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# Environmental Degradation: Key Challenge to Sustainable Economic Development in the Niger Delta

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Christian Duru

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2014

Abstract

Environmental Degradation: Key Challenge to Sustainable Economic Development  
in the Niger Delta

by

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MBA, Strayer University, 2010

B.A, Schiller University, 1981

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

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## Abstract

In 2011, the United Nations Environmental Program released an independent assessment report establishing that decades of oil and gas exploration and production activities by multinational oil companies have caused severe pollution of the ecosystem in the Niger Delta. The cleanup cost would require \$1 billion for the first 5 years and no less than 30 years for completion. The purpose of this case study was to uncover how environmental degradation resulting from the activities of multinational oil corporations affects sustainable economic development for the indigenes of Ogoniland in the Niger Delta. Modernization and dependency, critical, and stakeholder theories shaped the theoretical foundations of the study. Inquiry consisted of 2 separate focus group sessions with 20 Ogoni indigenes of various professional backgrounds, a review of the United Nations report on Ogoniland, and public records pertaining to Ogoni civil society organizations. Ogoni indigenes served as the optimum constituents for focus groups because of their exposure to the most degraded land and sea environment in the Niger Delta. Data analysis through selective coding confirmed that degradation occurred, and indigenes were affected economically and socially as their land may lose its regenerative capacity. The findings from the focus group sessions underscored a separation between the Ogoni need for a sustainable environment and corporate interests of multinational oil corporations. This study contributes to social change by alerting policy makers in public and private organizations to evaluate sustainable development practices from the perspectives of voiceless and powerless indigenous communities that host strategic resource wealth.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father, Ngamnodimma Mary Duru and Ubawumadu Joseph Duru, who always wished for me to attain the highest level possible in all positive endeavors and to commit my knowledge and resources for the advancement of humanity. “Your memories live in eternity.” Finally, I immeasurably thank all my family members and friends whose relentless support and encouragement remained steadfast throughout the doctoral learning process.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The wide scale contamination of farmlands, creeks, swamps, and rivers in the Niger Delta is the result of crude oil exploration, refining, and other allied business activities in the region (Snapps, 2011). The environment is a natural, human habitat, and its resources guarantee human survival (Oshwofasa, Anuta, & Aiyedogbon, 2012). In studying the Niger Delta region (NDR) of Nigeria, Onwubiko, Asmuni, Idris, and Othman (2013) admitted that environmental change can affect habitat, social development, customs, and norms. On August 3, 2011, the United Nations News-Service revealed that the current pollution of the ecosystem in the Niger Delta by oil multinationals, and Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC) in particular, will require no less than 30 years to clean up. The impact of environmental degradation on the rural economy (commercial fishing, boat-construction, and farming) of the Niger Delta suggests that multinational oil corporations (MNOCs) and other stakeholders miss the opportunity for business diversification (Babatunde, 2010).

Evidently, the demand for crude oil affects modern society more than any particular natural resource with the exception of water (Obi, 2010). Oil is a nonrenewable resource; therefore, the profits generated from the value ought to build the capacity for equitable wealth distribution in the Niger Delta (Eweje, 2007; Orogun, 2010). An average of one oil spill occurs daily in the Niger Delta and the cost of environmental loss as a result is incalculable (Babatunde, 2010). The cause of the armed insurgency, entrenched poverty, deteriorating living conditions, and underdevelopment in one of Africa's most resource rich regions relate to the role of MNOCs and the Nigerian State (Akhigbe,

2013). Following this assertion, Iniaghe, Tesi and Iniaghe, (2013) argued that MNOCs' inability to relate to host communities as stakeholders means that cumulative environmental damage as a consequence of resource extraction and depletion is not replaced with physical and material development. The entrenched poverty in the Niger Delta illustrates and explicates the paradox of plenty, the "resource curse," the "shadow state syndrome," and the debilitating effects of petroleum politics in Nigeria (Orogun, 2010, p. 2). The prevailing violence, and various forms of confrontations between MNOCs and indigenous communities in the NDR, leads to hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue to oil companies and the Nigerian government (Akpan 2010).

Specifically, this study involved exploring the experiences of the people of Ogoniland regarding the inaction of MNOCs to limit the cost of environmental degradation and its impact on sustainable development in their community. Wright and Kurian (2009) noted that a judicious integration of environmental control regulations and business-oriented options aimed at correcting market crash will stimulate economic growth and environmental protection. This research contributed to the existing body of literature on environmental security and sustainable economic development in the Niger Delta region. The findings of this study may expose the contradiction pertaining to the profitability of resource extraction, inequitable exchange, ecological devastation, and conflict.

### **Background of the Problem**

In the past 5 decades, multinational oil companies have invested hundreds of millions of dollars, imported advanced technological equipment, and conducted complex

operations for the exploration and production of crude oil. In return, MNOCs have extracted millions of barrels of oil accumulating profits in billions of dollars (Odoemene, 2011; Oguduvwe, 2013). However, the Niger Delta indigenes have not benefited from the profits of MNOCs (Oguduvwe, 2013; Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012).

Against this background, the people of NDR claim that activities of extractive industries such as gas flaring, poor disposal of chemical waste, oil spillage, and other forms of pollutants are externalities resulting from MNOC inefficient production systems (Donwa, 2011). The indigenes assert that in environmental economics, the cost of externalities arising from the internal transaction of MNOCs ought to be integrated into the direct cost and profit opportunity of production (Ogula, 2012; Omojimate, 2012). Aras and Crowther (2009) contended that inefficiencies that emanate from technical externalities represent a form of market failure. Thus, it is argued that it makes sense for MNOCs to recognize and responsibly accept the business or financial obligation associated with market outcomes (Donwa, 2011; Olufemi, 2010).

In pursuit of the triple bottom line theory (TBL), Amadi and Abdullah (2012) argued that the demands of the Niger Delta indigenes have to be addressed by MNOCs, within the economic framework of embracing stakeholder values. In this context, stakeholders represent any individual, group, or organizations affected by the activities of a corporation (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012). Odoemene (2011) and Edino, Nsofor, and Bombom (2010) noted that the negative externalities from oil/gas exploration are the cause of persistent health problems, forced migration, loss of agricultural farmland, social tension, and other forms of deprivation. The indigenes that were not part of MNOCs

internal transaction, contracts, or systems bear the indirect costs from these externalities (Oguduvwe, 2013; Ogula, 2012). Amadi and Abdullah (2012) contended that the TBL concept, otherwise known as People, Planet, and Profits, dictates that a corporate business practice should benefit stakeholders and not shareholders. The business case implicit in the attributions of responsibility to MNOCs by ND indigenes is that equitable distribution of the proceeds of oil/gas enterprise is a sustainable economic imperative (Iniaghe et al., 2013, Ogula, 2012). Carney, Gedajlovic, and Sur (2011) asserted that all stakeholders have equitable rights. This form of equitable sustainability provides the mechanism to counterbalance the destruction of capital (land and resource) and provide alternative approaches to stimulate the host economy incapacitated by environmental degradation (Ogula, 2012).

SPDC and other MNOCs operating in the NDR (see Appendix A for MNOC list) have issued press releases citing TBL as a guiding principle for their corporate sustainability agenda (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012). The goal of the TBL framework was to achieve a balanced satisfaction for the economy, society, and the environment (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012). Oil-induced environmental degradation has resulted in internal populations' displacement (Onwubiko et al., 2013). The people of the Niger Delta are dissatisfied with the amount of attention to the development of their region by the federal government of Nigeria and MNOCs (Akhigbe, 2013). This dissatisfaction is the source of regional conflict (Chukwuemeka & Aghara, 2010). The hegemonic alliance between the oil companies, powerful elites, and the government make it possible for MNOCs to break local environmental laws and engage in socially irresponsible behavior (Obi, 2011).

Environmental accounting entails close monitoring of natural resources by accounting for the impact of its related activities on the environment (Donwa, 2011). The well-being of the inhabitants who host the resource, and especially the effective use of such resources for sustainable development, is a critical component of environmental accounting (Donwa, 2011).

The dominant view is that oil and gas exploration activities and its attendant consequences are responsible for the declining productivity of the region (Ebegbulem, Ekpe, & Adejumo, 2013). Environmental degradation has contributed to the decline in fisheries and other agricultural activities like farming and lumber businesses that dominated the traditional economy (Oshwofasa et al., 2012). Gas flaring and oil spillage have impaired the yield and nutrient value of crops cultivated in the Niger Delta (Edino et al., 2010). Gas flairs contribute to heat waves and acid rain; these inevitably contaminate underground water sources (Edino et al., 2010). In the past, NDR communities were independent, but are now unable to promote and maintain their needs because of environmental devastation (Snapps, 2011). The Niger Delta crisis is a product of environmental degradation resulting in the transformation of a rich ecology into an unproductive wasteland despite its abundant reserves of natural resources (Okpara, 2011).

Government agencies fail to enforce environmental laws (monitoring and imposing sanctions on MNOCs), which reflects the impotence of a legal response towards the oil companies (Idemudia, 2009). The Nigerian state is a *rentier state* (Akinde, 2011), or a state that derives more than 55% of government revenue from taxes on profits and nontax sources and whose economy depends on the one-export economy



(Akinde, 2011). Authoritarianism, arbitrary rule, and emphasis on connections and loyalty rather than on merit and efficiency are characteristics of rentier states (Bagaji, Achegbulu, Maji, & Yakubu 2011; Emuedo, 2010).

The factors that best describe the environmental, social, and economic problems facing the Niger Delta arise from the near extinction of the means of subsistence that served the inhabitants of NDR for centuries (Odoemene, 2011). The people of the Niger Delta depend on the environment for survival, as they are farmers, fishermen, and hunters (Obi, 2011). The inability of the Nigerian government to enforce those laws that would protect the environment and promote the success of its citizens only deepens the state of underdevelopment and consequence of poverty experienced by the people of the Niger Delta (Obi, 2011; Omojimate, 2012).

### **Problem Statement**

Nigeria's dependence on oil and gas extraction has inflicted corresponding costs on the economy and the environment of the NDR (Akhigbe, 2013; Oguduvwe, 2013). For more than 50 years, multinational oil companies contaminated a 1,000 square km (386 sq. mile) area of the Niger Delta region, consequently endangering human health and wildlife (United Nations Environmental Program, 2011). Revenue from oil and gas extraction activities account for 80% of Nigeria's annual budget while oil accounts for 90% of its export earnings (Akpabio & Akpan, 2010). The activities of the oil industry have sanctioned environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region, threatening resource capacity and the economic livelihood of indigenous communities (Ako, 2012).

The general business problem is that profits and economic benefits derived from oil and gas businesses have not been used to improve the relationship with stakeholders to mitigate the effects of oil and gas extraction by multinational oil corporations (Ako, Obokoh, & Okonmah, 2009). The specific business problem is that profit monopoly guiding MNOC oil and gas extraction practices have incapacitated the economic sustenance of Ogoniland indigenes.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how the economic sustenance of Ogoniland indigenes have been incapacitated by profit monopoly guiding MNOCs oil and gas extraction activities. The population for this research study is indigenes of Ogoniland. Twenty Ogoni indigenes shared their perspectives on the activities of multinational oil companies in their community by participating in focus groups. I also reviewed archival documents from various libraries, community organization, and aid organizations (see Appendix B, C, and D). Ogoniland covers an area of 100,000 square km, east of Port Harcourt in Rivers State, and has a population of over 500,000 people. Ogoniland is an appropriate choice for this case study because it serves as a host for extraction sites for leading oil companies.

This study may sensitize multinational businesses of the importance for environmental sustainability and partnership with the Niger Delta people. This research has the potential to effect social change and reverse the negative impacts of industrialization concerning oil and gas exploration in the Niger Delta region. For example, this study might persuade business executives and investors to evaluate the

inefficiency of production activities against the socioeconomic life of indigenes in their domain of production. This approach may enhance SPDC's claims of best practices and commitment to the TBL principle for corporate sustainability.

### **Nature of the Study**

This qualitative research using a single case study design was to explore the effects of natural resource extraction on environmental and economic sustainability of indigenes of Ogoniland, and their relationship with MNOCs. The nature of this research is exploratory; therefore, a quantitative study may not satisfy the purpose. A quantitative research design uses deductive reasoning to analyze data (Tewksbury, 2009).

Quantitative research may be useful in testing theory or hypotheses, but cannot adequately explain why and how a circumstance occurs, which was the purpose of this research (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Tewksbury, 2009).

Qualitative research encompasses a multimethod approach and is essentially exploratory (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009). The value of qualitative research to understand a situation from the perspective of research participants lacks merit in quantitative findings (Eshlaghy, Chitsaz, Karimian, & Charkhchi, 2011). Quantitative research is deductive and conducted in controlled settings and its outcomes are subjected to statistical analysis. Qualitative research is inductive and conducted in natural settings and its data collection and analysis occur simultaneously (Harris et al., 2009). A qualitative researcher best guides the value of this study for obtaining in-depth descriptions, increased clarity, and meaning (Lietz & Zayas, 2010).

The case study design offers an in-depth knowledge of real life experience as contextualized in this study (Yin, 2009). The purpose of this case study was to learn how activities of oil multinationals affect the environment and the lives of people. In this context the actions, trends, and events as a result of policy and decisions by MNOCs warrant an in-depth research and analysis in order to understand the material phenomenon (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009). A case study design facilitates the investigation and comprehension of complex issues and a thorough investigation, such as using more than one source of evidence (Diefenbach, 2009).

In this research, a single case study design means one entity and event over a time frame; the unit of analysis can vary from an individual, event, company, or organization (Noor, 2008; Yin, 2009). Yin (2009), Diefenbach (2009), and Reynoso (2010) contended that the conditions that create a case study are the research questions, the control the researcher has over the event, and whether the research focus is on a modern complex issue or event. Thus, the people of Ogoniland, their struggle for equity and justice for 5 decades, and their interaction with MNOCs meet the criteria for establishing this particular case study as a complex and current issue (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009).

Qualitative research designs, such as ethnography, did not match the purpose for this study. Murchison argued that ethnography describes the symbols, signs, rituals, and practices of an organization (Chenail, 2011). The ethnographer seeks to provide an analytic description of the setting under study and to allow the reader to understand how the structural and operational area functions (Tewksbury, 2009). In the absence of theory, however, the use of ethnography in the context of validation is complex, and may lessen

the value of purposive sampling that is necessary to achieve the purpose of this research (Wilson & Chaddha, 2010). In ethnographic research, the analyst may influence thought to fit preconceived notions and make claims that are not well supported by data (Wilson & Chaddha, 2010).

Phenomenology was considered as a prospective research design; however, phenomenology involves acquiring knowledge of the lived experiences of participants (Lasch et al., 2010). While lived experiences may be useful, a case study design allows for other sources of information and may lead to a more robust analysis of the research question (Noor, 2008; Street & Ward, 2012). A grounded theory method requires going beyond description and the experience of the participants in order to create a theory (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). The intention of this study was to explore how the profit motives, character, and nature of MNOCs in the Niger Delta and in Ogoniland impact sustainable economic development and the livelihood of indigenes. Therefore, in order to conduct a systematic exploration and understanding of the phenomenon of interest to this study, a case study approach driven by a description of the experiences of the participants, observation, and document collection is suitable for this research.

### **Research Question**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how the economic sustenance of Ogoniland indigenes have been incapacitated by MNOCs' oil and gas extraction practices. The overarching research question is as follows: How has the economic sustenance of Ogoniland indigenes been incapacitated by profit monopoly guiding the extraction practices of multinational oil corporations? The open-ended

structure of the question provided an opportunity for focus group participants to share their views and experiences about MNOC activities in their community. The following focus group questions narrowed the main research question to provide the range of reasons that could explain MNOC action as it affects Ogoniland.

### **Focus Group Research Questions**

1. How would one evaluate the interaction between the Ogoni community and multinational corporations operating in Ogoniland?
2. What percentage of indigene income is derived from MNOC activities (such as land rents, royalties, leases, and other related benefits)?
3. How would water resources, farmlands, health care, and training services benefit directly from investment by MNOCs?
4. What percentage of Ogoni indigenes are employed by MNOCs in executive, management, and unclassified positions?
5. How has the interaction between Ogoni community and MNOCs contributed to peace, security, and promotion of agreement and principles?
6. How have MNOCs' activities affected the cost of living in Ogoniland, for example, cost of food items, housing, medicine, transportation, and energy?
7. How would one quantify the value of economic resources incapacitated by decades of environmental degradation due to the activities of extractive industries?
8. What specific MNOC actions would promote effective and sustainable outcomes for Ogoni community and make lasting peace with MNOCs?

9. What would you like to add to this focus group session?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Modernization and dependency theories, critical theory, and stakeholder theory formed the foundation to explore how multinational oil companies operate in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Environmental degradation of the Niger Delta region has created a state of economic deprivation, poverty, social disorder, and civil strife. Thus, sustainable economic growth and development of the area are under threat.

### **Modernization and Dependency Theory**

The various definitions and interpretations of modernization theory include cultural, economic, and political components. Developmental concepts of Western societies are models essential for developing countries to reach and promote modernization (Akinde, 2011). This view implies that modernization in economic terms represents the process of transition from traditional modes of operation to Westernized ways of operations. Modernization is a way of social changes linked with industrialization (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009). Modernization is not linear. The core idea of modernization is that technological and economic developments create a coherent set of social and political changes (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009). The main point of the dependency perspective is that studying the developing societies of the Third World in isolation from the development of the modern societies is of little value (Akinde, 2011). Akinde (2011) and Onwubiko et al. (2013) argued that a part of the institutions of dependency is the creation of multinational corporations.

At the center of the debate on environmental sustenance is the issue of creative changes to the central bodies of modern society, namely, the industrial production process and the capitalist mode of economic organization. The relationship between nature and the environment cannot be taken for granted any longer; rather, it needs to be reorganized to improve the welfare of humanity and protect the ecology (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009; Omojimito, 2012). This fact supports the need to restructure the modernization plan in order to restore some of its design faults that have caused serious environmental damage and ultimately impaired sustainable development and human health. In principle, modernization creates a situation in which people become economically empowered and self-expression values increasingly widespread (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009).

Modernization theorists proposed that underdevelopment reflected a nation's absurd traditional religious beliefs and shared values that discouraged achievement (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009). The assumption was that multinational corporations could accelerate the development of poorer countries with economic assistance and cultural exchanges by facilitating modern values (Onwubiko et al., 2013). The poorer nations realized over time that support and productive relationship with wealthy countries did not lead to significant improvement or success. This experience resulted in the loss of confidence in the prevailing theory of modernization. Inglehart and Welzel (2009) noted that modernization came under heavy criticism from dependency theorists who argued that trade with rich countries exploited poor countries, locking them into positions of



structural dependency. These contradictions have given rise to new definitions of modernization theory (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009).

The ground rule for global ecological preservation relies on the enforcement of social justice and equity as the proposition to promote sustainable development (Wright & Kurian, 2009). Thus, ecological management has become the policy strategy of choice in interpreting and implementing the goal of sustainable development (Wright & Kurian, 2009). The concerns of ecological management are policy measures and principles that promote mandatory environmental impact assessment (Wright & Kurian, 2009). Ecological modernization offers a practical approach to environmental problems with the primary responsibility assigned to science and technology as means of promoting innovations (Mol & Spaargaren, 2005; Wright & Kurian, 2009). The basic concept behind this theory is that the central institutions of modern society can be transformed in order to avoid ecological disaster (Wright & Kurian, 2009). Theoretically, ecological management is about setting the standard for regulating the management of environmental challenges (Wright & Kurian, 2009).

In contrast, Mol and Spaargaren (2005) asserted that ecological modernization theory analyzes environmental reforms mainly through evolutionary models that appear almost automatically in the greening of production and consumption. This approach does not pay sufficient attention to critical struggles between groups and to normative moral or just reflections of the debate (Mol & Spaargaren, 2005). Modernization reflects growth; therefore, it should serve as a vehicle for empowering citizens of a country to make their decisions and determine their own destiny in relation to individual sustenance (Akinde,

2011). This theory is a complete opposite if not rebuke on the status of oil industrialization and extraction activity in the Niger Delta (Onwubiko et al., 2013).

### **Critical Theory**

The central goal of critical theory in organizational studies is to form societies and workplaces, which are free from domination. In this context, critical theory promotes an equal opportunity for members to contribute to the development of systems, which meet human needs and lead to the progressive development (Ogbor, 2001). The purpose of critical theory is to create a body of knowledge that seeks to achieve an emancipatory interest through a critique of consciousness and ideology (Ogbor, 2001). Environmental degradation and the implication for the rights of the Niger Delta people both to a safe environment and to meaningful living within their location are the cause of the continuing conflict and tension between the people and the government/multinational oil corporations (Akhakpe, 2012; Odoemene, 2011). In rising to protest against the injustices brought about by the consequences of oil and gas operations in their region, the Niger Delta people have conformed to the rationality of critical theory.

Pursuant to the foregoing, Ogbor (2001) noted that critical theory helps to explore and articulate ways in which conditions of social, economic, and political domination limit, distort, and depreciate debate regarding contested social issues. In validating this claim, Akpomuvie (2011a) noted that people of the area should be able to live valued and dignified lives, overcome poverty, enjoy a peaceful atmosphere, and demand a sustainable environment. In their article, "Critical Theory and the Role of Citizen Involvement in Decision Making," Ventriss and Kuentzel (2005) wrote that current

environmental problems can be solved within established market, political, and organizational structures. Hence, the various development challenges of the Niger Delta region cannot be addressed without the utilization of the oil wealth to create a situation in which people can live in decent conditions (Eweje, 2007).

### **Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory has contributed to a coherent adoption of management duties that are beyond the interest of shareholders, but encompasses causes that benefit the community in its entirety (Dhir, 2007). There are several definitions of stakeholder, but for the purpose of this study, stakeholder means persons or groups that have or claim ownership rights or interests in a company and its activities, past, present, or future (Paki & Ebiefa, 2011). Stakeholder demand is a strategic investment (Paki & Ebiefa, 2011). In discussing citizenship participation and the utilitarian acquiescence, Ventriss and Kuentzel (2005) argued that public participation in environmental decision-making assumes that citizen involvement contributes to reflexive deliberations, communications, effective representation, and consensus building in the public sphere.

The Niger Delta crisis meets the criteria of a public issue. O'Donnell (2007) asserted that among the three different axes of conflict in a polarized world, the first axis is that of ecological conflicts, which are, by their transparent nature, global. The nation state and transnational cooperation share responsibility with this burden (O'Donnell, 2007). Thus, it can be inferred that the recurrent circle of violence against MNOCs' operations in the NDR are indicative of the oil companies' failures to recognize the significance of stakeholder value.

By omitting the stakeholder concept in its business judgments, MNOCs have tacitly engendered the emergence of new social movements in the Delta region (Omojimate, 2012). O'Donnell (2007) wrote that the dynamics of capitalist development are fulfilled through profit maximization, and the outcome is an overspill by these factors on areas no longer related to material production. Enhancing this view, Odoemene (2011) argued that various social consequences of environmental change in the Niger Delta included violence, crime, poverty, despondency, underdevelopment, and the destruction of the community's moral and social fabric. Once the steering factors such as money and power penetrate areas of cultural tradition (social integration through values and norms, training and development of future generations), for instance, by redefining relations in terms of consumption or bureaucratizing the conditions of life, then a rationalized lifeworld is under attack (O'Donnell, 2007). The two elements of a social system that are key concepts in dealing with public controversy consist of social values used in understanding competing, environmental conflict claims, and the idea of citizen participation, as a way of categorizing the range of interests that exist in a pluralistic society (Ventriss & Kuentzel, 2005). Endangering the natural environment is the cause of the crises that occur in the area of material production (O'Donnell, 2007).

### **Definition of Terms**

Environmental degradation has acquired a broad perspective because of its impact on nations in one way or the other (Effiong & Etowa, 2012; Okpara, 2012). The definitions of pertinent terms are as follows:

*Environmental degradation:* Environmental degradation constitutes a systemic destruction and depletion of the earth's ecological systems such as water resources, mangroves, plants, and the natural soil and air, which are the source of life (Jimoh, Ajewole, Onotu, & Ibrahim, 2011).

*Indigenous community:* This term suggests that there are numerous, but open-ended criteria for identifying indigenous people. Indigenous community includes cultural distinctiveness; the extent to which culture and their way of life are under threat; dependence on existing natural environment; a history of suffering from colonization; discrimination, domination and exploitation, self-identification, and political and social marginalization (International Labor Organization, 2009).

