Harcourt also costs more due to the taxi change at every junction.

While living in Choba, I attended three conferences organized by Kebetkache Women Development and Resource Center at Kole, Gokana and Omo. I recruited an equal number of participants at each event, and when the events were over, I interviewed my newly recruited participants. I was well prepared, planning to recruit participants for my research before arriving at the conferences, which were part of a youth empowerment program.

As I mentioned above, travelling around Port Harcourt was very difficult, and since I was not familiar with the routes, I had to travel with a companion. I also travelled with a companion for safety reasons, because it is quite crowded in Port Harcourt and so people can be pick-pocketed, kidnapped or have someone play 419 on them (which is being easily fooled for money) if they do not know their way around. I found myself pretending that I knew a lot when I went out, but I was fooled twice—once when I went shopping and the other time was two weeks into my work at the research site. I was fairly convinced that I knew my way around Port Harcourt, but when I went into town to visit a family member, first I got lost and then I was cheated.

I started my interviews in Choba, and then went on to visit Okirika, Remukera, Bodo, Kolo and Omo. Although choosing Choba was beneficial for my observations and building a rapport with the residents of the community, it was not an ideal place from which to collect a range of data on the impact of the oil crisis on youth. Working in

Choba exposed me to students and their many challenges, but some of these students were not from the Niger Delta and had no deep understanding of the oil crisis; they simply knew that it had happened, and that when it did school was closed and they returned to their respective states. Nevertheless, I was able to find some students from Port Harcourt whose lives had been impacted by the oil crisis. Working from this location, I was able to learn what factors influence youths' survival strategies and about how they cope with their daily challenges while living in Port Harcourt. Traveling to the other places listed above gave me new perspectives on how youths live in different areas and their experiences with oil-related violence. It allowed me to conclude that oil-related violence in these regions is location-specific, although the various kinds of violence are all related to oil production.

Methods and Data Collection

For this research project, I conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with men and women between 18 and 30 years of age. I also conducted three interviews with mothers in their thirties or older, in order to gain their perspective on raising youths during the oil crisis in Port Harcourt. I conducted between one and five interviews daily because I had to travel to different areas of Rivers State to conduct the interviews. I stayed in Choba for two months. The full list of semi-structured interview questions I asked the participants for this research project is included in the Appendix A. The background information collected on the respondents of this research during the semi-structured interviews is also summarized in a table located in the Appendix C.

For this research project, I collected information on the challenges and coping strategies of youths living in different parts of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In order to do

so, I conducted semi-structured interviews with youths from three different regions in Rivers State and one region in Bayelsa. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to gain insight regarding my specific research questions by focusing my conversations with participants on a specific topic, while simultaneously affording my respondents the opportunity to provide detailed accounts of their life experiences. The information Most of the youths in my field site were students within the age range I intended to study.

I included both female and male perspectives, gained through conversations and participant observation. I developed relations with both adult males and females, but mostly female adults because they tended to give advice and were always ready to share stories of when they were in their youth. As a student living in a room in the Sugarland apartment building, I was constantly concerned about my belongings and my reputation because my cousin warned me that everybody would be watching my every move and they tended to gossip, especially when it concerned a female. At first, I thought my cousin was overly concerned, but two weeks into my research I heard people I did not know talking about me as I passed through the neighbourhood. Living among youths in the apartment, I realized that half of the students there were not in school yet, or they were pretending to be in school so they would not be embarrassed because they either cannot afford to register or they have not gotten admissions yet.

Through the interviews I conducted with youths, I collected information on whether or not the interviewees would like to study abroad and how they felt about other students having that opportunity. I also asked why they chose to attend school in the Niger Delta region, where their lives and education were at risk. For this research, I investigated what Niger Delta youth do on a daily basis and how their livelihoods relate

to their family's economic status and the ethnic regions they come from. In order to investigate youths' life experiences, I investigated what it takes to live as a student in Port Harcourt. I asked this study's participants about how satisfied they were with their education and their lifestyles.

I also engaged in participant observation, watching students in the Choba community as I lived among them. The sort of tasks I participated in included fetching water, washing clothes by hand, and going to the market, cooking, attending class and socializing. In addition, I compared females' daily activities to those of males. Participant observation allowed me to gain daily insights into the lives of youth, which provided me with their present daily experiences. It also allowed me to see how the youths interact with each other and society, and also to witness how they coped with the challenges they faced on a daily basis. Another advantage of this method is that it allowed me to detect discrepancies between the information I collected during interviews and the actual routine behaviour of the participants, but I also kept in mind that everyone experiences life differently, regardless of how similar their lives or behaviours may appear to be.

Participant observation also helped me learn about youth's roles and expectations within the research site. I was very interested in discovering the degree to which traditional gender roles played a part in the lives of students living away from home. I observed the daily routines of females living with their brothers at the Sugarland apartment building, paying particular attention to whether or not they do all the cooking, fetching of water and washing of clothes, and whether or not they were allowed to socialize with male friends without conditions.

I maintained a written record of the events, conversations and I participated in almost every day as I lived in Choba, which was largely a repetition of events unless I had something planned or was invited to go somewhere. I usually wrote detailed field notes before going to bed. I took many pictures to capture the environments students lived in. My daily journal aided me in conducting my fieldwork and in reporting my findings, because it allowed me to more easily remember the events I observed and participated in when in the field, and it also provided me with an opportunity to self-reflect on my experiences in Choba.

Research Ethics

Before starting my fieldwork in Nigeria, I submitted a research proposal and obtained ethics approval for my research project fieldwork from the University of Guelph's Ethics Review Board (REB). There was little to no risk to the participants of my research project because the risks were not greater than those my participants encountered in their daily lives. While conducting this research project, I observed that no harm was caused to the participants as a result of their participation in this research project. Prior to conducting this project, I anticipated that the risks for participants would be limited to their feeling uncomfortable due to the questions asked during the interviews and psychological risks due to the potentially intense nature of the topics discussed. I also could not guarantee that the participants would remain anonymous, and I anticipated that this might pose social risks to the participants.

Participants in this research did not express verbal or physical distress as a result of the research questions asked during the interviews. Furthermore, none of the participants expressed the desire to remain anonymous or keep their interviews private, as

interviews were generally conducted with another person listening in. Generally, the interviews were conducted in a public place where the participant felt comfortable, and there was always another person who sat in on the interview. The participants consented to having other people present, as it helped them feel more comfortable, and I also felt comfortable having another person listening in during the interview. The participants were not concerned about maintaining privacy because some of them given interviews before, and the rest were excited that their stories, including tales of suffering, would be heard.

Prior to each interview, I distributed the informed consent form and read it to any participants who were not literate. Participants were free to ask questions about the research project at any time during the informed consent process, as well as during and after the interview. A copy of the informed consent form is included as Appendix A.

In order to protect participants' anonymity, I have refrained from identifying their names in the body of this work. For the purpose of this thesis, whenever I refer to a statement made by a specific interviewee, I will be using their name only if the participant gave me permission to do so in their consent form. While conducting my research, I protected the information that I collected by locking written records, audio recordings of interviews, transcriptions and photographs in my room.

Conclusion

This thesis is based upon data gathered during two months of fieldwork conducted during the summer of 2012. I conducted the fieldwork for this thesis in Choba, located in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. For this research project, I conducted 20 interviews with Niger

Delta youths between the ages of 18 and 30 and three interviews with Niger Delta women over 30 years of age. I gained further information on Niger Delta youths by living in Choba and engaging in participant observation for the duration of the fieldwork phase of this project. The data collected while conducting fieldwork is discussed in the following three chapters.

Chapter Three

Violence that Permeates the Niger Delta

Introduction

Basil, a 28-year-old university graduate who was born and bred in Okirika, lived through the 2004-2009 Niger Delta crisis. Basil confirms that violence has been inflicted on the Niger Delta people, whom he describes as “peaceful and God-fearing” until the outbreak of their agitations against the governmental and transnational organisations that were causing increased environmental destruction in their once pristine lands and waters. It is against this backdrop that this chapter provides eyewitness accounts of the violence in the region, as relayed by my respondents. In addition, this chapter examines the multifaceted ways in which the socio-economic and political lives of the residents of the Niger Delta, and particularly the youths’, are affected by violence. I use the sites I visited as case studies, in order to evaluate how violence is location specific. In the course of my research, I visited Okirika and Rumueke, small towns located within the greater conurbation that is Port Harcourt, where I observed the various ways in which violence is manifested in different areas of the Niger Delta. My goal in this chapter is to outline the context in which oil-related violence occurs in the Niger Delta, to help develop an understanding of how violence influences the strategies youths employ to survive in the region.

Shades of Violence in Niger Delta

The memory of the fight between militants and the Nigerian Joint Task Force (JTF) during the 2004 to 2009 conflict is still vivid in the minds of this study’s

participants. Basil and Bob recalled how the sound of gunfire became part of their lives, and they could tell the type of gun that was fired by the shots they heard from inside their home. Okirika, the headquarters of all the violent happenings in the Niger Delta, according to Basil, is the town where the conflict started. He asserted that the leader of the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), Asari Dokibo, is from Okirika. As I mention in the literature review for this thesis, the NDVF was part of the clan that started the MEND, a violent movement launched in 2004. Basil emphasized that youths in his town supported Asari in his fight because he started the NDVF to bring forward “the plight of the people.” According to Basil, people who did not understand Asari’s beliefs turned against him and blamed him for the damage the fight did to the region. In Okirika, the place where NDVF started, gunshots were fired between the JTF and the militants. Basil recounts that many innocent people were caught in the crossfire because they had no idea where the gunshots were being fired. In his explanation of the gunshots, Basil said that,

What happened is this: in the military you have what we call flying bullets. And most of the people that died were because of the flying bullet. So for you to go and visit the scene when the gun is going, you will end up losing your life because you don’t even know the direction of the gun. At a point when the military came, if we are going out, we would raise our hand. (Basil, 2012)

According to Basil, Okirika is also where the oil refinery is located, and this town is regarded as the centre of oil distribution in Nigeria. Basil said that every tanker truck comes to this town to fill up and then travels to different gas stations around the country. In the town, I noticed that there were many pipes on the roads and near the houses, which is very unsafe for everyone, including youths. Oil tanker trucks block every road, which makes it difficult for people to move around. These tanker trucks sometimes cause accidents, resulting in people’s deaths. During my fieldwork, a tanker fell over, and

citizens trying to steal petrol from it died because the tanker exploded. According to my respondents, a tanker truck falls over about once every month, and when this happens there are always people trying to gather free fuel to sell to make a living, despite the fact that this endangers their lives.

In Rumueke village, Blessing recalled how young men from her village who joined the MEND raped women, including their mothers and sisters, and some even killed their parents. These youths had to commit those crimes to prove that they could defend the land with no emotional attachments, such as family, to get in their way. She asserted that women and girls faced harassment on their farms, on the way to their markets, in their villages when minding their homes and at night when they were asleep. Blessing further narrated how youths who did not join the militant group tried to protect the village, which put them in more danger because they were targeted more than other people in the village. Historical evidence from the Ogoni crisis reveals a disturbing trend whereby women and young girls have been raped during every environmental crisis that has taken place in the Niger Delta region. As reported earlier, in this thesis's literature review, during the Ogoni crisis in the 1990s, the Nigerian army raped, murdered, burned, beat and tortured women during their three years of violence against the Ogoni people (Turner & Brownhill, 2007).

Violence also varies according to gender, as shown above. Most women experience sexual violence and live more as the victims than the perpetrators of violence. As a result, women come together in groups to share common concerns and devise strategies for reducing sexual violence. Blessing, who is from Rumueke, reported that women in her village come together once a month to discuss common concerns and also

to pray together to give one another encouragement in the face of the unprecedented threat of rape. Students who are harassed on a daily basis cope by discussing the issue with friends and searching for ways to avoid the situation. On the flip side, this study's male respondents reported that they attend workshops put together by the ERA and by the Kebetkacha women Development and Resource Center to learn how deal with the current situation. I attended one of the workshops organized by the Kebetkache group, and I noticed more males attended this workshop than females. The ratio of males to females in attendance was about 5 to 1 for two out of the three workshops I attended. For the last workshop, the number of males and females was almost equal, but an older crowd dominated the event. These workshops aimed to bring the community together to discuss community issues and have the experts tell them how to deal with each issue.

