DEVELOPMENT AS CONFLICT

Ogoni Movement, the State and
Oil Resources in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank or Asian Development Bank
AG	Action Group
ANT	Actor Network Theory
CA	Constituent Assembly
CDHR	Committee for the Defence of Human Rights
COU	Central Ogoni Union
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSN	Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria
EZNL	Zapatista National Liberation Army
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOWA	Federation of Ogoni Women Association
FSLN	Sandinista National Liberation Front
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRW	Human Rights Watch
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MNCs	Multinational Companies
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
MST	Movement of Rural Landless Workers
MVIC	Marginalised Violent Internal Conflict model
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
NPC	Northern People's Congress

NPE	New Political Economy
NSM	New Social Movement
NWRO	National Welfare Rights Organization
NYCOP	National Youth Council of Ogoni People
NYM	Nigerian Youth Movement
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OBR	Ogoni Bill of Rights
OCC	Ogoni Council of Churches
ONOSUF	One Naira Ogoni Survival Fund
PAPLRR	Pan-African Programme on Land and Resource Rights
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RM	Resource Mobilisation
SAFs	Strategic Action Fields
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SIPC	Shell International Petroleum Company
SMO	Social Movement Organisation
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company
TNCs	Trans-national Corporations
TNOCs	Trans-national Oil Corporations
TSAF	Trans-local Strategic Action Field
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

1 Introduction

1.1 Getting the Fundamentals Right

Conflict, political and livelihood crises have given the Niger Delta a near-permanent place in the news and public consciousness. The prevalence of conflicts in the region engaged critical and sustained attention. Controversy marks concern over the motivational underbelly of conflicts. To some, the conflicts represent the legitimate action of local communities seeking to preserve their environment and livelihood (Obi 2006). Others approach the conflicts as no more than a parochial thrust for inclusion in the State's distributive or patronage network (Reno 2002, 2005; Collier 2001, 2002; Omeje 2006). Thus, there is a polarisation of approaches to the conflicts. While the debate may have been helpful, whether motivated by legitimate or selfish ends, both camps inadvertently portrayed internal conflict in materialist, parochial and provincial terms.[1] Such is the case to the extent that either side of the debate begins from the premise that conflict entrepreneurs aim to privilege particular interests over the national good. Notwithstanding their polarity, therefore, both perspectives share a materialist understanding of conflict that is at best provincial and at worst self-seeking.

This study focuses on why and how the on-going Niger Delta conflicts emerged, but transgresses the materialist and localist limits to examine what symbolic and identity markers they embody.[2] It seeks to examine how and under what conditions the nexus between oil development and local communities became conflictual over what Escobar (2003) calls 'the triple distribution conflict'.[3] The initial premise of the study is that conflicts in the Niger Delta cannot be assumed, *a priori* to be communal, ethnic or solely motivated by sectional interests simply because they invoke communal symbols. It asks the question whether the Niger Delta conflicts are merely about a minority ethnic drive at securing an

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advantage in distributional matters.[4] This study strives to make it a matter of empirical investigation whether provincial materialist or nationalist and moral interests or, a combination of sorts, form the underbelly of the conflicts (Sen 2008). Thus, the study addresses the question whether the marginalised communities of the Niger Delta can, contrary to Chabal and Daloz (1999: 30), set in motion processes of social transformation as opposed to an orientation to self-interest, 'survival and adaptation' (Cox 1987: 389).

It sounds incredible to suggest that insurgents could be anything but provincial and self-seeking in a political economy described as a nation of 'takers' (Ake 1996). Even before independence, colonial administrators and Nigerian nationalist leaders divided into regional champions who privileged sectional interests over the national good. The obsessive concern with the self and one's ethnic group, which continues to the present (HRW 2007), is a generalised phenomenon in Nigeria (Omeje 2006; Reno 2002, 2005; Ekeh 1975). Such view resonates with the conclusion of the *New Political Economy* about the logic of action in developing society (Dasgupta 1998; Obi 1997). Moreover, it is congruent with Cox's (1987) argument that the instrumental and dependent bent of the marginalised entraps its energies. Therefore, to claim that the MOSOP and its leaders are not entirely provincial and self-seeking is to interrogate the existing literature and suggest that Nigerian society is not completely and crassly selfish, as some would suggest. Moreover, it is to argue that MOSOP represents a manifestation of creative collective potential for change (Oommen 1997). Such a bold claim deserves empirical verification.

A number of marginalised communities acquiesce in the face of marginalisation (Gaventa 1982). Others challenge domination. Examples include the Zapatista (Mexico), the *Gama'a Al-Islamiyya* (Egypt), the Ijaw (Nigeria), the Baliapal and Chipko movements (India) and the Bergama movement (Turkey). Peaceful or otherwise, these groups, like the Ogoni, do not seek to overthrow the government or seize control of the State. To the contrary, they accuse the government of betraying the true values of the State and they seek to revalidate it (Tschirgi 2007: 157). Yet, states constantly seek to delegitimise and criminalise such movements in order to maintain the status quo. Labelling movements as provincial, terrorist, and criminal, enables their demonisation and subjugation to state violence (Berdal and Malone 2000). Scholars, inadvertently, provide fodder

for the State when analysis reduces movements to ethnic, selfish, pecuniary beasts, lacking progressive and patriotic content. However, there is need to engage with the contradictions a movement instantiates and the alternative vision of society it enunciates.

The literature on Niger Delta conflicts is remarkable for its silence on the presence or role of moral and universalist motivations in collective mobilisation (Collier and Hoeffler 2000; World Bank 2003). The immediate effect of the silence is the reduction of social conflicts to material and self-oriented actions (Abdullah 2006). Such reductionism essentialises conflict, thereby preventing clearer understanding of its sources, character and possible appropriate resolutions. The study seeks to highlight the silence on an aspect of conflict and to correct for the lopsidedness by creating analytical space for the consideration of the discursively erased. It does so not by privileging the subjugated over the conventional but through consideration of the former in its entanglement with the latter.

Many scholars studied the Ogoni struggle and a number of major approaches are evident.[5] The first approach reads conflict in the Niger Delta as the outcome of incorrigible greed and the tendency to amass wealth (Omeje 2006). A second approach deemphasises pecuniary factors and fingers conflicting understanding of what constitutes environmental security (Ibeanu 1997). A third approach, represented by Reno (2000, 2005) and Watts (2004) to whom the Ogoni movement constitutes an attempt to secure greater patronage or a reiteration of spoils politics. The works of Naanen (1995), Osaghae (1995b), Anikpo (2002) and Ikelegbe (2001) represent a fourth approach. These scholars locate the movement in structural problems such as 'internal colonialism', the 'National Question', and the exploitation and dispossession of minorities. Obi (2006) represents a fifth approach in which the problems of the Ogoni transcend national boundaries to implicate the architecture of global capitalism. The Ogoni movement is a rejection of forces of dispossession and the social and environmental costs they impose (Obi 2005).

A basic premise of the literature is the view that development ought to consign conflict to the dustbin of history. Development only inadvertently induces conflict. Moreover, they shy away from embedding their analysis of why the Ogoni mobilised within the debate over what motivates collective action. They give little attention to the vital question of

how the Ogoni successfully mobilised against both the State and Shell Company. However, we cannot arrive at a clearer understanding of the *why* without knowledge of *how* the movement was organised. In their engagements with the why of the mobilisation, focus remained on the self-directed benefits of the struggle, and hardly the benefits the struggle portends for the country as a whole. Their account of why is grossly aspatial, treating place as mere background against which social action unfolds. These scholars primarily describe the conflict in distributive, provincialist and materialist terms.

In contrast to the literature, this thesis sets out the concept of the conflict as intrinsic to the development process, and as endowed with progressive potential. In an attempt to highlight such transformational potential, this study resides within the redistribution and recognition debate in social theory. Such a move promises to help uncover all the dimensions of the motivation behind the Ogoni movement.[6] Moreover, the study problematises the existing one-sided and aspatial reading of the Ogoni conflict, arguing for equal sensitivity to its localist, redistributive, nationalist and recognition tenor. To that end, this thesis applies place-sensitive social movement theories to understand the *why* and *how* of the movement. This approach introduces a fresh angle to the conflict, opening up the terms of the debate, which have stalemated in claims and counter-claims over the *why*, often addressed in essentialist terms.

To help generate fuller understanding of the character of the Ogoni conflict, the study proceeds from the initial premise that although riddled with particularistic elements, the conflict is fundamentally a politically informed struggle concerned with a dysfunctional federal structure, which fails to ensure equality to all its citizens. Collective action and struggles thus find articulation in the discourse of resource control, environmental protection, improved redistribution, and local development poorly perceived in skewed federal arrangements. Such terms constitute the grounds on which the people understand their problems and their struggles. With the understanding that Nigerian law defines every Nigerian as an ethnic being, it is not hard to see why they see themselves in that light and mobilise on that basis (see Salih 1999: 2; Gurr 1991).

1.2 Underside of Development in the Niger Delta: Socio-historical Note

In history, the Niger Delta has different meanings for different groups of people. The marine topography provided sanctuary for numerous migrant groups escaping the reach of repressive local potentates and a rich source of livelihood for its inhabitants. From the 15th century, the Niger Delta was the heart of European contact and trade (in human beings and palm oil) with West Africa. When mutual respect and beneficial trade relations gave way to European colonisation, the region, hitherto a safe haven and centre of growing economic activities became the theatre of military invasions, punitive expeditions and conquests. Evocative of the resistance against European colonisation and dispossession, the Niger Delta, since the early 1990s, has again become the flashpoint of communal mobilisations and violent state repression. At the centre of the recent conflicts are multinational oil firms whose operations and impacts on the environment, including the role of the State, have come under widespread condemnation (Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria 2006; Catholic Relief Services 2003).

Historically informed analyses promoted two erroneous views of the region. First, prior to the activities of oil corporations the region, the Niger Delta was a pristine landscape and, the dualism of nature and society, which tends to separate components from the whole (Gerber 1997). The overall effects are that most engagements with the region lack an understanding of the historical and geographical production of the region's topography and *socio-nature* as a 'hybrid', or a 'historical-geographical process' (Lefebvre 1991). A re-visioning of the Niger Delta as a hybrid enables us to approach the region from the perspective of the indigenous inhabitants as the material extension of society and abode of spirits, ancestors and deities.

The history of colonialism and development has been one of alteration and production of the socio-physical topography of the Niger Delta and reproduction of underdevelopment. The colonial project of export promotion and arrival of oil firms led to transformation of socio-physical space and emergence of new socio-environmental landscape. The resultant socio-physical landscape instantiates 'historical-geographical struggles and social power geometries' (Swyngedouw 1999: 461). Thus, existing socio-natural conditions are results of the transformations of pre-existing formations 'that are themselves inherently natural and social'

(Swyngedouw 1999: 445). Such production of nature intersects with the production of discourses by epistemic communities (Lefebvre 1991). The issue, therefore, is what analytical tool can enable us to grasp the hybrid quality of the landscape and the link between forces and discourses in contention over the alteration and creation of socio-nature, as well as their systems of meaning.

The development project consists 'simultaneously [of] economic, ecological, and cultural transformation' (Escobar 2003). Mega-development projects, such as pipelines, petrochemical plants, roads and ports are inherently displacing and they 'reflect and instantiate the larger social projects of colonialism, development, and globalisation' (Gellert and Lynch 2003). What is at stake with the onset of displacement 'is a deepening of capitalist modernity's triple economic, ecological, and cultural conquest and transformation', involving a ruthless attempt to destroy the economic, ecological and cultural difference embodied in local practices (Escobar 2003: 165). Gellert and Lynch (2003) argue that by employing state support, sophisticated technology and heavy equipment imported from industrialised countries, mega-projects profoundly transform the landscape. In other words, displacement refers to the 'ways in which human and bio-geophysical elements in the landscape interact and change as mega-projects are introduced' (Gellert and Lynch 2003: 17).

Examination of how displacement is produced and the broader historical social and natural relations of displacement centres attention on the understanding that mega-projects serve the material interests of powerful actors, supported by a range of legitimating modernising discourses (Escobar 2004). The resultant 'uneven and combined development' (O'Connor 1989) is both the means and end of what Harvey (2003) refers to as 'dispossession by accumulation'. Development, directly and indirectly, occasions the displacement and disruption of non-human and human actors and processes. It is, however, not a blind process as development churns out intolerable human costs for some and benefits for others (Goulet 1968). The result is that accumulation by dispossession has 'provoked political and social struggles and vast swaths of resistance' (Harvey 2003: 162).

One view of development in the Niger Delta is as a geographical project embodied by intense spatial transformation. The alteration of nature and society, thus, reflects the inherent contradictions of development (Swyngedouw 1999: 445). Against the project of a nature-society dual-

ism, it is critical to reflect that 'community and environment constitute a single, integral and open system; they are mutually responsive to, reciprocally constructed and informed by, one another' (Whitt and Slack 1994: 24-5). From such a *decolonised* (Plumwood 2003) framework or hybrid perspective, land enclosure or theft is not merely a disruption external to a local community with resultant negative impacts. Land is an integral part of such a community and 'to lay claim to it is literally to steal community' (Whitt and Slack 1994: 20). In other words, violence to nature is inherently violence to the social fabric.

What makes oil-induced displacement of significance for this study is the fact that it happens in place; a portion of space invested with meaning by a group of people and to which they have become attached. As Cresswell (2004: 11) argues, place is a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world. A non-place approach to the Niger Delta sees nothing but a world of vast oil resources and nature. However, the conception of the region as a world of places enables a deeper perception of worlds of meanings and experiences, connections and attachment between people and places. In other words, a place perspective frees us from the rationalising gaze of modernity, forcing on us a decolonised understanding that the so-called nature, far from being pure, is the outcome of both social and natural processes. A worldview founded on the modernist understanding of nature as unspoiled and as space, empty and without meaning, not only does violence to constructed nature, it vaporises the basic coordinates by which people negotiate life.

As an ongoing process of change, development embeds in a series of power relations legitimated through the contested discourses of progress, unity and development. In experiential terms, however, development generates contradictions, the effects of which are marginalisation, spatial stratification and emergence of the 'functionally superfluous' (Apter 1993). In other words, development in the Niger Delta remains a penalising phenomenon.

> It generates pariah populations, "negatived others", people increasingly outside the conventional working life of society, ghettoizes them, makes them "invisible", etc. Those in such conditions have the greatest need for compensatory entitlements from the state, net transfers from the functionally significant to the functionally superfluous. But these transfers tend to be such that they often exacerbate rather than reduce the problem and in any case tend to be the result of fits and starts, sporadic remedial efforts

more often the result of violence, or threats of violence, than the persua-
sive power of vote. Those who need the most get the least despite often
considerable efforts made on their behalf (Apter 1993: 9).

