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Between Nonviolence and Violence: A Comparative Analysis on the Dynamics of Choice in the Ogoni and Ijaw Movements in the Niger Delta

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Between Nonviolence and Violence: A Comparative Analysis on the Dynamics of Choice in the Ogoni and Ijaw Movements in the Niger Delta

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Bath

Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies

October 2017

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Abstract

Conflicts in the Niger Delta have reached a political brink that has attracted significant concerns and responsiveness at both local and international levels. Several theses have been centred around the recurring issues in the region, pointing to the argumentation of resource governance, marginalization, and neglect. While all these structural factors are valid and serve as the basis for understanding the grievances, a unique question still remains unanswered: why have the Ogoni and the Ijaw, which have in the region shared common, lived experiences, reacted differently to these problems? As this gap in the literature suggests, scholarship on the Niger Delta has tended to conflate these two distinct conflicts into one single movement of opposition and resistance.

The current thesis argues that in order to better understand the undercurrents of the Niger Delta conflict, it is imperative to analyse the dynamics of choice in terms of the distinct courses of action taken by the two groups. Given the similar structural constraints, it is essential to consider why the Ogoni adopted nonviolent resistance, and the Ijaw violent resistance. This question builds on a rich scholarly literature, which situates the causal factors of the conflict within three broadly contextual, structural, explanations: the political, socio-economic and environmental ones. However, these common structural factors cannot explain the *divergent* political strategies the Ogoni and the Ijaw have adopted to respond to the crisis. The dissertation argues for the inclusion of other key factors, namely narratives, leadership and organisation. These three factors are important for explaining the ‘how’ and ‘why’ within the political trajectories of the Ogoni and Ijaw in terms of nonviolence and violence. This more nuanced perspective provides a new context to the knowledge that each group employs distinct strategies in constructing its conflict, hence, each group works towards some context specificity of their communities.

List of Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini
ANC	African National Congress
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
COP	Council of Ogoni Professionals
COTRA	Council of Ogoni Traditional Rulers
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration
DfID	Department for International Development
EMIROAF	Ethnic Minority Rights Organisation of Africa
ERA	Environmental Rights Association
ERECTISM	Ethnic Resource and Environmental Control
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FNDIC	Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities
FOWA	Federation of Ogoni Women Association
FRGS	Fellowship of the Royal Geographic Society
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HYPREP	Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project
ICG	International Crises Group
INC	Ijaw National Council
IPMSDL	Indigenous Peoples' Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation
IRA	Irish Republican Army

IYC	Ijaw Youth Council
MAMSER	Directorate of Social Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MORETO	Movement for the Reparations to Ogbia
MOSIEN	Movement for the Survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
NANS	National Association of Nigerian Students
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons
NDDB	Niger Delta Development Board
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDSF	Niger Delta Strike Force
NDPVF	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
NDV	Niger Delta Vigilantes
NDVF	Niger Delta Volunteer Force
NEITI	Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NURS	National Association of Rivers State Students
NYCOP	National Youth Council of Ogoni People
OBR	Ogoni Bill of Rights
OCC	Ogoni Council of Churches
OCU	Ogoni Central Union
ODU	Ogoni Divisional Union

OML	Oil Mining Lease
OSRA	Ogoni State Representation Assembly
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company
UCPD	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
USA	United States of America
WDR	World Development Report
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

Introduction

Conflicts in multi-ethnic countries remain a primary challenge to peace globally. From the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia to the Basque region of Spain and Northern Ireland, from Rwanda to Sudan, from Fiji to Indonesia, several conflicts have been fought along ethnic (Horowitz, 2000) or religious lines through nonviolent and violent means. Ake (2000: 94) proposed that political divides would gradually emerge along ethnic or religious courses, deepening discontent and conflicts in Africa. These rifts of ethnic or clan conflicts remain dominant across much of Sub-Saharan Africa, and have arisen from episodes of democratic transitions (Mozaffar, 1995: 34) which have created threatening uncertainties for groups (Gurr, 2000: 85). Such is the situation Nigeria finds itself as, from independence to date, it has witnessed nonviolent and several violent conflicts.

African countries are continuously faced with one form of conflict or another. In Somalia, Sudan, Nigeria, Mali, the conflicts are ongoing, with various implications for peace, security and development (The World Bank, 2011). The African conflict landscape is composed of violence and nonviolence, which also includes terrorist attacks by movements that claim ideological reasons (ibid). Although conflicts are endemic in every society and make up one of the central features of human existence (Desai and Potter, 2008: 450), they impact negatively by destroying material resources and social networks which made daily life possible dating back to the colonial era (Ezirim, 2011: 61). The institutionalisation of colonial rule in Africa, especially through the last years of the nineteenth and the very early decades of the twentieth centuries, ushered in a considerable variety of responses from African societies (Kastfelt, 1976: 1); some expressed through violence and others through nonviolence. These reactions, according to Kastfelt, should be regarded as expressions of African politics demonstrated differently, indicating diverse local political differences (ibid). Some embraced the colonial rule in terms of its anticipated economic and political benefits, while others responded by active protest and resistance against the establishment of colonial rule (Ajayi and Crowder, 1976). Along with colonial rule came loss of traditional independence, and the institutionalisation of novel forms of economic and political orders, which were in direct opposition to the existing cultural forms of organisation (Ibid). This was apparent, for instance, in the local ethnic and religious customs of African communities, particularly the introduction of new taxes (ibid).

The period from 1905 to 1921 witnessed various types of African resistance against the British and their African supporters in the administrative system (Kastfelt, 1976: 3). Resistance is opposition that is refused legal recognition (Scruton, 2007: 595) based on an identity based political action (Howe, 1998). As a conscious rejection of values that maintain prevailing power relations (Faith, 1994; Hollander and Einwohner, 2004: 534), it has also been referred to as a deliberate questioning of the existing structure of national roles, as well as a rethinking of how such roles may be structured (Brown, 1994:167). Resistance takes place in various situations, including political systems and revolutions (Skocpol, 1979; Goldstone, 1991; Scott, 1987). The Maji Maji rebellion of 1905-1907 in Tanzania demonstrates a violent resistance by African indigenous communities in German East Africa against the colonial rule, and it has arisen from a policy designed to compel African people to grow cotton for export (Garibaldi, 2011). Other examples include, The Mau Mau uprising in Kenya 1952-1960 (Anderson, 2006) and the Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba resistance in Senegal in the 1880s which was subtle and aimed towards local matters of political and economic autonomy against the French (Talton, u.d) . Although the South African apartheid resistance was devoid of military engagement, it was however marked by mass uprisings and random guerrilla attacks. There were boycotts too in the South African case as seen in the Soweto Uprising of 1976 in which African students boycotted schools and protested against having Afrikaans language taught in their schools (ibid).

Characteristically, resistance in African conflicts indicates forms in which outcomes of a changed global order, identity and greed are interconnected within contexts of injustice, predation and repression (Sawyer, 2004). The question of categorizing these features and recognizing their salience in each theatre of conflict becomes important. Gurr (2000b) notes that in conflict situations as seen in Africa, where identity issues are foremost as seen in the Niger Delta, strongly attracts world-wide acknowledgment in terms of the importance of minority rights which mostly result in negotiated settlements. However, in several theatres of African conflicts, identity may not continuously be the most outstanding concern at the source, suggesting that conflicts undergo transformations (Sawyer, 2004). As rightly pointed out by Haynes (1995: 89) ‘Africa’s second liberation or second independence in the early 1990s involved a series of widespread political upheavals’. He refers to the rise of demands centered on democratisation, economic reforms and human rights, signifying the emergence of political opinions within certain society groups, which were subsequently transformed into fundamental aspects of political agendas, by professional politicians. These requests for democratisation and

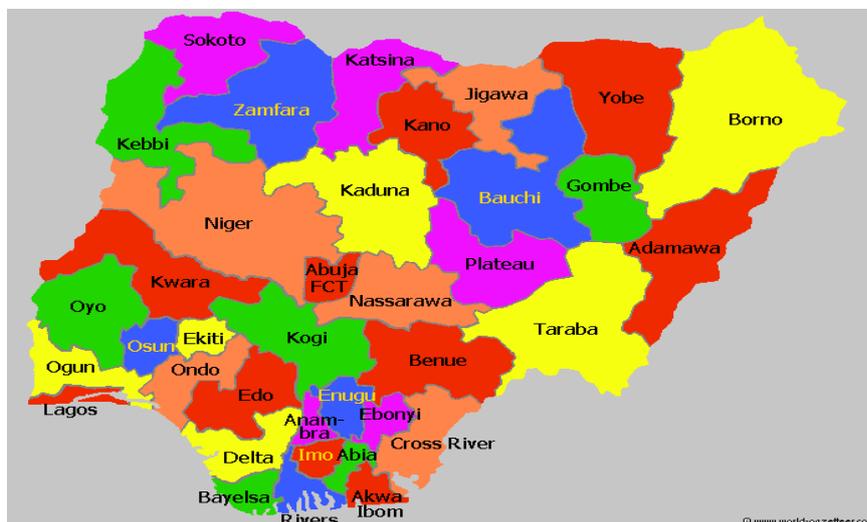
economic change in Africa, Haynes explains, demonstrate ‘a reawakening of political voice by dormant interest groups, inspired by international developments, whose worries were understandably aggravated by decades of popular frustration and disappointment (Ibid). As the subsequent chapters will show in the Nigerian case, the emergence of new leaders, such as Ken Saro-Wiwa, brought to the attention of the international community such socioeconomic problems and resourcefulness linked to human rights issues, that, had previously been overlooked by the state.

Conflict discourses within the African context (Nigeria, Somalia, Kenya, South Africa) revolve around the participation of youths’ in making claims and demands against the state employing both violent and nonviolent actions (Özerdem and Podder, 2015: 1). Özerdem and Podder note that youth as a conceptual grouping, are ‘othered’ in the debate on conflict, and presented as hypothetically dangerous ‘subjects’ and policy outlines them as ‘a problem (ibid: 4). Their engagement in conflict and resistance has emboldened them with power and potential, but one which is categorized by the state as marginal and therefore, subjected (Ibid: 6). This is why understanding the different forms of conflict which is a ubiquitous feature of all political societies becomes particularly crucial.

Nigeria is a microcosm of Africa with a population of over 170 million, it is made up of 36 states (see Figure 1), and 774 local governments. Politically, the country is split into 6 geopolitical zones, 1): North Central - comprising Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa, Niger, Plateau states and Federal capital Territory Abuja; 2) North East - comprising Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states; 3) North West - comprising Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara states; 4) South East– comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states; 5) South South – comprising Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers states; 6) and the South West – comprising Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states (see Figure 2). The three major ethnic groups are the Hausa in the north, Igbo in the east and Yoruba in the west. It is almost evenly split between Muslims and Christians, and endowed with vast resources (Walker, 2011). It is encompassed in a complex mosaic of ethnic, regional, and religious identities, all of which have over the years served as one form of threats to the country’s stability at one point or another. In similarity to some of its sub-Saharan African neighbors, the state struggles to contain political, socio-economic, ethnic and religious differences among its people (Elaigwu, 2003).

Nigeria is a large country in the West African region, covering 356,668b square miles bordered to the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, which are on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean, to the west, by Benin, to the north by Niger, and Cameroon to the east. It is separated from Chad in its extreme north eastern corner by the Lake Chad (Falola and Heaton, 2008). With over \$47.6 billion in external reserve, Nigeria has been described as the largest economy in the sub-region in terms of resources and other economic potentials, as well as being among the largest oil producers in the world (Obada, 2013). The 1914 success story of the amalgamation of diverse groups in Nigeria has radically depicted an arena of conflict and violence rather than a platform for peaceful coexistence. The conflict has arisen from the inherited colonial culture of state violence as well as the socioeconomic and political structures which exist today in post-independence Nigeria, in the form of the police and military. These mechanisms were exerted almost precisely in the colonial era (Elaigwu, 2003). Similarly to the former colonial overlords whose attitude to internal security barely acknowledged the genuine concerns of the subject people, the Nigerian state's conception of the indigenous leadership of organised protests is more of threats, against the obvious deficiencies of the neo-colonial order, which attracted decisive reaction in the form of massive mobilisation and the use of repressive state apparatus on agitators (ibid).

Figure 1.1



Map of Nigeria showing 36 states and the Federal Capital. Source: www.worldgazetter.com

Figure 1.2



Map of Nigeria showing the six geopolitical zones in the country. Source: nigeriamasterweb.com

The Nigerian polity and social environment could be disaggregated into three distinct epochs: the era of modern politics 1946-1966, the military era 1966-1999, and the civilian democracy 1999-date (Turaki, 1982). Alternatively, as Ojo (2006:466) adds, Nigeria has gone through fluid and unusual phases, starting with the era of colonial autocracy and absolutism that is, explained by Ojo as the period under colonial rule until attaining independence on October 1, 1960. Ojo identifies the next phase as the advent of constitutional democracy between 1960 and 1966, followed by the arrival of military dictatorship from 1966 to 1979 and the reestablishment of constitutional democracy between 1979 and 1983. He places the second coming of military autocracy at around 1983 and 1989 (Ibid:235), and argues that since 1989, the polity has added three more phases to her democratisation bid. Currently the country is in its Fourth Republic, and it is experiencing its longest uninterrupted period of civilian administration ever. From the attainment of independence in 1960, however, the Nigerian polity has for most of the period been afflicted with insecurity (Elaigwu, 2012:176) and escalating episodes of violent militancy to which the state has consistently reacted with military force. State policies in third World countries such as Nigeria are shaped by factors which include but not limited to ‘the nature of domestic political structures and distributions of wealth and income’ (Haynes, 1999:224). Burnell and Randall (2008: 466), establish that the 1990’s were arguably the most challenging periods in Nigeria’s political and economic development

in addition to events that unfolded in the 2000s. During the 2000s a country, Nigeria faced several forms of nonviolent and uprisings in terms of ethno-religious, political and economic issues.

Nevertheless, Nigeria, the ‘giant of Africa’ has over the years been caught up in recurrent cycles of civil conflicts of various magnitudes and outlook within a political disposition that has seen a rise in violence. Civil unrests of diverse dimensions and nature have manifested intermittently in Nigeria’s historical development preceding and since its independence in 1960. Despite the fact that since 1999, Nigeria has been in a democratic form of government, the conflicts have been on the rise and have become more militarized than they were even in the military era. Militarization according to Ross (1987), refers to the predisposition towards violent lines of action to the detriment of nonviolent modes of persuasion. These modes of disputes revolve around sequences of related episodes in which the pressure and engagement of force by groups is clearly targeted at the state (Mitchell et al., 1986). These conflicts have been delivered in different political, socio-economic, and religious forms, as seen in the Tiv uprisings 1960-1964; Maitatsine riots 1980-1985; Tiv – Jukun and Jukun - Kuteb unrests in the 1990s; Niger Delta from the 1980s, Kaduna and Jos from the 1980s (Elaigwu, 2003) and Boko Haram insurgency from 2002. Irrespective of their specific character, each of these conflicts could be considered as a distinctive study in violence, which have created reasonable doubts about the sustainability of the Nigerian nationhood (ibid).

These cycles of conflict and violent militancy have resulted in prolonged periods of unpredictability and uncertainty. Social development, for instance, has particularly remained very low, as money seldom makes its way into productive usage, a factor that has dampened Nigeria’s pursuit for stability, national security and accelerated economic development. Several of its worst conflicts pit the original inhabitants of a particular place against supposedly later settlers, exemplified in the Jos indigene-settler conflicts, which seem to be growing deadlier and more numerous with time (Sayne, 2012). In some parts of the country, particularly in the Middle-Belt area, there have been decades of substantial migrations, and these movements pitched indigenes against the settlers in the pursuit of control over polity and economy (Elaigwu, 2014: 23).

Factors which are often considered primordial such as the political and social arguments, have played major roles in the character of these conflicts, due to the country’s politicized turbulent

history, illustrated by the fear of domination of the Christians from the south by the slightly more populous northern Muslims at the federal level (Falola and Heaton, 2008). At the national level, the fear expressed by ethnic minorities of domination by larger ethnic groups might be illustrated by that of the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Igbo in the southeast, (ibid; Yakubu et al., 2011:38). The Nigerian Civil War (1967 to 1970) is an example of these ethnic and religious tensions, in addition to numerous episodes of both organised attacks and spontaneous riots targeted at ethnic and religious minorities. In reality, the existence of such challenging social forces and interests within and between societies makes violence an inescapable phenomenon in human relationships, where the dimensions and occurrences of such violence are often representations of the depth of social disagreements (Elaigwu, 2003). Also, in most of the conflicts experienced, soldiers had been drafted to repress the crises and restore temporary 'peace', overlooking the importance of restoring permanent peace between and among the concerned groups (Albert, 2003).

Politics, ethnicity and religion have generally been related with violence and insurgency in Nigeria (Alemika, 2012). The country has recorded several incidents of inter-group violence in the past decade all of which have resulted in numerous casualties across the country (Alubo, 2006). The frequency and recurring nature of such conflicts often makes it quite challenging to distinguish between ethnic and religious violence due to the conflation of the two identities. Large scale conflicts have resulted in huge losses of lives and the destruction of property across the country, with the highest frequency recorded in the north (Alemika, 2012). In fact, the contested nature of these conflicts has mainly been associated with the political elite's strategic employment of ethnic and religious sentiments to further their personal interests. Political entrepreneurs galvanize and sometimes separate ethnic and religious differences among the groups as a process of attaining political and economic power (Tilly, 2003). Another element is the implication of the socioeconomic environment in relation to the quality of life, level of inequality and impact of political repression especially of specific ethnic groups by the state (Lutz and Lutz, 2011). For the benefit of this study, the Niger Delta conflicts serve as the major focus, especially in attempting to understand why different people, the Ogoni and the Ijaw in the same region perceive and react to the conflict in different ways, some through nonviolence and others with violence.

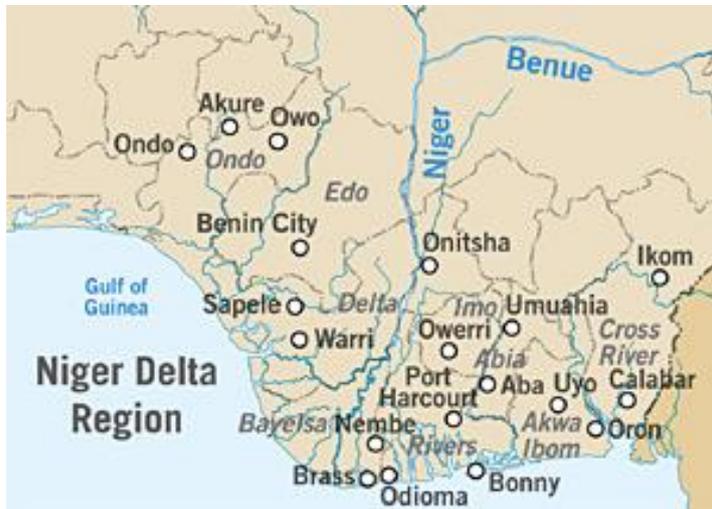
Within the Nigerian context, poverty, corruption and inequalities in relation to equal access to oil resources, education, health and other social infrastructures have all been presented as

causal factors (Human Rights Watch, 1995; Naanen, 1995; Osaghae, 1995; Watts, 1999, 2003). The perception of alienation and involvement in the management and control of oil (Ukiwo, 2007; Okonta, 2008; Ojatorotu and Morake, 2010), the lack of political power combined with the oppression and repression by the state (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a; Afinotan and Ojatorotu, 2009) and digested as inequalities (Obi, 2006, 2007, 2009; Ikein, 2009; Ojatorotu, 2010; Frynas, 2001) have led to several conflicts in the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta. Such grievances here are expressed by nonviolent civil strategies and also represented by several militancy activities against the state and multinational oil companies. These perceptions of marginalisation, neglect and domination are easily transferred within communities along ethnic networks cutting across all aspects of the society, resulting in the advent of a society thrown up and divided along ethnic and religious lines (Horowitz, 2000). This also suggests that when individuals in the oil producing areas assimilate, they combine new experiences into the existing framework, capturing culturally and historically dependent discourses that rest on social interaction (Piaget, 1985) which transform into discontentment, frustrations and conflicts.

1.1 The Niger Delta

Situated in the south south geopolitical zone of southern Nigeria, the Niger Delta region is that part of Nigeria which is defined by the delta of the Niger River (Anele and Nkpah, 2013: 53). It is a massive marshland spreading over a large expanse of territories crisscrossed by rivers, rivulets, springs and other natural topographical endowment (Horsfall, 1999:1). The area, rich in oil and natural gas deposits as well as flora and fauna, comprises of four main ecological zones: the coastal barrier sandy ridge; mangrove swamp; fresh water swamp; and lowland forest (UNDP, 2006: 19). It has been described as the third largest delta area in the world, approximately 26,000km (Oboreh, 2010: 17), second only to the Mississippi and Pantanal in South West Brazil (Anele and Nkpah, 2013: 13). It is home to over 606 oil fields, both onshore and offshore, with each field comprising several oil rigs and flow stations (Umukoro, 2010: 86). It is that part of the country that is solely responsible for the provision of over 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange income, through crude oil extraction and exportation, thereby making it the most strategic region (Ikein, 2009) upon which the national economy relies (ibid:8). It consists of the coastal margin and swamps which run along the coast from the East to the West that comprises the lagoon coast made up of the fresh water from the rivers and sea (Ojeifo, 2014: 17; Ekong et al., 2013: 42-43). The Niger Delta region is made up of the states

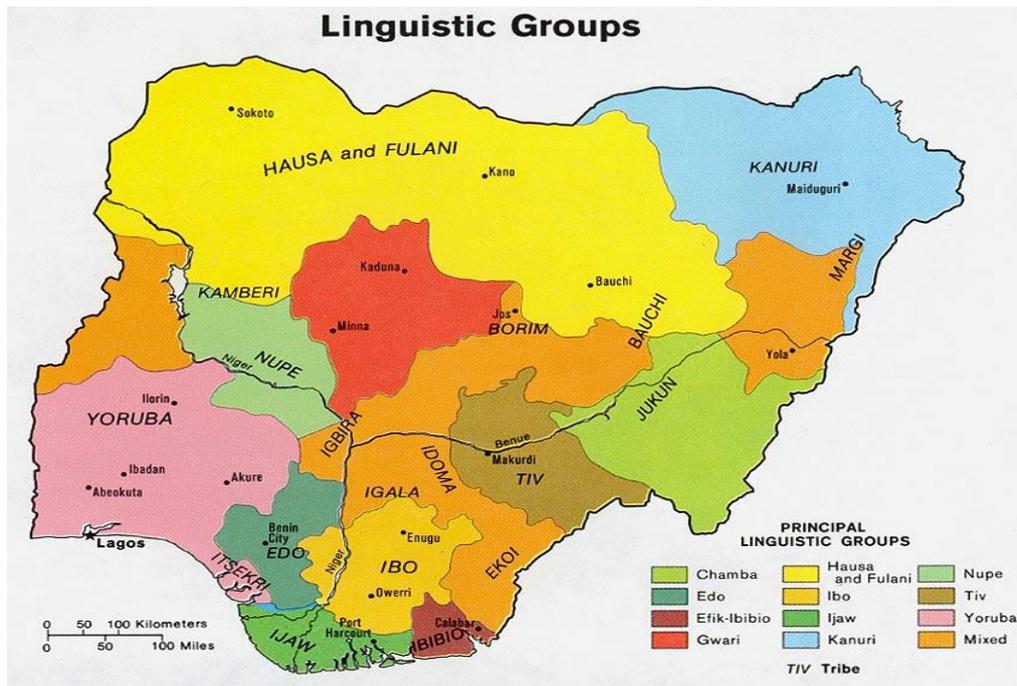
of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Rivers, and Ondo (see Figure 1.3). Figure 1.3: Map of Nigeria showing the Niger Delta region.



Sourcenigerdeltapolitics.wordpress.com and Ridgeway Research
www.research.ridgeway.pitt.edu

This Niger Delta is home to more than 40 ethnicities, 250 dialects and 3,000 communities (ICG, 2006: 26) it houses ethnic nationalities that include the Andoni, Efik, Ogoja, Annang, Ibibio, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Ikwere, Kalabari, Ogoni and Okrika, with some sections of the Yourba and Igbo (see figure 4). The Ijaw is the largest ethnic group and arguably the fourth largest in the Nigerian state (ibid). The Delta people are traditionally hunters, farmers, fishermen, and producers of palm oil.

Figure 1.4: Map showing Linguistic groups in Nigeria



Source: nigerdeltapolitics.wordpress.com

However, a disconnection occurs between the economic advantage of the region and the quantum of resources expended for its development, which has created structural imbalances in the area. The majority of the communities are situated extremely close to the oilfields and pipelines that crisscross their landscapes, which brings about several associated environmental, health and socioeconomic problems. Arising from this, the region has been characterised by increasing spates of insecurity and threats in addition to series of uprisings (Umukoro, 2010: 50) such as attacks of oil pipelines and kidnapping of oil workers for ransom by aggrieved Ijaw youths. The people in the region believe that they have been neglected by the state, owing to the perception that, they have barely benefitted from the rich resources they produce and the negative impact that oil exploration and production activities have on their traditional means of livelihood, which has been destroyed (Umukoro, 2010: 18).

Accordingly, the dawn of militancy in the Niger Delta has been ascribed to several factors both historical and contemporary. Afinotan & Ojakorotu, argue that these imbalances have made the region famed for constant violence, terrorism and insurgency, embedded within a complex network of creeks and braided streams, serving as operational bases of numerous insurgent groups (Afinotan and Ojakorotu, 2009). The continuous period of military rule from December 1993 to May 1999 saw the increase in demands for resource control and resistance in the Niger Delta. Prior to 1999, the military had control of the state under the leaderships of Major

General Muhammadu Buhari (1983-1985), Generals' Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) and Sani Abacha (1993-1998), and most Nigerians were apprehensive of the military, particularly with human rights trampled upon (Agbu, 2004: 36). The perception that very little could be done about grievances in the existing structure of the state saw the institutionalisation of agitations and demands for self-determination and resource control, which were misinterpreted as threats to the legitimacy of the then military administration in power (Idemudia and Ite, 2006). They were regarded as predispositions unacceptable to the government (Omeje, 2004; Okoh, 1996).

Consequently, in explaining the Niger Delta conflicts, understanding the various debates, such as those hinged on the occurrence of oil and the presence of multinational oil companies (Oboreh, 2010: 19), exploitation, marginalization and neglect (Ojatorotu and Morake, 2010: 5; Ojatorotu, 2010), paradoxes and contradictions of environmental degradation (Watts, 2008: 35; Ikein, 2009); Okonta and Douglas, 2001: 88) becomes very vital. The prevailing deprivation exacerbated by continuous ecological damage wrought on the Niger Delta has collectively caused it to be 'mangled, raped and denuded' (Kuku, 2012). This situation heralded various styles of responses from Niger Delta groups in the form of civil unrests, militancy as well as opportunistic criminality (Umukoro, 2011: 50; Anele and Nkpah, 2013; Ebeku, 2008; Okonta, 2008). The belief that there was little in terms of solutions that could be sought for their grievances in the existing structure of the state saw the clamour for self-determination and resource control become the order of the day, which were unfortunately misconstrued as threats to nationalism and to the legitimacy of the state by the central state (Omeje, 2004; Idemudia and Ite, 2006: 395; Okoh, 1996). These postulations indicate the existence of an array of distinct minority ethnic groups that have shared lived experiences especially regarding the oil exploration. However, the structural factors so often indicated as causes of the conflict are not in themselves sufficient to explain the course of resistance adopted by different groups.

Structural explanations are necessary factors but not sufficient for the course of the resistance (agency), so the thesis fits within the standard problem of structure and agency in International Relations, bearing in mind the shared relation between agency and structure. Structure refers to social relationships and shared meanings (Viotti and Kauppi, 2012:284) while agency has to do with the actors (ibid: 287). Viotti and Kauppi contend that structure can inspire agents to reconsider their interests and identities within an ongoing socialisation process, indicating that agents have a bearing on structures in terms of how they are transformed and shaped. Therefore,

agents and structures equally constitute one another (ibid). In the course of resisting against oil exploration and production induced environmental issues, unequal income distribution, neglect and marginalisation, oil producing communities in the Niger Delta demanded for a fair share of the revenues as well as right to self-determination and resource control. However, the Ogoni group, whose resistance peaked in the early to mid-1990's, operated under military administrations, and were thus confronted with the might of the armed forces security apparatus.

Nevertheless, the openness of democratic space in 1999 and the allowance of human rights, especially that of freedom of speech and agitation for better treatment, became more intense (Elaigwu, 2003: 16). This suggests that the transition to civilian rule provided an opportunity for grievances and resentments against the state and oil companies to be freely expressed (Alabi, 2014). In the quest for their demands for justice, some of the oil producing communities adopted a nonviolent civil form of engagement as will be analysed in the Ogoni movement, while some groups adopted a violent militant confrontation against the state and the multinational oil producing companies as in the Ijaw case (these will be analysed fully in Chapters Three, Four and Five). Some of the people in the region even regarded the militant youth as their protectors from oil producing activities, giving this youth some form of encouragement and legitimacy from their kinsmen (Alabi, 2014).

1.2 Towards Strategic Choice of Nonviolence or Violence: The Background of the Conflicts in the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta has been presented as one of Nigeria's hot points of ethnic violence, terrorism and insurgency. But within the unchecked violence and revolving criminality, in addition to the general ensuing apprehension to extinguish the conflict and appease the militants, the real issues of marginalization, environmental degradation and development, seem to have been ignored (Afinotan and Ojakorotu, 2009: 192). The unarmed and armed struggle, internecine conflict and insurgency in the Niger Delta have been incorporated under the general term of the Niger Delta crisis. The suggested core elements leading to the conflicts in the region are inclusive of injustice in socio-economic and political associations among multiple components of an ethnically plural nation, Nigeria. These concerns have been aptly expressed in what is now being termed the 'Niger Delta Manifesto' (Darah, 2003). The Niger Delta Manifesto stems

from the perceived inactions by succeeding governments to the issues affecting the region in terms of marginalisation and neglect which have pushed the communities to agitate and ultimately revolt against the state. It represents an argument which states that the resources of the region have been intentionally and systematically appropriated not only by the multinational oil conglomerates but also by the state through the mechanisms of exploitive laws that centralised the control of the oil wealth at the federal level. The manifesto will be analysed within the context of the 1990 Ogoni Bill of Rights as well as the 1998 Ijaw Kaiama Declaration in Chapter Five, the organizational chapter, to highlight the distinction between the dynamics of choice adopted by the two groups.

The core characteristics of the Niger Delta problems date back to the colonial era during which issues of equal identity representation and resource control emerged (Edozie, 2011: 45). At this time the Niger Delta and the Cameroons River yielded about half of Africa's palm oil and came to be known as the Oil Rivers (ICG, 2006b: 3). The palm oil trade was controlled by the Royal Niger Company¹, chartered by the British government in 1886, which subsequently became the most prominent trading company operating in the region. This monopoly of palm oil trade triggered a high degree of frustration among other British merchants as well as the local people who had previously depended on the palm oil trade. The company took over its African competitors in 1893 and instituted tariffs and licences in the area in an action which infuriated the local traders who perceived the takeover as hampering them from their traditional trading activities and thus instigated major resentment towards the British company (ibid). Consequently, these hostilities culminated in an attack on the company's headquarters in Akaasa by Nembe and Brass local warriors in 1895, who later made formal complaints against the Company. In 1900, the company involuntarily sold its lands to the British government (Anele and Nkpah, 2013: 14).

Furthermore, as a response by locals against the massive exploitation of the colonial system, the area was consumed by a surge in resentments against the colonial authority in 1929. All sorts of resistance actions were used. For instance, a rumour about new income taxes led the women of Aba² from the Opobo, Andoni, Igbo, Ibibio and Bonny ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region to directly confront the police, which resulted in the death of over 50 women (ICG,

¹ A mercantile company that existed in Nigeria in the 19 century, chartered by the British government.

² Aba women's riots in 1929 when women came to the forefront to protest injustice issues during in the colonial period.

2006: 4; Elaigwu, 2003: 3). The absence of political power as well as the frustration over the extension of direct taxation, which in 1928 had been forced on the men pushed the women of Aba to employ collective action by way of demonstrations to convey their discontent, against the listing of men, women and livestock by the then acting district officer Captain J. Cook (Ibid). However, during these protests which consisted mainly of sitting down, the security forces were brought in by the British district officers to disperse the sit-downs. The women of Aba were demonstrating peacefully not violently yet they were suppressed by the might of the colonial forces. In other words, even at that time, the incompatible and antagonistic disposition of the relationship between the British and the peoples of the region was characterised by resistance made up of different types of action, including violence. At that time, both nonviolence and violence were used as absolute tools to accomplish colonial interests (Ibid). The period witnessed other violent episodes as well, such as the 1945 Labour Strike and the Enugu colliery incident that are examples of the resistance of the colonised to the huge exploitation of the colonial system (Elaigwu, 2003: 3). These indicate that all sorts of resistance actions existed even during the colonial era, suggesting also that the interests of the British were concentrated on the economic exploitation, as well as on the political and cultural control of the people in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.

Coming back to the present day Niger Delta, the perception among the people of the state is no different from the colonial period, they view it not as an unbiased arbiter with reference to competing interests (Okonta, 2005: 205) in a region so rich and yet characterized by a crisis of underdevelopment (Ikein, 2009; Umukoro, 2011: 18). The concern over domination (i) resulted from a lack of representation within the Nigerian political structure of governance (ii) was combined with issues of tangible development (iii) exacerbated the perception of marginalisation in the region. These three interrelated factors suggest that the above mentioned nonviolent and violent agitations were exacerbated by the oil exploration and production activities that often resulted in unequal distribution of accrued revenues, and were made worse by the environmental degradation which pushed the communities to react, leading to periodic out-breaks of conflict. Meanwhile, when government fails to guarantee the equitable and impartial allocation of those resources, the people are compelled to react, especially in the form of youth restiveness and militancy. For example, perceptions of 'poor environmental conditions, deficiency in development and the reluctance of the state to attend to the demands made by the Ogoni served as catalysts for reactions in the area (Haynes, 1999: 236). Analysts suggest that such disagreements arise in the Niger Delta as a result of a clash of values and

claims over scarce resources and power (Yusuf, 2007: 237), and could manifest in either a nonviolent or violent form, or even a combination of both.

The Yunguru resistance in Adamawa, located in the present day northeastern part of Nigeria, for instance, is an example of a combination of both nonviolent and violent forms of resistance. The contention here arose out of the frustration with the imposition of a Hausa district head on the Yunguru people who they rejected through attacks on both the Hausas and the British (Kastfelt, 1976). Although Kastfelt argues that some of the Adamawa peoples accepted the colonial political transformations without armed resistance, others preferred to fight the new system (Ibid). 1914 thus demonstrated a resistance against a recently created administrative unit in which, political, religious and ethnic factors heralded a hostility between the British and the locals, which resulted in the loss of several lives including that of the Hausa District Head (Ibid). In the southern Nigeria, the suppression of the locals by force of the slave trade in the area was the core factor (Ikime, 1972: 271). The Yoruba anti-British resistance was fractured, not of a united people, as various groups within the area had differing purposes and intentions. It was the outcome of established political and other rivalries (Ibid: 270). The resistance was due to the breaking of the monopoly of trade that the coastal middlemen had benefited from for over the best part of the nineteenth century. It is clear therefore that the resistance to colonial conquest was situated within the politics of the slave trade, the Yoruba rival wars and the trade in palm produce (Ibid).

Arising from this, the conflicts in the Niger Delta could be regarded from two perspectives: the Ogoni example of a successful nonviolent movement against the environmental destruction of their land by multinational oil companies in alliance with the Nigerian state led by the late Ken Saro-Wiwa (Zunes et al., 1999). Secondly, the Ijaw national struggle for self-determination, which assumed a more fluid and radical dimension through its violent forms of expression. The struggle started under the late Ijaw patriot, Issac Adaka Boro (Ojo, 2009: 8), and revolved around the core issues of resource control, environmental protection and political marginalization (Naanen, 2004; Ojo, 2009; Orji, 2012).

The plethora of studies on the recurring crises of the Niger Delta (Humphreys, 2005; Obi, 1997, Obi, 1999, Obi, 2001; Ibeanu, 2000; Bannon and Collier, 2003; Asuni, 2009; De Barros, 2004; Douglas et al., 2004; Omeje, 2008; Basedau and Lay, 2009) point to resource governance as the backdrop of conflicts in the region. Decades of the poor management of resources and the

neglect of the people in the region have been accountable for this misfortune (Ezirim, 2011: 67). The conflicts in the region have been categorized into 5 major areas, intra-community; inter-community, inter-ethnic, community-oil company, and state-federal government (Onyeukwu, 2007). While this study draws on rich scholarly research on the Niger Delta conflicts, which puts the roots of the crisis within three contextual explanations: the political, socio-economic, and environmental as causal factors, it aims to further this argument by advocating for the inclusion of narratives, leadership and organisation in deep rooted conflict analysis. Narratives are important especially when the group is addressed by a leader, the leader usually has to stir up the group to make it participate and react by uniting around certain goals. This is achieved through group mobilisation on the basis of emotions and passions, which is what narratives do. These are reflective in the language that leaders use, which is why leadership and narratives go together. Leaders are normally defined as charismatic, they have to exercise charisma and communicative skills within which they organise their groups towards achieving targeted goals. These three latter factors are important for explaining the political trajectories of the Ogoni and Ijaw movements in terms of nonviolence and violence respectively.

Firstly, the environment marks the context within which the complexity of the Niger Delta has been established. The reason is that the discovery and exploration of oil (Ojeifo, 2014), which has been heavily marked by severe environmental problems such as the physical alienation of land for agricultural services (ibid: 67; Soremekun and Obadare, 1998). Kadafa (2012), provided historic instances of oil spillages and gas flaring in the region as seen through the following examples: Araromi, where the first oil spill happened in 1908; Forcados tank terminal in July 1979; Funiwa No 5 well between January 17-30th 1980 destroying about 836 acres of forest; Oyakama oil spillage of May 1980; Oshika village in September 1979 and Ogada-Brass pipeline oil spillage in February 1995 and August 1983 (Kadafa, 2012: 14). Due to the people's unacceptance of the existing situations, the impact of these on the environment made it practical for violence to be widely accepted in the region, with the exception of the Ogoni, thereby making intervention by the communities very important. They provided the enabling environment for collective violence to thrive in the delta (Idemudia and Ite, 2006: 400). Secondly, state failure is regarded within the context of socioeconomic factors, especially in explaining why development is not commensurate to what is expected in spite of the abundance of resources in the region. The economic factors stimulating the conflict could be considered along two nexuses: political-economic and the economic-environment. In

particular, the political-economic nexus to the conflict lies on the resource allocation formula which intensified the sense of relative deprivation in the region (Ibid: 396) .

The frustration and dissatisfaction brought on by palpable neglect in the region forms part of the justification for the Ogoni and the Ijaw challenging the state and the multinational oil companies (Ojakorotu and Morake, 2010: 24). A key question that comes up here is whether or not the Ogoni and the Ijaw are fighting for the same cause in view of the similar situations they found themselves in. Thirdly, the role of political factors are interlinked with state policies responsible for the polarization of groups, which accounts for the snowballing of ethnic and communal conflicts (Ojakorotu and Morake, 2010) from nonviolence as seen in the Ogoni movement to violence of the Ijaw movement. These are evident in the interplay between ethnicity and state formation, and the contradiction inherent in oil generated revenues. The display and use of youth for violence in the region (Omoweh, 2003) has also been widely accepted as a strategy channelled at attracting the state's attention to expected changes to its unfriendly policies and actions on minority oil producing communities (Idemudia and Ite, 2006). The state's reaction to both nonviolence and violence resistance, attributed to the military culture, is illustrated, for instance, by the state's strategies for repressing agitations of any kind, particularly when the state security apparatus utilise the heavy-handed military tactics, obvious in the engagement styles of the security forces (Hazen and Horner, 2007: 102; Bagaji et al., 2011: 40). The militarization of the Niger Delta conflicts (Ukiwo, 2007; Watts, 2003, 2008), as will be demonstrated in the coming chapters, has been credited as one of the major factors in the escalation of violence in the region from the 2000s.

Several military task forces, such as Rivers State Special Task Force on Internal Security; Operation Andoni; Operation Hakuri; Operation Fire for Fire and Operation Restore Hope have over the years been used to suppress demonstrations in the region (Omeje, 2004b: 431). These methods used in phases of deep restiveness are associated with the illegal procurement, acquisition and proliferation of sophisticated arms in the Delta. The arms build-up intensified the struggle between the restive youths versus the state security agencies (Ekong et al., 2013). Hence, the combination of the environmental, socio-economic and political factors discussed above, heightened the people's grievances and frustrations in the Niger Delta, and the different groups became unwilling to wait idly and instead decided to take on the state and by extension the multinational oil companies. Some with arms and some in a nonviolent manner. Worthy of note here is that not all the agitations and demonstrations that happened in the Niger Delta were

violent such as the Ijaw militant actions. For instance, the Ogoni struggle for self-determination was nonviolent: the Ogoni protested in the form of demonstrations, media campaigns, letter writings, international advocacy and boycotts, while the Ijaw which initially mirrored the Ogoni style, later employed tactics such as kidnappings, bombings of pipelines and direct engagement with state security forces. These will be discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

However, while all these arguments are valid and serve as the framework for understanding the Niger Delta conflicts, they establish a research puzzle on why two ethnic groups, the Ogoni and the Ijaw who live in exactly the same conditions, facing the same structural issues and yet made very different trajectories and choices in expressing their grievances. A unique question that stands out is, why the Ogoni and the Ijaw reacted differently to the actions and inactions of the state, why did they fail to fight together the cause of the region. The literature on the region is yet to fully address this, as all the uprisings are conflated as one. I argue, however, that in order to better understand the dynamics of the Niger Delta conflict, it is imperative to analyse the dynamics of choice in terms of the distinct courses of action taken by the two groups: why the Ogoni decided on a nonviolent course of action while the Ijaw opted for a violent course of action, as a means of expressing their grievances against the Nigerian state. This is because as shown, most scholars discuss the commonalities of the Niger Delta in terms of issues and causal factors (Ukiwo, 2007; HRW, 1999; Watts, 2003, 1999; Ikelegbe, 2005; Adebani and Obadare, 2013), and I argue that the conflict in the Niger Delta comprises different strategies, which are not one and the same.

1.3 Why the Niger Delta and Scope and Limitations of the Study

There is a common trend among people in Nigeria, that when the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta agitate and protest over resource control and self-determination, the majority regard their actions more as unfounded noise making. Yet when you read about the problems affecting the region, they tend to be presented as the same and, focus more on how these actions affect the economy of the country, and the media reports tend to be biased. A strong sense of misunderstanding and ignorance exists within the ordinary people that in most cases their grievances are not perceived as genuine and legitimate because the majority of Nigerians do not have the knowledge and understanding of what is actually happening in the Niger Delta. As an outsider, I decided to embark upon an investigative journey into the Niger Delta to find

out for myself first-hand what the Niger Delta problems are all about, and most importantly, why the people are reacting the way they are. And what followed was an academic adventure into an unknown territory, often described as dangerous and unfriendly especially to the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. The journey revealed to me that, not only was I lucky to have a clean environment free of gas flaring and oil pollution, but having clean drinking water and the ability to move about freely without pipelines crisscrossing my backyard among other things, made me realise the enormity of the challenges faced in the Niger Delta. In other words, to be able to tell a more informed and objective story. It is not enough to judge and assess or even condemn the situation from a distance, rather the beauty of analysing it lies in the in-depth exploration and understanding of the Niger Delta issues.

Therefore, this thesis will be of relevance to many academic, political, economic and social disciplines. As the subsequent chapters will show, it will have some impact on federal level policy makers in Nigeria especially in helping to unravel the dynamics of the Niger Delta, and at the same time serve as a guide to what to look out for when assessing nonviolent and violent conflicts. It will also contribute to the understanding of the complex nature of the conflict related actions and in actions of the Nigerian state regarding civilian conflicts, as these seem often to be overlooked in the theatres of conflict, especially in terms of the role they play in reproducing and transforming disputes into armed struggles.

This study concerns the dynamics of choice used by the Ogoni and Ijaw in the Niger Delta to chart their distinct courses of engagement with the state. As discussed earlier, the Nigerian state is challenged with several forms of conflict occurring in the north as seen in the Boko Haram insurgencies, ethno-religious and political/elections related conflicts across the country, and it is also not about assessing all the ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region. The Ogoni and the Ijaw ethnic groups are the subject of emphasis, based on the simple fact that, having coexisted and shared common living experiences, they each decided to embark upon different strategic choices of engagement with the state. The research encompasses the conflicts in the Niger Delta pre independence, pre 1960 up to the present day, starting with the nationalistic and developmental activities carried out by the late Ogoni patriot, Paul Birabi from the late 1940s to 1953, to the emergence of Ken Saro-Wiwa in the late 1980s up to the present day Ogoniland. A dominant context of the Ogoni struggle, as we shall see, is the preaching and institutionalisation of nonviolent civil forms of resistance as the accepted modes of engagement.

The Ijaw style of conflict was rather fluid and fragmented as later chapters will show. This conflict, began with the confrontational actions of the late Ijaw patriot, Isaac Adaka Boro who attempted the 12 Day Revolution in Ijawland, to the emergence of a mirrored version of the Ogoni nonviolent struggle, which was later hijacked by more radical and confrontational youth leaders such as Asari Dokubo. During this period, a temporary peace was brokered by the state for about four years, after which the region has again erupted into violence.

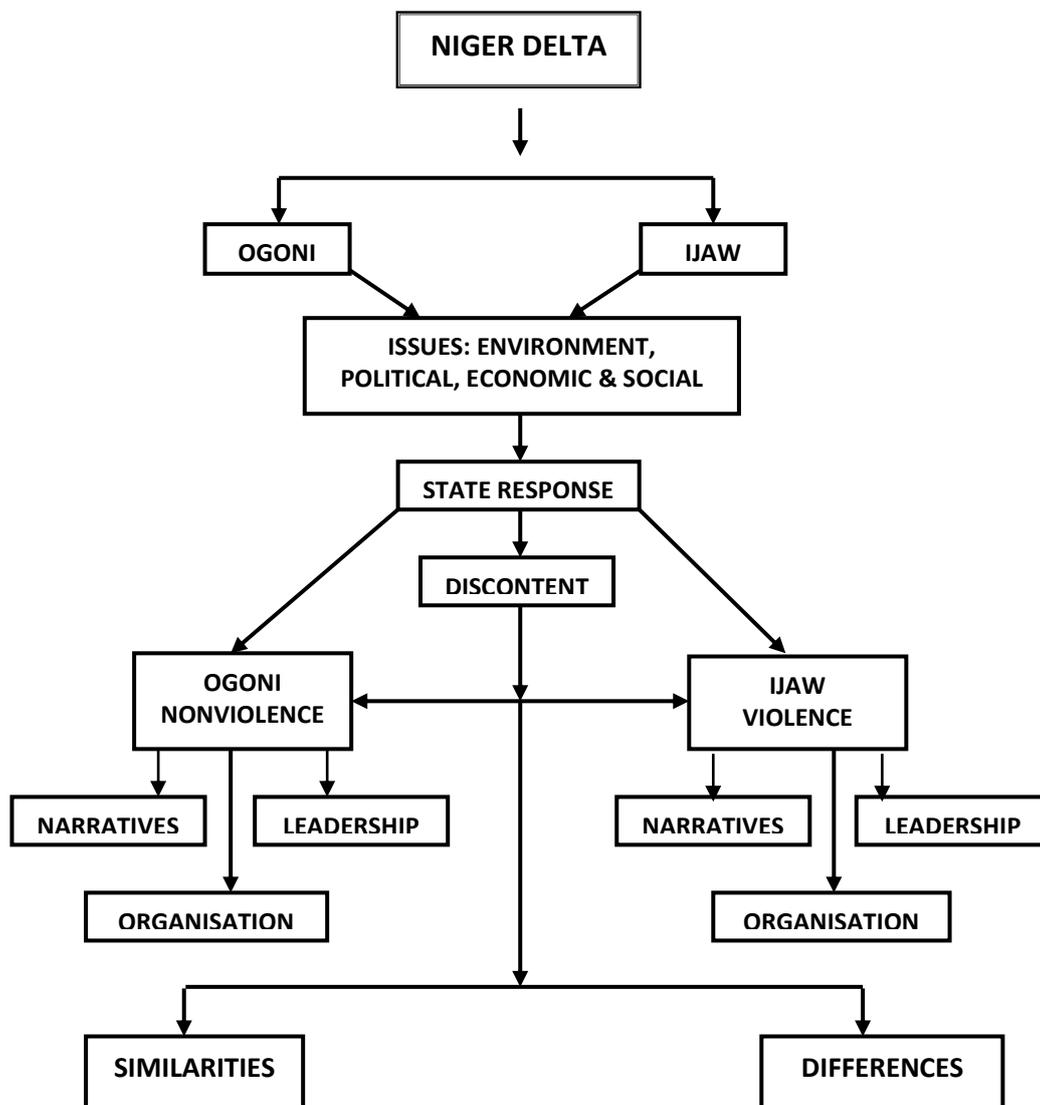
Therefore, to understand more fully what is happening in the region, the conflicts should not be generalised as one, but it should be insisted that, the choice of the Ogoni and Ijaw movements is based on their unique and historical occurrences and that at some points exposed the weaknesses of the Nigerian state that was meant to safeguard the lives and securities of all its citizens. Worthy of note here is the intention of the thesis to avoid the conflation of the two conflicts as one but rather to bring to the fore the similarities and differences between them. This is in view of the several resources such as marginalisation, neglect and oil exploitation, used to explain the causes of the conflicts, which unfortunately are limited in terms of narrowing down on the ways in which each scenario is different and context specific. A deeper insight into the different perspectives offered in the narratives, leadership style and organisational structure of the movements would provide a more informed understanding of the area compared to that of the existing literature.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is carried out over six chapters. **Chapter One** provides an introduction to African conflicts and a background towards the strategic choice of violence and nonviolence in the Niger Delta conflicts in addition to justifying the reason why a different focus on the conflicts is important. It introduces the unique Nigerian factors related to the Niger Delta such as environmental, socio-economic and political that are contributing to the explanation of why one group goes in one direction and the other in another. **Chapter Two** provides a review of related literature and theoretical framework. It sets out the conceptual understandings on the dynamics of nonviolence and violence in conflicts that includes social movements, contention, structure and agency and the construction of collective narratives as well as the methodological aspect of the study. It also introduces the key research questions. **Chapter Three** being the first empirical chapter draws themes together on how the narratives of the Ogoni lead to

nonviolence and those of the Ijaw to violence. This chapter presents narratives on the dynamics of choice between nonviolence and violence as methods of expressing their grievances. **Chapter Four** draws on how the Ogoni leaders preached nonviolence and the Ijaw preached violence. In this chapter, the strategies adopted by the different leaders are analysed in relation to nonviolence and violence. **Chapter Five** concerns how the Ogoni developed an organisation for advocacy, negotiations, and peaceful links with international bodies, while the Ijaw developed an organisation for armed struggle. The chapter also analyses the development and presentation of the Ogoni Bill of Rights in comparison to the Kaiama Declaration. As outlined, the three empirical chapters will be addressed according to Figure 5 below. Finally, **Chapter Six** draws from all the previous chapters and leads to a conclusion of the thesis. It presents an overview of the findings, contributions and recommendations for future studies.

Figure 1.5 Framework of the Empirical Chapters



1.5 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has briefly introduced the prelude to conflicts and resistance in Africa dating back to the colonial era where different African communities protested against various forms of rules imposed upon them by colonial rulers. The modes of resistance employed were violent as demonstrated by the Kenyan Mau Mau rebellion and also the Maji Maji resistance in Tanzania, the Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba resistance in Senegal as well as and the nonviolent resistance seen in the Aba Women's riot in Nigeria, and the South African examples. The chapter has furthermore provided a brief overview of the types of conflicts in Nigeria and introduced the Niger Delta and the nature of the conflicts in the region. It focused on why this research project should even take place in spite of the plethora of literature on the Niger Delta conflicts, as well as the scope and limitations of the study. The major objective of this study is to find out the reasons explaining why the Ogoni and the Ijaw, having shared similar lived experiences, decide to adopt different strategies of engagement with the state that saw the use of nonviolence and violence in the Niger Delta. The chapter argued that it is not enough to generalise when discussing the conflicts in the Niger Delta, rather, in order to better understand the dynamics of the Niger Delta conflict, it is imperative to analyse the dynamics of choice in terms of the distinct courses of action taken by the two groups.

The challenges faced by the Nigerian state in terms of various forms of conflict that manifest in the form of ethno-religious, socioeconomic and political agitations were briefly analysed and narrowed down to the specific nature of the Niger Delta. The agitations in the region were historically traced from pre independence Nigeria when people in the area revolted against the perceived domination and injustices associated with the palm oil trade by the Royal Niger Company. The trade in palm oil was the major source of income to the region before the discovery and exploration of oil resources in the area, and when a foreign company came in and attempted to subvert their benefits, the Niger Delta people reacted through the use of arms, which suggests the existence of violence even at that time. The chapter then moved on to show the linkage between how the agitations were demonstrated pre and post-independence Niger Delta in Nigeria.

Furthermore, in order to effectively answer the main research question, the chapter has suggested a six stage outline to the questions, separated into six chapters, with this being the introductory one. The second chapter will review existing related literature and how it relates

to the nonviolence and violence demonstrated in the Niger Delta conflicts. Being the empirical chapters, three, four and five will demonstrate the linkage between the qualities of the data gathered from the field work in relation to the arguments presented and how the existing scholarship supports them. Finally, the thesis will end with a concluding chapter six.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The literature review is structured to show the importance of understanding the dynamics of choice between violence and nonviolence when attempting to analyse the Niger Delta conflicts. This is because research into this topic requires the survey of such diverse literature that makes it necessary to examine theoretical concepts such as contention, construction of collective narratives and identities, social movements, structure and agency. This assertion is founded on developments along with gaps within existing literature which addresses the dynamics of choice between violence and nonviolence. This chapter is going to set out a theoretical and analytical framework that will use the theories to elucidate the concepts, it will look at these aspects to determine whether they had a bearing on explaining the research puzzle. It will also present the methodological aspect of the research and the main research questions.

The Niger Delta communities which include the Ogoni and the Ijaw, have been characterised by a commonality of lived experiences including marginalisation, inequality, poverty, environmental, socio-economic, and political arguments (Watts, 1999, 2003, 2008a; Ojatorotu, 2010; Naanen, 1995; Okonta, 2008; Oboreh, 2010; Frynas, 2001; Ikein, 2009; Osaghae, 2008, 1995; Ojatorotu and Morake, 2010; Osha, 2006, 2007; Ukiwo, 2007; Saro-Wiwa, 1995; Afinotan and Ojatorotu, 2009; Obi, 2006, 2007). Anger and frustration aroused by the combination of all these factors heralded the deep rooted contentions (Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000) resulting in grievances in the region that arise out of these disagreements, which have manifested in several ways. This is dating back to pre-independence Nigeria under the guidance of Paul Birabi in the 1940s from the Ogoni group, to the 1960s under the stewardship of Adaka Boro in the Six Day Revolution (when he attempted to declare a Niger Delta Republic). Then from the early 1980s-1990s exemplified in the Ogoni struggle led by Ken Saro-Wiwa and to the late 1990s as documented by the Ijaw youth Kaiama Declaration, and to the 2000s to date as seen in the armed Ijaw militancy. The introduction suggested that, as argued by scholars, the structural context is relevant to some extent, but the argument here is that these structural conditions are not enough to address the puzzle surrounding the dynamics of the Niger Delta conflicts.