Bob, in Port Harcourt, claimed that, in the universities, cult members were taking advantage of the conflict between the militant and JTF and killing innocent people. According to Malik (2009), "cultists¹ meet in secret and are under oath to promote the interests of its members or aid one another under any circumstances without regard to merit, fair play or justice" (2009:1). According to my respondents, cultists murder and harass innocent people and, during the conflict between the MEND and the government, these cult-related events were easily blamed on the Niger Delta crisis. Bob also mentioned, along with Chinedu, that kidnappings were also a big problem in Port Harcourt. Chinedu asserted that there were many kidnapping cases that did not make it into the daily newspaper. He reported that the only kidnappings that made it into the news were those of politicians' family members or foreigners who worked for the oil

¹ Cultists are members of a secret society who use secret signs, oaths, rites or symbols to communicate.

companies, but the local people who were kidnapped, especially the females, were not reported. According to Osumah and Aghedo (2011), kidnapping in Nigeria has become a way for perpetrators to make millions of dollars. They further explain that kidnapers in Nigeria are usually youths between the ages of 15 and 35 years, and they are often unemployed. These youths may be university students or regular unemployed persons. My findings support the idea that kidnapping is a business. Many of this study's participants reported that kidnapping in their respective towns has become a huge business due to the unemployment situation in Nigeria. Osumah and Aghedo's study, and the eyewitness accounts of Bob and Chinedu, substantiate the fact that people have a seemingly irrepressible motive to accumulate wealth in order to survive and are not afraid to do so through whatever means, whether kidnapping for rituals, business, or political reasons. Youths in Port Harcourt become kidnapers or cults² members due to the high rate of unemployment in the region, which results from the lack of development in the region, although most of Nigeria's oil revenue comes from oil production in their region.

Traveling to Okirika and Rumueke, and living in Port Harcourt, made me realize that violence is location specific and that some of the violent occurrences share similarities with prior cases of violence. For example, the assaults on women in Rumueke were similar to those Ogoni women faced when the Nigerian army attacked Ogoniland in 1993. The violence in Okirika was between militant groups and the JTF. Depending on which side of town a youth lived on, the dynamic of violence could be different, as shown above although the violence was all related to oil production. Kidnapping is no

² Cults are secret society in Nigerian Universities. The word Cults is used in this research instead of gangs because it's usually associated Nigerian youths in university and it's the language used in Nigeria to describe secret society.

doubt a result of oil's abundance in the region, largely because the inequitable distribution of oil wealth creates a juxtaposition of extreme wealth and poverty, and, ultimately, inequality in the region.

Political Exploitation of the Niger Delta

According to Alamieyeseigha (2005), the political manipulation of youths in Nigeria dates back to the beginnings of military rule, when the government infiltrated students' cults by giving them money, to convince the students to do the government's bidding (2005:59). The production of oil in the Niger Delta region has led to increased exploitation of youths in the region. Oil production has also resulted in worse living conditions and lost income for inhabitants because of the lost employment from the dwindling agricultural sector. Whereas agriculture constitutes a viable option for earning a livelihood, other industries are not providing employment opportunities to replace those lost from the agricultural sector. Niger Delta youth have been particularly exposed and are especially vulnerable to livelihood destruction due to oil exploration in the region. Due to their source of earning a living being undermined, Niger Delta youth are also the most vulnerable to political exploitation.

In the course of my fieldwork, I found that many of the Niger Delta's uneducated and unemployed youth, or youth who are classified as area boys (male youths with no education, a lack of family support, broken homes and many other social problems), are easily exploited by politicians, especially during elections. John reports that politicians, especially those that are part of the PDP (People's Democratic Party), used money to entice youths in his hometown to vote PDP. He believes that elections in Nigeria are rigged; claiming that politicians who are not part of the PDP do not win in his town.

Wolese reported that, in his town, politicians use youth to cause problems during elections, so that the politicians can use the problem to provide examples of ways they can improve the village, in order to win votes from the naive villagers. He related that politicians also use youth to rig the elections. I asked my participants how much these youth are paid to work under a politician; they claimed it was between N5, 000 and N10, 000 for a day's work, which is roughly between \$53 and \$64. It is easy money, which they can use to feed their families and purchase things for themselves. Samke asserted that although these youth make easy money, "at the end of the day, politicians use them and drop them." This statement supports the idea that the youth are exploited, because after being used to disrupt the social order, these politicians forget about the youths and go their own way, enjoying their position at the expense of youths. Therefore, exploitation has systematic impacts on the material well being of people, in addition to the inequalities in material well-being that are generated by unequal access to valuable resources. Exploitation in this region also relates to the power struggle that the Niger Delta youths are experiencing.

Power is one of the most important determinants of everyday life in Nigerian society. Power relations influence our careers, our opportunities, our freedoms, and basic aspects of our behaviour. I found that Niger Delta youths fear those in power, although they crave power to protect themselves because they believe that those who have power use it to abuse the innocent. They fear those in positions of power to the extent that when they see a crime being committed they will not report it, and instead they take matters into their own hands and beat up the criminal. My respondents told me that if they report crimes to the police, the criminals bribe the police and get released, and will not be

brought to justice. Reporting a crime brings attention to the reporter rather than the criminal, so people tend to ignore crime.

During my fieldwork, I discovered that there were many posters encouraging the reporting of crimes in the region; there are even hotlines to use when in danger, but youths do not use these since they do not trust the police. This study's participants reported that they only trust God and money, or what money can provide for them. They also note that money can get you out of anything, even murder, since, according to them, the police usually arrest the innocent and find them guilty without any proper investigation. At my field site, I found that Niger Delta youth see policemen as a joke, because they suggest that policemen "run the other way when armed robbers are robbing a house or travelers," as they are easily bribed. Policemen are viewed as criminals, too, because they collect bribes on the road when stopping cars and are even sometimes part of the groups of armed robbers seen when traveling. According to Ngboawaji Nte (2011), police corruption exists in the region, and he traces its cause to poverty and poor working conditions in the Niger delta (2011:1). Consequently, the Nigerian police are widely viewed as thieves who use their power to oppress the vulnerable instead of protecting them. Youths—especially females—fear the police, particularly security men. Remi Adeoye (2008) reports in her study of the Niger Delta crisis, that

Rape leaves a terrible scar in the heart of its victim; in some areas of the Niger Delta, nine out of ten women have been violated. An academic study undertaken in Nigeria identified members of the security forces as primarily responsible for the gender-based violence (including rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy) committed against the tribal women of the Delta's Ogoniland between 1990 and 1998. A 2001 report published by the non-governmental organization Centre for Democracy and Development also documented gender-based violence in the Niger Delta, perpetrated for the most part by the military. (Adeoye, 2008)

My female participants reported that when they see a group of police or security men idly standing beside their truck, they run the other way in fear of being raped. Evidence from this thesis's literature review also demonstrates that when military men or men in positions of power occupy a town (for example, Ogoni or Odi), women are subjected to rape and other forms of harassment. I witnessed a situation where a university student was being harassed, and my friend and I had to walk the other way so we would not experience that kind of situation. It was frightening. My friend explained that most of the girls endure harassment, because they are afraid that they might be arrested on a bogus charge if they do not. These students are harassed everyday by policemen on campus; these policemen tease females about their clothing, shoes, hair or anything else they can think of. These policemen exploit these females. Some females welcome their advances and use them to their advantage (to make money), but others complain and try to avoid such situations. While this does not directly relate to the resource curse, oil wealth is no doubt indispensable to the power and gender relations that exist in the Niger Delta region.

I argue that the political exploitation of youths in the Niger Delta is due to environmental violence, which has created a situation in which youths can be used for political gains. Oil in this region makes youths victims of political manipulation due to their lack of money and power. My respondents noted that belonging to a militant group bestows power and a sense of belonging. I interviewed an ex-militant, and he mentioned that he joined the militant group because he was tired of being powerless and not being able to provide for himself and his family. He mentioned that youths in the military were mostly on drugs, which is why they could do most of the things they did. He claimed that they were promised more drugs and power to keep them killing people. He asserted that

he was always high on drugs when he participated in MEND activities, such as destroying villages and oil pipes.

Poverty in the Region

A report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2006) on the Niger Delta claims that, “poverty has become a way of life due to economic stagnation, unemployment, poor quality of life due to shortages of essential goods and facilities, an unhealthy environment and government insensitivity.” This report claims that the poor human development situation in the region not only involves “the increasing incidence of poverty but also the intense feelings among the people that they ought to be doing far better given the enormous resources flowing from their region” (UNDP, 2006:36). The report further argues that even if poverty were measured as living on less than US\$1 a day, the true level of poverty in the region would be underestimated. Poverty in this region exists not only in terms of money but also people’s feelings, as well as their loss of pride, control and birth assets (natural resources). According to the report, the people of the Niger Delta define a poor person as,

one who cannot pay school fees for his children; cannot meet any needs, including food; has no farm land and cannot farm well; cannot take part in age-grade activities (responsibilities that are specifically designated to some age groups in communities); cannot afford to send his children to school; wears tattered clothes; is very lean; and has no house to live in. In short, a poor person is one who has nothing, consequently, he has no voice, in the community. (UNDP, 2006:37)

This definition describes how the people of the Niger Delta feel about living in their current situation. This study’s informants felt the same way about poverty in their respective towns. James, one of the respondents, reported that he could not finish school because his family could not afford it. He also said that sometimes there is no food in

their house, and that he has to either eat at a friend's house or remain hungry until the next time they can afford to eat. Each participant experienced poverty in their own way, by not being able to pay school fees or for a place to stay, or having to stay in a little room with three to four people. The Niger Delta region has many resources and has contributed significantly to Nigerian wealth; despite this, the region is underdeveloped, and people are unemployed and impoverished. Poverty is not an easy concept to define because it has various components of measurement. The way people commonly define poverty is by using the poverty line of less than one dollar per day. For this thesis, I will define poverty as a sense of helplessness, of having a lack of opportunities, and feeling voiceless and powerless, because these are the feelings of the youth living in the Niger Delta. It can be argued that poverty is prevalent in the Niger Delta region, and it has become a daily challenge, especially for the region's youth.

This study's respondents blamed the government mismanagement of oil revenues for the struggle they are experiencing in their region. They reported that because of corruption in the government and constant conflict due to oil production in the region, many people are living in poverty. It can be concluded that Nigeria's many years of political instability, caused by corruption and conflicts over the ownership of oil production in the Niger Delta, have increased poverty in the region, leaving people to struggle daily for their survival. I found that most of this study's participants still depend on their family as a source of income, especially youths who have graduated from university. Two out of three of my married participants still lived with their families, because they could not afford to own a house and take care of their families due to a lack of job opportunities resulting from oil exploitation in their region.

Youth and Unemployment

Most graduate students I came into contact with had no jobs since they graduated four years ago, and they believed political leaders did not show any practical concern regarding youth's interests, placing their own selfish interests before those of the country's general population. This study's participants reported that unemployment is very hard on them and their families. I interviewed three postgraduate students and none of them had jobs. They believe that, "if there is life, there is hope." Unemployed youth's routines are very similar across the region. Basil lives in a town called Okirika in Port Harcourt; he usually wakes up in the morning and goes out to look for a job. He describes himself as, "someone that does not have a job always going out to see if he can get a job." He described his search for a job thus:

I go to different companies to look for a job, and they don't even look at my face; they only collect my CV and keep. If you go to the refinery now, 75 percent of the people working there are outsiders, even northerners. But we own the refinery but you will not see 25 percent of Niger Delta people there. The ones you see are casual workers; they are not part of the permanent staff. I am capable of handling any administrative accounting job but they will not give me the job because of tribalism here. (Basil, 2012)

Basil describes tribalism as when you get a job because of who you know, despite your educational background. He asserts that most unemployed youth go through this everywhere in the country, and this makes it harder for youths to find work. My informants claim that the government should be paying the youth in the Niger Delta every month, to lessen the impact of unemployment. Bob said that the

government are using our oil and they are also the using the westerners to undo us by spoiling our environment. Every Niger Delta youth supposed to be under salary; they are supposed to be paid. You are taking 100 percent of the resources in our land but you are giving just 10 percent. It is not good. Every child should be paying salary once you are 18 years. (Bob, 2012)

This feeling is shared by many youth; they also want the government to pay and try to provide a job for them, since they are doing the same for the militant youth through the amnesty program. They believe that the government owes them at least that much after what they have gone through because of oil exploration and exploitation in their region. More than anything, they want the opportunity to work so that they can provide for their families and live a decent life.

Thus, youth are not given the opportunity to share and contribute to the wealth of the nation due a to lack of jobs, which resulted from the environmental violence in the region that largely ruined the agricultural sector. Although most parents struggle to send their children to school, with the expectation that it will help them find a job, the reality of the employment situation, even after education in Nigeria, makes these children's futures very unforeseeable. From the words of this study's participants, it can be inferred that government greed led to unemployment along with a lack of development, both of which generated grievances. As noted above, the unemployment rate is very high and the government is doing little to improve the economy, although it is always promising to do something. As rentier state theory explains, political leaders do not show any practical sensibility towards the state's interests, because their own selfish interest comes first. Consequently, the Nigerian government's greed and mismanagement of oil revenues has left the region undeveloped and poor and thus unable to provide jobs for its youth.

Violence and Education

Oyefusi (2008) argues that education reduces youth's participation in violence, and he asserts that violence is found in communities that have limited education opportunities (2008:4). Although I agree with this statement, I found that even educated

youth were involved in violence because they live in a society where violence is part of their everyday life. Violence in the region affects youth's education to the extent that students have to endure additional years of schooling to obtain four-year undergraduate degrees. For instance, Bob took seven years to finish a four-year degree.