It is within this development context that inversionary discourses that
threaten the order of things and challenge the development vision of
'progress', 'emancipation' and 'betterment' emerge. This study examines
the basis and processes by which such discourses arise or why and how
the transformational impacts of development on humans and non-
humans come to meet with resistance.[7]

1.3   Signposts

In the discourse of modernity, the Niger Delta is home to 11 oil compa-
nies operating 159 oil fields and 1,481 oil wells (Guardian 2006). These
include major operators like Shell, Chevron, Texaco and Agip. The re-
gion provides 80 per cent of the country's total revenue, and 95 per cent
of export earnings accrue from petroleum resources found in the region.
Estimated export revenue for 2005 stands at US$ 45 billion, while a stag-
gering $600 billion in crude oil revenue has accrued to the country since
oil extraction began. Yet, the region has benefited little from this boom,
prompting Aaron to assert, 'no region has ever been so rich in resources,
yet so poor' (2005: 128). The Niger Delta is both a paradox of plenty and
industrialisation. It hosts three refineries and two petrochemical plants as
well as gas thermal stations that account for 50 per cent of Nigeria's elec-
tricity supply.

However, 50 per cent of the region has neither access to fuel stations
nor electricity (Guardian 2006). In 1994, only 27 per cent of households
in the region had access to safe drinking water, and in 1991, there was
only one medical doctor per 132,600 inhabitants, figures well below the
national average of 32 per cent and 39,455 people respectively (Aaron
2005). According to the World Bank, the region is the least developed
part of the country in terms of social infrastructure and modern facilities.
Although oil companies contributed to poverty reduction in the region,
the people harbour a '*profound sense of injustice and bitterness*' (Burd-Sharps
2006: 11, emphasis in original). Local rage finds justification in processes
of environmental degradation and dispossession, which have spawned
collusion, at various levels, between oil companies, local and national
forces at the expense of the less powerful (ibid). Thus, the link between
dispossession, environmental degradation, political marginalisation and

the perception of injustice allegedly provides the context within which to understand spiralling violence in the region (Aaron 2005: 131).

The Ogoni struggle in the early 1990s escalated with the anti-Shell/State protests under the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). The Ogoni successfully internationalised their cause, drawing various forms of support from international organisations such as Body Shop, Greenpeace, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO), Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch/Africa, as well as international media coverage, notably by CNN and *Time* magazine, *Newsweek* and Reuters (Boele 1995). However, as the international profile of the Ogoni grew, so the pressure on MOSOP increased (Boele, Fabig and Wheeler 2001: 80). The Nigerian State, under the Sani Abacha regime, reacted to Ogoni mobilisation with violence against the Ogoni. Ibeanu (1997: 4) suggests that resorting to state violence relates to the calculation that if untamed, the Ogoni struggle would have a demonstrable effect on other oil-bearing communities. The state eventually quelled the Ogoni frontal challenge with the judicial murder of Ogoni leaders, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, in November 1995, sparking a wave of international outrage and condemnation (Maier 2000: 109). The death of Abacha and subsequent election of Olusegun Obasanjo in February 1999 ended Nigeria's international isolation and held the promise of a quick and peaceful resolution of the Niger Delta imbroglio.

Contrary to projected expectations, the violent conflicts between oil companies and, state and local communities continued to grow in scope and the level of violence employed by both state and militants. The Ogoni have since reorganised under new leadership and tempers still flare whenever the subject of resuming oil production in Ogoni arises. While the Ogoni struggle subsided to a degree from 1995, other communal groups across the Niger Delta, more militantly disposed than the Ogoni, emerged and continued to disrupt oil activities. The level of violence attained notoriety (USAID 2003) in November 1999 when Nigerian soldiers in search of militant youths moved into Odi town killing scores of unarmed civilians, and reduced the town to rubble. Perhaps because of local resistance, the government increasingly militarised the Niger Delta. Nevertheless, resistance persists. For instance, the violent attacks and activities of the militant Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) resulted in roughly 45 per cent cut in Nigeria's crude oil production. Taking foreign oil workers hostage, seizure and

destruction of oil installations and armed confrontations between federal troops and militant groups have become common. It is alleged that the policy sources of grievances and conflicts such as the Land-Use Act (1978), Petroleum Act and other laws that dispossess and marginalise oil producing areas, coupled with the operating practices of oil companies have not yet been adequately addressed by the State or oil companies.[8] Thus, while state repression of the Ogoni resulted in an impasse, militarisation furthered radical militant actions in the region. The scenario underscores the need for broader understanding of the conflicts that now characterise oil development in the Niger Delta.

1.4   Problem Analysis

Contemporary literature deals with the conflicts and crises in the Niger Delta in primarily five ways.

While portrayed as an environmental problem, the conceptualisation of the tensions and political conflicts in the Niger Delta fall under the rubric of 'the National Question'. The core of the National Question relates to how people are organised, empowered or disempowered (Momoh 2002: 26). Historically, the National Question arose from the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914, the subsequent incapacity to transform the complex into national societies and the consequent problem of what to do with the country (Osadolor 2002: 31). Colonialism engendered divisive policies and made little effort to create a united country (Oyovbaire 1983). Such mistrust led to the Nigerian civil war, which failed to resolve the National Question, but instead enforced unification (Akinyanju 1998: 127-8). The post-war era source of crisis has been the inequitable distribution of national resources, in which ethnic minorities of the oil-rich Niger Delta called into question the essence of Nigeria and advocated for convening a sovereign national conference to debate continued coexistence (Onwudiwe 1999). Thus, Anikpo (2002: 66) argues that extant inequalities in the distribution of wealth generate instability and protract the National Question.

Fashina (1998: 93) however deconstructs the National Question as a problem of inter-ethnic relations. An ethnic formulation of the National Question not only hides intra-ethnic exploitation but also suggests that ethnic groups in Nigeria are all competing for socioeconomic and political advantages, whereas the ruling elites rather than ethnic groups compete for power and wealth. Therefore, if the root of mass poverty lies in

the link between imperialism and the ruling elites, ethnic rivalry does not hold an explanation of the National Question. In a somewhat Marxist tone, Fashina deemphasises the causative power of cultural factors because ethno-nationalism could be the basis of oppression, and division (1998: 91-2). While sectional interests contribute to national instability, the National Question is not reducible to mere economics. Similarly, to construe the conflicts arising there from as materialist is essentialist, whether appraised in ethnic or elitist terms. The National Question thesis cannot explain why not all the Niger Delta communities have exploded in militancy.

Why would the Ogoni revolt given that they are only one group, and relatively better-off, among marginalised minorities in the Niger Delta? In grappling with the question, Eghosa E. Osaghae (1995b) identifies two explanations for the Ogoni conflicts. First, he refers to the failure of the State to respond positively to the institutionally channelled demands of the Ogoni and failure to protect the interests of 'the frustrated Ogoni people' and then, the radical orientation of the leadership of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). Rather than respond to the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) (see Appendix A1), the State and Shell resorted to repressive, strong-arm tactics. Osaghae argues that the Ogoni episode was part of a larger articulation of dissatisfaction with the structure of the Nigerian federation and of power sharing within it by several groups. However, there are other cases where the State ignored the denial of a minority's legitimate and institutionally made demands and conflict did not arise. Second, the radicalisation of leadership does not always point to conflict. Radical leaders may be susceptible to co-option or enlistment in the patronage network.

Augustine Ikelegbe (2001) sees the unprecedented insurgency in the Niger Delta as a function of marginalisation, neglect and impoverishment of the region, despite its huge contribution to national wealth. The contradiction generated anger, frustration and hostility to the State and multinational oil corporations. Such hostility has resulted in forms of violent protest. Welch (1995: 635) apprehends the crisis as a reflection of agitation for ethnic self-determination, and economic and political disparities. The Ogoni, as other minorities, are not only marginalised at the federal level, they remain dominated by the majority Ijaw and Igbo ethnic groups in Rivers State (Kirk-Greene 1967). Although Ogoni nationals have held high positions in government, such positions have not en-

hanced their political power in any important way (Alagoa 2006). Welch goes further to assert that Ogoni demands is symptomatic of politics in Sub-Saharan Africa, where keen competition for economic and political power encourages individuals to resort to primordial sentiment of kinship, and to create powerful movements within the confines of the group itself (1995: 644-5).

Again, poverty and marginalisation do not result in conflict necessarily. Even presuming that frustration leads to violence, an important question that the frustration-aggression thesis fails to answer is why poor, badly armed peasants would believe that they could confront the awesome might of the State and force change (Tschirgi 1999). Moreover, in emphasising frustration, anger and poverty, these accounts give little thrift to the mobilisation and organisation that precede overt collective action. Sen (2008) warns against such an isolationist thesis, as it tends to obscure adequate understanding of sources of conflict.

Ibeanu (1997: 4) argues that 'state conception of security tends to clash with citizens' notion of security, resulting in violence. He stresses that conflict arises out of a contradiction of securities; contradictions between perceptions and conditions of security defined by local communities and those defined by state officials and petro-business'. In other words, while security for the Ogoni represents an awareness that unsustainable exploitation and environmental damage threaten resource flow and livelihood, for the State and oil companies, security implies uninterrupted production of crude oil at low cost.[9] The state is unable to resolve the conflict given its inability to solve the security contradictions, a function of the low autonomy within the Nigerian State. Although it makes sense that a perceptual conflict is a relevant factor in Niger Delta conflicts, a mono-causal explanation is over ambitious. However, if the problem is perception, Nigeria should be one huge system of conflicts because perceptual differences with the State exist everywhere with regard to religion, citizenship, resource ownership, federalism, secularism and resource distribution. Moreover, Ibeanu succeeds at creating a dualism of securities and fails to show how each side of the pole achieved its assumed unity of vision.

Pessimistic literature such as that of Omeje's characterises Nigeria as a 'rentier space', defined by 'high stake rentier politics', or a political tradition of desperate tendency to accumulation. Key politics in Nigeria, laced with neo-patrimonialism, prebendalism and high stake rentier dis-

course happen within the rentier space. Although the hegemonic elites sit at the epicentre of high stakes rentier politics, the general disposition to 'political issues, discourses and phenomena is pervaded by high stake rentier mentality, calculations and manoeuvres'. This entrenched political discourse configures oil companies and communities, and finds profuse expression in civil society (Omeje 2006: 6). Reflective of the generalisation of high stakes rentier politics is the mainstreaming of oil bearing communities of the Niger Delta into the rentier space where they have become stakeholders in the rentier accumulation process rather than 'low stake clients and partisans of the rentier process' (ibid: 10). The rentier space, he argues, breeds and is characterised by violence and other destabilising tendencies.

Omeje appeals to an all-pervading political discourse that conveys cultural meaning of desperate and incorrigible penchants for primitive accumulation. In effect, he discursively silenced the remarkable and altruistic political actions of students, labour and academia in the effort to engender a better society (Dibua 2006). No society can be as irredeemably selfish and wanton as Omeje paints (Williams 2004: 576). The rentier space may be composed of key politicking but it is hardly the only significant sphere of political life. His high-staked reductionism of the politics of elites and the masses to accumulation and survival struggles respectively severely limits the possibilities of political action and, in fact, cannot stand the evidence of history. Alternatively we offer a re-reading of the Niger Delta and its highly politicised landscape.

1.5   Re-reading the Niger Delta Landscape

The dynamics of the Ogoni movement and the explanation by necessity invites an understanding of the experiences of the latter within the framework of place-informed social movement theory. Existing explanations of the Ogoni movement failed to recognise how place mediated movement agency (Routledge 1993). However, attention to 'place' (as a metaphor for the contestation of resources and values) gives insight into why the movement emerges where it does, the nature of the movement, and the spirit, or what inspires and motivates individuals within the movement (ibid: 21). The study bridges the gap in the literature by adopting a place-sensitive perspective in combination with social movement theory. This is to stress that context shapes the character of a movement not to argue for place determinism.

In the existing literature, the Ogoni struggle is stagnating in unending efforts to identify factors that explain Ogoni rebellion, and the claims and counter-claims between them, the State and Shell. A place-sensitive social movement approach to the Ogoni movement provides space to open up debate on the struggle. Moreover, the theoretical approach is timely and critical in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa where there is paucity of social movement scholarship compared to vast literature on the subject in Western Europe, North America and Latin America. In effect, a social movement approach to the Ogoni conflict contributes to bridging the theoretical gap as well as building up scholarship on social movements in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The social movement approach enables critical engagement with why and how the Ogoni mobilised against the State and Shell in contradistinction to a significant amount of scholarship, which remains content with understanding merely why the Ogoni mobilised. The result is that most scholars adopt a structuralist lens that portrays conflicts 'as the expression of "underlying" forces, events that could be deduced or even predicted from structural causes' (Starn 1992). This reduces the conflict to a reaction of the Ogoni to these structures. By reducing the Ogoni to mere pawns over-determined by social structure, the structuralist perspective is unable to account for the quiescence of other Niger Delta groups in the face of domination. Moreover, it fails to address how the Ogoni resistance represents and articulates alternative models of development, social organisation and conflict resolution.

Furthermore, most engagements with the Ogoni movement are inadequate because they suggest a linear link between grievances and collective action, a view partly shaped by the overriding focus on why the Ogoni mobilised. In effect, they ignore the cognitive, spatial and micro-mobilisation processes involved in the movement from grievances to mobilisation. Such scholarship is not helpful to a holistic understanding of conflict, conflict prevention and resolution. The current approach details those neglected processes. By so doing, the study provides critical lessons to students and would-be collective actors, and identifies several early-warning signals that may be useful to authorities, development actors and peace activists.

The existing literature invariably understands insurgent politics as relating only to gaining material advantages at the expense of the State (Ibeanu 1997; Ikelegbe 2001; Welch 1995; Osaghae 1995b: 333; Omeje

2005). Thus, the literature unambiguously casts the demands of the political entrepreneurs as 'collective goods' meant for the benefit of their constituencies.

The theoretical approach presented here charts a different direction by encouraging recognition that the Ogoni desired restructuring of the polity as a strategy to assure equality to all federating ethnic units. Such sensitivity to the nationalist and moral dimensions of the movement has been conspicuously absent.