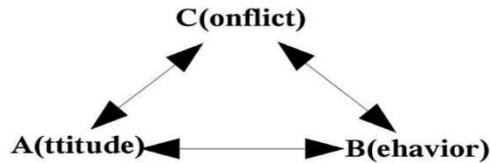
The research puzzle concerns why, we have two ethnic groups, the Ogoni and the Ijaw who live in exactly the same conditions, facing the same structural issues and yet made very different trajectories and choices in expressing their grievances. The dilemma here is that these two groups in those structural conditions behaved very differently, and most scholars have explained insufficiently why one group chooses violence and the other nonviolence. Therefore, the critical query here is, why the Ogoni group adopted the nonviolent course of action, and why the Ijaw went the violent way. This implies the importance of considering other larger elements in terms of the major delineations on the choice of strategies based on three key elements, narratives on nonviolence versus violence, leadership and the organizational structure of the two movements. Scholarship on the Niger Delta has conflated the two distinct conflicts, which undermines the Ogoni and the Ijaw, and the earlier presented structural causes are insufficient in providing a more informed distinction and understanding of the dynamics of choice within the Niger Delta conflicts.

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Underpinnings of Conflict

Scholars and practitioners of conflict resolution have different perspectives on what conflicts entails. Conflicts are presumed to be bases for solving internal variances in addition to being avenues of converting hidden disagreements into open tensions, (Ross, 1993). This thesis is concerned with the Ogoni and Ijaw ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region, who identify themselves as distinct ethnic groups fighting to retrieve their oil and gas resources as well as their environment which they claim rightfully belongs to them. For this purpose, the adopted definition of conflict is the one advanced by Johan Galtung and Chris Mitchell, in which it is described as a triangle (see Figure 2.1). Its vertices are constituted by goal incompatibility, attitudes and behaviour (Mitchell, 1981: 7; Galtung, 1996), and it is situated within a conflict setting where the parties tend to have opposing interests and objectives, and identifying with their own side, which will be demonstrated within the Ogoni and Ijaw cases. As the next three empirical chapters will show, how the Ogoni and the Ijaw engage within their peculiar conflict triangle, fight a context specific battle, one through nonviolence and the other through violence.

Figure 2.1 Galtung's Conflict Triangle.

The conflict triangle



Source: Galtung (1958)

Galtung's conflict triangle suggests that peoples' behaviour in a conflict corresponds directly to their attitudes, in the sense that attitudes in conflict situations affects the behaviours of a single individual as well as that of others which directly influences the setting within which the conflict is pursued. It provides a straightforward framework for studying the triggers and effects of conflict. According to Mitchell, conflict is any situation in which two or more parties perceive they possess mutually incompatible goals (Mitchell, 1981:7). This triangle model expanded by Mitchell and Galtung underscores conflict as an active course in which incompatibilities, attitudes and behaviour are continuously shifting and affecting one another (ibid), as exemplified by the fluid and fractured nature of the conflicts in the Niger Delta as will be demonstrated in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Coser (1956) illustrated conflict as a struggle over ideals and rights to limited resources, status, and power where the main objectives of the challengers are aimed at counterbalancing, hurting or destroying their opponents. Humphreys (2005: 63) goes further to delineate six rival mechanisms that clarify the correlation between natural resources and conflicts: (a) the greedy rebels' mechanism; (b) the greedy outsiders' mechanism; (c) the grievance mechanism; (d) the feasibility mechanism; (e) the weak states mechanism; and (f) the sparse networks mechanism. In line with Humphreys's theory, the greed and grievance thesis on the Niger Delta conflicts suggests the significance of an economic explanation as opposed to grievance based on inequality, neglect, and political marginalisation as causes of the Niger Delta conflicts (Collier, 2007; Collier et al., 2009; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Collier et al., 2000; Urdal, 2004). In contrast, however, Ukiwo (2007), contests the inclusion of greed as a causal factor, rather, he advances marginalisation and political exclusion, while, grievance-based approaches relate horizontal inequalities to socio-economic, cultural and political elements (Stewart, 2008; Stewart et al., 2008).

The grievance school stress the existence of such major inequalities as unequal wealth and power distribution, identity-based deficiencies, increasing social indignities brought about by unequal power allocation and subsequently incessant poverty that could push communities to agitate and protest against regimes (Gurr, 1970, 2007; Chenoweth and Ulfelder, 2015; Cederman et al., 2011). The perception by the Ogoni group that the senses of marginalisation and neglect and within other groups in the Niger Delta, exacerbated by the region's poverty could be used as an example of such grievance-based approaches.

An alternative argument to the grievance based thesis is that focusing on only grievance would not adequately account for the eruptions of conflict (Collier et al., 2009; Goldstone, 1991; McAdam, 1999), meaning that the strong emphasis on socio-economic and political deprivations is insufficient in arousing ethnic groups to protest against the state (Chenoweth and Ulfelder, 2015; Lichbach, 1994). While these historical reasons are important, Chenoweth and Ulfelder (2015) argue that they fall short of considering 'how people rebel'. Rather the emphasis is on the 'why', they stress that, to pursue change, groups choose either nonviolence or violence. The combination of the 'why' and the 'how' explain how groups navigate through the different conflict options available to them in order to achieve their goal, thus, the fact that the Ogoni maintain their nonviolence to the present day while the Ijaw have been a cocktail of violence and nonviolence serve as good examples of the importance of using different theoretical concepts to better explain why the Niger Delta conflicts evolved the way they did. Conflicts emerge when there is a quest of opposite concerns, purposes and desires be it by groups or individuals within identified social and physical environments (Otite and Albert, 1999; Forsyth, 1990). Draman (2003), posits that conflict is an interaction between interdependent people who recognise incompatible ends and who presume meddling from the other party, should they make an attempt to accomplish their aspiration (Folger et al, 1995). In the Nigerian context, the state's attitude to conflicts whether violent or not is that of management not resolution. Due to the recurring and fluid cycle of violent and nonviolent conflicts, it remains a question yet to be adequately addressed, if approaches to solving these conflicts are actually the interest of the state in most of Africa.

The root causes of the Niger Delta crises have been presented (Okonta, 2008; Obi, 2006, 2007, 2009; Naanen, 1995) as lying in the power dynamics that developed after the Nigerian civil war and as a result of the commercial political economy promoted on unearned oil proceeds.

Consequently, proceeds from the oil resources originating from the minority region profited the non-oil producing dominant ethnic groups who had the monopoly of power within the state. Consensus exists among scholars of conflict and peace studies that, conflicts cannot be resolved unless their root causes have been addressed. Root causes are distinctive fundamental causes that can rationally be identified (Rooney and Vanden Heuvel, 2004), and they are the primary causes of discontentment issues, grievances and conflicts, meaning proximate causes that are likely to turn violent in the near future.

Emphasis on the fact that conflicts should be acknowledged and identified for what they stand for and addressed was made by Oberg (1996). As the effective means of ensuring the non-reappearance of cycles of violence in their latent or manifest form, like it is happening in Nigeria. Oberg (1996) relates recognising conflicts to the identification and attending to the root causes of a contention. He explains that solving conflict efficiently opens the road to development while locking and suppressing conflict is a recipe for the eventual outbreak of violence. The significance of conflict identification and solution serves to avert another violent conflict (Lund, 2002; Ramsbotham et al., 2005; Cordell and Wolff, 2009). In a research article, Rodt (2012) argues in favour of the timing within which a conflict is addressed, in which either a conflict is violent or at a suggestive risk of turning violent in the short term. Similarly, Oyeshola (2005), simply refers to conflict as a clash, confrontation, battle or struggle. Accordingly, Oyeshola brings in four elements within which conflict could be viewed, which means that, on a general note, conflicts can be violent or non-violent in nature, indicating that they manifest in different forms. The bottom line is the existence of some kind of strong contentions of views over a specific phenomenon.

According to Tilly and Tarrow (2007: xi) contentions emanate in clusters, and relate to 'third waves of contention' such as civil wars, revolutions, and social movements, which are similar to mechanisms and processes. They identify mechanisms as events that produce the same immediate effects over a wide range of circumstances, and processes as combinations and sequences of mechanisms that produce some specified outcomes (ibid: 203, 214). Therefore, when a conflict changes from a nonviolent process into an open contest resulting in at least 25 battle related deaths, then it is designated as armed conflict, and these forms of conflict exist inter-state or intra-state, between governments and armed groups within states (Draman, 2003), as seen in the Ijaw group. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), characterises armed conflict as:

Contested incompatibility that concerns government or territory or both, where the use of force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year. Of the two parties, at least one has to be the government of a state (Harbom and Wallensteen, 2005).

As specified above, Tilly, Harbom and Wallensteen indicate the non-static occurrences of conflicts, and open up the dynamic demeanours of conflict which change its construction that have over time become necessary aspects of acceptable scrutiny (Mitchell, 1981: 33). This indicates the existence of boundaries between nonviolence and violence in conflicts (Demmers, 2012: 4). Conflicts are sometimes termed as deep-rooted, Bloomfield and Reilly (1998) recognise identity and distribution of resources as the core characteristics of deep-rooted conflicts, where perceived inequity in allocation coincides with identity differences. Where one ethnic group is marginalised and starved of benefitting from resources extracted from their environment, for instance, this becomes a potential for deep-rooted conflict. These types of conflicts have additional features such as their persistence, scope, and the tendency to recur are manifested through choices of either nonviolence or violence. Therefore, Chapters Three and Four will show the deep rooted nature of the Ogoni and Ijaw grievances specifically depicted in the narratives of the leaders and styles of leadership in the two movements and how they relate to the Niger Delta conflicts.

2.1.1 Nonviolence

Nonviolence, a method of engaging in conflict, takes place beyond the framework of normal political, economic or social phenomenon. It is founded on the perception that economic, social, political, and military power originates from the consensus and submission of individuals to the accepted rules and norms within a society (Merriman, 2009). Merriman (2009) highlighted six sources of power that leaders and nonviolent movements contend for and struggle to influence and claimed that these are factors that shape individuals obedience, allegiance and obedience patterns in society. These factors range from legitimacy, human resources, skills and knowledge, material resources, culture, religious and ideological factors as well as sanctions (Ibid: 19). Drawing on the understanding of the movements of collective action (Sharp, 1973: 82), studies of civil disobedience and religious thinking, Mohandas Gandhi emphasised the idea that nonviolence discipline is based on the strategic connection between mass political action and the principle of nonviolence (Schock, 2013). The Gandhian

notion of *Satyagraha* became a key method engaged in challenging perceived injustices (ibid). Schock explains that post-World War II, new nonviolent social movements appeared that were concerned with environmental and peace campaigns. Schock further uses the global South as an example of where several nonviolent indigenous people's movements adopted the principle of nonviolent resistance (Schock, 2009). Martin Luther King Jr. acknowledged the existence of evil and injustice and the necessity to oppose these through nonviolent resistance and non-cooperation (Crocker et al., 1996), which is a specific strategy advocated for by the Ogoni in the Niger Delta.

Chenoweth and Cunningham (2013: 271) define nonviolent resistance as the application of unarmed civilian power using nonviolent methods such as protests, strikes, boycotts and demonstrations without using or threatening physical harm against the opponent (Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008; Govier, 2008). Nonviolent resistance is again explained as a civilian-based method without the threat or use of violence to wage conflict through psychological, socio-economic, and political means (Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008: 9). These methods of nonviolent action (Sharp, 1973; Bond, 1988) were employed as instruments used to strive against injustice and oppression as witnessed in the civil rights movement in the United States of America's pro-democracy movements from the 1980s into the 21st century. In 1994 apartheid South Africa, Philippines in 1986, Poland in 1989, Chile in 1988, Serbia in 2000, Tunisia and Egypt in 2011 (Schock, 2013: 278), Madagascar in 2002, Ukraine 2002-5, Nepal in 2006, Georgia in 2003, Lebanon in 2005 (Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008: 8) and the 1990s Ogoni struggle in Nigeria. The fundamental awareness here is that you do not need violence to depose powerful and repressive regimes (ibid: 279).

Over the years, a crucial inquiry into major nonviolent civil resistance has developed (Cunningham, 2013; Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008; Chenoweth and Lewis, 2013; Svensson and Lindgren, 2011; Zunes, 1994; Nepstad, 2011; Schock, 2003, 2005, 2013). Scholars such as Gene Sharp provided a narrower and broader context of nonviolent resistance to include a wide-ranging category of such non-routine political activities that were devoid of violence or the threat of violence (1973). Paige (1993) argues that if nonviolent campaigns are to be most effective, they have to come from the bottom up; meaning that they have to be 'lived and practiced at the grassroots level'. He considers this as ignoring the legacy of Gandhi's *Satyagraha* campaign, as seen in more recent campaigns (p. 63) of the late 1980s. Gandhi, however, constructs a division between conflict and violence; he clarifies that conflict is often

essential and beneficial as a method of resisting domination and attacks on an individual's autonomy or that of others (Terchek, 2001: 221). Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Petra Kelly, to mention but a few, endorsed nonviolent conflicts that were organized to rectify injustices in whatever form.

2.1.2 Violence

Violence as defined by World Health Organisation, refers to 'the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation' (Krug et al., 2002; Nicholson, 1992). Ho-Won (2000: 19) has described the act of doing physical harm to other people as the most evident form of violence and he focuses on two types of violence that are evident in diverse social relations: direct and structural. While direct violence refers to physical injuries and the infliction of pain by a specific individual, structural violence relates to conditions such as inequalities, poverty, social alienation, repression (ibid), oppression (Freire, 2000) and genocide (Nicholson, 1992).

In the Niger Delta conflicts, both structural and direct violence have been exercised by both the Ogoni and the Ijaw. Bearing in mind the commonality of their living environment however, the difference between them in this sense lies in the type of violence they used in response to their conditions of severe environmental degradation, exclusion, marginalisation and poverty. Chapters Three, Four and Five will analyse the ways in which these conditions render the situation of the two groups distinct from one another. This distinction could be regarded within three contexts, firstly, in terms of structural violence it could be considered along the perception of marginalisation, oppression, social alienation, poverty, inequalities (Ho-Won, 2000); secondly, in terms of resources related grievances (Watts, 2008a, 1999) and thirdly, in the form of the lived experiences of both the Ogoni and Ijaw as exerted by the Nigerian state (see Chapter Three). This is going back to my research puzzle, relating to the question of why the Ogoni and Ijaw, despite having common lived experiences and facing similar structural issues, responded with two distinctly different trajectories and choices to the supposed structural and direct violence exerted by the state. While subjected to structural violence by the state, the Ogoni chose to respond using nonviolent civil protests, letter writings and international campaigns for support (see Chapter Five). They presented, furthermore, an Ogoni Bill of Rights

which was an articulated set of demands that they constructed. Another of their responses was the creation of MOSOP, which was done with the hope of emancipating the Ogoni ethnic group from the perceived state-led structural violence but which was suppressed by the direct force of the State security apparatus (Saro-Wiwa, 1992, 1995a). Chapters Four and Five will demonstrate that the Ijaw case, although initially mirrored the Ogoni case by releasing the Kaiama Declaration (Ijaw Youth Council, 1999a) and then by being met, similarly to the Ogoni, with violence by the state, exemplified in direct violence seen in the use of armed forces to repress the movement (Ikelegbe, 2006; Osaghae et al., 2007; Ukiwo, 2003).

The second context, that of direct violence (Ho-Won, 2000), for the Ogoni would be based on the repression of the Ogoni movement: on the arrest, detention and subsequent execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni leaders (see Chapter Five) and the suppression and crack down on the Ogoni leaders in 1993 (Chapter Four) some whom went underground and others fled the country to Europe, United States of America and other neighbouring African countries (Bob and Nepstad, 2007; Campbell, 2002; Demirel-Pegg and Pegg, 2015). Although direct violence is used on the Ogoni, still they chose to respond with nonviolent civil actions under the leadership and guidance of Ken Saro-Wiwa, which will be explained in detail firstly in Chapter Three that focuses on leadership, and secondly in Chapter Four that analyses organisation. The markedly different nature of the Ogoni and Ijaw responses to the relevant states' reaction presented a very intriguing angle in the discourse on the Niger Delta conflicts, which was sought to be explored in this thesis. The third context is based on the repression of the Ijaw movement and it relates to the use of direct violence on the group. Direct violence against the Ijaw is exemplified in particular by the Odi massacre which saw the displacement of the 60,000 inhabitants, deaths, human rights violations and destruction (See Chapter Four). Even though the estimated death in Odi is disputed, Environmental Rights Action (ERA) puts it at 2500 (Bassey, 2006) while OMCT and CLEEN (2002) places it at 1000.

The reaction of the Ogoni to such direct violence by the state differs from that of the Ijaw. While the Ogoni actions were devoid of violence, the Ijaw youth under the MEND umbrella employed direct violence against the state, exemplified, for instance, by the killings of nine staff members of the ENI SPA company in 2006; twenty Nigerian soldiers guarding Shell facilities 2006; ten staff of Chevron's Oloibiri floating production storage 2007; the attack on Shell operated pipelines in Nigeria forcing the stoppage of the production of 170,000 barrels of oil per day 2008 (David, 2016). The Ijaw, furthermore, also engaged in various acts of

sabotage against the state and multinational oil companies which included kidnapping of oil workers, and requests for ransom. The kidnap of Shell workers in 2003; nine crew members and four escorts of oil barges in 2003; nineteen oil workers of Nobel Drilling; hostage taking of 10 Shell workers in 2002 are some of the examples to this (Agbu, 2004). Ijaw youth have also engaged in sabotage activities in respect of oil based resource benefits, illustrated by the invasion and seizure of three vessels in Qua Iboe Terminal belonging to Exxon Mobil in 2000; the occupation of Shell oil rigs at Tunu and Opukulli and holding sixty five staff hostage in 2000; the stoppage of work on a Shell gas project and shutting down five flow stations in 2001; the seizure of Shell housing estate in 2001; sealing off the Chevron/Texaco off shore oil rig and taking eighty eight workers as hostage in 2002 (Agbu, 2000; Williams, 2000). Ijaw youths engaged furthermore, in bombing oil pipelines: the attack on the Agip Brass crude oil pipelines in Bayelsa state, the Escravos-Warri crude oil pipeline and the Clough Creek Tebidaba Agip pipeline manifold in Bayelsa in 2016. They also blew up Well D25 in Abiteye belonging to Chevron in 2016 (David, 2016).

Chapters Three, Four and Five will detail the desperation, frustration and anger in terms of the perceived grievances of both the Ogoni and the Ijaw against the state and multinational oil companies, and also discuss choices of different actions. From an axiological perspective, Freire (2000) argues that the issue of humanisation has been central to humankind's problems since the interest for humanisation points to the acknowledgement of dehumanisation, not only as an ontological possibility but as an historical reality (Freire, 2000: 43). Although violence has been characterised as the most austere and concerning form of conflict which warrants a significant level of attentiveness, some associate psychological or cognitive processes as features justifying violence (Cunningham, 2013; Elbert et al., 2010). The different choices made by the Ogoni and Ijaw leaders might suggest, however, that violence as a concept, might be observed from diverse perspectives according to which it may suggest actions causing injury or it may figuratively accentuate intensity of feelings and of words (Bulhan, 1985: 132). In a similar context, Galtung (1996) argues that violence is developed into 'unequal, unjust and unrepresentative social structures' historically, and should be explained as a 'situation in which actual realisations of humans are below their potential realisations'. He defined violence as,

Avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more generally, life, lowering the real levels of needs satisfaction below what is potentially possible (Galtung, 1996: 197).

Basic human needs represent whatever may be fundamentally necessary for survival and the avoidance of harm, and include whatever may be held to be absolutely necessary for physical survival, or for human dignity (Dean, 2010). According to Bulhan (1985: 135), additionally, any process or condition by which an individual or a group violates the physical, social and psychological integrity of another person or group amounts to violence. However, Galtung (1969), underscores the point that violence extends beyond the physical, the individual and the international, suggesting that anything short of these needs amount to conflict and violence. Therefore, in the absence of negotiation or in case of the failure to provide these basic needs, violence may be viewed as a mechanism of the de-legitimation of another, and could manifest in the physical or psychological destruction of the other (Paine, 2001). Ackerman and DuVall (2000), focus on physical violence deployed in revolutions, wars and terrorism that use tools of violence such as guns, tanks, bombs, and other instruments of physical force. Physical violence in the form of political violence could be expressed in three modalities: the first relates to violence by oppressed people in support of the state as in South Africa; the second is bidirectional and suggests violence in support of the oppressed people exemplified by the ANC in South Africa; and finally lateral or horizontal violence described as that between and among oppressed groups (Foster et al., 2005: 61).

Violence could also be considered as a social phenomenon within the context of its meaning and application which, as Paine (2001: 169) argues, is subject to divergent interpretations ‘depending, for example, on whether one is delivering or receiving’ (Wolff, 1969; Holmes, 1971). In support of this argument, Bermanzohn (2000) gave the example of the American civil rights era (1950s-1960s) when violence central to the United States politics became rife. Another example was the reign of terror unleashed by the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacists also around 1956-1966. Violence has been referred to as politics, specifically when contention takes a violent turn (Tilly, 2003). Contentious politics is referred to as,

Interactions in which actors make claims that bear on someone else’s interest, leading to coordinating efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are, as targets, the objects of claims, or third parties (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007: 202).

Such violent organized conflict as seen in the Ijaw movement in Nigerian Niger Delta (see Chapters Four and Five) diminishes economic growth, exacerbates social service provision and points to weaker human indicators when compared to non-conflict countries (Collier et al.,

2003; Stewart and Fitzgerald, 2001). Stewart (2009) advances the idea that incidences of such violent conflicts are prevalent among the poorest countries of the world. She highlights the plethora of evidence indicating that violent conflict in multi-ethnic societies (Basque region of Spain, Sudan Rwanda, former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Fiji and Indonesia) is not an unavoidable ramification of ethnic difference, an outcome of age-old hatreds, nor of an unavoidable 'clash of civilizations' (Huntington, 1993). According to Fearon and Laitin (1996), violent conflicts within multi-ethnic countries are not inevitable because several multi-ethnic societies are peaceful.

Contrastingly, it has been argued that there is no intrinsic connection between violence and conflict (Most and Starr, 1989; Celestino and Gleditsch, 2013; Boulding, 1963). According to Celestino and Gleditsch (2013), dis-contentment and conflicts sometimes result in nonviolent actions, implying that nonviolence and violence could be potential alternatives (Dudouet, 2013; Sandler et al., 1983; Shellman et al., 2013) as seen in the activities of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

In his book, Charles Tilly presents three violent vignettes: the 'cowboys shoot cowboys' (Courtwright, 1996) is a gunfight where the actors turn against each other; the 'villagers attack combines and landlords' (Scott, 2000) where the violence was targeted at the combines (harvesting machines) which the villagers felt were encroaching and taking away their wages and hence decided to tamper with the machines by removing the batteries, carburettors and fill the tanks with sand and mud. The third variety is the 'Rwandans slaughter each other' context, depicting the mass genocide between the Hutu and the Tutsi. Here, Tilly brings to the fore the notion that although these three episodes are distinct from one another, they share the common strategy of collective violence (Tilly, 2003: 3). He explains that for violence to occur in the three varieties, it must 'involve a minimum of two architects, immediately inflict physical damage on persons and objects, and result at least in part, from coordination among persons who perform the damaging act' (ibid). This implies collective violence based group rather than on individual activity, which as he suggests, is similar to the unpredictable nature of the weather, 'complicated and changing in some regards' (ibid: 4). Accordingly, the Ijaw and Ogoni movements could be regarded similarly to the three vignettes presented by Tilly, in the sense that although the two movements are distinct, they share also share a common strategy of collective action, albeit the Ijaw which is unpredictable employ violence while the Ogoni go for nonviolent actions.

While the distinctions between violent and nonviolent conflicts provide a good understanding of conflicts, but because the dynamics of the Ogoni and Ijaw contentions are framed within several issues, the Niger Delta conflict is yet to be adequately explained. It becomes crucial to make an attempt at deconstructing the reasons why one group takes up arms against the state and the other insists on nonviolence. Therefore, in navigating this transition from nonviolence to violence, perhaps what is interesting however, is the actions of the state related to how groups react within the story of the Niger Delta conflicts.

2.2. The State and ‘Political Jiu-Jitsu’

Sociologically, in Weber's (1965) words, ‘the modern state can be defined only in terms of the use of physical force’ highlighting the intimate relation between the state and violence. He cites Leon Trotsky, who argued that, ‘every state is founded on force’. Weber points to the fact that, although force is not the only means of the state, it is a means specific to the state, therefore, politics translates as striving to share power or influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state. Power is the essence of all governments and violence is by nature instrumental, like all means it always stands in need of guidance and justification (Arendt, 1970). Arendt sees violence mainly as a blatant manifestation of power (ibid: 35). The political environment within which groups in Nigeria operate and express their support or apprehension is controlled by the state, making the issue of national security paramount, as seen in all nation states. Historically, security is considered as the responsibility of states, but since the evolution of new threats, especially the September 11 attacks on the USA, the interpretation has drastically been altered (Fouinat, 2004). According to Fouinat, lives of millions are threatened more by violent conflicts than by the danger of a nuclear apocalypse. It has been firmly established as an important development issue that the increase in everyday violence and the globalisation of violence advances the recognition that violence undermines sustainable development (Moser and McIlwaine, 2006; Keen, 2008).

The contemporary understanding of security has transformed from physical security to include human security which encompasses economics, the environment, food and health (Özerdem and Podder, 2012: 543). The defence and security of any country would unavoidably be placed on national interests and values with special emphasis on its integrity (Vogt, 1996). The concept of national security is automatically biased towards the military (Wolfers, 1952; Bull,

2000), and by association, this school supports that once the physical territory of a state is secure, then other matters will spontaneously fall into place (Saliu, 1997: 12).

The conventional view of violence, including group or collective violence, is that it is irrational, deviant and a threat to the fundamental norms of a state (ibid) which are meant to be rationality, stability, and consensus on social and political change. The view here is that any group employing violence should automatically be met by suppressive actions of the state security apparatus. Moreover, when groups in Nigeria such as the Ogoni and the Ijaw who incidentally employ different methods of engagement with the state, come out to protest against perceived injustices, they are dealt with in the same manner, suppressed through the state security apparatus. The point of interest in the nature of state response is that there is no distinction regarding whether one group approaches the state through nonviolent civil protests and another that takes up arms, the state strategy, as will be demonstrated in the chapters that follow, is one and the same, through force (Wood, 2015). Therefore, when the use of violent coercion used to repress unarmed protests fails, an outcome referred to as ‘political jiu-jitsu’ (Sutton et al., 2014) occurs. This suggests that sometimes these actions backfire on the state and could transform such protests into armed militancy (Wood, 2015), as exemplified during the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria (ibid). Political jiu-jitsu is also evident in the Niger Delta movement in Nigeria as the leaders’ narratives in Chapter Three will demonstrate as a justification for, why the Ijaw militants took up arms against the state based on the state’s reaction and repression of the Ogoni movement.

Structural conditions and processes such as regime type, demography, economy and terrain (Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Collier et al., 2004; Vanhanen, 1990; Chenoweth and Ulfelder, 2015) correlate with political conflict, but because they evolve gradually within the traditional African context, specifically in the Nigerian setting, these conditions stop short of detailing the conflict processes. Structure based approaches emphasise the correlation between the organisation of states and violent conflict, which derives from violence inherent to political, economic, cultural and geo-political structures (Demmers, 2012: 55). Gregg (1935), acknowledged that, in some situations, the use of violence creates some inefficient and unplanned outcomes for the attacker. Political jiu-jitsu simply refers to the ‘paradox of repression’ (ibid; Johnstad, 2010), a phenomenon when the use of violent coercion to repress protests eventually backfires on the state (Sutton et al., 2014; Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Schock, 2005; Ackerman and Kruegler, 1994; Sharp, 1973; Martin and Varney, 2003), causing

severe, unanticipated, consequences (Martin, 2007; Nepstad, 2011; Martin et al., 2001). Accordingly, Imobighe (2013), points out that threat assessments are ineffectively dealt with by Nigeria and some other African countries in that, threats are regarded narrowly within the lenses of regime perpetuation and with an outlook on how to silence the opposition. Many contend that because these countries base their strategic response on such a narrow perception of threats, they have no clear idea as to the root causes of the increasing threats they are facing (Mbachu and Bature, 2013). In fact, McNamara rightly warned of the danger inherent in this simplistic, narrow and militaristic approach to security: ‘there is among us an almost ineradicable tendency to think of our security problem as being exclusively a military problem, and to think of the military problem as being exclusively a weapons or manpower problem...We still tend to assume that it is primarily this purely military ingredient that creates security’ (McNamara, 1968: 142).

Though not unmindful of the priority of the physical safety of a nation, Oberg (1996: 29), rightly asserts that security should also focus on immaterial items such as freedom, identity, culture, lifestyle, and the protection of nature, which are at the centre of the Niger Delta conflicts. Individuals yet to satisfy their basic human rights and needs can hardly be called secure, no matter how much weaponry the individuals may have at their disposal. The point of view of Oberg and other scholars who share the integrated approach to the question of national security is that underdevelopment and poverty are potentially as destructive as guns in the physical elimination of a larger percentage of mankind (WECD, 1987), therefore, non-availability of bread and butter are no less potent threats (Ebo, 1994).

Repressions by states could be regarded as warning signals or messages by the state to the protestors who are viewed as threats and deviants, specifically in relation to what Earl (2003:48) referred to as ‘observable repression by state agents’. Earl explains the idea as oppression that is targeted to the opposition and also to the general public with a clear intention (ibid) to scare or deter the opposition. But this is not always the case, the failure of violent coercion by the state exacerbated the cycles of conflicts in the Niger Delta and two groups decided to mobilise against the state. Therefore, political Jiu-Jitsu could be applied to the Ijaw case in the Niger Delta where, in response to the actions of the state, the radical militant leaders decided to engage the state also with arms. The Ogoni movement, however, maintained nonviolent civil resistance, as will be seen in the subsequent chapters.

2.3 Movements and Collective Identity

Tilly and Tarrow (2007) highlight that social movements are sustained campaigns of claim making by employing recurring acts that publicise demands based on ‘organisations, networks, traditions and solidarities that sustain these activities’. They clarified that, not all types of contentious politics constitute social movements, and these amalgamate ‘sustained campaigns of claim making, display of public performances; recurring public display of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment’. Social movements, therefore, are inclusive associations containing diverse interest groups (Tilly and Wood, 2009). In their study of social movements from 1768 to 2008, Tilly and Wood, (2009) described social movements as a form of contentious politics that necessitate historical understanding that will then provide potential answers to the question of ‘why these movements integrated some decisive features that differentiate social movements from other types of politics’ (ibid: 3). Democratic regimes are generally considered to be favourable political structures for social movements because of their relative openness, tolerance of opposition, and freedom of association and information within certain limits (Della Porta, 2013). Although Volkan (2001: 82), identifies the importance of the leader-follower dynamics as part of large group processes when he suggests that leadership is a defining characteristic of groups because members idealise the leaders (Volkan, 2001: 82) and thereby unite and recognise one another. He argues for the protection of the group identity as being imperative.

Contention in movements, according to Tilly, includes making claims that bear on another’s interests (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007: 4) in which ethnic groups in conflict are often represented as sharing a unitary identity and as fighting over a unified entity (Demmers, 2012). Ethnicity within the Niger Delta is perceived as a communal bond prearranged by nature. Ethnicity itself is socially constructed, and it has penetrated every socio- economic and political structure of the country due, especially, to perceptions of marginalisation and exclusion within and between groups.

Nevertheless, scholars of new social movements shifted from class-based political mobilisation to acknowledging new identities and lifestyles (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). These theorists’ have empirically merged political goals with more culturally oriented efforts (Melucci, 1985; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Touraine, 1981,1985; Castells, 1997; Offe, 1985). These further suggest the inclusion of more fluid constructs and they relate to ‘life politics’, the direct

involvement of new social movements (Davis, 2002: 3), which is another type of politics that focuses on situations of self-actualisation within the context of post traditional frameworks (Giddens, 1991: 214). In this context, apprehensions are amplified over economic structures in representative democracies, and over how they affect the quality of life and life styles (Pichardo, 1997: 415). On the other hand, scholars contest this claim by new social movement theorists' arguing that efforts to deconstruct identity are more critical in recent movements than they have ever been, Jasper (1997), for example, suggests the insertion of the 'legal' aspect as a significant difference in comparison to the civil rights and early labour movements which were concerned with full inclusion as citizens (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). Constructionism, as Davis (2002: 7) identifies it, places greater emphasis on the overlooked phenomenon of liaison in social movement participation especially between mobilising beliefs, ideas and identification in resource mobilisation.

Identity has been used to categorise the self and the other, and in social movements it is used in a plethora of ways to describe, label and categorise, but also as 'doing things', and driving individual and group behaviour (Demmers, 2012). It is the answer to the question 'who or what are you' which includes social identities in relation to the individuals and the environment (ibid; Volkan, 2001), that correlates with their shared understandings and representations (Tilly, 1995: 2). Because, identity is not static and, it becomes fluid as a result of social exchanges between persons, contentions exist in relation to what identity actually signifies (Appadurai, 1998; Kaufman, 2001). Scholars, such as Kaldor (1999), combine identity and globalisation due to the emergence of a new politics of identity as a result of the erosion of the modern state. She cites the examples of the decline of welfare states in more advanced industrial countries, the loss of legitimacy of post-colonial states in South Asia and Africa, and the collapse of communist states after 1989 as fertile grounds that advanced new types of identity politics (Ibid: 78). In this context, the concept of identity becomes very important as both the Ogoni and Ijaw groups regard themselves as having distinct group identities within the Niger Delta.

Ross (2007: 23) argues that although identities might be formed, shifting them within the short term is not uncomplicated. Identity issues comprise several characteristics that are fundamental to a people's sense of being such as culture, heritage, race, religion, and language. Hence, the capacity of deep-rooted conflicts can be worrying to states because conflict spreads easily among people who share the same identity. The issues in the contest are not only identity based,

but groups also become emotional over what ‘gives them a sense of themselves, defining an individual’s attachment with the community and defining the level of satisfaction of their need for identity’ (Bloomfield and Reilly, 1998), which indicates that individuals are socialised into ethnic identities (Verkuyten, 2005: 86). In the global process of mobilisation support for armed conflict, identity boundary mapping has been recognised as a defining feature (Demmers, 2012: 12). However, Volkan (2001: 79), notes that a ‘chosen trauma’, a term he uses to identify historical events, is a key element of large group identity (Volkan, 1991, 1992, 1997, 1998; Volkan and Itzkowitz, 1993, 1994), and it also links group members together. Movement leaders maximise chosen trauma especially in conflict situations when groups tend to heighten their identity (ibid: 88), associate fears through conscious and unconscious linkages made between the psychological description of a past trauma and a current threat. This process of chosen trauma amplifies the image of contemporary conflicts, so that it exacerbates the threat perception by members (Ibid: 89). This phenomenon becomes relevant in the analysis of leadership narratives in this study, in relation, specifically, to the analysis of how in the Ogoni Bill of Rights, Ken Saro-Wiwa creates more awareness by historically tracing the issues affecting the group before independence to include internal colonialism, minority issues within a minority and environmental related issues (Chapter Three). As the chapters on leadership and organisation will show (Chapter Four and Five), he was able to maximise the chosen trauma through mass sensitisation and awareness campaigns, where he deliberately linked the problems of the past to the situation the group found themselves in at that time. While on the Ijaw side, the fragmented nature of the leadership will show the mirroring of the Ogoni strategy but in the form of a youth conference and the presentation of the Kaiama Declaration. As well as a completely different method of expressing the chosen trauma by the radical militant leaders in terms of the use of violence against the state as the only way to solving the Ijaw problem (Chapter Four and Chapter Five).

Collective identity is therefore defined as an individuals’ emotional, cognitive, and moral association with a wider community (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 285). It is based on the awareness of a shared connection which, as Polletta and Jasper argue, could be imagined rather than directly experienced, and is communicated in various forms such as narratives and cultural materials (Ibid). In the process of constructing collective identities, the notion of collective memory is introduced, which has been described as an effective cultural resource exercised to build movement groups. For this reason, social movements are key to the formation of collective memories (Kubal and Becerra, 2014). These memories form a continuity with the

past, and are relied upon as resources of legitimacy and identity (Gongaware, 2010; Kubal, 2008). Social movements and revolutionary groups have been known to utilise memories for their cause (Isaac, 2008), as in the Zapatistas and the Sandanistas use of the memory of past leaders to mobilise present recruits (Jansen, 2007), and in the Niger Delta Ijaw movement's constant reference to Adaka Boro, then Birabi and Ken Saro-Wiwa for the Ogoni. Using collective memories to connect the past and the present (Chapter Three) has served as a motivational factor for groups, especially ones that define themselves as economically threatened, to take either violent or nonviolent actions to protect their own legacies (Kubal, 2008). Both the processes of collective identity and collective memory are established within a process known as framing, which according to Snow and Benford (1992) amounts to the 'transformation of old meanings'. They are real and not plain collections of individual memories (Kratochwil, 2006: 19). The Ogoni under the guidance of Ken Saro-Wiwa constructed themselves through a collective identity as a distinct ethnic group within the Niger Delta. The use of primordial narratives will highlight how the group distinguishes itself as a minority within a minority (Chapter Three). In the case of the Ijaw group, the continuous linkage of their struggle to the earlier mentioned Adaka Boro's 'Twelve Day Revolution' which they claim justified the turn to violence will further show how memories of the past still influence issues within the wider Niger Delta based on how they are framed by the group leaders.

2.3.1 Framing and Collective Action

Frames symbolise representations of explanation, that allow persons to trace, comprehend, and label episodes within their life space and the world (Goffman, 1974: 21) with the sole purpose of organising experience and directing action (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614). In social movements, frames identify and underscore the exigency and gravity of social problems, hence, articulating claim making among a range of various functions (Walton, 2015; Benford and Hunt, 1993; Benford and Snow, 2000). Though as Walton (2014) notes, social movements do not originate frames, but in some cases they are essential to the achievement of intended goals (Benford and Snow, 2000: 623). Genocide, for instance is a very powerful frame (Epstein, 1997: 416), so also are human rights and internal colonialism (Naanen, 1995; Saro-Wiwa, 1995). Saro-Wiwa at a certain point situated the Ogoni marginalisation and neglect within the frame of genocide, within the context of how the billions of dollars cost of oil and gas was being carried away from their land by the state and Shell Petroleum Development Company,

leaving the people without any benefit but environmental damages, poverty and neglect (Chapter Three).

Saro-Wiwa related these frustrations to the poverty, sickness, frustration exacerbated by state action and inactions which he claimed was an agenda of hatred against the Ogoni (Saro-Wiwa, 1992). This was exemplified in the mobilisation of the Ogoni people to collective action in the Ogoni Bill of Rights, which attracted the support and attention of the international community, and also in the albeit in a nonviolent boycott of the June 12 1993 elections (Chapter Five). Accordingly, interaction, interpretation and discourse are accentuated by movements in the process of framing grievances and mobilising support and in the building of collective identities (Snow and Benford, 1988, 1992; Fine, 1995; Snow et al., 1986; Gamson, 1992; Johnston and Snow, 1998). Consequently, in line with these ideas, Snow et al., (1986) note the emergence of collective action frames through an interactive and negotiated process where groups, drawing on and modifying existing cultural beliefs and issues, deliberately mould their grievances, strategies and reasons for collective action.

Frames are techniques of understanding how movements' employ, motivate and legitimate action, within the dual perspectives of the need for such action and the attractiveness of undertaking it (Ibid). Motivational framing, for instance, provides a call to arms or a basis for engaging in corrective collective action, especially the construction of suitable vocabularies of motive (Benford and Snow, 2000: 617), as seen in violent collective actions. These socially constructed vocabularies provide the motivational primes for engaging in collective action. Furthermore, recollecting the past amounts to situating it in a frame that gives meaning to the events, and by associating the past with the present, with individuals' personal and political projects. In this way, 'we prove our identity as agents and as societies, and recognise ourselves as the same, notwithstanding all the changes' (Kratochwil, 2006: 15).

The general understanding of collective action is that people have reasons for every action they take, but there are various explanations as to what factors motivate individuals. Gamson (1992: 111) clarified that collective action is mainly the outcome of negotiating shared meaning, which relates to Tilly and Tarrow's (2007) indication of it as organising efforts on behalf of shared interests, which, when successful, develops a connection between the identities of the individual and the group (Hunt et al., 1994). This position is supported by Davis (2002), who interpreted social movements as proffering novel ways of understanding contemporary

movements especially, as they comprise collectively constructed and shared meanings, interpretations, and identities. He suggested, furthermore, that they represent much more than collectively organised action. Tajfel (1978: 63), however, supports the social identity approach as the key to collective action, based on the distinction between individual and group based motives. This approach focuses on the relationship between the individual and the social environment. The degree to which people identify with their group clarifies the consequence of sociostructural factors on collective action (Mummendey et al., 1999; Tajfel, 1978).

The magnitude of a group's capacity for collective action depends on the visibility of group identity and communal motivations, but most importantly, capacity is enhanced if the group has genuine leaders who can bridge internal divisions (Gurr, 2007: 144). Most collective actions, including sustained campaigns of protest and rebellion, are shaped by strategic assessments and tactical decisions of the leaders of politically mobilised groups. Gurr stressed that although leadership, could strengthen existing group ties and provide a greater awareness of shared interests, leaders cannot actually create them (Ibid: 143).

On the other hand, Olson (1968), framed collective action as a social dilemma which relates to individuals participating in movements because of perceived collective benefits in the form of 'free riding'. Smith et al., (1998) advise that framing at the transnational level would be challenging because it must incorporate wider political, cultural, and social distances, which would warrant frame stretching movements (Bob, 2014) to attract the attention of international audiences. Frames, however, are important when analysing movements because they allow us to understand the why and the how, highlighting the point that, when contentious politics and collective action combine, claims turn collective and rely on coordination among the people making the claims (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007: 9). While this is true, if we accept that framing in movements serves as the link to understanding the past in relation to the present, then how do movements construct these frames so much so that they bring people together to act in movements either through violence or nonviolence in conflicts. The insight highlighted by this literature is that the generalised studies done earlier on the Niger Delta conflicts were incomplete without taking into consideration of how the framing of conflicts within narratives, leadership and organisation provided a more nuanced understanding of the distinct nature of the Ogoni and the Ijaw movements. Thus, on the one hand is the framing of the Ogoni struggle within the context of nonviolence and on the other is the Ijaw movement within a context of violence.

2.4 Narratives and the Dynamics of Choice

In a study on identity and social movements, Polletta and Jasper (2001), put forward an argument that individuals decide to participate in movements because they corresponds to who they are and influences the methods of protest they adopt based on their collective identities. They also advanced that, forms of strategic choice that had movement leaders choosing among tactics, by crucially gauging environmental opportunities and limitations overlooked the basic reality that strategic options maybe inherently appealing. They mirror ‘what we believe, what we are comfortable with, what we like and who we are’. Taylor (1989: 28), notes that to ‘identify who you are is to be positioned in moral space. Life itself, according to Bruner (1987: 11), is a narrative. He suggests that world making, is the primary function of the mind and he argues that life is a selective accomplishment of memory recall and a construction of the human imagination as a narrative (Ibid: 13). It is existent in every age, place and society starting with the history of mankind (Barthes, 1977: 79; Cromer and Wagner-Pacifici, 2001: 163). In view of their constructed nature and reliance upon language usage and cultural conventions, life narratives consist of various types of story plots, also referred to as genres (ibid: 18; Halverson et al., 2011: 14; Feldman, 2001; Jacobs, 2001: 225). They are furthermore, embedded in the varieties of human experience and based on the importance of language to the negotiation of meaning and the social construction of identity in everyday life (Davis, 2002; Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997). These genres offer a means for linking the fundamental meaning structure of a narrative to its construction and acceptance (Jacobs, 2001: 225), the genre of tragedy fosters an anticipation of failure and resignation through the generation of a historical logic of permanence so profound as to be constant. This was exactly the background into which historical accounts of race, class and urban space were narrated in the outcome of the 1992 Los Angeles uprising (ibid: 228). The Ijaw narratives of resignation and resorting to violent militant actions could also be considered within this context as will be demonstrated in the succeeding empirical chapters.

In relation to life histories and accounts and on the narrative construction of identity, sociology has witnessed renewed inquiries into the centrality of narratives as social forms of explanation, social processes in terms of storytelling and social objects for investigation (Davis, 2002; Somers, 1994; Maines, 1993; Griffin, 1993; Richardson, 1990). Narratives are scarcely explored by scholars in the study of social movements (Fine, 1995: 133), which is partly blamed on the persistent bias of theoretical elucidations such as resource mobilisation theories

that, with very few exceptions (Polletta, 1998; Hunt et al., 1994; Fine, 1995; Benford, 1993) focus on structural and interest oriented explanations to the almost marginalisation of ideational factors (Davis, 2002: 4). This is also evident in the literature on the Niger Delta conflicts, where scholars (Okonta, 2008; Watts, 1999, 2008b; Osaghae, 1995; Osaghae, 2008; Obi, 2006, 2007; Ikein, 2009) emphasise structural issues (see Chapters Three, Four and Five) at the expense of the delineation of the Ogoni and Ijaw movements based on agency or on leadership and ideational choices between nonviolence and violence. Nonetheless, narrative is a strategic kind of movement discourse and a vital analytical concept (Davis, 2002: 4). Different group narratives comprise of various narrative frames that translate into numerous meanings in multiple narrative perspectives within which an episode could be regarded, but which is contingent on the story frames they employ and on the ways in which these frames fit into the broader meta-narrative about identity (Feldman, 2001: 133).

Martin (1986) separated narratives into three groups, the first presenting narratives as a form of representation that consists of a sequence of events; narrative as a manner of speaking about events (as a discourse); and narrative as a verbal act in a social transaction highly sensitive to context. This supports the idea that narratives unite into a consistent relational entity of many contemporaneous activities and actions which may have been considered to be separate or disparate. This identity describes and assigns meaning to each of its components, and is simultaneously constituted by them (Griffin, 1993: 1097). As in the form of a collective identity, narratives construct experiences and request certain responses from their audience, they create the 'we' implying some degree of affective bond and a sense of solidarity and are used as foundations where social relationships are formed (Davis, 2002: 19). Such relationships transform the unfamiliar into familiar through social representations in narratives as collective meanings and attributes within a particular social grouping in that they establish frames of meanings in order to allow members to relate to the issues at stake (Foster et al., 2005: 8).

Distinct group narratives should differ widely in features of plot, even though their historical circumstances maybe distinctive, even when the groups are situated in the same contextual situation (Feldman, 2001: 130).

Regarding the differences between the Seminarians and the Apprentices' Bruner and Feldman (1996), importantly suggested that huge variations exist in genres even between groups experiencing a commonality of issues. The two groups frame their narratives in a rich narrative of events in time and space, in which the Seminarians tell a story that 'we are a small closed

group of actors ... who share a common theatre technique and philosophy taught by our founder and sustained by our leaders. We have remained faithful to our common principles', while the other group's story is a sharp contrast, in terms of groups trying to work out their own approach to theatre, each in its own way (Feldman, 2001: 130). As we shall see in the coming chapters, the Ogoni and the Ijaw groups fit neatly into the explanation put forward by Bruner and Feldman (1996). For instance, the Ogoni and the Ijaw communities are all located in the Niger Delta, all experience resource related environmental degradation issues, marginalisation and exclusion from the central state, poverty and such other similar situations, yet they tell their stories differently. Each group had different viewpoints on what was central in its theatre and different routes of relating to each other, just as the Seminarisians and the Ogoni see their group as established on a set of principles. The Apprentices' and the Ijaw in contrast worked at mastering different skills in different ways (Feldman, 2001: 130). The Ogoni demonstrated a strong culture of agency deciding the best way to engage the state, in the form of nonviolence. The explanation of conflict centred on narratives and stories, hence on the construction of meaning and on studies from an interpretive epistemology, indicating that human action is examined from within (Demmers, 2012; Sztompka, 1994; Callinicos, 1987). Agency based approaches emphasise that human beings and their organisations are purposeful actors whose actions help to reproduce or transform the society in which they live, thus, directly interfering with the relations of social domination (Touraine, 1977; Callinicos, 1987; Sztompka, 1994). Conversely, structure based theories view society as made up of social relationships which structure the interactions between these actors (Jabri, 1996). Giddens (1984), notes that where structuralism sees only the constraining qualities of structures at work, agency based approaches focus on the individual actor, he sees agency and structure as mutually constitutive entities.

Scholars of nonviolent action favour agency over structure (Sharp, 2005; Schock, 2005; Ackerman, 2007). They contend that, indeed, limited stable conditions exist that analytically establish if a nonviolent campaign can and will emerge and the possibility of its success. Generally, such advocates claim that competent nonviolent advocates can utilise almost any structural condition, employing nonviolent methods that are highly contingent and context specific (Chenoweth and Ulfelder, 2015: 3). There is a strong sense of agency in the Ogoni case to warrant a claim that these people did what they did because they felt entitled to do so (Foster et al., 2005: 292). The plot of stories involves both agency and circumstances (Ibid: 274) which indicates a choice made in terms of nonviolence and violence.

2.4.1 Choice

Rational choice theories of conflict places people as rational agents with options and choices even in conflicts in so far as the expected benefits outweigh the costs of rebellion. The adoption of nonviolence or violence, therefore, is regarded as the outcome of individual rational action. People act rationally when they know what they want, understand how likely each course of action will satisfy them and at what cost and decide the action that would be most beneficial to achieve their ends (Hollis, 1994: 18; Cunningham, 2013: 293). Rationally, an actor is perceived as a purposeful agent capable of rational decision making, but Jabri (1996), suggests that, actors' insights and analyses of the costs and benefits accompanying particular actions are motivated by the normative prospects associated with their roles.

Civil resistance tradition accentuates practices of nonviolent action, strategic choice, and mechanisms within which nonviolent action creates social change which is a prioritised action favoured by social movement scholars (Giugni et al., 1998; Amenta et al., 2010) due to the fundamental role of strategy and strategic choice (Mccammon et al., 2008; Jasper, 2004; Taylor and Van Dyke, 2004; Ganz, 2009). Strategic choice concerns the active role of leading groups in influencing, through a political process the structures of their organisations (Child, 1997), in which leaders decide upon courses of strategic action (Child, 1972). The ability of such leaders to make a choice depends upon how far they could preserve autonomy within their environment. Leaders embedded in social bases with strong vertical and horizontal ties use these ties to create choices in integrated organisations. New processes and new functions are built upon pre-existing connections among leaders on the ground and in local communities (Staniland, 2014: 26).

Decisions made by political actors with regard to strategies are based on three dimensions: legal versus illegal, institutionalised versus non-institutionalised and violent versus nonviolent (McAdam and Tarrow, 2001). Within these dimensions, movements engage in contentious politics in different ways, including peaceful, violent and occasionally a combination of the two (Asal et al., 2013: 305). Ideology, in addition to opportunity structure, resource mobilisation and grievance, has been included in understanding why social movement groups decide to engage in violent contention while others maintain nonviolence (ibid). When goals fail to be accomplished through institutional means, then claim makers embrace nonviolent protest. If that is also unproductive, then violence is approved (Schock, 2013: 281). Once

movements have emerged complete with organisations, leaders and members, strategic efforts to shape mobilising identities become imperative (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 285). This urgency is shown in ways that groups act together in pursuit of shared interests (Tilly, 1984: 11).

2.4.2 Narratives and Violence

Narratives, specifically those detailing political violence and painful pasts, could be regarded within three frames of connotations; the main actor, the event and the socio-political context of the event (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2001: 253). Vinitzky-Seroussi cites the examples of American soldiers killed in Vietnam, Jews murdered in concentration camps, and the death of Yitzhak Rabin and, while including the second frame of meaning, she alters the focus in the examples to the Vietnam War, World War II and Rabin's assassination. Incorporating the third frame, she denotes recognition and consequences of American foreign policy in Vietnam; racist ideology of Nazi Germany; and the tussle between ethno-religious versus civil definitions of collective identity in Israel (Ibid).

Violence within the perspectives of the Ijaw youth is only considered adequate when it is narratively constructed as indispensable and unavoidable by aggrieved groups. The motivations and qualities of the perpetrator and recipient of violence are framed within a narrative that justifies the inevitable necessity for confrontation (Smith, 1997: 97-98). This shows that discourse plays a major role in the legitimization of action. In his 1996 study of the legitimization of violence, Apter (1996: 2) concisely contended that people do not commit political violence without discourse, they need to talk themselves into it. In other words, for violence to start, it has to become imaginable first (Schroder and Schmidt, 2001: 2). Origins of violence could be located in the constellations of interactions between groups, ideologies and juxtaposed positioning's which rise in the toxic mix (Foster et al., 2005: 66; Huggins et al., 2002: 182), and these precarious combinations then interlock and resonate to engender violent tendencies (Foster, 2000: 9). Victims may also be perpetrators of violence (Foster et al., 2005: 4). Violent imaginaries play a central role in the construction of the historicity of present day confrontations encouraging a hegemonic solidarity among the groups, which is achieved through their participation in narratives. These narratives incite members to perceive and support the violent course of action that their leaders presented to them as legitimate and justified (Schroder and Schmidt, 2001: 9; Demmers, 2012: 132).

Such is the case in Nigeria, where the majority of the peoples in the Niger Delta are not satisfied with the way things are being done (Ukiwo, 2007; Okonta, 2008). This is particularly true in the area of resource governance, which has led to several violent conflicts of protest, leading to the rise in militancy and insurgencies (Ibid). Militancy is expressed not only in violence but also in words (Falola, 1998). Though some militants resort to direct violent action, by no means do all of them do so, contrary to what is popularly believed. Some militants are ethically and religiously exclusive and intolerant while others are not (ibid, Falola, 1996, p.81). Such imageries are replicated through a complex and multidimensional dynamics of group interaction (Ukiwo, 2007). Strong rationales must exist to guide otherwise sane individuals to agree that grave violence is the right thing to do (Corman, 2016: 9). Schroder and Schmidt (2001), ground their understanding of legitimacy on Weber's (1973) explanation which states that a social order is accepted as valid due either to its historicity, emotional value or instrumental reasoning (Demmers, 2012). The employment of discourse unfreezes overlooked versions of reality and reveals the ways in which they contribute to or challenge particular power relations (Foster et al., 2005: 275). Critics of discourse theory, at the same time, maintain that explaining ways by means of which violence is legitimised is not the same as accounting for its actual outbreak, as when compared to rational choice theory or the human needs theory, it fails to highlight the how and why of the concrete action itself.

Terrorism is another form of action that involves the use or threat of violence as a process of trying to achieve some sort of impact within a political context (Horgan, 2005: 1), and it is also referred to as political violence. It appears due to extremely complex and heterogeneous combination of sociocultural, psychological and political factors (Tololyan, 1989: 99), it is a creature of its own time and place (Cooper, 1985: 95). Abrahms (2008: 94), notes that people partake in terrorist organisations for the social solidarity irrespective of their political return, and their goal is mainly to create links with other members not the sole aim of realising the organisation's agenda. Narratives are also used in such situations to establish the type of social solidarity needed to advance their cause. Terrorist motivation involves the need to belong to a group which becomes strategic to identity formation in the terrorist (Kaplan, 1981). This, as Gomel (2003: 44) notes, constitutes the only way a terrorist can make sense of his own actions, by identifying with a society that sees him as a frightening and incomprehensible other. In order to exist, terrorist groups also rely on some form of leadership; here we can consider the IRA leadership structure which has over the years remained intact (Horgan, 2005).