*Multinational oil corporation (MNOC):* MNOC refers to companies engaged in oil and gas extraction activities that operate under a system of decision-making that permits coherent policies and a common strategy and that control entities in more than one country (Escobar & Vredenburg, 2011).

*Rentier state:* The rentier state is a state whose primary source of income does not arise from taxation on productive activities, such as agriculture, industry, and services undertaken by its economically active population (Akinde, 2011; Bagaji et al., 2011).

*Sustainable development:* Sustainable development is the type of development that generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably, that regenerates the environment rather than destroys it, and that empowers people rather than marginalizing them (Akpomuvie, 2011a).

## **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

### **Assumptions**

The main causes of the event hereinafter known as environmental degradation are pollution of air, farmland, forest, rivers, and underground water system of the Niger Delta region, arising from gas flaring and oil spillages (Adelana, Adeosun, Adesina, & Ojuroye, 2011; Kingston, 2011). The results of pollution include high level of poverty, infrastructural decay, disease, violence, and other social problems that affect the area. The armed insurrection in the Niger Delta by various militant groups is the outcome of intolerance for peaceful opposition groups (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012).

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) justifies armed confrontation against MNOCs and the Nigeria state because of their failure to extend the dividends of oil production to the people of the Niger Delta region (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012). The people in the Niger Delta region may be sensitive to respond to questions about their environmental problems due to fear of reprisals from government entities or agents of multinational oil corporations. Edino et al. (2010) captured this feeling and asserted that many of them claimed they feared for their lives because, in the past, some residents experienced harassment by the government's security force after they expressed candid views about the subject.

### **Limitations**

The fan-shaped Niger Delta region (NDR) of Nigeria covers approximately 25,640 square km and is the third largest delta in the world after the Mississippi in the United States and the Pantanal in southwest Brazil (Akpomovie, 2011a). It will not be

possible to cover every ethnic group, demographic structure, and other related persons in the study due to the magnitude and vastness of the area. The short time frame required for this study is a feature that may serve as a limitation. Inter-and intracommunity conflicts resulting from communal competition for oil rents have created a high level of suspicion, and any individual concerned with inquiries related to oil matters may face skepticism (Akpan, 2010). The risk of not getting accurate information or inadequate support from research participants could be anticipated, due to the prevailing high uncertainty and insecurity in the region. From testimonies of people in the Niger Delta, prevalence of suppression and disregard for their views in matters affecting them have contributed to accelerating conflict situations, and thus increased their distrust of those seeking their views on oil-related matters (Akpan, 2010).

The economic and social multiplier effects associated with oil and gas exploration activities cannot be easily captured through this study. The task associated with adequately quantifying the cost of environmental harm to human survival may not be thoroughly investigated through a single case study design. In the Niger Delta region, over 1,500 communities play host to oil and gas facilities of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC); the area is home to over 29 million people from about 40 ethnic nationalities who speak over 250 dialects (Baghebo, Samuel, & Nwagbara, 2012). Specifically, the impact of environmental degradation on the prospects of sustainable economic development in Ogoniland shaped this study.

**Delimitations**

The scope of this study was to explore the effects of MNOC activities on Ogoniland in Rivers State. Ogoniland illustrates the crisis in the Niger Delta and therefore may allow inferences about similar cases in the remainder of the Niger Delta. The devastation of the environment and ecological balance by oil and gas exploration and exploitation has multidimensional implications for people in the region (Akpan, 2010; Baghebo et al., 2012). Issues such as water pollution, air pollution, and deforestation may not be explored in depth even though these subjects relate to the study. A study of the effects of oil and gas exploration in the Niger Delta region encompasses various theoretical points of view and requires a considerable amount of data; therefore, I set boundaries to promote the research process. For example, because not all of the ethnic peoples who inhabit the Niger Delta may participate in the research, the exclusion of accounts of those who will not participate may limit information that otherwise could benefit the study. Selections of indigenes of Ogoniland in the focus groups excluded the participation of nonindigenes who may have resided in the area over extended periods and have experience with the phenomenon under study. Considering the variances of traditional, social and economic practices across the region, this research may be representative only of those who participated in the research as opposed to other social groups across the NDR.



## Significance of the Study

### Contribution to Business Practice

The myriad social and economic effects resulting from oil-related environmental problems and their impact on the Niger Delta region lack sufficient academic study (Obi, 2010). Emeseh (2009) and Agwu (2013) noted that the studies of sustainable development in the NDR have not categorically defined how the perspectives of those affected by the consequences of environmental degradation consider the possible factors that characterize the issues. For example, in the essay, *Corruption in Nigeria: Conceptual & Empirical Notes*, Mustapha (2010) portrayed the corruption of the Nigeria ruling elite both past and present and military and civilian, as partly the trigger point of the Niger Delta failings. Though this idea deserves its place, it falls short of highlighting the factors that promote the conditions associated with environmental degradation (Agwu, 2013; Kew & Phillips, 2013).

In the article, “Environmental Degradation and Oil industry Activities in the Niger Delta Region,” Oshwofasa et al. (2012) focused on the role played by the government-appointed Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in ameliorating the crisis and contradictions of the Niger Delta region. [Oshwofasa et al. \(2012\)](#) adopted a qualitative approach using secondary data, but only discussed corruption and ineffectual governance without addressing the underlying economic and socio-cultural in the Niger Delta crisis. Orogun (2010) asserted that the Nigeria government for nearly three decades has continued to struggle with the question of how to deal with violence and campaigns

by the locals in Niger Delta and simultaneously continue to produce oil revenue for the nation.

Through this study, an understanding may emerge of how a resource rich region in a developing country contributes to the development of international assets without corresponding compensation. The main focus was to interrogate the natural resource extraction activities by MNOCs and the effects on indigenes of Ogoniland. Additionally, this study may contribute to an exposure of the social movements in the Niger Delta that attempt to counteract the excess of resource extraction that is at variance to the concept of sustainability. This qualitative research may be used to deepen the awareness of policy makers and multinational oil corporations regarding the collateral hazards associated with ecological mismanagement and broaden the scope of literature about corporate earnings versus environmental sustainability.

### **Implications for Social Change**

One crucial aspect of bringing about change in organizations is to see company actions in terms of dialectical relationships, namely, as products of tensions between opposites (Ogbor, 2001). In the tradition of critical theory, corporate culture serves as an instrument of universalization of managerial interests, the suppression of conflicting interests, and the perpetuation of corporate and societal control (Ogbor, 2001). Poor people are exposed to environmental dynamics because social, economic, and political exclusion, which indicates that they have few choices about where to live (Agbibo & Maiangwa, 2012). Hence, it can be argued that a relationship could exist between environmental degradation and poverty (Ebegbulem et al., 2013).

The destruction of the main source of income and production activities of the Niger Delta region resulted in massive unemployment (Onwubiko et al., 2013). The outcome of this situation is youth restiveness; the outcome of such event expresses itself in the various forms of violence raging in the Niger Delta area today (Snapps, 2011). The shared grievances of unfair treatment by a cultural group promote a strong sense of group identity; in conflict theory, this tendency generates the outbreak of violent responses (Agbibo & Maiangwa, 2012). Eweje (2007) argued that an organization ought to be dependent on the host population from which she extracts its resources, which is essential to its operations because it does not exercise independent control over the aspiration of the community. An organizational system that ignores its host community will produce an unequal power relationship with all concerned parties (Eweje, 2007). Thus, the impact that emerges is the possibility of external and internal control of organizational and community behavior so as to consider the interest of the host community and multinational oil corporations in a complementary fashion (Eweje, 2007; Odoemene 2011).

The commercial sector including leading multinational oil corporations has begun to fulfill this exercise as evidenced by the wide adoption of various environmental and related social codes of business conduct and the pursuit of matching public-relations campaigns (Idemudia 2009). In discussing the role of organizations, Idemudia (2011) revealed that this disjuncture between local priorities and international assumption is because the mainstream corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda has largely been driven by northern interests and reflected the concerns of Western societies without

sufficient space for other concerns. Eweje (2007) argued that wealth creation is central to the economic role of business, but society determines the extent to which this wealth can be enjoyed and the value systems that surround enterprises.

In this context, critical theory defines the irrational nature of conventional rationality and explains the tendencies that cause this rationality to determine its own transformation (Ogbor, 2001). Therefore, the issues facing marginalized people such as oppression, domination, alienation, suppression, and hegemony are relevant to study. Through the study of these issues, the researcher provides a forum for these research participants raising their consciousness to improve their lives. For participants affected by the phenomenon, the case study design opens up space to offer an informed opinion.

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

This literature review is to explore the impact of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, resulting from the history of MNOCs in managing the natural resource extraction, specifically oil and gas exploration. The study of oil producing countries such as Nigeria, in addition to other countries that have experienced environmental and economic hazards associated with extractive industries, facilitates the process of expanding awareness on environmental protection and sustainable life (Orogun, 2010). Through this study, it is possible to gain insight on the interaction of the people in the Niger Delta with MNOCs and their experiences regarding environmental degradation and economic sustainability. The main research question is as follows: How has the economic sustenance of Ogoniland indigenes been incapacitated by profit monopoly guiding the extraction practices of multinational oil corporations?

This study may offer the policy makers in government and multinational oil corporations the necessary information tool in shaping their decision-making process, and overall strategy in dealing with ecological management and perhaps influence business practices aimed at corporate social changes. The findings of this study may expose the economic and social manifestations that challenge the real life world of the Niger Delta and contribute to broadening the scope of literature about environmental sustainability. The topics explored include (a) evolution of the Nigerian state, (b) perception of multinational oil corporations in the Niger Delta region, (c) history of oil exploration in Nigeria, (d) environmental degradation and corporate social responsibility, (e) impact of environmental degradation on capacity utilization, and (f) challenges to sustainable economic development.

### **Title Searchers, Research Documents, and Journals**

The title searches for this literature concentrated on key literature related to the most current information on the research topic. The articles and materials for this review came from scholarly (peer-reviewed) journals through the Walden University research library, the advanced Google Scholar, and textbooks advanced by Walden University. The database searches produced over 143 referenced articles. Peer-reviewed articles published from 2010 to 2014 make up 85% of the references. Specific terms used to search for literature included *Niger Delta, gender relations, violence, poverty, health impact, gas flaring, oil spillage, economic impact, capacity utilization, investment value and socio-cultural effects, environmental degradation and sustainable development concepts, multinational corporations, and government strategy and the Nigerian*

*economy*. The study encompasses current literature and deductive arguments that provide context for the economic, social, and conflict situation prevailing in the Niger Delta as a result of resource extraction and its attendant effects.

In order to determine the relationship between sustainable economic development and environmental degradation I discussed the following themes: *Niger Delta, gender relations, health impact, gas flaring, oil spillage, economic impact, capacity utilization, economic cost and socio-cultural effects, environmental degradation and sustainable development concepts, and multinational corporations*. The literature review starts with a snapshot of the Niger Delta as an oil and gas exploration enclave embedded in a crisis situation that involves multinational oil corporations and the Nigerian state. This point of the review offers insight on the effects of environmental degradation and barriers to sustainable economic development in the NDR and exposes the contradictions and concerns caused by oil exploration (Oguduvwe, 2013).

### **The Niger Delta Crisis in Perspective**

Niger Delta is one of the world's largest wetlands covering 20,000 square kilometers; the fragile ecosystems within the area include mangroves, fresh water, swamp forests, and coastal barrier islands and contain significant biodiversity including rare species (Bischoff & Lambrechts, 2010; Snapps, 2011). The current legislative definition of the Niger Delta by the federal government of Nigeria includes a geographical area covering nine states (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers) in the southern part of the country (Ihayere, Ogeleka, & Ataine, 2014). Oil exploration in the region has produced negative consequences to the natural habitat

(Bischoff & Lambrechts, 2010). Environmentalists have indicated that the quality of crops in the Niger Delta is rapidly deteriorating (Edino et al., 2010). The continuing quest for oil without the requisite Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) adversely affected the quality, size, and shape of traditional staples, such as cassava, yam, and plantain (Akpomuvie, 2011a; Kingston, 2011).

In the Niger Delta, Ogoniland's 56 oil wells account for 15% of Nigerian oil production, yet few Ogoni communities have electricity, the ratio is one medical doctor per thousand people, child mortality rates are the highest in the Nigerian nation, and unemployment among the Ogoni population is 85% (Chukwuemeka et al., 2011). Ken Saro-Wiwa, a known activist, argued that the people of Ogoniland and the people of the Niger Delta are like the goose that laid the golden egg but suffer the most severe forms of deprivation and poverty (Chukwuemeka et al., 2011) In plain language, the people of the NDR host resources that generate wealth yet remain poor. In 1993, arising from the Ogoni people's protests of passive resistance against Shell, the Nigerian Army laid siege on Ogoniland, and their leader Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others received death sentences by a tribunal convened under the military government (Emuedo, 2010). Okafor (2011) and Babatunde (2012) remarked that Ken Saro-Wiwa and other co-accused were hanged despite international protest against the court's judgment.

Environmental degradation caused by the oil spill and other oil and gas activities has worsened the economic levels of the people by destroying the once abundant fishing grounds and decreasing availability of quality agricultural land, thereby furthering impoverishment of those affected (Kingston, 2011). Assessing the impact of social

conflict and the implications of foreign investment in the region, Chukwuemeka et al. (2011) noted that the respondents were more serious on environmental degradation than financial compensation. The people of the NDR believe that compensation after environmental destruction is not a solution to the preservation of their environment (Chukwuemeka et al., 2011). Environmentalists and other advocates identify the environmental devastation of the Niger Delta region as a global concern (Obi, 2010). The oil development linkage debate in Africa revolves around the resource curse argument that oil wealth is the cause of government corruption and violent conflict (Agbiboa & Maiangwa, 2012; Obi, 2010).

In the literature, some theories and propositions in explaining the occasional linkage between natural resources and civil strife consist of grievance theory, fragile states theory, separatists' incentive theory, and looting theory (Ihua, 2010). Kingston (2011) and Akinde (2011) argued that foreign capital exclusively dominates oil production in Nigeria to the extent that some have applied the concept of the rentier state to Nigeria's political economy. The rentier state is unproductive and pursues its nourishment through rent collection from existing producers (Akinde, 2011). Consequently, the state is vulnerable to the fluctuating fortunes of oil as a commodity and over time other potential sectors of the economy have also been undermined by this dependence (Emuedo, 2010). Thus, power calculations by the hegemonic elite have revolved around the control and sharing of oil rents (Kew & Phillips, 2013).

The lack of equitable distribution of the oil wealth and environmental degradation resulting from exploration activities remain key factors aggravating actions from



environmental rights groups. These issues further interethnic conflicts and civil disturbances from ethnic militias, such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Movement for the Survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP), and the Niger Delta Vigilante Force NDDF; (Bischoff & Lambrechts, 2010; Ihua, 2010). This perspective explains the proliferation of resource conflict and instability in Africa. For instance, Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Rwanda, amongst others, are countries that have experienced various forms or degrees of resource conflict in Africa (Paki & Ebienfa, 2011). These findings expose the inherent contradictions, which a developing country like Nigeria has to deal with, and reflect the nature of social movement in the context of the Niger Delta.

The various scholars and authors studying the Niger Delta crisis have argued and espoused perspectives and analyses that shaped their view of countries like Nigeria. The focus of the study was to evaluate the claims regarding environmental degradation and their impact on sustainable developmental economics of the NDR. This study provides a foundation to explore, among other issues, the evolution of the Nigerian State, by addressing the legitimacy of power in governance and the role of multinational oil corporations. Of interest to the study is the response of the national government to the behavior of multinational oil corporations and the people affected by the action of these corporations.

**Evolution of the Nigerian state.** Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation with a population estimated approximately at 140 million (Bischoff & Lambrechts, 2010). The country has crude oil reserves estimated at 36 billion barrels and 19.2 billion cubic meters

of natural gas, with an average daily production of over 2.4 million barrels daily (Emuedo, 2010). Ihua (2010) asserted that, despite Nigeria's position as one of the principal producers of oil for several decades accompanied by the significant income earned from this source, the country qualifies as one of the poorest countries in the world. The region known as Nigeria today consisted of various ethnic nationalities before colonial invasion (Kalu, 2010). Before this period, the various nationalities of Africa and Nigeria maintained economic, social, and political structures that enabled the various groups to promote justice and peace, sustain progress, and maintain stability (Agbibo & Maiangwa, 2012; Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011). These indigenous states operated economic, political, and cultural activities that linked them together and accentuated their distinctive contributions to the region as whole (Agbibo & Maiangwa 2012; Lergo, 2011).

The geographic area called Nigeria is the creation of British Empire politics and nurtured to deliver British strategic interest at the time (Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011). This planned action has continued to challenge the basis of intergroup relations in the country (Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011). The British colonial policy was oppressive, and it denied the people participation, basic needs, equality, and social well-being (Jacob, 2012). For the purposes of administrative convenience and to promote commercial exploitation of all resources, the British colonial power forced different ethnic groups together without establishing conditions for the emergence of shared value among the people (Jacob, 2012). Saraceno (2012) argued that colonialism maps power as a force that colonizes the imagination and co-opts through access to pieces of the power system.

This strategy effectively captures the intersection of colonialism with capitalism, which underpins the dominant Western ontology (Saraceno, 2012). Consequently, colonial legacy imposed on the Nigerian certain characteristics, such as suppressing their perception of reality, knowledge, and accuracy from their own true beliefs (Kalu, 2010).

Lergo (2011) asserted that some of the problems of Nigerian unity could be attributed to the forced amalgamation of the country. Thus, it can be inferred that colonialism is responsible for crystallizing identity conflict in contemporary Nigeria (Kalu, 2010; Lergo, 2011). The majority of Africans, though forcefully conscripted, fought for the liberation of Europe from European tyranny in the Second World War and discovered that the colonial overlords did not have the monopoly of knowledge or power of civilization (Oluwagbemi-Jacob, 2011). Political statements, such as the Declaration of the Rights of Man, issued by the French National Assembly, and the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, which emphasized certain universal principles as equality, liberty, and fraternity, exposed in grand form the double standard of colonial intruders (Oluwagbemi-Jacob, 2011). African intellectuals of that time were emboldened by an understanding of unequal power relations between Africans and Europeans to pursue the decolonization process. Perhaps more noteworthy is the fact that the decolonization process did not offer Nigerians the opportunity to examine such issues as the nationality and citizenship issue, property rights over natural resources, and the value of the form of government they were inheriting from the colonial master (Kalu, 2010).

To strengthen the goal of colonialism, the country prematurely integrated into the realm of global capitalism (Arowolo, 2010; Lergo, 2011). This condition positioned the

government to operate primarily as a source of raw materials for Western industrial production (Arowolo, 2010). Arowolo (2010) argued that colonialism created a new group of elites, nurtured, and weaned on the altar of violence and colonialism. Armed with the structures of the modern state, the neocolonial elite continued to carry out the art of subjugation of the mass of the people in the service of erstwhile colonial barons (Arowolo, 2010).

The Nigerian nation secured independence from Britain in 1960 with these contradictions largely unchanged even unto this day (Kalu, 2010). The state became unresponsive in the deployment of force against society while at the same time was incapable of providing for the welfare of its people (Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011). Irrespective of the opportunity offered by independence as a process of dismantling the destructive policies of colonialism, the new representatives of government sought instead to maintain the same colonial structure by continuing to advocate for the monopoly of foreign capital in the Nigerian economy (Kalu, 2010). In the essay, *Resource Control and the Niger Delta Question*, Orogun (2010) noted that petro-capitalism in Nigeria functions through a sort of oil complex that is strongly territorial, operating through local oil concessions. These characteristics of the Nigerian state have undeservedly put the Niger Delta that harbors the oil into a particularly difficult crisis of development (Ezirim, 2011). The failure of nonviolent measures, such as peaceful protests, media, and publicity, and litigation to deliver the desired outcomes has resulted in the radicalization of the struggle for justice through violent means (Dhir, 2007; Ezirim, 2011; Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012).

In the grievance mechanism, perceived deprivations of producing regions and social groups create grievances and trigger violent uprising (Ezirim, 2011). The national elite have failed to use oil as a resource in creating the cognitive capacity that guarantees stability outside the organization of official repression (Emuedo, 2010). Oil multinationals not only control the technology of the industry, but also 85% of the executive positions, and receive about 75% of salaries in the industry (Emuedo, 2010). The Nigerian employees get 15% of the salaries, even though they make up 60% of the workforce while the expatriate population constitutes 40% of the workforce (Emuedo, 2010). The 10,000 workers employed in the oil industry are indicative of the industry's limited capacity to transform the employment crisis in the NDR with an estimated population of 30 million (Emuedo, 2010).

**Perception of multinational oil corporations in the delta.** The pivotal role of multinational corporations in spurring economic growth and prosperity in developing countries cannot be denied; however, these corporations are crucially relevant in the discourse of resource induced conflict, low intensity wars, in the peripheral regions of the global capitalist system (Bayode, Adewunmi, & Odunwole, 2011; Inglehart & Welzel, 2009; Orogun, 2010). Examining the role of multinational oil corporations in the Niger Delta, Ako et al. (2009) argued that corporate crimes and violence are on the rise, and they leave harmful effects on civil society and the environment in their areas of operation.

Olufemi (2010) contended that the activities of multinational oil corporations are of indispensable value to the Niger Delta region, especially in the areas of providing

capital, skills, technology, and employment for local people. Inevitably, the MNOCs require the local people to adapt themselves to the authority and procedures of MNOCs irrespective of whether their working conditions threaten the sheer existence of the host community (Kingston, 2011). Consequently, the Niger Delta Region is at present highly volatile as multinational corporations in the oil industry experience increased hostility from host communities for their perceived ethical inconsistencies towards alleviating the various problems of the host communities (Asawo, 2011).

Multinational oil companies represent imperial terror against the region (Asawo, 2011). For instance, Human Rights Watch revealed the role of oil companies in stoking the embers of violence in its host communities to cause confusion and conflicts among communities in order to draw away attention from them and their business (Ako et al., 2009). The people of the Niger Delta believe that multinational oil companies provide arms and strategic logistical support (boats, helicopters, payment of field allowances) to soldiers on repressive missions in the Niger Delta (Emuedo, 2010). Transnational oil companies claim that the response of the communities in the NDR is the problem (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010). The managing director of SPDC articulated this position during an interview with Friends of the Earth, when the former explained that the opposition of the Ogoni people was instrumental in restraining SPDC from taking steps to remedy the ecological damage in various parts of Ogoniland (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010).

The lack of integrity of the MNOCs in their dealings with the host communities is responsible for the widespread public distrust against the MNOCs (Asawo, 2011). In

recent years, attacks on oil installations have increased. One of the leading oil multinationals procured arms through local tenders for \$500,000 from Nigerian Army suppliers, according to court testimony related to the Umuchem massacre investigation (Odoemene, 2011, Snaps, 2011). The alliance with government empowers MNOCs to act on their own terms and conditions (Ezirim, 2011). Poor management practices around oil installations have contributed to pipeline blowouts leading to oil spills and leaks in the region (Oshwofasa et al., 2012).

Rather than addressing fundamental problems, such as poor payment for damages from oil operations, most multinational oil corporations in Nigeria rely on security and armed intervention to address grievances and anti-oil protests by local people in the oil producing areas (Bayode et al., 2011, Okafor, 2011). Over-reliance on security forces instead of other negotiations strategies with local stakeholders can lead to unnecessary bloodshed. Profits from increasing oil prices encourage multinational oil corporations to continue their activity in the Niger Delta irrespective of the accompanying violence and instability of the region (Ojo, 2011).

The activities of multinational oil companies as evidenced by revelations about gross misconduct precipitate the need to interrogate the relationship between petroleum extracting industries and their overall role in fostering environmental degradation, organized and sponsored violence against citizens of affected areas, and actions that promote poverty. In analyzing current studies on hydrocarbon induced conflicts in developing countries, Orogun (2010) argued that the interactions and linkages among subnational, national, transnational, and multinational actors with different and

conflicting interests in promoting or restricting the flow of commodities like oil have a significant impact on the frequency and nature of localized conflict.

Orogun (2010) asserted that these interactions both shape actors' goals in undertaking armed violence or in responding to belligerents with force, and they also represent the range of possible strategies these actors use to articulate interest and to legitimize various forms of use of force. Rexler (2010) noted that MNOCs create fragmented enclaves that avoid both social problems that surround them, and the government that attempts to regulate them. These corporations function in a space totally divorced from the societies in which they operate (Rexler, 2010). This predisposition underscores the basis of the relationship between MNOCs and the Nigeria state.