1.6 Research Methods

1.6.1 Research site

This study took place in Rivers State. Located in the southern part of Nigeria, Rivers State is one of nine states composing the Niger Delta and 36 states that constitute Nigeria. Rivers State is the largest oil-producing state in the region, and it is composed of several minority ethnic groups, one of which is the Ogoni. Although the researcher resided in Port Harcourt, initially, he made occasional visits to Ogoni, about an hour's drive away, to meet with respondents in the community and to gain personal experience of the place. Residence in Port Harcourt gave the researcher access to Ogoni living in the City and afforded opportunity to interact, observe and interview activists at MOSOP's office.

1.6.2 Sample selection

The nucleus of research design is deciding where and on whom or what to focus one's research (Bechhofer and Paterson 2000: 43). The present research problem is to understand why and how the Niger Delta conflicts came into being. It seemed natural to focus on the region as the setting of this study. Having decided on the locale, the question arises as to where and what conflict in particular to focus on. Given that this study uses a case for theoretical rather than statistical generalisation, the question was not the selection of a typical case (Bechhofer and Paterson 2000: 240). Rather the sampling of a case study should aim at in-depth understanding of a particular instance of conflict. In other words, the case ought to be a good manifestation of the theoretical construct of interest, in this case, a collective action. Another consideration is whether the sample is information-rich and whether there are people who participated or witnessed the event unfold, and thus are in position to provide

useful information. Therefore, employing purposeful sampling led to selection of the Ogoni conflicts.

The Ogoni case demonstrates a locale where oil installations, environmental degradation and conflict between local community and the oil firm and state security apparatus dot the landscape. Moreover, the Ogoni case represents one of the most highly organised and sustained movements in the region. The Ogoni case, therefore, provides an excellent locale to examine a movement.

Fieldwork occurred in two main phases, and numerous other visits of shorter duration. The first phase occurred during the years 2005-2006 and the second phase between November 2007 and March 2008. Data on the movement came from published and unpublished materials and statements of leaders and activists within the movement, human rights lawyers and environmental and activist NGOs. Unstructured interviews with leaders of MOSOP and academicians provided insight into the ideologies of activists and their political practices.

1.7 Data Collection and Fieldwork Strategy

Qualitative data comes from various types of data collection: in-depth unstructured interviews, follow-up interviews, questionnaire, in-depth discussion group (Burgess, Limb, and Harrison 1988), direct observation and written documents. Qualitative data describe, apprehend and communicate a respondent's experience of the world in his or her own words (Patton 2002: 47). Moreover, qualitative method facilitates a depiction of complex processes and understanding through thick description (Rossman and Rallis 2003). Qualitative design enabled an investigation, description and explanation of the subjective experiences of the Ogoni, including why and how they mobilised.

The fieldwork commenced with a visit to MOSOP office in Port-Harcourt, where I restablished contact with some staff of the office who I first met in 2001. Through them and chance happenings, I met other in-formants and activists. During this phase of the study, I engaged in informal discussions, casual observations, and data gathering, mostly over informal lunch or dinner and drinks.

1.7.1 In-depth unstructured interviews

During fieldwork, the researcher conducted unstructured interviews with a range of actors in order to capture their views and experiences of the

Ogoni conflict in their own words. Unstructured interview allows for in-depth information mining on respondents' beliefs, interpretations and attitudes. It enables respondents say what they want rather than being led by the interviewer. Participants do not need to be literate in order to respond and are likely to open up as they find the interview comfortable, increasing the validity of findings (McNeill and Chapman 2005). Unexpected, serendipitous answers may emerged and reveal new variables. Further questioning leads to uncovering of deeper meanings and views, which standardized methods may miss.

However, unstructured interview lacks structure and standardization with the result that interviewees may not give adequate attention to issues of interest to interviewer. It is unreliable because the data derived de-pends on the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, which affects objectivity and renders the data difficult to verify. Moreover, the small sample used in interviews is unrepresentative with the result that findings are difficult to generalize.

1.7.2 Interview and documentary review

The main sources of data for this study include collection of primary data and secondary data, including documents, published essays and newspa-per articles. Primary sources include interviews, informal conversations, book chapters, academic articles, online essays and photos. Data from the print media—newspapers, magazines and information from conferences and seminars provide thick descriptions of the Ogoni conflict.

Interviews were conducted with a range of Ogoni activists, youths, women, traditional rulers, academics and staff of MOSOP, and non-Ogoni academics and human rights activists. Interview focused mainly on why and how the Ogoni mobilised. Among the interviewees were a number of key informants; activists who participated actively in the organisation of Ogoni contentious action. Follow-up interviews were conducted with key-informants in order to understand better some issues that had arisen from previous conversations. To verify data, I frequently con-fronted interviewees with the views of other informants. Unplanned in-depth interviews took place while visiting traditional rulers in their pal-ace, or driving in a car with respondents, or at their home, and MOSOP office.

In-depth group discussion was employed to explore Ogoni environ-mental values, sense of place, and meanings. In-depth group comprised detailed work with a small group of four respondents who met weekly for two weeks to explore environmental concerns (Clark, Burgess and Harri-son 1999). On each occasion, the group met for almost 2 hours and fo-cused on the same agenda. The group was formed from respon-dents to a questionnaire on contingent valuation administered earlier, and their role was to be reflexive, sharing, exploring meanings, values, and appraising the views of others. The process enabled the capture of complex, moral and ethical dimensions of the environment, revealing incommensurability with monetary valuation. It would have been impos-sible to access such data if the researcher had relied on positivist meth-ods.

1.7.3 Case study

A case is the object of study and the unit of analysis or the phenomenon about which data is collected and conclusions drawn (de Vaus 2001: 17).

A case study enables fuller understanding of an event within its con-text. A major 'rationale for using (case studies) is when your investigation must cover both a particular phenomenon and the context within which the phenomenon is occurring' (Yin 1993: 31). Context matters because it is where events unfold. Moreover, context gives such events meaning. To ignore the meanings the Ogoni attach to what they do is to destroy a criti-cal source of understanding. Therefore, from the documentary re-view, the researcher drew a rich description of Ogoni as place. That meant outlin-ing the Ogoni context in terms of its location, locale and sense of place. Given that the Ogoni struggle unfolded in the early 1990s, the case study is necessarily retrospective. The problem associated with historical re-construction of events is the loss of evidence and re-call. To mitigate such problems the researcher employed triangulation strategy in some cases.

1.7.4 Personal experience and observation

A researcher has direct, close contact with respondents and the situation under investigation. From such close contact, the researcher is able to develop insights critical to an understanding of the phenomenon (Patton 2002: 40). This researcher spent time with Ogoni at different locations and at different times observing what they do, how they go about their

activities, how they relate with their environment and their emotive expressions as they went about their daily affairs. The researcher listened to their feelings of nostalgia, loss, faith and the reasons why they think their struggle continues. This range of observations provided a rich source of information necessary for understanding the Ogoni. From a positivist perspective, such a method lacks objectivity given the closeness between the researcher and researched.

1.7.5 Modernist views of knowledge construction

Based on positivism, the modernist perspective recognises only what can be derived from empirical experience. Knowledge that is not empirically tested, such as indigenous knowledge, is seen as illegitimate and disqualified as inadequate and unscientific (Fairhead and Leach 1997:54). Positivism is based on the ontological assumption that reality is made up of discrete events, which exist independently of people and context, and, as such, reality can be interpreted objectively and experienced by all people in the same way. Knowledge is generated through value-free research, and can be interpreted by everyone in the same way, and applied to different contexts without altering it meaning.

The modernist view has been criticised for its assumptions that knowledge is derived from empirical evidence and that event exist separately from their cultural and social context. The contextual structure of modernist epistemology and methodology affect what is considered to be valid knowledge, and determine which knowledge and whose understandings are given authority (Samoff and Stromquist 2001). By recognising scientifically verified knowledge, modernist epistemology marginalises critical lines of inquiry (Preston 2002). Instead of empirical evidence being the source of all knowledge, the mind is active in the construction of knowledge; human beings do not discover knowledge but they construct it (Schwandt 2002).

Thus, rather than being objective, knowledge is 'engaged, value bound and context determined' (1993:9). Claims that research is an independent process of discovering the truth do not reflect reality (Finlay 2002). Power relations shape the different sources and types of knowledge (Fou-cault 1980). The exercise of power shapes and validates some types of knowledge claims over others (Radford 1992). Thus, despite their weak-nesses, qualitative method and use of unstructured interviews, follow-up interviews, in-depth group discussions and anecdotal evidences

provide access to Ogoni subjective reality that would have remained hidden under a positivist approach.

1.8   Unit of Analysis and Value

The study employs both descriptive and analytical tools to understand the Ogoni movement, with special attention to why and how it played out. The study depicts the contexts within which the struggle emerges and interconnects with other actor-spaces. Moreover, it reviews the values, truth-claims and aspirations of the stakeholders, and how they organised resources, social, political and cultural, to tie other actors, at varying scales, into the pursuit of common goals. Such an approach commends an examination of the 'power geometry' (Massey 1991: 25) of the link between local and non-local actors, and how they influence the origin and trajectory of the conflict.

Therefore, the unit of analysis employed in this study is the Ogoni movement. Attention is on the relationship between actors and not the actors themselves. This is to emphasise that it is important to approach social life in terms of interdependence or relationships rather than the action of a given individual or group (Krieken 2002). Some of these actors are themselves networks, which limits the ability to conceive of them as bounded entities as they exist embedded in a web of relations that span scales. To focus on the internal relations to the exclusion of the external is equally inadequate.

Goals formulated by actors do not always mesh with means (Gavin 2004). This realisation echoes Merton's (1968) account of unintended effects. The appeal to unintended effects serves to consolidate the view that the entire process of planning, action and effects are completely within the control of human intention or agency. Very often, the outcomes of calculated human activities or development spin out of control. Therefore, focusing on a direct link between goals and means is simplistic and tends to omit from analysis outcomes that signal a disjuncture between goals and means (Gavin 2004: 581). Development practice may not only create unintended effects or externalities, both its intended and unintended effects can result in harmful outcomes for some actors. It is appropriate to account for the linkage between the pursuit of goals and 'the actual outcome of that pursuit in social life' (Elias 1994: 443-4). Thus, this study looks out for the actual outcomes of the intentions of and interactions between actors; and how these feed into the conflict.

There are multiple levels of analysis. This follows from the understanding that the macro links to and is constituted by the micro, and vice versa (Collins 1981; Fine 1991). The binary between macro and micro reflects an epistemological orientation that serves as an analytic strategy (Mol and Buttel 2000: 84). However, the so-called micro may contain macro influences. Moreover, the effort to isolate the micro from the macro may ignore the ways that they are mutually constitutive. Furthermore, the subject of the study cuts across local, national and global scales. Therefore, neither a micro-level nor a macro-level approach would provide the data needed for a holistic understanding of the issues involved. The study, thus, follows the networks of relationships or associations as they travel through varying socio-spatial scales (Massey 1991).

The study is motivated by four questions (informed by Flyvbjerg 2001: 130): 1) Where are we going with oil development in the Niger Delta? 2) Who benefits and who loses? 3) By what forms of power relations? 4) Is it desirable? If not, what should be done? Against the socially and historically shaped context of Nigeria, it appears that events and developments drifted from the vision of nationhood enunciated during decolonisation, at independence and subsequently. The resultant National Question has created situations, including repression and violence, which threatened the corporate existence of the country. Concerns that pervade each of the questions are raised therein.

Well aware of how these processes created the 'crippled giant' (Osaghae 1998) and witnessing the degradations most Nigerians endure, the researcher has no hesitation arriving at the conclusion that the path the region is set on is most undesirable. This thesis contends that change can be promoted through linkages between the researcher and the researched, and between both and the larger society.

The methodological problem of objectivity and value neutrality in researching and writing on such a sensitive issue arise immediately. One is of the view that the Weberian ideal of value neutrality in social science is utopian. Specifically, the object of the study is not an empirical phenomenon out there but a specific construction of reality by the author. Similarly, how do we study a movement in retrospect? Over time, the internal dynamics and external demands of a movement change. Such changes in the past might be lost to scrutiny based on the present. However, not even a contemporaneous study is immune to selectivity in social construction of reality. Nevertheless, the study attempts to be more

rigorous by generating data from actors who were there at the beginning and remained active. Moreover, by relying mainly on the writings of Saro-Wiwa, the study attempts to capture the original ideas and actions that birthed the movement.

1.9   Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is organised as follows: Chapter 1 argues that there is little if any gain from the common tendency in the academic debate, which explains the Delta conflicts in either materialist or provincial terms. It examines major theoretical perspectives, which portray the Niger Delta conflict as the legitimate action of local communities, and as no more than a struggle for inclusion in a patronage network propelled by the desire for personal accumulation. It argues that it should be a matter for empirical investigation whether provincial economic, political or nationalist interests or, a combination of forms creates the underbelly of the conflicts.

Chapter 2 provides a short history of the Niger Delta, its contact with European explorers and traders, colonisation and colonial rule. It aims to understand the region in terms of its internal dynamics, and history of foreign exploitation and resistance. Therefore, it draws attention to how the contradiction between pre-existing modes of organisation and sense of place, and the colonial experience led to many, varied acts of resistance to colonial subjugation. The legacies of colonialism remain germane to explaining contemporary developments in the Niger Delta. Thus, it provides political, economic and spatial background against which the following chapters contextualise analysis of the changing history of Ogoni, why and how they mobilised.

Chapter 3, seeking to contextualise the Ogoni conflict within the broader political economy, provides a sustained account of the colonial and postcolonial Nigerian State. It explores the legacies of colonialism and their impacts on Niger Delta societies in post-independence Nigeria. It addresses the question of why the delta has seen so little change and how the literature explains this fact. It argues that analysis of the political encounter between the colonialists and representatives of the three major ethnic groups, characterised by competition, distrust, fear and desire to control sowed the seeds of the crisis that continues to unravel Nigeria.

Chapter 4 lays the conceptual framework for approaching development. It employs a number of concepts to argue that development is a

strategic action field shaped by powerful translocal actors, and in which the latter reap benefits at the expense of the less-powerful. Conflicts of interest, values, ideologies and interrogation of the terms of engagement arise in this interaction, giving rise to conflict and crisis. It argues that such conflict is best understood by emplacing it as the features of place shape contention.

Chapter 5 examines the causes of the Ogoni conflict. It uses John Agnew's definition of place to examine how Ogoni as locale, location and sense of place has been shaped by the link between Ogoni, translocal actors and global capital. It argues that the outcomes of the nexus between Ogoni and wider social processes provide the background to conditions implicated in why the Ogoni mobilised. A priori sectional interests alone cannot be solely responsible for the conflict. Rather, the conflict invokes and is equally invoked by communal symbols. It recog-nises that the search for an ultimate cause is wasteful. However, it em-phasises that explanations of a particular conflict must address the par-ticularities of the place where they emerge.