Bob asserted that violence in Niger Delta universities is a major concern for the academy. He reported that violence affects the entire higher education system in Rivers State because most of the schools are federal or state schools, owned and run by the government. The student participants I interviewed reported that even episodes of little violence led to the closure of these governments-run schools, due to insufficient security and the MEND's activities whereby they tend to attack the governments. The closure of state schools affects the whole academic section. Many of the participants also mentioned how cultist obligations contribute to violent activity on campus, further leading to school closures that throw the academic year off balance. This study's participants reported that youth are drawn to the promise of wealth and power that cultism provides, and which they seek in order to raise themselves up out of the situation they are currently in, where they are struggling just to survive.

Participants reported that cultism is very common in most Nigerian higher education institutions, and schools in the Niger Delta are no different. Youths in universities were introduced to cultism by Wole Soyinka, whose cult, the Pyrates Confraternity, was formed "to fight non-violently but intellectually and effectively against the imposition of foreign conventions; to revive the age of chivalry; and to find a lasting solution to the problems of tribalism and elitism" (Ajayi est. 2010:2). According

to Ajayi est(2010), the currents cults in Nigerian universities are violent, aim to kill and carry out anti-social activities in schools (Ajaya est. 2010:2).

The participants reported that cultism has claimed many lives and threatens the security of their institutions. Students as well as professors are sometimes members of the same cults within an institution. The students I interviewed claim that cult members have parties where they engage in bizarre rituals such as cutting each other and ironing each other's backs. Respondents also reported that cult members also kidnap students, professors and head administrators from the universities in order to force them to do things they want (such as giving a passing grade in a course or a certificate proving that they attended school) which violate the rules and regulations of the school. Sometimes the students who are kidnapped do not make it back alive, especially female students. According to my respondents, when female students are kidnapped, the cult members rape them and their bodies are dumped beside the road.

Most of the guys that are in militancy are also into cult activities. They even bring that into the school. At times when you are going to school, you will be hearing that two cult gangs are fighting. Sometimes they will close the school and ask the students to go home because it is a state school. (Bob, 2012)

Thus, cultism presents a major challenge both to the school system and to youths' lives. It can be inferred that environmental violence affects the education of youths. Schools close down due to the physical violence in the region, which is caused by the oil conflicts and cultism in schools. Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009) write that the Niger Delta area is prone to "violence, insurgency, kidnaping, host-stage taking, oil pipeline sabotage, crude oil theft, gang wars, internecine struggles" and, inevitably, cultism

(2009:1). Violence in schools results from cultism because a lack of power and money stimulates educated youths to join cults in order to gain a sense of purpose and authority.

Conclusion

In sum, violence is location specific, as shown in the Okirika, Rumueke and Port Harcourt examples above. Different locations manifest different kinds of violence. In Okirika, youths experienced the war between the militants and the Nigerian JTF. In Rumueke, there was gendered violence, and in Port Harcourt there were kidnappings for ransom. This violent environment has also affected the economic and political lives of Niger Delta youth. Due to the lack of development in the region and their lack of inclusion in the society, youth feel marginalized, so they join MEND or cults to gain a sense of belonging and power. Violence in this region has disrupted youth's education and keeps putting them in harm's way. In order to survive, youth develop spontaneous and long-term coping strategies, which the following chapters discuss, as well as the experiences that have allowed youth to develop these strategies in order to survive in their environment.

Chapter Four

Coping Strategies: Day-to-Day Survival and Long-term Survival Strategies

Introduction

Chinedu, a 25-year-old student at the University of Port Harcourt, was born and raised in Port Harcourt. He confirmed that a survival mechanism is necessary in order to live normally in the Niger Delta. He reported that since he was young he has learned how to survive in this region, from hiding in the bushes during the heat of violence to avoiding daily dangerous occurrences. It is against this background that this chapter examines the spontaneous and long-term survival strategies of youths living within the devastating environmental, social and political conditions of the Niger Delta region.

Utilizing Mead's interactive symbolism through the concept of the "self," the first section of this chapter demonstrates how youths develop daily survival strategies through their interaction with their environment. Living in the Niger Delta region, youths encounter various kinds of dangerous situations, such as road traffic accidents (RTAs), kidnappers and armed robbers, which provide them with opportunities to develop survival strategies spontaneously. Having little access to the means necessary to satisfy their basic needs has also contributed to youths' spontaneous survival skills. Using their spontaneous skills to survive daily, youths have also devised long-term strategies to assuage the demands of their violent environment.

The second section of this chapter examines youths' long-term strategies for maintaining a positive outlook regarding their ability to change their personal lives. Youths in the city see gaining an education as a long-term goal that, if met, would give

them a better life in the long run, while youths living in rural areas look to traditional roles to help them define themselves for the future. This chapter argues that despite living in a violent environment, Niger Delta youths devise spontaneous and long-term survival strategies to help them endure their situation. This chapter also compares youths in urban areas to rural youths, analysing how their respective coping strategies are different but also somewhat similar.

Day-to-Day

Within the context of their violent environment and their interactions with society, Niger Delta youths develop spontaneous coping strategies that help them survive on a daily basis. What I mean by spontaneous is that their survival skills change depending on the situations they encounter on any particular day. Through interviews and observations, I found that youths' spontaneous survival skills have become part of their normal lives, since they are constantly trying to survive their daily encounters with dangerous situations. The challenge of avoiding RTA, kidnappers and robbers while also trying to eat, sleep and study has become part of their everyday existence.

Youth's Basic Survival

In the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25 states that,

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (UN, 2006)

The Niger Delta youths are particularly deprived of the basic necessities for survival.

Students face diverse challenges including inadequate and substandard housing,

insufficient money to have regular meals, and inadequate access to clean water. Students

living in Port Harcourt live in poor quality, hostel apartments. Each apartment consists of one room, a small kitchen and a bathroom, with a little space separating them. An apartment is supposed to house a maximum of two students, but because most students cannot afford the cost of living in an apartment, very often at least five students share a room. Two or three students usually sleep on the bed while the remaining residents sleep on the floor with a pillow; the students take turns sleeping on the bed or on the floor. Youth share accommodations in order to survive living in their society.

Focusing on surviving in the moment leaves youths with no medium- or long-term plans. For example, if they are given money they tend to spend it the moment they receive it, with no plans for future spending. Youths who are students forget that they have to eat for four months away from home. After spending their money at the beginning of the semester, they spend the rest of the semester getting fed by neighbours and hoping that friends will invite them over for a meal. Inviting someone to share a meal, to go out for a drink, or to go out in any way suggests that you will pay for everything they eat and drink. I asked a couple of friends to come out with me for dinner; they ate and then did not pay for their food. I was sitting there waiting for them to pay until my cousin told me I had to pay for everyone, because “inviting people to come out and eat means you have to pay for them.” I told him that I never said that I was treating them, but I paid for their meals nonetheless, according to the custom. Most of these youth only eat once per day, in order to make their money last them the entire semester. As I mentioned above, some students depend on their neighbours or roommates for food, to the point where, if someone cooks in the compound, the food does not last until the next day. The first time I made jollof rice, the food was all gone after my cousin and his

friends ate. I had to hide my food sometimes because it was hard to say no when they asked for something. Youth survive daily by eating what they can that day and always thinking about where they will get their next meal. This allows youths to become accustomed to poverty and surviving in the moment.

Gaining access to clean water is also a major challenge to youth's survival, as much of the water has been polluted by oil spillages. Youths in the villages cope by walking long distances to get drinking water, which they boil and then allow to cool down before drinking, while youth in the cities depend on what they call "pure water." Pure water is water that is sold in a plastic bag for N10, or less than one cent in US dollars. The water in this bag is not very hygienic—if someone were to drink it for the first time, they would get diarrhoea, but since the youths are accustomed to drinking it daily, they do not get sick. The bag of water is equivalent to only one cup and, due to the hot weather in Port Harcourt, I observed that youths were always running out of drinking water. Subsequently, they usually asked their neighbours or friends for drinking water. Even when given a whole bag of pure water, they would divide the water and drink half, keeping the other half for the next time they become thirsty.

Thus, in order to cope with their limited means, these youths interact with their neighbours and friends, who help them to survive. Due to oil conflicts and the lack of development in the region, these youths are accustomed to these conditions of living.

Avoiding Road Hazards

Niger Delta youth approach their life one day at a time because of the high rate of RTAs. This section presents an overview of the current knowledge about the daily

mobility problems encountered by Niger Delta youths and how they cope with this problem. Mobility is a major issue in this region due to the mix of transport vehicles on the roads, which causes confusion and RTAs, resulting in many deaths. For example in 2012, about 4,260 people died and about 20,752 injured due to RTA, mounting to an average of 12 deaths per day (Aminu, 2013).

Port Harcourt is located at latitude 5° north and longitude 7° east, on the Bonny River, about 20 kilometres from the Atlantic Ocean (Arene et al., 1989:2). It has a rainforest climate, making it one of the rainiest cities in Nigeria (Arene, et al. 1989:2). Port Harcourt's geographic location contributes to its poorly maintained roads and the number of RTAs that occur in the region. Accidents occur on a daily basis in this city; everyone is always in a hurry and the disorganization causes confusion, resulting in RTAs. While living in Port Harcourt, I observed the effects of poor roads, a lack of road signs and ineffective traffic laws—the challenges youth face when moving around the city.

Road traffic accidents are very frequent in Nigeria because of its ineffective national transportation policy and lack of a road safety plan. The lack of a safe transit environment in the country endangers youths the most because they tend to use cheap and unsafe methods of transportation more often than others. Transportation accessibility is very important in our everyday lives, and so is road safety. In fact, transportation plays a major role in the development of a country, and Nigeria lacks an effective transportation policy, which has affected its development. The Nigerian transportation sector took a major hit when the country adopted a structural adjustment program during the economic recession that affected the country's development in the 1980s and 1990s (Akinlade,

2004:2). This blow affected both public and private transit, and led the way for motorcycles to become an essential means of transport in the country. The use of motorcycles has increased the number of RTAs because motorcyclists do not wear helmets, carry more than one passenger, tend not to stop at junctions before entering main roads and also tend to speed a lot (Akinlade, 2004:1). The roads in Nigeria are a major contributor to RTAs, in urban, rural and especially in the wetland areas of the country, including the Niger Delta. Oil production in the Niger Delta increases RTAs because oil pollution erodes away the roads.

Moving around Port Harcourt is especially difficult when it rains, and it tends to rain every day. When it rains, the roads are flooded, which makes it difficult for vehicles to travel on them. The rain also causes major traffic jams that take hours to resolve; for example, on May 21, 2012, I had an interview at 1 p.m. in the afternoon. I left my room at around 9 a.m., knowing the traffic jams in the city and the difficulties involved in moving around. Leaving my room, I walked down the street to get a taxi; walking on the narrow road was a problem because it had rained the night before, so everywhere was flooded and it was a challenging road to walk on. I hopped from one stone to another, each of which was placed by the owners of stores along the road. It took about 10 to 15 minutes to walk to the main road due to the traffic (students going to school in the morning, sharing the same experience). During my fieldwork, walking down that road ruined three pairs of my shoes, and wearing slippers was very dangerous, too, because there were garbage dumps on the road and, when it rained, it became swampy. I observed a young boy pushing a wheelbarrow, stepping into the potholes filled with dirty water

because there was no decent pathway. These potholes contain worms and bacteria because of the garbage dumps beside them.

To get to the interview location I took two buses; my ride there took about two hours due to the traffic and poor roads, and then it started to rain. As a result of this combination, it felt like drivers on the road lost their senses of direction and order. They were driving recklessly; even the bus I was on drove on sidewalks and took dangerous shortcuts. The bus driver tried to go between two cars that were in front of him. Three of the cars in front of the bus I was on got into an accident because there were no traffic lights or road signs at the junction. It took about three hours to reach a bus station, where I had to catch a different bus to my location. I was three hours late for my interview, but luckily my participant also went through the same experience as me, although his journey was shorter. He said he knew that I was going to be late because it was a daily occurrence, so he was used to it.

After the interview, going home was also a major challenge. Since it was evening, there was more traffic. I was ready for that, but I was not ready for the event that occurred on my way home. People were rushing to catch the bus, so it was full within minutes. One passenger decided to get on the full bus, and he was beaten and pushed out. That same passenger took a different bus, caught up with the bus I was on (due to traffic our bus was moving slowly) and then threw a brick into it. The brick broke the windows and injured three passengers, including me. I was so frightened that day that I never took the bus in Port Harcourt again. This sense of danger is what youths live with every day; moving from place to place is so challenging that it often takes a whole day to travel somewhere, and sometimes youth do not make it back home. Students complain about

the stress of traveling from home to school, whereby they are often late for classes and are very late getting home, leaving them little time to study.