MNOCs consider the state as a rational actor, able to suppress or arbitrate the dispute between the excess of multinational control and the needs of the host communities (Akhigbe, 2013; Rexler, 2010). The Niger Delta community activists see the connection between the Nigerian State and international oil corporations as responsible for several incidents of human rights abuses and brutal suppression of peaceful protests and civil uprisings in the region (Emuedo, 2010; Snapps, 2011). The reputation of any corporation is a valuable intangible asset in business (Eweje, 2007). In this regard, MNOCs' business in Nigeria and elsewhere reflect controversies and malpractice.

The people of the Niger Delta, due to coastal geography, historically fought the monopolist tendencies of foreign European merchants dating back to the nineteenth century (Dhir, 2007; Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011). The people of the region are



increasingly demanding fair treatment towards the actualization of their dream of accelerated and sustainable development (Asawo, 2011). The agitation has moved from non-violent to violent mass actions, which have resulted in the disruption of the operations of MNOCs (Asawo, 2011). For a villager living near a multinational oil exploration site in the Niger Delta, little if anything has changed. Compensation for the destruction of valuable resources such as farmlands or fishponds is often meager (Ako et al., 2009). The people of the region live in constant fear of security forces assigned to protect MNOC facilities (Ako et al., 2009). These revelations warrant consideration of the history of oil exploration in Nigeria.

**History of oil exploration in Nigeria.** In Nigeria, the race for oil and gas exploration began in the year 1908 when a German business interest formed the Nigerian Bitumen Company to handle the exploration of coastal areas between Lagos and Okitipupa in present day Ondo State (Paki & Ebiefa, 2011). Contrary to this view, Steyn (2009) argued that the Nigerian Bitumen Company was not a German company, but a British company and its shares traded on the West African market of the British Stock Exchange in London. The company suspended its activity following the outbreak of the First World War (Steyn, 2009). The project restarted in Nigeria in 1937 with the establishment of the Shell/D'Arcy Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, an affiliate of the mineral oil companies of Shell Petroleum Company and British Petroleum Company (Paki & Ebiefa, 2011). At that time, Nigeria was officially a colony of the British government. Steyn (2009) revealed that systematic policies by British colonial

authorities had given Shell, a British oil company, a virtual monopoly over oil exploration in the country, and Shell has remained the dominant oil company in Nigeria.

In November 1938, Shell Overseas Exploration Company Limited received an exclusive oil exploration license (OEL) covering the whole of mainland Nigeria (357,000 square miles) from the British colonial rule (Steyn, 2009). Exploration activities in Nigeria ceased during World War Two. After the war, Shell-BP intensified its exploration activities. Shell-BP made Nigeria's first commercial discovery in 1956 at Oloibiri, in what is now Bayelsa state (Akpomovie, 2011b). The discovery attracted rapid development, and by 1958, production had reached 5,100 barrels per day. Subsequently, Nigeria shipped the crude oil to Europe. Thus, Nigeria entered the global oil scene.

Atsegbua (1999) noted the role played by Shell BP during this period, “the opportunity of exercising an autonomous strategy throughout two decades in the realm of concession politics brought about the result that this company today possesses the optimal concession site in the country” (p. 57). The monopolistic position historically controlled by Shell, with respect to license selection, affords the company a dominant position in the development of the Nigerian mineral oil industry (Atsegbua, 1999). This concrete example of dependency created under colonial rule lends support to dependency and underdevelopment theories as regards the economic interests of the metropolis under colonial rule, although this finding does not guarantee in any way the notion that the self-perpetuation of dependency was inevitable after decolonization (Kalu, 2010).

Steyn (2009) suggested that the British colonial government allowed greater competition in the Nigerian oil industry in the late 1950s, yet this policy of diversification

motivated by British political interests did not diminish after the Nigerian government acquired majority shares in oil companies operating in the country. Steyn (2009) contended that this state of affairs ensured that Nigerian investors had limited opportunities for participation in the nation's largest trade. Oil production in Nigeria is mainly through joint ventures between the government of Nigeria and a number of multinational oil corporations, namely Shell (normally called Shell Petroleum Development Company-SPDC), Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, Elf and Agip (Akhakpe, 2012; Akpabio & Akpan, 2010). Since the discovery and exploitation phase, oil revenue accrued to the government of Nigeria has exceeded over 280 billion dollars in over 30 years (Dhir, 2007).

Oil revenue accounts for 90% of Nigeria's export earnings, over 80% of government's annual income, and 70% of budgetary expenditures (Ako et al., 2009). Eweje (2007) noted that the oil extracted from Ogoniland alone has netted \$30 billion to MNOCs and the Nigeria state so far. Ako et al. (2009) revealed that multinationals control the oil production in Nigeria with the government holding substantial equity stakes in them through its domestic oil company, the Nigeria National Petroleum Oil Company (NNPC). Geological and geophysical investigations showed that the most favorable oil-yielding structures and the severe cases of environmental degradation and resulting consequences lay in the Niger Delta of Nigeria (Ekpoh & Obia, 2010).

The MNOCs in the NDR explore for oil without regard to overall health and safety standards or observed minimum levels of protection of the environment from chemical pollution in the air, land, rivers, and water table (Akpomuvie, 2011a).

Babatunde (2010) suggested that environmental sustainability is essential to the nation's success and growth as their existence largely relies on subsistence efforts. Hence, it can be argued that oil exploration threatens to destroy the survival of indigenous people, as their livelihood is dependent on their immediate environment for survival (Babatunde, 2010). The implication of these facts suggests that the oil production has exploited the ecosystems for resources beyond the level of sustainability (Babatunde, 2010; Kadafa, 2012). Consequently, the prevailing social deprivations, human violations and lack of access to assets that unlock poverty, and the apparent inability of the government to protect the land and the Niger Delta people from the hazards of hydrocarbon carbon activities underscores the relationship between environmental degradation and underdevelopment (Babatunde, 2010).

### **Environmental Degradation and Underdevelopment**

**Significant causes of environmental degradation.** All stages of oil exploitation negatively affect the environment, and the greatest single intractable problem caused by crude oil exploration in the Niger Delta is oil spillage (Kareem et al., 2012). Other identified causes of environmental degradation are gas flaring, seismic surveys, canalization, dredging, and poor waste disposal (Donwa, 2011; Effiong & Etowa, 2012). The effects that result from oil and gas extraction activities for people in the Niger Delta region are extreme poverty without the basic provision of infrastructure (Imobighe, 2011). The Niger Delta was ecologically sound, and the local population was economically independent before the discovery of oil in the area (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). Prior to oil exploration, the Niger Delta sustained a large percentage of Nigeria's

commercial fisheries industry (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). Agbakwuru (2011) noted “the Niger Delta plays host to 600 oil fields of which 360 are on shore while 240 are offshore with over 30,000 kilometers of pipelines crisscrossing the region and linking some 275 flow stations to various export terminals” (pp. 1055-1056). It can be argued that the massive oil installations in the Niger Delta region explain their vulnerability to vandalism (Agbakwuru, 2011). Agbakwuru (2011) asserted that oil spills resulting from vandalism have continued to be a problem with most incidents along important pipelines occurring with high frequency.

***Oil spillage.*** Oil spillage is the leading environmental hazard caused by crude oil exploration in the Niger Delta and constitutes significant economic, ecological, health, social, and political problems in Nigeria, and the Niger Delta in particular (Aro et al. 2010; Atakpo & Ayolabi, 2009). Oil spills may result from operational mishaps, equipment failure, and sabotage. In an environment that is aquatic, the oil sometimes flows on the water surface, encroaching shorelines by wind and wave actions invariably affecting the soil (Okpo & Eze, 2012). In 1979, a storage facility at West Niger Delta, a Shell operated Forcados terminal, collapsed and spilled approximately 560,000 barrels into the surrounding land, mangroves swamps, and the Atlantic Ocean (Imobighe, 2011). In the 40 years of oil exploration in Nigeria, the Directorate of Petroleum Resources (DPR, 1997) recorded over 6,000 spills with an average of 150 annually (Imobighe, 2011). In the period from 1976-1996, 647 incidents occurred resulting in the spillage of 2,369,000 barrels of crude oil (Atakpo & Ayolabi, 2009). Of this oil spillage, 549,000

barrels were recovered while 1,820,410 barrels dissolved into the ecosystem (Atakpo & Ayolabi, 2009).

Poorly designed causeways and canals used by the oil industry affect the hydrology of the seasonally flooded freshwater swamp and the brackish water of the mangrove forest, killing crops, destroying fishing grounds, and damaging drinking water supplies (Anyakora & Coker, 2009). Dredging of creeks by MNOCs has significantly altered the landscape, thereby causing soil erosion and houses to collapse (Anyakora & Coker, 2009). Pollution due to oil well blow out, corrosion of pipelines and vandalism can lead to underground leakages, which threaten the environment in the form of soil pollution and destruction of vegetation (Atakpo & [Ayolabi](#), 2009). In 1980, a significant pipeline blowout spewed some 200,000 barrels of crude oil into the Atlantic Ocean and destroyed over 840 acres of Niger Delta mangrove ([Imobighe](#), 2011). The cumulative effect of repeated but small-scale oil spills is just as potentially dangerous to the affected site as any isolated large oil spill (Okpo & Eze., 2012). The negative impact of oil spills and gas flaring in Niger Delta have probably placed the survival of endangered species, such as the Delta elephant and the white crescent monkey, at greater risk in addition to devastating the largest mangrove forest in Africa and the body of water in the region (Escobar & Vredenburg, 2011).

***Gas flaring.*** One of the main types and causes of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta is the result of gas flaring. Gas flaring is the burning or disposing of waste gases through the use of combustion (Edino et al., 2010; Ekpoh & [Obia.](#), 2010).

Most of the gas flaring that occurs in the Niger Delta region is around oil wells that are close to farmlands and dwelling homes. The law prohibits gas flaring except in certain circumstances such as breakdown of equipment or emergencies (Edino et al., 2010). In the case of Nigeria, state corruption and the lack of the rule of law prevents the enforcement of standard practice in oil exploration activities (Mustapha, 2010).

Edino et al. (2010) noted that the 56.6 million metric tons of associated gas flared daily in Nigeria are equivalent to about 16% of the total gas flared in the world. The environmental damage is yet to be fully estimated, but anecdotal evidence suggests it is equally colossal (p. 67). Consequently, the oil firms in Nigeria account for more greenhouse gas emissions than all other sources in sub-Saharan Africa combined (Kingston, 2011). Bayode et al. (2011) argued that gas flaring contributes to climate change, which may portend enormous risk for Nigeria and the world. Carcinogens with serious health concern for the residents of the region represent many of the by-products of gas flares (Ekpoh & Obia, 2010). Crops cultivated on farmlands produced low yields, and their nutrient statuses are reduced due to the closeness to gas flaring sites (Edino et al., 2010; Ekpoh & Obia, 2010).

Consequently, the result of gas flaring is that communities observe a continual bright light, making it difficult to distinguish night from day (Okpara, 2012). Constant deafening noises caused by hardware on the site, dehydration and heat waves from gas flares exacerbate this situation (Okpara, 2012). In oil and gas production, emitters of air pollutants include trans-shipment stations, maritime floating port terminals, drilling platforms, crude oil recovering platforms, linking platforms, water injection platforms,

pumping platforms, shelter platforms, telecommunication platforms, crude oil measurement platforms, and flaring platforms (Sonibare, Adebisi, Obanijesu & Okelana, 2010). The cost of gas flaring is significant when calculated in monetary terms. Babatunde (2010) suggested that gas flaring in Nigeria costs the nation about \$12.5 million annually.

**Economic cost of oil spillage.** The World Bank reported in 1999 that the Niger Delta region has the agricultural potential of feeding the whole of West Africa; today hunger in the area is widespread (Olufemi, 2010). The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has abundant natural resources and climate, which supports all year round agricultural production (Kew & Phillips, 2013). In the essay *Paradox of Oil Wealth in the Niger Delta*, Imobighe (2011) revealed that the unwarranted poverty in the oil producing states can be traced to the high activity level in the Niger Delta which has exposed the area to dangers of water, land, and air pollution as well as oil spills, which harm aquatic life as well the entire ecosystem, topography, and surface vegetation.

Nigeria's Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) revealed that about 50% of the active labor force engaged one type of agricultural activity or another with yam, cassava, plantain, maize, cocoyam, and vegetables as the main food crops in the Niger Delta (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). The hydrographic conditions of the area allow only on a fraction of the land area for cultivation of crops (Baghebo et al., 2012; Bayode et al., 2011). Oil spillage, which eventually leads to germination failure of crops on underutilized farmland, contributes to reduced income from farming, and these issues lead to lower standard of living (Bayode et al., 2011). Consequently, most farmers are



unable to send their children to school. Unarguably, low crop yields of agricultural staples translate to the high cost of food items, such as garri, corn, and cassava, a condition that exacerbates hunger (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009).

Crop germination failure and resultant poor agricultural yields can be directly attributed to decreasing soil fertility due to the destruction of soil microorganisms from oil spills (Akpomuvie, 2011b, Onwubiko et al., 2013). The outcome of underutilization of farmland is underemployment, exacerbated by lack of adequate tools of trade or money (Onwubiko et al., 2013). The cumulative impact of oil spillage on farmland is not only loss of land use, but also the situation forces farm owners to relocate. The transformation of a once fertile land to wasteland as a result of oil spills adds to the physical and emotional trauma of ancestral property owners and diminishes the prospects of future generations (Odoemene, 2011).

Women in the Niger Delta region remain educationally disadvantaged, and the percentage of school enrollment significantly lags behind the median score (Odoemene, 2011). The unemployment rate in the region is higher than the national figure (Odoemene, 2011, Omojimite, 2011). The collapse of infrastructures in the Niger Delta region is the reason why rural roads are impassable in all seasons of the year, and this contributes to the high cost of moving persons, goods or services in and out to the markets (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). Akpomuvie (2011b) asserted that these effects have led to economic stagnation, agricultural underdevelopment, and poor quality of life due to a lack of essential goods, facilities and funds, isolation, and poor communication.

It is estimated that more than half of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta live in rural subsistence characterized by a total absence of such basic facilities as electricity, pipe-borne water, hospitals, proper housing, and roads (Ihayere et al., 2014). Consequently, debilitating poverty, malnutrition, and disease oppress the people daily (Oguduvwe, 2013). Oil pipeline failures and the accompanying spills have led to infernos that caused destruction of life, homes, and property worth millions of dollars (Agbakwuru, 2011; Dhir, 2007; Oshwofasa et al., 2012). In some instances, oil pipeline failures resulted in wildfires that led to mass evacuations of people from their ancestral homes. Ogege (2011) noted that apart from the environmental degradation arising from oil spills, the other natural resources face the prospect of non-renewability. The people in the face of these predicaments of oil spillage have had to brace up to the hard choice of survival or decimation, and the Niger Delta is slowly losing its capacity to sustain life (Ogege, 2011).

**Economic cost of gas flaring.** A report by the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) indicated that every day, eight million cubic feet of natural gas burn off in flares that light the skies across the Niger Delta (Odoemene, 2011). In their research on the role of gas flaring in the Niger Delta region, Ekpoh and Obia (2010) wrote that gas flaring has a role to play in the acid rain effects on zinc roofs in the region. Most homes in the Niger Delta region are roofed with corrugated iron sheets. The life span of zinc-coated galvanized sheets is 25 years. Though these sheets rust after prolonged contact with water, the effect of acid rain has reduced the life span of these to between 3 and 5 years, depending on the inclination of the roof (Ekpoh & Obia, 2010). The incessant

replacement of zinc roofs in houses located in the region is of significant financial challenge to inhabitants. For rural communities in a region where over 80% of the population lives below the poverty line of one dollar per day, obtaining an estimated \$165 to re-roof a home (measuring 29 feet by 72 feet) every three to five years has brought serious financial hardship, especially among the distressed farmers, fishermen, hunters, and forest gatherers (Ekpoh & Obia, 2010).

The revenue lost from gas flared by the government of Nigeria over the last 30 years amounts to billions of United States dollars (Effiong & Etowa, 2012). The effect of gas flares in farming communities often leads to rapid destruction of a year's supply of foodstuff (Adelana et al., 2011). Exposure to flaire smoke can also lead to serious asthmatic conditions, respiratory malfunctioning such as coughing, wheezing, difficult breathing, chronic bronchitis, reduced lung function, body itching, impotency, miscarriages, and premature death (Ana, Sridhar, & Bamgboye, 2009). The average life expectancy for every child born in the Niger Delta region remains at 49.13 years (Effiong & Etowa, 2012). The destruction of vital economic and botanical plant species, as a result of gas flaring, means that traditional healers must search endlessly for herbs, bark of trees, and roots that could be sourced for treatment of minor ailments (Aghalino, 2009). The attendant cost for health services and financial loss associated with the loss of work force due to gas flaring are incalculable (Afinotan & Ojatorotu, 2009).

**Social impact of oil spillage and gas flaring.** The social impacts of oil spillage and gas flaring represent the resultant effects of the outcomes of environmental degradation on the people and the way they have reacted to this matter (Dhir, 2007). The

effect of gas flaring and oil spillages is that oil-producing communities have lost their financial sustainability (Edino et al., 2010). An occupational and revenue loss that causes voluntary and forced migration is a common experience of the people in the region (Akhakpe, 2012)). The denial of benefits accrued from the natural resources of the region prompted the people to strive for self-determination, even violently where necessary (Odoemene, 2011). The resultant activism arising from this situation has led to social breakdown as evidenced by generalized lawlessness in the Niger Delta (Odoemene, 2011). The mass movements that appear under these conditions do not primarily aim at changing society, but to escape their perceived isolation (Odoemene, 2011). The shift from peaceful protests by the people of the NDR to armed insurrection reflects radicalization of once peaceful political activism (Ezirim, 2011). The crisis of legitimacy is engendering a new generation of social tensions that include politically established cult groups and gangsters who are unleashing overt violence on rural and urban communities alike (Afinotan & Ojkorutu, 2009).

In the article, "The Rape of Paradise," Obayiuwana (2012) noted that the inhabitants of Ogoniland complained about contamination of the air, which is causing death and disease. Husbands can no longer provide for their families, and thus direct their children to seek employment as domestic servants in towns and cities (Obayiuwana, 2012). In some cases, these children fall victim to human trafficking, street begging, and sometimes risk falling into prostitution (Afinotan & Ojkorutu, 2009). The high percentage of unemployed young people in the Niger Delta is even more worrisome and portends serious dangers for the country's social and financial stability (Ihayere et al.,

2014). The incidence of youth militancy, gangsterism, kidnapping, and hostage of foreign and local oil workers for ransom in the Niger Delta, has pushed the conflict into a new direction (Idemudia, 2009). Further, the militants' confrontational strategies find expression in high profile kidnapping of expatriates or members of their families, bombing and destruction of oil facilities as well as daring guerilla-styled assaults on highly fortified military formations (Ogege, 2011).

The government responds to attacks on its security institutions by increasing repression against the affected communities, and deploying military and police formations with instructions that engender dire consequences (Afinotan & Ojkorutu, 2009). Odoemene (2011) remarked that government violence in this context appeared in various forms: wanton killings, destruction of communities, belligerent military occupation, and sexual abuses by military and government security operatives. Bagaji et al. (2011) argued that violent communal clashes that are either inter or intra ethnic, or between oil bearing communities and state or petro-businesses is a frequent occurrence in the Niger Delta communities. Fatalities from the Niger Delta conflict amount to 1,000 yearly, which place the region on the violence level with highly intense conflict areas such as Colombia and Chechnya (Emuedo, 2010).

Nigeria is a country with oppressive institutions and the Niger Delta is the theater where these repressive institutions, at the behest of multinational oil corporations, inflict severe brutalities on the helpless inhabitants of the oil communities (Akpan, 2010; Okafor, 2011). Based on the aforementioned view, Wiwa contended that respect for the civil liberties of the Niger Delta residents and other marginalized groups is the key to

lasting peace in Nigeria (Chukwuemeka et al., 2011). The examination of the multiplier effects resulting from environmental degradation in the Niger Delta provides an understanding of the comprehensive nature of the crisis.

### **Multiplier Effects of Environmental Degradation**

**Gender relations/capacity utilization.** The people of the Niger Delta region depend on land and sea resources for sustenance. The women play active socio-economic roles in the harsh Niger Delta environment and form the first line of social defense against socio-economic deprivations in the region (Ihayere et al., 2014). The women have benefitted least from employment in the oil companies, and have been excluded from minimal compensation arising from acquisition, pollution, and destruction of farmlands and fishing waters (Olankunle, 2010). Often, the women are custodians of resources such as food, water, and firewood used for cooking. For example, in Ogoniland when a woman gets married, her husband will give her a piece of land to farm; it is from that farm that she feeds her family and grows food for sale to purchase other staples (Wiwa, 2010). This practice guaranteed the women a certain level of financial independence. Fishing and gathering of seafood, and farming in the forest areas represent the primary sources of financial livelihood for rural women in the Niger Delta (Olankunle, 2010).

As the resourcefulness of these women depended on the viability of their environment, they become susceptible to over exploitation of the remarkably slim resources and thus experience some of the harshest consequences of the prevailing conditions (Ihayere et al., 2013; Odoemene, 2011). The lack of employment for many young men and women makes them an ongoing responsibility for their mothers long after

they should have been independent (Wiwa, 2010). The constant acquisition of new territory for oil exploitation and the resultant pollution have left the Ogoni women with no means to maintain or support their families, and this gives rise to tension in the home and community (Wiwa, 2010). The precarious nature of life of women caused by environmental degradation places the entire population of the region is at risk. Security forces deployed by the government or petro-business to quell the insurgency in the area often beat, rape women, and commit other sexual criminal acts (Dhir, 2007). Women victimized by a series of crises in the region lamented that:

The river they are polluting is both our life and death. We depend on it for everything. When this situation became unbearable, we decided to come together to protest. We insisted on dialogue with the oil companies, but the soldiers refused and started kicking us with their boots, they flogged us, they wounded us, as I am talking to you, three of our women are still missing. As we are disgraced this way, those us remaining will go there and let them kill us. We don't want Shell, Chevron, Texaco or any other oil companies. (Olankunle, 2010, p. 134)

In many instances, security forces invade private homes; terrorize residents, and gang rape girls (Odoemene, 2011). The implications of these actions on the well-being of families and communities of the victims can be quite severe. Some of the consequences include stigma and social exclusion that may lead to forced prostitution, fatherless children, child abandonment and neglect, prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, and homelessness (Obi, 2011; Odoemene, 2011). These trends

indicate a breakdown of societal moral fiber and social values all for which indigenous Niger Delta communities were reputed and respected (Ihayere et al., 2014; Odoemene, 2011). Akiyode (2009) argued that women have a vital role to play in environmental management and development, and their active participation is necessary to achieve sustainable growth. Akiyode asserted that the rural woman is the last to be hired by oil companies; thus, she suffers a discrepant impoverishment thereby deflating her gender status especially relative to men.

**Socio-cultural effects.** Emuedo (2010) asserted that the people of the Niger Delta consider two pieces of legislation, the Petroleum Act and the Land Use Act, which bequeath all land in the region to the federal government, as an assault to their humanity. To them land is sacred. It is also a source of pride, livelihood, and income, links the living to the dead, and is a source of confidence in supernatural and deities (Dhir, 2007; Emuedo, 2011). To the Niger Delta people, this legislation contradicts the definition of social order because it excluded the communities from participation in the agreements with multinational oil companies, thereby denying them any portion of the royalties paid by MNOCs (Odoemene, 2011; Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011). The youth in the Niger Delta region claimed that selfishness on the part of their elders may have contributed to the plunder of their ancestral lands in the past (Chukwuemeka & Aghara, 2010; Odoemene, 2011).

Perhaps, the legislative acts and the perceived complicity of the community elders explain the difference between the youth and elders of the Niger Delta today, especially in their response to the conditions of endemic poverty and destruction arising from the



environmental degradation of the region (Essien, 2011). Poverty has also been identified as a major cause of sexual risk behavior and susceptibility to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/Aids as well as unplanned pregnancy (Odoemene, 2011). With the presence of thousands of foreign and local oil workers, most of them separated from their families by exigencies of work, young girls in the region respond to oil workers' lusts by prostituting (Odoemene, 2011). Consequently, the incidence of teenage prostitution among boys and girls has become widespread in the region.