The frustration-aggression hypothesis has been used to explain that minority group movements' turn to violence due to having an under privileged, disadvantaged status and an aggressive response to a failure to have their grievances resolved (Friedland, 1992). In line with this, Tittmar (1992: 65) attempted to situate terrorism also within the frustration-aggression thesis which, according to Berkowitz (1965), relates the response to the frustration or obstruction of the realisation of an individual's personal or environmental goals. Violence could perhaps be integrated into the discourse of domination since it becomes a signifying activity, representing something other than itself, the victory of an ideology, or the might of a state (Gomel, 2003: 7). It is, however not a rational tactical thinking but, rather, a substitute type of rationality or, built in narrative that varies in consistency with the stories that the terrorists and their sympathisers believe to be true (Corman, 2016: 17). For contemporary terrorists, this made it possible through the process of vertical integration within which master narratives on socio-cultural or religious stories are employed, to translate and connect events in the here and now (ibid). All members of a group share the mental representations of the tragedies that have befallen the group (Volkan, 2001: 87).

Historical reflections help people become aware of the dialectic of choice in which the past is recollected and joined with the future by means of a political project in the present (Kratochwil, 2006: 8). Historical awareness clearly indicates that not everything is possible, as disagreements are rife, collective action problems abound, dilemmas are real and institutions are sticky. Historical reflection does not provide us with a warrant to engage in fantasies of omnipotence solely because the necessities to be confronted turn out to be most man made. Such a reflection is, nevertheless, the precondition for a proper appreciation of action and agency (ibid).

With the above theoretical discussions in mind, I shall now develop my own approach to addressing the main **Research Objective**: to examine the reasons why two ethnic groups, the Ogoni and the Ijaw, who live in exactly the same conditions and face the same structural issues, nevertheless made very different choices and trajectories of actions in expressing their grievances.

2.5 Research Questions

1. Why did the Ogoni adopt nonviolence as a means of expressing their grievances while the Ijaw opted for a violent course of action?
2. What role did the leaders of the two groups play in determining the strategy adopted in relation to the profile, nature and character of the rebellion?
3. How important were the collective narratives developed by the two groups in accounting for the different trajectories in fighting the Nigerian state?
4. Did the two groups organize themselves in ways which reinforced their strategic choices in relation to nonviolence and violence?

In order to answer the research questions, the thesis will examine,

1. The collective narratives developed by the leaders of different ethnic groups in the Niger Delta, particularly the Ijaw and the Ogoni;
2. The strategic choices and different courses of action taken by the leaders to express their groups' grievances and frustrations against the Nigerian state and the reasons for those choices.
3. The outcomes that led to the transition from a nonviolent to a violent situation in the case of the Ijaw.

These will be analysed within the following sub-points:

- A. Narratives on nonviolence versus violence.
- B. Nature and goals of the leadership within the Ogoni and the Ijaw movements.
- C. The organizational structure of the Ogoni and Ijaw movements.

The objectives of this research project are (1) to analyse the collective narratives developed by the leaders of different ethnic groups in the Niger Delta, particularly the Ijaw and the Ogoni, with the hope of providing a broader perspective on the emergence and management of violence in the Niger Delta. (2) To understand the strategic choices and different courses of action taken by the leaders to express their groups' grievances and frustrations against the Nigerian state and the reasons for those choices. (3) To highlight the outcomes that led to the transformation of the Ijaw movement from a nonviolent to a violent posture. The emphasis on

acceptance and understanding of dominant narratives preached by group leaderships facilitates easy mobilisation of members, although the dominant narratives are sometimes flexible with the consideration of challenging new narratives (Ross, 2007).

Within the context of this study, I understand that the questions of ‘why did the Ogoni adopt nonviolence as a means of expressing their grievances while the Ijaw opted for a violent course of action’; and ‘what role did the leaders of the two groups play in determining the strategy adopted in relation to the profile, nature and character of the rebellion’, will involve the extended analyses of the choices made by leaders in relation to nonviolence and violence. The application of narratives, leadership style and the organisation of the movements will be scrutinised in detail, precisely because, in the context of this project these are understood to contribute significantly to the creation of a dynamics of choices. This thesis uphold furthermore, that choices are important in particular to the framing of narratives and collective identities rather than the unspoken intentions of a leader. Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to make claims about the dynamics of choice in the emergence of nonviolent and violent responses that have emerged within the Niger Delta conflict with respect to the Ogoni and Ijaw ethnic groups. Based on the literature review, this chapter contends that the core of understanding the complexity and distinctiveness of the two movements lies in an analytical framework with a much narrower set of perspectives: the processes and mechanisms employed by the two sets of leaders in charting a course of action specific to their group will be examined in great detail. In this respect, the three empirical chapters (Three, Four and Five) will align more closely with how movement leaderships construct conflict through the formation of collective identities and actions, the framing of narratives, the style of leadership and specifically, how the organisation of the Ogoni and Ijaw movements against the state relate to nonviolence and violence respectively.

2.6 Methodology

In the course of the literature review, it became obvious that if the studies that seek to explore and gain deep understanding of why ethnic groups that share similar lived experiences and environments choose different steps in seeking solutions to their problems are based on the premise that require the conviction that the human world is an artifice, then the actors’ perceptions of their actions should be of importance (Kratochwil, 2006: 86). A crucial part of

the current thesis uses social constructivism as a framework of focusing on what we know and how we know it (ibid: 80). Kratochwil contends, furthermore, that constructivism is symbolised by clear ontological ideas regarding human action or praxis, as well as forwarding the understanding that meaning is use and that interaction among a group of persons is governed by conventions (ibid, Kratochwil, 2015: 25). According to Adler (1997:319), constructivism occupies the middle ground between rationalist approaches (realist or liberal) and interpretive approaches (poststructuralist, critical and postmodernist) and it finds new areas for theoretical and empirical study. Jorgensen (2015: 37) goes further by characterising constructivism along four different levels of reasoning, such as the philosophy of science, metatheory, theory and empirical analysis. Of these, empirical analysis was identified as key to the future of constructivism (Jorgensen, 2000; Keohane, 1988; Goldstein and Keohane, 1993) in terms of the latter's ability to provide empirical studies which would give constructivism a form of legitimacy as a theory (Jorgensen, 2015: 51). In international relations, things simply exist as results of human acts of conception that occur within a 'cultural, historical and political context of meaning' because, as social facts, they happen because of the worth and meaning ascribed to them (Fierke, 2016: 182).

Constructivism advances an idea about the position of human consciousness in international relations (Ruggie, 1998:856), suggesting that the construction of the human world happens within the actions and activities of actors themselves (Kratochwil, 2015: 17). Based on the clear inter-subjective aspect of human action, a constructivist investigation displays the configurations of how actors recognise what forms of actions are worthwhile, vital and applicable (Ruggie, 1998: 856) thereby shaping their identities and interests in relation to social structures (Wendt, 1994: 358; Adler, 1997: 322). Reasons for people's actions, according to Adler (1997), are 'causes' (Davidson, 1963) which indicate that when individuals act, they do so based on one origin or another when regarded from a constructivist approach. Furthermore, the idea of reacting or undertaking actions for reasons signifies applying an understanding of 'what is called for' within a set of situations (Giddens, 1984: 345). This suggests a link between the identification of an underlying bond between ideas and material relations (Fierke, 2015: 121). Although not in alignment with an accurately comprehensible world, constructivism endeavours, however, to depict the types of historical and culturally reliant communications that are contingent on social relations. Social constructivism symbolises an interest of social facts in international political life (Fearon and Wendt, 2002), making it a particularly suitable framework for the present study of the dynamics of choice in the Niger Delta conflicts due to

its potential to incorporate other vital features. Therefore, social constructivism is particularly relevant when explaining the adoption by individual group leaders of nonviolence versus violence as the key to understanding the choice between two distinct courses of action (Fierke, 2015: 118).

Such an understanding is important especially in appreciating how, in the process of reacting to similar structural issues groups change from one strategy to another (Fierke, 2015: 124) . The emphasis here is based on those collective understandings that represent the relevant facts and not merely observations constituted out of meanings that the Ogoni and the Ijaw have brought to their interactions (ibid: 192). These are in terms of the structural characteristics that ideas have as they serve as the medium and propellant of social action (Adler, 1997: 325). While searching for explanations in a variety of contexts, researchers must be mindful of the techniques they employ to avoid claiming that only one type of explanation fits all (Adler, 2008). Accordingly, in its analysis of the Niger Delta conflicts, this study employs a multi-case studies approach as the most practicable method in which to arrive at answers in relation to the research questions and puzzle. While decried for being instinctive, old and unmanageable (Miles, 1979: 597), the case study approach is nevertheless a critical tool for researchers' who examine conflicts (Yin, 2009) and it is well suited to the inductive objectives of this study (George and Bennett, 2005:19–21). As an approach, case studies are also crucial for description (King et al., 1994: 44): they allow for the understanding of the 'why and how' in conflicts, particularly by viewing them through the lenses of the key actors and aggrieved parties that used various strategies to express their grievances. Therefore, framing a case study towards an explanatory question could advance a more intensive and pertinent account, even if the study is eventually frustrated in its bid to offer even a single valid causal inference (King et al., 1994: 45).

Given the complexity of the dynamics of choice between the Ogoni and Ijaw movements, the choice of a method had to be based on one that permitted for a broad approach suitable for identifying critical mechanisms and variables of interest that would explain why one group adopted nonviolence while the other chose violence. Furthermore, since comparative case studies encompass the analysis and synthesis of the patterns, similarities and differences across two or more cases that share a common focus or goal (Goodrick, 2014: 1), its suitability, as will be seen in the Ogoni and Ijaw cases, needs to be emphasised. The deep understanding of each distinct and unique case is imperative in determining the foundation for the analytical

framework that will be used in the cross-case comparison (ibid) of the Ogoni nonviolence versus Ijaw violence. Comparative analysis answers to the necessity for ‘broadening the territorial scope and intensity of political information’ (Lasswell, 1968: 3-18 in Della Porta and Keating, 2008). This approach explains the similarity of the logic of the comparative method to that of other methods, due to its attempt to advance clarifications by the ‘systematic manipulations of parameters and operative variables’ (Smelser, 1976: 158; Lijphart, 1975: 160). Generally, it targets the establishment of empirical relations between two variables. The case study method was chosen for the rich and in-depth analysis it can generate, especially when it includes face to face interviews’ as a form of oral history, and the absorption of written data from existing literature and other secondary sources. Yin (1994) offered four arguments for selecting a case studies method: to clarify complicated and causal links in real-life interventions; illustrate the real-life context within which the intervention has happened; define the actual intervention and; to investigate those circumstances in which the intervention under study has no clear set of outcomes. These are important especially for their ability to justify how and why the case studies are used to support the theoretical framework of this study.

Arguably, although the case study approach is well suited to this research project, briefly outlining the methodological implications of comparative case studies and how these have been addressed in the study design becomes very vital. Deciding which observations to choose remains critical for the outcome of the study in qualitative research and for the extent to which it can deliver determinate and reliable results (King et al., 1994: 128). Selection bias can obstruct the researcher’s capability towards building generalizable claims in relation to other cases of significance in studies that examine the dynamics of choice between nonviolence and violence. Accordingly, selection should permit the ‘slight variation of the dependent variable’ (Ibid: 129) making the choices of the Ogoni and the Ijaw according to the divergent nature of their narratives, leadership and organisation based on their distinct choice between nonviolence and violence. While the researcher’s capacity to assess the impact of the identified variables is a frequent question posed at case studies (Ibid), accepting the limitation of findings becomes very important. Therefore, the inclusion of a process tracing aspect in comparative research could guide the researcher towards making tentative claims around specific variables deemed to be important, and which ought to be discounted (George and Bennett, 2005: 22). Process tracing provides an avenue through which the researcher looks closely (King et al., 1994: 226) at ‘the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes’ (Ibid). Characteristically, case studies merge various data collection methods that include interviews,

questionnaires and archival observations (Eisenhardt, 1989: 534) aimed at identifying causal mechanisms in empirical analysis (King et al., 1994: 86). These could be undertaken through analytic narrative, a form of process tracing which connects the actions to explain the consequence in interpretive case studies (Ibid). Vennesson (2008: 231) notes that process tracing could be accomplished within both a positivist and an interpretivist structure. Naturally, a positivist would recognise variables as underlying mechanisms, to tackle the gap created when ‘general effects are imputed to general causes’ (Vennesson, 2008). An interpretivist would analyse the perceptions and motivations of actors, suppositions ‘like rational utility-maximisation which can here be subject to critical scrutiny’ (Ibid), suggesting that positivist and interpretivist approaches may occasionally be linked. Accordingly, process tracing could attend to the worry that case studies are not independent, it could guarantee that such correlations are revealed and recognised within the study. Scholars of interpretive epistemology insist on seeking the connotation of an action rather than looking for causes of behaviour; actions, for them develop their denotation from shared ideas and rules of social life (Demmers, 2012: 10). During the literature review and the field work for the current study for example, it became clear that debates within the Niger Delta conflict have been shaped both by developments within Nigeria and internationally, and that it was likely that international experiences had discernible impacts on the dynamics of choice made by leaders in the Ogoni and Ijaw ethnic groups. Therefore, to delineate the political significance of the roles played by narratives, leadership and the organisation of the two movements, process tracing was utilised in the study. Thus, the construction of meaning in this thesis is historically and culturally specific and could solely be examined in context and by incorporating the self-conscious viewpoints of the key actors. This is without over stating the fact that the level of description entailed to represent the richness of the cases may mean that the cases, and the key actors within the cases, are identifiable.

The suitability of the historical approach in the construction of meaning is especially pertinent for case-oriented research designs which are ‘by definition context bound’ (Della Porta, 2008: 216). In line with the categorisation in which one happening influences the next, historical institutionalists underscore the importance of ‘context and historical order of events’. This enables and supports, researchers seeking to explain both ‘continuity and change over time’ (Della Porta and Keating, 2008: 10). Historical institutionalism focuses attention to real world empirical questions, and considers the means in which institutions structure and shape political behaviour and outcomes (Steinmo, 2008: 118). It emphasises the role these institutions perform

in influencing behaviour, therefore, the use of historical institutionalism in analysing the Ogoni and Ijaw movements is strategic, because it helps us to understand why a certain choice was made in terms of nonviolence or violence, and why a certain outcome occurred (Steinmo, 2008: 123) through engaging with historical narrative and evidence to try to find out causes.

In order to carry out meaningful qualitative research on the Niger Delta conflicts, primary sources relating to the Ogoni and Ijaw movements, as well as government sources were identified as the target data. Secondary sources were used in the form of an analysis of the various discourses in the existing literature, archival materials and newspaper articles relating to conflicts. This became important due to the recognition of the significance of gaining deeper insights as the research seeks to enhance the understanding of the dynamics of choice between the Ogoni and the Ijaw ethnic groups in the Niger Delta. The employment of discourse analysis helped understand how specific discourse structures affected the outcome of using different strategies to fight for related problems. Parker (1992) defined discourse as ‘a system of statements which constructs an object, mainly in relation to meanings, representations, and stories that in some way together produce a particular version of events (Burr, 1995). It is the social reasoning of a ‘socially constructed knowledge of some social practice established within fixed social settings and applicable to both large and small circumstances’ (Foucault, 1977). The sentences and transcripts have been interlinked with interview scripts, existing literature, newspaper and archive materials, deliberately aimed at ensuring objectivity and enhancing the scope of the study.

In this situation, face to face structured elite interviews were undertaken with key informants and actors of the two conflicts in the Niger Delta. However, asking questions and getting answers posed a larger challenge than it first seemed, yet the art of interviewing has proved to be one of the most influential methods used when attempting to understand our fellow human beings (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 361). At some point, semi structured and even unstructured interviews had to be used especially during the latter part of the research, when certain clarifications had to be made occasionally on the telephone. It is during the discussions with some of the ex-agitators in particular that unstructured questions had to be used in order to get to the contents that were relevant for this thesis. Most importantly, the researcher had to acclimatise to the domain of the groups being interviewed by sharing their anxieties and viewpoints at certain points. This proved strategic in order to even get their acceptance in

responding to the questions, obviously different situations required different interviewing techniques.

Unstructured interviews provided greater depth than the other types, because it made ‘breaking the ice’ easier, the discussions were started on a general context before gradually moving on to the more specific ones (Ibid: 365). The interviews were mainly informal within an average duration of one hour depending on who was being interviewed. Nevertheless, in conformity to the semi structured style of interviewing, basic questions were initially put forward to all interviewees (Van Evera, 1997). However, specific questions were posed to each interviewee depending on which group they represented, and in light of the position held by the interviewee, as it relates to the main research question. The chosen style of interviewing prevented the normal ambiguity of coding of schemes that places interviewees’ responses into broad categories as in structured interviewing (Burnham et al., 2008). The principal aim of the conducted interviews was to obtain more intense and clearer primary source material to support the understanding of the research questions and thesis puzzle, specifically, ‘why did the Ogoni adopt nonviolence as a means of expressing their grievances while the Ijaw opted for a violent course of action’. The quality of responses to the interviews proved to be invaluable for the interpretation of why the Ogoni insist on nonviolence, while the Ijaw are consistently caught up between nonviolence and violence, which produced a finely grained explanation to the facts of the different components. The discourse in empirical qualitative inquiry demonstrates how beliefs are interlinked in the course of knowledge development through which experiential material is ‘constructed, interpreted and written’ (Keso et al., 2009: 53).

2.6.1 Field Work, Access and Consent

Access to the primary data for this study represents a major challenge, as getting access to the key informants and actors in the Ogoni and Ijaw movements was indeed difficult. Being an outsider, for about four months no one was responding to my emails requesting for interviews and information. A breakthrough came during the telephone discussions I had with three personal contacts who incidentally are outsiders too, Dr Kole Shettima, Mrs Maryam Uwais, and Saleh Ahmadu; and later on Jummai Umar and Fatima Akilu Sada, who understood my predicament and offered to introduce me to some of their contacts in the Niger Delta. Subsequently, I was introduced to Chris Newsome of the Stakeholder Democracy Network based in Port Harcourt, Rivers State; Tom Jackson Orage, a lawyer and the son of one of the

Ogoni four victims which Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed for; Professor Chidi Odinkalu a Nigerian lawyer and human rights activist; Mr Iniruo Wills and Dr Ferdinand Ikwang, the lead consultant of the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme who collectively ensured that I had access to key informants relevant to my subject area. As a result of their experience in granting interviews to researchers, national and international media, the Ogoni group leaders were more receptive and much easier to engage with. The Ijaw on the other hand, was a mixture of those willing and some that had to be convinced before granting an interview, specifically the reformed militants.

As the primary site for this research is the Niger Delta where the Ogoni and the Ijaw are located, interviews were conducted in several locations in Rivers and Bayelsa states. In addition, some took place in Abuja, the federal capital territory of Nigeria as well as Providence, United States of America and London, United Kingdom because two of the interviewees were not in Nigeria during the period I went for the field work and was opportune to gain access to them while on a professional development visit to the USA and in the UK because that is where my institution is located. After further discussions we agreed to meet in these two places as I would be there also for other academic activities. I set out for the field work hoping to get answers to my questions and also to find out if the narratives regarding the Niger Delta conflicts are still the same or whether there have been changes within the different groups. I arrived in Nigeria on 25 July 2015 armed with various questions for the different groups I intended to interview. Before I started the interviews I was advised to paraphrase the theme of my research from nonviolence and violence to the different strategies used in expressing grievances by different groups in the Niger Delta, so as not to send the wrong message being someone from another region. Also, when addressing the militants, I was warned not to use the word violent militants but freedom fighters or ex-agitators.

Accordingly, I felt it would be beneficial to discuss how the construction of both state and non-state narratives and actions have contributed to transforming the conflict from nonviolent agitations and protests to a fully violent form. I set out to conduct 15 interviews but during the interviews I was asked if I was interested in interviewing some key people that engaged in the Niger Delta struggle and I said yes, which is why I was able to conduct 41 oral interviews and got access to some additional materials for the thesis. Some of the narratives quoted will seem quite long; this is mainly to share the depth in the discussions we had. The interviews were

spread over a period of twelve months because they involved different actors spread across Africa, Europe and the Americas.

At some point, an offer was made to conduct interviews with Asari Dokubo, Boyloaf and Tompolo in the Republic of Benin and other locations, but due to the dangerous, volatile and sensitive nature of the conflicts, the offer was declined. I decided to decline because I was asked to move to insecure locations outside Nigeria, and I wasn't guaranteed protection and security by the Amnesty office in Nigeria. However, the field work was necessary in order to gather the right data needed to facilitate the progression of this research, because it was understood that the most effective way to employ the research design at the heart of this thesis was to spend time in the area gathering information and conducting some informal interviews. It suffices to say that I met people who were receptive and willing to share their stories with me.

My requests for access and interviews with Shell Nigeria, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and a few other oil companies were not granted, even after signing several legal documents and sending several request. I was, in the end, able to engage with two confidential sources from the oil and gas sector who did not really reveal any information that would significantly enhance the study. Government sources were not directly included in this study because that would come afterwards based on the fact that the current study was aimed at exploring why certain groups adopt a certain strategy rather than another. The focus was on the aggrieved parties to the conflict and I came to certain conclusions especially on the importance of leadership and narratives because of the way conflict was constructed as well as the way the enemy (state) was also constructed. Therefore, logically understanding where the groups were coming from, what they wanted and where they are going became central to the study before analysing the interaction with the counterpart, the state.

2.6.2 Key Informants and Interviewees

The intention was to interview key actors from the Ogoni and the Ijaw movements, activists, government representatives and scholars on the Niger Delta. Fortunately, in the process of the fieldwork, I was opportune to interview 41 (see Appendix 1 for a list of all people interviewed for this study) people divided as follows, the Ogoni, comprising seven interviewees made up of individuals such as Professor Ben Naanen, Mr Ledum Mitee, Mr Legborsi Saro Pyagbara,

who have at one point or another been part of the leadership of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP); Dr Peter Medee the current president of the Ogoni elite group KAGOTE; Barrister Tom Jackson Orage; Dr Alubabari Desmond Nbeta and Dr Owens Wiwa included because of their knowledge and involvement in the Ogoni struggle.

On the Ijaw side, Dr Patterson Ogon, Dr Isaac Asume Osuoka, Mr Timi Keizer Ogoriba and Dr Felix Tuodolo were interviewed in view of their participation in the organisation and development of the youth conference that saw to the development of the Kaiama Declaration; Mr Iniruo Wills, Mr Marshal Kunoun, Dr Otive Igbuzor, Lancelot, Chief D.S.P Alamiyeseigha and Elder Godsdai Orubebe for their active roles in the Ijaw quest for self-determination; Belema Papamie, Kelechi Ameachi Justin, Chris Newsom, Inemo Samiama, Ken Henshaw, Ben Tantua, Jackson, Samuel Agbola, Professor Chidi Odinkalu, and Ukoha Ukiwo, based on their knowledge and activism on the Niger Delta conflicts. Additionally, the insider perspectives of some of the ex-agitations formed strategic pieces, especially in finding out why the Ijaw took up arms against the state. These involved interviews with General Andrew Azazi, General Peter Doloebiwei, General Abuja Seleoge, Comrade Ramsey Mukoro and Comrade Johnson Ajuwa.

Furthermore, Bishop Mathew Hassan Kukah, Gen Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, General Sarkin Yaki Bello (Rtd), Mrs Ihuoma Osaretin, Dr Ferdinand Ikwang, Kennedy West and three confidential sources by virtue of their involvement in the Niger Delta on the side of the state also became important in the study. Through the course of interacting with these individuals, whose knowledge and contribution proved invaluable to the study, I constantly engaged in a process of reflexivity, because I had to question and re-question my choices over and over again, just to ensure that they tallied with my main research question and would help solve the research puzzle (Keso et al., 2009).

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the theoretical and conceptual foundations of conflict were examined as a basis for understanding conflicts in the Niger Delta. The focus has been about the choices groups make in conflict situations, with strong emphasis on the nexus between nonviolence and violence in the Niger Delta, and on how taking up violence is not just a question of leadership but, also of collective narratives. In surveying the literature, this study found that narratives

and identities, alongside leadership and organisation, play a significant role in movements' decision making process, on the basis of collective identity which was framed within contexts that determine the choice of strategies adopted in conflict. Attention was paid to the dilemma faced while attempting to unpack reasons behind decisions taken by the Ijaw and the Ogoni, who in spite of their communal life experiences, differed in their strategies of engagement with the state.

Structural and theoretical approaches used by scholars to explain the conflict were discussed, and their inadequacies in determining the influence of collective identities over movements' strategic choices were examined and their shortcomings highlighted as they relate to the problematic natural resource Nigerian situation. The greed and grievance theses (Collier et al., 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Collier et al., 2009; Collier, 2007; Urdal, 2004), horizontal inequalities (Stewart, 2008; Stewart et al., 2008), frustration aggression hypothesis (Friedland, 1992; Tittmar, 1992; Berkowitz, 1965) as well as the structure based approaches (Vanhanen, 1990; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Chenoweth and Ulfelder, 2015) have made the deficiencies on the dynamics of choice apparent. The use of collective group narratives, however, provided more insights into how, in the framing of memories, movements' made strategic choices of modes of participation (Polletta and Jasper, 2001) in both nonviolent and violent group actions, which further shows the limitations of structural causes in explaining conflicts.

Since the aim was to focus on the dynamics of choice, identity framing was examined through the choice of strategic memory making narratives, demonstrated, for instance in the violent narratives, which were used by leaders to connect the strategic situation to the present-day reality (Snow and Benford, 1992). The adoption of narratives outlined the salience of linguistic aspects employed in violence in the sense that 'in order to practice violence, you need to talk violence, and dehumanise the other in the language', therefore, the narrative must show that there is nothing else you can do, and that you are constantly 'victimised' (Apter, 1996: 2), as seen in the Ijaw movement and also in the example of the Zapatistas and Sandanistas (Jansen, 2007). While in the nonviolence scenario, it was acknowledged (Chenoweth and Ulfelder, 2015; Foster et al., 2005) that campaign leaders would operate contingent and context specific nonviolent methods within whichever structural condition they found themselves while employing peaceful narratives that indicate agency, knowledge of the situation and the legitimate channels through which their demands would attract the desired attention, as in the

Ogoni case. However, in attempting to carry out an effective empirical research on such a topic, various methods had to be employed by the researcher. As the chapter highlighted, it involved requesting access to key informants whose wealth of knowledge helped shape the direction of the thesis. The nature of interviews conducted with the 41 interviewees showed the value and depth of the information generated from using unstructured types of interviews. It provided the perfect opportunity to the researcher to easily break the ice through the introduction of general questions before narrowing down on to the specific contexts.

Furthermore, within the combination of all these collective identities, memories, narratives and dynamics of choice exists some fundamental grievances against the state and an essential desire for change that could develop into mass movement, (Braithwaite et al., 2015) which is what the subsequent empirical chapters are going to analyse within the Ogoni and Ijaw contexts in the Niger Delta.

Chapter Three: Historical Narratives of Ogoni and the Ijaw

Introduction

This first empirical chapter seeks to elucidate the reasons why although the Ogoni and the Ijaw reside within a related topography, sharing similar origins, values and culture, the narratives from the two groups do not present them as having a collective voice or as collectively representing the Niger Delta. The narratives will be analysed to show that the discourses used to denote the grievances of the two movements are distinct, with the Ogoni using a moderate nonviolent form of discourse while the Ijaw indicate a stronger and more contentious debate while charting a distinct cause. The chapter will make a clear distinction between the combative natures of the Ijaw narratives and the nonviolent expression of the Ogoni issues. This distinction will clarify that the narratives each work for particular communities that have significant context specificity of their own. The Ogoni and the Ijaw are represented within the commonality of their lived experiences in the region, witnessed under key standpoints including environmental, socio-economic, and political arguments (Saro-Wiwa, 1995; Okonta, 2008; Naanen, 1995; Human Rights Watch, 1995, 1999).

In terms of underlying features like the deep historical political economy characteristics of Nigeria, the majority of scholars conflate the struggles in the Niger Delta as unitary and collective (Watts, 1999, 2003, 2008; Peterside, 2001; Obi, 2006, 2007, 2009; Ukeje, 2001). The frustration-aggression thesis towards Nigeria's nascent democratic process is characterised by several narrations of neglect, along with associated problems of poverty and deprivation to the detriment of ethnic minorities (Afinotan and Ojatorotu, 2009; Osaghae, 1995, 2008; Ikein, 2009). These problems include inadequate availability of essential social amenities and services such as electricity, health, pipe borne water and quality education (Okonta and Douglas, 2001; Ojatorotu and Morake, 2010; Ojatorotu, 2010; Omeje, 2004). Decades of oil exploration activities and the dangers of spillage and gas flaring exacerbated by environmental degradation (Okonta, 2008; Osha, 2006, 2007; Ukiwo, 2007; Frynas, 2001). While these perspectives have richly facilitated the knowledge and understanding of the issues, they indicate the existence of an array of distinct minority ethnic groups that have shared lived experiences on oil exploration activities. Although generally, the literature brings these minority ethnic groups together as one, this chapter will show that they are distinct from one another.

Furthermore, Dibua (2005: 6), rightly points to the prominence given to the struggle for ethnic minority politics and environmental degradation by the activities of Ken Saro-Wiwa, but stops short of representing his actions as specific to the context of the Ogoni agenda and not to a wider Niger Delta cause. Similarly, Oboreh (2010: 18), contends that the people of the region progressively employed varying methods in order to attract the attention of the state to their marginalised and neglected condition. As a result of a failure of peaceful actions carried out in the region, the nature of the responses escalated and radicalised. This argument suggests that the people in the region acted at first peacefully and later more violently against both the state and multinational oil companies. Here again, while the assertions within the literature are generally correct, no distinction is made between the actions taken by the different groups in the region in relation to violent and nonviolent strategies and tactics. Furthermore, the studies by Ezirim (2011) on resource governance and conflict in the Niger Delta and Idemudia and Ite (2006), on demystifying the Niger Delta conflict while very important, focused generally on the link between oil and conflict in the region, but leave a wide gap in terms of how the different groups in the region construct and react to the oil related issues. To address the gaps left by the literature, this chapter argues that the actual perception of how the Ogoni and the Ijaw regard themselves and how they engage with nonviolence and violence have important implications for understanding the nature of the struggles in the region.

By focusing on the Ogoni and the Ijaw, the analysis and findings in this chapter will analyse the ways in which each group constructs conflicts and reacts differently to the actions and inactions of the state. The linkage of the Ogoni and Ijaw narratives to distinct choices related to nonviolence and violence, will provide a more informed perspective in terms of the differences between the two movements. The chapter, importantly, contends that the conflict in the Niger Delta comprises different strategies, which are not one and the same.

The main argument of this research project is that in spite of sharing common lived experiences within a common geographical location, the Ogoni decided on a nonviolent course of action while the Ijaw opted for a violent course of action. It argues, furthermore, that the differing reactions by the Ogoni and the Ijaw were due to three sets of factors: 1) the narratives constructed by the leaders, 2) the strategies developed by the leaders and 3) the organisational aspects of the movements. Firstly, therefore, this chapter will examine the collective narratives

developed by the leaders of the Ijaw and the Ogoni groups. Indeed, the nonviolent nature of the Ogoni struggle stands out of all the agitations in the Niger Delta region.

Interviews for this chapter (see Appendix 1 for a detailed list and information of all interviewees) were conducted with selected key Ogoni and Ijaw leaders and representatives by virtue of their lived experiences as well as the knowledge they possess on the activities of the two movements. They comprise Barrister Tom Jackson Orage, Sir Dr Peter Medee, Dr Alubabari Desmond Nbeta, Professor Ben Naanen, Legborsi Saro Pyagbara, Mr. Ledum Mitee, Dr Owens Wiwa, and Bishop Mathew Hassan Kukah. While on the Ijaw side, interviews for this chapter were conducted with the following Ijaw youth leaders, Patterson Ogon, T.K. Ogoriba, Felix Tudolor, Isaac Asume Osuoka, D.S.P Alamieyeseigha, Iniruo Wills, Lancelot, Jackson, Otive Igbuzor, ex militant leaders Comrade Johnson Ajuwa, Ramsey Mukoro; some members of the civil society and activists such as Ken Henshaw, Inemo Samiama, Belema Papamie, Professor Chidi Odinkalu and some confidential sources. As well as key informants, these interviewees were also fully aware of the scope of the research and were willing to provide answers to the questions this project is seeking.

A second empirical chapter will examine the nature of leadership among both the Ogoni and the Ijaw, and specifically, the leaders' stance on the issue of violence versus nonviolence. It will analyse the deliberate nonviolent approach employed by the Ogoni leaders for both principled and pragmatic reasons, as against the fragmented strategies adopted by the Ijaw leaders. It will argue that the Ogoni leaders' adopted strategy proved long-lasting, while among the Ijaw leaders a turn to violence prevailed. Finally, a third empirical chapter will explore the structure and organisation adopted by the two groups to argue that the Ogoni developed organisational features aimed at advocacy, negotiations and peaceful links with international bodies, while the Ijaw developed an organisation fit for armed struggle. It will analyse the development and presentation of the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) which is an articulated set of demands of the Ogoni presented to the Nigeria state, in comparison to the Ijaw Kaiama Declaration which is similarly an articulated list of demands by the Ijaw youth. The chapter will also focus on the establishment of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) and compare it to the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Collectively, these three empirical chapters will seek to answer the main research question of 'Why did the Ogoni adopt nonviolence as a means of expressing their grievances while the Ijaw opted for a violent course of action'.

Accordingly, the first half of this chapter will focus on the Ogoni, while the second half will focus on the Ijaw movement. The chapter will be presented in four different sections which will examine collective group narratives, the nature of the Nigerian state, transnationalism and internationalism and the impact of oil extraction (see Table 3.1 below).

Table 3.1: Historical Narratives of the Ogoni and Ijaw.

Ogoni	Ijaw
1. Collective Ogoni Narratives 1.2 Constructing the Ogoni as a primordial nation from the 1990s	5. Collective Ijaw Narratives - Collective /one ethnic group - Primordial nature of the group, linked to violence
2. Nature of the Nigerian State - Colonial state (humanizing the enemy) - Internal Colonialism exercised by Nigerian State and dominant Ijaw and Igbo within the Niger Delta (linked to nonviolence)	6. Nature of the Nigerian State - Colonial state (aggressive and confrontational) - Ijaw in direct confrontation with the central Nigerian state (linked to violence)
3. Transnationalism and Internationalism 3.1 Stressing minority rights - Linkage to the United Nations and international NGOs connecting to the internationally accepted norm of nonviolence	7. Transnationalism and Internationalism 7.1 Stressing Ijaw Minority Status - Linkage to anti-capitalist struggles, connecting to discourse on violence
4. Narratives on Oil - Ogoni grievances linked to nonviolence	8. Narratives on Oil - Ijaw grievances linked to violence

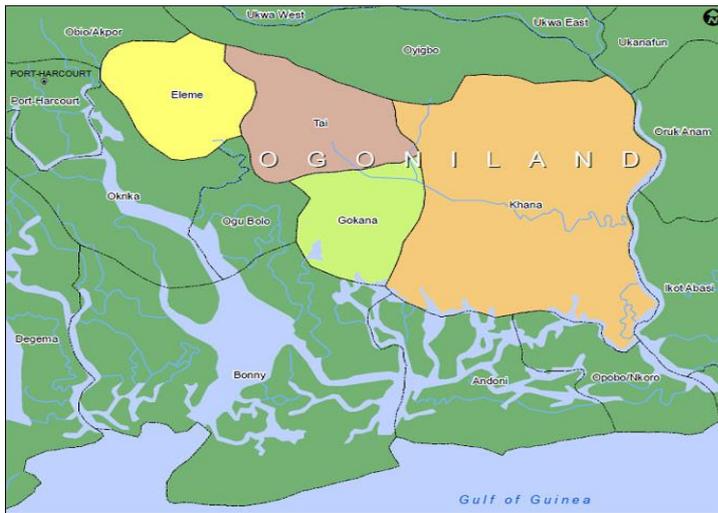
3.1 Collective Ogoni Narratives

As indicated in Table 1 above, this section will analyse the collective Ogoni narratives and specifically the claim that Ogoniland was a peaceful area before the coming of the British colonial masters who forced the group to become part of the wider Niger Delta region. From the 1990s the Ogoni, under the guidance of Ken Saro-Wiwa, were constructed as one distinct ethnic group with a common identity. The significance of the land to the Ogoni will also be discussed to show how certain collective narratives engage positively with nonviolence.

The Ogoni ethnic identity was constructed under the leadership of Ken Saro-Wiwa in the 1990s, revolving around their specific lived circumstances as a distinct nation challenged by immense economic and political difficulties (Okonta, 2008: 4). Born in 1941, Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa was a writer, civil servant, businessman, human rights activist, and environmental campaigner. He had a very strong passion for literary and scholarly quests, and this inclination, coupled with what he claimed to be a dehumanising situation faced by the Ogoni, led to the publication of a pamphlet entitled 'The Ogoni Nationality Today and Tomorrow' (Osha, 2007: 80). Scholars revealed that Ken's love for the emancipation of the Ogoni was developed over a sustained period of time (Okonta, 2008; Osaghae, 1995; Comfort, 2002; Irele, 1998; Osha, 2007). Most importantly, he appreciated the power of language and the fact that ideas cannot be killed, he knew that certain issues cannot be fixed by a show of force (Nixon, 1996: 10). Similarly, Senewo (2015), maintains that Saro-Wiwa not only appreciated the dilemmas of his people but also courageously challenged these difficulties against the odds of the might of the Nigerian state.

Saro-Wiwa claimed that the Ogoni increasingly realised that their leaders had faithfully cooperated with the rest of Nigeria but that this faith had been seriously misdirected as each ethnic group had its own agenda, entirely unconnected to the value of collaboration in a multi-ethnic country (1992: 92). Consequently, individual and collective recollections of experiences through engagements with other ethnic groups within common socio-political associations and processes equipped the Ogoni with the necessary motives to advance their identity (Isumonah, 2004: 440). In the 1990s, some Ogoni leaders, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, Garrick Leton, Bennet Birabi, E.N. Kobani, Ledum Mitee and Albert Badey, developed a narrative whereby the Ogoni were constructed as a distinct ethnic group in the Niger Delta, claiming to have settled in the area long before the fifteenth century and established within the six kingdoms of Babbe, Eleme, Gokana, Ken-Khana, Nyo-Khana and Tai (Saro-Wiwa, 1995: 12). This narrative, according to Saro-Wiwa's own assertion, developed as a result of the perception of exploitation felt by the Ogoni within a nation to which no one paid loyalty to but for personal or ethnic benefits (Saro-Wiwa, 1995b: 92). According to Isumonah (2004: 434), an ethnic group is characterised by a common awareness of group membership both among insiders and outsiders based on the foundation of primordial representations (Kasfir, 1979: 370).

Figure 3.1 Map Showing Ogoniland



Source: United Nations Environmental Programme Disasters and Conflict. www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts/CountryOperations/Nigeria/tabid/54124/

The Ogoni are located in the easternmost part of the fertile plateau bordering the eastern half of the Niger River Delta in Nigeria, (see Figure 3.1). Approximately 1,300 sq. kilometres in land area, Ogoni is bounded on the east and north by the big bend and mouth of the Imo River, on the west by Okrika and Port Harcourt city, and on the south by Andoni and Bonny (Kpone-Tonwe, 1997: 1). Similarly to the other groups in the Niger Delta, the Ogoni were mainly fishermen and farmers, who at one time were accused of cannibalism, murder of twins and sundry primitive practices (Okonta, 2008: 50).

3.1.1 Constructing the Ogoni as a Primordial Nation from the 1990s

Scholars have offered a number of explanations to assert the primordality of the Ogoni that mainly revolved around the relationship they share with the land. Saro-Wiwa contends that the Ogoni had inherited a valuable portion of land endowed with the rich plateau soil that provided agricultural blessings, while the rivers flowing along the borders of the area abounded with fish and seafood (Saro-Wiwa, 1992: 12). This idyllic existence, according to Osaghae (1995: 392), was dramatically interrupted by oil production activities which ‘changed the circumstances of intra-Ogoni relations as well as those of its relationship with other groups and the state’. This particular emphasis on environmental degradation and its disastrous consequences on the

sources of livelihood of the Ogoni peoples provided a new basis for forging closer ties to deal with common problems (ibid). In the words of Saro-Wiwa,

Ogoni was always a blessed land. The plateau soil was extremely rich, the fresh water streams and the surrounding seas brimmed with fish, and the forests had an abundance of animals and hard woods preserved by the environment conscious Ogoni (Saro-Wiwa, 1992: 18).

Saro-Wiwa identified Ogoniland as a paradise where socio-economic, environmental and religious issues were combined into specific rituals and procedures.

The land is god and is worshipped as such. The fruit of the land, particularly yams are honoured in festivals and, indeed the annual festival of the Ogoni is held at the yam harvest. The planting season is not a mere period of agricultural activity, it is a spiritual, religious and social occasion. Tradition in the Ogoni local tongue means *doonu kuneke*, the honouring of the land, earth, soil, and water (Saro-Wiwa, 1992: 12.).

Saro-Wiwa constantly reiterated the significance of the land to the Ogoni by drawing on its spiritual and economic importance in relation to the devastation caused by oil exploration and exploitation. The Ogoni narratives, like other nationalist narratives, construct the Ogoni people as a separate ethnic group with an exclusive link to their territory, that became violated by oil exploration (Gellner, 1983: 1; Grosby, 2005: 5). Gradually, the Ogoni claim became stronger in the 1990s, when they contended that they belonged together and constructed the Ogoni as having a special spiritual attachment to their environment. This narrative clearly suggests sanctity and nonviolence even at that early stage, and this corresponds to the notion of communities being ‘imagined where members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ (Anderson, 1991: 6). Saro-Wiwa reiterated the importance of mobilising every Ogoni person based on the necessity of their unity in terms of their culture, language heritage, and the importance of cooperating with one another on the Ogoni agenda (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a: 75). Additionally, in a speech delivered to the Kagote club³ he openly referred to a united Ogoni by stating that, ‘we have been faithful to this agenda which we set up for ourselves; we have established the Ogoni identity and placed Ogoni on the national agenda; we have mobilised all Ogoni people (Ibid: 111). Even at the domestic level, the significance of the land is further emphasised by Barikor-Wiwa (1997: 2), who justifies that traditionally, the land has given

³ An elite club in Ogoniland, which will be discussed in the chapter on organisation.

some form of independence to Ogoni women, the proceeds of which are used to feed and provide for the family.

According to Naanen (1995: 85), the crisis of legitimacy which dominated the Nigerian state drove citizens to draw back from the Nigerian identity fostered by the postcolonial state into ethnic, communal, and other types of identities. Although the Ogoni claim to be a primordial ethnic group with an ideal past, Cayford (1996: 187) argues that this unity of determination claimed by the Ogoni from the 1990s is a recent creation. He explains that the Ogoni are made up of three subgroups comprising Gokana, Khana and Eleme-Tai, which do not share a strong ethnic connection. Each subgroup has its own vernacular and is further split into clans (Ibid).

From the 2000s, the dominant narratives on the primordial nature of Ogoniland have been no different from what emerged in the 1990s. The land is presented as the most important source of economic power and social prestige in Ogoni society (Okonta, 2008: 32). For instance, interview with Orage illustrated that:

The Ogoni are traditionally farmers and fishermen and like any other community worldwide, land is a critical element of human existence. We are both riverine and up land communities (Interview 27 July 2015).

According to Nbeta (2006), the land is truly precious to the Ogoni. One reason put forward revolves around the Ogoni being predominantly farmers, living very close to nature. He argues that,

Economically, the land was of great value but years of oil production led to its devastation. The Ogoni people like going to the forest to behold the beauty of nature with an unbroken attachment to the land. The forests were abodes for their ancestors, deities, anything that destroys the forest was not only destroying their source of livelihood but also their connection with spiritual deities (Interview 27 July 2015).

This therefore suggests that religion was an important component around which the social life of the Ogoni revolved. As Okonta (2008: 37), points out, 'each house hold had its ancestral shrine with existing clan wide deities'. The narrative suggests Ogoniland as a nonviolent mythical place where human beings and nature co-penetrated each other, until oil production disrupted and destroyed the idyllic existence. They imply the function of spirituality and the sense of belonging to stimulate the notion of peace within Ogoniland.

In the mid-50s, prior to the advent of oil exploration in commercial quantity, the Ogoni were blessed with rich alluvium soil and hence, agricultural production was rather lucrative (Okonta, 2008; Osha, 2007; Osaghae, 1995; Human Rights Watch, 1995). Mitee argues that,

Environment in our context is different from the western concept of flora and fauna. It has a spiritual significance, we believe there are certain forests that are sacred, certain rivers we don't fish, and certain animals are portents of human beings. It beholds on the community to protect those values (Interview: 2 August 2016).

Before the British arrived, the land was not an issue of contention within the Ogoni. Okonta (2008: 32), explains that lineage was the major factor through which land was accessed and was communally owned. He argues that 'the norm was such that, various percentages of land resided in lineage heads (adult male) who then distributed them to individuals based on the ritual and social norms that guided their use', adding that land was not exploited commercially. According to Naanen,

Land wasn't a commodity it didn't have value, land couldn't be bought or sold it was communal tenure, but with increasing monetization and economic development, land started having value and all these communities became deeply attached to it (Interview: 31 July 2015).

Therefore, according to Comfort (2002), the Ogoni deemed the connection and non-exploitative link to the land as certified by a supreme authority. Going back to the narratives of the 1990s, Saro-Wiwa claimed that violations on the environment amounts to being violent on nature,

Environmental degradation is a very high form of violence. We will never resort to violence, but we will tackle the irresponsible leadership of this country [...] I am prepared to work for this justice, and there are several ways to it. I believe that an informed citizenry will stand up against dictatorship and social injustice. And the first thing to do is to mobilise all our people to realise that (Saro-Wiwa, 1993a).

In another medium he recounted that:

Over the past 30 years, I have made representations, in writing and in person, to the power elite in Nigeria to put an end to the misery, or at least to mitigate the harm which they do to the Ogoni environment. I have not only failed to convince them, each appeal has been followed by further acts of genocide (Saro-Wiwa, 1992: 100).

These quotes show that the relationship between the Ogoni and the land is so strong that they regard anything that violates the peaceful nature of the land as extremely offensive, hence stressing the importance of claiming back their land from exploitation but without the use of force. This intimate connection with the land indicates that the Ogoni have assigned enormous divine importance to the environment, believing it to be the life source of their communities as well as an abode of their sacred deities. By claiming to mobilise the Ogoni to realise the negative impacts of an abused environment, Saro-Wiwa introduces the nonviolence narrative to the Ogoni by stressing never to use violence. In his words,

To show the outside world that the Ogoni are determined, brave people that would not go under, and that they are not going to allow themselves to be victims of environmental genocide. This form of genocide is an ecological war that is very serious and unconventional because no bones are broken, no one is maimed. People are not alarmed because they can't see what is happening, but human beings are at risk, plants and animals are at risk. The air and water are poisoned, finally the land itself dies (Saro-Wiwa, 1993a).

These assertions correspond to Okonta (2008) and Osha's (2007) work on Ogoniland where they note that precolonial Ogoni was a peasant and political community in which subsistence farming and fishing were the major economic activities. The inference, therefore, is that to the Ogoni, the land is regarded as having a strategic and unquantifiable socio-economic value. Osha concludes that the Ogoni had a distinct mythological view of their land, thereby making any outside possession of Ogoniland an unbearable infringement of their spiritual existence (2006: 21; 2007:70). Owens Wiwa supports the argument that what affects the land directly impacts on the Ogoni:

Ken wrote that Ogoni is the land, the land is Ogoni. We are Ogoni and the land is called Ogoni, because in many earlier literature you will see what is called Ogoniland, there is nothing like Ogoniland, Ogoni is a land and the people are also Ogoni, we are Ogoni (Interview: 3 August 2015).

The preceding narrative makes the assertion that anything that devalues or devastates the land was seen as a threat to their very existence. This intense relationship between the Ogoni and the land, as Wiwa points out, is such that the land and the people are one, and are articulated as such in the local language (Snow, 2003: 2). There are lots of names for the spiritual trees, sacred rivers and lakes, and the traditions are very important, when people are ill, they revert

back to indigenous beliefs and folklore (ibid). This implies that the land was worth more than the material environment, its spiritual significance for the Ogoni was paramount.

Naanen even stated that the Ogoni did not travel much; they were mainly sedentary in their area (Interview: 31 July 2015). This is an indication that their communities had lived locally for generations unlike the Igbo, who had migrated to the area for economic reasons. In this way, the Ogoni are presented as a primordial community with unique rights to a specific territory. Tam-George (2010), referred to the Ogoni as an endangered peasant community. In the words of Naanen,

The Ogoni yesterday were self-sufficient in palm wine and palm oil production, these were industries that gave jobs to lots of Ogoni youth. Today the Ogoni tend to be backward looking, they attempt to go back and use things our forefathers used in order to survive, not knowing that those things can no longer work today (Interview: 31 July 2015).

The narratives from the 2000s seem to show the continuity of the power of narratives developed under Ken Saro-Wiwa and others of a very self-sufficient land that was greatly endowed until the coming of outsiders in the form of the British colonial masters.

3.2 Nature of the State

The previous section presented the primordial narratives of the Ogoni and the immaterial relationship they share with their land. This section will examine the lenses through which the Ogoni view the colonial state and how the group humanized their enemies in the process to refuse taking up arms against the state, or indeed against the Ijaw and the Igbo. It will analyze Ogoni group narratives to explain why in spite of feeling oppressed by their fellow Niger Deltans, they maintained a nonviolent attitude in their struggle. This will include the adoption and application of the internal colonialism concept moderated within a human rights context and constructed in a liberal form as opposed to a Marxist stance.

Saro-Wiwa (1992: 15) contended that the Ogoni regarded the British administration mainly in terms of upholding law and order through the setting up of courts and for tax collection, which were never utilized to their advantage (1992:16). He explains that the process through which Nigeria came into being in 1914 saw the forcing together of a large number of contrasting

ethnic groups with varying languages, cultures and histories (ibid: 19). This, according to Saro-Wiwa, was a deliberate strategy to steer the Ogoni into extinction (ibid: 18). Which, according to Okonta's (2008: 74) assertion, the Ogoni opted to stand for their interests in the political arena against the oppressive nature of the state.

In support of the above assertion, Mitee (1999: 431-433), stressed that the Ogoni decided to take charge of their destiny due to the nature of the state created by the British, which, although was meant to be a federal system, it was transformed into an oppressive unitary set-up. He clarifies that through the force of violence and political corruption, succeeding governments consistently ignored the rights of minority groups in collaboration with multinational oil companies. Similarly, Osha (2006: 14), points to two main forms of colonialism within the Ogoni context: the one being imposed by the British colonial regime and the one pursued by the postcolonial state. As regards the latter, the Ogoni leaders often exemplified the actions of the postcolonial state as a type of internal colonialism, in other words, the substitution of foreign colonialism with a local version (Mitee, 1999: 431).

The Ogoni internal colonialism concept was developed in the 1990s by some leaders like Ken Saro-Wiwa and Ben Naanen. According to Saro-Wiwa, British colonialism forced alien structures on the Ogoni and steered them into domestic colonialism, starting with the administration of Ogoni as part of Opobo division in 1908 up to the creation of Rivers state in 1967 (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a: 73). Naanen contends that internal colonialism arose in Nigeria not based on economic domination, but through a skilful pursuit of control critically facilitated by numerical predominance (Naanen, 1995: 49). The concept originated in 1957 during the great independence movement of the old colonies, and it refers to a structure of social relations based on domination and exploitation among culturally heterogeneous, distinct groups (Gonzalez-Casanova, 1965: 27-33). The claim in Ogoniland is that of being dominated internally by the Igbos and the Ijaw, following Van den Berghe's (1957) definition of the term as rule of one ethnic group over other groups situated within the same unbroken boundaries of a single state, and the presence of an internal government and relations of economic inequality (cited in Walls, 1978).

For many Ogoni leaders, internal colonialism remains a valid concept with which to assess their situation. According to Nbeta (2012: 50), the concept correctly represents the strain between the core dominant groups and the peripheries in the Nigerian state, which to a large

extent contributed to the central problems affecting the country. He asserts that post-independence from 1960, the south has continuously suffered underdevelopment and marginalization due to exploitation by the northern part of the Nigerian state in particular, and also by the other dominant groups. Ogoniland, he argues, remains one of the most underdeveloped regions within the Niger Delta, and it represents a periphery within the evolving Nigerian capitalist economy (ibid). The region, he further explains, is typified by a dual class structure with the dominant groups made up of the ruling class and the minorities as subordinates, the latter located mainly in the south. He further clarifies the paradox the Ogoni find themselves in within the southern region, as they are being exploited by an internal ruling class in the form of internal colonialism (ibid). Naanen points out that,

The traditional system at some point started to buckle under when oil operations started from the 70s when we were battling with internal colonialism, by our neighbours. Ogoni was treated virtually as a colony by the larger numerically more preponderant ethnic neighbours especially the Igbo (Interview: 31 July 2015).

Internal colonialism in Ogoniland is presented as a crude, unfeeling, and horrific practice whose approach has been an offensive usurpation of economic resources and dehumanisation (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a: 73). This model of political supremacy and oppression talked about by the Ogoni is indicated as a new form of colonialism, which is not enforced by foreigners but by local and national influential groups that enjoy the control of power (Naanen, 1995). Naanen illustrated a setting in which the benefits which are supposed to go to the Ogoni were superseded by the stronger dominant ethnic groups (ibid). While internal colonialism was primarily a Marxist concept going back to the 1960s, the Ogoni leaders in the 1990s linked it to issues of human and minority rights arguing that it had to be confronted by peaceful rather than revolutionary means. Naanen clarified that,

Internal colonialism may not necessarily be Marxist, and it could be liberal. It wasn't originally a pure Marxist approach but you could apply that to class, even the division of the world into rich nations and the peripheral nations, in which the periphery is exploited for the benefit of the metropolis. But basically the way that Hechter did it, was a liberal formulation (Interview: 29 July 2016).

Hechter's (1975), view of internal colonialism as the unbalanced form of development between the distinct core and the peripheral groups corresponds to the Ogoni situation where dominant groups make up the core and the Ogoni the periphery, as argued by Naanen. He further clarified

that the inclusion of internal colonialism to the Ogoni cause is based on Hechter's analysis on the British experience:

The British experience, where the English were regarded as the core and the rest of Britain, Scotland, and Wales as the fringe of British system. It analysed the English domination of the United Kingdom. We applied it to the Ogoni cause whereby the local ethnic communities dominated the Ogoni right from the beginning of the 19 and the 20 centuries. Through the migration of ethnic communities into the area and how they imposed their rule and their supremacy on the Ogoni. That was part of the origin of the domination, which people consolidated in the post-independence years under the post-colonial state (Interview with Naanen: 29 July 2016).