The roads in Port Harcourt are not well maintained and, due to climate conditions in the region, new roads seem to break down quickly. There are no road signs, road markings or proper sidewalks for pedestrians. Where sidewalks exist, they are dangerous to walk on because taxis and buses tend to use them to get through traffic. The roads in Port Harcourt are filled with youths selling snacks to passing travellers. The sellers tend to run besides moving cars to sell their goods. Some youths also make a business out of washing the windows of moving cars, which is very dangerous. I witnessed a situation where a boy around 10 or 12 years of age who had climbed onto the trunk of the car to clean the car's rear window, and then the car started moving so fast that the boy had to hold on tightly. The driver did not care that the boy was behind his moving car; he just wanted to beat the traffic.

The practice of hawking wares and conducting other business in the roads contributes to the difficulties surrounding youth mobility and safety in Port Harcourt and put them in danger of falling victim to accidents and other forms of violence. These youth are not sure whether they will make it home when they travel from one place to another, because of RTAs due to poor roads and ineffective traffic regulations in the region. Oil production in the Niger Delta does not contribute to the economic well being of the people, leaving youths to fend for themselves. These marginalized youths have to avoid daily dangerous encounters, such as RTAs, that have become part of their normal lives. While I was in Choba, I witnessed a few RTAs and heard about many more. The Nigerian government's inadequate distribution of oil revenue results in the region's lack

of development, which contributes to youth's daily struggles, prompting them to develop spontaneous coping strategies to help them endure their environment.

Through my observations, I found that youths tend to survive by roaming less during rush hours, because that is when most accidents occur, as many people tend to be in a hurry. When they cannot avoid travelling during rush hours, they usually ask the taxi driver to please drive carefully. I witnessed this quite often when using taxis to move around; many youths say, "Please I want to get to my class/home safely, please Oga drive carefully, no rush." Youths tend to use taxis more than buses, to avoid accidents, because bus drivers tend to drive carelessly and, with no seat belts on the bus, people tend to lose their lives. According to Chinedu, however, "no matter how you travel, there is always a chance of getting into an accidents and avoiding it is hard since no body usually follow regulations but we try to go to school and come back safely despite the bad road and bad driving."

Avoiding Robbery and Kidnapping

Youth in the Niger Delta devise day-to-day strategies to avoid being kidnapped or robbed. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, kidnapping is a form of business with the end goal of extorting money. Living in Choba, there is always news of someone being kidnapped or robbed every day. Although kidnapping is a source of business it can also be for revenge. Chinedu recalled a situation where he was going to buy something and suddenly he was shot at without any reason, so he ran for his life. When he got home, Chinedu found out that his cousin was a member of a cult and the people who shot at him were trying to kidnap him for revenge. Chinedu's experience is an example how

vulnerable youths are that they can easily join cults to make ends meet. They do anything to get money in order to survive.

On the streets of Choba, a person can easily take pedestrian's purse without that person noticing or corner a person into giving them money. It is common for robbers to steal from people's houses, and while in the process they might injure or kill residents. A friend I met while I was in the field said that when she was travelling to visit her village, armed robbers stopped her bus, took people's belongings and money and threatened to shoot if anyone moved. During the raid, people were injured but thankfully no one died. I have heard even worse scenarios where armed robbers steal property, rape women and sometimes kill them after, then move on to their next victims. Kidnappers and robbers are always watching what people do, such as how they spend money and how exposed rich people are, in order to extort money through kidnapping. Thus, kidnapping and robbery activity keeps youths alert to danger. To avoid being victims, youths stay home after dark and stay at residences where there is a security guard present. Both males and female youths always travel in pairs, especially females who prefer to move around with a male friend for protection.

Youths in rural areas also find daily survival a constant challenge, although some of their coping strategies are different, their need for basic needs is similar to that of urban youths. As I mentioned above, youths in urban areas depend on their neighbours and friends for basic needs they lack, rural youths also do the same. Since most of them live with their parents and with limited basic needs, these youths also depend on extended relatives' members for food, clothes and shelter. Since their water is contaminated due to oil, (more on that later), these youths also depend on pure water or they travel long

distance in order to get water which they have to boil to kill germs in order for it to be suitable to drink.

Youths in rural areas have no need for developing coping strategies to avoid road traffic accident because they mostly walk to the aim locations. They also do not have to worry about kidnappers because they have no money to pay for the transactions, so kidnappers tend not to kidnap village youths. I found that there are less armed robbers in the rural areas but there are occasionally thieves who steal food and other basic needs in order for them to survive. Thus, the spontaneous coping strategies that rural youths tend to develop are how to get basic needs in order to survive daily. Youths interacting with their environments and awareness of the situations which they live in have helped them develop coping strategies both short and long term.

Long Term coping strategies

Living in a dangerous environment with no certainty as to when things will improve, Niger Delta youths have devised long-term survival goals that they hope to achieve in the future. Although these goals are to be met far in the future, these youths have positive attitudes regarding their ability to reach their goals, which I explain in detail in the next couple of sections. Despite living in a violent environment, Niger Delta youths' quest for personal change, hope for environmental clean-up and creation of small businesses enable them to survive in their environment over the long run. This section examines how long-term coping strategies differ between urban youths and rural youths, due to their differing locations and the variant availability of opportunities.

Quest for Personal Development and Urban Youth

Youths in rural regions demonstrate different survival strategies than urban youths. Youths in rural areas are more prone to using activism for environmental change/clean up as a strategy, while youths in the city use education to change their lives and survive. Urban youths particularly use education to try and work in the oil industries or to become part of the working class. Niger Delta youths as a whole develop positive attitudes regarding their ability to change their personal lives, in order to cope with living in a violent situation. In order for change to occur in their lives, they have to find out who they are as individuals living in a violent society. According to Burkitt (2008), questions concerning who I am, or who we are, are collective questions, because all individuals are born into, and live or die within, societies (2008:16).

This question of “Who am I?” utilizes Lawler’s views on identity. Lawler (2008) argues that identity is produced and negotiated through relations with people. Identity is a very important aspect of a person’s life; our identity helps us perform and interact with different people within society, and it is a matter of who we are and how we are seen within society. As Lawler argues, identity is produced through the narratives that people use to explain and understand their lives (2008:17). If identity is used in every aspect of our lives, how does one find the identity that fulfills one’s self?

Taylor (1991) argues that self-fulfillment occurs when an individual evolves from using the traditional ways of reasoning to holding modern values. Taylor claims that each individual has an original way of being human and striving for self-fulfillment. According to Taylor, the moral ideal behind self-fulfillment in a modern society is being true to oneself (1991:15). For every individual, self-fulfillment is the ultimate goal, and if

one reaches one's goals, one can better carry out the moral reasoning demanded by society. This ideal of self-fulfillments relates to Marcia's theory of ego identity, because the commitment to self-improvement only occurs when a person knows who he/she is as an individual, after which they may commit to changing their lives. While this study has found that some youths feel that perpetrating violence - such as kidnaping oil workers for ransom - will lead to a better life, which they feel they deserve, many other youths seek education and environmental change to better their lives and survive in their environment.

Education is an important part of a youth's life; it helps them to understand who they are and what they can become. Education is so important that it has become one of the United Nations' millennium goals, for every child to have a basic education to be met by 2015. In our current society, it is believed that, in order to succeed, it is important to acquire an education. Many parents of Niger Delta youths sacrifice a great deal for their children to be able to attend school and do better than they did. People generally attend school to acquire skills and gain an understanding of life situations, and, after their education, they hopefully influence the world and contribute to its development.

As a youth, I believe that education "gives me wings" and makes me more mature as an individual. Education enables youths to become more aware of their society and gives them directions according to which to live, by making them aware of what is right and wrong. The students I met and interviewed during my research understood what it means to have an education and the benefits it can bring to their lives. These students know the importance of having a degree on their resume, what it means when applying for a job, and thus they strive to earn a degree, using any means to achieve their goals.

For youths, receiving a higher education means a way out, from the life they currently live to a better one.

Education as the Key

The procurement of higher education is very difficult in Nigeria, but youths' positive attitudes help them cope and make their way through the tedious process. In their final year of secondary school, students write two exams: the WAEC (West African Examination Council) exam and the NECO (National Examination Council) exam, where they pick a minimum of eight and a maximum of nine subjects for both exams. The Nigerian language must be one of the eight subjects. After the exam, they wait for three months for the results. During this waiting period, students write another exam, called the JAMB (Joint Admission Matriculation Board) exam, where they pick English and three other subjects related to the profession they want to study. Students are allowed to apply to only two universities, two polytechnics and two colleges of education of their choice. The results of the JAMB exam arrive after one week, and students must receive a minimum of 200 on the exam, or they must take it again the next year. Students also write a POST-JAMB at the school of their choice, and the results are released at the school. Students wait for the school to announce the cut-off for acceptance, and then wait again to see if their name is on the list of those students accepted by the school. If students do not pass, they go through the process again until they pass, or until their parents bribe the university officials.

Some students wait two or more years for admission into university. Chinedu said he waited two years for an admission into the University of Port Harcourt:

Admission into the tertiary institution is difficult to gain in this country. So I sat at home for two years after finishing secondary school. I did some casual jobs while

waiting for admission. I later got admission into the University of Port Harcourt. (Chinedu, 2012)

After gaining admission, students at the University of Port Harcourt are put through a basic program where they are offered courses related to a career of their choice. This basic program is divided into two sections. Students are required to take a minimum of five courses in each section, and an examination is given after each section. Students have to pass the cut-off mark set by the department of their choice or they are sent home, although some students bribe their departments with money to gain acceptance into degree programs. Niger Delta youths go through all of this because they believe that education, over the long run, will help them survive in their violent environment.

I observed that students who did not get into degree programs tended, nonetheless, to stay around campus. Most youths living near Uniport/Choba are not really Uniport students. These students are called “students passing through” because they pose as students, but, in reality, they have not received admission into the university and are just living as students. Some of these youths tell their parents that they are in school and that they will receive their certificate after years of living as a student. False certificates can be substituted for real ones, because there will be a record, even if it is a falsified one, as students pay school administrators to fake their school records, so that they can present the certificate when they go look for a job.

Schooling in Nigeria is very difficult because the school system is corrupt. Schools in Nigeria are not straightforward like Western schools. Some students pay to get into school or to pass a course, and some sleep with the professor to pass a course. Students sacrifice a lot of their self-worth to gain an education.

The above description focuses on urban youths and what they go through to acquire a higher education to better their lives. Education is a privilege of urban youths that rural youths do not have. Most of the rural youths I interviewed only had primary education, and some of them did not finish that. The youths in the villages usually attended school until their family could not afford to pay for their education anymore. These youths typically depend on their knowledge of the ecosystem and traditional roles to sustain their lives, but since their environment has been damaged they cope by hoping for the clean up of their lands and by traveling long distances to sustain their traditional livelihoods of fishing and farming.

Rural Youths' Activism for Clean-up: Hope for Revived Livelihood in Fishing and Farming

Niger Delta communities are the least developed in Nigeria, as the literature demonstrates. Many scholars, such as Obi and Idemudia (2009) and Ite (2007), have argued that there is a need for cooperation between communities and oil transnational corporations (TNCs) in order for development to take place in the region. For many years, communities in this region have partnered with oil companies such as Shell, EXXON Mobil and Total in an attempt to reduce poverty in the region (Idemudia, 2009:1). The TNCs in the Niger Delta have, since 1956, increased corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in the region. Corporate social responsibility requires every corporation in a region to help solve social and environmental problems, and also to contribute to development in the region they occupy (Idemudia, 2009:1). There have been three major programs in the TNC's development plans; these are Community Assistance (CA), Sustainable Community Development (SCD) and Community

Development (CD). Shell, for example, changed from offering a CA program in the early nineties to an SCD strategy in 2004 (Ite, 2007:3). Community Assistance is a part of CSR, which involves providing inputs to satisfy the basic needs of the host community where corporate facilities are located. Shell adopted the CA strategy, but its implementation of the plan was top down, so the community's needs were not taken into account. According to Ite (2007), the Shell CA approach only focused on what Shell thought the community needed (2007:3).

The Shell approaches subsequently made the community feel victimized by Shell's activities, and they saw Shell's CA plan as a form of compensation for using and destroying their land (Ite, 2007:3–4). The communities did not welcome the CA plan, so Shell progressed to CD, aiming to empower the community to participate in the development process (Ite, 2007:4). It was reported by Ite (2007) that Shell took into account the social capital of various communities, including their traditional knowledge and skills, in their CD plan by asking community leaders what the people need. Although Shell Nigeria's CA and CD plans were implemented to help reduce poverty in the region, the plans could not sustain the region because of increased demands from the community. In response to this increase in demands, Shell Nigeria implemented the SCD strategy, which focused on the key areas of economic empowerment, human capital development, healthy living and the provision of basic service (Ite, 2007:5). This SCD strategy involved other stakeholders, such as civil society and the Nigerian government agencies, in an attempt to get more people involved in the development of the Niger Delta community.