In examining the social consequences of environmental change in the Niger Delta, Odoemene (2011) wrote that the legendary respect for elders in African society has diminished in the Niger Delta region; as a result, the typical Niger Delta youth sees the elder as corrupt, inept, and the epitome of colossal failure. The environmental destruction in the Niger Delta is the cause of juvenile truancy, as many youths have dropped out of school because their parents are not able to afford school fees or buy textbooks, having lost their ability to farm or fish due to the environmental degradation (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). The rate of unemployment is reportedly much worse for the age group 15 to 24, and especially among those with the Secondary School Leaving Certificate as their highest educational qualification (Edino et al., 2010). In comparison to the other non-oil producing areas of Nigeria, the Development Policy Center revealed that 73% percent of the households in the Niger Delta have five or more dependents without a job (Edino et al., 2010).

**Health impact of oil spillage and gas flaring.** Exposure to hazardous air pollutants emitted during incomplete combustion of gas flares affect human health, which

includes cancer, neurological, reproductive, and developmental effects (Adelana et al., 2011; Ekpoh & Obia, 2010; Gobo, Richard, & Ubong, 2009; Jimoh et al., 2011). Benzene is a known cause of leukemia and possibly other disorders (Ana et al., 2009). In their study *Environmental Risk Factors and Health Outcomes in Selected NDR Communities*, Ana et al. (2009) revealed that emissions from incomplete combustion contribute to climate change as comparative genomic hybridization (CGH), and also significant adverse health impacts. The attendant health impacts include acute respiratory infections, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, nasopharyngeal and laryngeal cancer, tuberculosis, prenatal conditions, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and eye irritation.

Akinola (2010) revealed that of every 1,000 newborn children, 200 die before the age of 5; this statistic is one of the poorest records among developing countries. Access to health was estimated to be available to only 56.5% of the population, and population per one hospital bed was as high as 1,227 people (Akinola, 2010). The current high levels of pollutants, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAHs) in the soil, water, and air, especially in the Eleme community, are an indication that there is a much higher level of intoxicants in the environment from industries, including the refineries and petrochemicals present in the area (Ana et al., 2009). Recently, cases of physiological effects have been recorded in areas with intense gas flaring and these effects include birth defects, which occur during the reproductive cycle of women in advanced stages of pregnancy (Gobo et al., 2009). Other disturbances are the effects on the wake-sleep rhythm, which are associated with neurological problems, and depression among individuals found in the area where gas flaring activity is common (Gobo et al., 2009).

Before the discovery of oil, the Niger Delta contained pure stretch of fresh water and healthy water lettuce that adds beauty and flavor to the environment (Onwubiko et al., 2013). Oil pollution has resulted in a situation where polluted water will threaten future generations (Jimoh et al., 2011). The failure of public water supply schemes in the Niger Delta has led to the exploitation of hand-dug wells from near surface aquifers for domestic use by those who cannot afford the cost of sinking boreholes (Omojimate, 2012). Ana et al. (2009) reported that water pollution is possibly the worst problem affecting pristine (surface and ground) waters in the area. This problem has been associated with a high rate of stomach ulcers stemming from the consumption of contaminated water that is prevalent in the Niger Delta region (Ana et al., 2009).

In the Niger Delta, flaring of gas at petroleum operating sites generate fumes that contain harmful chemicals, and may contribute to the accelerated aging of lungs, aggravated asthma, and bronchitis (Ana, Sridhar, & Asuzu, 2010). Hospital records in the area are replete with cases of diarrhea and typhoid fever diseases, both of which can be water borne (Ana et al., 2009). This trend presents a public health risk. Ana et al. (2010) noted that populations living in areas of the Niger Delta with high environmental risk factors may be exposed to contamination related morbidities including a higher tendency to cancers of the lung, skin, and eye.

The physician ratio is one doctor for every 150,000 inhabitants of the oil rich states of Bayelsa and Delta (Akinola, 2010). Ana et al. (2009) contended that although several studies in developed countries have indicated a pattern of health effects associated with environmental risk factors, there is a dearth of information on this in developing

countries like Nigeria. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the human security issue in the Niger Delta crisis is multidimensional, and mainly centers on the impact of the oil industry activities on people whose entire source of livelihood and ultimate existence is dependent on the environment (Chukwuemeka & Aghara, 2010; Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011).

### **Collateral Effects of Environmental Degradation**

**Environmental impact.** The rich biodiversity of the Niger Delta region is under severe threat from multiple sources. The danger in the context of this study is most typically from oil and gas exploration, and development activities. The following statement attributed to Ken Saro-Wiwa is a credible assessment of the collateral effect generated by the operation of Shell in his embattled community, Ogoni:

The Ogoni is embattled and imperiled. Since oil was discovered in the area in 1958, they have been victims of a deadly ecological war in which no blood is spilled, no bones are broken, and no one is maimed. But the people die all the time. Men, women, and children are at risk; plants, wild life, and fish are destroyed, the air and water poisoned, and finally the land dies. Today Ogoni has been reduced to a wasteland. (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012, p. 49)

A United Nation Environmental Program (UNEP) evaluation that studied the effects of pollution in the Niger Delta revealed that nearly 60% of all the tested sites contained oil pollution levels that exceeded safety limits; inhabitants of Nisisioken Ogale consumed drinking water from wells containing benzene, a known carcinogen, at levels

over 900 times above the World Health Organization guidelines (Obayiuwana, 2012). Obayiuwana (2012) noted that the study found strong contamination present at Ejama-Ebubu, 40 years after an oil spill occurred, despite reported clean-up attempts. Oil contamination in Ogoniland is extensive and is severely affecting many components of the environment. Fishing and farming, which are the traditional economic occupations of the people in this particular area, are no longer possible because of the environmental conditions. In the article, "The Rape of Paradise," the experience of an eyewitness account of one resident was reported as follows:

I had seven children one died after a pipeline blowout, as a result of gas inhalation and three others who subsequently died had respiratory problems from continuous inhalation of gas. The cassava and yam crop grown on the land near her house is clearly unfit for human consumption, but she says her family still eats it: Yes, we eat it but most of the crop is killed by pollution. What can we do? (Obayiuwana, 2012, p. 12)

The aquatic life in the fishponds has died, and the ponds themselves taken over by thick deposits of crude oil; high levels of pollution poisoned all forms of drinking water normally drawn from wells (Adelana et al., 2011; Obayiuwana, 2012; Okpara, 2012). The impact of an oil spill may appear to be localized at the time of occurrence, but the overall cost can be far reaching. When a spill occurs on the seabed, the impact on marine life can affect aquatic life elsewhere through migration by surviving species (Aro et al., 2010). In such instances, the resulting health hazard incurred can easily be transmitted beyond the shore of the incident. These actions expose the extent of man-made and logical

consequences associated with environmental threats that are ever present in extractive industry operations (Oguduvwe, 2013).

**Sustainable development concepts.** Sustainability in the context of corporate responsibility means the established capability and capacity of corporations and governments to manage their own businesses with the aim of preserving the environment for the future (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009; Akhakpe, 2012). The goals of corporate sustainability are to improve the processes of production, distribution and consumption by creating lasting value for all stakeholders (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). Sustainability is part of corporate social responsibility (Butler, 2011). In contrast to this view of sustainability, environmental degradation that has manifested through oil spillage and gas flaring in Niger Delta region has produced problems of widespread poverty, disease, social injustice, insecurity, and social unrest that threaten not only domestic but also global security (Ogege, 2011).

To achieve sustainability effectively, stakeholder standards (a similar but significantly different concept from shareholder value) is essential (Ako et al., 2009). Odoemene (2011) argued that environmental actions must be improved to meet best practices elsewhere, which would simultaneously affect social conditions for development. The goal of sustainability is to guarantee unrestricted production, and trigger social, political, and financial innovations that would create new opportunities for previously impoverished and marginalized people (Odoemene, 2011). Eweje (2007) argued that multinational oil corporations have a responsibility to protect the physical

environment and society in which they carry out their operations because when corporations violate this duty, the host community will protest against them.

A World Bank Report (2003) stated that sustainability is an evolving framework, which demands that societies must continue to change over time (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). It is argued that where significant social stress and crisis likely to lead to a breakdown in the development and maintenance of all assets, intergenerational well-being may be jeopardized (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). The ethical responsibility of multinational oil companies is to refrain from polluting the ecosystem, refrain from harming people and their history of livelihood such as farmland, and utilize natural resources in a sustainable fashion (Ebegbulem et al., 2013; Eweje, 2007). The minimalist concept insists that corporations or any related entity must refrain from causing unlawful damage because failure to act responsibly would violate certain moral rights not to be harmed (Eweje, 2007).

To understand the logic of applying the aforementioned principle in the context of this study, it is necessary to emphasize notable episodes of oil spills in the Niger Delta region due to negligence by MNOCs. In 1980, Nigeria's largest spill ever, perhaps more than 400,000 barrels from a Texaco offshore facility, destroyed 340 hectares of mangrove (Aro et al., 2010). Idemudia (2011) noted that the MNOCs in the region communicate ideas about ethical governance and corporate social responsibility despite the public knowledge to the contrary. Examining the importance of corporate social responsibility as a component of sustainability, Olufemi (2010) expressed reservations about fair compensation to a host for the loss of income of livelihood, health hazards, death,

destruction of natural resources of the forest, and wildlife. Olufemi (2010) asserted that true sustainable community development depends on the creation of wealth within communities and not on the unequal redistribution of income, assets, or gifts.

For the petroleum industry to be sustainable in the near and distant future in Nigeria, the social dimension of sustainable development has to be considered the most critical component since social issues present and pose the greatest threat to the industry's survival (Kew & Phillips, 2013; Oguduvwe, 2013). Sustainability requires integrating human needs in planning, along with environmental and economic considerations because social sustainability (or well-being) of communities is vital to any assessment of sustainability (Kew & Phillips, 2013). Real economic growth stems from private investment and individual initiatives (Olufemi 2010). Olufemi (2010) suggested that emphasis on capacity building and economic empowerment always make partnership formation an imperative, and cooperation the dominant strategy for managing issues of corporate, and community relations. Based on the foregoing, it is relevant to assess the response of the Nigerian government to the Niger Delta crisis.

### **Challenges to Sustainable Economic Development**

**Government strategy and governance reform.** The Gross National Product (GNP) of the Niger Delta is below the national average of \$280 per household (Essien, 2011). Akinola (2010) noted that in spite of its strategic importance, the demographic picture of the region as indicated by the Human Development Index (HDI) compares unfavorably to other regions with the same oil and gas resources. For example, HDI for the Niger Delta is lower (0.564) than Saudi Arabia (0.880), Libya (0.799), Kuwait



(0.844), and United Arab Emirate (0.846) (Akinola, 2010). The oil wells located in the onshore and offshore drilling facilities in the area provide two million barrels of crude oil regularly while the majority of the indigenes of the NDR live on less than two dollars a day (Orogun, 2010).

Many years of neglect and conflict in the Niger Delta have fostered a siege mentality, especially among the youth who feel condemned to a future without hope, and see conflict, violence, theft, and kidnapping as strategic escape (Essien, 2011). The Federal Government of Nigeria has been battling for decades with strategies regarding the development of the Niger Delta in response to the prevailing agitation from the people of the Niger Delta. In order to correct the injustice, neglect, and marginalization suffered by the people of Niger Delta region over the years, the FGN has adopted the establishment of intervention agencies in the region (Paki & Ebiefa, 2011).

As Essien (2011) observed, in one of its first initiatives the federal government established the Niger Delta Development Board in 1961 and in 1992 the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMAPADEC) and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000. Despite these efforts, results of economic development of the area are slow, giving rise to different sorts of antisocial acts and economic disparity among the people (Essien, 2011). These commissions failed due to structural defects, corruption, and faulty implementation strategy, nepotism, financial imprudence, contract proliferation, and lack of moral will (Paki & Ebiefa, 2011; Akpomuvie, 2011b). Thus, development as a phenomenon cannot be defined as a project but a means (Paki & Ebiefa, 2011). The conflict situation in the Niger Delta is a

reflection of governance failure and a prolonged absence of a sustainable development strategy for the region (Omojimate, 2012). Fifty years of oil production in the Niger Delta may have only produced poverty, hunger, and infrastructural collapse for the region (Omojimate, 2012).

The issue of a revenue sharing formula has been at the center of the national debate on how to ensure that resources get to community levels to benefit the people in oil producing communities (Akinola, 2010). Orogun (2010) noted that the share of oil revenues allocated to ethnic minority oil producing states of the Niger Delta fell from 50% in 1966 to 1.5% in the mid-1990s, and then rose to 13% in 1999 in response to global campaigns and local protests by minorities. The increase in revenue share was the policy of a new democratic regime to gain legitimacy by attending to the grievances of the oil producing communities (Orogun, 2010). In order to find a political and economic solution to the injustices perceived by the people of the region, the government in 2008 established a Ministry of Niger Delta and commissioned the Ledum Mitte Technical Committee (TCND) to investigate and prescribe remedies and logistical mechanisms to promote peace building (Orogun, 2010). Rexler (2010) wrote that this intervention has to a degree moderated the crisis; they remain inadequate and ineffective. The inadequacy of these responses may not be unconnected with political influences, corruption, and other underlying structural problems that make them superficial (Kew, & Philips, 2013; Rexler, 2010).

**Multinational oil and corporate responsibility.** In the article, “Environmental Policy in Nigeria: Paradox of Niger Delta Sustainable Development,” Ugoh and Ukpere

(2012) asserted the governmental agencies, such as the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, are inefficient and ineffective. Oil companies' flout with impunity statutory provisions and regulations meant to protect the environment (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2012). The request by oil communities for compensation for damages to their habitat continues to be ignored by the government and MNOCs (Wosu, 2013). The unfavorable response by the MNOCs insisted that their agreements were with the federal government whose duty it was to improve the areas (Rexler, 2010). The oil companies have also been accused of instigating a third party by buying and supplying weapons to security agencies (Akhakpe, 2012). The host communities accuse MNOCs of collusion with the state to expropriate ancestral lands and to privatize violence and the large-scale destruction of traditional economic and social lifeline of the region (Akhakpe, 2012; Ako et al., 2009). Drawing from these revelations, it is appropriate in this study to question the corporate integrity and community engagement of MNOCs in addressing the plight of people in NDR. Asawo (2011) noted that integrity is an organizational level concept because organizations engage in a web of relationships with stakeholders, and should meet expectations and agreed standards of operation.

The advent of globalization and rapid developments in information technology has to a large extent reinforced the notion that business has a social responsibility that goes beyond profit making (Idemudia, 2009). Corporate social responsibility includes helping to solve environmental problems (Idemudia, 2009). Consequently, corporate social responsibility (CSR) should allow businesses to mitigate the impact of negative

externalities that arise from its operations, but also as means to contribute to sustainable development in the host community (Idemudia, 2009). CSR involves first, compliance with rules and regulations that shape society, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and other human rights principles from which national law usually derive their influence (Ako et al., 2009). It is within this context that Asawo (2011) argued that MNOCs operating in the NDR must continuously evaluate their performance in terms of corporate social responsibility, environmental protection, and their state of corporate citizenship, and corporate integrity identity. Thus, it can be inferred that to address the problem issues facing the Niger Delta, MNOCs are required to develop a corporate communication strategy that promotes dialogue, understanding, and access to all stakeholders within its area of operation (Osuji, 2011).

The perception of risk hazards of oil and gas exploration, perception of the benefits of oil and its consequences, the nature of community/oil company relations, restoration of the damaged environment, and compensation payments represent definitive issues that shape perception of MNOCs by the collective Niger Delta communities (Asawo, 2011). Idemudia (2009) noted that oil multinationals undertake partnership initiatives to contribute to community development by involving different actors such as government, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. Ako et al. (2009) argued that CSR in Nigeria should be aimed towards addressing the peculiarity of the socio-economic challenges of the country (e.g., poverty alleviation, health care provision, and infrastructure development) and would be informed by socio-cultural influences. The

cultural influences might not necessarily reflect the popular western standard and expectation of CSR (such as consumer protection, fair trade and green marketing) (Ogula, 2012).

For example, an MNOC that contributes millions of dollars in promoting fair trade around the globe has not contributed in any meaningful way to an indigene of the Niger Delta who does not have access to electricity, portable water, or hospitals (Idemudia, 2011). Consequently, the obligation of MNOCs operating in a place such as the NDR is to address the burning issues of the people (Agwu, 2013). At night what the inhabitants of the NDR see as light are the flames of burning disposal gas (gas flaring) that illuminates the night sky (Odoemene, 2011). The undeniable reality is that while the oil company's base or stations enjoy modern social amenities that make life more comfortable, the daily experience of the NDR host community is backwardness, and the resultant environmental degradation; this is at variance with billions in earnings that accrue to the multinational oil companies (Paki & Ebiefa, 2011). The oil multinationals have failed in their corporate social responsibility and community involvement to the people of the region (Agwu, 2013; Ako, 2012; Iniaghe et al. 2013). Akpan (2010) noted that inadequate regulation and the lack of incentives for corporate social responsibility initiatives within Nigeria means oil companies set their own standards. The profit driven nature of oil multinationals makes it difficult to believe that MNOCs will improve operational standards within areas of operation, unless either compelled to do so through community action or government regulation (Akpan, 2010).

## Summary

This proposed research relied on the wide range of available literature regarding the Niger Delta crisis in order to establish a basis for environmental degradation as the key challenge to sustainable development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The essential theories that enhanced development of the literature review are critical theory, modernization and dependency theory, and stakeholder theory. The value of these theories served as the window for understanding the importance of this study. The impacts of environmental degradation in relation to sustainable economic development were argued from cultural, economic, health, and social perspectives.

The Niger Delta is the hub of oil and gas production in Nigeria, accounting for 80% of total government revenue, 95% of the foreign exchange, and over 80% of the national wealth (Paki & Ebienfa, 2011). The rural communities in Niger Delta region depend solely on the natural environment for subsistence living; consequently, oil and gas extraction impact on the NDR causes the declining productivity of the region (Ebegbulem et al., 2013). “The oil industry in Nigeria is governed by state legislation; seen to be the legal basis, and the fundamentals of the disempowerment of communities in the Niger Delta” (Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011, p. 282). The laws governing the oil industry constrain development of the area because it has failed in protecting the Niger Delta environment giving rise to environmental degradation (Agwu, 2013; Orji, 2012; Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011).

The repressive character of the state, which made military action, reprisal attacks, and state terrorism the typical response to anti-state mobilization rather than negotiations,

has only succeeded in intensifying the conflict in the Niger Delta (Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011). Ako et al. (2009) asserted that health and safety of the people continues to deteriorate because MNOCs fail to clean up oil spills despite the eloquent statements (about responsible business conduct) issued by the various MNOCs operating in the region. The struggles in the region are not without historical specificities and analyzing these specificities does not only enhance an understanding of the current crises but facilitates the search for a solution to the problem (Obi, 2011, Odoemene, 2011).

### **Transition and Summary**

This qualitative research consists of three sections. Section 1 defines the research approach, which is a qualitative case study. In Section 1, the structure of the study purpose, research questions, and conceptual overview of factors that directly affect the Niger Delta crisis were explored. These issues include challenges to sustainable economic development, the perception of multinational companies in the region, environmental degradation and sustainable development, capacity utilization, and gender relations, good governance, and corporate social responsibility. Section 2 highlights a comprehensive structure of the research design in order to assure quality. The aim of this qualitative case study was to discover how activities of MNOCs affect the environmental and economic livelihood of the indigenes of Ogoniland and to present the environmental and economic consequences of oil extraction in the Niger Delta from the Ogoni perspective. Section 2 incorporates the following areas of discussion: role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling techniques, data organization and analysis, and the validity and reliability of data. Section

3 provides evidence regarding results of the analysis obtained from two focus groups, which included all participants who represented indigenes of Ogoniland. Section 3 illuminates (a) an overview of the study, (b) presentations of findings, (c) application to professional practice, (d) implications for social change, (e) recommendations for action, (f) recommendations for further study, (g) reflections, and (h) summary and study conclusions.



## Section 2: The Project

In this qualitative research with a single case study design, I explored how the environmental and economic consequences of extraction activities by MNOCs affect indigenes of the Ogoniland in particular and the Niger Delta region generally. This section includes the purpose of the project, the role of the researcher and research participants, and information on population and sampling. The justification for the research methodology and design, as well ethical components of research and data collection instruments, was provided. Lastly, I explain validity and reliability concepts as instruments for maintaining quality assurance in the research process.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to discover how the profit motives of oil and gas extraction activities by MNOCs have engendered poverty, social disorder, ecological damage, and other forms of deprivation on the indigenes of Ogoniland (Akpabio & Akpan, 2010; Odoemene, 2011). The study has the potential to inform stakeholders about the ecological mismanagement and its accompanying threat to human sustenance and existence. I explored the phenomenon of environmental insecurity and economic sustainability by using purposive sampling to collect data from community organizations and other stakeholders, all of whom are indigenes of Ogoniland in the Niger Delta. The focus group sessions consisted of two groups with 10 participants in each group. The focus group setting is less threatening to research participants, and the atmosphere is useful for participants to discuss ideas, perceptions, opinions, and thoughts (Jarvinen & Demant, 2011; Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). The focus

group session approach allows researchers to learn through discussion about responsive and unconscious psychological and cultural characteristics and processes among the various groups (Aripin, Mustafa, & Hussein, 2011; Jarvinen & Demant, 2011).

### **Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher is crucial to eliminating imaginary and real biases. In qualitative research, the researcher retains complete and continuous dialogue with the participant. For this study, the careful selection of participants met all ethical standards, especially those that pertain to participants' rights (see Appendix A). Qualitative research is characteristically exploratory, fluid and flexible, data-driven, and context sensitive (Reiter, Stewart, & Bruce, 2011). In qualitative research my role as the researcher was to explain what I saw, heard, and understood. All participants selected for the study were individuals who experienced the real-life phenomenon examined in the research (Street & Ward, 2012). A qualitative case study is appropriate because it enables a researcher to produce critical and in-depth information and multiple data sources about the topic (Diefenbach, 2009). Protection of all participants involved in the research under appropriate covenants regarding ethical research conduct was applied. Previously acquired experience with elements of the traditions and customs of Ogoni indigenes was an additional advantage that I transmitted positively to strengthen communication with participants. I did not have direct control over data not directly collected by me. However, responsibility is acknowledged to ensure data analysis and reliability and validity are tested and accurately verified.

## **Participants**

This study involved indigenes of Ogoniland as the primary research participants. These Ogonis were professionals, members of community advocacy groups, elders, representative of youth organizations, members of women's rights groups, and religious leaders. The purpose of qualitative research is to seek the depth of knowledge and experience; therefore, I engaged only productive exemplars of the experience (Chenail, 2011). A successful focus group would consist of between six to 12 participants and group sessions may take between one to two hours (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The focus group in this study consisted of 10 participants for each of the focus group sessions.

The choice of purposive sampling was to ensure that participants possessed qualities that best answered questions related to the general research questions (Abrams, 2010). Access to the participants was obtained through existing contact with members of the Ogoni community residing in the United States. This approach facilitated and promoted confidence building with research participants. Abrams (2010) argued that researchers should meticulously connect to those who provide access to research participants.

The residents of Ogoniland have developed mistrust of researchers as agents of governments or oil companies due to the underlying tensions resulting from the crisis in the region (Edino et al., 2010). Negotiating access to participants through community members helped to allay fears of participants and confirm the reliability of the answers given to questions in the group sessions. Given the unstable political situation in the Niger Delta, communication with research participants entails sensitivity to the local

environment due to the polemic relationship between the Ogoni people and government agents and oil company employees (Edino et al., 2010). The relationship between a researcher and participant may be invasive and suspicious. Therefore, it was necessary to establish a trusting relationship with the research participant in order to create a working relationship. Lietz and Zayas (2010) recommended that the research process focus rely on meaningful interaction with research participants. The focus group participants reviewed the consent forms by themselves. I introduced myself and explained my connection to Ogoniland and the reasons why Ogoniland best serves the research interest. Open discussion of the participants' perceptions of the research project, as well as their objections and criticism, guided the focus group process.

The participants were provided with voluntary consent forms explaining that research participants are volunteers who may withdraw from the research process at any time (see Appendix A). This process was expected to ensure ethical protection of participants. A condition for participating in the research study was that participants sign a form for consent, noting that confidentiality to all aspects of participant involvement in the study was assured. Participants obtained information about the purpose of the study during the focus group process. The focus group sessions fostered a sense of equality between all parties so that they served as a conduit for transmitting knowledge. Names of participants, their places of employment, their addresses, and other personal data shall remain confidential, and all written reports and materials pertaining to the data collection system will remain protected for a minimum of 5 years. To protect the rights of all participants, access to the research data requires an electronic pass code.