Furthermore, Nbeta (2012: 59), observed that, theoretically, the right model for elucidating the Ogoni case is depicted in terms of internal colonialism and how it relates to the minority oil producing areas in Nigeria. Specifically, it is indicated by the ways in which the grave and deliberate misuse of Ogoni resources added to the cultural division of labour that marginalises them. The assertions by Naanen and Nbeta fit into Osha's (2007: 73), contention that the issue of internal colonialism dates back to years of overlooking the minorities' issues and grievances. This enhances the claims made by the Ogoni that internal colonialism occurs in the country. In the 1990s, Ogoni leaders, including Saro-Wiwa, Leton and heads of the clans in Ogoniland declared that Ogoni resources were channelled to the other regions for the advancement of the power controlling groups, while they lingered in a deprived and inadequate environment. Naanen, for instance, maintains that the southern minorities had long suffered from internal colonialism carried out through the control of political power (Naanen, 1995: 91). It is important to clarify that the Ogoni construction of internal colonialism relates only to the Igbo and the Ijaw, not to other groups within the region. In the words of Naanen,

Internal colonialism does not apply to the Nigerian state, it will be inappropriate to apply it to the larger dominant groups, it applies mostly to the minorities (Interview: 29 July 2016).

Mitee adds that,

Internal colonialism in Ogoniland was historical, from when we were first in the eastern region, when the majority of the government of the eastern region was in the hands of the Igbos. The minorities issue was even looked at by the Willinks Commission, where it stated that the government of Nigeria should not so much

oppress the people of the Niger Delta, that the people will revolt and then troops will be required to quell that rebellion (Interview: 2016).

The internal colonialism narrative that started in the 1990s by Saro-Wiwa and Naanen continues to date in Ogoniland and the mode of presentation is devoid of any inclination to violence. The emphasis, rather, is on internal domination, and at this stage the complaints are being addressed within the norms of nonviolent civil engagement such as protests and letter writing. The adoption of nonviolence in addressing the Ogoni cause signals a strong feeling of agency that suggests a path to be chartered towards getting attention to their cause. In the words of Saro-Wiwa,

It is very important that we have chosen the path of nonviolent struggle. Our opponents are given to violence and we cannot meet them on their turn, even if we wanted to. Nonviolent struggle offers weak people the strength which they otherwise would not have. The spirit becomes important and no gun can silence that (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a: 194).

This suggests that using nonviolent actions in the Ogoni struggle was understood to be a powerful psychological political weapon and moral armour for the oppressed minorities against the oppressors, viewing it as a form of moral advantage to be gained. This relates to Saro-Wiwa's argument on true federalism, which, as he asserts, would greatly improve the well-being and happiness of peoples in the Nigerian state (Nbeta, 2006: 174). Nbeta concludes that,

To avoid a situation where the rights of the minority are subsumed under the tyranny of the majority, you have to recognize the different categories and groups of people and their needs so that there can be peace. (Interview: 27 July 2015).

These narratives serve as a validation of the argument showing that the Ogoni narratives engage positively with nonviolence and are related only to the marginalization and oppression suffered by the group.

3.3 Transnationalism and Internationalism

The previous section analyzed the Ogoni perception of the state and how the Ogoni agenda was linked to internal colonialism but with a liberal connotation as opposed to its original Marxist stance. This section will analyze the internationalism as well as the transnationalism of the Ogoni struggle, as will be demonstrated with an emphasis on human and minority rights

violations. It will show how the deliberate adoption of a narrative acceptable to the United Nations gave the Ogoni the edge they needed to attract international attention. Specifically, the inclusion of human rights to the Ogoni agenda will show how the linkage to the UN and other international NGOs helped shape the struggle in line with the internationally accepted norm of nonviolence, which the Ogoni group maintains today. To determine what these narratives connote, and how they relate to nonviolence, it will also focus on narratives linked to the claims made by the group on what they considered as factors responsible for their predicaments.

Since the late 1980s the Ogoni situated their claims within a global discourse of social justice and human/environmental rights, aimed at controlling oil resources and a right to self-determination (Obi, 2009:475). The adoption of the internationally recognised discourse on human rights in the 1990s by Ken Saro-Wiwa highlighted, for instance, the UN regulations Procedure 1503: 'if a case is presented and the UN investigates and sees a consistent pattern of rights violation, a reference will be made to the Nigerian government and action will start from there' (Saro-Wiwa, 1993b). The inference, therefore, is that the main aim was the insertion of clear-cut issues related to the UN as a means of attracting specific attention to their plight that would automatically draw immediate consideration from the Nigerian state.

Comfort (2002: 229), argues that such accounts of struggles for environmental rights relate to fights for environmental conservation aimed at ending poverty and they indicate a deep contestation of international models of development responsible for growing inequality. However, while this argument has validity, it does not explain how the inclusion of rights relates to the nonviolent construction of the Ogoni struggle, which is the gap this chapter seeks to fill. According to Saro-Wiwa,

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) was a real find, the great appeal for me was its insistence that its members forswear violence in their struggle (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a: 94). My contact with them, other organizations and activists such as Michael van Walt van der Praag, introduced me to the nature of nonviolent struggle for rights, and I thought I could do the same for the Ogoni (ibid: 101).

The argument that the narratives of the Ogoni are linked to nonviolence was also put forward by Naanen in his recounting of how adopting a narrative acceptable to the UN gave the Ogoni the legitimacy they needed in attracting attention. He reiterated that,

The UN recognize all manner of rights, it enforces rights of minorities. They give them rights within their present states because they don't encourage secession. In the case of Ogoni, human rights abuses were very rife. You have to know where to tag your struggle, to be able to identify issues that the international community would support. Nobody would have encouraged the Ogoni to struggle for an independent state, which is the main reason for remaining nonviolent, with violence nobody would have supported us (Interview: 31 July 2015).

This reconstruction by Naanen shows that the Ogoni made a deliberate plan, knowing fully well the importance and recognition attached to all manner of rights by the UN whose support would provide them with the moral and political legitimacy they needed. Further justifying the use of rights, Pyagbara notes that,

After the collapse of the Cold War, the rights of communities were actually maturing, the UN in 1992 had passed the Declarations on the Rights of Minorities and by that time the working group on Indigenous Population had almost concluded a 10-year draft of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People. We saw ourselves as a community that have indelible rights, and felt most of our issues were actually bordered on denial of rights, not from a needs based perspective, which is why the entire theory of the Ogoni people was cast in terms of violation of rights (Interview: 31 July 2015).

Obi (2008: 13), corroborates this by arguing that in the 1990s, the Ogoni movement, which was intentionally nonviolent, accentuated the use of public space for contesting the military administration and oil companies through peaceful demonstrations. Interviewees also pointed to the Ogoni leaders finding inspiration in the writings of philosophers on the issues of people's rights. According to Nbeta,

Ken followed the examples of philosophers like Thomas Paine who wrote the famous rights of man, John Locke on people's right to self-determination, people's rights to existence. They are affirmations of several other international declarations of human rights (Interview: 27 July 2015).

The inclusion of narratives linking the powerful concepts of internal colonialism and human rights in ways that support nonviolence is an aspect that has been overlooked by scholars. Some of the work by Okonta, Osha, Obi, Osaghae, Ikelegbe, and Watts have explored specific dimensions of internal colonialism and human rights, however, their analysis did not dwell on how the two concepts have arguably contributed to a peaceful strategy in fighting the Ogoni cause. Hence Naanen's assertion that:

The discourse between internal colonialism and human rights took place simultaneously, the internal colonialism actually predates the human rights issue. Right from the beginning of the century up to the time of the civil war, and it even continued under the new regimes in Nigeria, but the human rights issue was mostly associated with the Babangida and Abacha eras (Interview: 29 July 2016).

During the military administration (1983-1999) which was generally regarded as authoritarian, Naanen suggests a narrative of clear understanding, choice and inclusion of human rights to the Ogoni agenda strategically. Therefore, what emerges from the Ogoni leaders' narratives is a sense of positive agency, as exemplified in the linkage of their movement to global environmentalist movements. This fits into Comfort's (2002), assertion that Saro-Wiwa's enunciation of environmental unfairness stands out from the typical Nigerian political tradition. She argues that his stand on environmental justice shows similarities to ethnic politics but goes further to show a new social construction revolving around environmental justice. This in turn derives its legality from Saro-Wiwa's claim of Ogoni nationhood, and his belief in the Ogoni as a principled group of environmental overseers linked with nationalist narratives. This was demonstrated in the inclusion of internal colonialism, human rights and minority discourses in the Ogoni cause, which can be argued was due to the intellectual quality and knowledge of their leadership.

3.3.1 Stressing minority rights

As well as human rights, the Ogoni leaders pitched the group's grievances also in relation to minority group's rights. Consequently, the Ogoni struggle, according to Nbeta,

Was for political autonomy, economic emancipation, and recognition of their cultural identity and affirmation of their identity as a people. The recognition of minority rights, does not mean that their rights should be trampled upon, they should have equal rights with every other group within the nation (Interview: 27 July 2015).

In support of this view, Mitee recounts that:

We felt we had to do something to check what we thought was the marginalisation of our people both politically and economically. We needed a fair proportion of the resources of our land for our own development, and the protection of our environment (Interview: 3 August 2016).

It was against this background in the 1990s that the Ogoni claimed to have come together as one ethnic group, to fight for the rights their indigenes had been deprived of. The suppression of the Ogoni cultural identity is also included as one that was being pursued by the Nigerian state, as it concentrated more on the protection of the three major languages of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. Nbeta further remarked that,

In the early 60s-70s the Ogoni language was studied in primary schools but it came a time that only the three major languages were studied, today no secondary school recognizes any of the languages of the ethnic minorities. We felt that this region that was giving so much to the nation was being threatened and instead of being integrated we were being assimilated, gradually facing an erosion of our cultural identity (Interview: 27 July 2015).

Okonta argues that the centralisation of politics at the national and local levels left the Ogoni with the perception of being subjects again, similarly to the colonial era (Okonta, 2008: 136). Accordingly, Nbeta presents the Ogoni story as a classic example of a people who, far from securing their civic rights, became minorities instead of full citizens. He portrays the Ogoni as an involuntary minority within a minority:

The Ogoni don't like being called a minority, but it is a label that they have found themselves in. They want every person, every group to be seen as an individual first and then as groups (ibid).

The struggle for minority rights is also presented as a peaceful struggle in line with international norms, as Saro-Wiwa narrated:

We are involved in a passive resistance. We are appealing to the UN that the matter is beyond the care of the Nigerian government [...]. The UN should come in and save the Ogoni people and the Delta minorities because the rest of the country is incapable of doing it (Saro-Wiwa, 1993b). Under the UN regulations, anybody can take a case against a government, this is then presented to the Sub-Commission of Human Rights on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. I believe there must be peaceful protest, the rights of people in the oil producing areas are being abused. These people are being driven to extinction and it's their responsibility to stand up and say no to it (ibid).

In another forum, Saro-Wiwa maintained that:

Our stand is purely moral, that is all we have as a minority. We are only using the weapons that are available to us. I myself am a peaceful man (Saro-Wiwa, 1993a).

These quotations show that, although the Ogoni perceive themselves as an oppressed minority, in fighting for their rights the nonviolence norm had to be maintained. Here again, the Ogoni present a positive sense of collective agency in the use of nonviolence which they know is the internationally accepted norm.

3.4 Narratives on Oil

The previous section explored the internationalism and transnationalism of the Ogoni struggle to include internationally accepted norms recognised specifically by the UN and the international community. This section will now focus on how the Ogoni construct their grievances in relation to the discovery of oil, which they claimed has impacted negatively on their lives while maintaining a nonviolent course of action. The issues here will include the ownership, share and allocation of oil revenues.

HRW (1999: 6), reported that Nigeria's political economy recorded a major change with the location of oil, which accounts for more than ninety percent of revenue to the state. It argues that these resources have been utilised to the detriment of the vast majority and to the benefit of a few, while accounting for negative impacts on the environment in the oil producing areas (ibid). Based on the Nigerian constitution, the state owns all minerals, oil and gas, and has sole responsibility for negotiating the terms and conditions of oil production activities. The Petroleum Act of 1969 cap 350, the Land Use Act cap 202 (Obulor, 2009: 128), are some of the laws of the Federation of Nigeria that committed everything above and below the land to the state. Shell controls a joint venture that produces close to one half the country's crude oil, while Mobil, Chevron, Elf, Agip, and Texaco run other joint ventures, with a variety of other international and national oil companies operating smaller businesses (ibid: 7). However, decades of oil production activities in the Niger Delta have had severe devastating effects on the environment and the livelihood of the majority of the inhabitants of the resource producing areas (ibid). The discovery of oil has been both a blessing and the major contributing factor to the troubles in the region (Darah, 1995). According to Saro-Wiwa,

The oil belongs to the landlords. Ogoni is older than Nigeria; any community producing oil is older than Nigeria; the oil is their property, [...] the Nigerian government has no reason whatsoever to appropriate the royalties to itself, and it has been doing so to all Delta people minorities who produce oil (Saro-Wiwa, 1993b).

Saro-Wiwa (1992: 24), also claimed that the arrival of Shell-B.P armed with oil mining licence (OML) obtained from the colonial administration marked the beginning of extinction in Ogoniland which the people were ignorant of. The Ogoni, according to Mitee (1999: 431), whose land was used for oil producing activities, were not considered worthy enough for consultation and negotiations which led to subsequent agreements between the state and Shell. Interview with Nbeta (27 July 2015) highlights that

The multinational firms have had several years of oil activities without giving back anything. Shell is number one, then other allied firms like Chevron, Total and recently TotalFina, but basically we don't really talk much about the other firms because Shell has controlling interest. Even in the major oil block in Ogoni OML 11⁴, Shell has the operating license. Even within the Nigerian setting the NNPC⁵ has less than Shell.

Similarly, interview with Medee revealed that,

The level of devastation we have witnessed continued, the entire eco system and the farmlands were destroyed. Not only were health challenges posed as a result of this devastation, but the main sources of our livelihood were also destroyed (27 July 2015).

The Ogoni elites understood that the oil wealth flowing underneath Ogoniland was almost imagined and not a tangible benefit since it conveyed poverty, injustice and death (Nixon, 1996: 6). The presence of oil failed to usher in the prosperity associated with resource exploration, and has instead subjected the Ogoni ecosystem to substantial damage (Okonta, 2008: 3). Moreover, as Okonta argues, from 1989, a new phase of the Ogoni struggle was initiated with a programme of mass action and passive resistance on the one hand, and on the other, a transformed determination to emphasise the environmental outcomes of oil extraction with strong emphasis on the role played by Shell on group rights within the federal structure (Watts, 1999 2003:22). This suggests that from 1989, the group witnessed an increased awareness and

⁴ Oil Mining lease (OML) 11

⁵ Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

knowledge of the ill-effects of oil production activities as well as the peculiar situation within which the Ogoni found themselves. This some of the leaders felt obliged to challenge.

Interview with Orage attests to this:

The policies of Shell operations in Ogoni were totally unfavourable, it was operating on the basis of a licensed agreement with the government. We felt that the lack of development, and environmental degradation were problems to which Shell and the government were accountable for. This is why when the agitations came they became obviously the people from whom the Ogoni people sought demands from (Interview: 27 July 2015).

Sharing a similar opinion, Naanen also blamed the state and the oil conglomerates:

The state for putting the conditions for the marginalization and Shell for completing the marginalization through environmental devastation. The Ogoni felt the government was an entity opposed to their interest (Interview: 31 July 2015).

Interview with Owens Wiwa further highlights the gravity of the situation,

We used the medium of what affected us most, environmental genocide. You have that sense that you are going to die. The core thing that God gave you to survive is going away, the vegetables are no longer growing or if they grow, they have different colours. The fish from which you get the proteins are no longer thriving. Then the government is nonchalant, is in an unholy alliance with the oil company (Interview: 3 August 2015).

In this context, Saro-Wiwa argued that the achievement of political autonomy and the right to use a fair proportion of Ogoni resources for its development was a responsibility of all Ogoni, but he clarified that this was not a call to violent action (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a: 74-75). Although Saro-Wiwa challenged the destruction caused through the activities of oil exploration which, as he claimed, had destroyed the spiritual connection the Ogoni shared with the land, he opted pragmatically to lay claim to the revenues gained from the oil that flows beneath Ogoniland, as both a right and a form to redress the people's suffering. Ejobowah (2000: 36) notes that ethnic groups like the Ogoni have increasingly challenged the state's control of rents and royalties and laid ownership claims to the resources produced from their land. This is attested to by Osaghae (1995: 340), who argued that in laying ownership to the oil produced in

Ogoniland, the Ogoni, as other oil producing areas, themselves instead of the state claimed to be the rightful recipients of the revenue accrued, based on the principle of derivation.

The derivation principle requires that states be given apportionments from the main fund in strict percentage to their input to the fund (Ashwe, 1986: 88; Abubakar, 1986: 263; Frynas, 2001: 32). This viewpoint, according to Akinola and Adesopo (2011: 252), requires that inhabitants of the revenue generation zone must have been affected in terms of external costs manifested through pollution and interference of socio-economic activities occurring from oil production, as a form of compensation. However, the derivation principle encountered several manipulations resulting from changes in governments, therefore indicating a harsh decline from 100 percent in 1953 to 50 percent in 1960; 45 percent in 1969; 20 percent in 1975; 1.5 percent in 1982; 1.0 percent in 1990; 3.0 percent in 1992 to the 13 percent being given to the oil producing communities, which is supported by section 162 (2) of the 1999 Constitution (Anyanwu, 1997: 190; Sagay, 2001; Rapu, 2006: 13; Othman and Williams, 1999: 28; Nwajiaku, 2005: 468; Frynas, 2001: 32-33). Further evidence from interviews with Nbeta suggest that:

Prior to the discovery of oil, the principle of derivation held sway in Nigeria, the percentage of revenue that accrue to the area was upwards of 80% at some point it was about 90%, it dwindled to about 70 and then when eventually oil was discovered it fell to a paltry 0.5% and then after so much struggle it was increased to 13% (Interview: 27 July 2015).

For the Ogoni, therefore, the principle of derivation formula changed drastically (Nwajiaku, 2005: 468). Naanen clarified that,

From the 70s, when we began to have massive oil spills compensations were in pittances. The Ogoni felt excluded from the oil economy, we felt disempowered, helpless and we wanted to be empowered and treated as equal citizens in Nigeria (Interview: 31 July 2015).

In a similar vein, Medee emphasised that,

Some of our people who had opportunities to western education also had information about how oil-bearing communities are treated in the world. All these culminated in the desire and necessity to come together as an ethnic group and articulated the need for better treatment for our people and to address the effects of oil exploration in our communities (Interview: 27 July 2015).

The impact of the preceding narrative is the intensification of disagreements between the oil companies and the Ogoni people. It was the balance of power between the multinationals and the forceful apparatus of the state that ultimately defined the outcome of the struggle (Obi, 1997: 144). Although the narratives in this section depict some of the historical characteristics which engendered oppositions within Ogoniland, there seems to be no indication towards violence. Instead, as argued, the narratives indicate the emphasis on peaceful claims for better treatment and for recognition of the rights of the Ogoni to a fair share of the oil revenues.

The first part of this chapter presented collective Ogoni narratives indicating the construction of a primordial Ogoni nation, the perception of the state including views related to internal colonialism, internationalism and transnationalism in terms of minority rights issues and linkage of the Ogoni cause to internationally recognised norms, as well as narratives on oil. These collectively have shown how the narratives engage positively with nonviolence, especially through the linkage to the spiritual significance of the land and in relation to the UN. Through the linking of environmental destruction, economic exploitation, denial of human rights and ethnicity as noted by Comfort (2002: 342), the Ogoni leaders attempted to construct a collective identity of peaceful resistance. The connection between environmental issues, basic human rights and social justice suggests an intense contestation of international developmental trends that have hastened increasing disparity, environmental contamination and land closures (ibid: 329). This chapter has argued that these narratives relate only to the Ogoni and not to other groups in the region. The following part will present the Ijaw narratives which, in contrast to the Ogoni's, engage positively with violence.

3.5 Collective Ijaw Narratives

This section will focus on the Ijaw narratives in comparison to the Ogoni's and how they engage with violence. It will show that the Ijaw narratives of the 1990s started off on a peaceful note but changed in the latter part of the years to violence partly as a result of the extrajudicial killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and partly in reaction to the repressive action of the state in response to the Ijaw agitations. As mentioned earlier, the key argument of this section is to demonstrate that the narratives of the Ijaw engage with violence, bearing in mind the common lived experiences of the two groups. It is significant to point out from the beginning that, unlike the Ogoni who emphasized their specific identity in all discussions, most of the Ijaw leaders

referred to the group as constituting the Niger Delta because they are the largest and dominant ethnic group in the region during the field interviews conducted.

Pre-colonial Ijaw regarded kinship ties based on clans as the most important decision-making unit, with the adult male population playing a key role in the process (Leis, 1964: 829). Traditional governance was vested on the village head also known as the '*amanyanabo*' and on heads of lineages as against a general assembly of men (Dike, 1956: 31). Before the colonisation and subsequent independence of Nigeria, the Ijaw were a politically and socially isolated group in spite of their location along riverbanks (Leis, 1964: 829). Leis argues that the group was drawn together through common rituals, beliefs and intermarriages and a shared belief in being related through descending from a distant ancestor (ibid). According to Ariye (2013: 28), pre-colonial Ijawland was regarded as a non-centralized group, characterized by lineage groups founded by various sons of the founder of the village. In comparison to the Ogoni, in the area of religion, he explains that each unit, *Ibe*, had a chief priest, *Pere*, who presided over general annual gatherings and the worship of a single national god, while the Ogoni were noted to have had several deities. The political system in the western Delta was led through a village administration unit *Ama-Okosowei*, based on the autonomous settlement devoid of a centralizing force.

The Ijaw is the largest ethnic group in the Niger Delta which consist of sixty eight independent clans, spread within six states: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Ondo and Rivers, it is the fourth largest ethnic nationality in Nigeria (Etekpe, 2009: 142). Due to the complex nature of the terrain, the Ijaw are broken into subgroups that speak reciprocally unintelligible tongues of the Ijaw language (HRW, 1999: 82). It is estimated that approximately eight million people portray themselves as Ijaw, mainly situated along the riverine areas (ibid: 83). The distinction between the riverine and upland areas in the region is of foremost cultural and geopolitical significance, and it is embedded in the arguments over the rights of the oil areas (ibid, 83). The Niger Delta situation is somewhat complex in the sense that even before independence, the peculiar situation of the environment and how it affected the lives of the people were actually part of the issues which the people raised. These situations led to the setting up of the Willinks Commission in 1958.

Several Ijaw narratives from the early 1990s revolve around the area known as the Niger Delta region. Benatari (1998), argued that the formation of the Ijaw ethnic nation was a gradual

process, historically dating back to the period earlier than 400 CE i.e. 500 BCE to 700 CE (AD), during which the proto-Ijaws or ‘ancient people’ ancestors settled in the central Delta and merged with immigrants that later came to the area. The Ijaw, just like the Ogoni, are represented as traditionally farmers, fishermen, and producers of palm oil. However, the narratives of the Ijaw as it will be demonstrated are not as focused on the construction of a collective identity in relation to the importance of the land as that of the Ogoni. Rather, the Ijaw emphasize the process of state creation that led to the destruction of the Ijaw environment.

According to Papamie,

There are geographical delineations within the Niger Delta, there is a western and central Delta. The western Delta is more of Delta state and a small part of Ondo state, that is Ijaw, the central Delta is Bayelsa state, the eastern Delta is Rivers state and a small chunk of Akwa Ibom state that is also Ijaw (Interview: 30 July 2015).

Figure 3.2

Map Showing Ijaw Area



Source: Wadoo.org http://www.waado.org/nigerdelta/maps/WestNiger_Ethnic.html

Ijaw leaders such as Wills explain that,

Pre independence, the colonial masters knowing that there were fears amongst the various minorities in Nigeria, decided to set up the Willinks Commission to investigate their fears and to proffer responses. That commission recommended that the region should be declared a special development area, and a board be set

up to deal with the development of the region, that's the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) (Interview: 29 July 2015).

Another dimension of the Ijaw grievance in relation to the Ijaw environment also related to the pre independence era, as Osuoka puts it:

Even before independence the peculiar situation of the environment and how it affects the lives of the Ijaw, were presented, and that led up to the setting up of the Willinks Commission in 1958. The Commission was very particular when it highlighted the environment and the importance of taking particular actions, it proposed the setting up of a special development focused programme for the region. But that was even before oil added a new misery into the complex developmental challenges of the Niger Delta (Interview: 31 July 2015).

It is instructive at this point to briefly discuss the Willinks Commission Report, which forms a vital aspect in understanding the Niger Delta conflict. Prior to Nigeria's independence and out of anxiety of apparent marginalization and neglect, political leaders from the region, including the Ijaw and Ogoni, advocated for a self-governing region to avoid being subsumed under the control of the major tribes. This led the British colonial government to establish the Willinks⁶ Commission in 1957 to carry out a review on the fears of domination presented by the minorities. According to Watts and Ibaba (2011: 8), the commission was expected to establish the evidence regarding the concerns of minorities in any part of Nigeria, and to recommend ways to protect them (Umukoro, 2011: 8). It noted the particular challenges affecting the region due to the difficulties of the environment, thereby recommending that the area be regarded as a special area requiring special attention (ibid: 16). Interestingly, according to the Ijaw, the vital recommendation of the commission aimed at alleviating ethnic based control politically and enhancing development failed to occur in independent Nigeria (Anele and Nkpah, 2013:15; Watts and Ibaba, 2011: 8). This perceived failure of mitigating political, ethnic domination and improving development is emphasised by Ogon:

The Nigerian state did not take the recommendations made by the commission as important, not all the recommendations were implemented. Even the NDDDB that was created did not perform according to expectations (Interview: 30 July 2015).

This suggests that even before the 1990s, the perceived failure on the part of the state to respond to the recommendations of the Willinks Commission is presented in the Ijaw leaders'

⁶ Sir Henry Willinks, a respectable Queen's Counsel commissioned in September 1957.

narratives as one of the first examples of a narrow-minded behaviour and a constant refusal to listen to and respond to peaceful rights claims.

The metamorphosis of the Ijaw grievances and how they are currently expressed are attributable to natural human psychological factors of frustration and anger. The dominant narrative among Ijaw leaders, as shown, refer back to several complains and appeals made from before independence to the 1990s, which yielded very few or no results. In this situation, the group decided to consider a mix of options from the orthodox to the unorthodox. Nevertheless, in discussing the Ijaw grievances that were not addressed by the state, the interview with Wills highlights that:

Through the military years, there were a lot of advocacy and appeals by the leaders of the region, such as Dapa Briye, Professor Claude Ake, Melford Okilo, and Obi Wali. That advocacy continued and most of the intellectuals, wrote tons and tons on issues of greater autonomy, fiscal federalism, resource control. But instead of heeding the cries of the people, the government did nothing (Interview: 29 July 2015).

In a similar interview, Ogoriba points to the fact that,

When we raised our heads to say that these things are not proper, the government will do things in a way to keep us in perpetual quietude, for example, arrests and widespread hostility. There was no peace, they burnt down our towns like Odi, Umuechem in the 90s, just to make sure that we don't talk. Did they want us to continue to agitate so that could wipe us out of the surface of the earth? (Interview: 10 August 2015).

What seems to emerge from the Ijaw narratives, are historical feelings of real frustration and a sense of impotence in terms of being faced with a government that refused to address their complaints and issues. There is a strong perception also of neglect dating back to before the advent of commercial oil production. Ogoriba recounts that,

Back in the 90s, they used brute force on us, there were gun boats, check points, we were under a bond, we were held hostage, particularly in places where we go to hold our meetings in the Delta. At that time the level of consciousness was rising, so we had to champion the cause of our people with the small education that we had (Interview: 10 August 2015).

As seen in the Ogoni section, Ogon, one of the moderate Ijaw youth leaders, also points to the attitude of the state in relation to the significance to the Ijaw of the land as a source of livelihood:

In most cases, you see no trespass clearly written on farm lands, pipes are not laid deep down in the mud. People are denied access to their farms that normally should be a resource for feeding themselves (Interview: 30 July 2015).

Attesting to the land issue, Lancelot, another Ijaw youth leader, asserts that,

Land is at a premium which is the one on which the average African has almost a near spiritual tie to. But by instrument of government policy it is expropriated and the people are not directly or indirectly benefitting from its wealth. It is aggregated anger at that situation that gave rise to the charters of demand (Interview: 31 July 2015).

Coming back to the current perceptions within the Ijaw, Wills reiterated that,

Currently there are communities where you have to drive 1 or 2 hours by boat to get to, with appalling conditions. Imagine this whole area 50-60 years ago and how remote it was to government's attention in Lagos (Interview: 29 July 2015).

Here again, the late 1990s narratives suggest a series of factors that aggravated the anger and sense of perceived exclusion from the real political process and marginalization. The frustration and marginalisation issues evident in the Ijaw narratives seem to be directly linked to the way the state upset the Ijaw communal order. Osuoka concludes this thus:

Each community had its own order, how things are done, decisions made and implemented. But you bring in an external community extending and imposing its system upon the other communities. Then you have a situation where a particular community, whether in the form of state or pre state formation now decides to forcefully override an existing communal order, it uses violence, and it is not only Europeans that did it (Interview: 31 July 2015)

Thus far, the narratives presented from the moderate Ijaw youth leaders are devoid of violence, even though they express dissatisfaction with the nature of state responses to the Ijaw issues, which has some semblance to the Ogoni nonviolent narratives. The next section will discuss how the state is perceived by the Ijaw and how it relates to the violence imposed on the communities that serves to exacerbate the frustrations and impotence suffered by the Ijaw thereby impacting on their movement.

3.6 Nature of the State

In comparison to the Ogoni construction of the colonial state in terms of internal colonialism, this section will present how the Ijaw construct their marginalization outwards against the central Nigerian state and the dominant Igbo ethnic group. But similarly to the Ogoni narratives on the nature of the state, the Ijaw analysis can be seen as a form of internal colonialism, although the Ijaw leaders I interviewed do not speak in terms of internal colonialism. This section will also analyse the prevalent attitude of aggression and confrontation adopted by the Ijaw leaders from the late 1990s as against the nonviolent tone of the Ogoni of the early 1990s. Inferences were made in some of the interviews to the nature of the state constructed by the colonial masters' pre 1960, and accordingly, this section will examine the Ijaw narratives in relation to historical grievances from the colonial era to the 1990s. This is aimed at presenting and analysing the contents of the narratives to show how they relate to violence, which is an important gap in the Niger Delta literature this chapter aims to bridge. It is important to point out here that as discussed in the previous section, violence in the region started fully in the late 1990s, after the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995. According to Mamdani (1996), the colonial state was authoritarian and committed to extraction rather than to the development of the colonised states, forcing colonial subjects to finance the expenses of their infrastructural development (Nwajiaku, 2005: 465). Osaghae argues that the Ijaw underdevelopment began with the discriminatory and anti-Ijaw policies of the British who seemed bent on punishing members of the group who as middlemen, sided with the Portuguese against the British both in slave and in legitimate goods trade (Osaghae, 2008).

In the 1960s, Isaac Adaka Boro accused the Nigerian state of not finding it important to provide the inhabitants of the Niger Delta with pipe borne water, be it in the salt water washed creeks or in muddy fresh water rivers. People drink from the most squalid wells and so dysentery and worm diseases are rife, despite being the richest in water (Boro, 1982: 66). In 1963, Boro claimed to have conducted a political sampling of the Ijaw and discovered that most of the youths were frustrated with the general neglect and were ready for any action led by an outstanding leader to gain liberty (ibid:75). According to Watts (2003), prior to the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war, Boro and his band of followers were able to capture almost all of Ijaw territory within two weeks (Osha, 2006) and declared a Delta Republic, which Watts (2003:21) referred to as a 'desperate cry for some sort of political inclusion'. Prior to

the uprising, Boro specifically expressed his frustration with the Nigerian state in not doing enough for the Niger Delta by reporting that:

Year after year, we were clenched in tyrannical chains and led through a dark alley of perpetual political and social deprivation. Strangers in our own country [...] the day will come for us to fight for our long denied right to self-determination [...] If Nigerian governments refuse to do something drastic to improve the lot of the people, a point of no return will be reached (Boro, 1982).

According to Osuoka,

There were communities that didn't have state forms of organisation, but in the coastal city states you had such states having power and instruments of government that were more or less professional. But to create that authority, you needed to use force to maintain and get people to control even the business that the state was concerned about. The state at that time was like a mega corporation, which the Nigerian state is right now (Interview, 2015).

This fits into the explanation by Ogoriba of how the Ijaw visualise the state in the form of a mega corporation borne out of the colonial rule. He argues that,

The state formed by the colonialists has a character and purpose. In the Nigerian constitution, there is a section on fundamental objectives of the purpose of the state, the colonial state had a purpose to plunder, take, loot, remove resources as much as possible, which is violent in character (Interview: 10 August 2015).

Some of the radical moderate Ijaw leaders argued that the Nigerian state is dominated by the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo, the three major ethnic groups in the country. For instance, Gbomo Jomo⁷, (2011), relates this domination to what he termed as 'uneducated and unexposed Northern Nigerians who the British judged most obedient and easy to control from England'. Right from independence, he argues, each Nigerian ruler loyally subscribed to servitude of the British, in total indifference to the interests and well-being of the people (ibid). Moreover, the nature of the Nigerian state has been described explicitly by Osuoka, one of the architects of the Ijaw Kaiama Declaration, as violent. The Kaiama Declaration represents an articulated set of demands from the Ijaw youths to the state that is similar to the Ogoni Bill of Rights, and it will be analysed fully in Chapter Five, to demonstrate the closest the Ijaw movement ever came to nonviolence, which was short lived. Osuoka expressed that,

⁷ Spokesman of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

The state is not extracting to replace, it is creating an infrastructure that will see to the land being wasted, which is violence on nature. Ideally, the idea of a state is a political community, but when you have the colonial state that has not achieved community, although it has political force, and you have communities that are in conflict and competition with it, which are mostly resolved through violence (Interview: 31 July 2015).

He further clarifies that:

We had a situation where those communal forms were wiped out by force in the period of European colonialism. The process of establishing colonial rule over the territory involved the slaughter and massacre of people that attempted to resist, causing disruption and the dislocation of communal forms and cultures making the character of the state such that seeks to maintain the monopoly of violence (Interview: 31 July 2015).

Osuoka's assertions above connect the state to direct violence, which Weber holds as 'that entity which upholds the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order' (Whimster, 2003; Gellner, 1983). Unification was accomplished mainly through state violence; furthermore, the colonial policy objective was fundamentally to integrate Nigeria into the world capitalist system. And in order to achieve this strategic objective, the colonial state decided to use bayonets and cannons (Fanon, 1963: 36). The Ogoni's peaceful struggle was branded by Ijaw leaders as an example of a failed strategy that vindicated the need to resort to violence. Ajuwa states that,

After the death of Saro-Wiwa, when we see that if we did not carry arms the government is not going to respond, that is why we changed that system to gun system (Interview: 10 August 2015).

In the later Ijaw narratives, like those of the Ogoni, the correlation of the state and violence is strongly asserted (Whimster, 2003). The narratives tell of a critical historical juncture represented by the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa by the then military administration headed by General Sani Abacha. This event is argued to be one of the most significant factors that transformed the Niger Delta conflict into a violent militant activity (Isumonah, 2004; Comfort, 2002; Oboreh, 2010). Furthermore, the Ijaw narratives that emerged after the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa will reveal the representation of the nature of the state mainly in terms of violence, accompanied by strong arguments suggesting that the only effective way to respond to the

state's behaviour was through violence. Ogoni tells the story in ways that clearly depict the recourse to violence as a defensive strategy in the face of state brutality:

Saro-Wiwa, a campaigner for peace died a violent death, his killing did not bring the government to address our issues. The people felt the need to upgrade. So shutting down the oil production will hurt the economy and will force the government to respond. Even when you are having peaceful protests you are being brutalized and detained, what then was the value? But these were peaceful rallies sometimes all women yet the army will come with force. What kind of reaction would you expect? (Interview: 30 July 2015).

This perspective is also corroborated in the words of Ramsey:

The government doesn't listen to us in the Niger Delta, after Ken Saro-Wiwa was brutalized and killed by the soldiers we decided to physically fight for our rights. Because government uses violence we too will use violence (Interview: 10 August 2015).

These narratives indicate how the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa was not seen only as an Ogoni issue; the Ijaw constructed it as a problem that affected them too, especially the young people in the IYC who launched the operation climate change as a response to his execution. The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa is depicted as a turning point in the Ijaw leaders' narratives in the late 1990s, which from that time engaged positively with violence. They also suggest the turn to violence as a direct result of frustration with the engagement process of the state. However, it can also be argued that the representation of violence as being constitutive of the nature of the state response in earlier narratives by the Ijaw leaders, had already paved the way for justifying a violently confrontational struggle.

It is instructive to note at this point that while the Ogoni are able to define the state as a form of internal colonialism, the Ijaw are not able to do so. Although the Ijaw leaders I interviewed did not speak in terms of internal colonialism, their examination of the state had many similarities with the Ogoni. This suggests that the Ijaw situation can be seen as a form of internal colonialism except that, whereas for the Ogoni, they are more clearly articulated, being a minority oppressed by minorities themselves. What emerges from the Ogoni claim and that of the Ijaw is a distinction that, for the Ijaw, there is a sense of desperation, frustration and a strong sense that there is nothing they can do against a state that is over powerful. Whereas from the Ogoni narratives, what seems to emerge is a sense of agency that there is something

they can do about the Nigerian state's actions, if they link up with movements across the globe as well as with international struggles. Therefore, the analysis indicates the emergence of feelings of real frustration and a sense of impotence on the part of the Ijaw, which may be regarded as the main reason that eventually lead them to the adoption of violence.

3.7 Transnationalism and Internationalism

This section will analyse the internationalism as well as the transnationalism of the Ijaw struggle. Unlike the Ogoni, who put emphasis on human and minority rights, the Ijaw emphasized international struggles which engage positively with violence. This will further indicate the ways in which the two movements are quite distinct.

While the Ogoni pitched their struggle along international norms of human and minority rights and direct connection to the UN, the same cannot be said of the Ijaw movement which emerged from late 1998. The interview with Felix Tuodolo revealed that,

From 1997 to 1998 we didn't do any international campaigns at the time we started, everything we did was within Nigeria and later with Friends of the Earth and Human Rights Watch (Interview: 28 January 2017).

In the same vein, additional interview with Kunoun highlights that:

What the Ogoni did was as an ethnic group and they started from the home base and internationalised it, but ours didn't go that way, there wasn't anything solidly done from the home base as an ethnic group (Interview: 28 January 2017).

Ogoriba adds that,

We felt that if we now write a charter from that our conference, it will be known the world over, and that was what we achieved, called the Kaiama declaration (Interview: 28 January 2017).

Although these quotes indicate that the Ijaw as a group did not engage in transnationalism or internationalism in 1998, the interview with Ogon brings to light some direct engagements done at the international level by the Ijaw Youth Council in 1999.

One was our official letter to former president Jimmy Carter in 1999 and he also replied to us, supporting our option for peaceful engagement with the government

and his offer to also speak with the military government at that point in time (Interview: 31 January 2017).

In a letter to President Jimmy Carter, the Ijaw Youth Council stated that:

We believe that any dialogue with the government and oil transnationals must be genuine, frank and devoid of intimidation [...] there should also be local and international mediators. Honestly, dialogue is the sweet song the Ijaw youth have chorused since the Kaiama Declaration. The position remains the same and urgent (Ijaw Youth Council, 1999b).

The above quotes indicates both international and transnational links, specifically, the interest of the youth leaders in peaceful engagement with the state, suggesting nonviolence within the Ijaw in 1998. The IYC official letter to former President Jimmy Carter dated 2 March 1999 was a direct response to his visit to Port Harcourt. The letter, while thanking him for the visit in February of the same year, contained a brief history of the Ijaw problems as well as the need for urgent developments with the state and oil companies. It also stated that

The greatest achievement of your visit was your helping to present our grievances to the Nigerian people, particularly the out-going head of the military government (Ijaw Youth Council, 1999b).

Our survival is at stake. For four years we have been on the receiving end of ecological violence, waged most relentlessly by the transnational oil companies. We cannot afford to be under the spell of military violence, in the last year of the twentieth century. The twenty first century should usher in a decade of peace, justice, equity and good governance for all peoples (ibid).

This shows some attempt at internationalisation in spite of it not being as widely recognised as that of the Ogoni which was done on a collective group platform. On the Ijaw part, the attempt was made with such organisations based on individual direct engagement. President Carter replied with a recognition of the nonviolent nature of the IYC engagement at that time:

I was encouraged to see that you are searching for a peaceful resolution to your grievances with the federal government and foreign oil companies, and urge you to continue this approach [...] Since meeting with your council members [...] I have encouraged both Head of State Abubakar and President-elect Obasanjo to pursue an earnest dialogue with various people in the Delta (ibid).

According to Ogon,

Part of the issues we dealt with internationally was that of the human rights. We needed organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to monitor the environmental impact of oil production, and the human rights abuses occasioned by civil protests and the reaction of the state especially the military, the extra judicial killings (Interview: 31 January 2017).

Going back to a 1999 HRW report titled ‘The Price of Oil: Human Rights Violation in the Niger Delta’, it was a direct result of the Ijaw attempt to get the international community to follow closely what was going on in the region. Ogon further recounts that Amnesty International, Friends of the World, and Oil watch Africa, were some of the international organisations they were involved with. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable News Network (CNN) sent reporters such as Sam Olukoya and Jeff Koinange to follow up on the activities in the region. He informed that,

An exchange programme was organised with a group of environmentalists around the world that witnessed persons from all over the world going on a net tour of the Delta. Physically to learn about the challenges that we face and see what support they can give (Interview: 31 January 2017).

Additional international support to the Ijaw movement came in the form of a media publication signed by about five hundred organisations. Ogon explained that,

In 1999, about 500 organisations and notable personalities around the world carried a full-page advert in the Guardian newspaper expressing concerns about steps taken by the government. The military onslaught against Ijaw youths in the aftermath of the Kaiama Declaration, titled ‘We Are Watching’ (Ibid).

This came in the form of an open letter to the state, highlighting that,

We the undersigned, are extremely concerned about the deployment of troops in the Ijaw region of the Niger Delta which has left scores of people dead and countless others injured [...]. The Ijaw are, like the Ogoni before them, demanding for their rights to clean air, water and land by exercising their right to peaceful protest and assembly. [...] (The Guardian, 1999).

Here again, similarly to the Ogoni struggle, the peaceful and nonviolent nature of the initial Ijaw movement is demonstrated. There was specific mention of this in line with the support they got:

We support the nonviolent struggle of the Ijaw for the protection of their environment and the provision of human needs. We strongly condemn the

deployment of troops in the Ijaw region resulting in torture, shooting and deaths of nonviolent protesters. [...] (ibid).

Additional attempts at internationalisation were made by other notable Ijaw leaders such as Oronto Douglas, who in 2001 promoted the Ijaw cause in Canada (Bob, 2014: 329). Ogon explains that what they wanted at that time was the assurance that even if companies have been given the licence to explore for oil, they were not granted the licence to pollute the environment.

Oronto also had the opportunity of addressing some members of the European Parliament which led to the visit of some members of the Italian parliament to the Niger Delta to review the activities of Agip Oil Company. I took them round for one month to explore areas where Agip does its operations. At the end of the day it resulted in their interactions with the management of Agip on our behalf (Interview: 31 January 2017).

Attesting to this revelation by Ogon and in response to claims made by Oronto Douglas on behalf of the Ijaw in a speech at the “Petrolio ambiente e diritti umani” Conference in Rome May 1999, suggesting that Agip oil company might be involved in human rights violations and in practices against the environment in Nigeria. In a letter to Oronto Douglas dated 2 June 1999, the management of Eni Agip were quick to respond to these claims, stating that they were untrue and unfounded. The letter which served as an invitation to Oronto, stated that:

Clearly you received wrong and misleading information about our Group’s activities in Nigeria. [...] We would like and we feel we have the right to an opportunity to correct any wrong information you may have received in the past, so that you may obtain a fair and truthful picture of our activities in Nigeria [...] (Eni Agip Letter, 1999).

This action by Eni Agip also indicates additional impacts the internationalisation attempt made by some of the Ijaw youth leaders had on the international community. However, the appearance of Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) marked the turning point within the Niger Delta conflict from nonviolent protests to armed insurgency (Obi, 2012). This action further attracted negative international attention to the predicament of the Ijaw (Cornelissen et al., 2012). According to Bob (2014: 329), the emergence of radical movements and their engagement in kidnappings and other social vices in the region scared off international support, unlike in the Ogoni struggle. Although militant leaders, such as Asari Dokubo, claimed to have gained international military training and support in Libya (Marquardt, 2007), this further indicates some additional

levels of internationalisation of the Ijaw struggle that clogged off the initial nonviolent support the Ijaw had. The role played by Asari in the Ijaw struggle marked the turn of their movement from nonviolent to violent. This will additionally support the argument of this thesis that the Ogoni and Ijaw conflicts are distinct from one another. These will be discussed fully in the subsequent chapters on leadership and organisation.

3.7.1. Stressing the Ijaw Minority Status

Idemudia and Ite (2006: 391), portray the discovery and subsequent exploration of oil as an important period in the history of the Ijaw from 1965, with the implication that oil production transformed the region into one of great geographical importance. The discovery of oil is perceived to have motivated and emphasised the perception of minority position especially for the Ijaw, and has led to a fluid relationship between the state and the communities (Alapiki and Allen, 2010: 37). One Ijaw leader emphasised that,

Politically the population consists mainly of the minority ethnic groups and they don't wield enough power. There are different cycles of poverty that reinforces the poverty level and the political inequities causing the under development of the place (Interview: 3 August 2015).

In similarity to the Ogoni leaders finding inspiration from philosophers like Thomas Paine and John Locke, interviewees pointed out that the youth leaders in the IYC during the late 90s, such as Osuoka, Ogon and Tuodolo found inspiration in the works and actions of revolutionary leaders and philosophers such as Karl Marx. Ogon recounts that

Ijaw Youth ideology pre-Kaiama Declaration, most of the key leaders were active in university mobilization against military rule through the instrumentality either of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Students Union Governments or then National Association of Rivers State Students (NURSS). The radical elements in unionism and the desire to challenge the dictatorship of the military had emboldened and given direction to the planning and execution of the struggle. Amongst them were those whose thinking were influenced by the revolutionary thoughts of Che Guevara, Hugo Chavez, Franz Fanon, Karl Marx and regular interactions with great minds like the late Professor Eskor Toyo⁸ and Fela Anikulapo-Kuti⁹ (Interview: 17 January 2017).

⁸ A revolutionary leader of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Professor of Economics also known as Asuquo Ita, was a Nigerian Marxist scholar, human rights activist and academic at the University of Calabar, Nigeria..

⁹ The legendary Nigerian Afro beat musician and pan Africanist.

Although the above quote shows certain interests and inclinations towards revolutionary leaders, the actual linkage to these is missing in the Ijaw movement. The Ijaw internationalisation was not done in a collective institutional way like the Ogoni who worked together as an ethnic group through the adoption of nonviolence. As discussed earlier, some of their activities were done on an individual level. Although attempts were made as seen in the earlier quotes, the narratives by Ijaw leaders do not fully situate their struggles within the international arena as part of a global anti-capitalist movement. In other words, evidence does not fully indicate the connection of the Ijaw movement to other international struggles, unlike in the case of the Ogoni. Rather, they emphasize the perception of being isolated from the political and economic systems (Ebeku, 2002).

3.8 Narratives on Oil

This section will present the distinction between how the Ogoni and the Ijaw construct their grievances in relation to the discovery of oil from the 1990s to date. To determine what the narratives connote and see how they suggest violence, the focus here will be on the claims made by the Ijaw on what they considered as factors responsible for their predicaments.

Specifically, the enactment of the Petroleum Act of 1969 which bestowed all the oil and other mineral resources to the federal government, has been regarded unfavourably especially by the Ijaw. The Ijaw lay a strong claim to the oil, which they argued belongs to their communities and whatever is coming out of their land should benefit them first. Just as argued by the Ogoni, the Ijaw also painted a picture of severe environmental degradation, inadequate capacity to manage resource extraction or pursue avenues aimed at rectifying environmental policies as well as strong feelings of neglect. Over the years, derivation revenues have decreased significantly and have negatively impacted on the revenues available to the Niger Delta, while those accruing to the other regions have increased drastically (see the discussion on oil related policies and derivation formula in the Ogoni section).

Recounting the negative impact of the petroleum act, D.S.P Alamiyeseigha (the Governor General of all Ijaw) highlighted that'

Our Petroleum Act of 1969 consigned everything to the federal government, everything on, above and below belongs to the state, oil majors have this contractual agreement with them, and they have no business with the communities. Even when there is oil spillage that damages their economic life, the oil majors will be the judge, complainer and the advocates (Interview: 2 August 2015).

The nationalisation of all land under the administration of state and local governments under the Exclusive Economic Zone Decree and the Land Use Decree, was an attempt to harness the various land tenure systems within the central Nigerian state and placed all land in the trust of local state governments (Obi, 2006; Okorobia, 1999; Omeje, 2006). The perception of the impact of this law among the Ijaw is one of deep injustice because, as they argue, no discussion or consent was obtained from the host communities. This perception in the region resulted in protests and mobilisations by the Ijaw and other ethnic minorities such as the Ogoni, increasingly demanding for economic justice, greater political power and ownership and control of the resources produced in their area. The interview with Jackson points the accusation directly to the oil related policies:

We blame the laws of the nation which puts the ownership of the land at the instance of the federal government and the ineptitude of those in power. The law so specifies that the accruals of the land goes straight to the government and then it was expected of government to plough back what comes from the land to the respective communities, but that hasn't been the case (Interview: 3 August 2015).

Jackson's quotation refers to issues raised in reports released in 1995 by the World Bank and Human Rights Watch in 1999, where they stressed the negative impacts of oil production activities that had ruined the environment and caused several health problems and injuries (World Bank, 1995; HRW, 1999). Similarly, Bartlett and Miller (2012: 16), argue that decades of estrangement from the state since independence from the 1960s to the 1990s, led to individuals becoming prey for violent creed. Ogoni recounts that:

Most Ijaw communities, pre-Kaiama Declaration, were enmeshed in intra and inter-communal conflicts dictated by the politics of the oil companies. The issues in contention were the location of oil facilities and the patronage that local and traditional leaders get from the companies exploiting for oil. (Interview: 17 January 2017).

Accordingly, the 1990s witnessed outbreaks of Ijaw youth protests, some of which resulted in direct confrontation with state and multinational forces and in damage to oil industry infrastructure (Wimborne, 1991; Osaghae, 1995). In some instances, these hostilities tampered

with internal security and threatened the cohesion of the region due to their bandwagon effect and connection to violence. According, to a research done by Bob (2002), ethnic leaders of groups such as the Ijaw, formed associations tasked with lobbying the state for a better proportion of the oil revenues and enhanced political participation, but most of them witnessed severe military action by the state forces (Human Rights Watch, 1995). Attesting to this, Ogon reiterated that,

Our resolution was therefore to deal with oil related conflict reconciliation between and among communities pointing out the collective gains and challenging the practice by the oil transnationals and the loss we get from fighting among ourselves. We had a team of legal volunteers who gave a voice to the already traumatized communities. Reports of the activities of the transnationals in different locations were monitored and publicized (Interview: 17 January 2017).

He adds that:

The legal volunteers (Oronto Douglas, Uche Onyeagucha, Dr Bello Orubebe, Dr Sam Amadubuogha, Hon Kingsley Chinda, and Peace Awari) mostly civil society activists took up service free cases for communities impacted by the oil activities. While some of the cases were resolved through mediation, some went to the court (ibid).

These further confirm the existence of non-combative attempts made by Ijaw youth leaders in the 1990s pre-Kaiama Declaration to deal with oil related frustrations and grievances, even going so far as to mediate within and between warring Ijaw communities. But in order to better illustrate how the Ijaw leaders developed a more combative attitude and later turned to violence, from this point onwards, the focus will be on narratives from the more recent period. In an interview, Jackson related the underdevelopment of the region to oil being a curse to the region:

The mineral deposit of the place which was supposed to be a blessing turned to be a curse because the resources of the land that were expected to be tapped and used to develop the area, are used to develop Abuja, Lagos and other areas where the resources are not tapped from (Interview: 3 August 2015).

Another Ijaw leader, Wills, who attested to the deliberate neglect experienced by the Ijaw, expressed similar views:

Successive governments have so far neglected to develop the region and give us what is due to us and just simply refused to pay some attention to us (Interview: 29 July 2015).

These narratives further confirm the feelings of anger and frustration with the neglect the region has suffered from when oil was discovered in the area. In this context, Idemudia and Ite (2006: 394), argue that the Niger Delta conflict is a product of structural deficiencies inherent in the state and systemic anomalies within its society. They further argue that, as a result of these deficiencies, the people were without any form of control with regards to their destiny in the post-independence era, which translated into poverty, social instability, and backwardness. Supporting this view, Ogoriba recounts that:

We tried but they don't care. Why should we continue suffering this neglect? We have to tell them, and we have said enough is enough and we are equal to them. We cannot play like the Ogoni, there must be attention to Ijaw issues (Interview: 10 August, 2015).

While the Ogoni, according to Comfort (2002: 329), pitched their struggle within internationally recognised issues directly connected to environmental and human rights issues, the Ijaw stressed isolation and extreme aggravation at the state without an option of how to go about engaging an over powerful state by peaceful means. Ogoriba further notes that,

Still the injustice is plenty, we go to school no job, we don't go to school no job, so why should we continue listening to them? We have to act, the Ijaw cannot continue sitting down and listening to lies from the government that we don't see. If we behave like the Ogoni they will finish us (Interview: 10 August 2015).

In support of the above assertion, Jackson is quick to point out that,

We are still under subjugation in the hands of the powers that be, this Ijaw struggle is still on, even though we want things to change, we have still not achieved anything significant as Ijaw (Interview: 3 August 2015).

While the Ogoni construct their arguments based on the notion of internal colonialism tempered by a discourse on human and minority rights that stress human agency at the local, national and international levels, the Ijaw's perceive themselves as helpless victims of deliberate and calculated decades of neglect. They seem to induce a strong form of collective negative stance with regards to the state and the major ethnic groups deemed to be enjoying the resources

produced in the region while the producers bear the brunt of the excesses of the oil exploration process.

This fits into Ukiwo's (2007: 609) conception of the marginalisation of the Ijaw being a trigger to the claim by Ijaw youths, that the majority status has given easy access to the major ethnic groups to dominate the Nigerian federation, creating an unfavourable revenue distribution method to the disadvantage of the Ijaw. Alamiyeseigha (2005: 65), even added that unrest began soon after the discovery of oil in the Ijaw community of Oloibiri in Bayelsa state, as it became apparent that the oil companies operating in the area had little regard for the wellbeing of local people. Similarly, Samiama is quick to support these views in relation to the enforcement of proper oil practice mechanisms. He clarified that,

We feel helpless, caught between a government that doesn't care about us and companies who are just interested in profit (Interview: 29 July 2015).

In support of the above assertion by some Ijaw leaders, Odinkalu, a human right activist, highlights some negative physical actions by the state in relation to oil extraction. He emphasised that,

Government has not enforced proper oil field practice, pipe lines are not properly submerged, blow outs happen, people live under 24 hours of sunlight from the gas flaring, people are dying, communities and sources of livelihood are being destroyed, poverty is increasing (Interview: 4 August 2015).

These quotes indicate that from the time oil production activities started in the region even to the present, the feelings have been the same. There has been no change in the narratives as regards the accusation of neglect and indifference by the state or indeed the helpless victimhood of the Ijaws. This perception of decades of betrayal by the state apparent in the Ijaw narratives reflects a set of beliefs related to confrontations with broader political structures of governance. They blame the authoritative and uncaring nature of the state for the harsh lived experiences of the people in the area. Jackson explained that,

They have been cheating us, they take the resources to the north and other parts and they want us to be quite and law abiding, it can't be this way. We have to show them that we are the owners of the oil, they will no more dictate to us, we have to take control. (Interview: 3 August 2015).