Chapter 6 takes on the question of how the Ogoni mobilised. Such fo-cus has received little attention from scholars because of the more perva-sive tendency to engage with why the Ogoni mobilised. To achieve its aim, this study employs theoretical insights and concepts from social movement theories, history and geography. It recognises that the factors identified in the preceding chapter are not sufficient to engender contention. It traces the micromobilisational processes involved in the movement from grievances to collective action and how the particularities of place shaped those processes. Moreover, it considers how nationalistic and symbolic considerations, in addition, to materialist and provincial needs, shaped how the Ogoni mobilised.

Chapter 7 considers the issue of what motivates the Ogoni movement. It analyses the Ogoni conflict as a complex of varying conflicts, includ-ing the competitive pursuit of ethnic interests, reform of existing rules or systems, and interrogation of the logic of social organisation. The chapter employs theoretical arguments and empirical data to empha-sise that pro-vincial and materialist interests and nationalist and symbolic demands motivated and shaped the Ogoni mobilisation. It examines ac-tivists' self-understanding, and explanation of why they joined the movement, con-cluding that there is no separation between redistribu-

tion and recognition and between the symbolic and materialist in activists' discourses.

Chapter 8 provides a recap of what the study set out to achieve and what it did achieve. It attempts to outline in as concise a manner as possible why and how the Ogoni mobilised, and the complex nature of their motivation. The chapter outlines the implication of the study in terms of theory and praxis regarding resource-related conflicts worldwide.

This thesis argues that treating the Ogoni conflict as a consequence of ethnicity or resource control simply because it occurs within a political context structured by competition among multiple ethnicities and actors over control of oil resources is armchair scholarship. It should be a matter for empirical investigation to discover why people mobilise, how they do so, what they mobilise for and how such dynamics shape spatially. Many scholars essentialise the complexities of the Ogoni mobilisation by emphasising certain aspects of it at the expense of others. Openness to the complexities of collective mobilisation suggests a re-examination of some basic assumptions of conflict analysis. Such assumptions include the view that when conflict emerges over resources, the explanation must adhere in material and provincial needs, and that collective actors lack national aspirations, which renders them incapable of agendas that highlight and promote national values and aspirations. This study avoids such presumptions and approaches the Ogoni movement with an open mind, to the degree possible.

Notes

[1] Inevitably, therefore, concerned parties canvassed conflict prevention and resolution measures mainly in materialist and provincial terms. Namely the provision of development projects in the region or enlistment of the region into the political mainstream. Paul Collier (2000) posits that rebels are criminals and kleptocrats, and rebellions often adopt discourse of grievance namely ethnicity, religion and class divisions. He claims that economic incentive rather than justice lies behind the appeal to grievance. Whatever the nature of grievance, their analysis stays at the level of the provincial and material or selfish.

[2] This study does not assume ontological distinction between the materialist and symbolic. The categories serve analytical purpose alone. Thus, the use of the binary seeks to document the presence of the symbolic in the supposedly materialist, rather than argue for the salience or predominance of one category over the other.

3 'The triple distribution conflict' refers to 'economic distribution conflicts', 'ecological distribution conflicts', and 'cultural distribution conflicts' (Escobar 2003: 157-67).

4 The study is one of the few works that examine and draw copiously on the writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa, one of the core leaders of the Ogoni movement.

5 See specific critique in Section 1.4. The approaches are arbitrary in nature.

6 The effort merely serves analytical purposes because this researcher does not assume that redistribution and recognition are mutually exclusive.

7 There is no generally agreed definition of social movement. Following Doherty and Doyle (2006: 702-3), however, it can be surmised that a movement has the following characteristics: (1) a common identity; (2) by tracing its network ties we can identify who is in it; (3) segments of the movement are involved in public protest action; and (4) a movement challenge elements of dominant cultural codes or social values; it breaks the system's limit of compatibility.

8 Personal interview with Oronto Douglas, a human rights lawyer and activist on 6 March 2006.

9 Here, Ibeanu rehashes an anthropocentric view of the environment devoid of attention to the rich cultural interpretations of what the environment is to people of the Niger Delta.

2   Setting

2.1   Historical Flows and the Making of Place

This chapter focuses on the geographical and historical setting of this study. This is important because the space and history of the Niger Delta frame the general subject and specific problems of the study. Often, analysts engage with the Niger Delta without specifying what they mean. It is hardly surprising that some accounts convey the notion of the Niger Delta as pristine nature, dead geography and static communities reeling under the onslaught of oil exploitation. In such analyses, the view of community as a product of place-making is absent. A spatial understanding of the region is important for several reasons. As A.D. Smith (1981) argues, the geographical and political location of a community influences its 'chances of survival and its sense of solidarity.' Geopolitical location influences a community's self-perception.

Old habits of thought about Africa and its past shape the behaviour of their adherents (Fairhead and Leach 1995). This image, Christopher Wrigley (1987) argues, is evident in textbooks of prehistory and human evolution. They are also entrenched in some political economy textbooks that purport to excavate Africa's past and to identify that past as the trouble with Africa (van der Veen 2004). It is for this reason that following Wrigley, this chapter seeks to emphasise that early history matters. However, the history presented here is at best partial and largely restricted to the beginning of the subordination of the Niger Delta peoples to outside authorities and places. The purpose is to underscore the dynamic character of the region's past and to push the point that contrary to the general image of Africa's history as found in some textbooks, progress rather than stagnation, and change rather than stasis, characterise the Niger Delta (Fairhead and Leach 1995: 1032; Wrigley 1987).

2.2   Niger Delta

The Niger River is the longest and largest river in West Africa, and the third longest in Africa (the other two are the Nile and the Congo). It is difficult to imagine Nigeria without the Niger (Ifemesia 1982: 25). The total drainage area of the Niger, including its tributaries and outlets spread over some 222,000 square miles, approximately 60 per cent of the total area of the country. Since pre-colonial times, the Niger River has been a major highway of trade and contact between the different people in the region. Traders employed large dugout canoes for long distance trade along the river. Delta traders went as far upstream as the Niger-Benue Confluence, and Igbira and Hausa traders from the north of the country came as far downstream as Aboh and Asaba (ibid). Traders who were unable to make capital investments in canoes and long distance trade contented themselves with central markets, established at given locations on the river. Such central markets included Aboh, Onitsha, Asaba and Ikiri (ibid: 26). The Ijo people, especially of Brass and Bonny extraction, brought European goods and local salt to Abo, trading them for slaves and produce. Abo traders, in turn, carried the European goods and salt to Asaba and Onitsha to exchange for commodities from the hinterland.

The Niger Delta comprises the area covered by the natural delta of the Niger River and the oil-producing areas to the east and west. Its northernmost boundary is the town of Aboh on the Niger River. The Benin River forms its western boundary and the Imo River its eastern limits (UNDP 2006: 44). To the south, the region's Swamp Forests is marked off from the Atlantic Ocean by a fringe of mangroves about 10 kilometres inland. The area covers roughly 25,900 square kilometres. For political and administrative reasons, the Niger Delta today extends to 75,000 square kilometres, consisting of nine states (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers) and 185 local government areas.

The Niger Delta, some 5,600 square miles or 14,400 square kilometres, is a vast forested wetland, home to a large variety of species, including endemic and near-endemic mammal species such as the red Colobus monkey, Sclater's guenons, crested genets, black-fronted duikers and elephant populations (Wild World Ecoregion Profile nd). Although it has provided refuge and an environment that supported thriving human and nonhuman species, the Niger Delta has become a theatre of depredation

and a subject of controversy. This development relates to the fact that the same sediment that formed the region and supported life on it contains crude oil, an international commodity. There are no protected areas in the region and oil development by multinational corporations represents the greatest threat to the welfare of its human and nonhuman populations (ibid).

According to Berns and Nooter Roberts (2002), the Niger Delta occupies a vast area crisscrossed by rivers, tributaries, swamps and lagoons. Water, therefore, has always been far more than a mere element of nature.

> Water is synonymous with life itself, with spiritual sustenance, with wealth and prosperity, and especially with communication and identity. For years, the waterways of the Niger Delta have connected and divided people, serving as conduits and obstacles, repositories of riches and realms of danger. The ambivalence associated with these contrasting potentialities is made manifest through the arts, cultures, and ethos of the many people inhabiting this aqueous region (Berns and Nooter Roberts 2002).

People with diverse cultural traditions coexisted in the Delta, sharing a common, mostly aqueous environment, inundated by floods, tides and tropical rainstorms. Widely distributed resource bases encouraged the use of rivers as medium of communication and commerce. Although most cultural entities maintained their languages, intercourse engender similar customs. Thus, rather than separate peoples, the numerous waterways of the Delta created cultural convergence (Anderson and Peek 2002). Ethnically diverse, the region's inhabitants represent a number of different language groups, each group composed of distinct languages, many of which are not mutually intelligible. The five main 'linguistic and cultural groups— Ijoid, Edoid, Delta Cross, Yoruboid and Igboid—are each composed of numerous sub-groups' (UNDP 2006: 48). The Ijoid group predominates and many consider the group the longest settled in the region. Many of the languages also contain numerous dialects. Many people in the region speak two or more Nigerian languages in addition to Pidgin English (ibid: 29). The Ijo speakers find the Ijebu-Yoruba on their far west, on the western and northwestern flank the Itsekiri, Urhobo and Isoko, on the north and northeast the Igbo, and on the east the Ogoni and Ibibio. Yet,

> The Itsekiri speak a Yoruba language but appear to be culturally closer to Benin; the Urhobo and Isoko speak dialects of Edo, yet are culturally dis-

tinct from the Itsekiri, and to some extent from each other; and Ijo speakers have a language dissimilar to the others, yet share cultural and social features with the Itsekiri, Urhobo, Isoko, Igbo, Ogoni, and their neighbors (Leis 2002).

It is against that backdrop that Anderson and Peek (2002: 30) reasoned that perhaps the best conception of the Niger Delta is as a 'conceptual framework. Its inhabitants exist within a unique fabric of cultural resemblances and cultural differences' (Jung 2003: 457).

2.3 Ogoni: Background to a Periphery

The Ogoni live in an aquatic environment. About 90 per cent of the Niger Delta consists of rivers, creeks and streams. Movement, communication and trade in such an environment depend on canoes. Large canoes facilitate long distance travel and the movement of bulky agricultural and household goods from one location to another. As farmers, the Ogoni produce food products such as yams, plantains, palm wine, lumber and building materials. These are all bulky goods requiring large canoes to transport goods from farm to market (Kpone-Tonwe 1998: 25). The use of large canoes stimulates economic growth and provides employment for the canoe builders and the merchants who operate them. Particularly, for the Kono Boue, an Ogoni community famous for its large pottery industry, the large canoe allows them to distribute their wares, about 5,000 pots per week year round, throughout the eastern Niger Delta (ibid).

Commercial fishing, trade and long distance travel in turn stimulates the growth of the canoe industry. The Niger Delta is mangrove terrain, implying a scarcity of timber for canoes. However, areas of Ogoni, such as Ko contain thick forests and timber. Such areas eventually emerged as centres for canoe building and canoe-related skills. The Ko became canoe suppliers and due to high demand for canoes, the price of a large canoe went from 600 to 1300 British pounds and from 200 to 400 British pounds for smaller canoes by the mid-1950s (Kpone-Tonwe 1998: 29). The development of the canoe industry, production of bulky food products, goods and long distance travel, which facilitated supply of these goods to distant markets, formed the basis of pre-colonial Ogoni prosperity.

With wealth came the crisis of storage, Kpone-Tonwe argues. There were two main reasons for this. First, agricultural produce are perishable

goods, difficult to store as wealth. Therefore, many convert a large por-
tion of agricultural yield into durable forms of wealth such as money and
land. Second, the expanding canoe trade and bountiful harvests brought
in immense wealth. That however raised the problem of security against
theft as the indigenous means of exchange, *Kpugi* (or manila), is heavy
and bulky when accumulated. Thus, the Ogoni devised alternative means
of amassing wealth. These include reinvestment in land acquisition,
transportation, livestock and permanent tree crops, such as coconut and
palm oil trees. In time, the amount of farmland and tree crops one pos-
sessed became the valued measure of wealth and status. By the 16th cen-
tury, a class of wealthy men whose prosperity derived from long distance
trade had emerged in Ogoni society. They established their autonomous
households, married many wives, acquired farmland, performed tradi-
tional rites and earned traditional titles.

Beyond facilitating trade and communication, the Niger River per-
forms many other economic and cultural functions. It is a food source
for the communities on its bank, and the waters of the Niger help irri-
gate farmlands. The Ijo use the river for many activities including fishing.
Fish is an important part of the traditional Nigerian diet. The Niger is
also a space for recreation and sport for the Delta people. They hold ca-
noe and boat regattas and, swimming competitions. Ifemesia argues that
as far back as 1835, a British trader, John Beecroft, engaged in a boat
race with the people of Abo while he was on a trip upriver. After the
Abo outclassed him, Beecroft awarded them a live bullock. Sports and
recreation on the Niger continue to the present as evidenced by the an-
nual Pategi regatta and the Argungu festival. In addition, Ifemesia shows
that the river has religious significance to the people.

Specifically, the upper edge of the Delta was a zone of contact for dif-
ferent groups for centuries. Elem Kalabari (New Calabar) and Ibani
(Bonny), the two principal trading states of the eastern delta, emerged
because people migrated there from their original locations in the central
delta (Northrup 1978). The founders of Bonny migrated east, bringing
them in contact with the Ndoki on the Imo River, they later moved
south maintaining strong ties with the Ndoki through trade and inter-
marriage. There were also high levels of interaction among the Ijo, Edo,
Igala and Ibo peoples as far back as the 15th century. Northrup shows
that cultural complexity characterised the region. Communities made
contact, blended cultures and sometimes languages. He argues that im-

migrant bands that established dynasties were not mass movements of populations or the original settlers on their respective locations. Rather those that established themselves over indigenous populations were small groups that gained acceptance among their indigenous hosts. Whereas, where peaceful coexistence was impossible, contact led to indigenous migration.

The history of the Delta is not one of distinct and hostile ethnic groups. Over centuries, significant levels of interaction, hostile and peaceful, took place between the numerous peoples of the region. 'Continuous contact between contiguous groups produced broad zones of culturally and sometimes linguistically mixed communities rather than sharply delimited frontiers' (ibid: 47). The growth of trade was yet another dynamic behind the influx of diverse groups into the Delta. Over time, the major trading communities incorporated immigrants from other communities in the region, resulting in acculturation. Ethnic diversity facilitated trade among the delta communities and their hinterland neighbours. For instance, because the original Arochukwu comprised representatives of the Igbo, Ibibio and communities east of the Cross River, the Aro were able to trade freely among them. Northrup argues that population movement influenced trade in yet another way. Trade partitioned the region into separate spheres of influence 'whose interstices were generally dominated by communities of mixed origins' (ibid: 48). In effect, no single trading state had complete monopoly of trade. Different communities controlled trade as it passed through their domain headed in either direction.