## **Research Method and Design**

The three main approaches to research design are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The method for this research focused on qualitative case study research. This approach aligned with the purpose of the study, the characteristics of the participants, and their worldview. A qualitative single case study serves as an intensive study of a particular unit with the goal of understanding comparable larger units; a case study provides detailed information that includes more than one source and unit of analysis (Aripin et al., 2011; Street & Ward, 2012). A qualitative case study allows room for descriptions and interpretations, conveyance and prediction, and understanding of processes (Eshlaghy et al., 2011, Street & Ward, 2012). Giorgi (2012) argued that description is the use of language to communicate the intentional use of experience. Thus, the use of qualitative case study in this research was to achieve a clear understanding of issues, including the establishment of themes and categories, in order to advance suggestions that may improve business practices.

### **Method**

A qualitative method is suitable for discovering the issues, opinions, and insights embedded in the experiences of the Niger Delta people regarding the impact of MNOCs' extraction activities on environmental security and sustainable economic development of the region. A qualitative research method was selected because Lietz and Zayas (2010) argued that this method allows a researcher to explore the conditions of social practices, relationships, and ideas, and to evaluate the message from the participants' points of view. This research explored the interaction between indigenes of Ogoniland and

MNOCs leadership and how the inequitable relationship has failed to mitigate the adverse effects of oil and gas extraction.

A quantitative method would not have offered this study a meaningful outcome because its primary goal is to generalize findings and inferences from a statistical sample to the study population (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). This method may not allow the researcher to open up the space for questions aimed at gaining extensive understanding of the participants' social, economic sphere and world views. Quantitative methods emphasize amounts, numerical descriptions and their relationships (Tewksbury, 2009). Quantitative researches are conducted in controlled settings where outcomes are explored due to treatments and manipulations (Harris et al., 2009). Respondent validation as a form of validity proof is often not applied in certain aspects of quantitative research. Harris et al. (2009) argued that respondents will approve or disconfirm accuracy of findings if their position and significance is representative of the research.

A mixed method might have been suitable for this study in combining a quantitative and qualitative method in order to obtain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Mixed methods incorporate techniques that enhance the data fusion and generalization of outcomes (Harris et al. 2009). However, a mixed method approach presents certain challenges such as difficulty in integrating and analyzing data, additional cost, and unpredictable time for completing research (Farquhar, Ewing, & Booth, 2011). The time factors and the added cost are significant constraints in a mixed method research design. Therefore, I eliminated the option of this method for this study.

Qualitative methods allow researchers to discuss various manifestations of intended outcomes not reflected in standardized instruments, and to identify unintended positive or negative outcomes for the individual, an institution or the community (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Qualitative techniques are essential for documenting the adaptations necessary for the application of interventions in the real-life context and for identifying key intervention components and desired outcomes (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Biber (2010) asserted that a qualitative approach encompasses research traditions that contain as their core belief that reality is socially constructed and multiple. The transformative point for many of these perspectives indicates that they speak to social change and social justice as primary research objectives (Biber, 2010). Therefore, a qualitative case study design is the best method for this study.

### **Research Design**

Qualitative research with a case study design is useful in conducting research on organizations, groups and environments (Reynoso, 2010). Walden University recommends case study designs, ethnography, and phenomenology as appropriate research designs for the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program (F. Gottlieb, personal communication, July 12, 2013). The purpose of the DBA is to enhance the capacity to implement current academic theory in order to find solutions to business and organizational challenges. This study is not to develop a new theory, but to address the exploratory research question by explaining the phenomenon under study from the perspective of participants. A case study involves detailed study of an issue, organization,

feature or unit of analysis (Eshlaghy et al., 2011; Noor, 2008). Case studies draw global recognition for their usefulness and relevance in business practice (Reynoso, 2010).

A distinct advantage for the choice of case studies is that the objective of proof relies on more than two sources of information, and these sources must be validated in the same body of facts (Reynoso, 2010). A case study deals with the detailed analysis of one or more situations with intent to explain why decisions were made, why they were taken, and with what result (Yin 2009). Research designs such as ethnography, phenomenology, or a narrative and grounded theory approach will not enhance this study. The grounded theory approach uses previous research material and comparing different sources of data (Jonsen & Jehn., 2009). A grounded method does not allow for the application of a priori theory, and may not meet the conceptual frameworks (critical theory, modernization and dependency theory, and stakeholder theory) discussed in this case study (Lasch et al., 2010).

Ethnography has a variety of definitions, and as a design method seeks to observe the cultural characteristic of people, gender, race, or class (Singer, 2009). In ethnography, the descriptive narrative is beyond what the researcher saw or heard; the ethnographer is an active participant in the research process (Singer, 2009). Ethnographic research can lead to clarifications or discussions about a larger picture of an event or issue; its propensity to generate theory contradicts the purpose of this single case study (Harris, et al., 2009). Ethnography embraces the cultural behavior of people within their own natural environment (Singer, 2009). Ethnography may provide valuable informative insights to a case study; the method may not provide information that allows for comparison of a



single case to a similar case in a larger context (Singer, 2009). The focus of this study is beyond understanding the cultural life in the daily routine of a group; thus ethnography would not meaningfully enrich the study.

As a research method, phenomenology pursues the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experiences of a phenomenon in a group of people (Reiter et al., 2011). Phenomenology seeks to uncover the lived experiences of participants; however, sources for obtaining rich data through this method would not satisfy the purpose of this case study research (Lasch et al., 2010). The objective of this study was not only to explore the phenomenon shared through a common experience by a group of individuals, but also to explore how these issues affect them in their relationship with other forces. Though a phenomenological approach could provide some benefits to the phenomenon of interest to this study, it remains inadequate because the process is to determine themes about people's perceptions and emotions about a phenomenon.

The three types of case study research are exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Noor, 2008). I chose an exploratory case study design as the most appropriate design for this study because it meets all the characteristics of qualitative research (Eshlaghy et al., 2011). Eshlaghy et al. (2011) asserted that the case study researcher has limited control on events, and the focus is a current and real life situation where emphasis is on relationship and processes instead of results and products. A purposive sampling approach suits this study. Purposive sampling is one of the most reliable methods of data collection techniques in qualitative research (Lietz & Zayas,

2010). The process comprises a review of archival records, participant observation as well as focus group semistructured sessions (Noor, 2008).

The focus groups included indigenes of Ogoniland, such as community elders, women leaders, youth leaders, environmental activists, legal luminaries and professionals. These participants have knowledge of Ogoniland and its challenges in the realm of the indigenes relationship with MNOCs. Researchers could use different groups to determine if the themes that emerged from one group also emerged from the other groups (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The concept of multiple focus groups allows the use of a group to explore ideas and the other for verification (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009).

This study is based on the assumption that the people who relate to the phenomenon under study are capable of providing valid responses. The knowledge of the participant affected directly or indirectly by the consequences of natural resource extraction provides the implicit and flexible understanding of the assumptions made by the researcher. This theory promotes the acceptance of hitherto unknown issues and the creation of new knowledge sources (O'hEocha et al., 2010). In this study, my objective was to provide a deep understanding of a significant subject, which is the connection between valuable natural resources, and the entrenchment of poverty, social chaos, neglect, and environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region. Biber (2010) suggested that the goal of this perspective is not to look for truth; rather reality assumes a more representational role.

A case study design was appropriate for this study because the phenomenon of interest satisfied the three conditions defined by Yin (2009), such as the exploratory

nature of the research question, the complexity of the issue, or historic event defined by a time frame. Reynoso (2010) adopted a case study design in preparing postgraduate dissertations in small and medium sized firms. Jonsen and Jehn (2009) proposed a case study as the best research approach to address three different perspectives on a how an organization comprehends diversity as a strategic issue. Jonsen and Jehn suggested that strategic issues may include events, developments, people, and organizations. Based on this assumption, this study was to uncover the experiences and viewpoint of the indigenes of Ogoniland regarding the negative consequences of the oil and gas extraction activities by MNOCs. The goal of this worldview paradigm is to suggest that corporate ethical governance may increase profitability, as well as liberate and advance social justice.

### **Population and Sampling**

The specific populations addressed in this study were indigenes (male and female), who were native to Ogoniland in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Purposive sampling served as the best approach for selecting the 20 persons who participated in the focus group processes for this study. In discussing *Sampling of Hard to Reach Populations in Qualitative Research*, Abrams (2010) noted that sampling and selection of the population is critical to the integrity of research in social science. To maximize the usefulness of information, I chose criterion sampling as the preferred purposive sampling in this case study because it serves to ensure that the different members of the community fully participate, such as diversity of gender, age, education and class (Rakow, 2011). Purposive sampling allows for the discovery of a variety of meanings and experiences in the sampled population (Abrams, 2010; Rakow, 2011).

Purposive sampling fits the data collection technique for this case study because it has the potential to produce results that may be transferred to a similar situation (Harris et al., 2009). Further, this sampling technique facilitated the Ogoni people's recollection of their accounts as a recall of experiences. This sampling technique is adequate for the purpose of quality assurance (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). In qualitative research, sample units are usually sufficient when homogenous samples are selected (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Specifically, if interpretations and theories remain strictly localized, then the size of the sample is not as critical (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

An appropriate sample size in a case study research is a selection made by the researcher after he or she has determined the case or cases to be studied (Abrams, 2010). Given that an individual can generate hundreds or thousands of concepts, large samples are not necessarily needed to produce a rich data set since the idea or experience under study is the unit of analysis (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Abrams (2010) argued that each research design has its own set of sampling rules applicable to the topic of research and sampled population. The indigenes of Ogoniland who are better positioned to offer reliable information and subsequently enhance the validity of the study make up participants selected for study. Ogoniland served as the optimum location of choice for conducting focus groups and collecting other relevant data to this study because of its current exposure of having the most intensive land and sea degradation in the NDR as a result of oil spills and gas flaring (Odoemene, 2011). The purposeful selection of participants whose economic, social, occupational, and professional orientation relate to the activities of natural resources extraction by MNOCs is to provide concrete accounts

rather than a generalized description of events (Chenail, 2011). This approach facilitated the transfer of knowledge gained into a language discourse.

The selection of Ogoni indigenes is relevant to this case study because only those individuals affected by the phenomenon in question constitute the large sample of participants so that the research will establish a common understanding. The choice of the population and the sample was vital to the success of the research. The focus group sessions consisted of 20 participants distributed into groups of 10 participants per session. The groups' sizes reflected the diverse gender, age, academic background, and social status. O'hEocha et al. (2010) argued that the attraction of group participants is that focus groups share a situation in common, and will respond to the moderator's direction of the group's discussion. The population and sample selected for this study was sufficient to provide an in-depth investigation of the relationship among the phenomena, processes or experiences (Eshlaghy et al., 2011).

### **Ethical Research**

The cardinal principle of modern research ethics is respect for human dignity (Qu & Dumay, 2011). During the research process, various ethical issues take precedence in ensuring the safety of the research participants, especially in the case of human centered research designs in which people, not objects, are the focus of the research (Deventer, 2009). Research ethics are guidelines that ensure effective communication to all participants and recipients of the research process (Deventer, 2009). All research participants were free from harm in all its forms and structure. Ethical research in a

qualitative study involves the credibility of the researcher, the authenticity of the study, and issues of confidentiality.

All research participants received timely notification (no less than 10 days) via e-mail, telephone call and U.S. mail. The participants volunteered freely and were not coerced to participate in the research, and were informed about the purpose as established in the consent form (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Participants were provided informed consent form (see Appendix A) before participation in focus groups. Documentation included statements about any questions of the copyright of the focus group session. The principle of voluntary and informed consent is crucial for recruiting participants to a research projects (Juritzen, Grimen, & Heggen, 2011). To preserve the freedom of research participants, I ensured that the basis of voluntary and informed consent achieves its primary goal of empowering the participants' physical, mental, and emotional space (Juritzen et al., 2011). In compliance with the principle of protecting the participant, consent forms and other notifications contained only information that is required and relevant to serve the interest and purpose stated (See Appendix E).

The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and validated the methods of data collection. The approval of Walden University IRB was obtained for this research study on November 21, 2013 with approval # 11-21-13-0254795. The agreement forms draw attention to the participants' rights to withdraw from the focus group at will and to contribute voluntarily or withhold information that may harm an individual's interest. Participants retained copies of the agreement they signed. Participants were informed of any potential risks or dangers associated with the focus

group sessions and the right to refuse to answer any questions they deem compromising. Contentions may occur in areas where political sensitive issues may be exposed by research, whose goal is to provide reliable and factual accounts of daily events (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

Relationship based ethics guided this research process. Qu and Dumay (2011) asserted that the researcher enters into a relationship with the participant implying certain obligations. Therefore, I ensured that this relationship did not transform itself in any way to exploitation for personal gain through improper influences. Information such as names of persons, setting, incidents, or any characteristic that may expose a participant's identity was obscured. The conduct of the research complied with the acceptable norms of the cultural context of the research setting. This procedure ensured fair treatment of the research subjects. Protection of all written reports from focus groups and records of participant observations will remain in a safe box for 5 years. Research participants did not receive any incentives. After 5 years, the data and associated paperwork will be mechanically shredded in a manner that will render it unusable by anyone.

## **Data Collection**

### **Instruments**

Qualitative methods depend on the ability of the researcher to process information, respond sensitively to social cues, customize the research design, and interpret data as new questions emerge (Chenail, 2011; Lietz & Zayas, 2010). For the purposes of assuring the integrity of this qualitative case study, the data collection instruments consisted of focus groups sessions recorded with the Echo Smartpen,

participant observation, and study of archival records (Harris et al., 2009). I reviewed archival documents from various libraries, community organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), company reports and other resource organizations (See Appendix B, C, and D). Street and Ward (2012) used semistructured interviews or formats in a case study to gain a better understanding of how successful businesses made adaptive transitions after the failure of the Internet business in 2001. In other words, a semistructured session allows room for the focus groups to be conversational and promotes participant freedom with responses (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009).

Individual data, group data, or interaction group data are the three types of data that could emerge from focus group data (Onwuegbuzie et al, 2009). Focus groups provide reliable information to enable the researcher to focus on selected topics while leveraging group interaction (O'hEocha, 2010). However, group interaction may lead to collaborative construction effects such as conformity of views by controlling characters or roles in the group could inspire others to follow a dominant opinion (OhEocha et al., 2010). The strength of focus groups is that they facilitate evaluation, expose mechanisms that exist in the sample population and provide in-depth and contrasting characterization of these phenomena (Vicsek, 2010). Srivastava and Thomson (2009) adopted a focus group session to determine organizational policies and procedures from the particular people affected by it.

The research approach for the focus group sessions consisted of 20 participants, drawn from the diverse population of Ogoniland. A disadvantage of the focus group is the phenomenon known as *groupthink*. Boateng (2012) noted that the case where



groupthink offsets personal opinions may be attributed to many independent variables such as overall organization, constitutions, and even participant motivation during the focus group session. Groupthink in this instance is defined as the cumulative influence of collective thought on the opinion of an individual in the group (Boateng, 2012). The outcome of a study conducted to determine the direction of groupthink responses of a focus group, in contrast to one-on-one interviews with the same participants, revealed that responses only differed on controversial social issues with direct personal consequence for the participant at a focus group setting (Boateng, 2012). This finding suggested that participants in a focus group may not be forthcoming with a problem that implicates personal matters. The use of focus groups accords a voice to marginalized groups and especially in settings where there is a different perspective between researcher and participants (Guptill, 2011). A focus group session facilitates data collection through group interaction on a topic determined by a researcher (Jarvinen & Demant, 2011).

This study goes beyond explaining phenomenon, but also to understand the informal relationships that exist between multinational oil corporations and indigenes of Ogoniland at different levels of interaction. Rodriguez, Schwartz, Lahman, and Geist (2011) noted that critical theory shapes the focus groups from a culturally responsive approach. Critical theory is one of the conceptual frameworks discussed in this study. A critical framework emphasizes research work with people and not on them (Rodriguez et al., 2011). This claim is particularly relevant to groups that have suffered significant marginalization. To underscore the potential benefits of a focus group, Schmidt (2010)

argued that information detail that is difficult to distinguish in other comparable settings will certainly appear in a focus group.

The following protocols were applied during the focus group session: (a) use of a Sony IC digital recorder, (b) an Echo Smartpen for audio recording of the group discussions, and (c) transcription of all recordings to a laptop with the use of Livescribe transmission software. I designated and coded the transcript of the group session, and entered it into each group folder and labeled accordingly. At the end of the group session, data analysis was initiated by cross referencing participants' responses. This method facilitated the emergence of themes to support the study. Journal entries or notes included observations, descriptive accounts of participants' narrative, attitudes, conduct, mood, and non-verbal communication, and surroundings. Analysis of data, comprehension, and projections about movements and trends in reflective observation notes included the researcher's own impressions. Documentary evidence from evaluation of archival records enhanced validation of data gained from focus groups and observation (Noor, 2008).

Focus groups composed of homogenous participants create a safe and communicative environment (Favero & Heath, 2012). The focus group sessions consisted of two separate units. The participants did not express any inhibitions and did not request any preferential order of ranking. The conduct of the group sessions occurred in a place that was safe, secure, and mutually acceptable.

The data from the focus group were arranged using open and selective coding. Open coding facilitates the emergence of a core category and related concepts from raw data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). This categorization involves identifying and segmenting

themes from raw data. The analysis of data for the sole purpose of determining the research summary required selective coding. Selective coding of data is to saturate the core and related concepts (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). The first step in open coding consisted of a descriptive process and a second step in selective coding an analytic process. The HyperResearch software program was used for the analysis of qualitative data. This program was helpful in calculating the scores based on themes of the research and identifying the frequency of the themes to increase the reliability, quality, and validity of the research.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The data collection technique in this study consisted of two focus group sessions with a total of 20 participants; each group consisted of 10 individuals. The process started with self-introduction and presentation of my credentials. The next step involved presenting participants with a series of preliminary questions for gathering information on their different backgrounds. I presented questions that aligned with the main research questions, and open-ended questions to capture the thoughts, ideas and opinions of each participant were pursued. Predetermined and open-ended questions, introduction of the purpose, and topic of the focus group were directed by me. A significant limitation with focus groups is that focus group questions are not necessarily standardized, and may be subject to the individual situation (Vicsek, 2010). Other disadvantages of a focus group are that some participants may act in the session with intent to disrupt the process or not to participate. In such situations, Harrell and Bradley (2009) recommended that the moderator might want to use a 5-minute break or recess to address such participant (s) in

order to gain an insight into how they feel. The research participants in this particular study rendered maximum cooperation.

O’heocha (2010) noted that the focus group technique supports a clear and open interaction with participants where disclosure of meaning overrides measurements. For effective data collection purposes, I concentrated in directing the focus group. In many instances, it is not uncommon for research participants to submit restrained information due to perceived strangeness of the researcher. Therefore, to create an open, trusting relationship with the research participants, I promoted and sustained a relaxed atmosphere.

### **Data Organization Techniques**

Qualitative data enriched by a case study design is adequate for this study because a diverse group representing the broad range of Ogoniland indigenes, such as community elders, leaders and environmental activists, women’s rights groups, youth leaders, farmers, and fishermen, skilled and unskilled workers, and professionals made up the population for this study. I organized all data in this qualitative case study in a single file. The file covered both focus group sessions. This approach ensured confidentiality for each participant group. A notebook served the purpose of entering reflexive information and observations. Compilation of the data generated from the various sources formed a complete text for the final systematic study. Computer programs such as a Microsoft Excel worksheet and Dropbox served to keep all data sheets in an organized file. All written reports and materials pertaining to the data collection process will remain securely stored for a minimum of 5 years in a system accessible with a numerical pass

code. These research materials will be mechanically disposed after 5 years, in a manner that will render it unusable by anyone.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and analyzing data, such as text data as in transcripts for analysis (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). The overall process is for the researcher to compress the data in themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes and finally representing the data through discussion (Harris et al., 2009). Application of HyperResearch software facilitated the discovery of those themes that all the research participants identify as crucial to their experiences.

HyperResearch software has multimedia capabilities and allows the maximum ability to code and retrieve, construct theories, and conduct narrative analysis of data. I analyzed the data to confirm that the respondents expressed consistency on the real impact of MNOCs' extraction activities on the general assertion of human and material development in their community.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand how the economic sustenance of Ogoniland indigenes and the Niger Delta have been incapacitated by the profit motives guiding MNOCs' oil and gas extraction practices. The focus group session questions listed in Appendix B are as follows:

1. How would one assess the interaction between the Ogoni community and multinational corporations operating in Ogoniland?
2. What percentage of overall indigene income is derived from MNOCs activities (such as land rents, royalties, and other associated benefits)?

3. How would water resources, farmlands, health care, and education services benefit from investment by MNOCs?
4. What percentage of Ogoni indigenes are employed by MNOCs in executive, management, and unclassified positions?
5. How has the interaction between Ogoni community and MNOCs contributed to peace, security, and promotion of agreement, and principles?
6. How have MNOCs activities affected the cost of living in Ogoniland, for example, cost of food items, shelter, medicine, transportation and electricity?
7. How would one quantify the value of economic resources incapacitated by decades of environmental degradation due to the activities of extractive industries?
8. What specific MNOCs actions would promote lasting peace with MNOCs and create positive and sustainable outcomes for Ogoniland?
9. What would you like to add to this focus group session?

The answers generated from these questions set the foundation for performing fieldwork, analysis, and reporting. Another aspect of the qualitative process is designing. The methodological procedure of the research explains this protocol. Lietz and Zayas (2010), and Rakow (2011) argued that it is the responsibility of the researcher to determine the selection criteria for the respondents, and what type of focus group procedure will be relevant to the study. The interviewing phase outlines the issues to be covered during the focus group process of research such as exploring the participants' personal knowledge, awareness, and experience relating to ecological security and

MNOC character, reputation and capacity building. Some of the topics for discussion included economic, health, social, cultural, environmental, gender relations, and governance reforms.

Transcribing represents another phase of the qualitative research process.

Transcribing involves recording personal interviews without interruptions or distraction, and followed by notations (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). Transcription of the recordings to a laptop using the appropriate software took place at the end of the daily process.

Analyzing constitutes the fifth phase of the research process. Coding is used for close examination of data (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The goal of data analysis is to achieve a thorough understanding of the entire narrative. The data from focus group sessions was enhanced by a three-step coding: axial, open, and selective coding. Axial coding is a procedure for organizing data into groupings and patterns among categories identified in the data (Eshalaghy et al., 2011; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Open coding included conceptualizing, comparing, examining and categorizing data (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, Yin, 2009). Open coding or initial coding reflects the basic view of data and is free from pre-categorizations. Selective coding corresponds to identification and description of core categories or main phenomenon in the data (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Selective coding as a concluding stage is used for the validation of data. To this end, I utilized personal knowledge and experience to make sense of the material. My own unique experience of having traveled extensively in the Niger Delta, and to other oil producing countries in the West and Central Africa region, crystallized the value and

contributions of the various data sources. Thus, a coherent interpretation of the analysis that may otherwise remain undocumented and intangible emerged.

Verifying is the process of confirming, adopting checks and certainty to assure the reliability and validity of the research outcomes. Validity evaluates the level of research regarding the facts of the study. Verification is the process used during the research action towards ensuring reliability and validity (Lasch et al., 2010; Rakow, 2011). Chenail (2011) identified reporting as the seventh phase of the qualitative process. A written report covered all of the research findings. Rodriguez et al. (2011) noted that through reporting, the respondent assumes a voice in a meaningful way.

The primary aim of the data analysis in this study was to use a qualitative method that includes focus groups sessions. The validity of data is reliant on the facts that the respondents are individuals who possess knowledge of the phenomenon explored in the research. The focus group session entails presenting open-ended questions and promoting communication that explores an understanding of the problem from different angles (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009; Lloyd, 2011). In this case study, methodological triangulation is defined as the use of different sources of qualitative data to understand the phenomenon under study (Lloyd, 2011). This involved checking for representativeness of data, and cross checking descriptions against theoretical interpretations. For example, I compared and contrasted responses from two focus groups sessions with information gathered from documents applicable to the subject matter in order to determine the similarity of findings. One of the significant advantages of triangulation is that it adds confidence to research data, reveals specific findings, and illuminates the problem (Lloyd, 2011). The



purpose of methodological triangulation was to mitigate bias and increase validity of the study (Lloyd, 2011). The components of critical theory, modernization and dependency theory, and stakeholder theory informed the conceptual framework presented in the study. These frameworks guided the focus of the study, and served as the backdrop for understanding the contradictions and conflict arising from resource extraction, wealth creation, environmental degradation, and poverty that pervades the resource host community. Recording and documenting the experience of the indigenes of Ogoniland sets this study apart because the research participants acted as vital contributors of information relative to the causes of environmental degradation and the challenges to sustainable economic development in the Niger Delta.