The various strategies Shell implemented to be socially responsible with regards to its oil extraction in the Niger Delta region have been proven to be insufficient and unsustainable. Although the company has involved the community and other stakeholders, the community's needs were not fully represented in Shell's development strategy (Ite, 2007:5-6). These communities were self-sufficient for decades before Shell or other oil companies occupied their respective areas (Ifedi & Anyu, 2011: 3). They still believe in their traditional way of life, and Shell's and other TNCs' activities are constantly destroying their source of livelihood. The CD plan has not improved the social well being of the people in the community. Based on my observations during my visit to Bodo and interviews with this study's participants, it can be inferred that CSR activities are seriously lacking in most of the communities occupied by Shell facilities. The lack of a development plan leaves the community to join together with the little resources they have to sustain their livelihood and fight for the cleanup of their land.

This section examines the Bodo community's effort to overcome the challenge of living in an oil-infused community. The Bodo community's water fields and land have been destroyed by Shell's activities in the region, and in an effort to live they have been coming together to fight Shell and find ways to sustain their livelihood.

Bodo is a village in the Gokana kingdom, one of the six kingdoms in Ogoniland. The Bodo people rely mainly on fishing and farming for their livelihood, like other communities in the Niger Delta. Shell's activities in the region have ceased, but the damage they caused is still evident. Shell's pipelines, built during the oil extraction years, are not being maintained; in fact, most of them are damaged. There has been spillage for years, which has contaminated the Bodo's rivers and lands. The pipelines run across most

lands in the village, where they are clearly visible. Oil leakages from the pipelines have killed all aquatic, life and the fishermen have to travel as far as Cameroon to find fish in order to sustain their livelihood. Emmanuel gave this account of migrating to find a place to fish:

Now we have to cross the border to another part of the river that is not part of our land in order to get something, so that we can eat. We cross to the other side of Bonny River. There many places where we have to pay some money to the community we want to settle and do some fishing. We buy the men in the community drinks and they let us enter and fish. All the fish you see in our village is from there. This is what we go through; we pay money to fish, instead of fishing for free in our river. (Emmanuel, 2012)

I observed the oil spillages in the rivers and on land, and the damage they have done to the Bodo's fishing boats, as shown in Figure 1. I observed some fishermen trying to fix their damaged boats to get them ready for the next fishing trip. Although Shell Nigeria is no longer active in the region, the oil in the rivers suggests that spillages occurs daily from the pipelines, making it difficult for the villagers to meet their basic needs, such as having clean water. The villagers reported the impact of travelling to different regions and even near crossing as far as to fishing in the coastal rivers in the nearby countries. They complain that travelling to another country is very dangerous because their boats sometimes capsize and many fishermen die because of the weather. Their boats are not built for such long journeys and they have no access to safer boats.



The community has voiced its suffering without any response from the government or Shell. They complain about the lack of clean-up plans and the lack of responsiveness on the part of the government and the TNCs. Although the TNCs' implementation of CSR is lacking in this region, the community often comes together to discuss a clean-up plan with their chair council, who takes the villagers' complaints to the local government representative in the region. As John said, "through community protest, Shell has been brought to court here in Nigeria." Other participants claimed that the case had now gone abroad, but they had no knowledge of which country it was held in. The community has been told that Shell Nigeria has agreed that their activities resulted in environmental damage in the region, and they want the community to meet with them to settle out of court. Emmanuel offers a detailed account of what the community knows about the case:

Shell said they will listen to us, but our case is still in court. Although they agree they are the cause of the problem, they never agree to take full responsibility of

the consequences of the oil spill. The case has gone back to court and we don't know how it will be. How they will agree over what they will pay us has not been agreed on. (Emmanuel, 2012)

Although the people of the Bodo community want compensation for the damage to their land, some feel that if Shell cleans up the river and fixes and manages the pipes, it will be a great help to their community. They also claim that they are willing to help Shell clean up the river because it will be to their benefit, as it will help feed their families and send their children to school. The villagers believe that Shell Nigeria owes them a lot, and so they also want to benefit from the development plans that they have heard Shell gave to other communities. They want Shell to pay them directly, not through their local government, because they will not get the money through the latter method due to corruption in their country. The villagers in Bodo want to live comfortably in their village, so they need their rivers to be clean so they can fish and provide for their families.

I interviewed five participants in Bodo Village who did not or could not attend school past grade six. These youth use their traditions and culture to define who they are, and their interactions with their small community help shape their identity. This relates to Mead's conceptualization of "self," which asserts that social interactions are facilitated through sets of recognized symbols that have the same significance for each individual within a given social group (Burkitt, 2008 p. 37). The shared meaning provided by language allows the individual to examine her own thoughts and attitudes in order to interpret the actions of others. Youth in the village live by coming to understand their cultural roles as they grow, and I found that they live an unpretentious life.

The lifestyles of youths who live in villages are very simple; they do not have many places to go, and they tend to stick to their traditional duties. Most of them are not in school. I found that men in Bodo Village do not attend school, or they tend to drop out when they are old enough to go fishing. Their livelihood is fishing, so going fishing every morning is what they are accustomed to, John said. He said that the oil spills have affected their morning routines, but now they wake up to look for odd jobs in order to provide for their families. Women's routines include cooking and farming with their parents; some go to the river to collect periwinkles to sell in the local market.

Rural youth live a very simple but meaningful life. Their goals in life are different from those of the youths I interviewed in the city. These youths just want a life where they can find employment in their traditional livelihoods and live a comfortable life with their families, but they are deprived of their traditional livelihoods due to the environmental degradation caused by oil exploitation in their region. Youths in the villages tend to maintain their traditional roles in order to survive in their environments.

Entrepreneurship and Establishment of Small Businesses and other informal economic activities

Faced with high unemployment in the region, youths in the Niger Delta are often forced to perform odd jobs and establish small businesses in order to make a livelihood and survive. Youths that are engaged in this type of entrepreneurship still suffer hardships, poverty and continued dependence on parents even after graduation. The youths of Niger Delta have expressed their yearnings for the government to provide employment opportunities in the region so that they will not be dependent on their parents after graduation. They want an economy in which they will have the opportunity

to apply for work and get a job; they want to be able to provide for their families.

Although they are waiting for the government to improve the economy, youth have also embarked on a quest to provide for themselves. Youth in the Niger Delta survive by making money both legally and illegally. They engage in small businesses to earn money for themselves and their families.

In urban areas, many students engage in profitable activities on and/or off-campus in order to make the money necessary to stay in school. Although parents sponsor most students, some students sponsor themselves. The students I interviewed reported that they perform odd jobs to make enough money to stay in school, especially the ones that send themselves to school. Basil, a graduate, explained that because he has many siblings and his parents struggle to feed the family, he was motivated to send himself to school in order to help provide for his siblings. He said he struggles to stay in school, and he finished school by participating in dancing/drama, which paid a little money. He said he also went fishing and sold fish to earn money. He performed odd jobs for his professors and other casual labour jobs to stay in school. He reported that some people he met throughout his life also helped him with his education.

I observed that many youths are engaged in small businesses, such as braiding hair and selling all kinds of goods, especially clothing and fruit. They sell their goods below the market price so that other students will buy them. These student salespeople go to different hostels and pass by each room, calling out what they are selling and asking if anyone wants to buy. Other students, especially smart boys, make money by writing exams for other students. One particular day in my hostel, a student came back very scared that he would be expelled from school for being caught writing an exam for

another student. He got paid about N8, 000 to write an exam, but when he was writing the exam an invigilator recognized him and he ran for his life.

I observed that students writing exams for other students is major business in Uniport, and even invigilators will write for students who give them money. This is a general phenomenon in Nigerian society. One student said that many students go and write their exam, but when they are submitting it the invigilator gives them a different paper to submit, since the invigilators see the exam papers before the students. The students basically write the exam and then exchange papers at the last minute, in order to submit one that has the correct answers on it, as supplied by the invigilator for a fee.

In my observations at Choba, I found that some female students earn money quite differently from the male students. Although some have a braiding business, most of the girls have “sugar daddies” (older boyfriends). I observed that many girls’ boyfriends give them allowances to stay in school and sustain their livelihood. For example, while I was in Choba a friend of mine had a boyfriend 10 years older than her, who paid for her rent, school fees and other necessities. Most girls in Port Harcourt have two or more boyfriends; one is usually their age, and the other is older and lives away from the university. Each plays a role in their lives: the older boyfriends give them money, while the younger ones allow them to keep face.

I observed that female students cook for these older men because most of students are away from their families. These men actually come looking for these students in Allu (a community where students reside). While I was living in Choba, I went to get my hair done one afternoon and afterwards, going back home, I observed many large cars waiting

to pick up university girls, and some female students were dressed nicely and waiting to be picked up. This happens every evening, although I was told that most female students are “call girls”/Escorts instead of prostitutes. I thought they were prostitutes, but my friend said those girls mostly accompany important men to parties and are paid for it, whereas the ones who sleep with men for money are called “prostitutes.”

Making money to survive is so important to youth that even fun and games are turned into ways to make money. I observed both video and soccer games being used to make money; basically, the loser either buys the winner’s dinner or pays them a certain amount. Gambling with dice is also very common with male students. They play every day after classes, and it usually causes problems when a student cannot pay his debts and the others take his electronics, such as his iPod or cell phone, to sell. Although they struggle to make money every day, youth claim that it is better than being used by the politicians to inflict violence.

Youths in rural areas also survive by starting small business using their traditional occupation. For example, men who go fishing try to sell their fish at the market or on the road to people in passing cars. Women sell periwinkles and cook food, such as fried yam and fish, in order to make a living.

Thus, small businesses and other income generating activities help youth make money and survive in an economy that provides very few jobs for its youth. Most of the youths I encountered still depend on their parents for some money, but they also try to use small businesses of their own to help with school fees and other necessities. They understand that their parents struggle to send them to school, so they do what they can to

help out. Youths in the villages sell periwinkles and fish they catch in the rivers in order to provide for themselves and their families; this makes them more independent than some youths who live in the city, who still depend on their families for financial support.

As they are aware of their environments, youths know what kinds of small businesses can succeed within them, and they use those small businesses, such as selling fruits or braiding hair, to survive. I believe that if more youths could afford to open small businesses, or if the government loan money to youths to jump start small businesses, more youths would be kept busy, left with no time for participation in cults or militant groups. It would also provide jobs for many youths, who otherwise tend to steal and kidnap individuals for ransom money (as a form of business). Having small businesses gives youths more responsibilities and allows them to find out who they are as individuals, and also as part of the larger society that generally tends to ignore its youths.

Conclusion

Violence has become part of the reality for youths surviving in the Niger Delta. Neglected by society in general, these restless youths move to the forefront of agitations for compensation from the oil companies and the government for the region's exploitation. The youths' way of interacting with society demonstrates how youth identity is intertwined with the social process. The extraction of oil has destroyed the relationship between the people and the state; they are constantly in a struggle over the control of oil production. Youth, at the forefront of this struggle for oil control, perpetrate violence as part of the process. Other youths find alternative means to cope, however, such as creating small businesses, which allow them to feel better about themselves and avoid becoming involved in the violence. Thus, youth's sense of identity is crucial to

their confidence, ambitions, and relationships; it has a very significant effect on the decisions they make regarding their lives.

I found that youths in the villages had a stronger sense of identity than did the youths in the cities that were receiving an education. Youths in the city feel that education will give them a sense of self, while youths in the villages believe that traditional cultural roles already define who they are and what they are capable of. Living on a day-to-day without a long-term plan, normalizes living in a violent environment for Niger Delta youths. To survive their encounters with various kinds of violence, Niger Delta youths invent spontaneous survival strategies depending on the situation. Long-term objectives give them hope for the future. While youths put a great deal of effort into evading their daily endangerment in terms of occurrences such as road traffic accidents, kidnapping and robbery, and struggling each day to meet their basic needs, they also maintain a positive attitude towards personal, environmental and societal change. As they respond to the environment they are created within, the spontaneous and long-term survival strategies of various youth populations depends on their location and the way of life they are exposed to, including the kinds of violence that surround them. Youths' interactions with their environment have enabled them to develop both sorts of strategies in order to survive and help find their identity and shape their behaviour within society. The youths I interviewed seemed relatively self-aware, socially aware and self-sustaining; they understand they have to struggle every day to survive within their environment, and their hopes for change keep them going over the long run.

Chapter Five

Coping Strategies: The Niger Delta Value System and Youths' Survival

Introduction

Since the discovery of oil in the region, the Niger Delta has witnessed environmental degradation, violent conflicts and militancy. Scholars have iterated the fact that youth have been the major victims and perpetrators of violence in the region. My thesis has argued that although these youths live in a volatile region prone to conflict, environmental hazards, poverty, unemployment and accompanying socio-political instabilities, the youth population in the Niger Delta has devised spontaneous and long-term survival strategies that respond to the demands of their environment. The short-term strategies enhance daily survival and are developed on the spot, according to an individual's initiative and context.