According to Alagoa (1971), strong evidence of early commercial and cultural contacts between Benin and Niger Delta states exist. He delineates three stages in the attempt by Delta states to derive livelihood from their environment. These include an early era of subsistence fishing, hunting and gathering. Exchange with other Delta communities involved in various levels of agriculture in the freshwater zone supplemented subsistence. The second stage of more extensive exchange of produce and long distance trade with the hinterland and finally, trade with Europeans on the coast transformed the delta states into commercial centres of redistribution: collecting European goods for sale in the hinterland, and receiving hinterland produce for coastal trade (Nwabughuogu 1982).

The Delta people depend on fishing for their livelihoods, employing crude strategies such as basket traps, harpoons and poisons. Inhabitants

of the saltwater swamps engage in gathering palm nuts and cultivation of bananas, plantain and cocoyam. This strategy of subsistence provides little surplus accumulation for exchange. The earliest form of exchange was between the fishing settlements of the saltwater swamp and the fishing and farming communities of the freshwater swamps. The saltwater swamp environment of the Eastern Delta states is unsuitable for agriculture, and thus inhabitants trade for most items in their diet (Alagoa 1970). Other evidence of internal long-distance trade, spanning the length and breadth of the Niger Delta, include trade in canoes, salt, pots, cloth and works of art. Alagoa argues that such economic contact, particularly the presence of bronze artefacts in the delta suggest interconnection between the delta and places outside the region. In itself, bronze suggests the emergence of groups 'pursuing leisure activities, or the bronze were used in the courts of political leaders, the cult houses of religious leaders, or in masquerade plays of cultural elites' (Alagoa 1971: 292). Moreover, a bead trade linking Benin with the Gold Coast suggests that intermediaries of Ijo, Itsekiri and Ijebu extraction transported the goods given that the Bini are not a seafaring people (ibid).

The Portuguese soon became important actors in the local long distance trade along the coast. Portuguese traders had direct contacts with trading centres such as Warri and Ughoton, and took over the movement of goods from one location to the other (ibid: 294-5). For example, because of their presence in Warri and Ughoton, the Portuguese took over the trade between Benin and the Gold Coast, exchanging blue cloth and beads from Benin for gold at Elmina and copper in the Congo. The copper, refashioned into manilas, was used as currency in the Niger Delta. Writing about two notable intermediaries, Gertzel asserts:

> Nana of Itsekiri and Ja Ja of Opobo, had commercial organizations which stretched over considerable areas of country and which employed several thousand people in various capacities (canoemen, traders, labourers, warriors, local buying agents). No European firm, even if prepared to employ Kru labour on a vast scale, could have done the same (Gertzel 1962: 362).

Those who suggest that significant commerce and the wealth of intermediaries like Nana and Ja Ja were the result of European impetus diminish the importance of the extensive pre-European, internal trade (Jones 1963). Michael Crowder (1973) makes a similar point when he asserts that the slave trade stimulated the growth of fishing villages into trading states. The next section examines this point further.

2.4   Atlantic Slave Trade and Abolition

Although sub-Saharan Africa was unknown to Medieval Europe until the 15th century, evidence suggests that in classical times European traders and explorers had contact with West Africa (Crowder 1973: 66). In the 15th century, there were two good economic reasons for the Portuguese to start exploring the West African coast, free access to significant gold supply and locating a sea route to India, which would avoid Arab intermediaries. There was also the search for a Christian king in tropical Africa that would join the campaign against Islam (ibid: 67). By 1480, the Portuguese had explored the West Coast and engaged in gold and pepper trading with Mina and Benin respectively. They settled a small island, Sao Thome and made it the centre of the pepper trade with Benin. Without an indigenous population on the island, Benin soon became a source of labour to the island plantations. The profitability of exporting slaves led to increased demand after 1493. To facilitate trade in humans and other cargo, the Portuguese established a factory, or trading station in Gwato, Benin. Diplomatic exchanges soon followed, culminating in the dispatch of a Benin prince to Portugal and Christian missionaries to Benin. In 1553, Captain Windham was shocked to find that the King of Benin could speak Portuguese.

By 1510, trade was almost exclusively slaves. England soon established itself as the leading trader on the coast and chief exporter of slaves. Conservative estimates show that 24,000,000 slaves were taken from West Africa and Angola, and probably 15,000,000 of them survived the notorious 'Middle Passage' across the Atlantic.

> In the sixteenth century about 1,000,000 slaves were transported to the Americas, in the seventeenth century, some 3,000,000, and in the eighteenth century some 7,000,000 or 70,000 a year. Of these about 22,000 were shipped annually from ports in Nigeria. Benin and its colony of Lagos sent about 4,000 and the ports of Bonny, New Calabar and Old Calabar, which grew up directly in response to European demands for slaves, together with the Cameroons sent some 18,000 (Crowder 1973: 72).

Crowder argues that the discovery of the Americas and realisation of their mineral and agricultural endowments precipitated traffic in humans. Spanish policy of settling and developing the New World, the decimation of the populations of the West Indies and mainland and brutal Spanish rule as well as the scarcity of labour from Europe led to using Africans

who survived well and were adaptable to work in the mines and planta-
tions (ibid: 72-3). The Dutch became the leading slavers in the 17th cen-
tury, but lost control to Britain and France after the Treaty of Utrecht in
1713.

Crowder argues that the slave trade had notable impacts on the politi-
cal structure of the Niger Delta. Before the advent of the Portuguese, the
Ijo people who escaped Benin domination migrated to the Niger Delta,
living in small, scattered fishing villages. The onset of the slave trade
stimulated the growth of these small fishing villages into trading states.
The Ijo traded with peoples of the hinterland, exchanging salt and fish
for vegetables and iron tools. The slave trade altered this trade pattern.
Sparsely populated, the Ijo had to look to the more populous hinterland
communities to import slaves, mostly sold to the Europeans on the
Coast. Yet the Ijo communities retained some of the slaves resulting in a
rapid population growth. The Ijo experienced social transformation in
other ways (Crowder 1973: 81-2).

The idea that some European traders fostered the emergence of criti-
cal state institutions, which led to growth, grossly exaggerates the crea-
tive impact of European trade (Alagoa 1970). Niger Delta states had
evolved structures before the arrival of the Europeans. The new overseas
trade was inserted on the pre-existing long distance trade within the re-
gion. Thus, the new trade 'merely altered the nature and dimensions of
trade within the Niger Delta, and accelerated changes already begun by
the internal long-distance trade' (319). Overseas trade arose at pre-
existing locations of authority, requiring no need to fashion new institu-
tions of control. Anene (1966) corroborates Alagoa's position when he
argues that the Ibeno of Bonny and the Efik provide the best illustra-
tions of sophisticated political organisation.

The British abolished the slave trade on 1 January 1808. The abolition
is a paradox against the backdrop that Britain had become the leading
carrier of slaves. The act had profound impacts on Nigeria and marked
the onset of legitimate trade, precursor to British colonisation of the
country (Apena 1997). The abolition followed 30 years of agitation in
Britain against the trade, which spanned more than three centuries. After
the abolition of the slave trade, Britain took steps to suppress the trade
(Hopkins 1968). This led to a new economic order in the Niger Delta;
one that reverted to trade in natural products, mainly palm oil. Growing

British interest in the palm oil trade brought a shift in British attitude toward local rulers, including disrespect for their sovereignty (ibid: 131).

2.5 Hinterland Trade and the Niger Company

Penetration of the interior led to the breakdown of the monopoly enjoyed by African intermediaries. At the time, the British believed that if trade was to flourish, then the highest authority in the land should be the British government and not African chiefs (Crowder 1973: 150-1). Elements within British commercial and humanitarian circles as well as members of government opposed the idea. Booming trade led to extensive use of slaves as porters and labourers to collect palm nuts and to carry oil to the coast. Thus, rather than substitute trade in slaves, palm oil trade increased the need for slaves. The Delta was unsurpassed in the palm oil trade. In 1855-56, the Delta exported 25,060 tons of oil, over half the quantity of oil exported from Africa (Aghalino 1998: 152).

The policy of Britain in colonial West Africa was to advance British commercial interests (Hopkins 1968). Thus, Britain soon achieved commercial control over the coastal region through the efforts of her consuls and military. Moreover, 'the unequal treaties concluded with the Delta states became her instruments of pressure and coercion in her dealings with native governments' (Dike 1962). To break the resistance against penetration of the interior, Britain strengthened rulers of the city-state, Old Calabar, who collaborated to advance her interests. Those who refused to support British designs, such as Pepple, King of Bonny, suffered victimisation.

The shift was a function of the desire to capture an expanding hinterland trade (Aghalino 1998). At the time, four British companies were operating in the Niger valley: The West African Company (Manchester); Messrs Alexander Miller Brothers & Co. (Glasgow); The Central African Trading Company (London); and James Pinnock & Co. (Liverpool) as well as numerous small firms and individual merchants (Dike 1962: 204). Together the companies employed 14 steamers in the Niger trade opening commerce 600 miles into the hinterland. British government realised that naval power at the Coast was of little use to her traders in the hinterland. With the lucrative interior waiting, firms put considerable pressure on the British government. The government rationalised that commercial profit is a function of political security and accepted the view prof-

fered by the traders that trade and political frontiers must expand simultaneously to reach their mutual objective (Hopkins 1968).

Employing armed boats, the companies penetrated the interior, establishing factories at various locations, thus intercepting trades that previously passed through intermediaries, leading to a number of confrontations between Europeans and Africans between 1871 and 1879.

> Military expeditions visited the Niger basin annually, destroying Delta and hinterland towns that had attacked British life and property. So long as the warships remained in the vicinity of the trading posts a thriving trade was carried on; during the seven months of the dry season, when the ships could not ascend the Niger River, Africans resumed their attacks on the invaders. War and trade alternated with the seasons (Dike 1962: 207).

Sustained attacks on British trading posts in Onitsha led to naval bombardment and razing of the town in 1879. Similarly, bombardments occurred at Idah and Abo, just as they destroyed Yamaha, an inland trading station on the Benue River for attacking British traders. The fallout of the forceful penetration of the interior, local resistance and reprisal bombardment was an environment of insecurity that made trade sometimes impossible. By 1879, it became obvious that the peaceful exploitation of the lucrative and substantial trade in the region demanded some form of security.

Concomitantly, from 1877 to 1879, Goldie Taubman unified competing British firms in the region into the United African Company, and successfully eliminated foreign competition. However, Taubman's overriding interest was to bring British political domination over the Niger basin. Taubman was of the strong view that trade and civilisation was impossible in an unsettled interior, and that 'pacification' was, therefore, crucial. In pursuit of his ambition, he established more than 100 trading posts on the Niger and Benue Rivers. He commenced treaty deals with African rulers. By 1884, he had concluded 37 treaties. The figure rose to 237 by 1886. The treaties 'invariably ceded to the National African Company, "the whole of the territories of the signatories", conferring in addition the right to exclude foreigners and to monopolize the trade of the area' (ibid: 212). Dike (1962) argues that the company had more than 20 gunboats capable of navigating the Niger year round for purposes of policing and pacification.

The people of the Niger Delta opposed and bitterly resisted the company's rule. The company's factories in Akassa, Patani, Brass, Asaba and

Idah were attacked. Despite such uprisings, the company's superior fire-power kept the locals subdued (ibid). Dike argues that the motivation behind the eventual annexation of the region was the need to marginalise and neutralise African intermediaries, seen as obstacles to the lucrative trade with the interior. Thus, having successfully claimed the Niger Delta and lower Niger at the Berlin Conference of 1885, based on the efforts of its consuls, the British, on 5 June 1885, declared a Protectorate over the Niger area.

However, such proclamations were insufficient to transform the area into an effectively occupied territory. The British achieved effective occupation by force (Anene 1966). The British coerced native chiefs into signing hardly understood treaties, by which they ceded their sovereignty, the rights of their people and their lands. However, by West African customary law, it was beyond the competence of the ruler to alienate land. Given such voluntary surrender of sovereignty was not intended, African chiefs resisted European encroachment. Thus, between 1885 and 1900, British forces embarked on the 'subjugation and pacification of Nigeria the Niger Delta' (Dike 1962: 218).

2.6   Control through Coercion

The colonist utilised force in the establishment, consolidation and expansion of the Southern Protectorate. Tamuno (1978) argues that the protectorate troops and police were employed in patrols, punitive expeditions, or maintained as a threat, and were infamous for their terror. Thus, between 1901 and 1903, there were 13 punitive expeditions and patrols in Southern Nigeria, and such exercises became an annual occurrence. He observes that through punitive expeditions much of the Southern Protectorate became subjugated territory including Bonny, Brass, Degema, Ahoada, Asaba, Calabar, Warri, Opobo, Ogoni, Benin, Eket, Awka and Udi. The natives in these areas had difficulty adjusting to the new colonial government, which in turn sparked public unrest and conflicts.

The British navy gave cover and protection to European traders on the coast dealing with African intermediaries, chiefs and rulers. In the event of crisis, warships were quickly mobilised and deployed, and during war, 'armed cruisers and vessels were generally deployed to blockade the coasts and to support the land forces' (Mbaeyi 1982: 201). Following the abolition of the slave trade, the British navy played an important role

in combating trade by patrolling the coast and seizing slave ships. Trade in palm oil flourished in place of slave trade. The navy once again had responsibility to protect the substantial volume of trade in the region. Paul M. Mbaeyi (1982) argues that the unofficial pacts between the navy and merchants, and between the navy and colonial administrators, emerged and remained for much of the 19th century. As will be illustrated below, the colonialists were consistently improving their means of oppression and exploitation despite the abolishment of slavery, using oppressive means such as forced labour.