### **Reliability and Validity**

#### **Reliability**

Without rigor, research may be worthless, could be fiction, and may lose value; hence, reliability and validity in all research methods involve exceptional attention (Chenail 2011). Validity and reliability are two factors, which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analyzing results, and judging the quality of the study (Rakow, 2011). Therefore, reliability is the extent to which results are stable over time and account for accurate representation of the population under study (Rakow, 2011). Methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, developing a positive relationship between sampling, data collection, and analysis, thinking theoretically, and theory development are essential verification strategies for ensuring reliability and validity of data (Lasch et al., 2010). The main reliability of the study is to determine if the

focus group sessions used to generate data are an effective and reliable method to determine if the activities linked to natural resource extraction by MNOCs threaten environmental security, and constitutes a key challenge to sustainable economic development of the Niger Delta region.

Measures of reliability maintained during the focus group session were applicability, dependability and neutrality, and not imposing an opinion on the subject matter. Research is only as reliable as the investigator; it is the researcher's imagination, sensitivity, flexibility, and skill in using the verification strategies that affect the reliability of the evolving research (Lasch et al., 2010). Yin (2009) noted that error should be minimized as much as possible to ensure reliability.

### **Validity**

In qualitative studies, validity is grounded in the process of the specific research methodologies and projects (Chenail, 2011; Lasch et al., 2010). The validity of the data relates to the fact that individual participants will respond to the questions based on actual observation and understanding of the phenomenon (Diefenbach, 2009). Harris et al. (2009) and Eshlaghy et al. (2011) revealed that validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research that determines whether findings are correct from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or readers of the account.

The study participants had experience in the same cause-effect prevalent in the phenomenon studied. I verified the accuracy of the participants' recorded responses in this study through direct observation and public records of specific causes and effects (i.e., gas flaring sites, diseased vegetation, and crude oil spill on farmland). These

provisions confirm the validity of the study. Methodological triangulation involving the search for convergence among the various sources of information confirmed validation. In this study methodological triangulation consisted of comparing information from focus group transcripts with perspectives documented in the Ogoni Technical Committee on UNEP Report (Appendix C), Ogoni Bill of Rights (Appendix D), and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland.

Denzin noted that the three types of data triangulation are time, space, and person (Hussein, 2009). Denzin posited that the value of data can vary based on the timing of data collection as well as the setting, and people involved with its collection (Hussein, 2009). For this study methodological triangulation is expected to enhance the validity procedure to search for convergence among multiple data and various sources of information. Triangulation facilitated the formation of themes, or categories in the study in order to illuminate the different ways of establishing facts.

Triangulation involved comparing and contrasting responses from multiple focus groups sessions. Other triangulation procedures included checking for representativeness of data, checking and cross checking descriptions against theoretical interpretations. Data notes depicting the nature of the sampled population, location of data collection, time sequence of activities being investigated, and participant behaviors were organized and coded to simplify analysis. Document analysis relating to reports and assessments of MNOC business practices, ecological mismanagement, and respondent validation otherwise known as feedback from informants, and checking for any form of bias constituted a valuable part of the process. For example, the validity conclusion derived

from a focus group structure could be strengthened if confirmed by another such as participant observation or document analysis (Harris et al, 2009). Reliability and validity are concepts that underline trustworthiness, quality and rigor in qualitative research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The common experience of environmental degradation across the entire geography of the Niger Delta lends credence to the assumption that the phenomenon is applicable to all the ethnic groups and people throughout the Niger Delta.

### **Transition and Summary**

Section 2 illuminated the method, research design, data collection techniques, and other strategies I used to complete this study. Section 2 also included insights on the reliability and validity of data stemming from the study and how these data aligned with the purpose of the study. The next section of the study presents an overview and purpose of the study, significance of the study on business practice, and potential implications for social change.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

This section provides evidence illustrating results of analysis obtained from two focus groups comprising male and female participants who represented indigenes of Ogoniland. Section 3 consists of (a) an overview of the study, (b) presentations of findings, (c) application to professional practice, (d) implications for social change, (e) recommendations for action, (f) recommendations for further study, (g) reflections, and (h) summary and study conclusions.

#### **Overview of Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to uncover how MNOC resource extraction activities affect sustainable economic development for Ogoniland indigenes. A qualitative method was deemed appropriate for evaluating the participants' points of view. The participants in this research study answered the overarching research question: How has the economic sustenance of Ogoniland indigenes been incapacitated by profit monopoly guiding the extraction practices of multinational oil corporations? The objective was to explore the relationship between the cost effects of environmental hazards resulting from resource extraction activities by oil multinationals, and their impacts on economic sustainability of Ogoniland. The study participants consisted of a diverse category of male and female indigenes of Ogoniland who reside in the United States. The selection of individuals affected by the phenomenon in question provided a forum to obtain concrete accounts rather than a generalized description of events (Chenail, 2011). All participants of the two focus groups were knowledgeable to offer

reliable information as a recall of experience and contributed in enhancing the validity of data (Eshlaghy et al., 2011).

The participants observed that community-company relations are a crucial factor for preventing the escalation of violent conflict between Ogonis and oil multinationals. From the participants' perspective, the absence of mutual understanding between organizations and society leads to situations in which affluent and influential corporations resort to nonethical means to achieve their goals. The participants in the study expressed dissatisfaction with the role of oil multinationals in Ogoniland, and suggested that MNOCs are responsible for the economic collapse in Ogoniland. This revelation is consistent with findings by Kew and Phillips (2013) that in 2004 Shell admitted its business practices had contributed, in its estimation, to corruption, conflict, and poverty in the Niger Delta.

The findings of the focus groups sessions underscored a separation between Ogoni need for sustainable environment and corporate interests of multinational oil companies. The specific findings from the two focus groups are that (a) environmental degradation resulting from natural resource extraction is the reason for loss of land use and other factors compelling Ogoniland to become economically unsustainable, (b) multinational oil corporations do not recognize Ogonis as stakeholders in the oil and gas enterprise, (c) the health problems in the region are the result of oil industry-related activity, (d) the increasing spate of violence and armed resistance in Ogoniland is the result of insensitivity of the oil companies to the plight of indigenes, and (e) the inclusion

of indigenes in decisions that affect MNOCs' business activities in Ogoniland and the NDR in general is a panacea to enduring solutions to the regions' crisis.

These findings are in concert with literature on the causes, effects, and solutions to the crisis in the NDR. Onwubiko et al. (2013) suggested that MNOCs have failed to conduct their business in Ogoniland in line with sustainable practice and values. MNOCs in the Niger Delta operate with impunity against the laws of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) of Nigeria (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2012). Agwu (2013) noted that the failure of sustainable development initiatives in oil producing communities in the NDR is because MNOCs are only interested in profit making to the detriment of the community and its environment.

Corruption and the pursuit of personal gains by Nigeria government officials allowed oil companies to violate environmental laws with impunity and conduct business on their own terms (Kew & Phillips, 2013). For example, officials of the Willbros Group, Inc. (an American oil servicing company) admitted in a U.S. court that they paid bribes of \$1.5 billion dollars to Nigerian officials to secure contracts and manipulate tax figures (Agwu, 2013). The participants' responses were consistent with findings in literature and other data sources such as the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, Ogoni Bill of Rights on perception of MNOCs in the NDR, and environmental implications of oil exploitation and exploration in coastal areas (Baghebo et al., 2012; Bayode et al., 2011).

## **Presentation of the Findings**

The primary research question addressed in this study was: How has the economic sustenance of Ogoniland indigenes been incapacitated by profit motives guiding the extraction practices of multinational oil corporations? The focus group interview questions were developed to gain a detailed understanding of the problem and the participant engagement. Responses from the interview questions provided data that led to the themes in the data analysis section.

### **Research Questions**

1. How would one assess the interaction between the Ogoni community and multinational corporations operating in Ogoniland?
2. What percentage of overall indigenes income is derived from MNOCs activities (such as land rents, royalties, monetary, and other associated benefits)?
3. How would water resources, farmlands, health care, and education services benefit from investment by MNOCs?
4. What percentage of Ogoni indigenes are employed by MNOCs in executive, management, and unclassified positions?
5. How has the interaction between Ogoni community and MNOCs and their affiliates contributed to peace, security, and promotion of agreement and principles?
6. How have MNOCs activities affected the cost of living in Ogoniland, for example cost of food items, shelter, medicine, transportation, and energy?



7. How would one quantify the value of economic resources incapacitated by decades of environmental degradation due to the activities of extractive industries?
8. What specific MNOC actions would promote effective and sustainable outcomes for Ogoni community and make lasting peace with MNOCs?
9. What would you like to add to this focus group session?

**Focus Group Research Question 1.** How would one assess the interaction between multinational corporations operating in Ogoniland and the Ogoni community? The purpose of this question was to explore the history and progress of the relationship between Ogonis and the extractive industries, and to gauge the systems for promoting sustainable development in the area. In response to this question, Participant A1 stated that the relationship between Shell and other MNOCs in Ogoniland is beyond master servant relationship and worse than slavery. Participant A3 replied that interaction between Ogoni's and MNOCs was historically dictated by an imperialistic agenda and pointed to environmental devastation and economic collapse of Ogoniland as evidence of MNOC imperial conduct.

The participants' comments indicated that they anticipated a relationship with MNOCs based on the equality of stakeholders involved in a productive process. The expectations of participants were framed around the values of corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practice. A significant point that emerged from participants is that MNOCs in Ogoniland do not engage Ogonis in any collaborative relationship or partnership regarding the enterprise of resource extraction. This point of

view corresponds to the assertion by Agwu (2013) that strong evidence suggests sustainable development in Ogoniland has failed because indigent communities are excluded from participation in the design and execution of community development projects.

To further buttress the complexity of interaction between Ogoni's and MNOCs, Participant A5 asserted that 5 decades of MNOC presence in Ogoniland engendered poverty and underdevelopment. This assertion is underscored by the conceptual framework of dependency theory. Ebegbulem et al. (2013) contended that dependency theory stresses exploitation through an international capitalist system or its imperialist agents, and the systemic treatment of dependent nations as inferiors. This pattern of exploitation that fosters the injection of a capitalist mode of operation to claim resources of poor communities and nations has resulted in growth without development (Ebegbulem et al., 2013). The participants revealed that the interaction between the Ogonis and MNOCs has been historically adversarial.

**Focus Group Research Question 2.** What percentage of overall Ogoni income is derived from MNOCs activities (such as land rents, royalties, monetary and other associated benefits)? This question was to determine if obligations to balance host community interests have been established through legally binding contracts, institutionalized legislation, or other forms of agreements. Participant A4 and A9 of the first focus group replied that Ogonis individually or collectively did not grant any legal concessions to a MNOC at the inception of its business operation in their land. In the second focus group, Participant B4 and B7 opined that the legitimacy of MNOCs is

defined by their relationship with the pre- and postcolonial Nigeria state and not with indigenous communities of the NDR.

The participants' responses imply that a clash of worldviews exists between MNOCs and indigenous people regarding the legitimacy of MNOC operations. The lack of constructive engagement of the host community as stakeholders by MNOCs is the reason why MNOCs in Ogoniland have failed to develop and implement an efficient system to manage their business operations (Agwu, 2013; Onwubiko et al., 2013). Stakeholder interest defines the extent to which corporations meet their economic, ethical, legal, and social responsibilities in a strategic manner (Paki & Ebiefa, 2011). To underscore this point, Wosu (2013) noted that the development action of CSR is not a business action alone, but a function of stakeholder relationships because invariably action or inaction impact on CSR development.

Participant A4 stated that the corporate culture prevalent in Shell and its affiliate SPDC is shaped by the privileged monopoly of exploitation and exploration rights granted to these corporations by colonial authorities. Against this background, Wosu, (2013) contended that the structure of state institutions in developing countries like Nigeria is too weak to challenge the global spread and overwhelming financial power of MNOC's. This status quo is aligned to the conceptual framework of modernization and dependency theory. Proponents of this theory claim that in a globalizing world with high demand in emerging economies for transformative technology, no developing nation would choose to delink itself from MNOCs even though the latter may not necessarily offer development (Ebegbulem et al., 2013; Wosu, 2013).

**Focus Group Research Question 3.** How would water resources, farmlands, health care, education services benefit from investment by MNOCs? The goal of this question was to gain insight into the corporate social responsibility (CSR) model adopted by MNOC in Ogoniland, and to ascertain delivery outcomes for Ogoni people. Participants A9, A10, and B4 asserted that an effective CSR is foremost about meeting the developmental needs and empowering the community, not about the corporation. In concert with this assertion, Emeseh (2009) noted that CSR requires companies to minimize the negative impacts of their operations by acting in a socially responsible manner. Participant A1 replied that the CSR agenda by MNOCs operating in Ogoniland is for window dressing and public relations propaganda. Participant A1 disclosed that CSR should not be a reactive initiative, but the business model of a corporation that ensures economic growth and development as well protecting the environment.

The participants' responses indicate that MNOCs operating in the Ogoniland do not view CSR as a social obligation in the conduct of their businesses. Fontaine (2013) remarked that legal behavior in pursuit of profit is socially responsible behavior. This remark implies that non-compliance with environmental laws is socially irresponsible behavior, and therefore illegal. Gas flaring was outlawed by the Nigerian government thorough legislation in 1979, yet MNOCs in the NDR continue to engage in this illegal behavior (Chukwuemeka et al., 2011; Edino et al., 2010). In examining the legal duty and obligation of extractive industry, Olawuyi (2012) noted that international environmental law mandates a corporation that pollutes to adequately compensate victims of oil pollution for economic and other related losses incurred.

CSR is a strategic investment that contributes not only to enhancing the reputation of a corporation, but guarantees profit stability (Asawo, 2011; Egbe, & Paki, 2011). In this instance, profit stability is understood as uninterrupted access to raw materials and production processes. This objective can be achieved when corporations seek community involvement in decision making processes as a way of promoting systems that can contribute to eliminating negative outcomes. To underpin this point, Participants A1 and A2 stated that effective CSR demonstrates quantitative and qualitative credibility, such as the measure of consumer satisfaction and stakeholder loyalty. This assertion aligned with Fontaine (2013), who observed that the support business receives from society in pursuit of profits mandates business to repay society with those profits.

The broad views of participants indicate that oil companies in Ogoniland have not adopted CSR within the framework of seeking solutions to problems arising from the conduct of its business. The participants' responses indicate that CSR engagement by oil companies, if any, are reactive, and not restorative or preventative. Fontaine (2013), and (Iniaghe et al., 2013) noted that CSR consists of a moral obligation, sustainability, and license to operate. This means that corporations that engage in CSR in collaboration with the community secure implicit or explicit approval from the host community, government, and stakeholders. This approach to CSR enhances corporate reputation, which involves image, brand name, and values. Shell's corporate reputation was exposed in a reference made by a top Shell executive, who claimed that Ogonis were to blame for obstructing SPDC from engaging in corporate social responsibility (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae,

2010). To this effect, Ogula (2012) contended that community attitudes towards business largely depend on how responsibly the corporation engages its host.

**Focus Group Research Question 4.** What percentage of Ogoni indigenes are employed by MNOC's in executive, management and unclassified positions? The 4th question was to assess MNOC stakeholder orientation toward the indigenes of Ogoniland. The term stakeholders in this context refer to those individuals and organizations impacted by firms' activities (Aras & Crowther, 2009; Fontaine, 2013). Participant B1 from the second focus group response to the 4th question was that MNOC stakeholder orientation in Ogoniland lacks definition and is unclear. Participants A1 and A5 of the first focus group revealed that Ogoni people have no significant position in MNOCs operating in Ogoniland, or elsewhere (See Appendix C). Seventeen participants observed that MNOC's hire most workers from outside Ogoniland.

The lack of employment opportunity for Ogonis with MNOC operating on their land is a significant source of grievances against oil companies. The prevailing view is that for society to thrive, a profitable business such as oil and gas exploration should minimally provide avenues to the host community for income generation as a way to distribute wealth. In further discussion, participant A1 remarked that domestic and diaspora Ogonis are highly qualified and educated, yet they are not represented in the executive management hierarchy, or clerical services of the oil industry operating in Ogoniland or in the Niger Delta in general. In pursuing the topic further, participant A3 replied that SPDC may from time to time hire Ogonis as day wage laborers to clear hazardous wastes without requisite protective gear.

The information provided by participants raises questions about the credibility of MNOCs business practice and interface with its host community. Against this background, Wosu (2013) noted that social coherence and geographical area are conditions relevant for community engagement as a planned and sustained effort to maintain mutual understanding between firm and community. Contrary to the business strategy theory, which places emphasis on profit maximization for shareholder benefits, Agwu (2013) argued that stakeholders (such as Ogonis') impacted by the activities of extractive industry have a legitimate right in demanding and receiving adequate and structured compensation from the proceeds of the corporations' transactions. This argument assumes that at the practical level, stakeholder engagement is listed as an important metric in assessing CSR standards as well, as such aspects as management system, reporting, audits and certification (Carney et al., 2011; Wosu, 2013).

Stakeholders have to play an active role in order to ensure that CSR initiatives stimulate productive objectives, especially those that lend credibility to sustainable outcomes (Egbe & Paki, 2011). The business integrity model holds that shareholders and stakeholders prefer a financially stable corporation that complies with sound environmental management and ethical conduct in business (Egbe & Paki, 2011). It is worth noting that without adequate stakeholder participation, as defined in this context, any barometer for measuring development on the basis of human development index lacks proper accounting. Based on the participants' responses, the stakeholder orientation of MNOCs in Ogoniland is at variance with the definition of stakeholder in this study.

**Focus Group Research Question 5.** How has the interaction between the Ogoni community and MNOCs and their affiliates contributed to peace, security, and promotion of agreement and principles? The question was for the purpose of exploring the efficacy of communication channels that exist between Ogonis, oil multinationals, government agencies and other intermediaries, for constructive conflict resolution. Participants A2 and A3 reported that community engagement as a planned strategy for interface with Ogoni indigene does not exist. Participants B1 and B2 also indicated that the SPDC preferred strategy for community interface involves financing surrogates who are handpicked to speak and make claims on behalf of the community. Many participants revealed that this tactic has been adopted by MNOCs to perpetuate intra/inter community conflicts. This revelation supports remarks by Ganiyu and Okogbule (2013) that industry–community relations developed into a theatre of conflicts, and by 2006 had degenerated into a war with alarming proportions.

In further discussions, participant A7 noted that historically, oil companies have maintained a systemic pattern of deception and manipulation in communicating with Ogoni indigenes (See Appendix, C & D). Against this background, it may be argued that the upsurge in violent confrontations between MNOCs and various communities in Niger Delta is the result of lack of an effective channel for resolution of conflicts. Carney et al. (2011) asserted that trust, reliability, and commitment are essential for a successful relationship with investors. The participants reported that government security agencies respond with brute force whenever Ogonis organize peaceful protests against SPDC, or other MNOCs for demands of fair compensation for damages. This view aligned with



Akpan (2010), and Okafor (2011) who revealed that these reactionary tendencies by government forces are usually at the behest of multinational oil corporations.

**Focus Group Question 6.** How have MNOC activities affected the cost of living in Ogoniland, for example cost of food items, shelter, medicine, transportation and electricity? The purpose of this question was to assess the corresponding cost of extraction activities to the living standard in Ogoniland. Six participants in the first focus group independently remarked that environmental degradation and pollution of farmland from 5 decades of oil spillages have led to poor crop yields, and loss of land use. Implicit in this information is that Ogonis who are traditionally subsistence farmers are no longer in a position to farm. The outcome of this experience is that many Ogonis now depend on food imported from outside Ogoniland at a higher cost. This condition only deepens the level of poverty and hunger prevalent in the land (Participant A1). The focus group question was further addressed as follows:

In Ogoniland, we are likely to be sick from the water we consume because of pollution, we are also likely to die from the air we breathe, and the food we eat due effects of pollution; so how costly is survival in Ogoniland? (Participant, B4)

The human condition illuminated in this response is at variance with the reality that MNOCs in Ogoniland have generated billions of dollars in profit from resource extraction. It is from this perspective that Akhigbe (2013) asserted that an intricate linkage exists between the reckless manner in which crude oil is explored and produced, the degradation of host communities, and the increasing incapacity of the people to

reproduce themselves. In the same vein, Agwu (2013) noted that the exploitation of finite resources (oil/gas) without due consideration to ecosystem functions not classified as economic resources amount to ecological extinction. Thus, the viewpoints of the participants in this study confirm that the direct cost and profit opportunity of extractive processes is the cause of the negative high cost internalized by the living standard manifested in Ogoniland.

**Focus Group Question 7.** How would one quantify the value of economic resources incapacitated by decades of environmental degradation due to the activities of extractive industries? This question was to explore the meaning of finite/renewable resource, regeneration and sustainability, short to long term remediation, and the significance of compensation. Participant A1 stated that in the last 30 years countless Ogonis have died from incidents related to extractive industry activity and its attendant consequences. Participant A2 replied that in the absence of an environmental accounting structure, it is not logically possible to place any economic or financial value to loss of human lives as a result of environmental degradation in Ogoniland. Three participants cited internal population displacement and forced migration due to loss of land use as factors that cannot be quantified in monetary terms.

The participants' responses broadened the view that environmental degradation has created unquantifiable economic and social loss in Ogoniland, and consequently threaten the prospect of a sustainable future. This point reinforces the UNEP report that environmental degradation of Ogoniland will take 30 years to clean up and may require a minimum of \$1 billion (Micah & Umobong, 2013). To the Ogonis, the exploration of

finite resources in their land for private gains, the absence of environmental regeneration and a conservation plan, and the denial of benefits accruing from MNOC transactions not only amount to social injustice, but a crime against humanity. Despite the U.N. estimates for cleanup costs, Baghebo et al. (2013) classified the environmental degradation as so significant to be unquantifiable.

**Focus Group Research Question 8.** What specific MNOC actions would promote effective and sustainable outcomes for the Ogoni community, and make lasting peace with MNOCs? This question was to explore how market inefficiencies and MNOC's negative externalities and related transaction may be negotiated in order to provide positive and sustainable rewards, or investment such as economic revitalization of Ogoniland. Three participants from focus group 1 responded that enforceable legislation is critical to protecting the environment from further degradation. However, participant B1 questioned why MNOCs operating in Ogoniland and the NDR would flatly refuse to conduct its operations with the same level of environmental accounting and standard that it adopts in their home country of origin. In response, participant B2 and B4 in the 2nd focus group cited the case of British Petroleum (BP) during the oil spill in the U.S Gulf Coast for which compensation to affected persons was paid with immediate dispatch, along with long term commitment for restoration.

The participants from the two focus groups independently asserted that MNOCs in Ogoniland and the NDR have traditionally declined responsibilities for their action. This view was amplified by an SPDC executive who once claimed that intransigent attitudes displayed by Ogonis accounted for SPDC's inability to implement remedial and

restorative action (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010). From these observations, it is worthy to note that 5 decades of resource extraction in Ogoniland have not contributed to an enabling modern infrastructure, electricity, employment, good roads, transport, functioning schools and hospitals. It is therefore rational to assume that the components of sustainable development like economic productivity, environmental accountability, social stability, distributional equity, gender equality, and human rights are yet to be established in the corporate governance agenda of MNOCs operating in Ogoniland.

**Focus Group Research Question 9.** What would you like to add to this focus group session? This question was to afford participants the opportunity in contributing additional information and knowledge to the depth of understanding of the issue. The participants of the 2 focus groups independently reported that a solution to the oil and gas induced crisis in Ogoniland is for MNOC to fully implement the Ogoni technical committee report on UNEP Report (See Appendix C). The participants reported that though this document may not altogether resolve the existing impasse between Ogonis, MNOCs and the government of Nigeria, its full implementation will demonstrate good will on the part of MNOCs, and usher a new era for bargaining and negotiations between shareholders and stakeholders. The participants stated that this action will align industry activity with community interests.