Attesting to the inactions of the state outlined in the above quote, a confidential source explained that,

We began to feel why are we taking this very peaceful strategy, it is not working, and the government is not listening, it will only listen when people are violent (Interview: 3 August 2015).

For decades, the poor response by oil companies to appeals from the oil producing communities requesting for compensation for environmental damages received unfavourable responses, arguing that their agreements were with the central state authorities, on whom responsibility to develop the area lies (Osaghae, 2008: 201). This perceived state failure to deliver on the political and socioeconomic benefits due to the region forced the aggrieved communities to finally take up arms to fight for their rights (ibid). Supporting Osaghae's arguments, a confidential source interviewed reiterated that,

When there is a protest they use the federal power, but nobody cares to ask what has led to this protest. The state is not interested in the welfare of the Ijaw people (Interview: 3 August 2015).

Reaffirming this, Ajuwa, an Ijaw ex-agitator clarifies that:

Today because of oil we don't have jobs, Niger Delta problem will not end, not only because of the problem but the issues have not been addressed (Interview: 10 August 2015)

As argued earlier, these narratives clearly show an inclination towards violence; the frustrations and anger are clearly spelt out within a harsh uncompromising discourse, while on the part of the Ogoni, although they share similar problems, there is no acceptance of violence.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter locates the historical narratives based on the lived experiences and grievances of the Ogoni and the Ijaw within the Niger Delta region. A close observation of the two sets of narratives reveals that the two groups are putting forward similar claims, but the means employed in response to the behaviour of the state and the oil companies are content specific to the group in question.

The Ogoni narratives were presented in four key sections. The narratives constructing the Ogoni as a distinct ethnic group were presented through sharing a unique link to their land, engaging positively with nonviolence because of the spiritual relationship they share with nature. Additional narratives on the Ogoni's perception of the nature of the state were analysed, specifically, how they were treated as an internal colony by the Igbos and the Ijaw. The awareness that the Ogoni constitute a minority group within a minority led the main leaders in the 1990s to opt for a strategy of internationalism and transnationalism. Despite the frustrations and discontentment, the narratives do not indicate violence. Instead, they tend to link the Ogoni issues to a positive collective agency through human rights discourse, international solidarity and peaceful engagement with the state. Finally, narratives on oil were included to show the grievances expressed by the Ogoni with the discovery and exploration of the mineral resources in the area. Although, the narratives indicated clear frustrations with the activities, here too they were devoid of violent connotations.

The Ijaw narratives indicate similarities in terms of being a peaceful agrarian society before oil exploration. When it comes to the nature of the state, however, the Ijaw narratives were more confrontational and the grievances were directed at the three major groups in the Nigerian state, the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. This showed another major distinction between the Ogoni and the Ijaw constructions; while the Ijaw blamed their domination on the central state, the Ogoni stressed the notion of internal colonialism of which the Ijaw and the Igbo were the guilty parties. Here too, the language used by the Ijaw to describe the nature of the state suggested violence, with the state being accused of governing systematically through force exemplified especially in the oil related activities. While the Ogoni presented their frustrations in moderate terms, the Ijaw narratives were strongly expressed and aggressive in the language used.

The transnationalism and internationalism section analysed the attempts made by the Ijaw at internationalising their struggle. While evidence shows some initial interests in revolutionary ideas in relation to Franz Fanon, Che Guevara and others, there is no direct entrenchment of these ideas to the movement, unlike that of the Ogoni nonviolence stance. Additionally, attempts at the internationalism and transnationalism of the Ijaw agenda were initiated but not on a pan-Ijaw ethnic platform. They were mainly done on individual basis, as shown in the activities carried out by Patterson Ogon, Felix Tudolor and Oronto Douglas. These were exemplified by interactions with international personalities and organisations such as President Jimmy Carter, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International, who indicated support for the

nonviolent nature of Ijaw engagement at that time. However, this relationship came to a premature end with the transformation of the engagement into armed militancy as seen in Asari Dokubo, who claimed to have attended military trainings in Libya. These highlight further distinctions in terms of the internationalism of the two movements, within the context of the Ogoni maintaining a strong sense of agency, while for the Ijaw it became fractured with a major emphasis on frustration and desperation

Finally, narratives on oil within the Ijaw highlighted the open discontentment and anger for the oil production activities directed at the state and multinational oil companies. To conclude, therefore, this chapter presented the prelude to the dynamics of choice between nonviolence and violence based on the narratives from the Ogoni and the Ijaw. It showed how the narratives do not present the Niger Delta region as one, but are articulated differently in relation to specific ethnic groups. The next chapter will present strategies adopted by the Ogoni and Ijaw leaders, specifically of how they engaged in preaching their different agendas.

Chapter Four: Nature of the leadership within the Ogoni and Ijaw Movements

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the dynamics of choice between nonviolence and violence based on the narratives of the Ogoni and the Ijaw leaders. It examined in more detail the construction of historical narratives based on their lived experiences and grievances against the Nigerian state and multinational oil companies. The chapter also demonstrated the main difference in the narratives that emerged in the late 1990s following the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa, and showed that there were already precedents from a previous period especially that of the Ijaw. Leaders are obviously fundamental because of the indispensable role they play in shaping movements (Nepstad and Bob, 2006), which are influenced by the social and cultural capital they have (Bourdieu, 1991). This chapter is concerned with the nature of leadership within the two movements, and the ways in which the Ogoni leaders preached nonviolence and the Ijaw preached violence. Specifically, it argues that while the Ogoni are able to demonstrate one style of leadership, the Ijaw appear to have two types of leaders; one was more similar to the Ogoni favoured nonviolence, but was then replaced by another type that was completely different and promoted violence.

It will set out the process of interactions and negotiations within the two groups that justified the different courses of actions taken to express their grievances and frustrations against the Nigerian state. It will also explore the different strategies employed by the Ogoni leaders in terms of the massive systematic campaigns of communications at different levels established by Ken Saro-Wiwa. It will detail the principled and pragmatic approaches adopted by the Ogoni leaders as against the Ijaw leaders whose strategies were not as disciplined or as focused on media campaigns. This chapter will show that at a later stage, the Ijaw leadership was fractured and fluid, hence it did not include campaign strategies and other methods adopted by the Ogoni leaders. This fluid and fractured nature of the Ijaw leaders will, in comparison to the Ogoni, be analysed to show what leadership capital the Ogoni were able to provide, and what leadership capital the Ijaw were able to provide and how it differed from one another. Therefore, the inclusion of leadership capital here denotes contrasting levels of material wealth in the form of economic capital, varying degrees of prestige, honour and social distinction as symbolic capital, as well as educational qualifications, knowledge and skill referred to as cultural capital (ibid) that collectively impact life choices advanced by leaders to their movement. In other words, how the

noteworthy status, prestige, and social recognition (Nepstad and Bob, 2006) the Ogoni and Ijaw leaders possessed became symbolic capital that heightened their capacity to organise either nonviolent or violent collective actions. For instance, as the chapter will demonstrate, how the leadership and guidance of Ken Saro-Wiwa influenced the Ogoni movement towards nonviolence while the Ijaw struggle emerged fluid and fractured and engaged more with violence. It will specifically highlight the context-specific cultural capital (ibid) of the Ogoni and Ijaw leaders as it relates to the viewpoint and goals of the various leadership styles witnessed in the movements.

While most scholars focus on Ken Saro-Wiwa as a remarkable leader, (Comfort, 2002; Watts, 2003, 2008; Watts and Ibaba, 2011; Osha, 2006; Cayford, 1996; Bob and Nepstad, 2007), this chapter will show that although his leadership style led to some disagreements within the group, the Ogoni leaders who followed him such as Ledum Mitee, Ben Naanen and Legborsi Pyagbara also continued to adhere to and preach a strategy of nonviolence. On the Ijaw side, I will show that the absence of a collective unity and formidable leadership led to the adoption of a more violent strategy. Additionally, the chapter will show how the leaders of the Ogoni and the Ijaw responded differently to the actions of the Nigerian state in response to their discontents and agitations. It will examine specifically, the ways in which these two sets of leaderships contributed to the different views on violence versus nonviolence. On the Ogoni side, interviews were conducted with Owens Wiwa, Ledum Mitee, Tom Orage, Alubabari Desmond Nbeta, Legborsi Pyagbara and Ben Naanen, while on the Ijaw part Patterson Ogon, Isaac Osuoka, Iniruo Wills, a confidential source, and Andrew Azazi were interviewed. In addition, the views of Ken Henshaw and Bishop Mathew Kukah are included based on their involvement and knowledge of the subject area (see Appendix 1 for a detailed list of Ogoni and Ijaw leaders, activists, and key informants).

This chapter will be presented in three sections, which will comprise: timing of the struggle, outlook of the leaders and social status of the leaders (see Table 4.1 below).

Table 4.1: Outline of the nature of the leadership within the Ogoni and Ijaw movements.

Ogoni	Ijaw
2. Timing of the Struggle a. Ogoni Leadership Early 1940s (Paul Birabi)	4. Timing of the Struggle 4.1 Ijaw Leadership Early 1960s (Isaac Adaka Boro)

b. Ogoni Leadership From the 1990s (Ken Sari-Wiwa, Ledum Mitee, Legborsi Pyagbara)	4.2 Ijaw Leadership since the 1990s (Fragmented)
2. Outlook of the Leaders - Nonviolence (ERECTISM)	5. Outlook of the Leaders - From Nonviolence to Violence
3. Social Status of the Leaders - Education - Life Experiences	6. Social Status of the Leaders - Education - Life Experiences

Accordingly, the first half of the chapter will discuss the nature of Ogoni leadership and the second half will focus on the Ijaw leadership.

4.1 Timing of the Ogoni Struggle

Over the years, scholars have proffered various explanations on the nature of leadership offered by the Ogoni elites. Okonta maintains that the first effort made by the Ogoni to recover the civic rights they had experienced in precolonial times Nigeria was after the Second World War in 1945. This was an initiative inspired by the nationalist agitations that spread across West Africa, led by elites and demobilized Ogoni soldiers such as S.F. Nwika, Kemte Giadom, Timothy Naaku Paul Birabi and F.M.A. Saronwiyo (Okonta, 2008: 64). They founded the Ogoni Central Union (OCU) as a social and cultural platform for all Ogoni, which was tasked from inception to unify the groups that made up the Ogoni with an emphasis on socio-economic advancement. The organisation was mandated to include ordinary people and traditional village rulers as well as officials of the native authority, a leadership initiative which, as Okonta (ibid: 64) explains, sought to overcome the disunity resulting from conflicts of interests between the elites, the people and the traditional title holders who were regarded as being subservient to the colonial administration. Although Isumonah (2004: 439), contends that the OCU was not endorsed by all Ogoni, notable achievements of the OCU leadership was the insistence of a distinct identity for the Ogoni in a petition made to the Resident, in which they requested a separate administrative division for Ogoniland (Loolo, 1981: 20). The leadership made another request for the establishment of a new Rivers province in a petition made to the then Governor of Eastern

Nigeria, which accordingly led to the establishment of the Ogoni Division in 1946 (Rivers Province Document, 1947).

According to (Watts, 1999, 2003), Ogoniland was progressively integrated into a distinct group through the 1930s and the demand for a distinct political division then flourished under the very first pan-Ogoni union which achieved a positive outcome with the creation of the Ogoni Native Authority in 1947. This shows that political developments were gaining momentum within the continent and on a modest scale in Ogoniland. The deduction, therefore, is that from the early 1940s deliberate attempts were made by Ogoni leaders to establish a united Ogoni with a collective identity.

4.1.1 Ogoni Leadership Early 1940s - Paul Birabi

The first Ogoni struggle was initiated by Naaku Paul Birabi during the period of his studies in London, where he became aware of grassroots politics as well as the significance of being organized around a common political platform. This awareness was a result of his membership of the West African Student's Union, a London Based union that struggled for constitutional transformation in West Africa (Okonta, 2008: 67). He was the very first Ogoni indigene to earn a university degree in mathematics in 1948 from Southampton University in the United Kingdom, as well as a fellowship from the Royal Geographic Society (FRGS) of Kings College London (Ogoninews, 2015; Okonta, 2008). He was part of the Nigerian delegation to the London conference of 1953 which negotiated Nigeria's independence (Ogoninews, 2015). It is important to note that during the time of Birabi, Ogoniland had very few schools as it was too expensive to send a child to school, and no post primary schools were available in the area. As an educational ambassador, Birabi emphasized the need for community-based educational programmes as the ideal route to advance the Ogoni community, and at the same time, aroused the political consciousness of the Ogoni people (ibid).

Birabi's return to Nigeria coincided with Sir John Macpherson's¹⁰ 1948 mandate to district officers to embark on a political enlightenment campaign to attract local people's participation in the coming elections, aimed at transferring substantial legislative power to the regional governments (Okonta, 2008: 67). To Birabi, for administrative autonomy to take place the Ogoni

¹⁰ Governor of Nigeria 5 February 1948-1 October 1954.

had to be politically mobilised in order to sway the regional government's policies. Okonta argues that, with the knowledge that the Ogoni were not united around a common political platform and because the OCU had become inactive as a result of some of its key members being away for further studies (ibid), Birabi embarked on a campaign aimed at raising the political awareness of the Ogoni on the need for formal education. He visited one Ogoni village after the other while promoting the setting up of a new organization that would give proportional representation to each of the clans¹¹ in Ogoniland (Ogoninews, 2015; Okonta, 2008). Birabi stated that 'for the quest of the autonomy of Ogoniland to successfully influence the policies of the Nigerian state and be rewarded economically and socially, the Ogoni had to be seen as one, speaking with one voice, under a platform where all sections would be represented' (Okonta, 2008: 66). This heralded the birth of the Ogoni State Representation Assembly (OSRA) in 1950 with Birabi as president, while the OCU was disbanded. The OSRA was created to further the advancement of a common Ogoni ethnic identity and to foster the interests of all Ogoni (Isumonah, 2004: 440). It comprised of the executive officers, the *Gbemene Barasins*¹², ten representatives each from the three largest clans Gokana, Nyo Khana and Ken Khana, and six each from the smaller clans of Tai and Eleme (Okonta, 2008).

In the period 1952-1953, Birabi under the umbrella of the OSRA, was particularly noted for the full participatory discussions he had with his people during his tour of the villages, after which he was able to influence the OSRA to build a post primary school in Ogoniland. Okonta (2008) concludes that through such grassroots dialogues, Birabi was able to instil not only the need for unity within Ogoniland but also the importance of obtaining formal education. Furthermore, it was to Birabi's standing that by 1953, a school was established in almost every village in Ogoniland through the help of the Christian missionaries, indicating his commitment to bring education closer to his people. Even though Birabi started political enlightenment in Ogoniland, events between 1948 and 1958 were overshadowed by Nigeria's quest for independence (ibid: 71). The adoption of grassroots dialogues and participatory discussions by Birabi indicates the inclination to nonviolence from the early stages of his awareness in attracting the attention of the Ogoni people to the importance of education, and a collective unity under one organisation. This standpoint is yet to be adequately linked to the 1990s struggle reignited by Ken Saro-Wiwa by scholars, which makes it central to understanding it as the foundation of the choice of a nonviolent

¹¹ The five tribes that make up Ogoni nation.

¹²Key holders of the five clans.

course of action within the Ogoni movement. This thesis is providing insights into key decisions taken in charting the Ogoni cause based on the strategic choice of nonviolence by the leaders.

In spite of the attempts by the OSRA, the Ogoni were not a united group, which was demonstrated by the preference shown by the Eleme subgroup in favour of having a council of its own not under the Ogoni in 1956 when the colonial administration offered to change the Ogoni Native Assembly into a Local Government to be regarded as Khana County Council (Isumonah, 2004: 441). This supports the assertions made by Watts (2003); Ikoro (1996) and Isumonah (2004) that as far back as the 1950s, the Ogoni were a divided group who did not speak with the same voice. Even though the Eleme openly showed their resistance to being under an Ogoni leadership, there is no evidence of the use of violence to support their preference; they are still together as part of one group.

The Ogoni became involved in politics under the aegis of the OSRA when Birabi steered the group into politics on the side of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons¹³ (N.C.N.C). In 1953, he was actively involved as a party member when the leadership crisis that entangled the N.C.N.C leadership at the Eastern House of Assembly in Enugu escalated (Okonta, 2008; Ogoninews, 2015). The crisis was in opposition to the dominance of the Igbo within a party that comprised other minority ethnic groups in the Niger Delta. During his membership of N.C.N.C, Birabi was part of the team along with representatives of the Northern People's Congress¹⁴ (NPC) and the Action Group Party¹⁵ that negotiated the Nigerian independence with the British Government at the constitutional conference held in London. He was also the president of River's association, an organisation set up to canvass for special treatment and the provision of social amenities for the Niger Delta people, which offered him an opportunity to be part of the team that developed the proposal to resolve the sufferings of the Niger Delta presented to the Willinks Commission of Inquiry in 1957 (ibid). These were the foundations of the creation of the present Rivers state in Nigeria, which was established in the late 1960s.

It has been established by scholars (Okonta, 2008; Isumonah, 2004) that in the course of preaching Ogoni unity and identity, Birabi maintained a peaceful and nonviolent character.

¹³The Igbo and Christian controlled party led by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, and part of a coalition of conservative parties that made up Nigeria's government at that time.

¹⁴ A party led by northerners and those of Islamic faith.

¹⁵ The Yoruba controlled party led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

There has been no record to link him with the use of words that would suggest violence by the group. The focus of the Ogoni ethnic mobilisation in the 1950s rested in requests for better social status and Western education (Isumonah, 2004: 440). Birabi's path to greatness has been connected to various activities and achievements during the last five years of his life, so much so that the Ogoni regard him as a leader and motivator of the various changes that occurred within Ogoniland between the years 1948-1953. Birabi died in 1953, his death bringing an end to the first phase of the Ogoni struggle (Okonta, 2008: 71).

After the death of Birabi, no significant struggle was recorded in Ogoniland until Ken Saro-Wiwa emerged as a political figure determined to pick up from where Birabi left. In 1962 the Ogoni Divisional Union (ODU) was set up as a result of the collapse of the OSRA as an avenue to advance Ogoni interests leading to the creation of Rivers state in 1967 (Isumonah, 2004: 441). The ODU preserved the Ogoni minority awareness within the state. It was replaced by two not very political Ogoni ethnic organisations such as the Ogoni club which comprised young Ogoni graduates and the Kagote club made up of the Ogoni elite (Ibid: 442) and, as later will be demonstrated, the MOSOP. The next section will present the development of Ogoni strategies by Saro-Wiwa, in terms of the methods he employed to unify the Ogoni as one people and the similarity of some of the activities carried out by the MOSOP to that of the OSRA, which according to Okonta (2008: 68), 'mirrored Birabi's grassroots politics, to some extent'.

4.1.2 Ogoni Leadership (From the 1990s)

After Birabi, Ken Saro-Wiwa became the second notable Ogoni leader, he was president of MOSOP from 1993 to 1995 and, as mentioned in the previous section, the group had not engaged in any significant requests or resistance before he emerged. Osha (2007) argues that self-determination wasn't at the forefront of Saro-Wiwa's thoughts pre 1970s owing to his membership of the Interim Advisory Council of the then Rivers State during the civil war, and appointment as a commissioner in 1968. His removal in 1973 from the Rivers state cabinet led him to the wealth generation and investment, through trading and acquisition of landed property (Ibid). However, the inability of the Nigerian state to adequately address the Ogoni requests for full citizenship rights (Okonta, 2008), in addition to the jeopardised physical and psychological well-being of the group (Osha, 2007: 80) prepared the ground for the emergence of Ken Saro-Wiwa as a leader of the Ogoni. He vowed to ensure a more improved life for the Ogoni people (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a: 49), and the ethnic minorities and indigenous people of Nigeria (Osha,

2007). After his unsuccessful attempt to get into the Constituent Assembly of 1977, Saro-Wiwa maintained that the late 1970s served as an inspiration for him to be charting an Ogoni agenda. Participation in the Constituent Assembly to Ken was regarded as a final attempt to secure the long anticipated full citizenship for the group. He, however, failed to acquire the necessary support by Edward Kobani, an influential Ogoni elder, who had the largest Ogoni grassroots support at that time, when Kobani decided to endorse another candidate to represent the Ogoni at the Assembly (Okonta, 2008). Saro-Wiwa appealed against his defeat in the elections and claimed that the loss was due to his being 'blocked by some educated Ogoni people and then by the rulers of Nigeria' (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a), who, as Okonta argued, were not in favour of Saro-Wiwa's participation at the Constituent Assembly, as they regarded him an Ogoni nationalist that would ask uncomfortable questions (Okonta, 2008: 156). Saro-Wiwa stated that:

I analysed why all my hopes for the Ogoni has failed to materialise. ...I found that the task was gargantuan one which would require an almost superhuman effort. My failure up to 1973 I could ascribe to my relative youth and inexperience. My failure in 1977 I could put down to my not having organised the Ogoni people properly. But I also knew that any such organisation would require a lot of energy, patience and money (Saro-Wiwa, 1995:55-56).

This defeat, according to Okonta, became a lesson that Saro-Wiwa applied in the construction of Mosop in 1990, ensuring that influential politicians, such as Edward Kobani, were a party to it (Okonta, 2008), although they would eventually fall out as a result of the divisions within MOSOP (see Chapter Five). As a result of his failure in 1973, Saro-Wiwa shifted focus away from the government to television production, writing and journalism in the 1980s. His satirical television series, *Basi & Company*, which depicted the everyday activities of gang elements in Lagos, Nigeria became incredibly well-liked. He wrote regularly for the Nigerian Sunday Times, authored several novels and poetry pieces in engagements that further increased his vast audience (South African History online) and that resulted in his identification as a 'perceptive commentator and champion of minority rights' (Okonta, 2008). Meanwhile, this perception of the political insignificance of the Ogoni and in particular the group being shut out of the formal institutional structure thereby negating the Ogoni meaningful self-representation stimulated Saro-Wiwa's desire to lead the group in charting a new course.

The 1985 military rule under the Babangida Administration increased economic and social divisions in the country, enabling marginalised groups like the Ogoni who were also facing environmental degradation exacerbated by oil exploration to utilise the opportunities and form novel coalitions such as Saro-Wiwa's MOSOP (Okonta, 2008; Osha, 2007). Worthy of mention here is Saro-Wiwa's engagement with the Babangida Administration in which he was appointed and served at the directorate level of the Directorate of Social Mobilisation (Osha, 2007). The struggle to challenge the state and the multinational oil companies became central to the activities of Niger Delta environmentalists. Saro-Wiwa who, in various dimensions, had been part of the government, rose to challenge the central state and the multinational oil companies due to the region's environmental degradation triggered by the exploration and exploitation of the Niger Delta resources (Amusan, 2009). Saro-Wiwa's actions came after about thirty years without any visible expression from the region after Adaka Boro. Saro-Wiwa's activities coincided with the criticism of the poor human rights records of the then undemocratic Military Administration of General Abacha exacerbated by the lack of transparency, both of which made Saro-Wiwa and MOSOP popular (ibid). His objective of having a loose national state or even an independent state within Nigeria by way of his Ogoni Bill of Rights marked a turning point in the politics of oil resources in Nigeria (ibid). Unlike that of Adaka Boro, Saro-Wiwa's movement, as we shall see, was predicated on the principle of intellectual struggle by means of constructive criticism and dialogue (Etemike, 2009).

Described as a man of peace, Saro-Wiwa's struggles were constructed on the view point of nonviolence depicted in his organisation of the Ogoni people using socio-cultural and educational tools (Ashforth et al., 2010). Saro-Wiwa has written that,

My worry about the Ogoni has been an article of faith, conceived of in primary school, nurtured through secondary school, actualised in the Nigerian Civil War in 1967-70, and during my tenure as a member of the Rivers State Executive Council, 1968-7. My first thoughts on the matter were published in my pamphlet *The Ogoni Nationality Today and Tomorrow* in April 1969. (Saro-Wiwa, 1992).

This assertion by Saro-Wiwa corresponds to Cayford's observation that, in the wake of the Ogoni elites drive towards a broader unity after 1945, the consequences of environmental damage and lack of development became obvious and led to the recognition of common threats and a common goal in line with earlier unifying efforts (Cayford, 1996: 187). Owens Wiwa reiterated that

The problems were common, there was oil in all the kingdoms maybe apart from one, but even that one had a lot of gas, so the problem was environmental. Initially there were no politics to divide the leadership, it was the commonality of the problem that brought the people together (Interview: 3 August 2015)

Additionally, Comfort (2002: 3), argues that Saro-Wiwa took advantage of his insider experience to press forward environmental justness and nonviolent ways to social change. In the words of Saro-Wiwa,

I am creating the Ogoni people, first and foremost, to come to the realisation of what they have always been which British colonisation tried to take away from them. My effort is very intellectual. It is backed by theories, thoughts and ideas which will, in fact matter to the rest of Africa in the course of time (Saro-Wiwa, 1993a).

In another forum Saro-Wiwa further stated that:

I have lived through most of the period covered by this sordid story, I watched as they went into decline. I have watched helplessly as they have been gradually ground to dust by the combined effort of the multinational oil company, Shell; the murderous ethnic majority in Nigeria and the country's military dictatorship. Not the pleas, not the writing over the years have convinced the Nigerian elite that something special ought to be done to relieve the distress of the Ogoni (Saro-Wiwa, 1992).

These inferences by Saro-Wiwa suggest the careful thinking done before attracting the peoples' support to the Ogoni struggle. The misfortune faced by the Ogoni provided Saro-Wiwa with a clearer distinction between minority and extreme minority standings. Comfort (2002:232) described Saro-Wiwa's political development as both logical and contradictory, formed to an extent by his activism on the Ogoni cause within both national and international contexts. This assumption was confirmed by Saro-Wiwa in his autobiography when he noted that 'certain conclusions have since conditioned my attitude to change and society in Nigeria' (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a: 61). He pointed out that:

Trudging over the 100 rural villages, in which the Ogoni lived, I was able to see for myself what the Ogoni as a people needed [...] But even more importantly I could see that what they required most was the formation of a mass organisation to press their rights (Ibid:40)

This indicates that the significance of bringing the Ogoni together to challenge the Nigerian state became a philosophy advocated by Saro-Wiwa, through representations in person and in

writing and using the tools of nonviolent advocacy. Saro-Wiwa's one-year tenure as the director of MAMSER¹⁶ has been credited with shaping his political thinking and strategies that eventually led to the creation of MOSOP (Okonta, 2008: 171). Tam-George viewed Saro-Wiwa's philosophy in terms of his effort to reterritorialise his area of expertise to the grassroots as a way of galvanising communal backing and involvement (Tam-George, 2010:289). These may have been the contributory factors to Saro-Wiwa's determination to offer some philosophical resolutions to Nigeria's problems. His clear observation and understanding of the prevailing political conditions in America and the Western European states he visited helped in his integration and acceptance of the universally valid generalizations influencing political actions of the state (Nbeta, 2006:164).

This determination created several conflicts and divisions within the group as well as with the state which saw to the murder of four prominent Ogoni elites in Giokoo, which led to the arrest and detention of Ken Saro-Wiwa along with nine others (Ogoni nine)¹⁷. They were accused and charged with instigating the murder of the Ogoni four by the Abacha administration. The Ogoni nine were found guilty and hanged on 9 November 1995 (Okonta, 2008: 229). Comfort (2002:235), argues that the trial of the Ogoni nine was marked by anomalies and contravened vital doctrines of fair, objective and impartial judicial trials. This indicates that the legitimacy of the tribunal was questionable because, as she argues, it was selected by the illegitimate regime of General Sani Abacha. The defence lawyers, Comfort reiterated, were prevented access to their clients, and prosecution witnesses were said to have been compromised with bribes during the trial by government operatives in order to give false information. Reacting to the arrest and judgement passed on Saro-Wiwa, Owens claimed that,

Abacha just wanted to kill him, there's no question of that, all that was a rouse. He didn't arm anybody (Interview: 3 August 2015).

Giving a first-hand narration of events that happened in Giokoo, Medee recounted that:

Saro-Wiwa was supposed to address a conference in Gokana, everybody was expecting him but he didn't show up. The killings were purely circumstantial, it was neither planned nor was Saro-Wiwa part of it. Government used the opportunity to clamp down on him and other leaders of MOSOP (Interview: 27 July 2015).

¹⁶ Directorate of Social Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery

¹⁷ Ken Saro-Wiwa, Barinem Kiobel, John Kpunien, Baribor Bera, Saturday Dobe, Felix Nwate, Nordu Eawo, Paul Levura, and Daniel Gbokoo

Andrew Apter argued that the state's rush and immediate execution of Saro-Wiwa and the others followed the internal colonial logic of divide and rule (Apter, 1998: 145). In line with Wole Soyinka's claim of the trial being a sham;

Saro-Wiwa's fate had long been sealed. The decision to execute him and his eight companions was reached before the special tribunal was ordered to reconvene and pronounce a verdict that had been decided outside the charade of judicial proceeding (Soyinka, 1996).

Medee insists that it was a kangaroo trial where the accused were not given a fair trial by the Nigerian state. He explained that,

First there was some kind of fear in Ogoniland because we never felt that the international community will be there and Ken Saro-Wiwa will be executed and they couldn't stop his execution. We felt that if you push this thing as far as Ken did you may go the same way he went. There was some kind of disillusionment and a sense of abandonment (Interview: 27 July 2015).

This suggests some form of disappointment from the failed expectations the group had on the international community, arising from the fact that the group was aware that before his execution, Saro-Wiwa made very good efforts in soliciting for help and support from the international community. Even Amnesty International adopted Ken, Dube and Nwinee as prisoners of conscience (ibid, Hunt, 2005:125). Help came for Ken and the others from people and international organisations such as Greenpeace; The Body Shop; Amnesty International; PEN International's Committee for Writers in Prison; UNPO; the UN Working Group for Indigenous People; the Association of Nigerian Authors; the British Broadcasting Corporation, and William Boyd (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a: 236). The support from the listed organisations confirms the impact and appeal the Ogoni struggle had on the international community which raised the hopes of the Ogoni people.

However, in reality, mobilisations within Ogoniland at that time were very troubling because whether Saro-Wiwa and the other leaders appreciated it or not, the nonviolent approach they adopted threatened the Abacha regime's survival, and within the context of any threat to a regimes survival, different states react differently. According to Ukiwo,

The reactions of the Abacha administration could be interpreted in two ways, on the one hand, to defy both the Ogoni and the international community that isolated it, and on the other hand, to send a signal to the other groups in the Niger Delta of

what would be fall them if they take the path of the Ogoni (Interview: 14 June 2016).

Reactions in Ogoniland were suppressed by the government as detailed by Wiwa. It was even illegal to express grief over the death of Saro-Wiwa in Ogoniland; it was an unaffordable luxury. When the Ogoni heard the first radio reports announcing the executions, huge numbers spilled onto the streets, wailing with grief. But within hours, four thousand troops were deployed to arrest anyone mourning the Ogoni nine in public (Hunt, 2005: 284). Pyagbara stated that,

We still believe strongly that the state wanted to crush the movement, and the hanging of the Ogoni 9 consummated the whole thing about turning the entire movement to an underground movement. Although their hanging marked the period of Ogoni repression, on the flip side, rather than killing the struggle, that was the highest time that Ogoni people demonstrated their resilience, we resolved to continue struggling (Interview: 31 July 2015)

In the same vein, Wiwa also recounted that,

There were peaceful protests, which is what Ken had asked for and people were shot at. The core MOSOP leadership were hunted, we all moved out to where we could go, there was literally tens of thousands of people in the Republic of Benin, just a fraction of that were able to go abroad and there was active hunt of MOSOP literature. They did not only want to decapitate the brains of the movement, remove the brains from the stem, they also wanted to remove the hands and the legs (interview: 3 August 2015).

The aftermath of the killing of the Ogoni nine was marked with harsh army repression which significantly subdued major response within Nigeria and was coupled with the fact that MOSOP was fragmented by factionalism (Bob and Nepstad, 2007). Marion Campbell described the execution of Saro-Wiwa as an effort by the state to squash an opinionated criticism of a corrupt national government and an unfair multinational oil corporation (Campbell, 2002: 39). According to Demirel-Pegg & Pegg, the Ogoni struggle weakened quickly when the leader of the protest movement, Saro-Wiwa, was executed (Demirel-Pegg and Pegg, 2015: 654). They argue that protest movements, as put forward by social movement scholars, disband as an after-effect of the division between radical and moderate protesters, but in the Ogoni case they demobilised as a result of the repression and might of the military regime. Highlighting the fact that states can successfully prevent the rebound consequence of

suppression even if the protest continues nonviolently (ibid: 656), which the military regime did by going after the members of MOSOP most of whom went underground while some fled the country. From 1995, most of the surviving MOSOP leaders were scattered and settled in whichever countries that offered them asylum. These wide geographical distances further intensified the already prevailing generational and subethnic contentions (Bob and Nepstad, 2007: 1388) which affected the immediate remobilization of the Ogoni struggle.

After Saro-Wiwa's death, the notable alliance of international interests that he had begun to build and that brought together minority rights advocates and environmentalists, stretched past what he had ever imagined (Nixon, 1996: 10). Despite the demobilization of the Ogoni protest campaign after his execution, MOSOP continued with nonviolent resistance, which is the legacy of Saro-Wiwa they have retained. The legacy of Ken's struggle against the ecological destruction of his native Ogoniland created by multinational oil corporations (Brittain, 2015:5) is one that will be recalled and discussed over and over within and outside Nigeria. Within the wider Niger Delta, political mobilizations of minority groups, as seen in the presentation of charters, declarations and bill of rights, bear the traces of Ken Saro-Wiwa's Ogoni Bill of Rights and his notions of self-determination (see Appendix 3), political autonomy and resource control continue to dominate political requests within the region (Isumonah, 2015; Demirel-Pegg and Pegg, 2015). Even while they were underground, Ledum Mitee continued operations in his capacity as the president after Ken.

After Saro-Wiwa, leadership was passed on to Ledum Mitee in 1995, Ben Naanen and subsequently to Legborsi Pyagbara in 2008. The focus here will be on Ledum because Naanen only served as the Chairman, Provisional Council, of MOSOP in 2012 after Ledum Mitee was removed from office. He also, incidentally, was the secretary general from 1992- 1999 while Pyagbara, whose tenure is on-going, is the current president. Ledum Mitee was one of the key actors of the struggle who participated from the beginning and went on to become the leader of MOSOP. Similarly to Saro-Wiwa, Mitee also had his leadership issues, depending on whom you talked to in Ogoniland; some saw him as a sell-out, but he was able to lead the organisation for 10 years without violence, which makes his leadership too important to be ignored. In a discussion with Ukoha Ukiwo, the Ogoni under the leadership of Ledum Mitee almost became like an NGO unlike during the time of Saro-Wiwa when the movement was a public concern, a mass movement. Under Mitee, the organisation collected several grants and engaged in one project after another which led to increased suspicion about his leadership.

At that time, the international system as evolved had changed, at the early stages international development concerns recognised social and labour movements and gave them support. But later on the people getting support are the NGOs, which led the Ogoni to form a foundation known as MOSOP Foundation, which has deviated the notional symbolic issue of individual Ogoni contribution although, Ken can hardly say that he made much of that, it was mainly symbolic (Interview: 14 June 2016).

Among other things, Mitee has been accused of deceiving and misleading the Ogoni people for almost 10 years, some claimed that he was never elected as a leader nor appointed by Saro-Wiwa as he had stated. Rather, he was accused of serving the interest of the Nigerian state and Shell. Interview with Orage revealed that,

Today people like Ledum Mitee have all participated in the government they all said they don't want, why are they participating? Have the Ogoni demands been met? (Interview: 27 July 2015).

Mitee was noted to have worked with the state at various points as would be highlighted in the section on the social status of the leaders below. Whilst supporting the direct accusation made by Orage, Nbeta points to the involvement with the state as having conceded the Ogoni struggle. He explained that,

Subsequent leaders after Saro-Wiwa adopted a leadership style that falls short of what should have been the model of leadership. This is supposed to be a grassroots movement and Ledum Mitee adopted some kind of elitist approach, he was insulated from the people and became closer to the government, the very people that you are supposed to confront. To us that would easily compromise the fervour of his confrontation with the state. There has been a progressive decline after Ken, the present leadership falls far short of what we had under Ledum Mitee (Interview: 27 July 2015).

This suggests that the movement under Mitee faced several leadership issues, mainly in the relationship with the state, which some of the Ogoni are still not in support of. Although accused of failing to unify the Ogoni as Saro-Wiwa did, Mitee addressed the Ogoni using similar ways as Saro-Wiwa, through using nonviolent language targeted to the people. For instance, in an Ogoni speech in 1997, he stated that,

Nothing is more reassuring than the fact that in spite of these repressive efforts intended to silence and intimidate us, we have by our courage, resilience and discipline cast out the yoke of crass complacency and passivity that has enslaved

many an oppressed people. Your courage has demystified the oppressor. Your resilience in the face of agonies has attracted world attention and reprieved the oppressor a slumbering conscience. Your discipline in the face of provocations has inspired hope and rewarded faith in non-violence as a weapon for fighting oppression (Mitee, 1997).

However, contrasting the accusations and despite being blamed for not serving the Ogoni people effectively, further evidence from selected speeches Mitee made indicate efforts to sustain the struggle. Even in 2007, he reiterated that the rejection of all attempts by Shell to force its way back into Ogoniland was a sacred duty which fate had pushed upon the Ogoni people. He stressed that,

A failure to contest it would be a disloyalty to dead Ogoni leaders like Saro-Wiwa and further enslavement of the living and continuous depravity of Ogoni prosperity. I call on the Ogonis and their supporters to step up their rejection and non-cooperation with all instruments of oppression and repression [...] I appeal to all Ogoni to nonviolently resist to the last man any attempt by the company to stage a forced or forged return to Ogoniland until our demands are met in full (ibid).

Additional evidence from the speeches indicate pleas he made to governments, organisations and supporters of freedom and justice around the world to exert their influence and intensify pressure on Shell to show consideration for the environmental and human rights of the Ogonis as well as the wider Niger Delta inhabitants (Mitee, 1999: 437-438). He argued that his leadership tried its best to prove that mass based, disciplined movements can effectively regenerate a declining people and through reliance on discipline, primordial values, morals and cultures, affected people and societies can effectively renew themselves while challenging oppressive governments nonviolently (Ibid :437). The use of phrases such as courage, discipline and resilience in the face of agonies, suggest a nonviolent undertone along the style of leadership demonstrated by Saro-Wiwa. Therefore, the assertions show that even though the Ogoni movement was faced with internal disagreements and conflicts, they did not lead to violence within the group. This further indicates a collective awareness that the best way to fight an authoritarian system is through nonviolence.

4.2 Outlook of the Leaders

This section will focus on the Ogoni leaders understanding of and participation in international debates on issues relating to the global environment. Specifically, it will discuss Saro-Wiwa's strategic option to link the problems faced by the Ogoni to international environmental

movements in order to better challenge the state. This will highlight the deliberate adoption of nonviolence and the principles of ethnic autonomy, resource and environmental control (ERECTISM). To Saro-Wiwa, ethnic domination disintegrates cultures of the controlled vulnerable groups, and suppresses the fulfilment of one's own potential, indicating that the employment of ethnic autonomy provides groups the avenue to advance specific political institutions (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a, p. 67) to maintain its own culture and identity. For the Ogoni, Saro-Wiwa connects ethnic autonomy to resource and environmental control based on the correlation natural resources have with the physical environment and the importance environmental issues attract in the international arena majority (Nbeta, 2006).

Environmental justice became for him a vital notion within which to engage the state and Shell (Nixon, 1996:5). In Saro-Wiwa's view, a unitary constitutional framework is not right for a highly multi-ethnic state, and this thinking informed his proposal of an Ogoni agenda (Nbeta, 2006). Nbeta explains that the Ogoni agenda:

Postulates the equality of all ethnic groups, within the Nigerian federalism as well as the evolution of proper, undiluted federalism in the nation. In this way Nigerians will not be oppressed, their creative spirit will be freed and their productivity and self-reliance promoted. Cheating will end in the nation and corruption will be minimised and justice will prevail (ibid).

In the words of Saro-Wiwa,

Three events have encouraged me to now place the issue before the world: the end of the Cold War, the increasing attention being paid to the global environment, and the insistence of the European Community that minority rights be respected, albeit in the successor states to the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia. What remains to be seen is whether Europe and America will apply in Nigeria the same standards which they have applied in Eastern Europe (Saro-Wiwa, 1992:7).

This quote indicates that because of the events mentioned, Saro-Wiwa was very much aware of the importance of shifting from previous narratives of internal colonialism towards emphasizing current issues of human rights and the environment in order to achieve the Ogoni objective. The interview with Nbeta revealed that Saro-Wiwa clearly understood the discourse and narratives of international politics:

The environment was not the only thing that the Ogoni people were fighting for but he realized that in the 90s, there was an increasing awareness of the need to protect the environment, there was so much talk about global warming, and ozone layer depletion. He keyed into the global narrative, so even the issue of political

marginalization which was a major factor was kind of subordinated to the environmental pollution and the Ogoni caught international attention (Interview: 27 July 2015).

The interview further clarified that:

Saro-Wiwa came up with a principle, a paradigm which he called ERECTISM, that various ethnic groups should have control over their resources, and then they could pay taxes to the federal government for the running of the wider state (ibid).

Saro-Wiwa thus linked the Ogoni agenda to the understanding of getting redemption for the group through federalism as a solution to their problems, through the concept of ERECTISM (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a:98). He portrayed the Ogoni as fighting a war of genocide while in the process of reconstructing their proud heritage as a primordial nation (ibid: 149). The concept of ethnic autonomy advanced by Saro-Wiwa does not imply complete isolationism or a sovereign status for the ethnic groups but, it rather emphasizes the right of the preservation of the cultural heritage of the different peoples that make up the federation. Just as Nbeta (2006:172), argues, resource control constitutes the cornerstone of Saro-Wiwa's political theory in that it relates to regional control of resources which should entail the vesting of ownership and right to allocate resources to the regions that produce them. The environment is also a resource, therefore Saro-Wiwa's idea of environmental control meant that a considerable measure of control over the environment exercised by the regions will promote a culture of environmental protection (ibid).

Even in the insistence of ERECTISM, there is no suggestion that violence should be used. In Nbeta's words, nonviolence was adopted by the Ogoni because,

We thought we were dealing with a people that are truly human who have conscience. Knowing that in terms of violence the Ogoni probably do not have the strength. It would be counterproductive to wage a confrontational war against the state, with all its resources. If we were able to convince them, to realize the evil in depriving a people of their means of livelihood, of robbing them of their very existence, they will be forced to realize what they were doing was evil and also tangential to the principles of growth and development (Interview: 27 July 2015).

This brings up an important element of the Ogoni struggle which is that of 'humanising the enemy'. According to Gubler (2016), to humanise members of the outgroup is often considered the first step towards reconciliation, but in the Ogoni case this humanization failed to produce the expected positive attitudinal change that the Ogoni expected the state would empathise

(Gubler et al., 2016) with their situation, and that would lead to a change of hearts and minds, but they were ignored. They had a humanized view of the state which determined the approaches they employed in their struggle, indicating the importance of the ideas and values of their main leaders.

Owens Wiwa explained that Ken's leadership role was portrayed through an unwavering commitment to nonviolence by his ensuring that MOSOP was committed to nonviolence as a strategy. "*Alo be, iko be, nale begin*" was his slogan in the Ogoni language, meaning we will fight with our brains, not with a knife (Hunt, 2005:64). Nbeta (2006:173), further argues that Saro-Wiwa's inclination to nonviolence was shaped by the ideas of Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Desmond Tutu, Bell Hooks, Cornel West and Rabindranath Tagore, as well as by his passion for classical literature (ibid). Nonviolence was introduced to the Ogoni through various strategies such as dialogue, protests at national and international levels, mass mobilisation, boycotts and other forms of civil disobedience.

Being informed by the Gandhian philosophy entailed that like all nonviolent narratives, the Ogoni struggle was driven mainly by the power of its ethical argument and the creativeness of its methods of protest against the Nigerian state. For the followers of Gandhi according to Klitgaard (1971:2), *Satyagraha* is ordinarily described as nonviolent resistance and is conceived of as the anticipation of hope in the future, a long expected channel of peaceful conflict resolution. Gandhi appears as one of the most outstanding figures, and his notion of a political struggle was nonviolence. In Bose (1991) words:

In Gandhi's theory of peace, human value takes great prominence. Nonviolence (Ahimsa) is a way of life rather than a tactic, and together with the search for truth (Satyagraha), makes the difference between passive submission to injustice and an active struggle against it. This struggle excludes both physical violence and casting the opponent in the role of the enemy, and hence presupposes compassion and self-criticism.

Further ideologically based explanations have been offered by other Ogoni leaders who support the adoption of nonviolence. Interview with Pyagbara, the current MOSOP president revealed that,

Our struggle was patterned around the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence which was also used by Martin Luther King Jr. We didn't see those who oppressed us in the classical sense as enemies, we saw them as largely those who are not practicing the real tenet of love. For us, it was also going to be suicidal to march

a population of less than one million in a violent rebellion against a powerful army. MOSOP wanted to breed new grounds, we felt the need of using a new strategy of engagement with the state. It also helped us gain more sympathy than a violent struggle (Interview: 31 July 2015)

In the words of Saro-Wiwa:

Violence is not the answer to a fascist government. We must continue a nonviolent struggle. It is very expensive to do that, it is hard. But it is the only way that our way can proceed. There is no other way. We will never resort to violence. But we will tackle the irresponsible leadership of this country. Our struggle has been well defined and has been well thought out (Saro-Wiwa, 1993a).

Following the presentation of Saro-Wiwa's nonviolent leadership style, it is important to state that his leadership was not without criticisms. Osaghae (1995:334) reports that Saro-Wiwa was publicly accused of wrongly calling the struggle an Ogoni struggle by Bardian Lekara of Bori Polytechnic, who claimed that Saro-Wiwa mislead and brain washed the Ogoni people for personal gains. Saro-Wiwa was particularly accused of not championing the Ogoni cause and also not helping the Ogonis when he held positions in government (*ibid*), as well as being 'testy, inflexible, self-aggrandizing and presumptuously ambitious' (Nixon, 1996:10). But in spite of these internal disagreements, the Ogoni maintained even after Saro-Wiwa's execution in 1995, the principle of nonviolence that he had introduced. Despite the demobilization of the Ogoni protest campaign by the Nigerian state, the Ogoni have continued with nonviolent resistance, the OBR, as well as the internationalisation of the Ogoni struggle, thus retaining the legacies of Ken Saro-Wiwa.

In the course of his leadership, Saro-Wiwa seemed to use two arguments. Firstly he used the idea of being principled, where he emphasised the principles of nonviolence as advocated by Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. Under the principle of nonviolence, he did not kill to achieve his goals, these he achieved with the help of a few key people in Ogoniland through mobilisation at the community level, interviewing and interacting with the Ogoni people about their needs and what they wanted to see in Ogoniland (Atiri, 2004). Secondly, Saro-Wiwa used a pragmatic argument with his knowledge of the small number of Ogoni indigenes within Rivers state. He operated with the understanding of the Ogoni being a minority nation, small in size and number geographically, therefore to engage in a violent resistance against the might of the Nigerian security forces would have been, for him, counterproductive and a disadvantage

to the group. This further explains the dynamics of choice adopted by the Ogoni, in terms of the principle of nonviolence entrenched socially and politically. The principle of leadership was another strong norm; he was able to effectively bring together the Ogoni leaders with the youth, women and men through the speeches he made during the meetings and gatherings he attended.

This section has shown that seeking international recognition specifically without the use of violence was strategic to the Ogoni cause, as seen in leaders' deliberate efforts in presenting an internationally oriented language of nonviolence in relation to their struggle. This also suggests that the Ogoni leaders understood that in order to succeed, nonviolence had to be preached to the people to make them understand how their sufferings related to the outside world. This section has shown furthermore, that the preaching's by Ogoni leaders engaged positively with nonviolence: that even where there were dissatisfactions and conflicts as seen in the Eleme case and that against the various leaderships, the movement was devoid of violence, and they maintained the principle of nonviolence.

4.3 Social Status of the Leaders

This section will show the degree of leadership capital the Ogoni were able to provide in terms of the centrality of their social and educational characteristics as it differs from the Ijaw leadership. It will highlight how the role of agency stands out within the Ogoni leadership, and suggest leaders who were able to take advantage of these conditions in charting the Ogoni agenda (Nepstad and Bob, 2006:3). In particular, in the case of the Ogoni, from the previous chapter we can see a precedent in the 50s that was clearly a statement, a narrative of nonviolence from a very important and influential leader Birabi that was then reinvigorated by Saro-Wiwa in the 1990s. The argument here relates to the importance of how these two leaders' level of education, work experience, exposure and world view helped articulate their grievances to the kinds of networks they have which enhanced the engagement and maintenance of nonviolence in their struggle. It would be recalled as mentioned earlier, that Birabi, often referred to as the father of modern Ogoni (Teniente, 2014), was the first Ogoni university graduate who, as a result of his exposure to western education in the United Kingdom laid the foundation to educational awareness and development within the Ogoni.

Prominent Ogoni leaders, such as Ken Saro-Wiwa gained international attention and recognition based on his disposition as a writer, publisher, environmentalist and human rights activist (MOSOP, 2004:1). Saro-Wiwa's environmental and human rights quest provided him the opportunity to frame the Ogoni agenda within internationally recognised matters especially in the United Nations as the voice of the Ogoni, where he successfully entrenched the peculiarities faced by the Ogoni as a minority group in Nigeria. His exposure to the UN and such other international organisations as Green Peace armed him with the knowledge and understanding of nonviolence as the only acceptable language of presenting grievances internationally in order to be recognised. Saro-Wiwa was the main reason that the Ogoni mobilised effectively in spite of the internal divisions and challenges the movement faced. Saro-Wiwa embarked upon massive sensitisation campaigns on the importance of charting a nonviolence course for the Ogoni agenda if they wanted to succeed.

Most of the subsequent Ogoni leaders have been graduates and some also hold postgraduate degrees, at times obtained at international universities. For instance, Benedict Bernard Benapena Naanen (Ben Naanen), graduated from the University of Nigeria Nsukka and had his postgraduate education in Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Ledum Anazor Mitee is a lawyer by training from the University of Nigeria Nsukka, while Owens M. Wiwa, a medical doctor graduated from the University Calabar Nigeria and subsequently acquired a Masters of Public Health (M.P.H.) degree in International Health and Development from Johns Hopkins University USA. Alubabari Desmond Nbeta, Peter Nlorle Medee, Barrister Tom Jackson Orage and Legborsi Saro Pyagbara were also educated in Nigeria. Even though the Ogoni have been presented as a minority within a minority, this small group were able to acquire a diverse variety of educational advancement that served the development and positioning of the Ogoni agenda. This can be seen from Birabi's expertise in mathematics, English by Saro-Wiwa in addition to economic history Naanen (Naanen cv and interview: 10 February 2017); law Mitee (CV and Interview: 10 February 2017) and Orage (CV and Interview: 15 February 2017); social and political philosophy Nbeta (Interview: 10 February 2017); medicine Owens Wiwa (CV and Interview: 24 February 2017); and economics Medee (CV and Interview: 10 February 2017).

These indicate the wide ranging educational capacity possessed by some of the Ogoni leaders which provided the enabling platform for critically assessing and articulating their specific problems. This relates to the 'universalistic cultural capital' which is the knowledge of the

ideals, empathies, cultural principles and political trends within the wider publics they aim to connect with (Nepstad and Bob, 2006:4). This means that they were conversant with new developments in international thinking which facilitated the understanding and acceptance of the norm of nonviolence preached by Saro-Wiwa, especially in the establishment of MOSOP and the development of the Ogoni Bill of Rights.

Also, almost all the Ogoni leaders have professional jobs or have had high-ranking positions as civil servants. For example, Birabi was part of the Ogoni Native Authority as well as the Ogoni State Representation Assembly (Okonta, 2008:71). Saro-Wiwa had at various times served the Nigerian state both at the federal and local levels including as a director and head of research in MAMSER, the administrator for Bonny and was a Commissioner in the Rivers state cabinet in 1968. Furthermore, Naanen, is a member of the governing Council of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) established by the Federal Government to clean up Ogoniland and other oil-impacted areas of Nigeria (CV and interview: 10 February 2017). Mitee had at various times held positions in the government: he was the chairman of the 2008 Niger Delta Technical Committee, chairman, Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) and was a member of the National Political Reform Conference 2005, and the 2014 National Conference (CV and Interview: 10 February 2017). Mitee is currently a member of the HYPREP Board of Trustees for the UNEP clean-up of Ogoniland while Orage has engaged with the government at various times as a Commissioner for health, education, agriculture, housing and for special duties in Rivers State, and has been in practice as a barrister of law (CV and Interview: 15 February 2017). The argument here is not to insinuate that having leaderships with professional jobs or held certain high positions with the government makes a movement nonviolent. The intention is to demonstrate how these experiences and relationships facilitated engagements with the state. This indicates the Ogoni leaders such as Saro-Wiwa, Naanen and Mitee had links or at least access to state institutions and agencies and could conceive of engaging in a dialogue with them at various levels.

The intellectual capacity of the Ogoni leadership becomes important as many have been academics and writers, starting from Saro-Wiwa who was especially noted for being a writer and publisher, has several publications to his credit, especially as they affect the Ogoni situation. His notable publications such as *'The Ogoni Nationality Today and Tomorrow; Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni Tragedy; A Month and a Day: A Detention Diary; and On a Darkling Plain: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War* serve as examples. Moreover, Naanen

who has been recognised as one of the intellectual vocal leaders of the Ogoni and a disciple of Ken Saro-Wiwa, is a Professor of Economic History at the University of Port Harcourt, with an academic career that spans across Nigeria and Canada (Naanen CV and interview: 10 February 2017). Nbeta is a senior lecturer and scholar at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers state Nigeria, and has engaged in research and consultancy in politics and governance, conflict management and development (Interview: 10 February 2017), Medee is also a senior lecturer at the same university. Even Orage was at various times a lecturer at the University of Nigeria Nsukka, College of Science and Technology, Rivers State and the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria (CV and Interview: 15 February 2017). These individuals have great experience of both academic and non-academic publications as well as engagements with the larger community, which are central because they both clearly indicate that they had excellent communicative and media skills. Persuasive rhetorical abilities, media skills and strategic knowledge to recognise opportunities and overcome barriers in the political grounds where they operate are essential for movement leaders (Nepstad and Bob, 2006:4).

Furthermore, many leaders held posts in international organisations, an opportunity that allowed them to establish international networks of communication and exchange. Saro-Wiwa, Naanen, Mitee, and Pyagbara, for instance had strong ties to the UN. Records show that from 1993 to 1995, Saro-Wiwa was the vice chair of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) General Assembly, and was once the president of the Ethnic Minority Rights Organisation of Africa (EMIROAF) (Okonta, 2008; Osha, 2007; Comfort, 2002). Likewise, Naanen, over the years, has engaged in consultancies with international organisations and institutions such as the Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), International Institute of Social History, The Netherlands. Of particular significance is his participation in the UNPO working groups on Ethnicity, Racism and Indigenous People, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, 1995-1996, which led to his becoming the Vice-President of UNPO 1995-1997. He also was a delegate to the annual Sessions, UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Geneva, and Switzerland 1994-1996 (CV and interview: 10 February 2017).