The varied approaches to individual survival are sustainable, although they are subject to change. The long-term strategies, though time-consuming, build determination in the youths and are more sustainable. Long-term goals like receiving an education and achieving environmental clean-up provide youths with the hope that one day things will be better, and they will become persons who can fend for themselves and their families. Education presents an opportunity for these youths to improve themselves, to find out who they are and how they can contribute to the development of their region. Most of this study's respondents said that going to school gives them a sense of purpose in their region, where opportunities are very few. They claim that education provides them with an opportunity to reap the benefits of oil production in the region. The youths largely feel

marginalized in the region and desire active participation in society, to be regarded as a valuable and recognized part of the society and to have their rights respected. The ambition of many educated youths is to gain employment in the oil companies, and uneducated youths simply clamour for corporate responsibility on the part of the oil companies, to ensure the environment is cleaned up. They want be able to fish in their villages again and not have to travel a long distance to fish; they also want to be able to farm on their own land and produce their own food. In this chapter's evaluation of my study's findings, I address the importance of family values and Christianity to the sustainability of the long-term survival strategies.

Family Network

Family relations are very important to the lives of Niger Delta youths. Most of this study's participants were from polygamous families with many stepsisters and brothers, although they do not see their siblings as stepsiblings; they are all from one blood (the father's). My participants reported that although the mothers/wives might fight sometimes, the children in the family all look up to their older siblings as role models, especially if the person is a first born, the first to attend school or the only one in a higher education institution.

As is the case in any household, a lack of resources can be a major cause of familial stress and unhappiness. From this study's respondents, I discovered that some families in Rivers State do not have enough land, and some have an income insufficient to take care of their families. Families that were able to meet their household needs were quite satisfied, even though they did not have the luxuries that many city dwellers enjoyed. Students reported that coming from a struggling household made them aware of

how hard they have to work at their studies, in order to provide for their families and help send the rest of their siblings to school.

Participants reported that their parents could not send all their children to school, so they put their hopes on the idea that the one who does go to school will help in raising their older siblings. The youths I interviewed said that they are viewed as role models, although they feel that society has set them up to fail. However, they do not give up hope—because of their families they are alive today and attend school. Although they will not be able to live up to their family expectations after the sacrifice made for them to attend school, they will try their best to succeed. As Basil said,

The family is looking up to me. The expectation is that I get a job and bring the family together after my studies, but as you can see, I am done school and still have not gotten a job and have not lived up to their expectation. (Basil, 2012)

This feeling is shared by many youths, although they have not given up hope yet. They still strive to become better for themselves and their families.

I asked several people whether they preferred living in a village or in the city. Most youths said they preferred living in the city, although they like to visit the villages during the holidays. Youths in the villages said they would like to live in the city, in order to be exposed to more opportunities to earn money for their families, but they also like living in the village because a simple lifestyle can be more satisfying than an extravagant one. Youth claim that staying in or visiting the villages allows them to further develop their character and ethical capacity, which is part of maintaining their familial and traditional values. I also asked youths why they did not move to a different region during the crisis. They mentioned that although it was unsafe there, it was their home and where their roots were, and they had to protect their homes. Although some youths reported that

their families temporarily moved away during the crisis, the youths stayed behind, which constantly worried their relatives. Basil said that his family constantly asked him to move away from Okirika, but he refused because it is where he was born, and he wanted to be part of Okirika as they fought for what they believed in.

Most youths credited their families for keeping them away from violence. James, Wolese and Chinedu said that because they come from a strict and God-fearing family, they were able to resist joining the armed youth. They claimed that although they were tempted and believed in what the armed youth were fighting for, they wanted to live and find other ways to fight for what they believe in, which is what their family taught them, by going to church and studying the Bible, which led them onto the right path.

Youths and Christianity

I found that Niger Delta youths are very religious, practicing both Christianity and traditional African religion. Christianity, however, seemed to be the dominant religion. The community I stayed in during my research had about 20 or more churches in it. I even saw a small room turned into a church. Some of the churches in this community operate seven days per week. I always woke up to the sound of prayers at daybreak and the same thing when going to bed. Sundays are service days for most churches, and they mostly have two to three services. For every service, the churches are quite full, and students and families stand outside listening anxiously to every word the pastors say.

I found that religious beliefs guide how some youths live their lives. They often pray before making a major decision, especially during exams. Before exams start, churches usually have special services for students, where they pray for help with the

upcoming exams, asking God to help them study and pass their exams. During my stay in Choba, I observed that churches take advantage of this period to collect more money from students. I attended one service for students taking exams; after the regular tax and offerings, students were asked to come forward for a special prayer and to give thanks to God. Each student came forward, dropped money into the offering bowl, and went to pray; it felt like they were paying for each prayer the pastor called them forward for. The church members were also asked to buy spiritual candles to help with exam prayers (these candles are prayed over by the pastor before they are sold in church). Although these churches sometimes take advantage of youth's vulnerability, Christianity also helps youth cope with their lives on a daily basis.

Prayer is part of many youths' daily lives. They would gather to pray in the compound I lived in. Two girls in the compound always led the prayers, every morning at 5 a.m. They usually began with praise and worship, and then read the Bible very loudly so everyone could hear and then pray. At first, I thought that the two girls were trying to convert people, like the Jehovah Witnesses who visit people at their houses, but I realized that this was a tradition in the compound. Although people do not come out of their rooms, they usually follow their leads during the prayer, and I found myself always waking up to join them. I realized how Christianity guides youths in their daily lives.

Niger Delta youths acknowledge the role played by Christianity in helping them to avoid becoming involved in violent movements and also in helping them to cope with their surroundings. Youths who were once part of the MEND commend Christianity for helping them reintegrate into society. I interviewed one youth who was part of the MEND and one whose cousin was also part of the MEND. These youths both went

through the amnesty program, which helped rehabilitate them into society, but churches helped these youths be accepted back into their communities. Through their involvement with the church, they slowly asked for forgiveness from their communities, and the communities gradually accepted them, since they showed that they wanted to become better people by going to church. Youths who lost close family members during the violence also credited the church with helping them to cope with the loss. They reported that the church helped them through prayers, and church members comforted them in their time of need. Although churches and Christianity is a source of comfort for youths in their time of need, it can also lead youths astray.

Religious followership in the Niger Delta and Nigeria in general is very high. Due to the religious inclination, people tend to believe whatever religious leaders tell them. This is more common among the youths where they idolise religious leaders. These leaders use religion as a way to hold people to a ransom example, religious leaders can tell their congregations that donating to the church is a guaranteed way of achieving success or they should not enter a particular vehicle or do certain things in order to attain eternal glory. Although religion takes advantage of youths believes and vulnerability, it is still a positive coping mechanism for youths in Niger Delta.

Conclusion

Thus, family and Christianity helped both male and female youths cope with living in a violent environment and deterred them from becoming involved in the violence. I found that being family- and religion-oriented helped them to cope and develop survival strategies. Having a sense of responsibility for their families' deterred male youths from joining rebel groups. Males in the families are viewed as role models

and future family leaders, while females take on the more housekeeping roles of protecting the household. Christianity is a very important aspect of some youth's development in the Niger Delta. These youths depend on religion/Church for their survival and daily guidance. With regards to religious activities, I found that both males and females are equally God-fearing and take religious activities very seriously. They are equally involved in church activities and in using Christianity as a daily guide.

It can be inferred that both Christianity and family relations are important for building a strong moral value system to support youths' survival. Long-term goals and spontaneous survival strategies are also important to Niger Delta youths as they survive in their violent environment. I found that males tend to develop and benefit more from spontaneous and long-term strategies than females. For example, long-term goals such as education are more important to males than females because, in the long run, males have to provide for their families, their relatives and their wives' relatives, while females can always benefit from marrying a well-established man who can care for her and her family. Although this example points to the stereotype common in the region, females still want to gain an education to be able to provide for themselves and avoid being dependent on their husbands. In support of the spontaneous survival skills, males tend to avoid them while females tend to be victims. For example, females are more often the victims of robberies, kidnappings and harassment as compared to males; in fact, females tend to travel in groups to avoid becoming victims. The prevalence of long-term and spontaneous survival strategies depends on the individual and their values.

Conclusion

Oil in the Nigeria Delta has become a catalyst for violence due to the unequal distribution of oil revenues. Living in a violent environment, youth are prone to encountering violent situations, in response to which they develop survival strategies in order to survive in the region. The spontaneous and long-term strategies youths develop help them cope with the economic and political instability in the region. Niger Delta youths use the long-term strategy of establishing small businesses to deal with the high level of unemployment in the region. The high unemployment is the result of the resource curse (oil) that has left the economy in poor condition and shifted labour from the agriculture sector to the manufacturing sector, due to oil exploitation, which has also damaged the environment in the region. Youths developed spontaneous strategies in response to the lacking provision of basic human necessities, poor infrastructure (roads) and poor security in the region. The dearth of development in the region is due, in part, to the state being under an authoritarian rule, whereby the government has total control over the oil resources.

My findings also suggest that youths marginalization has allowed Nigerian politicians to exploits youths in the Niger Delta as well as across the nation. Oil exploitation in the Niger Delta has also prevented youths from accessing its social and economic benefits. In order for these youth to feel more like part of the society, they join cults and militants groups to gain a sense of belonging and power. Under the blanket of being part of a cult or militant group, they confront the problems, which the government has thrust upon them. The relationship between oil and violence has made it necessary for youths to develop spontaneous and long-term coping strategies to endure their violent

environments. Their development of these strategies gives them hope for a better and brighter future.

My research explores the relationship between youth and oil violence in the Niger Delta; more specifically, it explores the forces at work on youths who do not participate in the violence and how they survive in the region. During the course of my research, it became evident that Niger Delta youths live in a violent society and that they cope by adopting two main mechanisms: living on a day-to-day basis and by adopting a positive attitude toward change at both the personal and social levels. I arrived at these results by investigating the experiences of youths living in the Niger Delta and seeking clarification regarding the following questions: how does the nature of violence in the Niger Delta enable Niger Delta youths to develop coping strategies in order to survive in their environment, and what are these strategies?

I found that this study's participants had an upbeat attitude towards the possibility of societal and environmental change. They hope that one day the situation will be better, and the government and oil companies will recognize their wrongdoings. Although some youths maintain a positive outlook on their situation, societal problems such as the lack of jobs, unsafe transportation, a substandard education system and the lack of opportunities nonetheless make it necessary for many youths to develop survival strategies. The data I have presented in this thesis illustrates the violent situation in which Niger Delta youth lives and the mechanism in which they use to survive. Niger Delta youths developed these strategies in response to the relationship between oil and violence in the region, as the rentier state theory and the resource curse have demonstrated, as well as through their interactions with society, as illustrated by Mead's concept of self.

Finding out who they are as individuals also helps youths survive and make their lives better, as exemplified by Marcia's theory of ego identification.

During my research, I investigated youths' daily activities, economic opportunities and physical mobility, and their attitudes toward oil in the region. In this MA thesis, I have described the violent environments that facilitate youths' development of coping strategies. My research contributes to several topics within the disciplines of sociology and international development. In this thesis, I make contributions to the existing literature on youths' experiences with violence in the Niger Delta region. My research project is important because it addresses certain gaps in the literature on Niger Delta youth violence. Previous research on Niger Delta youths has focused on those who perpetrate violence. In choosing to focus my research on youths who did not participate in violent activities, I add to the information available on Niger Delta youths. Thus, my thesis contributes to the literature on Niger Delta youths because it provides details regarding youths who did not participate in the region's violence.

My research findings indicate that this study's participants would greatly benefit from involvement in political programs that take their needs into consideration. Attending workshops organized by the Keketkache Women Development and Resource Center and Environmental Rights Activist (ERA) made me realize that youths would benefit from a more inclusive, community-based political agenda. This would allow youths from all ethnic groups to gain rights and freedoms in addition to, rather than at the expense of, the traditions, rights and freedoms they enjoyed in the past before the discovery of oil. The introduction of the amnesty program acknowledges the need to harness the energies of able youths for the development of the Niger Delta region. Community-based political

representation of youths from all regions of the Niger Delta is crucial to involving youths to a greater extent in development planning for the region. Educated and non-educated youths alike ought to be included in development initiatives that concern them. This will involve a concerted effort to address existing inequalities and youth's exclusion from society in Nigeria.

My research findings could also be useful in addressing pressing social issues in the contemporary Niger Delta. This study's participants' responses highlight the social issues that are important to them: mainly, the lack of economic opportunities and development in their region. One of my goals in documenting their experiences is to enable policy makers and political advocates in the Niger Delta to take these experiences into consideration. I intend to send a copy of my thesis to an experienced Niger Delta development/activist worker I met at the ERA office in Port Harcourt during my research.

My findings indicate that there needs to be more research and studies conducted on youths' experiences in the Niger Delta, especially on militant youths who have gone through the amnesty program provided by the government and oil companies. This program was created in 2009 to help integrate militant youths back into society. Taking a critical look at the program and how these militant youths are coping now will help improve both the program and youths' ability to survive and search for their identity away from violent activities. Researching if and how communities accept militant youths back into the community is also important to assess, as it is an indicator of the success of the program and youths' reintegration.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview

Hello (participant name) my name is Rita Wiwa, and I am a master's student at the University of Guelph, currently studying with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Thank you again for being here today. In this interview I would like to hear about your experience living Port Harcourt with the constant violence such as kidnapping, killings and political unrest going on. I am interested in learning about challenges you have experienced living here and how you cope with these challenges. I am also interested to see how your life has changed due to the challenges you have encountered.