2.7   Forced Labour

While the British ostensibly abolished slavery, they simultaneously imposed forced labour on Southern Nigerian peoples (Ofonagoro 1982: 219).[1] Ofonagoro argues that these laws enhanced the authority of the chiefs, as they became the channel for acquiring the forced labour required by the government. In the acephalous communities of the Eastern Province where there were no chiefs, the colonialists created chiefs, issued with warrants to compel adults to provide labour for public works. Wealthy men and women were able to avoid work through bribes. The Colonial Office was aware of the abuses and inequities inherent in the labour regime (Ofonagoro 1982: 223-4). The dominant argument arose that such labour was indispensable to British development efforts in Nigeria. There were attempts to escape its reach, reflecting its oppressive impacts on the people. Moreover, British administrators mishandled chiefs and local people by flogging them in public for failing to provide forced labour. The notoriety of forced labour in some communities provoked internal dissent and discontent, which in the case of Agbor, led to the death of Acting District Commissioner F.O.S. Crewe-Read in 1906. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that John Holt emphasised:

> This is not the way to rule these people by attraction, nor the way to get the best out of them for the good of the country. We must get rid of the over-bearing ways of the white officials – make him know his place – make him feel that there is law to punish him if he outrages the rights and liberties of other people – taking advantage of his colour and position to do things contrary to all justice and common sense (Tamuno 1978: 322).

Severe penalties on rulers affected the pre-colonial monarchical institutions of the Niger Delta. According to Tamuno, Consul-General Moor

fostered Native Councils of chiefs whose members received seats based on their loyalty rather than kingly status. Moreover, Moor removed from the councils kings who opposed his administration or policies, and seemed happy to administer directly as he made no effort to fill the vacuum created by the demise or sacking of a reigning monarch. At the same time, a new crop of loyal leaders, including African chiefs and educated elite, emerged in some communities. From the 1890s, the colonial government favoured working through loyal members of the Native Council rather than through African monarchs. In the coastal communities, there was a remarkable shift from the pre-colonial system of government rooted in the *amanyanabos* (owners of the land) to the protectorate practice of administration founded on the *amadabos* (executive heads) (Anene 1966). For Tamuno, the 19th and 20th centuries saw the eclipse of the grandeur and awe of the monarchs of Benin and the coastal states by the British Crown.

Fanon concludes that colonialism crushed and emptied indigenous values. More than that, it mummified a culture that was once living and open to the future (Fanon 1964: 34). Tamuno and Fanon, thus, agree that colonialism altered the trajectory of the Niger Delta communities. Rather than foster civilisation, colonisation turned 'the indigenous man into an instrument of production', introducing 'a principle of ruin' (Cesaire 2005: 62).

2.8 Conclusion

The peoples of the Niger Delta have a rich history predating the arrival of the Europeans. This history is dynamic: a history of peaceful coexistence and violent conflicts; isolation and interaction; and identity and cultural borrowings. That history reflects the changing economic, political and social fortune of Niger Delta communities. Following the forcible penetration of the interior, trading towns like Gwato, Opobo, Calabar, Benin and Aboh lost their early advantage as centres of religious and commercial contact with the Europeans. Things changed with the colonists' decision to establish administrative headquarters in the hinterland. Such relocation effectively sowed the seeds of the spatial stratification pattern that came to dominate relations between Niger Delta communities and the hinterlands.

Despite the eventual violent subjugation of the people, the British colonisers failed to transform Nigeria in pre-determined ways. In the en-

suing encounter, however, they did occasion a social formation neither they nor the colonised completely determined. This contact and attempt to engineer diverse peoples in line with European dreams form the foundation from which emerges the root of the crisis unravelling in the Niger Delta today. The historical experiences of communal subjugation and loss of autonomy, attempt at the homogenisation of disparate people, uneven regional development, colonial expropriation of resources, underdevelopment and communal powerlessness continue to reverberate in the present.

> Everywhere, this historical experience bears the stigmata of trauma and strife, of interference and rupture with the past, as well as the boon of continuity, of successful adaptation and adjustment-engrams of events not easily erased and often only latent in the cultural memory until some greater event serves to draw them forth again (Wolf 1969).

Aside from precipitating the insertion of Nigeria into global capitalism, colonialism bequeathed legacies of predation, inter-ethnic competition and rivalry and marginalisation. Although capitalism did not invent exploitation and resistance against exploitation, pre-capitalist formations sustained social equilibrium by balancing peasants' surplus transfers with ruler's provision of security for the cultivators (Wolf 1969: 279). These economic orders changed with the onset of colonisation (Mehretu 1989: 99). Colonial incursion initiated an economy dominated by forced raw materials export, and deliberately reorganised the local economy to respond to European industrial needs. It laid the foundation for an equally intrusive and predatory postcolonial development.

Note

[1] Ofonagoro defines forced labour as 'exacted under conditions of compulsion with or without payment. Where a man or woman is compelled to work against his will, and legal penalties are exacted from him for failure to do the required work, such labour must be considered "forced" '(222).

Development, Politics and Society: Colonial and Postcolonial

3.1 How did We Get Here?

Before colonialism, the places that composed contemporary Nigeria were terrains of dynamic cultural, political and economic relations and events. Chapter 2 examined aspects of such dynamism as reflected in the flexible interactions and cultural exchanges among Niger Delta people, trade between them and the Europeans, and the onset of colonial subjugation. While colonial rule failed to impose British designs on the colonised, what emerged from the colonial encounter cannot be attributed to the intention of either of the actors nor could either of them be seen as firmly in control of the trajectory of such an unintended outcome (Cooper 1994). Colonialism engendered change in ways that undermined and transformed the world of the colonised, as they knew it (Ajayi 2002). With decolonisation as 'unfinished business', Nigeria moved from colonialism to neo-colonialism (ibid: 14).

Postcolonial leaders inherited and promoted the idea of development as intentional development. They did so by providing jobs, roads, schools, health facilities and social services. Yet it is important here to ask questions about the determination and distribution of such development projects. Such questions are apt because the postcolonial leaders inherited a highly charged political system composed of numerous hitherto independent political entities. Because of the amalgamation of these different nations, British territorialisation occasioned uneven regional development and British intrigues geared at divide-and-rule and protection of its own interests, which fostered communal distrust.

This chapter seeks to understand how the political context that emerged in the context of colonial rule shaped postcolonial politics and development by asking questions such as what form of politics came to characterise Nigeria? What effect did such politics have on the practice

and effectiveness of development? What was the nature of the relationship between the elite developers and the mass to be developed?

3.2   Political Context of Development

Before colonialism, contemporary Nigeria was composed of kingdoms, empires, caliphates and city-states. Some of these geopolitical entities extended beyond the boundaries of modern Nigeria. While these entities had trade, peaceful and violent contacts, none exercised hegemony over the others (Oyovbaire 1983). The geopolitical systems, as Wolf shows, were built on surplus exploitation. For instance, Benin as an imperial social formation owes its rise to the appropriation of surplus value from the working people in the city and peripheries, including slaves (Sargent 1986; Oyovbaire 1983). Following colonial conquests, the peoples that make up present day Nigeria were grouped into two different administrative bodies: northern and southern protectorates.

Sir Frederick Lugard's Native Administration Policies engineered the amalgamation of the two protectorates in 1914 in order to 'consolidate the colonial possession of Nigeria for British economic imperialism' (Oyovbaire 1983: 10). What emerged in 1914 was a social formation that afforded the coloniser power and wealth. The amalgamation did not seek to unify colonial policies for the country or to foster an integrated administration. Indeed, there was constant bickering between colonial administrators who favoured a unified legislative council for the whole country and those 'who were committed to nurturing the Northern emirates and Native Administration into separate sovereign status' (ibid: 10).

> In this, as in other matters, the first steps did count. In spite of Nigeria's common colonial experience, the record also emphasised the local differences in administrative practices, if not in policies, going right back to the early years of this century. Up to May 1906, the British authorities had totally different administrative structures to the east, west, and north of the Niger. But the 1914 Amalgamation, which tried to remedy these defects, created problems of its own (Tamuno 1970: 565).

It was only from 1947 when Arthur Richards established a unified legislative council for the entire country that leaders from the south and north sat down together to deliberate on the affairs of Nigeria (ibid: 10-11), after more than four decades of British domination. Within that period, the system of indirect rule and the attendant policies of preserving

the emirates from Christian missionary and Western education influences safely isolated the North and South from each other, but more than that 'it indoctrinated the emirs, chiefs and the emergent nationalist elites in their historical differences, not only political but racial, religious and cultural' (ibid: 11). Having been shielded from such 'civilizing influences', the North remained more or less static, while the South experienced rapid social change.

In 1945, British colonialists regionalised the two protectorates into three regions. To Sir Arthur Richards, the colonial Governor, Nigeria was composed of three natural regions, the North, West and East. However, as Oyovbaire argues, Richards did not arrive at the three-tier framework naturally. Rather the three-tier regional framework had roots in the pattern of colonial domination. First, the British government took control of the north from the Royal Niger Company between 1898 and 1900. Then, it secured the southeastern areas of the country and the lower reaches of the Niger River in order to protect the interests of British traders. Finally, they made the extension of the colony of Lagos into the Yoruba hinterland for commercial reasons (ibid: 8-9).

> These patterns in Britain's consolidation of her Nigerian colonialism are the origins of what turned out five decades later to be the "three natural regions" of Nigeria, articulated and rationalized by the British as well as the subsequent Nigerian rulers (Oyovbaire 1983: 10).

These areas fell under separate administration until 1906 when the two southern areas merged. This resulted in the northern and southern protectorates, which Lord Lugard integrated with a view to secure the colonial possession of Nigeria for British imperialism and prevent threats from rival European interests as the amalgamation was not a unification of colonial policies or an integrated administration (ibid: 10). Oyovbaire argues that the deployment of the administrative practices of indirect rule, on the grounds of cost-effectiveness, 'froze the unsettled historical boundaries of the Sokoto caliphate', as the Southern provinces were returned to two separate entities, Eastern and Western Provinces, as they stood between 1900 and 1906 (ibid: 11). The spatial recalibration of Nigeria into two protectorates in 1914, regrouping into three groups of provinces in 1939, and transformation into three administrative regions in 1946 were entirely colonial affair, but had the effect of handing down to the Nigerian peoples colonial officials' prejudice (ibid: 12).

British use of brute force alone was what kept Nigeria, 'a mere collection of self-contained and mutually-independent Native States', together, and despite the force, Nigeria remains 'notoriously precarious lumping together of unwilling peoples' (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 19). At various times, nationalist leaders saw Nigeria as a 'mere geographical expression', and as 'existing only on paper' (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 12). The dominant element of Nigeria's federalism was the prevalence of one ethnic group in each region: Hausa-Fulani in the Northern Region, the Yoruba in the Western Region and the Igbo in the Eastern Region. Thus, these three became the power brokers in Nigeria. Nigeria as a concept came to represent a tripod, a land of three ethnic nationalities, rather than a polyglot, a land of many ethnic nationalities. This way of seeing continues to inform politics in Nigeria (Omoruyi 2000). Given such conceptual exclusivity, the hundreds of other ethnic minorities have only two remaining options: clamour for crumbs or self-determination (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 20). Such power-informed vision applies to how the three dominant ethnic groups approach the uses and control of oil (Omoruyi 2000). According to Saro-Wiwa, the regionalisation of the country as a federation, with the regions intact as unitary states virtually ceded control of the country to the three major ethnic groups (1992: 25).

Between 1947 and 1954, leaders of the three regions under the auspices of British rule negotiated and adopted a federal constitution. Oyovbaire argues that from the 1950s, a twin struggle for separate regional development and control of the central government dominated Nigerian politics, 'since control of the centre was quite crucial to the shape of national development' (ibid: 13). He argues further that in this period dormant forces began to assert themselves, 'the forces of ethnic minorities which were not only concerned with a relative lack of development and progress in their own areas but with their self-determination within the Nigerian federal state' (ibid: 13).

> This disjunction in the process of social change became the roots of communal consciousness or ethnicity as a social force in Nigeria: the fears as well as the facts of predominance of the members of one administrative or political region, one community, one locality or one group of individuals over others in the struggle for opportunities, resources and power. The process did not change after independence. In fact, it has been extended and deepened (ibid: 15).

Kirk-Greene (1967: 4-5) offers an historical and cultural explanation for the crisis that unfolded in the Nigerian civil war. The *giant of promise* is crippled by the historical and social evolution of the three major ethnic groups, which has in turn shaped the entire development of Nigeria. Ethnic, religious, geographical differences, the resultant differences in ways of life, agricultural production and exports are critical. He argues that the emergence of political parties reflected these differences (ibid: 7). The British did not help. The Colonial Service fostered the belief that British officials posted to the North were superior to those sent to Lagos. According to Kirk-Greene,

> Local loyalties, in fact, so developed that it was sometimes said, only half jokingly, that Northern Nigerian officials became more royal than the king…in the pre-war period if all the Nigerians had withdrawn from Nigeria there would have been civil war between the British officials in the North and South (1967: 9)!

Thus, Nigeria became,

> Characterised in broad terms by a triple division at all levels: tribal and linguistic, religious and ethnic. But each of those segments in turn—the North and the West and the East—comprises a dual make-up, having one strong ethnic group and another minor group. It is in the light of the ensuing social differences that must be seen the deep division in the two local government structures (ibid: 7).

Cohen (1974) addresses the basic roots of tension and conflict in postcolonial Nigeria citing the availability of wealth, social benefits and political power that never seemed enough for political actors. Intense rivalry for political power to obtain economic benefit ensued. From being 'part of the racket' (ibid: 12), many Nigerian elites became blazingly ostentatious and corrupt, and nepotism so pervasive that 'the sensibilities of those who had less, or those who had next to nothing, could not but be inflamed' (ibid: 13). These included individuals, ethnic groups and other identity groups.

As a dominant ethnic based party controlled the regional government, the ethnic group concerned had control over regional resources, both material and social. Minorities within the region had three options ally with the dominant party in order to receive some patronage, ally with the rival dominant party to weaken the competitive advantage of the ruling party and/or press for self-determination to escape marginalisation (ibid:

13-14). While some ethnic groups took to rebellion, other marginalised groups were 'generally constrained to play the game within the system of part alliances' (ibid: 15).

Robson and Lury (1969: 133) argue that the British controlled the machinery of government and the character of trade, thus the fortunes of the Nigerian economy came to reflect events similar to those occurring in the British economy. For example, events following the two world wars stimulated demands for Nigerian raw materials and the depression and advances in production methods in industrial countries affected export earnings negatively. In effect, the country's growth determinants had a foreign orientation (ibid: 133). They argue that the attainment of political independence even though there is more ownership has not changed the scenario.