Additionally, Ledum Mitee served also as a member of the United Nations International Campaign to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998, and was President of the UNPO 2005-2010 (CV and Interview: 10 February 2017). Legborsi Pyagbara is also a representative of the Ogoni at UNPO under the umbrella of MOSOP,

member of the Board of trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations and the African coordinator of the International Indigenous Peoples' Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL) (Interview with a Confidential source: 24 February 2017). Owens Wiwa became the vice-Chairman Eastern Canada Chapter of Sierra Club and a member of the International Committee of Sierra Club, USA. Specifically, he internationally advocated for the Ogoni cause and in particular the release of Saro-Wiwa and eight others that were detained and later executed (CV and Interview: 24 February 2017). However, in terms of the class status of the Ogoni leaders, it is a mixture of low, middle and upper class. Both Ken, Owens and Orage are from a middle class family backgrounds. Naanen is from an educated family while Pyagbara, Nbeta and Medee are all from low income families. A common characteristic within their social status is that they are all property owners, owing to the traditional African land ownership system linked to family backgrounds and inheritance.

Having briefly presented the social status of some of the Ogoni leaders, what emerges is that the quality and level of exposure of these leaders enabled them with an international outlook in terms of addressing the Ogoni cause. It displayed a high degree of leadership capital within the Ogoni and shows that the leaders have been more aware of what is going on, in terms of the human rights and internal colonial discourses. They understood that they could tap into such international resources by refusing to merely be constrained by the local situation. Their backgrounds allowed them to build social networks both at local and international levels, in terms of the contacts they made in particular with the United Nations Agencies. The next section will present how the Ijaw leaders preached violence in comparison to the Ogoni leadership.

4.4 Timing of the Ijaw Struggle

An interesting characteristic of the Ijaw movement is its fluidity between violence and nonviolence. From the 1960s, it was a violent rebellion which was short lived under Boro, then from the 1990s it manifested in a nonviolent manner similar to that of the Ogoni, additionally, in 2003-2004 the Ijaw struggle took a turn towards violence as will be seen in the emergence of more radical armed leaders such as Asari Dokubo. From 2009, an amnesty was granted to the armed groups, hence a period of relative peace up to 2016 which then saw the re-emergence of violence again in the region while the Ogoni movement has been clearly identified with an engaged leadership specifically in the person of Ken Saro-Wiwa and later on Ledum Mitee.

This suggests that getting an accurate analysis of the nature of leadership that exists within the Ijaw movement would be almost impossible in view of the fact that these perceived leaders were not as unified in the construction of the struggle. However, an attempt shall be made. This section will discuss the Ijaw first national struggle for self-determination, spearheaded in the 1960s by the late Ijaw patriot Issac Jasper Adaka Boro. It will then present the fragmented nature of the Ijaw leadership and how the Ijaw movement has witnessed the swaying from violence to nonviolence and back to violence seen in the emergence of several leaders. It will highlight the lack of unity in the construction of the Ijaw agenda in comparison to the Ogoni, by showing that the youth leaders who constructed the Ijaw Kaiama Declaration are different from those that actually took up arms against the state.

The Niger Delta region from 1999 to date has been described as a hot bed of violent militant, terrorist and insurgent activities (Afinotan and Ojakorotu, 2009) where a number of protest movements and militia groups surfaced in reaction to the perceived nature of state violence on the inhabitants of the region. Like in the case of the Ogoni nonviolent struggle, much has been written about the violent aspects of the Niger Delta struggles. The Niger Delta according to Akinwale (2009:192), has gradually become famed due to massive oil deposits and recurring episodes of violence. Ukiwo (2007:597), argues that insurgency is the outcome of established experiences of the political and socio-cultural relegation of youths in the Niger Delta, as a result of which militant groups emerged in the region. The start of pan-ethnic political identity, however, was gradually introduced in the early 1930s and 1940s in the course of an increasing struggle for influence and resources within the colonial administrative centre of Port Harcourt. Consequently, Ijaw, Igbo and other Delta migrants engaged in competition for jobs, political influence and land (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2009:52).

4.4.1 Ijaw Leadership Early 1960s (Isaac Adaka Boro)

The Ijaw struggle, similarly to the Ogoni movement was initiated as far back as the 1960s. The Ijaw national struggle for self-determination was one of the early notable violent rebellions in the Niger Delta against the state, this was a struggle spearheaded in the 1960s by the late Ijaw patriots, Issac Adaka Boro, Samuel Owonaru and Nottingham Dick (Osha, 2006; Watts, 2003) from the Kaiama community in Rivers state, under the group known as Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), in what has been called a 12-day revolution. Adaka Boro's ascension to Ijaw leadership was based on the premise that a fairer share of the oil revenues were the rights of

the Ijaw ethnic group. This idea came from the conviction that a majority of the Ijaw youths, frustrated with the general neglect, were ready for any action that would liberate the Ijaw from the central Nigerian state (May30, 2016:33). Boro's primary intention was to create an independent state of the Niger Delta that aimed at solving the human and infrastructural developmental and infrastructural challenges faced by the Ijaw (Omotola, 2006). The Boro rebellion represented the peak of the injustice, political frustration and suffocation that the Ijaw suffered in an independent Nigeria (ibid). Darah (1995), points out that it was provoked by noticeable state of neglect, environmental degradation, poverty and the loss of the source livelihood. Boro expressed his frustration over these by stating that:

My sharp sensibility to injustice in my fellow creatures made matters worse and only aggravated my resolve to right all wrongs that lie within my reach (Boro, 1982:31).

To secede from the Nigerian state he declared the Niger Delta Republic on 23 February 1966 (Darah, 1995; Mukoro, 2010). This historical incident took place a few weeks after young Nigerian army officers overthrew in a bloody coup the first post-independence government in 1966. Boro was noted to have made several complaints before the uprising that marked the start of an epoch of insurgency and militia activities in the Niger Delta. Boro demonstrated to the world exactly how the region felt about their perceived oppression by the state by proclaiming that:

Today is a great day not only in your lives but in the history of the Niger Delta. Perhaps, it will be the greatest day for a very long time. This is not because we are going to bring the heavens down, but because we are going to demonstrate to the world what and how we feel about oppression.... Remember your 70 year old grandmother who still farms before she eats; remember also your poverty stricken people; remember too your petroleum which is being pumped out daily from your veins; and then fight for your freedom (Agbo, 2007).

With these brave words, the NDVF sailed into the creeks and took over several facilities belonging to Shell (Darah, 1995). Boro's actions clearly demonstrate violence, the open call to arms as the best way to challenge the state has been evidenced in all his statements. This stands in clear opposition to the Ogoni movement under Birabi in that the Ogoni leadership were more concerned with educating and sensitising their people as against a call to arms recorded during the time of Boro. Under Boro, the preaching was clearly violent; he did not shy away from what he specifically intended to do, which was to secede from the state through the use of force.

However, the rebellion was crushed by the state on 7 March 1966 after 12 days of fighting, and Boro and his counterparts were subsequently captured, tried for treason and sentenced to death. The death sentences were not carried out on the trio who were later granted amnesty by the military government led by General Yakubu Gowon, after they opted to join the army and fight on the side of the state against the Igbo¹⁸. This came as a result of the urgent support the state needed from the Niger Delta region in order to fight the Biafran war. Additionally, Boro claimed that the killing of Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa¹⁹, whom he described as the ‘protector’ of all Ijaws, and the installation of Major General Aguyi-Ironsi²⁰, an Igbo officer, convinced him that:

The day had dawned on the Niger Delta, revolution is the only way out for the Ijaw otherwise we would throw ourselves into perpetual slavery (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2009:57; Boro, 1982:94).

This fits in with Darah's (1995:1) assertion that, notwithstanding Boro's early death in 1968, his revolutionary initiative became a model for struggles on national resistance against perceived oppression and exploitation by the state and multinational oil companies. Subsequently, all the militia groups that were formed by the Ijaw paid allegiance to the Boro rebellion. Even though the strategies may have changed noticeably, the demands have remained basically the same in the last 40 years in terms of the recognition of the ecological devastation by oil exploitation and the inadequate compensation and development of the oil-bearing communities (Watts, 2003). The ill-fated Delta Peoples Republic was the front runner of what is today a prairie fire of ethnic mobilisation by the historically excluded indigenous minorities (ibid). Adaka Boro emerged as a political figure determined to lead the region out of the terrible situation of neglect they found themselves in. This suggests that calling the attention of the world to the uncomfortable situation of the Ijaw through violence, meant success in the perspective of Boro. After Boro's death, no significant struggle was recorded within Ijawland until the Kaiama Declaration was issued in 1999. The next section will discuss the Ijaw struggle from the 1990s in order to assess if the Ijaw leaders preached violence in comparison to the nonviolent preaching of the Ogoni leaders.

¹⁸ One of the largest ethnic groups located in the south-eastern region of the Nigerian state.

¹⁹ Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, first Prime Minister of Nigeria 1 October 1960-15 January 1996.

²⁰ Major General Johnson Thomas Ummakwe Aguyi-Ironsi, second Nigerian Head of State 16 January-29 July 1966.

4.4.2 Ijaw leadership since the 1990s

As discussed in the preceding section, Boro's 'ground-breaking credentials, soldierly dexterity and standpoint' (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2009:56) made him a strategic point of reference as well as a gallant figure for present-day Ijaw nationalists who claim to be defenders of resource control. Years of oil stimulated community rebellion in the region encouraged and enhanced the development of an extensive pan-Ijaw ethno-nationalist consciousness amid a group of people, communicating in some variations of six interconnected languages (Ibid:51). The late 1990s Ijaw movement witnessed the emergence of some moderate youth leaders in the persons of Oronto Douglas, Felix Tuodolo, Isaac Osuoka, Patterson Ogon, and T.K. Ogoriba, and the list is inconclusive, who were more concerned with the development of the region. This group of leaders is made up of those who are genuinely concerned with the goal of a truly developed Niger Delta, who are neither militants nor insurgents, but predominantly enlightened citizens and members of the intelligentsia which includes enlightened traditional institutions (Afinotan and Ojajorotu, 2009). These are the youth leaders who constructed the Kaiama Declaration as a form of demands to the state, and they did not take up arms. Discussing the rise of youth leadership in the Niger Delta would be incomplete without first understanding what constitutes youth in the Niger Delta. Generally in Africa, youth is a grouping of early adulthood, interested in and connected to the social order (Durham, 2000). Young people are at the heart of struggles and agitations in Africa (Ugor, 2013). According to Ikelegbe, the specific classification of youth in the Niger Delta is situational and culture specific, a good percentage of the population is within the ages of 15-35 (Osaghae et al., 2007:3), which, Osuoka linked to:

The influence of traditional society in having gerontocracy as the system of rule. The elders in villages are believed to have knowledge, they are the ones who are in charge, and so power became conflated with age. If you are a youth, it means that you are not allowed to participate at that level of decision making, but over time those who became influential and were in power with government, and with the introduction of the state are not necessarily old people (Interview: 31 July 2015).

As a social category, the youth develop certain awareness, behaviour patterns and value systems (Osaghae et al., 2007), but within the Niger Delta context in particular, this development is quite problematic. According to Osuoka,

People that are 60 now call themselves youth. From the 90s those who tended to define themselves as youth were people who have the perception of being marginalized in society, and youth became the appellation for those who do not have access to power, at the same time looking for a space for expression and

participation. There was opposition to military dictatorship, different organisations emerged that defined themselves as youth. (Interview: 31 July 2015).

In the Ogoni context as clarified by Saro-Wiwa, the term youth is used to define people below the age of 40 (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a:71). As Ikelegbe observes, these youths fight for existence, collective identity and inclusion, in view of the challenges which determine how the youths as a social group correlate to the environment within which they exist (Ikelegbe, 2006:3). In a research project on the Niger Delta, Olofinmoyin (1998) argues that the agitations in the region were typified with an increase in the development of militant youth groups such as the Ijaw Youth Congress, Itsekiri Youth Wing and Egbesu Militant Youths. This upsurge is the result of the awareness and defiance of the oil resource producing communities, specifically the Ijaw, to the environmental damage which sometimes occasioned physical resistance (ibid). In addition, Ijaw youths formed several armed militia groups with different leaderships that unleashed severe terror both on the Nigerian state and people of the region.

In almost all the agitations and protests, Ijaw youths are at the frontline of the activities which ranged from nonviolence to violence perpetrated by some of the leaders. Some engaged in other activities that include lawlessness, piracy and blackmail which have been perceived as threats to the Nigerian national security. Alabi (2014:21), opines, however, that these militia groups concentrated on perceived dissatisfactions and resentments of a particular ethnic group as a cover for their pan-Niger Delta demands. On the other hand, Mukoro (2010:82), described them not as militants but as civil movements, with membership mainly from the Ijaw nationality, which heralded the development of the Kaiama Declaration, and the formation of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) (see Chapter Five). Which serves as the military arm of the Ijaw National Congress (INC) (Afinotan and Ojakorotu, 2009:192).

As mentioned earlier, 2003 and 2004 saw the emergence of some of the notable radical militant leaders including Government Ekpemupolo (Tompolo)²¹, Asari Dokubo²², Ateke Tom²³, Farah Dagogo²⁴, Oboko Bello²⁵, Boyloaf²⁶ and several others. The organisation of these groups will

²¹ Ex-militant, and a hero of the struggle for the emancipation and development of the Niger Delta.

²² A prominent ex-militant and leader of FNDIC

²³ Leader of the Niger Delta Vigilante.

²⁴ One time MEND Commander in Rivers state

²⁵ President of the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC)

²⁶ His real name is Ebikabowei Victor Ben, an ex-militant leader.

be discussed in the next chapter. By contrast, in the Ogoni struggle there is no record of armed militant leaders like those seen in the Ijaw movement, which further reaffirms the justification on the choice of nonviolence for the Ogoni. This second dimension of leadership links to the several groups of criminal cult gangs created and financed by political godfathers for the purpose of threatening and intimidating political opponents, kidnapping for ransom, and crude oil theft (ibid). In a similar attestation to the differing groups of leaders in the region, Benaebi Benatari, a member of the Ijaw nation²⁷ classified the militant leaders into three groups:

We have genuine leaders concerned with the freedom of the Ijaw in the Niger Delta, some are armed while others are intellectual. Some were into oil bunkering to fund the armed struggle. We have leader by day and political thug by night, those who are into armed struggle but rent out their services to politicians to achieve power. Then we have leader by day and criminal by night, those who are in the armed struggle, but commit the odd crime on the side to strike it rich and maybe fund the armed struggle (Benatari, 2010).

This indicates that not all the leaders in the region are fighting an Ijaw cause or have the genuine interest of the Niger Delta in their activities, which suggests that some of the leaders, especially those that became active in the 2000s in the region, acted because of financial benefits; particularly those armed by local politicians to rig elections in their favour, scare and intimidate voters. Furthermore, Alabi (2014:8-10), classified the Ijaw leaders into two groups, (i) individuals and (ii) organizations such as MEND, FNDIC, NDV that have reasons for taking up arms against the state. According to Omotola (2009:137), taking up arms in a violent confrontation may not have been the actual intention of the militia leaders' but for the inattentiveness to their agitations, the violent option may not have happened. This dimension was attested to in a newspaper statement by the then Governor Uduaghan of Delta State, who disclosed that

The genuine and true struggle for economic and social emancipation of the Niger Delta is yet to take a direction with the importance of fighting the cause of the region on the basis of ethnic nationality, where all would be included and not on tribal differences. Including the absence of a leadership with a representative profile, collectively put together by the nationalities in the region (Uduaghan, 2008:193).

This suggests that the representative profile discussed by Uduaghan relates to a militant group that will fight the cause of the region as one Niger Delta, not an Ogoni or Ijaw struggle, but

²⁷ An Ijaw intellectual group in the Niger Delta.

one that will have the other ethnic groups in the region represented. The classification of leaders into different categories brings to question the actual motive behind the Ijaw armed struggle, which fits into Demirel-Pegg and Pegg's (2015:660), assertion that using greed and the desire for personal enrichment as the major reason for the escalation of the Niger Delta conflict is too simplistic. They presented a more compelling perspective in terms of the perceived failure of the nonviolent methods of collective actions, such as that employed by the Ogoni, as the key factors responsible for the violence. Collier et al., (2001:1), point out that uprisings are mainly caused by severe injustices such as extreme inequity, lack of political space and discriminations in society. What led to Asari Dokubo reiterating that,

The struggle is unstoppable, we must avoid falling into the throes of what Adaka Boro foresaw forty years ago. Let them call us terrorists...bandits. It is important and critical that we remain as resolute in the pursuit of the ideals of our fallen heroes like Isaac Adaka Boro and Ken Saro-Wiwa (Dokubo, 2009).

Ukiwo (2007) counters the inclusion of greed as part of the causal factors of the militancy in the region, arguing that if greed is the key cause of violent conflicts, then leaders of all the ethnic groups in the oil-bearing region would have taken up arms against the state and the multinational companies. It would be recalled that the Ogoni based on their own experiences, channelled their grievances using nonviolent direct action, but the simple fact that it is the Ijaw in the region that have taken up violent group mobilization alludes that violent disputes arise from the particular group experiences of 'state power and inter-group relations', rather than simply opportunities to loot resources (Ibid). This indicates the unpredictable nature of the Niger Delta conflicts because, if the Ogoni being faced with similar oil related predicaments did not employ violence against the state, why then did the Ijaw take up arms?

4.5 Outlook of the Leaders: From Nonviolence to Violence (1999-Present)

This section will show that although the Ijaw struggle from the 1960s started off with violence and then changed to nonviolence in an attempt to mirror the Ogoni outlook, the fragmented and fluid nature of the Ijaw leadership led to the transformation of the conflict in the region from a nonviolent community protest to a full blown violent insurgency. According to Wills,

A dialogue ensued among those who were leading this movement that we've made nonviolent efforts, and you see the response. How can we continue to follow this nonviolent method? Some sections of the group decided that the more effective way to deal with these issues is to go violent, but there were some who decided to stay

the course of nonviolence. December 1998 into January 1999, was really the turning point from nonviolent intellectual political agitation to partly violent struggle (Interview: 29 July 2015).

This seems to show some thoughtful considerations made within the Ijaw intellectual leadership in terms of how to best address the situation they found themselves in, in relation to the state's actions. This indicates the juxtaposing of nonviolence versus violence before the violent option was adopted. These suggest the classical situation of those who make peaceful change impossible make violent change inevitable, as exemplified in the history of South Africa, where the African National Congress (ANC) became involved in the struggle against apartheid through peaceful methods until the 1961 Sharpeville massacre that led to the establishment of the armed wing of the ANC Umkhonto we Sizwe²⁸. The transformation of the conflict in the Niger Delta from the Ogoni nonviolent community protest to violent insurgency is a strategic factor to consider in order to fully understand the fluid nature and dynamics of the issues. According to Demirel-Pegg and Pegg (2015), while moderates spearhead the struggle toward more established forms of collective action such as strikes and demonstrations, smaller and newer groups become uncompromising because they engage in fierce strategies in a bid to make a clear distinction between themselves and the moderates. In support of this, Ogon highlights in an interview that:

The preaching's were on fundamental issues, because there were internal divisions, communities were in court, it was more or less to resolve internal disputes and to say that you don't have any need to fight amongst yourselves while people are drilling your oil and taking your resources away. Why don't you come together and fight the common enemy (Interview: 30 July 2015).

These indicate clearly that the moderate leaders were concerned with ways in which their internal and external issues and problems could be resolved through nonviolence while, the radical Ijaw leaders show openly that the adoption of violence is the only solution to solving the Ijaw problems. Media interviews with some of the militant leaders such as Boyloaf revealed that,

We had to change our way since our rights are not given to us. Violence is the only way we can use to tackle the Nigerian state because they understand it better than us. We blow up stations because that is the source of government money. The best way to tackle government is to destroy these instalments before we go one on one (Vanguard News Paper, 2008).

²⁸ Zulu word for Spear of the Nation.

Supporting this confrontational stance taken, Azazi revealed that,

We were angry and tired, we didn't look back, let them give us what belongs to us
(Interview: 10 August 2015)

These quotes underscore the assertion that violent confrontations have actually been the last resort of the civil groups, embarked upon because of the perceived failure of peaceful methods (Ikelegbe, 2001:459). This supports one of the arguments raised by this study that the nature of state response to the conflicts in the Niger Delta exacerbates rather than solves the conflicts.

In a media interview, Tompolo revealed that,

If the joint military task force had not woken up the sleeping lion the violence would have been avoided. But they attack us and i have promise them that i must revenge since they attacked my boys and people. We will succeed, kill them and burn down the place (The Punch, 2008).

In the same vein, Ateke Tom adds that:

We have already crossed our minds long time ago, we are ready to face anything that comes our way because we have the Egbesu God of war behind us. He is not afraid of anybody. The oil companies are on our land and it is our business to get rid of them, what we want is our land (The Guardian News Paper, 2008).

According to Omotola (2009:137), the IYC, through its militant section known as the Egbesu Boys of Africa, became violent. At the forefront of the Ijaw confrontational activities was the Supreme Egbesu Boys that gained public attention during the military onslaught that followed the Kaiama Declaration. In this, there grew a perception that its members were purportedly protected by the Ijaw Egbesu deity and were invisible to bullets (Ukiwo, 2007:602). In support of this assertion, Alamieyeseigha recounts that,

There was one type of movement, a deity that became so prominent, they call it Egbesu, ordinarily if you see them, you may not regard them as anything, but just a white cloth they tie as arm band. They became more or less invisible to bullets in reality, when the army will engage them and they will be moving towards them, the army will drop their guns and run. They could enter a place chained with big padlocks, by pointing at that particular padlock, the padlock and the big chains will just cut, the place will open, so that emboldened them, they became so fearless in their operations (Interview: 5 August 2015).

He adds that,

Bayelsa state was near ungovernable, by 4 pm in the evening you can't walk on the streets of Yenagoa the state capital for fear of Egbesu, rascality, kidnapping, miming of people, rape, all types of acts were going on (Ibid).

The military onslaught referred to by Ukiwo (2007), occurred in the town of Odi after the Kaiama Declaration, which Elaigwu points to as the killing of policemen in Odi (Elaigwu, 2014). In almost all the disturbances, youths formed the vanguard of the violence perpetrated. It is important to bring in the Odi incident that happened in November 1999, which some of the interviewees make reference to. The News (1999), reported of an attack on a team of seven policemen including a deputy commissioner, dispatched to Odi on a fact-finding mission, in an effort to re-open the police office that was previously burnt by the militants as a result of a violent clash with the police. The militants, who later requested a ransom in exchange for the policemen, abducted the team upon their arrival at Odi (Ojo, 2009; The News, 1999). The demand was initially turned down by the state but was eventually accepted after three days of negotiations. Unbeknownst to the negotiators, however, the policemen had been killed a few hours after they were abducted. Three soldiers traveling from Warri to Port Harcourt were also abducted and killed in Odi by the militants (ibid). According to Ojo (2009), a two-week ultimatum was given by the Nigerian state to the then governor to either bring out the killers and restore peace to the area or face the imposition of a state of emergency. This ultimatum generated a lot of controversy in the state as it became too difficult to be carried out (The News, 1999).

Shortly after these incidents, during the biggest internal military operation ever witnessed in the region, armed soldiers destroyed the entire village of Odi in the restive Niger Delta, igniting local and international condemnation for the then President Olusegun Obasanjo. More than 50 army trucks and over 3,000 soldiers pushed through paths and forests into the heart of Kolokuma/Opokuma²⁹. This deployment of soldiers within the Ijaw quarters was seen as the execution of the threat by the Nigerian state during which over 95% of the Odi population were displaced by the invasion (OMCT and CLEEN, 2002). Forty-eight hours after the attack, the rural town of Odi was completely levelled; only a church and a First Bank³⁰ building survived the operation. Of the estimated 60,000 inhabitants, only 13 frail looking old women and eight children were seen, looking empty and dejected, with neither good meals nor medical attention

²⁹ A local government area located in Kaiama, Bayelsa state.

³⁰ Literally the first bank established in 1894 in Nigeria.

(The Punch Newspaper, 1999). The armed forces spent fourteen days in Odi, leaving behind raped women and a death toll of over 2,000 people including women and children of varying ages ranging from four to eighty-six (HRW, 1999; OMCT and CLEEN, 2002; Omotola, 2009; The News, 1999). Violations of right to life and associated civil and political rights were displayed openly (OMCT and CLEEN, 2002). The Human Rights Watch Report stresses that these operations indicated a disturbing willingness by the new civilian government to use the same methods as the military governments of the past (1999).

These seem to suggest that the Odi massacre in 1999 marked the most alarming state excesses recorded. It is possible to argue that these excesses could perhaps be noted as the actual trigger to the Ijaw violence. Such repressive and coercive actions by the state targeted at the militants (Omotola, 2009) pushed for the ensuing violence in the Niger Delta.

To Ukiwo, the Egbesu were recognized for the possession of power and protection within the Ijaw and specifically targeted at the interests and instruments of the state. Even Asari Dokubo, one of the notable Ijaw militant leader of the NDPVF, stated openly that:

We are talking about blood oil. Ken Saro-Wiwa and others were murdered for our oil. Anybody who takes our oil is an enemy. The only way they can contribute is to leave. As long as they continue to back the occupation by the Nigerian government, these multinational oil companies are enemy combatants and if they are caught in the line of fire, they will be killed. They will not be speared (Alabrah, 2010:1).

Accordingly, this corresponds with Omotola's (2009:137), observation that the escalation of ethnic militias is simultaneous with the rise and snowballing radicalisation of ethnically founded leadership groups in the Niger Delta, whose fundamentals appear mainly violent. For instance, Dokubo preached open violence and even outlined that,

The views of the NDPVF are very clear. We are going back to armed struggle and anybody who is caught in the line of fire will be treated as an enemy combatant, whether an American or Dutch. Nobody can enslave and cause me pain in my land, destroy my land and continue to ask me to accept peace with my hands behind my back, with a gun pointed at my head. I will never accept that peace. I will fight until I get victory and place freedom on the palms of my people or I die (Alabrah, 2010:10).

Asari Dokubo's leadership style, for example, becomes more of direct confrontation after him having left the IYC where he was the president in 2003 to set up his NDPVF. In an attempt to

justify the leadership status of Asari, the 2004 NDPVF handbill came up with the aims and objectives of ‘the fundamentals of justice and equality, truth, conscience, logic and facts, love for humanity as well as sanctity of life’ (Etemike, 2009:159) as key to being an Ijaw leader. Asari came up gallantly, and protested against what he perceived as the Nigerian government’s lack of concern about the area in spite of the fact that more than 80% of the state’s revenues derived from there, and the concomitant adverse effects on the livelihood of the people due to the large scale petroleum production activities (ibid). Asari concluded that if the people of the Niger Delta do not take up arms and fight the federal government, they would remain poor and become poorer in future. As a founding member of the Ijaw Youth Council in 1998, Asari started off as a vice president, but his committed stamina and leadership abilities facilitated his assumption of leadership as president in 2001. During his term, he engaged in the quest for resource control and self-determination (Clark, 2009). He challenged the central Nigerian state, determined to emancipate the Ijaw from state oppression by taking control of their destiny. Taking advantage of the poverty and prolonged oil exploitation grievances, Asari found a willing group of youth ready to engage in a realm of violence, bombs and bullets and thus became a significant influence within his community.

He adopted a strong propaganda war that appealed to the opinions and backing of many in the region, in particular, his declared political ideology was one of advancing Ijaw rights through commanding control over the god given resources (Hazen, 2010:89). Dokubo’s ability to depict himself as a victim and the NDPVF as the solution to the Ijaw’s problems fitted strategically into the prevalent local grievance (Ibid: 90), indicating that the formation of the NDPVF exhibited an obvious refutation of nonviolent political movements in the Delta. The same stance is reiterated in an interview with confidential source 4, who points out that

We know when it is time to change our tactics, why should we remain peaceful, when government has forgotten about Ijaw suffering? Whose mandate is it to tell the Ijaw people to remain calm when all they can see is suffering? We have to reclaim what is rightfully ours with our strength not with words but with our military style (Interview: 3 August 2015).

These quotes seem to suggest that with the coming up of various militant leaderships within the Ijaw axis, the preaching’s were clearly confrontational and the quotes show that the voices and actions of the radical leaders such as Asari Dokubo and Tompolo were louder than the moderate leaders, because their groups were formed with a defined intention of violence. These

have further demonstrated the two-fold nature of leaders that exist within the Ijaw group and show how they turn to violence as the preferred method of engagement. They correspond with Idemudia's (2009:319), observation that the concentration on violence witnessed in the area is the consequence of the opportunistic atmosphere for violence that emerged out of the multifaceted interface of need, creed and greed. The escalation of violence in Ijawland attracted several criticisms and much condemnation from some of the moderate leaders, who displayed their opposition to the violence perpetrated in the region. For instance, Sobomabo Jackrich, the leader of the Kalabari Unity Forum who was at one time part of the agitators, and Alabo Charles Harry, the president of the Ijaw National Congress explained that the negative and violent approach utilised by the latest crop of violence in the region not only inflicts severe aftereffects on the socioeconomic lives of the people but also creates indescribable environmental risks that would result in destructive effects on the peoples' well-being and health (Hart, 2016). Jackrich emphasised that,

I am against agitation centred on violence and destruction, I believe in the nonviolent approach. I have continued to preach against violent agitation, even after accepting amnesty I have been deeply committed to advocacy for nonviolence and have taken my campaign to the youths (ibid).

In the same vein, the new President of the INC reiterated that:

The time is rife for us to jointly and responsibly take our destiny in our own hands, and to however, embrace nonviolence agitation. We know Niger Deltans are aggrieved and are justified to agitate against injustice and marginalization but we must do it in the most nonviolent manner to attract global attention and intervention, this is the path INC has chosen (ibid).

This shows that nonviolent leaders argue that violence aggravated the problems faced by the people in the region because, as argued by Jackrich, the greatest resources of the Ijaw's have been wasted, which are the Ijaw youth this becomes more of a disadvantage for us (ibid). The next section will present the social status of the intellectual and the militant Ijaw leaders.

4.6 Social Status of the Leaders

This section will discuss the similarities and differences between the social status of the Ijaw leaders and that of the Ogoni. It will specifically focus on how the function of group agency stands out within the dual nature of Ijaw leadership, suggesting the presence of two distinct

group of leaders. The point of interest here is that within the Ijaw leadership, we have an early leadership preaching violence, then we have a kind of leadership in the 1990s that were trying to follow the Ogoni style because they could see that the Ogoni seemed to be obtaining so much international support and therefore considered this a strategy that seemed to be working. But Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution coupled with a change of leaders gave them a reason to go towards violence, linking up to the very early violent leadership of Adaka Boro.

Therefore, on the one hand is a leadership that attempted to explore the benefits of these conditions and on the other, one that was unable to make the best out of the conditions (Nepstad and Bob, 2006:4) due to differences in social status. These distinctions will show what degree of leadership capital the Ijaw provide in comparison to the Ogoni, and how the leadership were similar to the Ogoni in terms of the engagement with nonviolence based on the education and work experience that influenced leaders' social and international networks and, that had put them in contact with policy makers within Nigeria and internationally. The section will then focus on the social status of the new, more radical Ijaw youth leaders which emerged much later, from the 2000s, who were relatively uneducated, and even drop outs, to indicate that nonviolence was not what interested them, rather, that they were perhaps much more linked to the local people. These leaders will be approached in two parts, the first being of the intellectual youth leaders and the second in terms of the armed militant Ijaw leaders, with a view to better understand the adoption of a moderate stance on the part of the former as opposed to the violent stance adopted by the latter. The intention here is not to present the educated as essentially nonviolent, rather, it is to show how the less educated are much more tied to the local situation and probably more likely to express their feelings of rage, frustration and strong discontent through a much more radical representation of the local demands. It will thus be highlighted that as a result of the less external contacts, they had very limited social networks, to be able to tap into international movements and discourses like the Ogoni.

Similarly to the Ogoni movement, the 1990s Ijaw agitation started on a very intellectual note organised by Ijaw personalities who were also graduates of local and international universities. Patterson Ogon for example, graduated at the postgraduate level from the University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria with a Noose Foundation Fellowship of the University of California Berkley. Isaac Asume Osuoka graduated from the University of Calabar and obtained postgraduate education from Nigeria and Canada, while Timi Keiser-Wilhelm Ogoriba had all his education in Nigeria. Diepreye Solomon Peter Alamieyeseigha popularly referred to as the

‘Governor General of Ijaw Nation’ graduated from the Nigerian Defence Academy, also, Iniruo Wills graduated from the Rivers State University of Science & Technology, Nigeria.

The wide ranging educational capacity of the Ijaw leaders is similar to that of the Ogoni in the areas of political science studied by Ogon (Interview: 28 January 2017), social and political philosophy as well as environmental studies by Osuoka (CV and Interview 16 February 2017); chemistry by Ogoriba; law by Wills (interview and cv, 11 February, 2017); and also defence and logistics by Alamiyeseigha (Interview with Ben Tantua, February 9 2017). Just as in the Ogoni case, possession of such varieties of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) enabled them to identify and put together the major issues affecting the Ijaw, indicating the awareness of strategic international trends within which they could situate their issues along a nonviolent disposition demonstrated in the establishment of the Ijaw Youth Council and the presentation of the Kaiama Declaration. Therefore, up to this point there is no major difference within the Ogoni and Ijaw leaderships in terms of possessing the knowledge and understanding of issues affecting their region. It is important, however, to restate that the inclusion of education is not about them being more educated; education is indicative of the wider social networks bearing in mind the fact that they themselves have got the hard side of the issues, having shared similar lived experiences.

As seen in the Ogoni leadership, some of the Ijaw leaders are professionals in their own rights and have important positions although not mainly in the civil service. Ogoriba for instance, has been a teacher and was part of the Federal Government - Ijaw Representatives Joint Committee in 2007 which negotiated the truce and amnesty deal granted to the Ijaw militants (Interview: 13 February 2017). Wills has worked within the public sector and has served at various times as a Commissioner for environment; information and culture, as a Special Adviser to the Governor on environment for the Bayelsa State government. He was also the Special Assistant to the Managing Director in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) (Interview and CV, 11 February, 2017). Osuoka has been mainly involved in environmental and civil society issues in nongovernmental organisations with Oilwatch Africa and Oilwatch International, a program manager, energy, mining and climate change in Environmental Rights Action (ERA) and Friends of the Earth in Nigeria, and currently with the Social Development Integrated Centre (Social Action) Nigeria where he currently is the Executive Director (CV and Interview 16 February 2017). Alamiyeseigha was a retired Squadron Leader of the Nigerian Airforce and onetime governor of Bayelsa state, while Ogon also engages in the civil

society and activism for the Niger Delta cause (Interview 28 January 2017). It goes without saying that the Ijaw leadership in the 1990s comprised of specialists that had the capacity and that also attempted to address their grievances through dialogue and who aimed at peacefully resolving some of these issues.

In addition to the related educational and professional capacity, the intellectual ability of the Ijaw leadership, although not comprised of several academics as seen in the Ogoni case, serves as another interesting angle within which to examine the social standing of the group and its impact on central and common concerns. Osuoka, Ogoriba and Ogon, while in the university, have been active members of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), in fact Osuoka, was part of the National Executive Council of NANS (CV and Interview 16 February 2017), who later decided to mobilise the local Ijaw youth that were more impoverished than themselves (Nwajiaku, 2005:9). An important characteristic of the Ijaw youth leaders is their engagement in student union activism while at university. Ukiwo maintains that some of these former Ijaw student union activists embarked upon the formation of various pan-ethnic youth organizations, notably the Movement for the Survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSIEN), the Movement for the Reparations to Ogbia (MORETO), and the IYC which was conceived as the umbrella organization of Ijaw youth associations at the grassroots level. The IYC is similar to the Ogoni MOSOP, but the latter significantly did not stop at the Ogoni youth association, rather it encompassed women, professionals, traditional councils as well as church groups which also included elders. Moreover, just as MOSOP spoke for the Ogoni, the IYC was also advocating for the Ijaw youth associations in the region (Ukiwo, 2007:601).

In terms of communication and connections to international networks, while the Ogoni are able to demonstrate strong ties to international organizations such as the UN, the same cannot be said in terms of the interaction from the intellectual moderate Ijaw leaders, even though they were able to link up with some institutions. Ogon, for instance, has been in contact on oil related issues with several international organisations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International on behalf of the Ijaw, and with notable international personalities such as former President Jimmy Carter as discussed in the previous chapter. These interactions paved the way for the founding of the Ijaw Council for Human Rights, which championed the campaign and defence of violations of human rights of individuals and communities especially within the Ijaw areas of the Delta (Interview 28 January 2017). Osuoka has also been the co-Coordinator and Chair of the Steering Committee of the Gulf of Guinea Citizens Network, which is an

international advocacy initiative by civil society actors for effective enforcement of standards of legal, political, and social responsibility in natural resources exploitation, management, and accounting in the countries along the West African Gulf of Guinea (CV and Interview 16 February 2017). Oronto Douglas has also been noted to have engaged actively with some institutions in Canada as well as with the European Union officials that even saw a visit to the region by some members of the Italian parliament to the Niger Delta (Ogon Interview: 31 January 2017).

Iniruo Wills's commitment with the World Legal Systems and Contracts for Oil and Gas Associated London, United Kingdom also served as channels within which the Ijaw interacted and built networks and contacts internationally. These indicate that the Ijaw youth leadership were also equipped with the necessary skills with which they could easily express and communicate with the wider international community both orally and in writing. Here the similarity between the leaders is clear in terms of the understanding that the contacts you can make relates to the kind of discourse you can promote to engage with and gain international recognition, and goes further to highlight the differences in terms of leadership capital with that of the Ogoni being evidently higher. Meanwhile, in terms of family background and class status, Iniruo Wills and D.S.P Alamiyeseigha come from a middle income background, while Osuoka, Ogon and Ogoriba can be said to be from low income families (Interview with Ben Tantua, February 9 2017).

As argued earlier in the chapter, the second group of Ijaw leadership is such that was highly deficient in leadership capital and was therefore incapable of making effective use of their conditions (Nepstad and Bob, 2006:4) due to differences in social status. Comparing the radical leaders to the moderate Ijaw and even the Ogoni will be very difficult because of the huge variances in education and intellectual abilities. Going back to the Isaac Adaka Boro rebellion of the 1960s, Boro was a chemistry university drop out from the University of Nigeria Nsukka, who left to champion an armed rebellion against the exploitation of oil and gas resources in the region. While at university, he was also active in student union activities, and was at one time president of the student union (Boro, 1982), which is a trend observed by some of the moderate Ijaw leaders such as Osuoka and Ogon.

Another leader that stands out within the radical Ijaw group is Alhaji Mujahid Asari Dokubo who was originally known as Melford Dokubo Goodhead Jr., who in a similar gesture dropped

out of higher education after making two attempts at studying law from the Rivers state University of Science and Technology as well as the University of Calabar (Interview with Ben Tantua, February 9 2017). The other leaders, such as Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo; Ateke Tom and Ebikabowei Victor-Ben popularly known as Boyloaf, are all primary school drop outs with the exception of Tompolo who dropped out of secondary school (Interview with Belema Papamie: 30 July 2015).

On the grounds of intellectual capacities and professionalism, Boro was once a teacher, policeman and served as an officer in the Nigerian Army (Boro, 1982), while Dokubo was one of the founding members of the IYC, hence his activism, which propelled him to be the third president of the council. From there, he set up the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force and became very well-known because he pioneered the armed struggle in the region. His role in the IYC handed him the perfect opportunity to implement what he had been suggesting, in terms of taking up arms against the state (Interview with Ben Tantua, February 9 2017). He was also an executive member of the earlier Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and Ethnic Nationalities, which enabled him the opportunity to unleash his violent tendencies in the region (Ibid). On the other hand, all the others have no record of either working for the government or relating with any local or international organisation, but Tompolo has been referred to as a true born Ijaw original fighter and a 'general', who fought not because of the oil, but because the Ijaws would not die in the hands of their neighbours and the hired mercenaries of their neighbours namely the Nigerian military. He joined those forces as a boy and has been fighting for his village, where he had his camp, the famous camp 5, where the Ijaws of that area would assemble and go to unleash attacks on Itsekiri villages. He grew up in that struggle (Interview with Belema Papamie: 30 July 2015).

Incidentally, Boro and Dokubo come from middle level family backgrounds, Boro's father was the headmaster of a mission school while Dokubos's father was a retired judge. Tompolo, Ateke and Boyloaf are all from very poor family set ups, their parents were fishermen and farmers. The poor family back ground of the more radical leaders could also be considered as another factor that shaped the line of thinking of some of them. For instance, Boyloaf, Tompolo and Ateke were not opportune with the exposure that Dokubo or Boro had, they had the experience of better life and educational lifestyles yet they chose to take up arms, whereas the

other three, were raised at the local grassroots level without experiencing various options in terms of choices of actions related to expressing their grievances.

Further interviews reveal that the transformation to violence from an intellectual angle was due to the level and quality of the militant leaders' education. It was their education that determined the strategy they adopted. Kukah stated that:

Looking at the militant leaders in the Niger Delta, the first thing was the quality of education or lack of it, they did not have the articulation of Saro-Wiwa. The best they could do was to take up their struggle through violence because the struggle came from the bottom rather than the top. Compare them against the Ogoni people and you will see that the context was different, had that struggle been started by some of their elites let's say President Jonathan himself then perhaps the outcome would have been structured in a slightly different way (Interview: 1 August 2015)

These therefore clearly indicate the lack of leadership capital within the radical Ijaw leaders because there is no question of understanding or of establishing social networks within which they could channel their grievances effectively through civil activities and dialogue. Rather, their close links to the grassroots prepared them with one line of thinking and action and were more concerned with ways to stand up and defend their people from the state forces. The social status of the militant leaders presented seems to indicate that they are from a more limited social background and while they are more likely to interpret and represent the local discontent and the grassroots feelings, they are more constrained in terms of which direction they are going to lead their followers. For them, violence was the only way and there was nothing else they could do.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter built on the foundation set by Chapter Three on the narratives centred on the dynamics of choice between nonviolence and violence set out by the Ogoni and Ijaw. It has been shown that although the two groups share similar origins and lived experiences, the two movements are distinct from one another specifically expressed in the inclination to the choice of nonviolence as against violence. In this chapter, we have seen how distinct the timing and nature of leadership that exists between the movements are, while the Ogoni can show a more disciplined and intellectual leadership in the person of Saro-Wiwa, the Ijaw on the other hand includes several fragmented leadership styles ranging from the nonviolent intellectuals such as

Osuoka and Ogon to the more radical and violent prone militants in the persons of Asari Dokubo, Tompolo and others.

Evidence has shown that from the start, the Ogoni leaders preached nonviolence, a notion that was introduced to the group by Saro-Wiwa due to his informed knowledge and observation of the prevailing conditions of America and Western European countries, and interactions with the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation. An organisation, he stressed, that did not tolerate any form of violence, which shaped his preaching of the importance of nonviolence to his people at different stages. These collectively provided him with universally valid generalisations regarding governing political actions based on historical facts and processes. In the course of his preaching, the Ogoni were sensitised on the significance of ethnic autonomy, resource and environmental control, (ERECTISM) which became the key themes of the Ogoni movement. These have been seen in the Ogoni agenda preached by Saro-Wiwa, so much so that even after his execution by the state, nonviolence is still the guiding principle of the group, and in spite of all the internal divisions being experienced, the group still maintains their nonviolence stance. In the concept of ethnic autonomy, Saro-Wiwa puts forward the right of preservation of the cultural heritage of different people, especially the Ogoni, and in terms of resource control, he contends that the allocation and distribution of oil accrued revenues should be the prerogative of the producers of the resources not centrally to the state. The social status of the Ogoni leaders showed an informed group of intellectuals who appreciated what their problems were and charted a nonviolent course of actions with linkage to internationally accepted norms.

While for the Ijaw on the other hand, evidence suggests that the movement in the 1990s started on an intellectual note which continued through to the establishment of the Kaiama Declaration, but as a result of the excesses of the state typified by the Odi massacre, the movement escalated into full violence and the emergence of several armed leaderships. Unlike in the Ogoni case, the fragmentation and lack of a unified leadership changed the character and nature of the movement into an armed struggle. The execution of Saro-Wiwa in addition to the nature of state responses have also been linked to the factors responsible for the transformation of the Ijaw conflict from nonviolence to violence, as Watts notes, what followed was a period of silence in the region up until 1999 when a democratic government came into power and it transformed into a violent confrontation against the state. He explains that after Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni eight were executed, the region became an area of intense conflict with more oil

producing communities such as the Andoni, Itsekiri and the Ijaw clamouring for reparation and resource control (Watts, 1999, 2003:16).

The outlook of the Ijaw leaders was fluid, ranging between nonviolence and contentious, evidence has shown how the fragmentation among the Ijaw leadership prepared the grounds for the adoption of violence while, the Ogoni, despite their issues, were still preaching nonviolence. The significance of the strategic level of acceptable knowledge of the engagement that would attract international and local support was clearly not part of the views held by the militant leaders. Rather, theirs was mainly anger and loss of faith against the state which generated the need for violence in the region. Moreover, this chapter has analysed how the leaderships of the two groups responded differently to the actions and inactions of the Nigerian state, with the Ogoni maintaining their stance of nonviolence and the Ijaw going for a more confrontational strategy. While the social status of the Ogoni showed an internationally aware set of leaders, that of the Ijaw was fragmented, and showed a group coming from middle to low income families that had the benefit of both the local and international levels of education and exposure, and another composed mainly of the less educated from very low and poor backgrounds. These were more concerned with taking up arms to clamour for the change they want for their communities. These put together further address the gap in the literature on the region by supporting the argument raised in the chapter that the two movements are distinct from each other. Therefore, if the conflicts within the Ogoni movement did not lead to violence, why then did the Ijaw movement turn to violence? This will be further addressed in the next chapter which will discuss the organisational structure of the Ogoni and the Ijaw movements and how they relate to nonviolence and violence.

Chapter Five Organising Nonviolent and Violent Struggles: The Ogoni and Ijaw

Introduction

This chapter builds on the nature of the Ogoni and Ijaw leadership presented in Chapter Four, which highlighted how the Ogoni leadership preached nonviolence even when faced with internal divisions and challenges after Ken Saro-Wiwa. The Ijaw leadership demonstrated a dual, fluid and fragmented system of leadership, consisting of one group that tended to adopt the Ogoni system and later saw the emergence of more radical leaderships that felt violence was the best way to solve the Ijaw problems. As we saw in the narrative chapter, certain leaders within the Ijaw used state repression and the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa as strong arguments to promote an alternative strategy, however, on the Ogoni side, the state repression, including the execution of Saro-Wiwa who was their leader, did not propel them to violence. Therefore, in this chapter I argue that the differences in terms of the organizational structure of the Ogoni and the Ijaw movements demonstrate the commitment to nonviolence versus violence. The chapter will analyse the development and presentation of the Ogoni Bill of Rights in comparison to the Kaiama Declaration, as well as the establishment of MOSOP in comparison to the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and later MEND, to further highlight the dynamics of choice between nonviolence and violence between the two movements.

The articulated set of demands presented in the form of an Ogoni Bill of Rights targeted at getting the support of the international community (Okonta, 2008; Watts, 2003; Osha, 2006) will be analysed in comparison to the Kaiama Declaration, which is a set of demands that actually mirrors the organisation of the Ogoni movement. It would be fair to suggest that the Kaiama Declaration was the closest the Ijaw movement ever came to the Ogoni peaceful resistance but, as this chapter will show, it was short lived (Ukiwo, 2007; Isumonah, 2004, 2015; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2009; Nwajiaku, 2005) due to an ultimatum issued to the Oil companies by the youth leaders. Furthermore, the organisation and establishment of MOSOP as the voice of the Ogoni will also be highlighted to indicate the contrasts in the development of the IYC to champion the Ijaw agenda which saw the emergence of the radical armed MEND which was rather concerned with a move towards physical violence in order to attain the Ijaw self-determination. The chapter will show the discipline, structure and organisation employed by the Ogoni in their struggle in comparison to that of the Ijaw. The internationalisation of the

Ogoni struggle in relation to networking with some foreign associations and civil societies and their support for the Ogoni cause will also be analysed in comparison to the Ijaw movement.

The chapter will also present the latest developments within the Ogoni movement in respect to the implementation of the recommendations of the UNEP Report which was at the instance of the Nigerian state. It will detail the temporary peace and pause in violence within the Ijaw group, in terms of the amnesty granted to the militants in the region. The UNEP recommendations become significant as they will be used to show that MOSOP did not reject the offer of a potential clean-up of Ogoniland, and that they took on the offer and engaged in a dialogue with the state. At the same time, the inclusion of the amnesty which is sometimes referred to as a reward for criminality becomes vital in order to demonstrate that although some of the Ijaw militant leaders were not prosecuted and even paid in exchange for peace, still not all the groups gave up arms. Yet many of those who gave up arms were left idle and without a role in the society, which, because they did not have many alternatives, made it easier to go back to the armed struggle. Thus, organisationally, much of the Ijaw struggle is still around armed groups with these events helping and leading them to shape their struggle, to organise it the way they are, towards violence. Meanwhile, the social status and outlook of the two groups of leaders will be used as justification for the inclination and adoption of nonviolence and violence respectively.

The interviews for this chapter were accomplished through Ogoni leaders that include Peter Medee, Legborsi Pyagbara, Owens Wiwa, Ledum Mitee, Alubabari Nbete, Ben Naanen, Tom Orage and a confidential source; as well as Ijaw youth leaders; Patterson Ogon, Isaac Osuoka, Iniruo Wills, Lancelot, T.K. Ogoriba, Andrew Azazi and Ramsey Mukoro. Likewise, former President Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, Inemo Samiama, Bishop Kukah, Ukoha Ukiwo, Frederick Ikwang and Ken Henshaw were included based on their knowledge and roles they played in the Organisation of the two movements (see Appendix 1 for a detailed list of all group leaders, activists, and key informants engaged with for this study).

Accordingly, the first half of the chapter will be on the organization of the Ogoni struggle and the second half will focus on the organization of the Ijaw movement. This chapter will be presented in three sections which will comprise the organization of the struggle, the internationalization and the current dimensions of the struggles (see Table 5.1 below).

Table 5.1: Organising Nonviolent and Violent Ogoni and Ijaw Movements.

Ogoni	Ijaw
1. Organisation of the Ogoni Struggle 1.2 The Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) 1.3 Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) – Peaceful Resistance	4. Organisation of the Ijaw Movement 4.1 Kaiama Declaration – Peaceful Resistance Ijaw Youth Council - Towards Militancy
2. Strategies of Engagement - Internationalization	5. Strategies of Engagement 5.1 MEND (Towards the armed struggle)
3. Current Dimensions of the Ogoni Struggle: The Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland by UNEP (still maintaining nonviolence)	6. Current Dimensions of the Ijaw Movement: The Niger Delta Amnesty Programme and Resurgence to Violence

5.1. Organisation of the Ogoni Struggle

Okonta observes that Ken Saro-Wiwa’s aim of completing his thirty-year dream of politically steering the Ogoni people started at a time when the Nigerian state was going through a crisis of legitimacy, during which citizens were made to draw back from their ‘Nigerian’ identity into ethnic, collective, and other forms of identities. This was the period when he decided to question through the understanding of economic and political self-determination the state which, he believed could no longer provide for the essential needs of its citizens (Okonta, 2008:169-170). In the process of constructing the Ogoni as an oppressed people in the early part of 1989, Saro-Wiwa thought of and presented his ideas for a political movement. He claimed that:

I began the process of mobilising the Ogoni people by organising a seminar under the auspices of the newly formed Ogoni Central Union, of which I had been elected president. The best Ogoni brains presented papers on aspects of Ogoni life, culture and education, the disorganisation of the Ogoni, their traumatic existence, [...]. The seminar conclusions pointed to the need for the Ogoni people to organise themselves better and to take responsibility for their political existence (1995:46).

He adds that:

I canvassed the idea of forming a mass organisation with Kagote and the Ogoni Klub, another club for young Ogoni professionals. I attended meeting after meeting with them and pressed my views hard all the time. I found a ready response (ibid).

The above reconstruction by Saro-Wiwa on attending meetings in order to press his views on the Ogoni people was similar to that adopted by Martin Luther King JR, who was an inspiration and model to Saro-Wiwa. In the words of Martin Luther King JR:

From the beginning there was a philosophy undergirding the Montgomery boycott, the philosophy of nonviolent resistance. There was always the problem of getting this method over because it didn't make sense to most of the people in the beginning. We had to use our mass meetings to explain nonviolence to a community of people who had never heard of the philosophy and in many instances were not sympathetic to it (Martin Luther King Jr., 1991).

Saro-Wiwa started a systematic campaign of persuasion to show the Ogoni the path and strategy that had to be adopted. He organised the campaigns in a structured way that institutionalised the Ogoni into different groups for the purpose of communication. The Kagote platform mentioned by Saro-Wiwa refers to an Ogoni elite group. Historically, the Ogoni was a gerontocratic and traditional group where leadership was logically exercised by the elders and wiser individuals (Tam-George, 2010:303). Given all the predicaments that the Ogoni faced, there was an understanding among the group of a need for some kind of renewed unification, because, as discussed in the chapter on narratives, the leaders claimed that the Ogoni had a common predicament which reinforced their sense of nationhood. This reinforcement led to the formation of Kagote³¹ in the 1970s as a supreme cultural organisation (Watts, 2003:22, 1999). The main objective of Kagote was to provide a platform for seeking solutions to the cultural, social and economic problems of the entire Ogoni nation, through the promotion of the welfare of its citizens both at home and in diaspora and defending them against discrimination and injustice. Kagote was also expected to provide effective leadership at all times so as to justify the existence of an enlightened citizenry within the Ogoni (Kagote Constitution, u.d.). Peter Medee the President of Kagote explains that,

³¹ KAGOTE is an acronym of Khana, Gokana, Tai and Eleme which are the constituent units of Ogoni ethnic nationality.

It acted as a socio-cultural and political platform, in the days when we did not have political parties, to agitate and negotiate with government for the well-being of the area. (Interview: 27 July 2015).

It was a major platform used for agitations, negotiations and for the struggles in Ogoniland and although it was also an umbrella organisation of the people, it was largely for the elites. Saro-Wiwa in particular felt the need for a more formidable organisation in which every sector of the community would be involved. The idea of forming an inclusive organisation corresponds to Hutchinson and Smith's observation that movements in Eastern Europe also started with an elite of intellectuals, which subsequently included the professional classes as well as masses of clerks, artisans, workers and even peasants (Hutchinson and Smith, 1994:5). The Ogoni struggle, similarly, started with an elite group, the Kagote and then moved to include the ordinary Ogoni people through the creation of MOSOP in 1990.

Going back to Saro-Wiwa's political philosophy, he claimed that he had a ready response from the Ogoni people. Saro-Wiwa wrote in his civil war pamphlet³²:

We must remember that no matter the system of government, unless a people take their destiny into their own hands, no improvement will come to them. We cannot afford to be complacent. We must begin immediately to organize ourselves enthusiastically for the difficult and turbulent days ahead (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a:53).

To woo the Ogoni, and inculcate confidence in them, the elite laid emphasis on what Smith termed as myths of 'auto-emancipation' and 'ethnic authenticity' (Smith, 1976:8) in mobilising the communities. Saro-Wiwa made a deliberate effort in attending several meetings of Kagote and recurrently stressed the traditional significance of the land (Isumonah, 2004:443) as well as the need to form a mass organization. His proposal to develop an Ogoni Bill of Rights was willingly accepted, and he concerned himself with drafting the bill (Hunt, 2005:63).