Your participation in this study is strictly confidential. This interview will be recorded in order to keep accurate track of information. Your participation in this study is important but if you wish to stop, you may do so without any prejudice to you. If at any time you wish to ask me any questions concerning the study or the interview feel free to do so. May we begin?

Questions:

So let's begin [press play on audio recorder]: "It's [date] and I am sitting in [place] with [participant's name]. We are going to converse about her/his experiences living in Port Harcourt.

First off, can you tell me your name and how old you are and where you live? How long have you lived there?

[Name], are you enrolled in school? If yes, what are you studying?

Can you tell me about your journey to studying here?

Why did you choose University of Port Harcourt (or other institution) knowing about the situation here?

Tell me about living on/off campus?

How safe is it here on campus compare to living off campus?

Can you tell me about your daily activity as a student living here?

Has the violence affected your education in any way? If yes, how so?

Has your school gone on strike due to violence activity?

How many strikes have your school gone on since you enrolled?

Can you tell me about your everyday activities?

Do you think these activities might be different if you had gone to school in a different state?

if yes, how so?

Can you tell me how often you move around?

How has the violence such as kidnapping and killings affected how you move from one place to another?

This fight against oil companies has been going on for a while, well at least you have witnessed it since you have been here in Port Harcourt. Can you tell me how you have managed to handle the situation and survive?

What has helped you deal with this situation?

Why do you respond to it this way?

How has your life changed since your encounter with violence?

Have you had to change or adjust to any social settings?

Can you tell me about your social life?

Are there limits to places you can go?

How do you decide if where you are going is safe enough, that you will make it home ok?

Does your school have a security system or personnel to ensure that the students are safe?

Can you tell me about your relationship with other youths that have gone through similar situation or just youths in general?

I was hoping you could tell me about your family life?

Are they very encouraging about your studies?

How do your family feel about you being here? Do they believe that you will be safe?

How have they ensured your safety?

What are your family expectations from you?

How has your life changed since being here?

I was hoping we could talk about your plans for the future.

What do you plan to do after school?

What is your dream job? Do you think you will be able to get it?

Do you think that being a male/female might hinder your job opportunities?

Let's talk about your involvement in the community.

Are you involved in any community activities?

Can you tell me about this group you are involved in?

Apart from your parents paying for your fees/ you working to pay for your education, have you received any funds from the government from the school to help with your studies?

Lastly, how do you feel about other students who get the chance to travel abroad for their studies? Or attend other university like Abuja University?

Is there anything you want to add? Feel free to tell me anything you want me to include in my study.

Thank you so much [participant's name] for taking the time to speak with me today. I learned a great deal from this conversation and I really appreciate your willingness to share your story with me. This experience will be helpful to me as a new researcher and I am sure your insights and experience will help other youths in the same situation as you.

Appendix B: Sample of Consent Form



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH Niger Delta Youths' Survival Strategies

I am asking you to participate in a research study that I am conducting. I am a graduate student, in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Guelph in Canada. The results of this study will contribute to my final Master of Arts thesis and may be published in the future.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to understand the impact of oil violence on youth in Port Harcourt. This research will also explore how social class and ethnicity influence the level of violence young men and women are exposed to. It will also consider the different violence-related experiences of young women and men. This research aims to study the daily experiences of young adults and how they develop survival strategies within the social, political and environmental context of the Niger Delta.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

I would like you to participate in a face-to-face interview, which will run about 45 minutes to an hour. In this interview you would be expected to discuss your experience living in Port Harcourt, the violence you have encountered and how you dealt, and deal today, with these situations.

If after the interview you would like a copy of the interview transcript, please indicate so on this consent form. I will send the copy to you 2 weeks after the interview. If you would like to make any deletions or changes to your interview please inform me within 5 days after the interview copy have been sent to you. If you would also like a copy of the research please let me know now, and I will email it to you after it is completed.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There may be risk of emotional or psychological discomfort and social risks when discussing personal violence-related experiences living in Port Harcourt. If an issue arises that causes any discomfort for you, I will either will stop the interview (upon your request) or move to a different question. You are free to leave the interview at any time with no consequences. All the questions are optional so if you do not wish to answer the questions, you can tell me that you do not wish to do so.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This study might benefit you because you might feel relieved after talking about your journey from being, for instance, a victim, to being a survivor.

This study might also benefit the society because your testimony might contribute, in however a small way, to stopping or reducing oil related violence. Your experience might prevent other youths from experiencing the same thing.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not be paid for participating in this research because it is voluntary.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. I will use codes names on data documents and keep a separate document that links study code to subjects on my mobile computer. I will keep the identifying information locked up in a separate location and restrict access so that only I (Rita Wiwa) will have access to the information provided in this study. The mobile computer will be encrypted to ensure further safety of participant confidentiality.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind from the study. You may also exercise the option of removing your data from the study as indicated above. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

Director, Research Ethics
University of Guelph
437 University Centre

Telephone: (519) 824-4120, ext. 56606
E-mail: sauld@uoguelph.ca
Fax: (519) 821-5236

I would like a copy of the interview transcript

Email or postal address where the researcher can send the completed transcript:

Participant's signature _____

Date

Investigator's signature _____

Date

Appendix C: Table Summarizing Informants' Background Information

Key Characteristics of Participants	Participants Ages 18-30 (out of 20)	Participants Ages over 30(out of 3)	Total Number of Participants (out of 23)
<i>Marital status</i>			
Single	18	0	18
Married	2	3	5
<i>Parental status</i>			
Children	2	3	5
<i>Living arrangement</i>			
Living with parents (at present or after school is over)/	18	0	18
Living with spouse at parents (husband parent's home)	2	3	4
Living with a roommate (student live when in school)	5	0	5
<i>Occupation</i>			
students	5	0	5
Uneducated/drop out in primary school	13	3	16
Graduate	2	0	2
Unemployed	13		13
Employed	0	3	3
Fisherman	5	0	5
Farmers	5	3	8

**Some of the participant between the ages of 18 to 30 years of age does odd jobs such carrying bricks on construction site as to pass by.

**Rural participants were both fisherman and farmers

Appendix D: The Ogoni Bill of Rights

The Ogoni Bill of Rights which was presented to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1990 called for, among other things, political autonomy to participate in the affairs of the Republic as a distinct and separate unit (by whatever name called), provided that this autonomy guarantees political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people; the right to control and use a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development; adequate representations, as of right, in all Nigerian national institutions, and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.

OGONI BILL OF RIGHTS

PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT
AND PEOPLE OF NIGERIA
October, 1990

WITH

AN APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

by

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
(MOSOP) December, 1991

Published by Saros International Publishers, 24 Aggrey Road, PO Box 193, Port
Harcourt, Nigeria for The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)
June 1992.

FOREWORD

In August 1990 the Chiefs and people of Ogoni in Nigeria met to sign one of the most important declarations to come out of Africa in recent times: the Ogoni Bill of Rights. By the Bill, the Ogoni people, while underlining their loyalty to the Nigerian nation, laid claim as a people to their independence which British colonialism had first violated and then handed over to some other Nigerian ethnic groups in October 1960.

The Bill of Rights presented to the Government and people of Nigeria called for political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people, control and use of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development, adequate and direct representation as of right for Ogoni people in all Nigerian national institutions and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.

These rights which should have reverted to the Ogoni after the termination of British rule, have been usurped in the past thirty years by the majority ethnic groups of Nigeria. They have not only been usurped; they have been misused and abused, turning Nigeria into a

hell on earth for the Ogoni and similar ethnic minorities. Thirty years of Nigerian independence has done no more than outline the wretched quality of the leadership of the Nigerian majority ethnic groups and their cruelty as they have plunged the nation into ethnic strife, carnage, war, dictatorship, retrogression and the greatest waste of national resources ever witnessed in world history, turning generations of Nigerians, born and unborn into perpetual debtors.

The Ogoni Bill of Rights rejects once and for all this incompetent indigenous colonialism and calls for a new order in Nigeria, an order in which each ethnic group will have full responsibility for its own affairs and competition between the various peoples of Nigeria will be fair, thus ushering in a new era of peaceful co-existence, co-operation and national progress.

This is the path which has been chosen by the European tribes in the European Community, and by the Russians and their neighbours in the new Commonwealth which they are now fashioning. The Yugoslav tribes are being forced into similar ways. The lesson is that high fences make good neighbours. The Ogoni people are therefore in the mainstream of international thought.

It is well known that since the issuance of the Bill of Rights the Babangida administration has continued in the reactionary ways of all the military rulers of Nigeria from Ironsi through Gowon, Obasanjo and Buhari, seeking to turn Nigeria into a unitary state against the wishes of the Nigerian peoples and trends in world history. The split of the country into 30 states and 600 local governments in 1991 is a waste of resources, a veritable exercise in futility. It is a further attempt to transfer the seized resources of the Ogoni and other minority groups in the delta to the majority ethnic groups of the country. Without oil, these states and local governments will not exist for one day longer.

The import of the creation of these states is that the Ogoni and other minority groups will continue to be slaves of the majority ethnic groups. It is a gross abuse of human rights, a notable undemocratic act which flies in the face of modern history. The Ogoni people are right to reject it. While they are willing, for the reasons of Africa, to share their resources with other Africans, they insist that it must be on the principles of mutuality, of fairness, of equity and justice.

It has been assumed that because the Ogoni are few in number, they can be abused and denied their rights and that their environment can be destroyed without compunction. This has been the received wisdom of Nigeria according to military dictatorships. 1992 will put paid to this as the Ogoni put their case to the international community.

It is the intention of the Ogoni people to draw the attention of the American government and people to the fact that the oil which they buy from Nigeria is stolen property and that it is against American law to receive stolen goods.

The Ogoni people will be telling the European Community that their demand of the Yugoslav tribes that they respect human rights and democracy should also apply to

Nigeria and that they should not wait for Nigeria to burst into ethnic strife and carnage before enjoining these civilized values on a Nigeria which depends on European investment, technology and credit.

The Ogoni people will be appealing to the British Government and the leaders of the Commonwealth who have urged on Commonwealth countries the virtues of good government, democracy, human rights and environmental protection that no government can be good if it imposes and operates laws which cheat a section of its peoples; that democracy does not exist where laws do not protect minorities and that the environment of the Ogoni and other delta minorities has been ruined beyond repair by multi-national oil companies under the protection of successive Nigerian administrations run by Nigerians of the majority ethnic groups.

The Ogoni people will make representation to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to the effect that giving loans and credit to the Nigerian Government on the understanding that oil money will be used to repay such loans is to encourage the Nigerian government to continue to dehumanise the Ogoni people and to devastate the environment and ecology of the Ogoni and other delta minorities among whom oil is found.

The Ogoni people will inform the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity that the Nigerian Constitution and the actions of the power elite in Nigeria flagrantly violate the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights; and that Nigeria in 1992 is no different from Apartheid South Africa. The Ogoni people will ask that Nigeria be duly chastised by both organizations for its inhuman actions and uncivilized behaviour. And if Nigeria persists in its perversity, then it should be expelled from both organizations.

These actions of the Ogoni people aim at the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Ogoni people as a distinct ethnic community in Nigeria, and at the establishment of a democratic Nigeria, a progressive multi-ethnic nation, a realistic society of equals, a just nation.

What the Ogoni demand for themselves, namely autonomy, they also ask for others throughout Nigeria and, indeed, the continent of Africa.

It is their hope that the international community will respond to these demands as they have done to similar demands in other parts of the world.

Ken Saro-Wiwa
Port Harcourt 24/12/91

STATEMENT BY DR. G.B. LETON, OON JP

President of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)

1. The Ogoni case is of genocide being committed in the dying years of the twentieth century by multi-national oil companies under the supervision of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is that of a distinct ethnic minority in Nigeria who feel so suffocated by existing political, economic and social conditions in Nigeria that they have no choice but to cry out to the international community for salvation.
2. The Ogoni are a distinct ethnic group inhabiting the coastal plains terraces to the north-east of the Niger delta. On account of the hitherto very rich plateau soil, the people are mainly subsistence farmers but they also engage in migrant and nomadic fishing. They occupy an area of about 400 square miles and number an estimated 500,000. The population density of about 1,250 persons per square mile is among the highest in any rural area in the world and compares with the Nigerian national average of 300. The obvious problem is the pressure on land.
3. Petroleum was discovered in Ogoni at Bomu (Dere) in 1958; since then an estimated US 100 billion dollars worth of oil has been carted away from Ogoniland. In return for this, the Ogoni have no pipe-borne water, no electricity, very few roads, ill-equipped schools and hospitals and no industry whatsoever.
4. Ogoni has suffered and continues to suffer the degrading effects of oil exploration and exploitation: lands, streams and creeks are totally and continually polluted; the atmosphere is for ever charged with hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide; many villages experience the infernal quaking of the wrath of gas flares which have been burning 24 hours a day for 33 years; acid rain, oil spillages and blowouts are common. The result of such unchecked environmental pollution and degradation are that (i) The Ogoni can no longer farm successfully. Once the food basket of the eastern Niger Delta, the Ogoni now buy food (when they can afford it); (ii) Fish, once a common source of protein, is now rare. Owing to the constant and continual pollution of our streams and creeks, fish can only be caught in deeper and offshore waters for which the Ogoni are not equipped. (iii) All wildlife is dead. (iv) The ecology is changing fast. The mangrove tree, the aerial roots of which normally provide a natural and welcome habitat for many a sea food - crabs, periwinkles, mudskippers, cockles, mussels, shrimps and all - is now being gradually replaced by unknown and otherwise useless plants. (v) The health hazards generated by an atmosphere charged with hydrocarbon vapour, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide are innumerable.
5. The once beautiful Ogoni countryside is no more a source of fresh air and green vegetation. All one sees and feels around is death. Death is everywhere in Ogoni. Ogoni languages are dying; Ogoni culture is dying; Ogoni people, Ogoni animals, Ogoni fishes are dying because of 33 years of hazardous environmental pollution and resulting food scarcity. In spite of an alarming density of population, American and British oil companies greedily encroach on more and more Ogoni land, depriving the peasants of their only means of livelihood. Mining rents and royalties for Ogoni oil are seized by the Federal Government of Nigeria which offers the Ogoni people NOTHING in return. Ogoni is being killed so that Nigeria can live.