### **Theme Development**

The textual elements obtained from the focus group responses were linked to various categories of meaning from which the main themes emerged. The process involved data reduction and clustering. The themes that emerged aligned with the

research questions, the phenomenon under study, the conceptual theories of the study, the views of the participants, and knowledge deduced from other data sources such as document analysis. Theme development was further enhanced with analysis of Ogoni Technical Committee on UNEP report, Ogoni Bill of Rights, and UNEP Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland. The primary research question addressed in this study is: How has the economic sustenance of Ogoniland indigenes been incapacitated by profit monopoly guiding the extraction practices of multinational oil corporations? These themes were identified by cross-referencing information found in each participant's responses as: (a) sustainable future of Ogoniland, (b) economic disempowerment, (c) human capital and infrastructure development, and (d) environmental degradation and remediation.

**Theme 1: Sustainable future of Ogoniland.** The majority of participants of the two focus groups asserted that 5 decades of oil and gas extraction in their community have caused pollution of ground water, agricultural land, forest resources, marine resources, and wildlife. The participants of the two focus groups independently confirmed that Ogoniland's capacity to sustain life is at risk. This claim is validated by declarations in the Ogoni Technical Committee on UNEP report (See Appendix C). Implicit in this narrative, along with statements from literature, is that the sustainable future of Ogoniland resonates as an urgent factor in the study. Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC) defined sustainable community development as strategic planning and application of resources to improve capacity for the community to regenerate and sustain economic progress and quality life (Ganiyu & Okogbule, 2013).

The definition of sustainability as indicated by SPDC encompasses the general definition in literature; however, the validity of this definition contradicts given statements about the economic and social state of Ogoniland today. Against this background, Chukwuemeka et al. (2011) revealed that the collateral damage to the Ogoni economy, affecting fishing, farming, hunting, and seafood gathering is the outcome of external variables of oil production business in Ogoniland. The people of Ogoniland depend on the land and its natural resource endowments for economic survival (Iniaghe et al., 2013). Hence, the continued existence of Ogonis in their natural habitat is at risk. The following quote illustrates the significance of this theme:

The survival of my people is no longer taken for granted. I am 30 years old but in my village, I am considered an old man because most of my mates are dead. It was hard to determine the cause of these rampant and early deaths. It was later that it became clear to us that almost everything in the environment we lived in was poisoned, the air we breathe, and the water we drink. (Participant B2)

This response suggests that resource extraction by MNOCs has not contributed to the positive development of Ogoniland and places its economic sustainability at risk. The impact of environmental degradation on the health of Ogoni indigenes is a critical factor in assessing the sustainable future of Ogoniland. This view is supported by Iniaghe et al. (2013) assertions that infant mortality in the region is the highest in Nigeria. A correlating point that emerges from this assertion is that other sustainable resources in

Ogoniland that could act as balance against the prevailing threats are also at risk. To buttress this point another participant replied:

My 60 year old mother told us stories of her childhood memories about at a time when food was abundant; in those days she would accompany her mother to the stream and within a few minutes catch a basket full of fishes without using a net. She told us that almost every food item consumed in the home was cultivated in the backyard, and sometimes, she sold extra food to the market. Today, all local streams and waterways in Ogoniland are filled with toxic oil residue (see Appendix B). The fishes are dead. Crops planted in the land no longer yield anything. The question for all us is what is the future of our children here? (Participant A3)

The experience recounted by Participant A3 supported the assertions by Odoemene (2011) that resource extraction in indigenous communities should strive to promote economic empowerment and safe guard the social and cultural dignity of the people. This statement also implies that the people believe MNOCs play a direct role in assuring the sustainable future of Ogoniland. The next response compared corporate responsibility of MNOCs in Ogoniland and elsewhere:

I thought that environmental pollution was normal and consistent feature oil and gas extraction. It was when I arrived in the United States, I discovered that Oil Company's operating in developed and powerful nations, abide by certain environmental guidelines and act responsibly.

Why are MNOCs operating in the Niger Delta so reckless, and refuse to obey environmental laws or respect the host community? (Participant A1)

The observation by Participant A1 contends that in developed and powerful nations like the United States, sustainable development is the institutionalization of best practices by corporations in the process of production and distribution. In 1992, multinational corporations in the oil and gas industry were the first to be called by the United Nations to pursue the goal of sustainable development (Escobar & Vrendenburg, 2011). A significant and necessary approach in promoting sustainability by corporations that operate in a culturally different region far from country of origin is by aligning business objectives with host community interests (Ogula, 2012). The need for new innovative technologies is associated with sustainability by contributing to efficiency, and reduction of production cost (Micah & Umobong, 2013; Wright & Kurian, 2009). Omojimate (2012) remarked that for sustainable industrial development to achieve the objective of positively transforming society; it has to take into account the cost of externalities, and be prepared to address it as an opportunity cost to stakeholders-community. Sustainable development is not about protecting the environment only; it also involves the best productive use of natural resources to eliminate poverty and accelerate economic growth (Agwu, 2013; Iniaghe et al., 2013).

**Theme 2: Economic disempowerment.** Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, infant mortality and low life expectancy are high in the NDR, and the indigenes are among the poorest in the world (Ogula, 2012; Onwubiko et al., 2013). Youth unemployment in the region is above 40% (Iniaghe et al., 2013). The economic indicators



of the region make an urgent case for adoption of a sustainable economic package to counter the impact of environmental degradation on the livelihood of the Ogoni indigenes. The initial anticipation of indigenes was that industrialization associated with oil extraction would engender an atmosphere in which people would become economically empowered through employment and an enabling environment to pursue competitive choices in entrepreneurship and wealth generation (Asawo, 2011; Micah & Umobong, 2013). An illustration on the significance of this theme is revealed in the following comments:

My father used to own a four bedroom house. One day Shell was carrying out what we later learned was a seismic survey, (See Appendix B, Fig.5); one of the explosives they used in exercise blew a section of the house to pieces. We did not get any form of compensation, no one in our family had any source of income, we continued to live in a partially damaged building. Every day, we lived in fear that the rest of the house would collapse any time, because we could not afford to repair it. (Participant, B4)

The aforementioned statement links the technicalities of resource extraction to outcomes that deepen the economic plight of Ogoni indigenes. Based on the conceptual framework of modernization theory, the Ogoni indigenes anticipated employment, infrastructure development, and economic progress with multinational oil extraction; however, the reverse is the case. Twenty participants of focus groups 1 and 2 identified the degrading level of material poverty entrenched in Ogoniland as a consequence of the

destruction of traditional economic resources that sustained the Ogonis for centuries, and the inequitable distribution of income generated from the wealth of oil and gas revenue. This view is consistent with the findings by Orogun (2010) that a majority of individuals in the region live on less than \$2 per day. In the context of human development by any economic or material standard, Ogoniland is reported as one of the poorest oil producing communities on earth (Akinola, 2010). This view lends support to claims that oil as a strategic commodity has not benefitted the Ogoni indigene economically or socially. The Ogoni Bills of Rights (Appendix D) contains significant statements linking economic disempowerment of indigenes to resource extraction and its attendant consequences. The Bill of Rights was proclaimed as a charter to empower otherwise voiceless and powerless people. Twelve participants framed their responses around the idea that corporate governance of MNOCs in Ogoniland exists to satisfy the business of profit maximization for MNOC investors. This viewpoint underpinned the following participant response:

We do not know if Shell or any MNOC pay royalties to anyone in Ogoniland. Perhaps, Shell may fund certain cronies and surrogates in the community for the purpose of promoting its own selfish interest. Even, when compensation claims are acknowledged, MNOCs are the ones that evaluate the cost of damage and claims. Most Ogonis possess the dual capacity as skilled fishermen and farmers. With the profits of oil wealth obtained from Ogoniland, MNOCs can stimulate income generation by enabling the revival of fishing and farming economy. Wealth distribution

is created through investment in the private sector, which ultimately establishes enduring values for stakeholders. (Participant A7)

These comments attribute power, influence, and capacity building, and poverty alleviation in Ogoniland to MNOCs through the application of wealth derived from oil and gas resources. Multinational oil corporations rank as one of the wealthiest of global multinationals with influences that cut across public and private sector investments (Fontaine, 2013). Eweje (2007) suggested that a corporate system is dependent on the host community from which it extracts its resources, and therefore cannot afford to neglect its demands. The participants in the focus group asserted that Ogonis are primary stakeholders. The participants also rely on the theory that a stakeholder comprises internal and external groups (direct employees, contractors, suppliers and the host community), especially people whose livelihood have been affected by the activities of a corporation (Fontaine, 2013). The participants claimed that Ogoni indigenes are left without any human security, as their land has been transformed into an economic wasteland due to the unsustainable exploration practices by MNOCs. Another participant articulated this view as follows:

Shell Petroleum Development Corporation is a business conglomerate.

They came here to do business and to make profit. They are making profit, from a resource that is in our family and communal land; if they are truly genuine business people, why are they not giving us our own share so that their business can flourish without disturbance. (Participant B8)

A significant number of participants' indicated indigene participation in the decision making process of the oil extraction enterprise would facilitate economic empowerment. It is within this context that Ogula (2012), and Oluduro and Oluduro (2012) asserted that economic empowerment enhances access levels, participation, and control in resource distribution and allocation, factors that militate against costly conflicts. This assertion supports the view that stakeholders have a legitimate role, and that corporations have a responsibility to recognize their claims as an integral part of the business transaction process (Aras & Crowther, 2009).

Paki and Ebienfa (2011), identified stakeholder attributes as power, legitimacy, and urgency. Definitive stakeholders (such as host communities) that possess all the attributes mentioned above can be dangerous and dominant because their demands are strategic and are beyond shareholder interest (Dhir, 2007; Paki & Ebienfa, 2011). The participants regard the conflict in Ogoniland as largely emanating from the lack of economic progress in the community due to the inflicting cost of unsustainable MNOC extraction methods. The collateral loss of sustenance for a people that were once self-sufficient is unbearable, especially in view of the fact that MNOCs have earned an estimated 30 billion dollars from resource extraction in Ogoniland over the last 3 decades (Chukwuemeka, et al., 2011).

A compelling view is that the neglect of a host community leads to an unequal power relationship between a host community and an MNOC; the ensuing consequence could be violence (Eweje, 2007; Odemene, 2011; Orogun, 2010). To the people of the

NDR, the discovery of oil provided hope that modern and civilized amenities such as electricity, competitive schools, good roads, hospitals, and modern equipment to improve agriculture and fishing, would be made available (Afonitan, & Ojatorotu, 2009). The prevailing view among participants in the study is that corporations should interact and build relationships with entities other than shareholders or investors in order to promote balanced and credible sustainability outcomes. As the reverse is the case in Ogoniland, the participants insist that shareholders cannot justifiably be the only beneficiaries of corporation's wealth (Amadi & Abudllah, 2012). As a conceptual framework, critical theory posits that modernization represented by industrialization should in principle enable conditions in which people become economically empowered (Akinde, 2011; Ogbor, 2001).

**Theme 3: Human capital development and capacity building.** The participants identified youth restiveness and its attendant violent and armed insurrection as one shade of response to the lingering economic and social crisis in the region (Afinotan & Ojatorotu, 2009; Chukwuemeka & Aghara, 2010). The participants indicated that most youths were out of school due to parents' inability to afford school fees, coupled with the inadequacy of existing schools to provide a structured learning environment. Youth unemployment is highest in the region when compared to the national average (Odoemene, 2011; Owualah, & Obokoh, 2008). Most communities use the youth to engage MNOCs in running battles and armed confrontation in order to extract financial settlements (Orji, 2012). These episodes often result in the loss of life and valuables (Onwubiko et al., 2013).

The development of human capital, especially the youth, and provision of modern infrastructure in Ogoniland is central to resolving the Ogoni crisis. Kareem et al. (2012) remarked that NDR resources are rapidly being depleted without being replaced with physical or human capital. In its executive summary, the UNEP Assessment of Ogoniland emphasized that the clean-up operation of Ogoniland should include skills training, employment, and career development of indigenes. This recommendation by an independent source crystallizes the significance of this theme. The participants reported that professional training, education, and skills acquisition will contribute to the success of small business that has roots in Ogoni traditional economy. The participants indicated that the absence of modern infrastructure, such as electricity, pipe borne water, all-season-roads, schools, clinics, and hospitals, contradicts MNOCs' claims of commitment to corporate sustainability. The participants believe that road construction and maintenance, and public health facilities will enhance capacity building. All participants revealed that MNOC equipment, such as machinery used in industry operations, and heavy duty trucks damage the few accessible roads in the area. A participant's reaction to this theme was illustrated in the following quote:

The lack of access roads to densely populated areas of Ogoniland translates to the high cost of commodities. In the rainy season, most farm roads are not usable. Evacuation of available cash crops from farms is impossible. The lack of access to modern clinics and hospitals with up-to-date diagnostic equipment means that death is the outcome of minor health problems. Our women are most affected. A female cousin who

experienced complication during childbirth at home died because, she could not be evacuated to a facility in the nearest city, due to the poor road network. Ninety-five percent of our youth is unemployed. MNOCs labeled them as trouble makers and would not hire Ogoni's for the simplest of labor, such as clearing of overgrown weeds or pathways. They prefer to bring in contractual workers from outside our community. (Participant B9)

The participant's quote supports the idea that the reality of daily experience of the Ogoni community is backwardness (Omojimate, 2012). The significance of this theme resonates with every aspect of the discussion on sustainable economic development of the NDR. Agwu (2013) contended that the creation of new sources of livelihood through social investments and entrepreneurial partnerships with local communities is necessary for sustainable development and growth to thrive in the region. The following participant's response underscores these contentions:

When we were growing up in Ogoniland and the only evidence that a modern extractive industry, existed in my community was in the form of the constant deafening noise that emanated from the heavy machinery in operation; the ringing sound in the air that came from greenhouse gas emission, and endless night light in the sky from gas flares. Our primary and secondary schools did not have a lavatory, library, or laboratory. Most of the sporting facilities available to us in school were proceeds of community self-help effort. We learn from the grapevine that Shell offers

scholarship to deserving students, but the truth is that we do not know any person who benefitted from that scheme. (Participant B7)

The remarks above highlight issues, such as education, capacity building, and human development. The participants expected MNOCs, especially SPDC to actively participate and contribute to the development of Ogoniland. This finding is consistent with academic literature regarding the relationship between MNOCs and her host communities. Akpomuvie (2011a) suggested that a critical step in resolving the crisis of the region begins with using its oil wealth to create an environment that is economically prosperous and stable. The participants believe that these expectations are appropriate because oil exploration business in the developed world is associated with modernity, industrialization, and prosperity.

In contrast to the dispossession experienced by Ogonis, the oil companies' base stations in the NDR are fully equipped with modern social amenities, such as first class schools for the children of expatriate oil workers, good roads, hospitals, and all the comforts of modern life without regard to the needs of their host (Afonitan, & Ojakorotu, 2009; Odoemene, 2011). Kew and Phillips (2013), and Micah and Umobong (2013) contended that business decisions by corporations have to consider the rights of a people to earn their living independently by creating an enabling environment that allows access to jobs, health care, and capacity building. The prolonged failure of MNOCs to meet these expectations particularly in the area of human capital development and capacity building means that successive generations remain aggrieved and embittered.



**Theme 4: Environmental Degradation and Remediation.** The participants' emphasis was that environmental degradation is the primary cause of the crisis threatening the survival and future of the Ogoni people. It is worthy to note that every aspect of crude oil exploration and exploitation negatively affects the environment, and the most significant destructive consequence of this activity in Ogoniland is oil spillage and gas flaring (Ako et al., 2009, Okpara, 2012). Other causes of environmental degradation are seismic surveys, canalization, dredging, and poor waste disposal of associated by products. The participants indicated that the level of ecological damage experienced by Ogonis is the worst in comparison to other oil producing locations around the globe. A lot of land degradation and deforestation caused by oil induced fires often lead to the death of hundreds of people and wild life (Iniaghe et al., 2013).

Oloduro and Oloduro, (2012) stated that ecological mismanagement of the NDR and Ogoniland in particular has transformed the once rich biodiversity of the area to a wasteland. A UNEP report not only accused SPDC of culpability, but also established that the spills in Ogoniland will take 30 years to clean up at the cost of one billion dollars (UNEP Assessment report, 2011). The participants explained that prior to the UNEP report, various Ogoni associations made numerous attempts to sensitize the Nigerian government and MNOCs on the magnitude and impact of environmental degradation without success. The significance of environmental degradation and remediation to this study is illustrated by the remarks of the following respondents:

The oil pipelines are laid on the ground surface and crisscrossed the front of my father's compound (See Appendix B, Fig. 9). As a child, we used

the oil pipelines as play instrument. Sometimes, the pipes were extremely hot to touch. Often, we saw pipes that were rusted and leaking. We were warned by our parents and teachers not to go close to these leaking pipes. On occasion, you heard of whole families that were blown to pieces by an explosion, because, somebody mistakenly got in the proximity of a leaking pipe with a naked flame. (See Appendix B, Fig.9)

It is reported that 50% of oil spills are due to pipeline corrosion (Iniaghe et al., 2013). This theme aligned with the topic of the this study; the views of participants helped to crystallize the main factors associated with this phenomenon: (a) economic loss of land use, (b) economic collapse of aqua-maritime industry, (c) aggravated health problems, and (d) permanent threat to public safety-lives and property. These factors were defined as the negative externalities of oil and gas exploration and exploitation. The participants asserted that environmental degradation is largely the outcome of pollution and unsustainable business practices by MNOCs (Kadafa, 2012). The following respondent's reply links environmental degradation to economic sustainability.

My father was a prosperous fisherman just about 25 years ago. He was an expert boat builder, especially boats for fishing in shallow waters. My father and his brothers who were self-sufficient in this trade are no longer self-employed. All the rivers and stream within our village that contained fish and other seafood are now ponds of crude oil. My father and his siblings are not in a financial position to buy a modern engine boat to go and fish in the deep sea. Most members of my family have large skin

patches and lesions to various body parts. These lesions have been diagnosed as skin abnormalities caused by heat waves from the residues of many years of gas flaring. The lack of access to safe water for cooking and drinking is the significant causes of gastrointestinal diseases now ravaging our community. We are condemned to live with ecology that has been devastated by industrial mismanagement. (Participant B4)

The participants maintained that environmental degradation is the direct result of inefficient production and management practices of MNOCs. In environmental economics, externalities represent the immeasurable negative effect of investment and production strategies of resource extraction companies on a people who were not directly involved in the company's internal transaction (Aras & Crowther, 2009; Fontaine, 2011; Omojimate, 2012). The critical state of environmental degradation in Ogoniland and the urgency for remedial action to address the problem is the focus of reports in the following documents: UNEP Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, Ogoni Bill of Rights, and the Ogoni Technical Committee on UNEP report. The conclusive evidence is that MNOCs and SPDC in particular have failed to operate within minimally acceptable local and international standards in Ogoniland (Afonitan & Ajakorotu, 2009). The following participant's response confirms the validity of this claim.

In a memorable case, a friend lost the entire family in an oil pipeline explosion. Shell and other MNOCs to the best of my knowledge never responded to reports of leaking and corroded pipes. For several months, oil pipelines stretching several kilometers would leak, dispatching and

contaminating our only source of surface and underground water, without a representative of the oil companies paying attention. (Participant A4)

In addition to the experiences exposed in these narratives, the participants remarked that MNOCs lack of respect for the history, culture, and traditional economy of Ogoniland account for the acts of impunity demonstrated by SDPC. This view is consistent with Ugoh and Ukpere's (2012) assertion that SPDC operates in contempt of established environmental laws. Ebegbulem et al. (2013) observed that the culture of impunity displayed by MNOCs in the region is consistent with an imperialist mentality, which is embellished in the conceptual framework of dependency theory. In Ogoniland, this context of dependency demonstrates how the presence of a Western capitalist mode of production has failed to create progress for all; instead, it has produced growth for a select few without development (Ebegbulem et al., 2013).

Multinational oil companies generate billions of dollars in profit to compensate for the high cost of equipment, personnel, and technology involved in their operations (Odoemene, 2011). Thus, the participants assert that the right of return on capital investment applies to them because their ancestral land that has been degraded is not a public good but a private asset. Olawuyi (2012) noted that the International Covenant of Economic and Social Rights (ICESR) prohibits transnational corporations from endangering the lives and environment of indigenous people through any acts emanating from their business enterprise. In recognition of these rights, the African Court on Human Rights found the Nigerian government liable for violating the property right of Ogonis by

facilitating the operations of oil corporations in Ogoniland (Okpara, 2012; Olawuyi, 2012).

Participant A1 remarked that the duty international law places on MNOCs include the responsibility to prevent damage to the environment, the property, and livelihood of persons domiciled in areas of resource extraction seem to apply only to developed nations. This view aligned with contentions by Olawuyi (2012) that the provisions for protection of subsistence under international law may have compelled British Petroleum (BP) to set up the \$20 billion escrow fund to compensate businesses and workers in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Texas, and all persons whose businesses and livelihoods were affected by the Deepwater Horizon explosion. Significantly, the intervention of the U.S. government, the risk of losing its business, and the need to protect its corporate image are considerable factors that compelled BP's rapid and commensurate response to that incident. All the participants observed that the swift and decisive disaster response, recovery and contingency services accorded the Gulf of Mexico oil spill that involved BP demonstrated the double standards in MNOCs' business convention in Ogoniland.

The participants' remarked that the urgency and magnitude of response by MNOCs and other stakeholders in the Gulf of Mexico incident deepened their feeling of injustice because for 5 decades the Ogonis have experienced the burden of oil spillages and attendant consequences without requisite compensation. For example, the United Nations recommended that Shell set up an Environmental Restoration Fund to support clean-up and restoration in the Niger Delta, yet no action has been noted in this regard

(Olawuyi, 2012). Over 90% of oil spills in the NDR is linked to corporate environmental management practices, equipment failure, and corrosion from faulty pipes (Onwubiko et al., 2013). At various times, Shell admitted using outdated facilities and equipment, especially pipelines that have outlived their lifespan (Emeseh, 2009). The 7000 km of oil pipes crisscrossing the NDR were laid over 40 years ago (Iniaghe et al., 2013). The age of these pipes along with poor management and zero replacement plan means more corrosion and frequent spills. Environmental degradation therefore, is the central force of Ogoni agitation and demand for international condemnation (Asawo, 2011, Ekpoh & Obia, 2010).

Environmental rights are critical components of international human rights law and international environmental law. These rights include freedom from pollution, environmental degradation, and all activities that may threaten human health, life, and the ecosystems (Olawuyi, 2012). The participants stated that only a total cleanup up of the polluted environment, (See Appendix B, Fig. 8) along with measures to contain future spills will bring a lasting solution to their demand for sustainable development. To this effect, participants A9 and A10 replied that “Only God’s intervention can resolve the issues with SPDC.” Participant A1 and A2 replied that the path to a mutual understanding for Shell and the Ogoni community depends on the will of Shell to positively respond to the Ogoni Technical Committee Recommendations on the UNEP report (See Appendix, D) and to unconditionally abide by the Ogoni Bill of Rights, (an economic, political, and social manifesto-See Appendix E).

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

Global demand for energy is expected to rise significantly in the next 30 years (Watkins, Kemp, William, & Harwood, 2012). The World Energy Council (WEC) estimates that primary energy demand will increase by 1.5-3 times (Watkins et al., 2012). Sustainability is a critical factor in devising a road map for meeting these energy requirements in the future. A strategy for managing future energy needs (oil and gas) would take into account all assets, and resources: human, physical, natural capital, and financial and monetary assets. This view presumes that the three basic goals of economic development (a) efficient allocation, (b) equitable distribution, and (c) sustainable scale, can be applied to promote sustainability through ethical and responsible corporate governance (Aras & Crowther, 2009; Micah & Umobong, 2013). To underscore this point, Aras and Crowther (2009) remarked that once a company has identified its environmental strategy, sustainability becomes a business opportunity with market potentials for product development, research, technological innovation, and services.

The main finding of this study is that environmental degradation of Ogoniland and the NDR in general has resulted in the comprehensive economic collapse of Ogoniland and dislocation of the social fabric of that community. The people of NDR claim that environmental degradation is the sum result of MNOC inefficient production systems (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012; Donwa, 2011; Kingston 2011). Fontaine (2013) argued that markets are required to serve society positively by harmonizing corporate and social interest so that private and social costs are the same. The Ogoni indigenes consider the externalities (oil spillage and gas flaring) arising from the internal transaction of

MNOCs as factors of the direct cost and profit opportunity of production. Aras and Crowther (2009) and Fontaine (2013) contended that cost inefficiencies that emanate from technical externalities represent a form of market failure. The study participants argued that since they supported MNOCs by allowing them to exist, do business, and make profit, MNOCs share the business obligation and responsibility of correcting market failure by allocating distributive equity to affected stakeholders.