3.3   Politics of the Transfer of Power

Nationalist agitation for constitutional progress toward independence before 1945 traces back to the founding of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in 1934, and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in 1943 (Ajayi and Ekoko 1988). Sir Arthur Richards became governor in 1943, and in 1945, he imposed the Richards Constitution, which failed to address the aspirations of the nationalists, without consultation (Oyelaran and Adediran 1997: 188). The constitution introduced regionalisation in Nigerian politics and emphasised 'native authorities'. Such accent negates Lord Hailey's warning in 1938 against the use of native authorities, seeing them as instruments of the executive for local administration. It had completely ignored the suggestions of a memorandum on decolonisation submitted by Nnamdi Azikiwe, a foremost nationalist, in 1943. Seen as inhibiting genuine participation and inadequate in every material particular, the nationalists roundly condemned the constitution. Sir John Macpherson became governor in 1948 and announced the introduction of a new constitution.

London sought to undermine Azikiwe's radicalism by issuing a new directive that politicians should get their mandate from Native Authorities. The emphasis on grassroots consultation awakened political consciousness all over the country. To the authors, grassroots politics was divisive because of the intent to bring both educated elites and traditional conservative elements into confrontation. Every colonial governor since Lugard has always shielded traditional leaders of the pro-British

Native Authorities from subordination to the educated elite. Moreover, it was diversionary because it displaced political action from the centre to the grassroots. Although Macpherson promised political evolution based on parliamentary institutions unlike his predecessors, what he achieved by sending politicians to the grassroots was to premise parliamentary institutions on the discredited Native Authorities or traditional elites.

The 1945 Richards Constitution introduced the notion of regional politics in Nigeria. It called for the creation of three regional Houses of Assembly. Existing Native Authorities formed the basis of election to the Houses. According to Ajayi and Ekoko, the structure of these Houses were so constrained that they precluded valuable Nigerian participation. Thus, H.O. Davies, a moderate nationalist, lamented that the constitution created space for discussion but not Nigeria's own genuine participation in national government. He charged that until genuine participation was entrenched, 'a sense of frustration, not conducive to mutual trust or friendship' would subsist (Ajayi and Ekoko 1988: 248). Thus, nationalists roundly condemned the constitution. The labour strike of 1945, the 'obnoxious' ordinances,[1] and reactions against the Richards Constitution made Sir Arthur Richards unpopular.

According to Ajayi and Ekoko (1988), the movement for independence was essentially a nationalist movement. The promise of power transfer, devoid of equivalent power, kept politicians occupied devising means of acquiring power. The emergence of political parties fostered development of subnational nationalism.

> Between 1948 and 1951, subnationalism or ethnicity became the pragmatic instrument for bolstering group interests in the game of party politics. This resulted in the regionalization of the nationalist movement and kept the politicians quarrelling among themselves most of the time. Regionally based political parties emerged to fight regional battles; unity against British colonialism was hardly within the bounds of possibility, and British strategy and policies promoted these antagonistic tendencies (1988: 252-3).

Yoruba nationalist leaders accused Zik and the NCNC of fostering Igbo hegemony, and reacted by forming the Action Group (AG). Northern leaders formed the Northern People's Congress (NPC). What emerged is a north-south dichotomy within a tripartite competition for scarce national resources.

The north saw in the unfolding political landscape a topography of southern domination of the administrative cadre and the economy because of their sociohistoric privileges and advantages of Western education. The South on the other hand could sense a deadly collaboration between the receding colonialism that British officials represented and the steadfast conservatives of the northern emirates to capture political power at the center to the detriment of the more educated south. Between the two southern regions there was no love lost; keen competition for employment and other economic resources continually fouled their mutual relationships, perceptions, images, and attitudes (ibid 1988: 252-3).

In the ambience of such bitter rivalry, the nationalist politicians failed to take advantage of the opportunities to make a Constitution for socio-economic engineering. Instead, it became a field for squabbles, and acquisition of political power. The question of erecting the fundamentals of a stable and viable postcolonial state receded from view. Rather than serve as unbiased mediator at such a critical moment, the British took sides.

For example, the committee stage of the Ibadan Conference of 1950 on constitutional review had recommended 45: 33: 33 as the quotas for representation at the center for the north, east, and west. But the Emir of Zaria, who was on the northern delegation, made it clear that unless the Northern region was allotted 50 per cent of the seats at the Central Legislature it would ask for separation from the rest of Nigeria (Op. cit.).

According to Ajayi and Ekoko, what is clear is that the north was uncompromising; it brought forward its demands and conditions. Worse still, such demands became British conditions and demands as well. In effect, the British became valuable allies of the north. Southern leaders, divided, anxious for political power and mistrustful made compromises to resolve the crisis at the expense of enduring objectives.

The resultant 1951 Macpherson Constitution fostered distrust between the British and the more articulate nationalist politicians. The 1952 Census, manipulated by the British in favour of the north fuelled mistrust. The wave of opposition to the Macpherson Constitution culminated in the self-government motion of 1953 by Anthony Enahoro, and the resignation of two AG ministers at the centre. Anti-south protests and riots broke out on the streets of Kano, a northern city.

Regional politics began in earnest with the participation of regionally-based political parties in the London and Lagos deliberations and the

1954 Constitution. The 1954 Lyttleton Constitution devolved specified and limited powers to the federal government, while regional governments retained residual powers. Thus, 'regionalism was completely institutionalized, and the nationalist movement became regionalized' (ibid 1988: 257). The nationalist leaders chose to become regional premiers, implying that politics at the centre fell to representatives who took directives from regional leaders. The region was a proto-federation composed of several minorities under the domination of one ruling majority group.

The regionalisation of the economy led to disagreement over the revenue sharing formula. While the north favoured a population-based metric, the west sought derivation, and the east emphasised need. The trend toward regional politics, which demonstrated the need for regionalising the marketing boards, also favoured the principle of derivation. The principle,

> Poisoned inter-governmental relationships and had exacerbated inter-governmental rivalry and conflict. Perhaps more than any other single factor it had hampered the development of a sense of national unity or common citizenship in Nigeria…. Moreover its application has been arbitrary and lacking consistency…. The whole financial arrangements have inhibited the development of an effective, development-oriented national fiscal policy (ibid 1988: 258).

The issue of replacement of British officials by qualified Nigerians had equally weighty implications. Following political regionalisation, the issue of Nigerianisation became less a matter of conflict between the nationalists and the British than a cause of disagreement between Nigerians (ibid: 259). The policy created opportunities for career advancement, and encouraged expansion of education. However, the pace of education in the north lagged behind the south because of colonial policies aimed at protecting Islam, and strengthening the position of rulers against the emergence of an educated proletariat. Although the north lacked trained workers, it enunciated a northernisation policy that discriminated against southerners in preference to expatriate British officials. Northerners held strategic positions as guarantee against southern domination and to encourage the north to agree to self-government.

According to Ajayi and Ekoko, southern politicians seem entrapped by their call for self-government because determining the character of the postcolonial state was not within their reach. The consequence was that between 1956 and 1959, the eastern and western regions were self-

governing, but the northern and central government remained under co-
lonial control.

> The overall supervision of the decolonization process enabled British offi-
> cials to ensure that in those years imperial British and northern interests
> were aligned. British administrators ensured first that northern control
> over the northern region and the federal government and its agencies was
> carefully planned and consolidated and, second, that the southern parties
> could not sustain an alliance against the Northern People's Congress (ibid
> 1988: 260).

According to Gifford and Louis (1988), both the nationalists and
British manoeuvred to 'gain and sustain advantages', believing they could
shape the course of the new order. Awolowo rationalised that nationalist
attainment of power was predetermined as only the educated elites re-
served the right to chart the course of political development. Ajayi and
Ekoko, however, surmised that by pushing the self-government motion
and accepting self-government for the Western and Eastern regions in
1956, southern politicians 'played into the hands of the British administra-
tors'. That was the case as they watched helplessly as 'the initiative in
determining the character' of the nation-state slipped out of their hands
(1988: 260).

Business played a particularly important role in shaping the process of
decolonisation (Lawal 1994). Lawal asserts that British commercial inter-
ests sought to influence the process of decolonisation to help the con-
tinued security of their interests. Toward that end, businesses mobilised
their staff politically. European firms reasoned that it would be advanta-
geous to them if their old and trusted staff held political offices. Thus,
they encouraged them to seek elective posts and offered them promises
of leaves of absence and financial support. Additionally, the firms, in-
cluding Shell, successfully mounted pressure on the Colonial Office to
introduce measures that would secure their interests (Lawal 1994:103-4).

3.4   Anatomy of a Postcolonial State

Although nationalist leaders achieved the goal of ending foreign rule and
saw power transferred to educated elites rather than traditional elites,
educated elites did not enjoy a monopoly of power in the postcolonial
state. Emergent educated elites in the north linked to the emirs and Na-
tive Authority systems. Ajayi and Ekoko argue that emirate connections

more than competence promised political success in the north. In the south, educated elites consolidated their positions by acquiring chieftaincy titles. Moreover, traditional elites remain relevant in the order of things given the constitutional provisions for House of Chief in the region. Military rule from 1966-1979 did nothing to undermine the position of traditional institutions. The same authors argue further:

> Nationalism in Nigeria produced neither a national hero accepted as such throughout the country nor a national party that could have been turned into potent integrative institutions for social mobilization. Nationalist politics was devoid of any ideological base or commitment. The tragedy of Nigeria's political experience was that, unlike India, it failed to produce a statesman in office (Op. cit.: 266).

They argue that the strategies and dialectics employed during the transfer of power account for these developments. Preoccupation with consolidating regional hegemony and employing that as a basis to capture federal power led to intense competition and a syndrome of domination at the centre. Census controversies, perceived bias of the British and inter-party distrust all ensured failure to develop the basis of a stable polity. In the passionate competition for power, the overriding consideration was who should control the distribution of scarce federal resources and patronage and not developmental policies and programmes. Thus, the 'post-colonial state became a forum for trading power to protect largely regional and local interests, often to the neglect of the overall national interests' (Ajayi and Ekoko 1988: 267).

Development planning in the First Republic evoked regional bias rather than national integration and development. The ruling political elites favoured projects that benefitted their regions in the face of cheaper alternatives with widespread or national benefits. Despite clear evidence that modest investment in natural gas, abundant in the south, would generate enough electric power supply, the NPC government preferred bigger investments in the construction of the Kainji Dam. Similarly, the government was not keen on the idea of exploiting iron ore located in the north to develop a steel industry in the south (ibid: 268). The supremacy of regional interest over national benefits continues to influence economic decisions.

Such developments drew the ire of Ake:

> Our politics is not a lawful competition to select those to manage our common concerns but a fight to capture and privatize an enormous power

resource. There is no public realm, strictly speaking, no state. There is only a contested terrain, where interest groups and communities go to fight for appropriation. There is no space which incarnates a collective identity; there is only a battlefield where the act of doing battle constitutes us as a purely negative unity. We are a polity of *takers* rather than *givers*. What we dearly love to take is state power, and being strangers to one another and adversaries, we necessarily take it as private property (1996: 8).

In effect, institutions of the postcolonial state failed to deliver the expected benefits and instead became tools of control and exclusion from political participation (Oommen 1997: 54). The nature of postcolonial politics resulted in two trajectories, namely the politics of elites, and politics of the poor.

3.4.1 Elite-dominated politics

According to Soyinka, the basic reality of Nigeria's politics rests in the phenomenon of spoils of power (Soyinka 1997: 62). He emphasises that the spoils of power imply protection, and 'unlike the spoils of office, the former remain guaranteed long after office' (1997: 96). The trend, Soyinka argues, is at the core of internal conflicts that wracked Nigeria since its creation in 1914. The protagonists of this development emphasised they were chosen to rule Nigeria. Their mission was, 'originally bequeathed to them by the departing British colonial masters but one they have adopted with relish', ensuring that power never crosses 'a calculating divide that was inserted in the map of Nigeria by the departing British' (ibid: 62-3). Soyinka emphasises the enthronement of power as 'the birthright of a given sector of any human community evolves, sooner or later, into a privilege of mediocrity, and logically still, into the quest for power, by right, on the part of the mediocre' (ibid: 63).

   The ruling elites determine for Nigerians all aspects of the political order that are for them considered non-negotiable (Osaghae 1998: 225). Soyinka holds that the notion of non-negotiability is self-interested as the inviolability principle of national boundary is a fictitious concept (1997: 29-30). Nigerians must reserve the right to decide whether it serves their collective interest to stay as one nation or divide into disparate nations (ibid: 30). The language of non-negotiability is at least subversive because it is designed to stop intelligent confrontation with the issues whose resolution is essential to guarantee the continuity of a true nation (ibid: 33). It disables a definition of 'the precise nature of the problematique'

of uncertainty as to whether the struggle is making a nation or a minimalist approach of keeping together what is left of it. In Soyinka words, 'are we trying to keep Nigeria a nation? Or are we trying to make it one?' (ibid: 35). Given that the factors that resulted in the Biafran war remain undiminished and the minority problem remains unresolved, the inviolability principle is self-serving.

Ake describes the politics of the elites thus:

> When we can, we make laws which confiscate other peoples' property; we wax eloquent about development co-operation which is a code for our beggar role in the international system; business people buy our foreign exchange cheaply and profitably "for the economic well-being of the nation" instead of meeting their foreign exchange needs themselves; we demand more local governments and more states in the name of even development but this is just a subterfuge for extortion; in the name of national development, we appropriate the wealth of the mineral producing areas with brute force, utterly insensitive to the environmental hazards they face, turning them into disposable victims of their own property. We pretend that we are playing politics when, like Mafia families, we are actually waging a violent struggle for a lucrative turf (Ake 1996: 18).

It is important not to view the elites as a homogenous group that is always fighting and imposing its will upon non-elites.

3.4.2 Politics of the poor

The politics of the ruling elites cannot adequately account for the political economy of a country. Despite their relative political disadvantage, the poor play a crucial role in social development. For instance, the collective action of blacks in the United States brought about civil rights (Aldon 1984) and their contentious actions in Europe ignited several changes (Tilly 1986a, 1986b). Some theorists observe that the truly poor are too poor for politics (Huntington 1968: 52). The result is reluctance to consider the processes that not only impoverish and marginalise the poor, but also normalise their attempts to undo their marginalisation (Nnoli 1989: 34).

Although crucial to the nationalist struggle and the credibility of nationalist elites, since 1960, the poor became the object rather than subject of Nigerian politics. Yet, the poor remain incapable of emancipatory action. Olufemi Taiwo (1993) draws attention to how colonial policies forbade formation of trade unions, but allowed ethnic associations, and

employed divide-and-rule tactics to disorganise a singular worker's iden-
tity. Their goal was to render impotent the revolutionary potential of the
working class and trade unions.