6. Politically, the Ogoni are being ground to the dust under dictatorial decrees imposed by successive military regimes in Nigeria and laws smuggled by military dictatorships into the Nigerian Constitution which Constitution does not protect ethnic minorities and which today bears no resemblance whatsoever to the covenant entered into by the federating Nigerian ethnic groups at Independence.

7. Ethnicity is a fact of Nigerian life. Nigeria is a federation of ethnic groups. In practice, however, ethnocentrism is the order of the day in the country. The rights and resources of the Ogoni have been usurped by the majority ethnic groups and the Ogoni consigned to slavery and possible extinction. The Ogoni people reject the current political and administrative structuring of Nigeria imposed by the Military Government. They believe with Obafemi Awolowo that in a true federation, each ethnic group, no matter how small is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large.

8. The Ogoni people therefore demand POLITICAL AUTONOMY as a distinct and separate unit of the Nigerian federation - autonomy which will guarantee them certain basic rights essential to their survival as a people. This demand has been spelt out in the Ogoni Bill of Rights. The Ogoni people stand by the Bill and now appeal to the international community, as a last resort, to save them from extinction.

(Sgd) Dr. G.B. Leton
President, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)

OGONI BILL OF RIGHTS PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

We, the people of Ogoni (Babbe, Gokana, Ken Khana, Nyo Khana and Tai) numbering about 500,000 being a separate and distinct ethnic nationality within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, wish to draw the attention of the Governments and people of Nigeria to the undermentioned facts:

1. That the Ogoni people, before the advent of British colonialism, were not conquered or colonized by any other ethnic group in present-day Nigeria.
2. That British colonization forced us into the administrative division of Opobo from 1908 to 1947.
3. That we protested against this forced union until the Ogoni Native Authority was created in 1947 and placed under the then Rivers Province.
4. That in 1951 we were forcibly included in the Eastern Region of Nigeria where we suffered utter neglect.

5. That we protested against this neglect by voting against the party in power in the Region in 1957, and against the forced union by testimony before the Willink Commission of Inquiry into Minority Fears in 1958.
6. That this protest led to the inclusion of our nationality in Rivers State in 1967, which State consists of several ethnic nationalities with differing cultures, languages and aspirations.
7. That oil was struck and produced in commercial quantities on our land in 1958 at K. Dere (Bomu oilfield).
8. That oil has been mined on our land since 1958 to this day from the following oilfields: (i) Bomu (ii) Bodo West (iii) Tai (iv) Korokoro (v) Yorla (vi) Lubara Creek and (vii) Afam by Shell Petroleum Development Company (Nigeria) Limited.
9. That in over 30 years of oil mining, the Ogoni nationality have provided the Nigerian nation with a total revenue estimated at over 40 billion Naira (N40 billion) or 30 billion dollars.
10. That in return for the above contribution, the Ogoni people have received NOTHING.
11. That today, the Ogoni people have:
 - (i) No representation whatsoever in ALL institutions of the Federal Government of Nigeria.
 - (ii) No pipe-borne water.
 - (iii) No electricity.
 - (iv) No job opportunities for the citizens in Federal, State, public sector or private sector companies.
 - (v) No social or economic project of the Federal Government.
12. That the Ogoni languages of Gokana and Khana are underdeveloped and are about to disappear, whereas other Nigerian languages are being forced on us.
13. That the Ethnic policies of successive Federal and State Governments are gradually pushing the Ogoni people to slavery and possible extinction.
14. That the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited does not employ Ogoni people at a meaningful or any level at all, in defiance of the Federal government s regulations.

15. That the search for oil has caused severe land and food shortages in Ogoni one of the most densely populated areas of Africa (average: 1,500 per square mile; national average: 300 per square mile).

16. That neglectful environmental pollution laws and substandard inspection techniques of the Federal authorities have led to the complete degradation of the Ogoni environment, turning our homeland into an ecological disaster.

17. That the Ogoni people lack education, health and other social facilities.

18. That it is intolerable that one of the richest areas of Nigeria should wallow in abject poverty and destitution.

19. That successive Federal administrations have trampled on every minority right enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution to the detriment of the Ogoni and have by administrative structuring and other noxious acts transferred Ogoni wealth exclusively to other parts of the Republic.

20. That the Ogoni people wish to manage their own affairs.

NOW, therefore, while reaffirming our wish to remain a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we make demand upon the Republic as follows:

That the Ogoni people be granted POLITICAL AUTONOMY to participate in the affairs of the Republic as a distinct and separate unit by whatever name called, provided that this Autonomy guarantees the following:

- (i) Political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people.
- (ii) The right to the control and use of a fair proportion of OGONI economic resources for Ogoni development.
- (iii) Adequate and direct representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions.
- (iv) The use and development of Ogoni languages in all Nigerian territory.
- (v) The full development of Ogoni culture.
- (vi) The right to religious freedom.
- (vii) The right to protect the OGONI environment and ecology from further degradation.

We make the above demand in the knowledge that it does not deny any other ethnic group in the Nigerian Federation of their rights and that it can only conduce to peace, justice and fairplay and hence stability and progress in the Nigerian nation.

We make the demand in the belief that, as Obafemi Awolowo has written: In a true federation, each ethnic group no matter how small, is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large.

We demand these rights as equal members of the Nigerian Federation who contribute and have contributed to the growth of the Federation and have a right to expect full returns from that Federation.

Adopted by general acclaim of the Ogoni people on the 26th day of August, 1990 at Bori, Rivers State and signed by: (see under).

ADDENDUM TO THE OGONI BILL OF RIGHTS

We, the people of Ogoni, being a separate and distinct ethnic nationality within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, hereby state as follows:

(a) That on October 2, 1990 we addressed an Ogoni Bill of Rights to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida and members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council;

(b) That after a one-year wait, the President has been unable to grant us the audience which we sought to have with him in order to discuss the legitimate demands contained in the Ogoni Bill of Rights;

(c) That our demands as outlined in the Ogoni Bill of Rights are legitimate, just and our inalienable right and in accord with civilized values worldwide;

(d) That the Government of the Federal Republic has continued, since October 2, 1990, to decree measures and implement policies which further marginalize the Ogoni people, denying us political autonomy, our rights to our resources, to the development of our languages and culture, to adequate representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions and to the protection of our environment and ecology from further degradation;

(e) That we cannot sit idly by while we are, as a people, dehumanized and slowly exterminated and driven to extinction even as our rich resources are siphoned off to the exclusive comfort and improvement of other Nigerian communities, and the shareholders of multi-national oil companies.

Now therefore, while re-affirming our wish to remain a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we hereby authorize the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) to make representation, for as long as these injustices continue, to the United Nations

Commission on Human Rights, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the African Commission on Human and Peoples rights, the European Community and all international bodies which have a role to play in the preservation of our nationality, as follows:

1. That the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has, in utter disregard and contempt for human rights, since independence in 1960 till date, denied us our political rights to self-determination, economic rights to our resources, cultural rights to the development of our languages and culture, and social rights to education, health and adequate housing and to representation as of right in national institutions;
2. That, in particular, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has refused to pay us oil royalties and mining rents amounting to an estimated 20 billion US dollars for petroleum mined from our soil for over thirty-three years;
3. That the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria does not protect any of our rights whatsoever as an ethnic minority of 500,000 in a nation of about 100 million people and that the voting power and military might of the majority ethnic groups have been used remorselessly against us at every point in time;
4. That multi-national oil companies, namely Shell (Dutch/British) and Chevron (American) have severally and jointly devastated our environment and ecology, having flared gas in our villages for 33 years and caused oil spillages, blow-outs etc., and have dehumanised our people, denying them employment and those benefits which industrial organizations in Europe and America routinely contribute to their areas of operation;
5. That the Nigerian elite (bureaucratic, military, industrial and academic) have turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to these acts of dehumanisation by the ethnic majority and have colluded with all the agents of destruction aimed at us;
6. That we cannot seek restitution in the courts of law in Nigeria as the act of expropriation of our rights and resources has been institutionalised in the 1979 and 1989 Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which Constitutions were acts of a Constituent Assembly imposed by a military regime and do not, in any way, protect minority rights or bear resemblance to the tacit agreement made at Nigerian independence.
7. That the Ogoni people abjure violence in their just struggle for their rights within the Federal Republic of Nigeria but will, through every lawful means, and for as long as is necessary, fight for social justice and equity for themselves and their progeny, and in particular demand political autonomy as a distinct and separate unit within the Nigerian nation with full right to (i) control Ogoni political affairs, (ii) use at least fifty per cent of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development; (iii) protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation; (iv) ensure the full restitution of the harm done to the health of our people by the flaring of gas, oil spillages, oil blow-outs, etc. by the following oil companies: Shell, Chevron and their Nigerian accomplices.

8. That without the intervention of the international community the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the ethnic majority will continue these noxious policies until the Ogoni people are obliterated from the face of the earth.

Adopted by general acclaim of the Ogoni people on the 26th day of August 1991 at Bori, Rivers State of Nigeria.

Signed on behalf of the Ogoni people by:

BABBE:

HRH Mark Tsaro-Igbara, Gbenemene Babbe; HRH F.M.K. Noryaa, Menebua, Ka-Babbe; Chief M.A.M. Tornwe III, JP; Prince J.S. Sangha; Dr. Israel Kue; Chief A.M.N. Gua.

GOKANA:

HRH James P. Bagia, Gberesako XI, Gberemene Gokana; Chief E.N. Kobani, JP Tonsimene Gokana; Dr. B.N. Birabi; Chief Kemte Giadom, JP; Chief S.N. Orage.

KEN-KHANA:

HRH M.H.S. Eguru, Gbenemene Ken-Khana; HRH C.B.S. Nwikina, Emah III, Menebua Bom; Mr. M.C. Daanwii; Chief T.N. Nwieke; Mr. Ken Saro-wiwa; Mr. Simeon Idemyor.

NYO-KHANA:

HRH W.Z.P. Nzidee, Genemene Baa I of Nyo-Khana; Dr. G.B. Leton, OON, JP; Mr. Lekue Lah-Loolo; Mr. L.E. Mwarra; Chief E.A. Apenu; Pastor M.P. Maeba. TAI: HRH B.A. Mballey, Gbenemene Tai; HRH G.N. Gininwa, Menebua Tua Tua; Chief J.S. Agbara; Chief D.J.K. Kumbe; Chief Fred Gwezia; HRH A. Demor-Kanni, Meneba Nonwa.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD:

1. Prevail on the American Government to stop buying Nigerian oil. It is stolen property.
2. Prevail on Shell and Chevron to stop flaring gas in Ogoni.
3. Prevail on the Federal Government of Nigeria to honour the rights of the Ogoni people to self-determination and AUTONOMY.
4. Prevail on the Federal Government of Nigeria to pay all royalties and mining rents collected on oil mined from Ogoni since 1958.

5. Prevail on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to stop giving loans to the Federal Government of Nigeria; all loans which depend for their repayment on the exploitation of Ogoni oil resources.
6. Send urgent medical and other aid to the Ogoni people.
7. Prevail on the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity and the Commonwealth of Nations to either get the Federal Government of Nigeria to obey the rules and mores of these organisations, face sanctions or be expelled from them.
8. Prevail on European and American Governments to stop giving aid and credit to the Federal Government of Nigeria as aid and credit only go to encourage the further dehumanisation of the Ogoni people.
9. Prevail on European and American Governments to grant political refugee status to all Ogoni people seeking protection from the political persecution and genocide at the hands of the Federal Government of Nigeria.
10. Prevail on Shell and Chevron to pay compensation to the Ogoni People for ruining the Ogoni environment and the health of Ogoni men, women and children.