Donwa (2011) noted that environmental accounting requires organizations that depend on natural resource extraction to generate sustainable development indicators to guide the use and protection of such resources. Environmental cost accounting may enable extractive industries to assess the efficiency of its production processes relative to environmental preservation, and equally track internal and external economic activity within its domain of production (Aras & Crowther, 2009; Donwa, 2011). For example, a statistical map derived from environmental cost accounting may assist MNOCs to appropriately project the level of environmental damage to agricultural land, forest and water resources as a result of its extraction activities.

One of the significant findings in this study is the revelation by participants that the Ogoni indigenes prefer to retain MNOCs' business in their territory; however, they expect to receive recognition and reward as equitable partners in the extraction enterprise. The participants indicated that corporate sustainability requires corporations to interact and build dependencies outside their internal corporate domain with consumers, suppliers, bankers, contractors, and host community. This view implies that recognizing



the host community is mark of good corporate governance mechanism, and potentially enhances the integrity and reputation of a corporation (Micah & Umobong, 2013).

During the focus group process, participants noted that the sum of economic loss incurred by individual and communal landowners as a result of the damage to agricultural farmlands is incalculable in financial terms (See Appendix C). The cost of cleaning up the environmental damages done to Ogoniland is estimated at \$1 billion dollars for the first 5 years and may take up to 30 years before complete restoration and reclamation can be achieved (Olawuyi, 2012). This cost is required just for cleaning Ogoniland. The NDR is host to 5,000 oil wells (Aro et al., 2010). In comparison, Ogoniland has 156 active oil wells (Chukwuemeka et al., 2011).

The cost required in cleaning up environmental damages in other parts of the Niger Delta that is the hub of Nigeria's oil and gas industry is yet to be calculated. For example, a local court fined SPDC \$1.5 billion as compensation for environmental degradation against an Ijaw community in the NDR, yet to this day SPDC has not paid (Agwu, 2013). "Oil spills trigger the application of several interrelated national, regional, and international laws, and regulations that provide windows for redress for victims" (Olawuyi, 2012, p. 1). This assertion provides an outlet for extensive litigations by indigenes of NDR considering the magnitude of oil spills in the area. The eventual outcome of this possibility would present a considerable financial strain for any corporation.

In addition to the unknown cost of cleaning other NDR affected areas, kidnapping of foreign oil workers for ransom, hostage taking of staff of oil companies in exchange

for ransom, and the occasional occupation of oil platform and flow stations by armed militants seeking to extract financial gains, multiplies MNOC transaction costs in oil producing areas (Ogege, 2011; Owualah & Obokoh, 2008). Shell Petroleum Development Corporation by its own accounts estimated it lost \$10.6 billion, and that other MNOC's (See Appendix F for list of MNOCs) in the region may have lost \$21.5 billion due to bombing of oil installations by militants, violent attacks and other forms of sabotage (Oloduro & Oloduro, 2012).

The amount of gas flared in the NDR on a daily basis by MNOCs is estimated at 56.6 million metric tons, and the annual value of this loss is estimated in billions of dollars (Edino et al., 2010; Effiong & Etowa, 2012). Gas flaring according to Nigeria's environmental law is illegal. The external cost and loss associated with environmental degradation resulting from extraction activities is evidence that MNOCs in the NDR have not embraced sustainable development as a business opportunity in their corporate governance agenda. The participants in this study noted that the only agenda of interest by MNOCs is to produce at less cost, even if that means complete destruction of the environment.

Emeseh (2009) and Ezirim (2011) noted that to eliminate the negative consequences of environmental degradation, MNOCs have to recognize the value of economic and social patterns of host communities, and implement techniques that conform to effective environmental management standards. Asawo (2011) and Eweje (2007) noted that the integrity of a corporation is arguably one of its greatest assets; however, in Ogoniland and the NDR in general, the reputations of MNOCs are relatively

low. Campaigns by civil society groups against SPDC and other MNOCs in the NDR have attracted worldwide publicity, and frequently these corporations embark on costly and extensive public relations campaign in the media to protect their image. Other costs incurred by MNOCs include funding logistics (arms and other military paraphernalia) for national security agencies in order to obtain exclusive protection from potential and real attacks against their business interest (Ako et al., 2009; Emuedo, 2010).

The third theme in this study highlighted economic empowerment as a factor in stimulating business opportunities to indigenous communities; creating an enabling environment to foster commercialization of traditional economic occupations, such as fishing, farming, and boat making. Carney et al. (2011) argued that mutually beneficially stakeholder relationships can enhance the wealth creating capacity of a corporation. In line with this view, Aras and Crowther (2009) asserted that when resources are recognized to be finite, the factors of production are not commodities, but stakeholders; thus, these stakeholders need to be recognized as part of the output section of the production process. For example, in Canada, mining companies in indigenous communities engage public participation in their decision making processes as an effective business strategy (Emeseh, 2009). In this context, sustainable development means transformation and utilization of resources, and directing investments and technological orientation in ways that enhance the potential of stakeholder and shareholder (Akiyode, 2009).

The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) report on the Niger Delta, which highlighted the enormity of environmental degradation by MNOCs, underscores

the contemporary and global nature of this subject as a public issue (Orogun, 2010). This study also identified the inequitable relationship between MNOCs and Ogonis, and how economic and social injustice breeds violent resistance. Therefore, it may be desirable for oil multinationals to re-assess their current business strategy of oil and gas extraction in the NDR against its operational threshold of the past five decades. This study could assist MNOCs, public policy agents, and applicable national entities to embrace sustainable development as a strategic business option. This study compliments the findings of Donwa (2012) and Omojimitte (2011) who contended that sustainability-based industrial development in the Niger Delta requires a comprehensive focus and integration of the external cost of industrial activity into long term business policy development and solutions.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The implications for social change are intricately connected to the significance of crude oil and gas in the sustenance of global economic performance. Oil and gas resources are non-renewable; therefore, to meet the global demand for goods and services in almost all areas of consumption, alternative sources of renewable energy are required. The oil companies in Ogoniland and the Niger Delta in general have operated below domestic and globally accepted environmental standards (Wosu, 2013). The consequence of this action is environmental degradation, which has resulted in loss of land use, internal population displacement, disease, hunger, poverty, and civil strife in the Niger Delta and Ogoniland in particular (Odoemene, 2011). The oil and gas wells that have not been yielding any revenue since SPDC was forced to temporarily shut down its

operations in Ogoniland represent significant economic loss to shareholders and stakeholders respectively. The persistent agitation and threats from militant groups in various parts of the NDR against oil multinationals portends serious risk to the global supply of oil (Obi, 2010).

This study makes a business case for oil corporations to differentiate high income growth and profits from sustainable development. The practice of sustainable development and growth has for the last decade become a considerable strategy for policy makers to define the relationship between economic, social, and environmental objectives (Akpomuvie, 2011b). This study contributes to knowledge about the environmental effects of oil and gas extraction activities, especially in circumstances where corporate entities negate the value of the host community's economic and social history, experience, and input in the decision making process.

The cost arising from compliance with environmental laws could open up creative business opportunities for corporations to pursue technological innovations aimed at improving efficiency. For example, if MNOCs in the Niger Delta acquire and deploy advance warning systems to alert management of corrosive and leaking pipes, the risk of prolonged environmental pollution would decrease. Hence, the measure of attendant health risk and compensation costs for loss of farmland will be reduced. Therefore, by addressing the findings presented in this study, policy makers and environmental management professionals may be additionally equipped to evaluate the Niger Delta crisis from the perspective of indigenous people. This approach may allow for the development and application of effective corrective measures, cumulative, short, and

long term solutions. Finally, this study illuminates the overall body of knowledge by linking scholarly literature discussed in Section 1 and 2, and outcomes in Section 3, such as economic, social, health, ethical, cultural, corporate governance and sustainable development issues driven by the consequences of environmental degradation.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The perception of participants involved in this study is that MNOCs need to engage in a collaborative relationship with host communities that are primary owners of natural resources (Aras & Crowther, 2009). Engaging natural stakeholders in resource exploitation have the potential to assure a safe and hostile free production environment (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012). The specific benefits that may accrue to an oil corporation from investing in the local economy are multiple. For example, MNOC employees import a variety of food stock from external sources at multiplied cost. These stocks could be purchased at a lower price if they were produced and obtained from local sources within the proximity of MNOC operational sites. This goal can be achieved if a percentage of profits derived from oil and gas business is invested in revamping the rural economy (host community) by optimizing agriculture and fishing (Akpomuvie, 2011b).

Participants in the study revealed that prior to the advent of oil and gas extraction, Ogoniland like the rest of the Niger Delta was not only self-sufficient in food production, but also a source of farm produce and seafood supply for the rest of Nigeria ( Onwubiko et al., 2013).

Agriculture, fishing, farming, crafts, and timber businesses that once accounted for 44% of employment in the Niger Delta have since declined because of environmental

degradation (Akpomuvie, 2011b). The development of the Niger Delta is not the sole responsibility of the government alone. Public and private sector partnerships are relevant to the development of human capital in the region. The participants in this study explained that the wealth of Ogoniland is its people and one way to enrich their lives involves the provision of an enabling infrastructure. The infrastructure includes, but is not limited to schools, skill acquisition and training institutions, roads, jobs, hospitals, and most importantly light, and portable safe pipe borne water.

The responsibility of corporations in assuring the integrity of the environments in which they operate is necessary in protecting the interest of shareholders (Eweje, 2007). This responsibility is also a reflection of corporate legal behavior that corresponds with national and international laws. The frequent attacks on the interests of the corporation (technological equipment, site infrastructure, and personnel) imposes strenuous financial burden on investors and shareholders. While it may be argued that a binding statute on corporate social responsibility is not the rule, CSR is central to ameliorating the negative impact of company operations in a host community (Emeseh, 2009). To reduce the frequency of oil spills through discharges from corroded pipelines, and contain other associated hazards, oil companies operating in the NDR should invest commensurate funds in upgrading production facilities. The research participants remarked that SPDC's reentry into Ogoniland for resumption of oil and gas operations will not be allowed without credible plans to unconditionally resolve the various environmental issues identified in the UNEP report.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

Following the findings of this study, further studies should investigate whether corporate sustainability as a business model has negative or positive effect on firm's financial performance. Akapbio and Akpan (2010) argued that corporate sustainability practices improve financial performance of corporations. Therefore, the focus for further study or investigation should address claims that sustainability-driven companies (for example: Starbucks) have faster growth rates, and the evidence, if any, that firms that adopt sustainability practices outperform those that do not. The inclusion of non-Ogonis resident in Ogoniland in future research may provide a broader understanding of the issues embedded in the challenges posed by environmental degradation to sustainable economic development of the NDR. A study of another geographical area of the Niger Delta has the potential to produce additional information to deepen an understanding of the phenomenon explored in this study.

The assumptions, limitations and delimitations in this study offer opportunities for further studies. For example, one of the assumptions in this study is that the armed insurrection in the Niger Delta by various militant groups is the outcome of intolerance and unfavorable response by government and MNOCs to peaceful protests against economic marginalization due to environmental degradation (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012). The reliability of this assertion may have been progressively blurred by other competing factors inherent in the NDR crisis (Afonitan & Ojakorotu, 2009). The findings from further studies could assist policy makers and captains of industry to develop a



multipurpose action plan for addressing the ongoing economic, social, and political crisis in the NDR.

One area that did not generate sufficient in depth discussion in this research is the impact of environmental degradation on forest resources, wildlife, and the economic survival of women in Ogoniland. Notably, the women of the region are occupationally farmers and gatherers of seafood and firewood for cooking (Ihayere, et al., 2014). In this study, I suggest that further studies should consider the opinions and contributions of indigenous communities directly affected by the multifaceted nature of oil and gas related environmental issues. The participants revealed that journals, media, academic, and oral reports regarding issues that pertain to economic, social, cultural, and political conditions in Ogoniland are without verifiable contribution from Ogoni sources. This study involved 20 participants, 12 men and eight women. Future research may adopt a mixed method study in order to quantify the value of the collateral damages done to the Ogoni community after more than 50 years of environmental degradation.

### **Reflections**

The research process was far more challenging than anticipated. The initial challenge was that assurances by prospective participants for an early meeting never materialized. Individually and collectively, participants expressed frustration regarding the tendency for outsiders to exploit the Ogoni problem. A few participants questioned the benefit of the study in resolving the Ogoni crisis. Other participants opted not to participate for personal reasons.

I maintained contact with a few participants, who could not agree on a time, place, and date for a meeting. As time progressed, I was able to gain the confidence of five individuals who eventually secured the confidence and cooperation of others. Finally, 20 participants were located, and they consented to participate in the study. The first focus group session consisted of 10 individuals. The participants volunteered their contributions as recall of experience. The raw data collected from this research validated the choice of a qualitative case study as the optimum research design in exploring the overriding research question in this study. I was fairly overwhelmed by the emotions that emerged during the focus group session. Some participants were close to tears; some actually cried during the focus group session. One participant explained, "Sorry for my emotional vulnerability, I was a victim of gross physical abuses in the hands of security agents who invaded my village because of disagreements with Shell." At this point it became clear that these were manifestations of people who had experienced first-hand the economic, social, cultural, and political effects of environmental injustice against their ancestral homeland.

Irrespective of the deep emotions revealed during the focus group sessions, the participants were enthusiastically engaged in the discussions. The participants were willing to discuss without inhibitions and were eager to volunteer information outside the scope of the open-ended questions. I presented questions in the tabulated order outlined in the research questions format. The process of data collection diffused any effects of bias on my part. It was perhaps the most intense scholarly part of learning in the course of this study. I found the process liberating after discovering that certain participants were

living victims of narratives documented in the literature review. The participants expressed an interest in receiving segments of the approved doctoral study. From the findings of the data collection process, it is rational to assume that environmental degradation as the key challenge to sustainable economic development is not only about economic well-being, but embraces the enlargement of all human choices: knowledge, health, clean environment, cultural dignity, and freedom of speech; in short, it is about the enrichment of human existence.

### **Summary and Study Conclusions**

The focus of this study was to explore how MNOCs inaction to limit the cost of environmental degradation on sustainable economic development affects the indigenes of Ogoniland. The responses to focus group research questions highlight the factors that can be adduced as the source of conflict between extractive industries, the government of Nigeria, the Niger Delta community, and Ogoniland in particular. A deductive analysis of these responses led to the four themes that emerged. The focus group sessions illuminated the conflict that surrounds corporate governance, shareholder and stakeholder values. The findings from this study suggest that the lack of consideration for community expectations and demands by policy and decision makers is a focal point in the crisis (Agwu, 2013; Odoemene, 2011; Wosu, 2013).

The main deduction from this study is that attribution of responsibilities to MNOCs is because of their enormous resources, wealth and power, and the consequences of their actions on the livelihood of indigenous people (Akpan, 2010; Baghebo et al., 2013). This study also revealed that communities negatively affected by consequences of

environmental degradation have limited resources or power to enforce their rights. The participants in this study acknowledged that the activities associated with oil and gas exploration will always present challenges to ecological management; however, they also note that MNOCs have a primary responsibility of integrating these negative externalities into its cost accounting processes.

The participants hold the view that corporate sustainable development practices serve as a viable means of promoting enduring human and material development in the area (Orji, 2012). Proponents of corporate sustainability argue that corporations that adhere to environmental justice in the conduct of business expand the propensity for increasing shareholder value (Olufemi, 2010). Finally, I suggest that conflicts arising from the inefficiencies of production systems can be resolved through mutually beneficial transactions, especially in circumstances where major risks to human existence are prominent.

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## Appendix A: MNOCs operating in the Niger Delta

Shell Development Corporation of Nigeria

Mobil Producing Nigeria Ltd

Chevron Nigeria Ltd

Nigeria Agip Oil Company

Elf Petroleum Ltd

Texaco overseas (Nigeria) Petroleum Company

Other Producers: Ashland (USA)

Deminix ( Germany)

Conoil (USA)

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*Source:* Akpabio & Akpan, (2010)

**ABBREVIATIONS**

**FG's** - Focus Group Sessions

**FEPA**- Federal Environmental Protection Agency

**ND** - Niger Delta

**NNPC** -Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation

**NDR** - Niger Delta Region

**MNOCs** - Multinational Oil Corporations

**TBL**- Triple Bottom Line

**UNEP**- United Nations Environmental Program

## Appendix B: Pictorial Evidence of Environmental Degradation



*Figure 1.* NNPC trunk line spill (K-Dere Goknan, LGA) *Source:* United Nations Environmental Program UNEP (2011).



*Figure 2.* Fly tipping of oilfield waste in Ogoniland. *Source:* UNEP Assessment (2011).





*Figure 3.* Visible hydrocarbon pollution on surface water and vessel used to transport oil. *Source:* UNEP Assessment, (2011).



*Figure 4.* Inadequate regulatory requirements and enforcement are leaving communities exposed. *Source:* UNEP Assessment, (2011).



*Figure 5. A house constructed on a well pad (Yorla 9, Khana LGA) Source: UNEP-Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, (2011).*



*Figure 6. An aerial view of contamination within the creeks. Source: UNEP Assessment, (2011).*





*Figure 7.* A typical spill site in Ogoniland, many of which remain unaddressed for long periods of time. *Source:* UNEP Assessment, (2011).



*Figure 8.* A view of a decommissioned and abandoned flow station in K-Dere, Ghokana LGA. *Source:* UNEP Assessment, (2011).

Note: “In oil operations some assets are usually decommissioned when they no longer serve a productive purpose or any longer economically viable” (UNEP REPORT, p. 99) However, there are guidelines and standards for decoupling such abandoned equipment’s for health and safety purposes, but this does not seem to be the case in this instance.





*Figure 9.* A traditional house made from combustible materials adjacent to a pipe line (Ebubu, Obolo-Eleme LGA) *Source:* UNEP Assessment, (2011).



*Figure 10:* Contaminated Soil and Groundwater. *Source:* UNEP Assessment, (2011).

Appendix C: Ogoni Technical Committee on UNEP Report

# OGONI TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON UNEP REPORT

*[OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF OGONILAND]*

OCTOBER, 2011





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Environmental Programme report (UNEP report) paints a gruesome picture of the effect of oil and gas exploration and production impacts in Ogoni for the past 50 years and, corroborates the reality and contentions of the Ogoni people that their environment has been severely polluted and rendered virtually useless with concrete evidence that remediation and clean up will take as long as 30 years. It is a fate completely uncalled for and has exacerbated the environmental traumatization of the Ogoni people. In spite of oil and gas pollution, damage to environment and endangering of livelihood, the real danger is in the health havoc perpetuated on the Ogoni population, with an indelible dent to lives and longevity. There are no amounts of financial compensation that can assuage the pains, sufferings and decimation the Ogonis have been subjected to. The reality is that Ogoni people will live with multifarious environmentally caused cancerous situations for a long time. Any proper medical tests conducted on the dead and living in Ogoni may only reveal extreme cases, the environmentally synergized hydrocarbons included genetic or latent cases due to oil and gas pollution will be with the people for generations.

The environmental pollution situation in Ogoniland is completely overwhelming and requires urgent attention. It is deeply rooted in the ambient or atmospheric air, soil, sediment, ground water, and surface water and the Ogoni people take in these poisons and live with these dangerous pollutants everyday. The Federal Government of Nigeria and Shell are faced with an obvious pathetic case of oil and gas pollution problems in Ogoniland, and to address it, the government should speed up the process of restoring dignity of life to the Ogoni

*Ogoni Technical Committee on UNEP report*

## VIII

environment as recommended by the UNEP, an independent party that has validated the oil and gas pollution problems in Ogoniland and it cannot be delayed any longer.

As pathway to progress, we recommend that the Federal Government of Nigeria should nominate the UNEP as Ogoniland Remediation On-scene Coordinator (OROC), and in order to inject confidence into the process should adopt a Comprehensive Environmental Corrective Action Plan (CECAP) that pre-informs the Ogoni people. Without the Comprehensive Environmental Corrective Action Plan (CECAP), it would be difficult for the Ogoni people to be confident that the Federal Government of Nigeria and Shell are ready to address the environmental pollution problems of the Ogoni people.

On the issue of re-entry, we recommend that due process should be taken as detailed in this report. Remediation of Ogoniland as recommended in the UNEP report should not be used as a condition-precedent into Ogoni for oil and gas production activities. The committee therefore adopts the entire recommendations of the UNEP and makes additional recommendations that are found to be critical to realizing the UNEP recommendations.

## Appendix D: Ogoni Bill of Rights

**(EXTRACTS)****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.

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:

- 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:

### **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.

#### **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 dehumanized 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 dehumanization 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 institutionalized 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; and (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-Khane; 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 dehumanization 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.

## Appendix E: Consent Form

You are invited to participate in this research study to narrate the experiences you have lived as a result of the impact of MNOC extraction activities on your land. The researcher is inviting you to participate in this study because you are an Ogoni indigene. This form is a part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you understand the study before deciding whether to take part. This study is being conducted by a researcher named Christian Duru who is Doctoral student at Walden University.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study to explore how MNOCs inaction to limit the cost of environmental degradation on sustainable economic growth affects the indigenes of Ogoniland.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study you will be asked to:

- Participate in focus group sessions that will last between 45 minutes to 1 hour and will be scheduled to fit your time convenience
- Audio tape recording of this focus group session is standard procedure

### **Voluntary Nature of the study:**

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to participate in the study. No one at Walden University or any applicable institution will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

**Risks and Benefits of the Study:**

There are no known risks associated with the study. Being in this study will not pose any risk to your safety or wellbeing. Focus group session will take place in a mutually agreed safe and secure location. You do not have to answer any question that may compromise your social status, personal beliefs, or affiliations. As a benefit, this study provides Ogoni indigenes the opportunity to contribute to knowledge and awareness about a phenomenon that directly affects them. The researcher will inform participants by email about completion of Doctoral study, and upon receipt of response to that email, will share 1-2 page research summary of Doc study with interested participants'.

**Payment:**

There is no compensation whatsoever for participation in this study. This researcher may offer to drive a participant to and from researcher location if he/she is unable to arrange for transportation.

**Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name, or anything else that could identify you in the study reports.

You will receive and retain copies of all forms signed by you regarding participation in this research. Data will be kept secured in locked safe, and only accessible through an

electronic password. The researcher will retain sole access for security and data storage for a period of 5 years.

**Contacts and Questions:**

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have any questions later, you may contact the researcher Christian Duru. If you want to talk privately about your rights as research participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone is 612-312-1210. Walden University approval number for this study is 11-21-13-0254795 and it expires on November 20, 2014.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I consent that I am agreeing to the terms describe above.

**Printed Name of Participant** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Consent** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix F: Focus Group Questions

1. How would one assess the interaction between the Ogoni community and multinational corporations operating in Ogoniland?
2. What percentage of overall indigenes income is derived from MNOCs activities (such as land rents, royalties, monetary, and other associated benefits)?
3. How would water resources, farmlands, health care, and education services benefit from investment by MNOCs?
4. What percentage of Ogoni indigenes are employed by MNOCs in executive, management, and unclassified positions?
5. How has the interaction between Ogoni community and MNOCs and their affiliates contributed to peace, security, and promotion of agreement and principles?
6. How have MNOCs activities affected the cost of living in Ogoniland, for example cost of food items, shelter, medicine, transportation, and energy?
7. How would one quantify the value of economic resources incapacitated by decades of environmental degradation due to the activities of extractive industries?
8. What specific MNOC actions would promote effective and sustainable outcomes for Ogoni community and make lasting peace with MNOCs?
9. What would you like to add to this focus group session?

## Curriculum Vitae

**Udogadi C. Duru****PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

<b>Chief Financial Officer</b> Fidelity Resources Inc. Towson, Maryland	10/05-Present
<b>Chief Executive Officer</b> <u>Netcon</u> & Earthkins, Inc. Parkville, Maryland	3/00-9/05
<b>Case Management</b> Department of Health & Mental Hygiene Developmental Disabilities Administration State of Maryland-DHMH Rosewood Center- Owings Mills, Maryland	10/95-2/2000
<b>Case Management</b> Department of Social Services Services to Extended Families with Children Baltimore City, Maryland	1994-10/95

**EDUCATION**

<b>Doctor of Business Administration</b> Walden University Minneapolis Minnesota Specialization: Leadership Anticipated date of Graduation	6/10 -Present    October, 2014
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