5.1.1. The Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR)

The strategy of nonviolence is further demonstrated by the elaboration and presentation of the Ogoni Bill of Rights on 26 August 1990. Saro-Wiwa presented to the Ogoni an articulated set of requests which summarised Ogoni issues and demands. Specifically, he called a meeting in Bori, inviting influential Ogoni people from all six kingdoms to sign the OBR, and they offered

³² A 1967 civil war pamphlet produced by Ken Saro-Wiwa titled: The Ogoni Nationality, Today and Tomorrow.

to put their signatures on the historic document (Ibid: 63). However, it should be noted here that the traditional ruler of Eleme initially refused to sign the OBR along with the other rulers of the clans, but he did so later. As earlier discussed in the chapter on narratives, the Eleme expressed their reservations of being subsumed under the Ogoni group. Pyagbara explained that:

We had some people who articulated the problems and bounded the people together, using the commonality of the problems and a clear vision of why we shouldn't be having the problems. We had this leadership who worked together to get a Bill of Rights, before then there were pamphlets that Ken had written, 'Letter to the Ogoni Youths'. The pamphlets were very well circulated and almost every Ogoni person who could read had access them, which made mobilisation easy (Interview: 3 August 2015).

The OBR adopted by the Ogoni with general acclaim, demanded political control of Ogoni affairs. Importantly for the argument of this dissertation, the Ogoni as a group were not fighting the cause of the Niger Delta as one, they were fighting a cause for the six clans that make up Ogoniland and the OBR is a confirmation of this battle. Detailing a historical narration of neglect and local misery of the Ogoni, the Bill addressed the question of Nigerian federalism and minority rights and it called for active involvement in the affairs of the state (Watts, 1999, 2003:22). The Bill started off with the following statement:

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 Government and people of Nigeria (Saro-Wiwa, 1992:93).

It highlighted the historical grievances of the Ogoni against the state, such as socio-economic, political, and environmental ones. It became very attractive to the chiefs and leaders who felt marginalised within the political arena at that time. Accordingly, Senewo (2015:665) points to the strategic importance of the presentation of the OBR as the most important tool in the region, which was used to push forward the struggle for the survival of the Ogoni, as well as a framework employed by other groups agitating for their rights (Okonta and Douglas, 2001; Human Rights Watch, 1999). The Bill focused on the justification of the rights of minorities as the proper entity to which accrued oil revenues should be apportioned to (Watts, 1999, 2003; Okonta, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 1999). The Ogoni, according to Saro-Wiwa, wanted political autonomy to participate in the affairs of the state as a distinct and separate unit, which

included the right to control and use of a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development (Saro-Wiwa, 1992:95). The question of political autonomy included in the OBR according to Senewo (2015:666), was a bold demand for self-determination; the capacity to use a rational portion of the resources produced from their land to develop Ogoniland. Senewo argues that the political autonomy the Ogoni were asking for is in the form of a medium which delegates power to the people, thereby galvanizing them to take responsibility for their destinies through participating in the development of their region with a clear form of freedom (ibid:668).

Moreover, the 20-point Bill was signed by leaders of the six Ogoni clans on behalf of the people (Saro-Wiwa, 1992:93). The Babangida administration ignored the presented Bill, and instead proceeded with the creation of additional local states without any created for the Ogoni as requested in the OBR, making the Ogoni feel further marginalized. The lack of response by the state and Shell to the presented OBR consequently led the Ogoni leaders to meet again in 1991 to request attention and support from the international community, through an Addendum to the OBR (ibid: 97). The addendum expressed dissatisfaction that a year after receiving the OBR the state refused to grant to the Ogoni people an audience, where the listed demands could be discussed (Ibid). This granted permission to MOSOP to make a representation to the United Nations and the international community (ibid: 98) on behalf of the Ogoni. The OBR was an attempt to return to pre-colonial Ogoni, where all citizens regarded power and authority as legitimized by good conduct (Okonta, 2008:174). According to Ako (2015:625), the OBR was much more than a human rights articulation of their grievances and requirements. It served as the logical foundation of their struggle for establishing their rights and the crusade to accomplish these rights (Human Rights Watch, 1999). The inclusion of the Addendum according to Senewo, attracted instantaneous interest and prompted non-governmental organizations and human and environmental rights organizations such as *Amnesty International*, *Sierra Club*, *Green Peace*, *Friends of the Earth*, and *Human Rights Watch* to support the plight of the Ogoni people as propelled by MOSOP (Senewo, 2015:666). This, he maintains, provided the precise medium and fertile ground to the organizations to engage in their various institutional agenda as well as to further internationalize their plight.

Saro-Wiwa maintained that the Ogoni leaders decided to approach the Nigerian state using a nonviolence strategy, and sent an OBR to the then President, General Ibrahim Babangida and

to the Shell multinational oil company on the 26th August, 1990 at Bori Rivers State (Saro-Wiwa, 1992:93). Owens Wiwa recounts that:

The OBR was actually first drafted by Ken Saro-Wiwa himself, but his approach to leadership was a bottom-up approach, so he summoned the entire Ogoni people to a congress from all the local government areas and presented it to them. He provided a background on why he thought those demands should be made to the government and became convinced that the people accepted the demands, they became the views and demands of the Ogoni (Interview: 3 August 2015).

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) declared that, starting from December 1992, the people of Ogoni handed out a thirty-day demand ultimatum to Shell, which raised fears around a developing fight with the Ogoni people. The ultimatum was accompanied by several organised nonviolent actions by the Ogoni including the protest of January 4th 1993, also referred to as the Ogoni Day in commemoration of the International Year of the world's Indigenous People. This singular, massive, non-violent protest in which an estimated three hundred thousand Ogoni people participated was indeed a novel event with striking impacts. It undeniably showed that the Ogoni people had come of age and imbued the struggle with a greater level of seriousness and intensity on both sides. This event and other subsequent non-violent passive resistance activities, such as the holding of successful vigil nights across Ogoniland and the launch of a survival fund, sent panic signals to the Nigerian authorities and to Shell (UNPO, 2008). As Demirel-Pegg and Pegg (2015:658) explain, 'most self-determination movements' channel their claims solely at sovereign states, but in the Ogoni case, such claims were continuously directed to the government and at the oil companies'. In 1993, the Ogoni staged a massive protest against the actions of Shell, requesting environmental justice and reparations for the damages done to Ogoniland (Nwulu, 2015). Saro-Wiwa recounted that:

When it was my turn to speak, I mounted the rostrum and seized up the crowd. From a vantage point above everyone, I saw a new profile of the Ogoni people, a profile I had not identified. I saw eagerness, determination and joy on the young faces that looked up to the men on the rostrum. And I knew that a new seed had germinated and everything would have to be done to water, nurture, grow and harvest it. Ogoni would surely not be the same again. And I also felt that I must not let them down ever, or they would be right to lynch me (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a:129).

Language was a vital strategy of Saro-Wiwa's in organising the struggle that he used to connect to the Ogoni masses, he addressed them in their local languages and dialects (Demirel-Pegg

and Pegg, 2015:659). It was noted by Boele, that Saro-Wiwa learnt to speak the different Ogoni dialects, which apparently was a rare quality for Ogoniland leaders, and it captivated several people (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a:11). Although in the OBR, the Ogoni leaders deny asking for secession from the Nigerian state, one question that comes to mind is why the Ogoni had a flag and a national anthem. Isumonah (2004:444), clarifies that there was a proposal to concurrently fly the Ogoni flag alongside the Nigerian flag and simultaneously demand an Ogoni state as the 'minimum for staying within the Nigerian Federation' (Saro-Wiwa, 1994:17). This separatist attitude implied in the decision to introduce an Ogoni flag and anthem may have necessitated the violent suppression by the state operatives who viewed it as a pursuit for sovereign independence (Isumonah, 2004:444). Again, Saro-Wiwa referred to the Ogoni anthem as:

The Ogoni liberation song, it is not the anthem yet... self-determination does not mean secession. Self-determination means that you choose (Saro-Wiwa, 1993b).

Contrary to the general belief that the OBR was the work of Saro-Wiwa alone, Mitee points out that,

The OBR was something that we all sat down and looked at, it took over a year for all the Ogoni leaders to articulate ideas. It was signed by a cross section of people from all the six kingdoms of Ogoni. Ken hardly comes to a meeting without bringing a paper, so you find out that the conversation will be mainly how to amend what he thought, because he had given it a more considered thought (Interview: 2 August 2016).

This suggests that although Ken was the personification of the struggle and most of the literature credit it to Saro-Wiwa alone, other Ogoni leaders also participated in developing the OBR. It is important to note at this point that there was no opposition to Saro-Wiwa's stance on nonviolence in all the meetings and gatherings he attended during the campaigns. That he persuaded leaders of most of the subethnic kingdoms within Ogoniland to become part of MOSOP suggests that Saro-Wiwa was the central generational link between his age group, Ogoni leaders, elders and the youth (Osaghae, 1995; Bob and Nepstad, 2007). Nbeta concludes that:

It was environmental, economic and a struggle for political representation, the OBR stated it clearly that the struggle was not a kind of secessionist struggle, they maintained their allegiance to the Nigerian state. They needed political autonomy

as one would expect within a democratic presidential system, that would bring about fiscal federalism in which case the regions were supposed to have control over their resources (Interview: 27 July 2015).

The OBR heralded the establishment of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), which together with the fact that it emphasised a nonviolent manifesto of human and minority rights might indicate that the OBR clearly was aimed at the international audience and international organisations, especially the UN. An interesting question that came up when trying to understand the Ogoni Bill of Rights was why such emphasis was placed on rights, and this question, as we have seen has been discussed in the chapter on narratives.

5.1.2. Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)

Prior to the formation of MOSOP, the Ogoni were a linguistically obscure people (Jones, 1963:10) and politically salient mainly within Rivers state (Isumonah, 2004:439). Senewo (2015:664), underscores the claim that MOSOP through the leadership of Saro-Wiwa, confronted the state and oil multinational businesses such as Shell on environmental and human rights awareness, which made them realize that the major interest of the Ogoni struggle was more ecological rather than a purely political struggle (Saro-Wiwa, 1995:xi). Naanen recounts that,

The turning point in that struggle was the formation of MOSOP in 1990. It took on a distinctive Ogoni character within the Niger Delta struggle. The struggle focused mainly on the Ogoni situation, the issue of oil, empowerment and inclusion (Interview: 31 July 2015).

This validates one of the main arguments of this thesis, namely that the Ogoni were fighting a distinct cause not representative of the region. The MOSOP was founded in 1990 as a mass movement, an umbrella organisation of other organizations. It comprises 10 affiliated bodies, the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), Ogoni Council of Churches (OCC), Council of Ogoni Traditional Rulers (COTRA), Ogoni Students Unions (for those in secondary schools and below), National Union of Ogoni Students (for those in tertiary institutions); Ogoni Teachers Union; Federation of Ogoni Women Association (FOWA), Ogoni Central Union; Committee of the Leaders of thought (which is for the elders) and the Council of Ogoni Professionals (COP) (Interview with Pyagbara: 31 July 2015). The encompassing membership of MOSOP, according to Isumonah (2004:442), possibly explains why the Nigerian state under

the administrations of Generals Babangida and Abacha could not ban it. The interview with Pyagbara shows that,

It is organised vertically and horizontally, every community in Ogoni has chapters of MOSOP, from the chapter level you move to the kingdom level. The electoral process starts at the chapter level in the villages, after which the chapter leadership will elect the kingdom leadership. Three persons from each of these affiliates and kingdoms elect the national leadership of MOSOP (Interview: 31 July 2015).

The MOSOP structure consists of the General Assembly of the Ogoni people, the Steering Committee (Haynes, 1999:237), which is made up of three representatives of each of the affiliates and then three representative of each of the Kingdoms. Below the Steering Committee is the National Executive Council, after which is the Kingdom leaderships and then the chapters (Interview with Pyagbara: 31 July 2015). There are about 16 national executives, made up of 8 kingdom coordinators, from the 6 kingdoms and 2 special units, which includes Bori. There are coordinators for each of those kingdoms, who automatically become vice presidents of the organisation, accordingly MOSOP has 1 president, 1 deputy president, 8 vice presidents, general secretary, assistant general secretary, public relations officer, finance secretary and treasurer (Ibid). From the onset, MOSOP embarked upon massive sensitization campaigns to get all on board. This is confirmed by Medee who explains that,

We did enlightenment, demonstration, media and we used a lot of approaches to engage with government, so where necessary we demonstrate, which was almost like the last resort (Interview: 27 July 2015).

This indicates that MOSOP made strategic use of public speeches at rallies, press statements, and handbills, to address a variety of audiences both local and international with environmental degradation and genocide against the Ogoni as the key themes of their propaganda.

Okonta (2008), in contrast, points to some major fault lines within MOSOP at that time. He contends that the movement concentrated on ideological and educated entrepreneurs like Saro-Wiwa, without a working consensus with other influential political and economic elites. He countered the assumption that the Ogoni struggle was a unified movement that was accepted by all the Ogoni elites. Similarly, Watts (2003:23), observes that, notwithstanding the notable record of MOSOP, its ability of epitomise itself as an integrated pan-Ogoni movement remains an open question. This indicates that MOSOP was not that wide platform that carried along all

Ogoni's, as Okonta (2008) explained. Within the group, stronger clans like the Eleme and Gokana influenced the decisions and only the voices of the old, wealthy and accomplished males were considered instead of the voice of all. Orage supports these arguments put forward by Okonta and Watts by adding that,

MOSOP did a lot of sensitization and mobilisation which gave them an opportunity to be able to misdirect, misconstrue and mismanage the whole idea of the struggle. In Ken Saro-Wiwa's characteristic nature, there were a few things they disagreed on with Dr Gary Leton³³, one was on the question of methodology in the constitution of the struggle, while the leaders believed in constructive engagement, Ken, was preaching total isolation, an isolation strategy of attack which was tending towards the issue of conflict. Ken felt that the other leaders were a sell out because he had been mirrored as the image of the organisation (Interview: 27 July 2015).

This indicates that there was severe rivalry among Ogoni political elites to control MOSOP, which also aimed at channelling the organisation as a bargaining tool for personal, clan and national advantage (Okonta, 2008:216). Countering the argument put forward by Watts, Okonta and Orage, Owens Wiwa explains the division in line with the decision taken by MOSOP during the time of Saro-Wiwa:

MOSOP had taken a stance, that the leadership are not going to participate in partisan politics but when politics came some set of the leaders attended the convention. When the movement found out, we had an emergency meeting and took a decision that we were not going to vote. That divided those that have been promised positions by the political parties (Interview: 3 August 2015).

These divisions emerged in June 1993, when the Nigerian state under the leadership of General Babangida called for presidential elections, which, under MOSOP directives, the Ogoni decided to boycott. The Ogoni refused to vote for a government which, they claimed, would rule under a constitution which ignored minority rights (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a). Tam-George (2010:302) argues that for the Ogoni as a group, to partake in an electoral process is to participate in a process that would take full control of their lives and resources and to further agree to be submissive to that authority. This, according to the Ogoni means that to boycott an electoral process is to negate that procedure and all its basic conventions (ibid). The decision, however, to boycott the election was not accepted by some of the Ogoni elites, which caused further divisions within MOSOP and the Ogoni. Mitee recounts that:

³³ One of the leaders of the Ogoni struggle.

In the meeting which we held in Dr Leton's house, Ken made that proposal, that whether we vote or not, Ogoni votes will have nothing to do with the presidential elections, but if we do that, it will attract attention to our cause. Most of us the younger folks bought that idea, we wanted something that was exciting which most of our leaders didn't like. There were those who felt that we were with the government and those who felt if you were with the government you are not with us (Interview: 2 August 2015).

This suggests that the decision to boycott the elections developed into an 'us versus them' problem. Explaining the election boycott, Nbeta stated that,

Ken wanted us to boycott and some people wanted us to participate in the election. There were actually some internal divisions within MOSOP during his time but it was managed and did not quite become as glaring as it became after him (Interview: 27 July 2015).

In the same vein, Medee includes the conflict surrounding the Ogoni representation in the Constitutional Conference as an additional factor to the divisions. He pointed out that,

Government and the oil companies sponsored the divisions, they used a strategy of divide and rule. They will come into the place they look at one or two persons, give them money and brainwash them and those people will begin to fight the other people. When Ogoni's wanted Saro-Wiwa to represent Ogoni for the constitutional conference, government wanted Eddy Kobani (Interview: 27 July 2015).

These indicate that the decision to boycott the elections and the constitutional conference conflicted with what the mainstream Ogoni political leaders wanted. They also highlight the interference made at some point by the state. The interview with Ukiwo explains that,

The mainstream Ogoni leaders saw the constitutional conference and the elections as opportunities for participation, and here was Ken and his team saying they should not participate (Interview: 14 June 2016).

The MOSOP leaders, according to Watts, 1999, 2003:23), were clearly opposed by sections of the traditional clan leadership (Haynes, 1999:237), prominent leaders as well as public servants. In the same vein, Osaghae (1995:334), posits that Saro-Wiwa and the other leaders of MOSOP did not have the support of the entire Ogoni people, explaining that there was strong opposition specifically from other Ogoni elites. Particularly, the clan heads, known in Ogoni as *Gbenemene* of Babbe, Ken-Khana, and Nyo Khana as well as other Ogoni elites such as

Chief Giniwa and I.S. Kogbara disagreed with MOSOP's tactics and were labelled as state agents by MOSOP. These divisions saw the resignation of some Ogoni elites from MOSOP, who, according to Okonta (2008), felt challenged by a younger generation of Gokana and Ogoni activists that introduced new initiatives in MOSOP. The other leaders felt that especially the youth wing was controlled by Saro-Wiwa, and thus it was unacceptable to them (Watts, 1999, 2003:23; Haynes, 1999:237). The youth wing (NYCOP) has been accused of using force in order to ensure strict compliance to the MOSOP directive, to boycott the June 12, 1993 presidential elections through the mounting of roadblocks to compel the decision taken in Finimale-Nwika Hall, Bori Rivers state (Isumonah, 2004:444).

Desmond Orage attributed the problems within MOSOP to several factors that led to the resignation of some of the MOSOP leaders in 1993. These include the boycott of the presidential elections, the formation of the youth wing of MOSOP advocating for an Ogoni nation, the production of an Ogoni flag and a national anthem. These, he argued, were against the objectives of MOSOP, which brought about serious disagreements with the leaders and Saro-Wiwa (Orage, 1998:47). In 1994, some Gokana chiefs made a public call to the people of Gokana to 'forsake MOSOP and return to the age-old culture of respect for the elders' (Isumonah, 2004:446). Furthermore, Saro-Wiwa was strongly accused of exploiting the travails of the Ogoni to achieve his egotistic wishes and desires by Dr Garrick Leton in his witnessing against Saro-Wiwa during the trial of the murder of the Ogoni four (Maier, 2000). These show that individual and group interests played a significant role within the group. The tension caused between these interests against the Ogoni political mobilisation is a particularly clear indicator of this (Ibid).

Similarly, Watts (1999, 2003:23), clarified that Saro-Wiwa seized the opportunity to make use of the over 50 years of Ogoni unification and built upon the decades of anger against multinational oil companies to provide a critical mass foundation and a youth driven ardour within an indigenous subject, in a space that was highly debateable and challenging. Furthermore, he challenged the claim made by Saro-Wiwa of having the support of ninety-eight percent of Ogonis, citing that there was 'no Ogoni-ness, no unproblematic unity, and no singular form of political subject', and that MOSOP exemplified a fractured and increasingly divided 'we' as clear differences and divergences between Saro-Wiwa and the other Ogoni elites were visible. Ethnicity to Watts was a major issue in postcolonial Nigeria not only to the Ogoni as claimed by Saro-Wiwa, it incorporates the corruption of ethnic minorities. He pointed

out another contradiction by Saro-Wiwa, that to ‘implore the history of exclusion and the need not solely for ethnic minority inclusion as the foundation for federalism, steered Saro-Wiwa to overlook the histories and geographies of conflict and struggle within and between ethnic minorities’ (ibid). Additionally, Bob and Nepstad (2007:1387), contend that Saro-Wiwa failed to exemplify a collective Ogoni identity and did not personify a resilient group identity (ibid:1388), stressing that he tried to depict the Ogoni movement generally as a struggle for environmental justice and human rights instead of the ‘complex, regional ethnic minority rights’ (ibid). Even the framing of the entire Ogoni cause within environmentalism and human rights was criticised as a ‘weaker’ foundation for unified engagement (ibid: 1389). However, despite the divisions within the Ogoni group, the leaders remained committed to nonviolence owing to the preaching’s of Ken Saro-Wiwa and also the shared similar statuses and backgrounds presented in Chapter Four.

According to a Social Action report, as the Nigerian state ignored the Ogoni demands, MOSOP, in 1992 demanded US\$10billion, with a breakdown of US\$ 6 billion as royalties for past oil production and US\$4billion as damages for environmental degradation. In addition, MOSOP issued a 30-day ultimatum to Shell within which to meet the demand or leave Ogoniland. The Ogoni people were informed of the collective decision to send Shell out of Ogoniland during the first Ogoni Day meeting in 1993 (Osha, 2007), highlighting the impact of the activities of MOSOP under the leadership of Saro-Wiwa. By 1995, the organization pushed the Ogoni agenda to the visible levels of engagement based on human rights and environmental issues (Bob, 2005).

Regarding the question of why the OBR was not attended by the Nigerian state at that time, former president Ibrahim Babangida points out that although the Ogoni were asking for what they thought rightly belonged to them, as a government,

We looked at the OBR from the point of this is a country, where we wouldn’t like a situation that will make us repeat what we went through before. Nigeria went through a civil war in 1967 and for another area to carve itself separately, and then say this is what we want, was not be acceptable at that time (Interview: 6 August 2015).

This decision by the Babangida administration was conveyed to the MOSOP leadership, according to Okonta, in a meeting where the administration acknowledged the plight of the

Ogoni people and reassured them of the administration's determination to do what was required to address their problems, short of granting them the Ogoni state they have been clamouring for. He stressed that the Babangida administration had resolved not to create any more states in the country as that would spark new requests for states creation in areas that felt disadvantaged or marginalised. Instead, the administration offered to create eight new local governments for the Ogoni (Okonta, 2008:217-218).

5.2. Strategies of Engagement: Internationalisation of the Ogoni Struggle

The deliberate choice of nonviolence by the Ogoni is likewise visibly exemplified in the authorisation of MOSOP to make representations 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 that have a role to play in the preservation of the Ogoni nationality (Saro-Wiwa, 1992:98). Mitee recounts that:

We clearly looked at all the options, the question of armed struggle, the Nigerian system is so violent that the only thing that they listen to is violence. After hours of arguments we rejected all that based on two main considerations, first is that of our terrain, ours is just a flat land, so where do you run to? Secondly is the philosophical angle, if the Nigerian system is this violent, then what do you do? We decided to take an option that would bring out the contrast between us and at the same time get public sympathy locally and internationally (Interview: 2 August 2016).

According to Kukah,

The Ogoni realized the correlation between the pain and destruction of their environment with the irresponsibility of the oil companies, they also understood the fact that the state was negligent. They discovered that in other parts of the world, communities where oil was being drilled were entitled to certain economic incentives and they decided to engage the Babangida administration. The high point of their struggle was the convergence in their struggle with Green Peace, which fed their struggle as an environmental struggle (Interview: 31 July 2015).

Saro-Wiwa made very good efforts in soliciting attention from the international community. In fact, Amnesty International adopted Saro-Wiwa, Dube³⁴ and Nwinee³⁵ as prisoners of conscience (Okonta, 2008:278; Hunt, 2005:274). Support came for them through international

³⁴ One of the Ogoni nine, executed along with Ken Saro-Wiwa.

³⁵ Ibid.

organisations such as Greenpeace; The Body Shop; Amnesty International; PEN International's Committee for Writers in Prison; UNPO; the UN Working Group for Indigenous People; the Association of Nigerian Authors; the British Broadcasting Corporation, and William Boyd (Saro-Wiwa, 1995:236). The support from the listed organisations confirms the impact and appeal the Ogoni struggles had on the international community. This is demonstrated in the speech delivered during the Ogoni Day rally, where Saro-Wiwa reiterated to the Ogoni people that:

The UN recognises the rights of all the world's indigenous people, the indigenous people have been cheated through laws such as are present in Nigeria today. Through political marginalization, they have driven certain people to death. That happened in America and Australia. They are trying to repeat it in Nigeria and we don't want it. In recovering the money that has been stolen from us, I do not want any blood spilled, not of an Ogoni man, not of any strangers amongst us. We are going to demand our rights peacefully, non-violently, and we shall win (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a).

This shows how Saro-Wiwa deliberately linked their local struggle to the international discourse on rights. According to Ako (2015:625), the reconceptualization of the Ogoni problems in terms of environmental human rights by MOSOP was not only intelligently comprehensive but similarly to preceding social movements, it served as the foundation upon which the trust in nonviolence as its method of approach was constructed. Although Saro-Wiwa pitched the Ogoni struggle at a much higher level as a result of the internationalization, Ukiwo confirms that,

Ken was not isolated from other movements that were ongoing that were contemporaneous with the Ogoni struggle at that time (Interview: 14 June 2016).

In addition, Naanen argues that,

If Ogoni employed violence it would not have gotten the support of the international community, which was a critical part of the struggle. Without that we would have gone nowhere, there is no way a small group such as Ogoni would have been able to challenge the power of the military, although we paid for it (Interview: 31 July 2015).

According to some informants, women in Ogoniland played a key role in ensuring that nonviolence became the norm in the struggle, they played a very significant role in forming the massive Ogoni protest (Barikor-Wiwa, 1997:1). Barikor-Wiwa explained that women

supported Saro-Wiwa because the movement was constructed on the accounts that he had accumulated over the years about what women objected to and complained about (Turner, 1997;75). According to Isumonah (2004), Ogoni women had been meeting to discuss community affairs, and, incidentally, Jessica Wiwa³⁶ had been leading women groups for decades. Noting Saro-Wiwa's interests, she introduced him to some of the informal groups' leaders, which led to the creation of the Federation of Ogoni Women's Association (FOWA) in 1993 (Hunt, 2005:65). This shows that in the course of organising the Ogoni struggle, Saro-Wiwa made use of his mother's position and influence on the women groups, which gave him an opportunity to directly address the women and mothers to get their support in Ogoniland. The interview evidence from Wiwa confirmed that,

The movement was more than 50 percent women, they were at the forefront of most of the marches and town hall meetings. They have been more impacted upon by the pollution. Some of MOSOP positions were influenced by core elections and if you don't have the backing of the most numerous group you are gone. That was Ken's power, he was a feminist, and the women gravitated towards him a lot (Interview: 3 August 2015).

According to Demirel-Pegg & Pegg, women frequently led MOSOP demonstrations, visibly parading in the front to indicate nonviolence and also included campaigners carrying twigs or leaves in order to display that they were without arms (Demirel-Pegg and Pegg, 2015;658). This depiction of nonviolence by MOSOP relates to the postulation by Chenoweth and Stephan (2011), that the nonviolent character of the struggle amplified its recognition as ordinary people are more probable to partake and pledge to nonviolent struggles as opposed to violent ones, which entails a greater form of liability.

These show the importance of using nonviolence by the Ogoni, and highlight the common opposition to the use of violence in bringing about the desired change through the internationalisation, discipline, organisation as well as the role played by women groups during the struggle. These fit in perfectly with Saro-Wiwa's (1995), argument of nonviolence being a formidable psychological weapon and a moral advantage which gives strength necessary for victory locally and internationally. Although the Ogoni claim to have demonstrated and protested peacefully, their actions were perceived as violent because they hindered the state's access to the vital petroleum and oil resources. The Ogoni did not bomb or destroy any pipeline

³⁶ Ken Saro-Wiwa's mother.

but they were successful in disrupting oil related activities in that area. This is why, although the Ogoni would argue that they were nonviolent the state would counter argue that the peaceful protests included the application of force in terms of loss of man hours, disruption of oil production and revenue on which the state depends on.

According to Haynes (1999:238), ‘the Ogoni movement recorded some achievements in the short-term, particularly the national and international awareness raised to the Ogoni cause’. The internationalisation of the Ogoni struggle had succeeded to the extent that, we can see that from the international reaction to his death. Saro-Wiwa and eight others were arrested, detained and charged for the murder of four³⁷ prominent Ogoni chiefs. Subsequently, on 9th November 1995 Saro-Wiwa along with eight³⁸ others, were hanged by the Abacha administration for the murder. The execution of Saro-Wiwa and the others attracted international condemnation against the actions of the Nigerian state. The United States, Canada, South Africa, and all fifteen members of the European Union withdrew their ambassadors from Nigeria (Hunt, 2005:285). At the request of the South African president Nelson Mandela, two days after the execution, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group suspended Nigeria from the Commonwealth. The suspension excluded Nigeria from receiving any new Commonwealth technical assistance, such as the agricultural training which took place in 1993 and also prevented government representatives from participating in inter-governmental meetings and events (Velde, 2013). This suspension also acted as a public condemnation from the Commonwealth to the Nigerian government and the international community; it denounced the undemocratic and human rights abuses which reverberated across the world (ibid). Even the FIFA game that Nigeria was to host was stopped (Interview with Nbeta: 27 July 2015).

It should be recalled that during the height of the Ogoni struggle, the state was faced with a confluence of factors that led to its isolation by the international community. In reality, the mobilizations within Ogoniland at that time were very troubling because whether Saro-Wiwa and his team appreciated it or not, the approach they adopted threatened the regime’s survival, and within the context of any threat to a regimes survival, different states react differently. According to Ukiwo,

³⁷ Edward Kobani, Albert Badey, Samuel Orage, and Theophilus Orage

³⁸ Barinem Kiobel, John Kpunien, Baribor Bera, Saturday Dobe, Felix Nwate, Nordu Eawo, Paul Levura, and Daniel Gbokoo.

The reactions of the Abacha administration could be interpreted in two ways, on the one hand, to defy both the Ogoni and the international community that isolated it, and on the other hand, to send a signal to the other groups in the Niger Delta of what would befall them if they took the path of the Ogoni (Interview: 14 June 2016).

This corresponds to Mitee's (1999:435) assertion that a grass roots mass movement using the basic tools of civil disobedience, attracting national and international attention was not the challenge the military administration had anticipated. The aftermath of the killing of the Ogoni nine was marked by harsh army repression which significantly subdued major response within Nigeria, coupled with the fact that MOSOP was fragmented by factionalism (Bob and Nepstad, 2007:1386). Marion Campbell described the execution of Saro-Wiwa as an effort by the state to quash an opinionated criticism of a corrupt national government and an unfair multinational oil corporation (Campbell, 2002:39). According to Demirel-Pegg & Pegg, the Ogoni struggle weakened quickly when the leader of the protest movement, Saro-Wiwa, was executed by Nigerian military regime (Demirel-Pegg and Pegg, 2015:654). They argue that protest movements as put forward by social movement scholars, disband as an after-effect of the division between radical and moderate protesters but in the Ogoni case, it demobilized as a result of the repression and might of the military regime. The events in Ogoni highlight the fact that states can successfully prevent the rebound consequence of suppression even if the protest continues non-violently (ibid: 656), which the military regime did by going after the members of MOSOP who went underground. In 1995, most of the surviving MOSOP leaders were compelled to escape to foreign countries where they scattered and eventually settled in countries that offered them asylum. These wide geographical distances intensified further the already prevailing generational and subethnic contentions (Bob and Nepstad, 2007:1388) which affected the immediate remobilization of the Ogoni struggle.

The fractioning of MOSOP into factions has been credited to the leadership gap created after the death of Saro-Wiwa, who was the unifying and organizational voice in the struggle. The Ogoni, were faced with a clear deficiency of a united voice in the quest of the attainment of the OBR (Senewo, 2015:669). The international and local credibility and recognition that Saro-Wiwa had had been lost by MOSOP, especially considering the fact that he was highly knowledgeable in the Nigerian geo-political, economic, social and environmental systems (ibid). These visible divisions led organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Sierra Club, Green Peace and Amnesty International to pull out their backing from MOSOP (Bob, 2005;

Human Rights Watch, 1999). This affected MOSOP to such an extent that it had diminished its ability to vigorously chase the attainment and implementation of the OBR (Senewo, 2015:669). Nevertheless, the internationalisation strategy and the organisation of the struggle at the international level had had a very substantial impact.

5.3. Current Dimensions of the Ogoni Struggle: The Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)

Although the chapter has established the fractioning that exists within MOSOP, current developments within the organisation relate to the clean-up recommended after the environmental assessment carried out by UNEP at the instance of the Nigerian state. Bringing this section into the chapter is strategic in that it argues that even when the state attempted to engage UNEP in assessing the environmental impact of oil exploration activities and implementing a clean-up in Ogoniland, the response of MOSOP was that of dialogue and the acceptance of the offer by the state and Shell. This section is aimed at showing that in spite of all the conflict that exists within the group, the organisation does not change its strategy, it is still active and has maintained the nonviolence stance preached by Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders. In response to the continuous request for environmental accountability in Ogoniland, in 2006, the Nigerian state and Shell sought the assistance of the UNEP ‘to undertake a comprehensive environmental assessment of impacted sites in Ogoniland’ (UNPO 2009:6; Senewo, 2015:667)

In May 2005, the then President Olusegun Obasanjo formally launched an initiative to resolve the long standing conflict between Shell and the Ogoni people, which was facilitated by Reverend Father Mathew Hassan Kukah, as part of attempts aimed at enhancing relationships and facilitating the resumption of oil exploration activities in Ogoniland (Social Action, 2014:1). This followed the meeting the president had with some Ogoni leaders, where the issue was broached, and subsequently, MOSOP leadership held two special congresses in Eleme, and resolved to mandate and approve that the Ogoni should participate in a dialogue, provided it was genuine and transparent (MOSOP, 2006:2). In a press statement, MOSOP stressed that,

We have consistently said that we are willing to talk and we want to hear what the state and Shell have to say about redressing the damage which has been done to our land and our people' (Ibid:5).

This marked a new development in the history of the struggle which has drawn a lot of interests within the entire Niger Delta. As anticipated by MOSOP, the study confirmed the nature and extent of oil contamination in Ogoniland across areas that include contaminated land, ground and surface water (UNEP, 2011:8). It revealed the extent and harshness of oil contamination in the area, even though oil production activities are no longer taking place there, as oil spills continue to occur with disturbing regularity, causing soil pollution by petroleum hydrocarbons becoming more extensive. It concluded with a summary of recommendations that once implemented, would have an immediate and positive impact on Ogoniland. These recommendations, according to Senewo (2015:668), highlight the blatant environmental disrespect of Shell and the Nigerian state, which could be regarded as an environmental triumph for the Ogoni struggle, that has vindicated the allegations of the Ogoni contained in the OBR regarding the devastating effects of oil on their land.

According to Social Action, SPDC welcomed the UNEP report and the Chief Executive Officer³⁹ agreed that the company's counterpart funding to the US\$1 billion Ogoni Restoration Fund for the clean-up has been set-aside in a verifiable account, in a London Bank. However, the clean-up is yet to commence because the state is yet to provide the framework and the technical work plan needed for the clean-up exercise (Social Action, 2014:24). In the words of Naanen,

The Ogoni fought a hard battle and they seem to have won considerably especially on the environmental issue, Ogoniland will now be cleaned up hopefully. Shell never absolved themselves from that responsibility, all they wanted was a framework. We hope that the president will act very soon and give his approval for that process to commence (Interview: 31 July 2015).

Although MOSOP welcomed the findings, it argues that the involvement of UNEP was announced at a meeting held in the Rivers state government house in October 2006, under the auspices of a dialogue process in which they were not represented. The process, as highlighted above, was surrounded by several issues and complaints by MOSOP, so much so that the organisation expressed their concern to the UNEP Executive Director in a letter dated 22

³⁹ Mr. Ben Van Beurden.

October 2006, over the announced involvement of UNEP in a proposed clean-up in Ogoniland without due consultation. MOSOP reiterated its concerns about the increasing gap between the reconciliation process in Ogoni and frustration at the lack of actual dialogue (MOSOP, 2006b). They claim to have received a late invitation to the crucial Saturday 21 October meeting, where the announcement of the clean-up was made. They also mention the dramatic wavering of the state and Shell's positions regarding their operations in Ogoniland which has contributed to deeper crisis in the area. Mitee recounts that:

We were to have conversations with Shell, but all of a sudden they came up to say they are going to clean up, both Father Kukah and them arranged to say they that and UNEP has been contacted. We said is this not something we should talk about, we had an agenda for these talks, and we've not started some of the things which are important (Interview: 2 August 2016).

In spite of the talks on cleaning up Ogoniland, it is the implementation of the UNEP Report that is the current issue within the organisation. The Goodluck Jonathan Administration inaugurated a Presidential Implementation Committee to study and advice on the way forward (Social Action, 2014:15). But the silence from the state again led the Ogoni to start preparing for mass protests against the state a year after the report was officially released. The setting up of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Project (HYPREP) was the response from the state, with the mandate of implementing the recommendations of the UNEP report, and tasked with investigating, evaluating, establishing other hydrocarbon impacted sites and making appropriate recommendations (UNEP, 2012). Accordingly, the MOSOP president Pyagbara, expressed his dissatisfaction with the activities of HYPREP by pointing out that,

I cannot tell you that HYPREP has started and completed any water project anywhere in Ogoniland. I have not heard of any community that has water provided by HYPREP (Interview: 31 July 2015).

The Ogoni leaders argue that the creation of HYPREP was not backed by an enabling legislation, and the state failed to allocate budgetary allocations for its operations (Social Action, 2014:15). This seems to suggest that the actual clean-up is not regarded as a solution to the Ogoni issues, rather, the organisation is still agitating for the fulfilment of its requested demands articulated in the OBR. Still on the implementation issue, Mitee reiterated that,

UNEP was not part of our agitation as Ogoni. It is wrong to put the whole Ogoni thing in a match box called UNEP report which came just yesterday. I think it is

most unfair to Ken and all others to say that all we were fighting for was just that. UNEP the clean-up is good but it should not be taken that that was what the Ogoni were fighting for (ogoninews.com, 2016).

Agitations towards the implementation of the UNEP report increased in 2014 when protests and letter writing campaigns started gaining momentum within Ogoniland, which led to the state sending a delegation to Ogoni on the 8 of August 2014. MOSOP issued a 30-day ultimatum to the state to implement the report during the 23rd celebration of Ogoni Day. Pyagbara reaffirmed the determination of the Ogoni in embarking on protest marches and other forms of nonviolent actions such as international advocacy, letter writing campaigns should the state fail to implement the recommendations (Godwin, 2016; Enviro News Nigeria, 2016). Although the state was praised for restoring attention to the urgency and importance of the UNEP report, Pyagbara reiterated that the deliberate slow action was an ‘act of genocide’ against the Ogoni (Godwin, 2016). It would be recalled that Saro-Wiwa used the word genocide to describe what had happened to the Ogoni people. He explained that the UN defines genocide as the commission of acts with intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group (Saro-Wiwa, 1992:9). Naanen renewed the call on the people of the area to form a united front in order to achieve the implementation of the clean-up, vowing that:

The struggle for the actualization of the freedom of the Ogoni would not stop until our demands are met (Interview: 31 July 2015).

MOSOP reports that the Ogoni people will fully cooperate with all agencies, including ‘security personnel’ to see that the programme is successful, urging the youths to abstain from all types of behavior that could sabotage the struggle of the ancestors of the land (Godwin, 2016; Enviro News Nigeria, 2016). This serves as another corroboration that the Ogoni movement still adheres to the principles of nonviolence, even after the slow actions of the state in implementing a clean-up which Shell has provided funds for.

Although MOSOP has been shown to be the voice of the Ogoni, the fieldwork revealed that there are still tensions between Kagote and MOSOP in terms of representation on the committees and working groups set up towards the implementation of the UNEP recommendations. A confidential source informs us that,

MOSOP and Kagote are fighting for positions to represent Ogoni on the federal government committees. We are still not together in this struggle, we still bring in

personal interests. I have complained to Ben Naanen that the current MOSOP president is side lining us, he doesn't want KAGOTE to be part of the discussions of the UNEP report (Interview: 28 July 2015).

The researcher was present during one of the heated discussions on who best to represent the Ogoni on the committees. Some leaders are complaining of being sidelined in the ongoing discussions on the implementation of the clean-up.

This section indicates a positive change in the attitude of the state towards the plight of the Ogoni. The change in the political climate in Nigeria started after the death of General Sani Abacha in 1998. Nothing significant was achieved during this period when General Abdulsalami Abubakar took over as Head of State (1998 to 1999), until power was transferred to a democratically elected government. In 1999, General Olusegun Obasanjo (Rtd) became president, and under his leadership the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was created to help in the positive development of the Niger Delta, and the revenue allocation formula was increased to 15 percent in favour of the region and later Umaru Yar'adua. As a matter of fact, the UNEP report on the environmental assessment of Ogoniland was presented to the government of Goodluck Jonathan in 2011, but nothing was done to favour the Ogoni plight. The current Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari took over in 2015, and the clean-up of Ogoniland has made some very slow progress under his leadership, as discussed in the chapter.

Therefore, there appears to have been a clear dynamic shift from the stance originally taken by MOSOP not to collaborate with the enemy, because the state was perceived as being out to destroy the Ogoni nation. Currently, the MOSOP leadership under Legborsi Pyagbara are interacting and collaborating with the Nigerian state towards the implementation of the clean-up of Ogoniland. This serves as an indication of the achievement of the Ogoni struggle, showing the possibility of collaboration between the Ogoni leaders, the state and Shell oil conglomerate towards a common goal while maintaining a nonviolent posture. This renewed relationship heralds discussions on the possibility of resumption of oil extraction in Ogoniland. The interview with Nbeta revealed that,

Currently some Ogoni people are seriously asking for replacement of Shell with another company. A few Ogoni people think that the problem is not with the name Shell but with their policies and that if any company comes that can do what the people want them to do, it will be good. But still 99 percent of the Ogoni people don't want to hear the name Shell (Interview: 27 July 2015).

This further indicates a shift from the original MOSOP ideology of forbidding all Ogoni from interacting, or having anything to do with the oil companies, especially Shell, which was black listed as the major enemy after the Nigerian state. Nevertheless, internal conflicts within the MOSOP organisation continue to form a major obstacle to the resumption of oil exploration in the area. It has been reported that oil exploration was stopped in Ogoniland in 1993 as a result of the massive demonstrations by Ogoni people (Sotunde, 2013; MOSOP, 2015).

This section has shown that although the organisation is challenged with divisions and conflicts, the Ogoni struggle has maintained the tenets of nonviolence. These tenets have been evidenced in the reiteration of nonviolence during sensitisations and speeches made at different levels of the mobilisation process. The next section will present the organisation of the Ijaw movement and examine in comparison to the Ogoni the ways in which it relates to violence.

5.4. Organisation of the Ijaw Movement

Having presented the organisation of the Ogoni struggle and how it relates to nonviolence, this section will analyse the Ijaw struggle in relation to its engagement with violence. This section is concerned with how the Ijaw organised their movement and will focus on the issuance of the Kaiama Declaration as a similar action taken by the Ogoni. The argument here is to show that the closest the Ijaw movement ever came to the nonviolent strategy of the Ogoni struggle was in the declaration as an imitation of the OBR, and secondly, that it was short lived unlike the former which the Ogoni are still clamouring for. It will be argued that the Kaiama Declaration was a temporary nonviolent posture precisely because it was followed by an ultimatum by the IYC to the oil companies operating in the area. This results from the simple fact that although both these groups are confronted with the same repression by the state, one has gone towards violence, and the other towards nonviolence.

5.4.1. The Kaiama Declaration and the Ijaw Youth Council

Frustrated by economic and political marginalisation, environmental pollution and in order to capture the attention of the state, the youth in Ijawland decided to come together in an ‘All Ijaw Youth Conference’ on 11 December 1999, and issued a communique termed as the Kaiama

Declaration in Kaiama community of Bayelsa state. The conference themed ‘Regaining Control of Our Destiny’ recorded attendance of more than 5000 Ijaw youths pulled from over 500 communities of about 40 clans within the Ijaw nation (Ijaw Youth Council, 1999b). The gathering was to consider the way forward in order to safeguard the uninterrupted existence of the indigenous peoples of the Ijaw ethnic nationality. This Kaiama Declaration was meant to answer the question raised in 1998 on how to determine the best way to interact with the state with regards to the peculiar Ijaw problems (Ibid:5). Simulating the Ogoni, they also confirmed their unceasing membership of the Nigerian state (MOSOP, 2008:42), but on the other hand demanded to work for self-government and resource control for the Ijaw people (Ijaw Youth Council, 1999b:10).

The Kaiama Declaration was constructed in such a manner that declared all the land and natural resources within the Ijaw territory to belong to the communities, being the basis of their survival. They expressed the non-recognition of all undemocratic decrees that robbed the Ijaw communities of the right to ownership and the control of their lives and resources, all of which were enacted without their agreement (Ibid). Unlike the OBR, the Kaiama Declaration was addressed as an ultimatum to all the multinational oil companies operating in Ijawland at that time in a letter⁴⁰ which conveyed that:

We demand that all transnational companies and their contractors involved in the exploration and exploitation of crude oil and natural gas in the Ijaw areas of the Niger Delta cease operations and withdraw by 30 December, 1998 [...] We know that transnational companies like yours have continued to support military dictatorships in the Nigerian state in their project of repression of the minority Ijaw nation; even as your reckless activities result in the devastation of our natural environment and the impoverishment of our peoples[...] (Ibid:11).

This letter was followed by a press statement issued by the IYC on 28 December, 1998, which appealed to all Ijaw communities to take demonstrative steps to protect the environment beginning from 1 to 10 January 1999. Oronto Douglas reiterated that,

We have just taken a decision to extinguish the fierce flames of hell called gas flares on our land. We have done so because of its negative impact on our people, on our

⁴⁰ Letter from Ijaw Youth Council to all Managing Directors and Chief Executives of Transnational oil companies operating in Ijawland (Shell, Agip, Mobil, Chevron, Texaco and Statoil BP), dated 18 December, 1998 signed by Felix Tuodolo, T.K. Ogoriba, Oronto. Douglas, I. Osuoka, Abule Benard, Rowland Oweinanabo and Valentine Kuku.

environment, the noise and the heat, the permanent daylight and the deaths of animals and plants (Ibid: 12).

Wills explains the emergence of the various Ijaw platforms for agitation as,

Platforms emerged, like the IYC, and the Ijaw National Council (INC) in 1998, as major platforms for conducting the agitations of the Ijaw people. In principle all Ijaw people belong to it. There are also other platforms over the past 10 years progressively with dilutions and contradictions attending the struggle, affecting the cohesion, coherence and effectiveness of even these structures (Interview: 29 July 2015).

The IYC was set up to coordinate the struggle of Ijaw people for self-determination and justice (Ijaw Youth Council, 1999a), which is similar to the Ogoni MOSOP. Between 29 and 30 December 1998, the states of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers in the Niger Delta witnessed demonstrations and protest marches which, as Nwajiaku (2005:457), asserts, were met with the full might of the Nigerian state security apparatus. Watts (2003:24), opined that the presentation of the Kaiama Declaration suggests that within the Ijaw, there is a construction of a pan-ethnic solidarity movement. According to Wills,

They set a target that by 31 December 1998 all oil producing activities must be stopped., During this time the general political agitation was continuing, in the form of position papers in the constitutional assembly under Abacha, these positions were articulately presented which led to the regime acceding to grant 13% derivation (Interview: 29 July 2015).

These indicate the similarities between the construction of the Ijaw and the Ogoni struggles in terms of the articulation of their grievances as a document, but the Ogoni go a step further to include the international community. The formation of MOSOP and IYC and the rejection of the perceived actions of the elders in the two groups is another similarity, where the youths decided to take over the struggles. However, unlike the Ogoni struggle, there is no indication of a particular leader heading the process of the struggle as done by Ken Saro-Wiwa, but rather, of a group of Ijaw youth. Also, there is no indication of the intense mobilisation campaign as reflected in the Ogoni struggle, instead it was an invitation to a meeting termed conference where the decision was taken to engage the state. Furthermore, the formation of two principle umbrella organisations, INC and IYC is a direct contrast to the formation of MOSOP in that the Ogoni relied on one umbrella organisation not two. Nwajiaku (2005:470), explains that IYC and INC have separate social standings, INC is mainly tasked with the mobilization of

past, present and would be political personalities, while IYC stood for those youth who contest the way in which members of the Ijaw political class have acted in the past.

The Kaiama Declaration, just as in the case of the OBR, is also yet to be recognised by the state. In the wake of the Kaiama Declaration, Ayuba (2010:133), observed a shift in the nature of demands by the militants, with more importance being placed on resource control as against development of the region. On the question of the implementation of the requests made in the Kaiama Declaration, Ogoni, clarifies that to date, the demands are yet to be considered by the state.

Between 1998 and now, our demands have not been addressed, governments have come and gone. The issues will continue to remain and we hope it will not form the nucleus of another militancy in post amnesty Niger Delta (Interview: 30 July 2015).

In the same vein, Lancelot adds that,

Some persons in government will interpret items contained in the charters of demand to mean secession. Successive regimes have not given the right response, which will be a cocktail of legal and administrative measures and legislations by way of changing certain laws to give communities a greater stake holding and participation (Interview: 3 August 2015).

The Ijaw nationalist movement, which came after the Ogoni struggle, witnessed the creation of several ethnic nationality associations within the region⁴¹; each with their own charters of demand and bill of rights, often acknowledged to have developed from the similar experiences of historical and political contexts as that of the Ogoni (Nwajiaku, 2005:469). Lancelot reiterates that,

Although the Ogoni and Ijaw struggles happened at different time periods, they speak to the clamour for greater inclusiveness (Interview: 3 August 2015).

While the Ogoni maintained a nonviolent attitude to the actions and inactions of the state, the Ijaw movement, which also started off in a similar manner of nonviolence, transformed into a violent course of action in order to stress the importance of their demands. The violent

⁴¹ See Appendix 5.

aftermath of the Kaiama Declaration indicated the defining moment in Ijaw political history and a key moment in the youth restiveness in the Niger Delta (Nwajiaku, 2005:458).

Having suggested that the Kaiama Declaration attempted to copy the OBR, the next section will analyse some of the Ijaw militant groups that came after the declaration. The Kaiama Declaration and the struggle for self-determination heightened tensions in the region, and transformed them into a full-blown militant action against the state. Ayuba (2010:134) explains that youth groups who were capable of safeguarding their communities gradually became dominant. He argues that the proliferation of youth mobilisation and association with violence has also accounted for the encouraging environment for violence to prosper. According to Osuoka,

I was one of the founders of the Kaiama Declaration and the IYC. But things have changed so much that it is difficult to understand how to explain the vision in a way that will make meaning, considering what the organisation has become (Interview: 31 July 2015).

This further shows that the decision to take up arms was not collective, and indicates the fragmentation of the Ijaw movement into several militant groups, a process which the next section will address.

5.5. Strategies of Engagement: Violence as a Strategy for Expressing Ijaw Grievances

This section will argue that, although the Kaiama Declaration was also met with repression by the state as in the Ogoni case, it allowed certain Ijaw leaders to put forward this as a legitimisation, with strong arguments, to turn to violence. Therefore, this section will show that unlike in the Ogoni case, there was no direct linkage to an international strategy in terms of nonviolence, rather, the Ijaw militant leaders armed with a feeling of hopelessness and desperation decided to take up arms. There was no international support received by the Ijaw on this stance. The previous chapter demonstrated the initial influence and inspiration that some of the youth leaders had with revolutionary movements like those led by Che Guevara, and Hugo Chavez as well as some of the international support they had attracted from Human Rights Watch, Friends of the Earth and Amnesty International. The emphasis here will be on the organisation of the MEND militia activities, these will further highlight the differences between the strategies adopted by the Ogoni and the Ijaw.

5.5.1. Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and Some Militant Groups in the Niger Delta.

Okonta (2006:24), described MEND as the violent outcome of decades of intentional limitation of the social space in the Niger Delta, where the people have been denied their public and political rights in their lawful quest of material and social welfare. He argues that the militant leaders that make up MEND are political subjects compelled to take up arms with the sole aim of reestablish their rights as citizens. In an interview with one of the MEND leaders, Okonta, reports that the members do not refer to themselves as MEND, rather as,

Armed youth in the creeks who say they have had enough of the oil companies' double standards, and are determined to put an end to an exploitation of their people by Shell, Chevron and the federal Government (Ibid).

He explained that the group emerged in 2004 in order to call international attention to the plight of the Ijaw people (ibid: 4) under the leadership of Henry Okah⁴², Asari Dokubo, Ebikabowei Victor Ben, John Togo, Godswill Tamuno, Ateke Tom, Government Ekpemupolo, Soboma George, Brutus Ebipadei, Solomon Ndigbara and Tubotamuno Angolia. The foundation of MEND's activities was the kidnap of four foreign oil workers in 2006, while at the same time issuing demands for improved involvement in political affairs, larger share of profits derived from resource extraction, increased development, and outright rejecting the transition to civil rule put in place by the General Abdulsalami Abubakar⁴³ (ibid: 14). According to Ukiwo (2007:605), MEND became visible sometime after the arrest and detention of Asari Dokubo and Chief Ebitimi Banigo⁴⁴, after the impeachment and detention of D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha, together these three episodes were perceived as attempts to break and humiliate the Ijaw. A key strategy deployed by the group in drawing attention to their activities include sending out pictures of armed youth in masks displaying heavy armoury, and helpless oil workers at their mercy (Okonta, 2006:4). Jomo Gbomo⁴⁵ goes as far as describing the group as a non-tribalistic merging of various groups without any political inclination, with the single purpose of managing the oil resources of the region (Ibid).

⁴² Leader of MEND currently jailed for 24 years in South Africa for the Independence Day attacks in Nigeria in 2010.

⁴³ Military Head of State 9th June (1998-29th May 2009).

⁴⁴ A prominent Ijaw business man who has provided employment for several Ijaw youth.

⁴⁵ Militant war lord and part of the leadership of MEND.

While adopting the Kaiama Declaration as its focal terms of reference, MEND was involved in several kidnappings which, as Turner (1998), argues were done for four reasons: financial reasons, kidnapping without any governmental or financial reason, kidnapping for financial and governmental affairs, and kidnapping for politics but without any financial interest. Kidnapping foreigners was especially profitable, hence they became preferred targets, for the ransom paid for their freedom (Ibid). Kidnapping was also done for financial motives, which became essential for maintaining the struggle. For instance, in April 2003, four Niger Delta oil rigs were seized and two hundred and seventy people held hostage; in 2004, seven Chevron Texaco workers were kidnapped and in January 2006, four foreign oil workers were kidnapped and a pipeline blown up (Alabi, 2014:5). Even pipeline vandalism escalated in the region: from seven cases in 1993; thirty three in 1996; fifty seven in 1998 to four hundred and ninety seven in 1999 and over six hundred cases in 2000 (Okecha, 2003:9). The NNPC further verified this by reporting that in 2010 there were five thousand cases of pipeline vandalism in the region (Alabi, 2014).

MEND gradually transformed into a grouping of diverse militant youth groups with perpetually fluid associations and allegiances. According to Alabi (2014), the group had the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC), Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF), the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), and the Niger Delta Vigilantes (NDV) among a list of others operating under the MEND umbrella, which made it challenging for the state to identify the group. Unlike some of the groups in the region MEND, according to Ukiwo (2007:607), did not exchange kidnapped hostages for ransom, rather, the hostages were used to negotiate and portray the political objectives of the region.

The Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC) often referred to as Western MEND was founded on a more rigid ethnic stance in Delta state. It emerged out of the interethnic wars from 1997 through 2003, and was specifically concerned with the physical safeguarding of the Ijaw communities within Warri and its surroundings (Berman and Florquin, 2005:334) and with the action of hostilities towards those mainly opposed to ethnic groups that endangered Ijaw interests (International Crisis Group, 2006:1). Politically, the group was led by Oboko Bello and militarily by Government Ekpemupolo (aka Tompolo), with a key objective of Ijaw self-determination. The Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF) also referred to as the eastern MEND

operated in Rivers state led by Farah Dagogo⁴⁶, a onetime commander of a separate militant organization. General Boyloaf and his group, often referred to as central MEND, operated mainly in Bayelsa and are believed to have greatly benefitted from the state government and were an ally of Henry Okah.

The Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) earlier known as Niger Delta Volunteer Force is the militant group led by Alhaji Mujahid Abubakar Dokubo-Asari, a breakaway faction from the IYC that operated in Rivers state. It came into being in 2001 after Dokubo was forced to step down as president of IYC (Ukiwo, 2007:602), and has been described as the most organized and armed (Marquardt, 2007). It was also involved in both covert and overt violent conflicts with Niger Delta Vigilantes (NDV) (Ibid). Dokubo has acted as an intermediary between Delta's underground political movement and the state (ibid). International Crisis Group (2006), reported that NDPVF received its funding from the Rivers state government and through oil bunkering. According to Ukiwo (2007:603), the FNDIC gained prominence in 1997 when it organized youths to engage thirteen Itsekiri villages after the contested moving of the local government headquarters from Ogbe-Ijoh to Ogidigbeh. Similarly, on 17 March 2003, the FNDIC militants were suspected to have attacked and killed several unarmed Itsekiri civilians in three villages, which the group argued to have attacked as a consequence of it being a ground from which soldiers had attacked its members (ibid). This shows that tribal clashes occurred within most of the militia groups because tribes in the region were regarded as distinct from the other even after the declaration of support by MEND to the other groups. This further indicates the entrenchment of violence in showing displeasure or anger both within and outside the militant groups.

The militia leaders were organised in various camps with camp 5 being the recognised one under the control of Tompolo. The militant leaders operated throughout the length and breadth of Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, and Ondo states. These military style camps were separated from the main communities and other areas, they were a bit isolated and located mainly in the creeks. The actual number of the camps is not yet known but in the interview, with Ogoriba he revealed that,

There were about 140 camps in the different states, the most famous camp was camp 5, where a lot of discussions took place, it was the camp vice president

⁴⁶ One time MEND Commander in Rivers state.

Jonathan went to on June 28 during the amnesty negotiations (Interview: 10 August 2015).

The setting up of these camps further indicate that the perception within the militia groups was that of the violent option, suggesting there was no space to even propose alternatives. This also suggest that having the camps was more about organising the violence, which therefore makes the militia actions an organised type of guerrilla violence, it was not indiscriminate violence. Therefore, a pattern observed in the formation of the militia groups is the link to MEND and allegiance to the 1960s Boro revolution. All the groups started off as members of MEND, but later broke away to form new groups with a variety of aims and objectives, signifying the increase in violence which created wide spread anxiety in the country. This compelled the deployment of a joint military task force which included the police to conduct an operation nicknamed Operation Hakuri⁴⁷ for the continuance of peace in the region.

Hanson (2007), rightly observed that the first response of the Nigerian government to the rising insurrection in the region was a long period of military involvement in order to maintain peace and stability. This military involvement ranged from engaging the militants in the creeks' and guarding the waterways to securing oil installations in the region. These measures put in place by the state exacerbated violence between the militants and the joint task force, with casualties recorded on both sides. The militia activities at times forced the shutdowns of oil production of up to 800,000 barrels per day, which had a negative effect on the national economy, leading to an annual loss of 4.4 billion dollars (Agbo, 2009). In 2006, the average daily oil production of Shell at 1 million barrels per day was significantly reduced to about 500,000 barrels per day, so also in 2008, about 24-40 percent of oil production was shut in and by early 2009, both Chevron-Texaco and Total oil multinationals had shut some of their capacity while Agip announced a force majeure (Umukoro, 2011:133). Similarly, Watts (2008:42-43), points out that the period between 1998 and 2003 recorded an average of about 400 attacks on oil facilities and about 581 incidents between January and September 2003.

Meanwhile, the state suffered a shortfall of about \$6.8 billion in oil revenues as a result of the militia actions and public disturbances between 1999 and 2005, and the deficits amounted to \$45.5 billion from 2006 and 2009 (ibid:43). International Crisis Group (2009:5) also reported

⁴⁷ Hakuri is a Hausa language word for patience.

that in 1998, militants in the Niger Delta carried out 92 strikes on the oil industry, and in 2007 also, in the form of abductions of about 167 foreigners, and kidnappings of about 128 persons both Nigerian and foreigners in 2008. Therefore, in 2009, revenues accruing to the Nigerian state were greatly affected by serious deficits in oil production. This was evidenced in the decreased oil production activities and exploration which had a negative impact on public finance, which shrank the country's production to less than 1.7 million barrels per day, from about 2.6 million barrels per day in 2005 (Social Action, 2010:7). The decline in oil revenue which was the main stay of the state pushed for the granting of amnesty to the Ijaw militant leaders and their groups. This shows that the state reconsidered the relationship between the violence employed in the region to the economic situation of the nation which would slow down or even shut oil production, with the possibility of new armed groups evolving from such an action. In the wake of the possibility of shutting down oil production, the state decided to grant an amnesty to the militants. This will be briefly examined in the next section to uncover why it was readily accepted by the Ijaw militants, and what factors led to the temporary pause in violence in the region.

5.6. Current Dimensions of the Ijaw Movement: The Niger Delta Amnesty Programme and Resurgence to Violence

Of all the strategies employed by the state against the insurgency in the Niger Delta, it is the amnesty program that heralded the relative peace and quiet experienced in the region up to 2016, when the violence erupted again. This section aims to show that, the amnesty was introduced as an attempt to pacify the Ijaw militant leaders, but it however did not lead to reintegration into society; the armed groups were not given jobs and many were left idle. It will be shown that the amnesty was not followed by an effective systematic re-integration process of the armed men, rather, the armed groups continued to exist. This will show evidence that the organisation of the Ijaw struggle is still to a large extent constructed and reacting to these developments, towards violence. Despite the amnesty, some armed groups have not disarmed and others are simply paid a daily rate and are not re-employed into civil society. Hence, from an organisational point of view, the military structures are still in place with new crops of militant groups emerging in the region.

The amnesty was an initiative of the President Umaru Musa Yar'adua administration aimed at ending insecurity and underdevelopment in the region. In 2009, a proclamation of

unconditional amnesty was made by the president, in order to steady, unite and maintain security conditions in the area (Kuku, 2012:23). The amnesty was predicated on the condition that the militants renounced militancy within a stipulated period (Umukoro, 2011:136). President Yar'adua declared that:

The offer of amnesty is predicated on the willingness and readiness of the militants to give up all illegal arms in their possession, completely renounce militancy in all its ramifications unconditionally, and depose to an undertaking to this effect. The offer of amnesty is open to all militants for a period of sixty days (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2009).

This proclamation was made with the expectation of bringing about lasting peace in the region and granting unconditional pardon to all militants who had taken up arms as a way of attracting attention to their predicaments (Vanguard, 2009). Explaining the amnesty, Ikwang⁴⁸ stated that:

The programme was supposed to create an enabling environment for peace to be achieved in the Niger Delta. There were several negotiations with the militant leaders and community leaders, we went into several areas of the creeks, and also negotiated with the military officers who were involved to allow the amnesty programme to thrive (Interview: 9 August 2015).

The commitment of the state to the amnesty is its commitment to institute programmes to rehabilitate and reintegrate ex-militants under a structured DDR⁴⁹ programme (Ikwang, n.d.), with the vision of moving from militancy to gainful employment and from abject poverty to growth and development. These would be done through four key components which includes the implementation of the amnesty programme; oil asset redistribution; infrastructure development and environmental remediation (ibid). Incidentally, nonviolence transformation training is a key component of the amnesty programme aimed at changing the militants' conviction from violence to nonviolence as an alternative, as well as promoting nonviolent methods in bringing about a better Niger Delta (ibid). This suggest that in terms of the amnesty deal, the employment of nonviolence as an avenue to be used in expressing issues in the region was considered as an important tool in conducting peaceful agitations. The interview evidence from fieldwork in the region suggest that several negotiations took place with the intervention of some of the key Ijaw leaders such as T.K. Ogoriba. Ferdinand Ikwang the lead consultant informs that,

⁴⁸ Lead consultant of the amnesty programme.

⁴⁹ Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration

Entry point for us was through elder statesmen in the Niger Delta, we were able to bring them on the table and they called these militant leaders to a meeting (Interview: 9 August 2015).

T.K. Ogoriba was one of such elders that participated actively in the negotiations, he recounts that:

In July 2007, negotiations started between our Ijaw people called Federal Government /Ijaw Representatives Joint Committee, the federal government side was led by Babagana Kingibe⁵⁰; Yayale Ahmed;⁵¹ General Godwin Abe⁵²; Mike Ogiadhome⁵³; Engr Numoipre Wills⁵⁴; Mrs Deziani Allison Madueke⁵⁵. On the Ijaw side, T.K. Ogoriba⁵⁶; Patrick Akpobolokemi; Kime Engozu; Dan Ekpebide; Bello Oboko; Chris Ekiyor; Richard Akinaka; Opaks Harry; Isaac Osuoka; and Elfreda Olungwe (Interview:10 August 2015).

He adds that,

We said to them Goodluck is your son, an Ijaw. We discussed and gave the government seven conditions of engagement, to establish a developmental emergency in our area; rebuild the burnt down towns; release Alamiyeseigha and Asari; the President has to visit the Niger Delta to see things first hand to appreciate our issues; the United Nations and other foreigners should come as witnesses and observers, and an amnesty must be given to everybody (Interview: 10 August 2015).

He further informed me that,

Yar'adua agreed to all the demands, but the only condition that government objected to was the one that involved the UN and foreign bodies. But he also charged us to go and release the hostages that were held, which we did (Interview: 10 August 2015).

The then vice President Goodluck Jonathan was noted to have visited the famous camp 5 and met with the militant leaders because the focus at that point was on the way forward for the region. According to Ogoriba,

⁵⁰ Then Secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

⁵¹ Minister of Defence.

⁵² Minister of Internal Affairs.

⁵³ Chief of Staff to the President.

⁵⁴ Member representing the Vice President.

⁵⁵ Minister for Works and Housing.

⁵⁶ Leader of the Team.

Goodluck Jonathan was in camp 5 to plead with the agitators (Interview: 10 August 2015).

The disarmament programme recorded some success in terms of mopping up of arms and ammunitions, between 6 August and 4 October 3,124 weapons, 18 gun-boats, 3,693 magazines and 297,056 rounds of ammunitions were recovered from the ex-militants and between 2009 – 2010, 707 weapons, 1,976 ammunitions, 684 magazines were also recovered (Ikwang, n.d.:4). Confirming the achievement of the programme, the interview with Ikwang revealed that a total of 2,192 militants were recorded and trained during the first phase, 6,166 during the second phase and 3,642 registered for the third phase, which is still on going. The third phase consists of militants whose leaders refused to capitulate initially, they have been registered but they are yet to be demobilised and sent for training. The disarmament process was organised in about seven areas. Ikwang explains that,

We set up collection points in Bayelsa, Rivers, Edo, Delta, Ondo and Imo states, with headquarters in Enugu and appointed state coordinators. Serving army Majors trained them and we registered the various groups that came in to disarm. We now had a list of the persons and we called them up for demobilization in Obubra camp (Interview: 9 August 2015).

It is important to note that not all the militants accepted the amnesty, but although some of the militants capitulated, it leaves a lot to be desired in the region. For instance Ogoni, is of the opinion that,

Capacities have been built but limited to only 30,000 persons. The number is probably minute when it comes to the number of youths in the Niger Delta. There should have been ways for accommodating wider audience so that you don't seem to demonstrate the fact that your interest is not only for those who can be violent (Interview: 30 July 2015).

Some of the ex-agitators interviewed were concerned with the slow pace of the demobilisation and training of the third phase. Additional interviews reveal that not all the militants surrendered. According to Ramsey,

We looked at it from a distant, before we surrender our arms, to see if they are going to do what they promised. Some of us do not believe in the amnesty up till now, because in the process of how the amnesty came, there was no sensitization. Continuity of the amnesty is paramount, if government fail to continue there will be chaos and problem in this country, we will not hesitate (Interview: 10 August 2015).

This suggests that, there were indeed some militant leaders who felt the state was not sincere enough and who refused to accept the amnesty, but when they realised that the programme had recorded some success, they had a change of mind on the deal because they felt that they had genuine cases. According to Demirel-Pegg and Pegg (2015), the scheme of paying off militants \$410 monthly under the amnesty programme, which they argue has earned the support of some of the moderate Ijaw militants is a point of concern. The interview with Azazi revealed that:

Something called a stipend of 65,000 naira per person is paid. Today the Niger Delta struggle can come up at any time, for the struggle is still at the war front. The government promised to do a lot and yet nothing has been done, they promised to develop our communities (Interview: 10 August 2015).

Initially the agreement was for the sum of 1500 naira to be paid daily for feeding and the sum of 25,000 naira monthly during the demobilization period (Umukoro, 2011:146), but, according to Ikelegbe (2010), the amount was changed to 65000, naira as claimed by Azazi. This suggests that peace is bought rather than attained, and the above quotes indicate a general dis-satisfaction with the amnesty deal. Another major flaw observed in the organisation of the amnesty programme has to do with the reintegration of the reformed militants into society. Most of those trained are left without jobs bearing in mind that some did not accept the amnesty deal at all. As a result of which, new crops of militant groups have come up, and even the victims are yet to be addressed. According to Ikwang,

They have gone for their reintegration training, they are now skilled, some of them have gotten jobs, and others are yet to get jobs. That is not what was supposed to happen, before you train somebody you should have a place for the person to come in and reintegrate, but that is not happening in the amnesty as we speak (Interview: 9 August 2015).

An important factor to address is the prediction of a relapse to militant violence in the region if the amnesty is not handled well. The general feeling among the other groups in the region is that you can do bad and be rewarded with an amnesty, the Ogoni view the amnesty as payment for trouble making. Worthy of note here is that the Ogoni were not part of the amnesty because, according to the group, it was a payment for violence and they were not a violent group. In the words of Naanen:

The amnesty was for trouble makers, the Ogoni trouble was a different kind of trouble, it was an intellectual problem. And Government as usual didn't value intellectual struggles (Interview: 31 July 2015).

In line with the above assertion, Pyagbara observed that,

The amnesty has not addressed the core justice issues that are involved in this whole campaign. There are two types of militants in the Niger Delta, there are those who are the intellectual militants like the Ogoni and those who carry guns, so when you talk about militants everybody in the Niger Delta has been a militant (Interview: 31 July 2015).

The response from some of the civil society organisations regarding the amnesty was not different from those expressed by some of the Ijaw, Ogoni and ex-militants. Samiama points out that,

We thought they should follow examples of successful amnesty programmes, particularly the Northern Ireland amnesty, the IRA engagement to us was well done. But the government decided to do it their way and somehow it actually worked, at least it contributed to the ongoing peace, however, the situation is changing now (Interview: 29 July 2015).

Henshaw concludes that,

Till today, the government has not addressed any of the root causes of militancy which are getting worse, and that runs to only one conclusion, that this region will return to militancy, it's just a matter of time (Interview: 28 July 2015).

These suggest that the peace recorded in the Niger Delta is temporary the prediction of a relapse into violence by some of the interviewees has proven to be true with the latest resumption of militant attacks on strategic oil installations. Although the amnesty programme is on-going, the so called peaceful atmosphere once again faces new violent episodes from new militant groups that include the Niger Delta Avengers, Red Egbesu Water Lions, Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force, Niger Delta Volunteers, Concerned Militant Leaders and several others. The fluidity of the Ijaw movement is further demonstrated in these attacks that resumed in 2016, but this is beyond the scope of this study and because it is on-going, will not be adequately analysed, it is subject for future research. The amnesty raises the question as to whether the problems in the region have been addressed and what will happen post amnesty? But these are not part of what this thesis seeks to address.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter built on the conclusions drawn from the previous two chapters on narratives and leadership. In this chapter, we have analysed the organizational structure of the Ogoni and the Ijaw movements. The discussion has been put within the context of nonviolence and violence respectively, and shows the structure employed by the two groups in charting their distinctive courses. The first section presented the deliberate adoption of a nonviolent discipline by the Ogoni through the meetings and discussions held within the organisation and the final decision to fight a nonviolent action through the guidance of Ken Saro-Wiwa. The adoption of nonviolence as a strategy saw to the articulation of their grievances and demands into a document presented to the state during the Babangida administration as an Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR). While the Ogoni pledged allegiance to the state, they requested for political autonomy to engage as a separate unit with the intention of controlling Ogoni affairs as well as using a fair amount of their resources for Ogoni development (Saro-Wiwa, 1992), among other requests. The OBR led to the establishment of MOSOP, an umbrella organization with a unique Ogoni appeal, to fight the Ogoni cause both locally and internationally, and gained the support of the UN, Body Shop, Green Peace, the international community and other organizations. Under MOSOP, the Ogoni witnessed several internal conflicts and divisions, especially after the boycott of the 1993 general elections which the organisation decided to do in spite of interests shown by some of the Ogoni elites.

Interview evidence has been used to show that although MOSOP has and is still facing internal conflicts, the organisation of the movement has maintained nonviolence. Additional evidence has shown some changes from the early stance of MOSOP which involves no relationship with the state and the stoppage of oil exploration in the region. The divisions within the organisation have been posed as a threat to a unified agreement, and even, not all the Ogoni people are ready for oil activities to resume. The reactions of the state to the Ogoni issues have been discussed and the chapter also presented briefly some of the latest dimensions of activities happening within Ogoniland, specifically, its clean-up based on the recommendations of the environmental audit carried out by UNEP. Discussions with key Ogoni leaders suggest a possible inclination towards resumption of oil production activities, which MOSOP as an organisation is yet to take a definite stand on. But as it stands, the clean-up as well as the resumption are greatly challenged by the slow attitude of the state and the existing internal divisions within the group. In spite of all the challenges facing the Ogoni movement, however,

evidence has shown that the group is still able to maintain the principle and discipline of nonviolence.

On the other hand, just as in the Ogoni case, the chapter portrayed the organisation of the Ijaw movement which started nonviolently and saw the development and presentation of the Kaiama Declaration but later fractured into several fluid armed groups. The OBR and the Kaiama Declaration, although specific to each group's demands, have further demonstrated the distinctiveness of the two movements as well as the different characters of the two groups. While to date, the Ogoni still refer to the OBR, the Kaiama Declaration seems to have been lost to the multiple fragmentation of the Ijaw movement into armed militant groups such as MEND and NDPVF. With the Kaiama Declaration came the IYC which was meant to chart all Ijaw issues as in the case of MOSOP, but their movement was fluid and fractured. The Ijaw movement witnessed the break-up of militia leaders into almost one hundred and forty military style camps that were located within the almost inaccessible creeks in the Niger Delta and separate from the Ijaw communities. The famous of these was that led by Tompolo's camp 5. This fragmentation has further verified the earlier assertion of the Ijaw movement lacking the discipline and coordination that has existed within the Ogoni group and through which they have been able to maintain nonviolence. Rather, the fragmentation of the Ijaw movement engages with armed violence.

While on the Ogoni side, the chapter briefly examined a positive side to the reactions of the state to their nonviolent actions such as the implementation of the clean-up recommended by UNEP, the violence demonstrated by the Ijaw attracted an amnesty deal from the state. The analysis of the on-going amnesty deal indicated the achievement of temporary peace in the region, which has witnessed the resumption of full oil production activities, but the fluid nature of the Niger Delta conflicts has also shown the resurgence of armed militancy activities in 2016. Here, it has been indicated that the Ijaw violence was not solved. Rather, it was a situation of freezing the conflict and ignoring the organisational structure of the violent struggle which made remobilisation in the area easy. The lack of an adequate reintegration strategy in the amnesty deal specifically facilitated remobilisation. This has proven that predictions made during the field work by the Ogoni, Ijaw, and civil society have indeed come true within a very short period of time; that if the amnesty deal was not carefully handled, the militants would take up arms again. This has once again demonstrated the Ijaw commitment to violence. As the amnesty is on-going, a thorough analysis will be the topic of another research.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Introduction

The perception of the Niger Delta conflicts brings forth questions about why a conflict is nonviolent or violent while acknowledging that they evolve out of certain historic circumstances which are constructed by unique and precise occurrences (Unesco, 1994:2). Generally, scholarship on the region has tended to focus on debates from the lenses of resource exploitation, marginalisation and neglect. While significant, these discourses tend to present the Niger Delta conflict as representative of the region, but neglecting the essential understanding of the dynamics of narratives, choice and trajectories used in constructing the issues surrounding the resource conflicts. This final chapter offers a summary of the thesis as well as the conclusions arrived at during the analysis of the dynamics of choice between the Ogoni and the Ijaw movements in the Niger Delta. It will also offer essential policy recommendations and suggestions for future research studies. This thesis attempted to determine the dynamics of choice between the Ogoni nonviolent struggle and the Ijaw violent movement based on the comparative experiences of the two groups and the various strategies used in expressing their grievances to the state against oil production activities.

This thesis has argued that in order to better understand the dynamics of the Niger Delta conflicts, it is imperative to analyse the dynamics of choice in terms of the distinct courses of action taken by the two groups. This was approached through the social construction of reality within the perspectives of the Ogoni and the Ijaw, particularly because the method of investigation was to analyse the structure of the facts (Searle, 1995:2) that determine the direction the different narratives chart in relation to nonviolence or violence. This was advanced through the main question of (1) why the Ogoni adopted nonviolence as a means of expressing their grievances while the Ijaw opted for a violent course of action. Additionally, three sub-questions discussed (2) what role did the leaders of the two groups play in determining the strategy adopted in relation to the profile, nature and character of the rebellion. (3) How important were the collective narratives developed by the two groups in accounting for the trajectories in fighting the Nigerian state; and (4) did the two groups organise themselves in ways which reinforced their strategic choices in relation to violence and nonviolence.

The research project approached the Ogoni and Ijaw conflicts from the perspective of why nonviolence and violence, and these perspectives revolved around the questions of how the collective narratives were developed by the leaders of different ethnic groups in the Niger Delta, particularly the Ijaw and the Ogoni; the process of interactions and negotiations within the two groups that justified the different courses of actions taken to express their grievances and frustrations against the Nigerian state, and finally the outcomes that led to the transition from a nonviolent to a violent situation. Having closely explored and analysed these trends, I argue that the Niger Delta conflicts comprises distinct strategies and ideologies particular to Ogoni and the Ijaw, thereby making the conflicts very clearly different. The understanding that violence in the region is most of the time aggravated by the nature of state response to protests and expressions of dissatisfaction of oil related activities shows that within the Ogoni, the nonviolence has been continuous, while for the Ijaw nonviolence and violence have been fluid and recurring themes of the conflicts.

6.1 Overview of Findings

The major findings of this research relate to the research questions presented both in the second chapter as well as at the beginning of this chapter. Through the analysis of various discourses, historical and secondary as well as structured elite interviews, the foundational reasons which occasioned the adoption of nonviolence and violence by the Ogoni and Ijaw leaders were systematically examined in relation to the research questions. Having closely observed the two sets of narratives, this study has established that although the Ogoni and the Ijaw share similar lived experiences, they are not fighting a common cause. Rather, they are each fighting context specific battles that are constructed and framed for particular specific communities. The important discourses embedded in each community's context specific battle were explained within the context of the strategic logic of different methods (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011:6), of understanding the relationship between nonviolence and violence tactics and their expressions. The major delineations on the choice of strategies were based on three key elements; narratives on nonviolence versus violence, leadership and the organizational structure of the two movements.

6.2 Narratives on Nonviolence versus Violence

The two sets of narratives in the analysis on the historical narratives constructed on the lived experiences of the group leaders exposed that although they both put forward corresponding claims, the way in which these have been framed are specific to the group in question. Historical understanding of the Ogoni and Ijaw movements became central from the vantage point of trying to bring together several episodes that were inarticulate without being entrenched in leadership narratives. Through the use of narratives in the construction of both the Ogoni and Ijaw identities, the two groups of leaders had to situate the past history within factual frames of events relating to the identity of the groups in question; thus the historical aspects are directly linked with the construction and reconstruction of collective Ogoni and Ijaw meanings (Kratochwil, 2015:33) tied to the identities of the groups. The data collected during my interviews for the chapter on narratives established that, for instance, the Ogoni leaders narratives which were reviewed from the four sub-themes of (i) collective Ogoni narratives, (ii) nature of the Nigerian state, (iii) transnationalism and internationalism, and (iv) narratives on oil, constructed the ethnic group as distinct with an exceptional bond to the land. It was this bond that has, made unacceptable to the Ogoni anything that affects the environment negatively.

But even more crucial in this regard is the positive engagement with the notion of nonviolence in the relationship between self-determination groups and the political strategies they adopt to determine whether or not they tend towards nonviolent commitment (Cunningham, 2013). In the commitment to nonviolence, they systematically pitched their struggle within internationally recognised narratives of minority issues situated within the contexts of internal colonialism and human rights issues. The notion of internal colonialism for the Ogoni relates to their perception of being a minority ethnic group within a minority in Rivers state, and the accusation refers to their domination by the Ijaw and the Igbo. This perception of being internally colonised steered the leaders towards positive collective agency through such discourses, international solidarity and peaceful encounter with the state.

The discourses and political practices associated with the above issues championed by the late Ken Saro-Wiwa tended to humanise the enemy through civil protests, letter writing activities and campaigns. Being purposive, Saro-Wiwa organised and coordinated the Ogoni in an attempt to compel the state and transform the status quo through civil disruption and pressure

(Sharp, 1973, 2005) by the international community, particularly the United Nations, Body Shop and Green Peace. The findings of this thesis provide ample evidence that in spite of the obvious oil and gas related frustrations and discontentment advanced by the oil discovery and exploration activities, as well as the actions of the state, the Ogoni as a group do not suggest violence through its narratives.

However, for the Ijaw group which were also reviewed along the same four sub-themes, establishes some similarities in the peaceful nature of their land before colonisation and oil production activities, but when the question shifts to their perception of the state, their narratives became more combative and confrontational. It was clear from the interviewees that the Ijaw perceived the state within the lenses of the three major groups of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, who they regard as unfairly dominating specifically the economic and political scene within the state. This depicted another major contrast between the minority statuses of the Ogoni and the Ijaw. Although the Ijaw failed to regard their relegation in the form of internal colonialism, what emerged from the interviews suggest some form of internal colonialism in terms of being excluded and controlled by the more powerful ethnic groups. The expressions of the forceful governance particularly in terms of oil production and revenue allocation were quite strong and aggressive in comparison to the Ogoni.

The successful internationalisation of the Ogoni struggle was not equally achieved by the Ijaw. While the former ethnic group attracted significant international attention and recognition to their issues, the latter did not approach the international community as a collective group. Rather, the findings show that within the Ijaw movement, such international engagements were done on individual basis by youth leaders such as Patterson Ogon and Oronto Douglas. Although they received some attention by the European Parliament, Human Rights Watch, Friends of the Earth to mention but a few, the support was short lived when the protests and agitations transformed into a tsunami of armed militancy by Ijaw youth leaders such as Asari Dokubo. It established that while the interviewees ascertained the familiarity of the specific grievances between the Ogoni and the Ijaw, striking dissimilarities exist between them regarding the techniques of presentation, with the latter expressing more frustration and desperation. Worthy of mention was the direct impact of oil production activities that have resulted in these frustrations and desperations within Ijawland. Consequently, these narratives reflect clearly an introduction to the dynamics of choice between nonviolence and violence by the Ogoni and the Ijaw.

6.3 Nature of the Ogoni and Ijaw Leadership

Closely related to the dynamics of choice between Ogoni nonviolence and Ijaw violence is the understanding of the types of leadership that steered the two groups towards their different courses of action. The leaderships of the Ogoni and the Ijaw were analysed under the sub-themes of (i) timing of the struggle, (ii) outlook of the leaders, and (iii) social status of the leaders. The findings establish another major distinction between the two groups. This section specifically examined some of the Ogoni and Ijaw leaders, and it stands out that the Ogoni have a more disciplined and intellectual leadership exemplified in individuals such as Paul Birabi, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Ben Naanen and Ledum Mitee. It is hard to overstate that right from pre-independence Nigeria, the Ogoni leadership advocated nonviolence and the importance of the education and enlightenment of their people. Specifically exemplified in the engagements by Ken Saro-Wiwa with the international community and in particular with the United Nations, at this level, are Saro-Wiwa's awareness and experience being a writer fully equipped with knowledge of internationally accepted issues on oil related matters. He preached and advocated for ethnic autonomy, resource and environmental control, (ERECTISM) to the Ogoni, to the extent that the outlook of the leaders became synonymous with maintaining nonviolence as a basis for the international support and ERECTISM became the key theme of the Ogoni agenda. The leaders demonstrated a collective sense of agency in relation to their grievances with the state.

Although the Ogoni leadership became fractured at different levels, which brought about divisions within the group, the findings indicate that they were still able to stick together as one group. Another important factor observed during the research was that of the social status of the Ogoni leaders; most of the leaders have been from middle class educated family backgrounds and have been educated to university level in Nigeria. It is clear that their backgrounds and experiences provided a well-informed platform within which they have been able to operate with a collective sense of agency. To date, the Ogoni nonviolence continues to be the principle within which the Ogoni engage with the state and oil companies, in spite of all the fragmentations and challenges they have faced.

In a similar way, from analysing the data collected in my interviews in Chapter Five, it is demonstrated that, for the Ijaw, the nature of leadership was not as co-ordinated and unified as that of the Ogoni. For example, the Ijaw leadership could be grouped into two: one comprising

the nonviolent intellectual youth leaders such as Patterson Ogon, Isaac Osuoka and Timi Ogoriba. These were leaders that attempted to chart a nonviolent Ijaw movement similar to that of the Ogoni, which culminated in the production of the Kaiama Declaration. The second group were the less educated and more radical militants exemplified in the likes of Asari Dokubo, Ateke Tom, Tompolo and Boyloaf. By investigating the different leadership within the Ijaw, this thesis provided a clear insight into the often ignored fluid and fractured nature of their leadership, which had a major impact on the character and nature of the movement from a nonviolent to a violent armed struggle. The dissonance between the nonviolent and violent advocates of the Ijaw movement as well as the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa emerged as key factors in transforming the conflict from nonviolence to violence.

While the outlook of the Ogoni leaders leaned on a nonviolence stance, that of the Ijaw claimed that the state denied agency to the Ijaw people, which provided them only with one option of response: to engage in violence against the state. Another important element that stands out between the Ogoni and the Ijaw leadership is their social status. For example, the nonviolent intellectual group mentioned earlier emerged also from middle class educated backgrounds with a variety of work experience, but most of the radical group are from very low income families, with the exception of Asari Dokubo whose father was a retired Justice of the Supreme Court. Almost all the other militants were school drop outs while some benefitted only from primary school education and some had no formal education.

6.4 Organisational Structure of the Ogoni and Ijaw Movements

Organisation of the movements were examined under the sub-themes of (i) organisation of the struggle, (ii) strategies of engagement, (iii) current dimension of the struggle. Concentrating on how the Ogoni structured their struggle revealed the impact that peaceful links, negotiations and advocacy had on their nonviolence posture. Additional distinctions manifested in the development of the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) and the establishment of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) as an umbrella organisation for all Ogoni. In particular, the Ogoni agenda and the adoption of nonviolence by the Ogoni went through series of deliberations with a clear choice made between nonviolence and violence. Guided by the intellectual ability of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Ogoni leaders were brought together under MOSOP through meetings and discussions where the different available options were presented. This type of organisation led to the deliberate adoption of civil engagement with the state, in line

with the recognition and legitimacy of the struggle gained through the internationalisation of their agenda to the UN, Body Shop, Green Peace, and the international community (Chapter Five).

The presentation of the articulated set of demands in the form of an OBR to the state paved the way for the establishment of MOSOP to push forward the Ogoni agenda, exemplified in the boycott of the 1993 general elections (Okonta, 2008; Osha, 2006). Interview evidence from the data analysed in Chapter Five showed that although MOSOP became fractured even under the leadership of Saro-Wiwa and after his death, nonviolence continues to be the norm. Another important observation is the shift in the attitude of MOSOP which at one time forbade interactions with the state and oil companies and the successful stoppage of oil related activities in the area. Currently, the differences were clear as evidence suggest regular interactions with the state and the possibility of the resumption of oil production in the area, bearing in mind that some of the Ogonis are still opposed to the idea.

It is considered that the effectiveness and nonviolent standing of MOSOP is quite visible with the notable achievement of the anticipated clean-up of Ogoniland under the auspices of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). Although the Ogoni leaders showed open dissatisfaction with the state with regards to the slow pace of activities regarding the clean-up, evidence revealed that the group are still able to maintain the principle and discipline of nonviolence. Interview evidence indicated a possible resumption of oil exploration in the area. A key element which distinguishes the Ijaw movement is their earlier organisation and the subsequent production of the Kaiama Declaration and the establishment of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC). It has been ascertained that while the Ogoni have continued to press their demands in the OBR, the Kaiama Declaration remained relevant only for a few months as a result of the multiple, fluid and fractured style of the leadership of their movement. The declaration became lost with the transformation of the movement from nonviolence to violence, because it changed hands with the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and other such militant groups that sprang up.

State responses to the two movements served as further elements that separates them in the sense that the Ogoni are currently talking about the UNEP clean up while the Ijaw are faced with two distinct actions. The escalation of the Ijaw conflict to violence which directly affected the oil economy of the state saw the pronouncement of an amnesty to the armed militants,

which evidence showed was received with mixed feelings and uncertainty within both the Ijaw and the Ogoni. Within the intellectual Ijaw group, the perception is that of another clear failure by the state in addressing the root causes of the Ijaw problems, while the Ogoni, although sharing the same view, also regard it as a reward for violence with a prediction by both the Ijaw and the Ogoni of a resurgence of the violent militancy. However, the analysis of the on-going amnesty showed the achievement of temporary peace which could be regarded as negative peace (Galtung, 1969), and has seen the resumption of oil activities and a boost to the Nigerian economy that ninety percent relies on accrued oil revenues.

The accuracy of the prediction of both the Ijaw and Ogoni manifested in 2016 in that the region is now engaged in another cycle of violent bombings of strategic oil facilities. Going back to the interview with Elder Orubebe (3 August 2015), a onetime Minister for Niger Delta Affairs, during which it was clear that under the amnesty deal several ex militants have been trained in under water marine wielding and oil drilling areas, and in the event of a relapse of the region into violence, it is demonstrated that the impact would be more than what was recorded in the past. Therefore, it is a major finding of this study that the Ijaw conflicts are just a perpetual continuous recycling of recurring themes swinging between nonviolence and violence in stark contrast of the Ogoni who have remained fixed on nonviolence as a choice.

6.5 Contribution of the Thesis

The story of the Niger Delta conflict is incomplete without the critical understanding of the dynamics of choice between the different ethnic groups engaged in the region's conflicts. As this thesis has argued, some scholars tend to discuss the Niger Delta conflict generally as one, with mentions of the Ogoni and Ijaw groups. This study has provided a detailed analysis of the differences between the Ogoni struggle and the Ijaw movement. Bearing in mind the similarities in their lived experiences, it has showed the convergence of experiences. This is strategic as it has brought into the discourses on the Niger Delta the voices of key contributors such as Ledum Mitee and Legborsi Pyagbara from the Ogoni angle as well as Patterson Ogon, D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha and T.K. Ogoriba. Of particular importance is that it fills the gap in the existing literature on the region by bringing to the fore the significance of including narratives, leadership and organisation of the different movements together in the Niger Delta analysis for the Nigerian state, this thesis provides some strategic perspectives from which to consider critically not only the Niger Delta conflict but even the wider national conflicts such as Boko

Haram, and help in the formulation of policies. This is crucial because, the militarised perception of one size fits all and the failure to take into consideration the historical specifics and dynamics of each form of protests and grievances tend to push nations into recurring cycles of conflicts some of which are becoming more violent than others. It is not enough merely to identify a conflict. The government's ability to identify the reasons why in the same region one group takes up arms while the other remains nonviolent is key to peace within the Nigerian state.

6.6 Suggestions for Future Research

This thesis created a framework of three key elements in terms of narratives, leadership and organisation to examine the dynamics of choice. Adopting this framework will enable researchers and policy makers to gain better understanding of the subject matter. It opens the door to applying my approach to other movements locally and internationally for future researchers. This framework suggests some opportunities for future research, for example, as the current thesis has focused only on two ethnic groups within the Niger Delta, additional research capturing other articulated sets of demands from groups such as the Chikoko Movement 1997, Oron Bill of Rights 1999, Aklaka Declaration 1999, the Urhobo Economic Summit 1998, the Charter of Demands of the Ogbia People 1992, The Warri Accord 1999, The Ikwerre Rescue Charter 1999, and The Niger Delta Peoples Compact 2008, will provide a wider and more detailed understanding of the differences and similarities of the Niger Delta conflicts. As the amnesty is on-going, a thorough analysis should be the topic of another research study in order to fully assess its impact and benefits (if any), and possibly a comparative analysis of the Nigerian, Northern Ireland, and the South African amnesties. Fieldwork in the Niger Delta revealed that even though the amnesty had at one point reduced active and sustained physical combat, with new militant groups emerging in the region, peace here remains elusive.

A mini research carried out by the researcher examined that the construction of amnesty as social harmony in the Niger Delta is a major challenge that side-lines the actual grievances (Mai-Bornu, 2016). Therefore, an exploration of the similarities and differences of the Niger Delta and Northern Ireland amnesties could be carried out to examine how the concept of peace is constructed and interpreted in terms of the two amnesties granted. The constructivist perspective might be used to explore the question of 'What have been the main consequences

of the two amnesties, and how has it affected the peace and conflict dynamics'. For example, the goal of this would be to argue that if not efficiently handled, the Nigerian amnesty deal would give rise to potentially more radically armed militia organizations in the country, which will ultimately lead to regional instability. Researching this is important as it will better situate the Nigerian amnesty within the wider peace discourse of international relations.

6.7 Conclusion

This thesis connected the three key elements of narratives, leadership and organisation as the basis for an informed understanding of the Niger Delta conflict. However, while acknowledging the similarities of the living experiences of the Ogoni and the Ijaw ethnic groups in the Niger Delta, clear distinctions emerged, showing that the two conflicts are not one and the same. Looking into the future and having gained a better and more informed understanding of the nonviolent and violent aspects of the Niger Delta conflicts, it is hoped that this knowledge would help in some ways to solve some of the problems out there. The Ogoni and the Ijaw movements are major milestones in the discourse of the Niger Delta conflicts basically targeted at addressing their perceived domination and marginalisation with the hope of achieving self-determination and resource control within the Nigerian state. The harsh and militarised responses of the state to the Niger Delta question continues to recur and has seen the emergence of nonviolent intellectual and violent militant postures from two ethnic groups in the region. These different positions have affected the quest for national security, unity, and stability within the state, which go back to historical minority issues that have been ignored since pre- and post-independence. The perceived injustices and grievances which have haunted most minorities are factors which have continuously aggravated nonviolent and violent minority agitations and contestations in the state. The fact that the state reacted with harsh repression against both the violent and nonviolent activism, exasperated attitudes whereas a more nuanced and articulated response would have helped strengthen nonviolence. Perhaps, the state's recent behaviour towards and engagement with the Ogoni represents a possible way forward to the Niger Delta conflicts in Nigeria.

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Appendix 1

List of Interviewees

Ogoni

1. Tom Orage⁵⁷
2. Sir Dr Peter Medee⁵⁸ (President Kagote Ogoni Worldwide)
3. Dr Alubabari Desmond Nbeta⁵⁹
4. Professor Ben Naanen⁶⁰
5. Legborsi Saro Pyagbara⁶¹ (MOSOP President)
6. Dr Owens Wiwa⁶²
7. Ledum Mitee⁶³
8. Bishop Mathew Hassan Kukah⁶⁴

Ijaw

1. Iniruo Wills⁶⁵(Commissioner of Environment Bayelsa State)
2. Pattersen Ogon⁶⁶
3. Isaac Asume Osuaka⁶⁷
4. Lancelot⁶⁸
5. T.K. Ogoriba⁶⁹
6. Dr Otive Igbuzor⁷⁰
7. Felix Tuodolo⁷¹
8. Ben Tantua⁷²
9. Jackson⁷³

Ex-Militant Leaders (Ex Agitators)

1. General Andrew Azazi⁷⁴

⁵⁷ Interviewed 27th July 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁵⁸ Interviewed 27th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁵⁹ Interviewed 27th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁶⁰ Interviewed 31st July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁶¹ Interviewed 31st July, 2015 in Abuja.

⁶² Interviewed 3rd August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁶³ Interviewed 2 august 2016 in London, United Kingdom.

⁶⁴ Interviewed 1st August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁶⁵ Interviewed 29th July, 2015 in Yenagoa, Bayelsa state.

⁶⁶ Interviewed 30th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁶⁷ Interviewed 31st July, 2015 in Abuja.

⁶⁸ Interviewed 3rd August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁶⁹ Interviewed 10th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁷⁰ Interviewed 2nd August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁷¹ Interviewed 28 January 2017 via telephone in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁷² Interviewed 9th February 2017 via telephone.

⁷³ Interviewed 3rd August 2015.

⁷⁴ Interviewed 10th August, 2015 in Abuja.

2. General Peter Doloebiwei⁷⁵
3. General Abuja Seleoge⁷⁶
4. Comrade Ramsey Mukoro⁷⁷
5. Comrade Johnson Ajuwa⁷⁸

Civil Society/Niger Delta Activists

People interviewed:

1. Chris Newsom⁷⁹ (Stakeholder Democracy Network)
2. Ken Henshaw⁸⁰ (Social Action)
3. Inemo Samiama⁸¹ (Country Director SDN)
4. Samuel Agbola⁸² (SDN)

Pan Niger Delta Youth Forum/Dawn in the Creeks

1. Kelechi Ameachi Justin⁸³ (Community Organiser and founder Dawn in the Creeks)
2. Belema Papamie⁸⁴

Human Rights

1. Professor Chidi Odinkalu⁸⁵

Scholars

1. Dr Ukoha Ukiwo⁸⁶

Nigerian State (Federal Government)

People interviewed:

1. Gen Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida⁸⁷ (Rtd) Former President Federal Republic of Nigeria
2. D.S.P Alamieyeseigha⁸⁸ (Former Governor Bayelsa State)

⁷⁵ Interviewed 10th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁷⁶ Interviewed 10th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁷⁷ Interviewed 10th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁷⁸ Interviewed 10th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁷⁹ Interviewed 28th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁸⁰ Interviewed 28th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁸¹ Interviewed 29th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁸² Interviewed 29th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁸³ Interviewed 30th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁸⁴ Interviewed 30th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁸⁵ Interviewed 4th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁸⁶ Interviewed 14th June 2016 in Providence, USA.

⁸⁷ Interviewed 6th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁸⁸ Interviewed 5th August, 2015 in Abuja.

3. Elder Godsday Orubebe⁸⁹ (Former Minister Ministry of Niger Delta)
4. Confidential Source 1⁹⁰(Serving Member Federal House of Representatives)
5. Mrs Ihuoma Osaretin⁹¹ (Niger Delta Development Commission)
6. General Sarkin Yaki Bello⁹² (Rtd) Commander JTF

Amnesty

1. Marshal Kunoun⁹³
2. Dr Ferdinand Ikwang⁹⁴
3. Kennedy West⁹⁵

Oil and Gas Companies

People interviewed:

1. Confidential source 2⁹⁶
2. Confidential source 3⁹⁷

⁸⁹ Interviewed 3rd August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁹⁰ Interviewed 3rd August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁹¹ Interviewed 30th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁹² Interviewed 10th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁹³ Interviewed 9th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁹⁴ Interviewed 9th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁹⁵ Interviewed 9th August, 2015 in Abuja.

⁹⁶ Interviewed 28th July, 2015 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

⁹⁷ Interviewed 4th August, 2015 in Abuja.

Appendix 2

Ogoni Bill of Rights

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

OGONI BILL OF RIGHTS

PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT
AND PEOPLE OF NIGERIA
October, 1990

WITH

AN APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

by

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

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

FOREWORD

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

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

These rights which should have reverted to the Ogoni after the termination of British rule, have been usurped in the past thirty years by the majority ethnic groups of Nigeria. They have not only been usurped; they have been misused and abused, turning Nigeria into a hell on earth for the Ogoni and similar ethnic minorities. Thirty years of Nigerian independence has done no more than outline the wretched quality of the leadership of the Nigerian majority ethnic groups and their cruelty as they have plunged the nation into ethnic strife, carnage, war, dictatorship, retrogression and the greatest waste of national resources ever witnessed in world history, turning generations of Nigerians, born and unborn into perpetual debtors.

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

Ogoni Bill of Rights

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

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

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

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

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

The Ogoni people will be telling the European Community that their demand of the Yugoslav tribes that they respect human rights and democracy should also apply to Nigeria and that they should not wait for Nigeria to burst into ethnic strife and carnage before enjoining these civilized values on a Nigeria which depends on European investment, technology and credit.

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

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

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

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

Ogoni Bill of Rights

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

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

Ken Saro-Wiwa
Port Harcourt 24/12/91

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

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

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

Ogoni Bill of Rights

6. Politically, the Ogoni are being ground to the dust under dictatorial decrees imposed by successive military regimes in Nigeria and laws smuggled by military dictatorships into the Nigerian Constitution which Constitution does not protect ethnic minorities and which today bears no resemblance whatsoever to the covenant entered into by the federating Nigerian ethnic groups at Independence.
7. Ethnicity is a fact of Nigerian life. Nigeria is a federation of ethnic groups. In practice, however, ethnocentrism is the order of the day in the country. The rights and resources of the Ogoni have been usurped by the majority ethnic groups and the Ogoni consigned to slavery and possible extinction. The Ogoni people reject the current political and administrative structuring of Nigeria imposed by the Military Government. They believe with Obafemi Awolowo that in a true federation, each ethnic group, no matter how small is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large.
8. The Ogoni people therefore demand POLITICAL AUTONOMY as a distinct and separate unit of the Nigerian federation - autonomy which will guarantee them certain basic rights essential to their survival as a people. This demand has been spelt out in the Ogoni Bill of Rights. The Ogoni people stand by the Bill and now appeal to the international community, as a last resort, to save them from extinction.

(Sgd) Dr. G.B. Leton

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

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

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

1. That the Ogoni people, before the advent of British colonialism, were not conquered or colonized by any other ethnic group in present-day Nigeria.
2. That British colonization forced us into the administrative division of Opobo from 1908 to 1947.
3. That we protested against this forced union until the Ogoni Native Authority was created in 1947 and placed under the then Rivers Province.
4. That in 1951 we were forcibly included in the Eastern Region of Nigeria where we suffered utter neglect.
5. That we protested against this neglect by voting against the party in power in the Region in 1957, and against the forced union by testimony before the Willink Commission of Inquiry into Minority Fears in 1958.
6. That this protest led to the inclusion of our nationality in Rivers State in 1967, which State consists of several ethnic nationalities with differing cultures, languages and aspirations.
7. That oil was struck and produced in commercial quantities on our land in 1958 at K. Dere (Bomu oilfield).

Ogoni Bill of Rights

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:

Ogoni Bill of Rights

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

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

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

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

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

ADDENDUM TO THE OGONI BILL OF RIGHTS

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

- (a) That on October 2, 1990 we addressed an Ogoni Bill of Rights to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida and members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council;
- (b) That after a one-year wait, the President has been unable to grant us the audience which we sought to have with him in order to discuss the legitimate demands contained in the Ogoni Bill of Rights;
- (c) That our demands as outlined in the Ogoni Bill of Rights are legitimate, just and our inalienable right and in accord with civilized values worldwide;
- (d) That the Government of the Federal Republic has continued, since October 2, 1990, to decree measures and implement policies which further marginalize the Ogoni people, denying us political autonomy, our rights to our resources, to the development of our languages and culture, to adequate representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions and to the protection of our environment and ecology from further degradation;
- (e) That we cannot sit idly by while we are, as a people, dehumanized and slowly exterminated and driven to extinction even as our rich resources are siphoned off to the exclusive comfort and improvement of other Nigerian communities, and the shareholders of multi-national oil companies.

NOW, therefore, while re-affirming our wish to remain a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we hereby authorize the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) to make

Appendix 3

THE KAIAMA DECLARATION

By

IJAW YOUTHS OF THE NIGER DELTA

BEING COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE ALL IJAW YOUTHS CONFERENCE

WHICH HELD IN THE TOWN OF KAIAMA THIS 11TH DAY OF DECEMBER 1998

INTRODUCTION

We, Ijaw youths drawn from over five hundred communities from over 40 clans that make up the Ijaw nation and representing 25 representative organisations met, today, in Kaiama to deliberate on the best way to ensure the continuous survival of the indigenous peoples of the Ijaw ethnic nationality of the Niger Delta within the Nigerian state.

After exhaustive deliberations, the Conference observed:

- a. That it was through British colonisation that the IJAW NATION was forcibly put under the Nigerian State
- b. That but for the economic interests of the imperialists, the Ijaw ethnic nationality would have evolved as a distinct and separate sovereign nation, enjoying undiluted political, economic, social, and cultural AUTONOMY.
- c. That the division of the Southern Protectorate into East and West in 1939 by the British marked the beginning of the balkanisation of a hitherto territorially contiguous and culturally homogeneous Ijaw people into political and administrative units, much to our disadvantage. This trend is continuing in the balkanisation of the Ijaws into six states-Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States, mostly as minorities who suffer socio-political, economic, cultural and psychological deprivations.
- d. That the quality of life of Ijaw people is deteriorating as a result of utter neglect, suppression and marginalisation visited on Ijaws by the alliance of the Nigerian state and transnational oil companies.
- e. That the political crisis in Nigeria is mainly about the struggle for the control of oil mineral resources which account for over 80% of GDP, 95 %of national budget and 90% of foreign exchange earnings. From which, 65%, 75% and 70% respectively are derived from within the Ijaw nation. Despite these huge contributions, our reward from the Nigerian State remains avoidable deaths resulting from ecological devastation and military repression.

f. That the unabating damage done to our fragile natural environment and to the health of our people is due in the main to uncontrolled exploration and exploitation of crude oil and natural gas which has led to numerous oil spillages, uncontrolled gas flaring, the opening up of our forests to loggers, indiscriminate canalisation, flooding, land subsidence, coastal erosion, earth tremors etc. Oil and gas are exhaustible resources and the complete lack of concern for ecological rehabilitation, in the light of the Oloibiri experience, is a signal of impending doom for the peoples of Ijawland.

g. That the degradation of the environment of Ijawland by transnational oil companies and the Nigerian State arise mainly because Ijaw people have been robbed of their natural rights to ownership and control of their land and resources through the instrumentality of undemocratic Nigerian State legislations such as the Land Use Decree of 1978, the Petroleum Decrees of 1969 and 1991, the Lands (Title Vesting etc.) Decree No. 52 of 1993 (Osborne Land Decree), the National Inland Waterways Authority Decree No. 13 of 1997 etc.

h. That the principle of Derivation in Revenue Allocation has been consciously and systematically obliterated by successive regimes of the Nigerian state. We note the drastic reduction of the Derivation Principle from 100% (1953), 50% (1960), 45% (1970), 20% (1975) 2% (1982), 1.5% (1984) to 3% (1992 to date), and a rumoured 13% in Abacha's 1995 undemocratic and unimplemented Constitution.

i. That the violence in Ijawland and other parts of the Niger Delta area, sometimes manifesting in intra and inter-ethnic conflicts are sponsored by the State and transnational oil companies to keep the communities of the Niger Delta area divided, weak and distracted from the causes of their problems.

j. That the recent revelations of the looting of national treasury by the Abacha junta is only a reflection of an existing and continuing trend of stealing by public office holders in the Nigerian state. We remember the over 12 billion dollars Gulf war windfall, which was looted by Babangida and his cohorts We note that over 70% of the billions of dollars being looted by military rulers and their civilian collaborators is derived from our ecologically devastated Ijawland.

Based on the foregoing, we, the youths of Ijawland, hereby make the following resolutions to be known as the Kaiama Declaration:

1. All land and natural resources (including mineral resources) within the Ijaw territory belong to Ijaw communities and are the basis of our survival.

2. We cease to recognise all undemocratic decrees that rob our peoples/communities of the right to ownership and control of our lives and resources, which were enacted without our participation and consent. These include the Land Use Decree and The Petroleum Decree etc.

3. We demand the immediate withdrawal from Ijawland of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigerian State. Any oil company that employs the services of the armed forces of the Nigerian State to "protect" its operations will be viewed as an enemy of the Ijaw

people. Family members of military personnel stationed in Ijawland should appeal to their people to leave the Ijaw area alone.

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

5. Ijaw youths and Peoples will promote the principle of peaceful coexistence between all Ijaw communities and with our immediate neighbours, despite the provocative and divisive actions of the Nigerian State, transnational oil companies and their contractors. We offer a hand of friendship and comradeship to our neighbours: the Itsekiri, Ilaje, Urhobo, Isoko, Edo, Ibibio, Ogoni, Ekpeye, Ikwerre etc. We affirm our commitment to joint struggle with the other ethnic nationalities in the Niger delta area for self-determination.

6. We express our solidarity with all people's organisations and ethnic nationalities in Nigeria and elsewhere who are struggling for self-determination and justice. In particular we note the struggle of the Oodua people's Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (Mosop), Egi Women's Movement etc.

7. We extend our hand of solidarity to the Nigerian oil workers (NUPENG and PENGASSAN) and expect that they will see this struggle for freedom as a struggle for humanity

8. We reject the present transition to civil rule programme of the Abubakar regime, as it is not preceded by restructuring of the Nigerian federation. The way forward is a Sovereign National Conference of equally represented ethnic nationalities to discuss the nature of a democratic federation of Nigerian ethnic nationalities. Conference noted the violence and killings that characterized the last local government elections in most parts of the Niger Delta. Conference pointed out that these electoral conflicts are a manifestation of the undemocratic and unjust nature of the military transition programme. Conference affirmed therefore, that the military are incapable of enthroning true democracy in Nigeria.

9 We call on all Ijaws to remain true to their Ijawness and to work for the total liberation of our people. You have no other true home but that which is in Ijawland.

10 We agreed to remain within Nigeria but to demand and work for Self-Government and resource control for the Ijaw people. Conference approved that the best way for Nigeria is a federation of ethnic nationalities. The federation should be run on the basis equality and social justice.

Finally, Ijaw youths resolve to set up the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) to coordinate the struggle of Ijaw peoples for self-determination and justice.

Signed for the entire participants by:

Felix Tuodolo

and Ogoriba, Timi Kaiser-Wilhelm.

Appendix 4

Declarations and Charters of Demands Presented by the Different Indigenous Groups in the Niger Delta.

Ogoni Bill of Rights 1990

The Charter of Demands of the Ogbia People 1992

Chikoko Movement 1997

Kaiama Declaration 1998

Oron Bill of Rights 1999

Aklaka Declaration 1999

The Urhobo Economic Summit 1998

The Warri Accord 1999

The Ikwerre Rescue Charter 1999

First Niger Delta Indigenous Women's Conference 1999

The Niger Delta Peoples' Compact 2008