> Thus, at the time of independence in 1960 the poor were politically frag-
> mented with no history of joint struggles, no political organisations of
> their own, no co-ordination of their activities, no national outlook, no
> class consciousness, and therefore no political militancy. They had been
> terrorized, intimidated, and coerced into accepting a reformist approach to
> socio-economic transformation. Socialised into the norms of philistinism
> and opportunism, bribed into disbelief and cynicism, and thoroughly
> alienated from their work and society they had become politically indiffer-
> ent, if not apathetic (Nnoli 1989: 45).

Nnoli argues that the political behaviour and organisation of the poor
has changed little since 1960. Thus, the Bakalori farmers' protests against
their displacement in 1980 ended in the death of an estimated 1,000
peasants (Nnoli 1989). They failed to mobilise other Nigerian farmers or
initiate transnational support, making it easy for government to destroy
the protests in only three days.

3.5 Peripheral Capitalism and Nigeria's Political Economy of Oil

Reyna (1999: 56) argues that the unique combination of two mutually
reinforcing logics—the logic of predatory accumulation and the logic of
capital accumulation—produced the Great Leviathan. Capital accumula-
tion depended on the predatory activities of the State carried out at its
frontiers. Harvey argues that all the features of primitive accumulation
identified by Marx persist within capitalism (2004). A good example of
such a partnership, as shown in Chapter 2, is the activities of the Royal
Niger Company, which snatched control over trade from local traders,
and determined the terms of trade for maximum exploitation. The award
of sole exploratory right to Shell Company reflects the partnership be-
tween both logics. In Nigeria, however, the logic of predatory accumula-
tion and the logic of capital accumulation draw attention to the partner-
ship between the State, MNCs, core factions of dominant ethnic groups,
and elites of the oil-producing communities (Adeola 2001: 44-5).

Naanen refers to it as internal colonialism, involving the strategic pur-
suit of political dominance by the majority ethnic groups. As shown in

chapters 2 and 3, the colonisers actively supported such an objective with both their policies and beliefs.

> Internal colonialism began in Nigeria, not through economic domination but through political penetration deriving from a skilful pursuit of political control, aided crucially by numerical preponderance. This power was then used to transfer resources from the numerically weaker groups to develop the dominant areas, creating in the process an economically advantaged and powerful core and an impoverished and weak periphery. In the case of Nigeria's oil-producing communities, this process of ethnic domination and periphelization was aided by the presence of multinational companies (MNC) (Naanen 1995: 49).

Adeola and Naanen underline the alliance between the Nigerian State and transnational actors, particularly oil companies, in regards to the exploitation of both minority communities and their environments. To Obi, the transnational ruling class contains 'factions of the dominant class at the global, national and local levels, benefits from the expropriation and degradation of the oil-rich Ogoni ecology' (ibid: 140).

Schatz (1984) characterises Nigeria's peculiar capitalism as 'pirate capitalism'. Despite the growth in oil revenue, the Nigerian economy has remained inert. Because of rising oil revenue accruing directly to the federal government, it became the sole source of economic surplus. Access to massive state revenue became the easiest route to fortune and the appeal of productive economic activity consequently faded.

> The use of the state for enrichment is certainly not new. Before independence the colonial regime was involved in the economy in ways which accorded primacy to British interests. Thus the Nigerian political class perceived "government" as a means of serving the interests of those who controlled it. When they got power, they cheerfully and enthusiastically used the state to further their own private interests (Schatz 1984: 55).

To Ake (1973), the 'propensity to invest', that is, the intensity of political competition shapes political exchanges. As the propensity to invest increases, political actors are inclined to do whatever will realise their objectives rather than what is legitimate or legal. The high propensity to invest among Nigerian elites has roots in the colonial era (ibid: 357). In the colonial context, the capture of power was the issue of politics; there was no interest in majority rule and political equality. The nationalists who were in no position to win any significant political influence demanded some power. They could not demand the reform of colonial

authoritarianism as that would have been an acknowledgement of its legitimacy.

> Thus the nationalists and colonisers were not divided over conceptions of good government, but rather over the single question of who should rule. Colonial politics was a single-minded struggle for the capture of government power…. To a very great extent the influence of the colonial experience persists…. It is evident in the tendency to construe politics strictly as a struggle for rulership (ibid: 358-9).

The inclination to high political investment resulted in what Ake calls 'political anxiety', or fear of consequences of not being in control of the political development. It seems more appropriate now to view peripheral capitalism as an effect of political anxiety and high propensity to invest. Together these comingled and mutually reinforcing processes manifested in a form of politics that decimated three critical assets of the Niger Delta population.

3.6   Why are There So Meagre Development and So Many Conflicts?

The 1972 World Development Report, barely a decade after independence, presented a depressing appraisal of Africa's future development. True to prediction, by the early 1980s, Africa was in the throes of economic decay. How may one explain such dismal deterioration of economic and developmental crises in Africa? Put differently, why has decades of development efforts failed in Africa? Heads of state and governments of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (African Union) in April 1980 at an economic summit in Lagos enunciated the reasons why. In the unanimously adopted document, the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa, the African leaders charged:

> Africa is susceptible to the disastrous effects of natural and endemic diseases of the cruellest type and is a victim of settler exploitation arising from colonialism, racism and apartheid. Indeed, Africa was directly exploited during the colonial period and for the past two decades; this exploitation has been carried out through neo-colonialist external forces, which seek to influence the economic policies and directions of African States (OAU 1982: 3).

A number of scholars built upon either position to understand what went wrong. The next three sub-sections outline the origin and trajectory of economic and political development in Nigeria.

3.6.1   Exceptionalist paradigm and political denial

Government as cause

There are those who argue that there is too much attention paid to the external structuralist forces of modernisation to the exclusion of internal factors. These scholars suggest that state action itself merits attention to explain crisis in the developing world. The emphasis is on internal state behaviour under the neoliberal economic worldview, which evolved in the late 1970s. This section examines two trends within the theory that attempt to explain the onset of conflict. The first is the lack of market view. The apparent failure of modernisation from the 1970s led to criticism that state intervention encouraged corruption and rent seeking by elites (ibid). According to free market advocates, the problem is that the State, rather than being the solution, was part of the problem. They argue it is the main impediment in the path to development. Neoliberals oppose the idea of development through state intervention in the economy. According to them government is inefficient and parasitic. The solution is to privatise the public sector, minimise government, renounce all control and permit the market to determine allocation of resources. Neoliberal economists argued for reorientation of approach to development that emphasised market and price as the most effective tools for resource allocation, especially setting the proper price point. Equally, they argued that 'correct government policy was market-oriented, non-interventionist, and did not create trade barriers' (ibid: 26). For them, state planning and intervention not the conditions of development constrained progress.

Novak argues that the assumption that state regulation and free market are antithetical is a myth because far from being adversarial, the market economy was not an autonomous or natural creation, but a product of historical and political decision-making. The public economy was 'part of a worldview slow to separate public and private, government and society. It understood commerce, trade and economics, like health and morals, as fundamentally public in nature, created, shaped and regulated by the polity via public law' (Novak 1996: 84). From the early to mid-1800s, a period acclaimed as being an era of free trade, market restric-

tions prevailed in America. Therefore, no 'business, occupation, trade, or economic activity was immune from the State's police powers for the protection and promotion of public safety, health, comfort, and welfare' (Op cit.: 112).

Institutions as cause

The second neoliberal view gave causal relevance to the lack of effective institutions. The neoliberal approach came under criticism following widening inequality between poor and rich countries, and among poor countries, widespread violence, dramatic decline in world commodity prices throughout the 1980s and a declining standard of living (Dasgupta 1998). In response, the institutionalists argued that the difference between developed and developing countries lies in the presence or absence of salutary institutions (ibid: 37). Joseph Stiglitz argues, contrary to the position of market-oriented economists, the *East Asian Miracle* was not a function of market policies, but a combination of intervention, markets and institutions. An analysis of the failure of market reforms in the former Soviet Union concluded that 'market reforms in the absence of effective domestic institutions can fail to deliver growth and poverty reduction' (World Bank 2001e: 32). The concept of governance allowed the World Bank to explain the failure of the SAPs because it removed the attention from the latter and focused it on 'inherent weaknesses and failures in the governmental structures of African states' (Boas and McNeill 2003: 68-9).

3.6.2   Revisionist modernisation

Early modernisation theorists located the onset of violence and revolution in poverty and the attempt to undo the conditions of impoverishment (see Huntington 1968: 5-6). Samuel Huntington argues, however, that although modern societies are more stable than less modern ones, it is a mistake to conclude that economic and social backwardness result in instability or, that modernisation is the route to political stability (ibid: 40-1). If poverty or economic backwardness produces violence, then education, mass communication, industrialisation and economic growth should produce greater political stability. Yet, he argues that they have not. Rather than the lack of modernity, the modernisation process itself breeds political violence (ibid). He claims that the truly poor are too poor for politics or protest. The gap between new levels of aspirations and

wants, promoted by modernisation and inability of transitional societies to satisfy them generates frustration and ultimately instability (ibid: 53-4).

Schatz (1965) characterises the view of government as cause of the problem as a 'fundamental misconception'. It rests on the assumption that development will prosper with the removal of the political obstacle. While government is partly to blame, the real problem is the economy itself. African economies need to generate gross private investment of 15 per cent per GDP, but were neither able to do so during the era of nurture capitalism nor during the economic reforms of the 1980s. Schatz argues that external conditions and the shortage of profitable investment opportunities are major causes. He argues for government intervention in those areas that are not privately profitable but welfare enhancing. He argues that the general view of inadequate capital as the problem is erroneous because rather than surplus viable projects seeking capital, the situation as it stands is one of capital seeking viable projects for investment. His argument dovetails with Arrighi's (2002) contention that external conditions and luck are critical explanatory factors for Africa's position *vis à vis* Latin America and Asia.

Cultural resurgence

A movement of self-righteousness that revels in cultural explanations of political instability and the state in Africa is resurfacing (Jacoby 2005: 216). Certain modernisationists argued that attitude and other cultural elements limited development. Thus, while condoning atrocities by Western militaries under the guise of spreading democracy, they revile conflicts in Africa as 'the result of irrational and ancient tribal hatred' (Keen 1997: 67). The cultural perspective within modernisation theory argues that cultural shortfall is the root of underdevelopment. Therefore, economic assistance and technological transformation are insufficient to resolve the crisis. According to them, Africa's traditional culture inhibits progress. There is a lack of the requisite culture necessary for development. Traditional culture, in turn inhibits adoption of the vital modern culture. Kaplan argues that violence in Africa is a reflection of untamed natural forces. The violence is a cultural repercussion of a biological tendency by Africans to populate their societies to the brink of environmental collapse. He says, 'Physical aggression is part of being human. Only when people attain a certain economic, educational, and cultural standard is this trait tranquilised' (1994). Chabal and Daloz argue that

violence in Africa is an 'instrumentally plausible retraditionalisation of society' (1999: 82).

In effect, the culturalists look to internal factors rooted in culture. Wilson (1991), for instance, suggests that the persistence of corruption in Nigeria is the result of the moral quality of reciprocity in Nigerian society. In a critique, Williams argues that cultural explanations focus on negative images: 'Many African governments are very corrupt and suffer tribalism. African culture encourages and legitimates tribalism and corruption. The circularity of the argument is evident' (Williams 2004: 575). What these culturalist explanations do is eschew society-rooted politics or political contexts of the explanandum. To attribute causal role to putatively resurgent cultural elements is to deny the impact of society-rooted politics.

Natural resource curse

Scholars use two primary models to analyse the state-conflict nexus in resource-abundant developing countries. These are the *rentier state model* and *neo-patrimonial models*. The underlying logic of the rentier model is that huge natural resource rents relative to income foster uneven levels of rent-seeking. Thus, mineral-rich countries are prone to violence associated with distributive conflicts and they generate intense corruption. Underlying the above is the basic principle that when the State derives its revenue mainly from rents, leaders neglect domestic taxation and therefore become less dependent on, and unaccountable to citizens (DiJohn 2002: 2). The increased autonomy of the State increases leader's ability to undertake predatory behaviours.

In a critique, DiJohn (2002: 4) argues that the rentier literature assumes that leaders own natural resources, and thus, neglect to analyse how 'common pool resources are managed or the processes through which rights are assigned, enforced, maintained and changed'. He stresses that the State is not a thing (e.g. a predator) but a set of social relationships. Nothing prevents a state that decides not to tax citizens from being developmental rather than predatory. Moreover, he argues that leaders' predatory behaviour cannot be assumed or simply described (ibid: 4). Increased rent-seeking could emerge from disputes over unjust distribution of rents and rights as much as from increasing natural rents (ibid: 6). DiJohn concludes that mineral-rich countries do not appear more prone to violence than countries lacking minerals (ibid: 7).

The rentier model privileges the politics of the elites over the masses portraying them as little more than passive victims. For instance, Bayart et al. (1999) in their analysis of the Sierra Leone conflict authoritatively attribute agency to Charles Taylor as the proximate cause of the war, presenting a political space 'inhabited only by elites driven by pecuniary and culturalist motives' (Mustapha 2002). The 'philosophy of despair', as Mustapha calls the rentier model literature, informs Omeje's 'high stake rentier space'. Characteristic of the sum of the literature, Omeje is unable to distinguish between the legitimacy and necessity of redistribution and illegitimacy of corruption (Bracking 2003: 12). Incapable of exploring redistribution outside the 'neo-Hobbesian' or, 'post-Darwinian' (ibid: 8) logic of accumulation, lifts high stakes politics out of the context in which authority and distributional issues are contested and negotiated.

The second model, which Africanists employ to examine how resource abundance leads to conflict, is neo-patrimonialism. According to Ohlson and Soderberg, in 'a patrimonial system rulers base their claim to power, their authority and legitimacy on powerful, but informal structures of vertical patron-client relationships, with rewards going top-down and support going bottom-up in the system' (2002: 9). What we have in place, therefore, is a hybrid political structure combining formal and patrimonial features. In this structure, ruling elites maintain regime stability and ensure personal survival by selectively distributing patronage to clients. The defects of this system are, its exclusivity makes it conflict prone and that it cannot co-opt everyone. Chris Allen argues that the endemic violence in Africa lies in the 'internal dynamics of "spoil politics" in which the primary goal of those competing for political office or power is self-enrichment. Over time, the self-destructive logic of prebendalism that accompanies such relationships undermines the fiscal capacity of the state, and the state ceases to provide the most basic social services. This induces conflict, which may assume violent forms and warlordism' (Mkandawire 2002: 185).

Bracking argues that critics of the African state refer to the patrimonialism and corruption of African polities as effects of an inherent inability of state officials to break away from personal relationships in society, or state meddling with market forces. Bratton and van de Walle (1994: 458) argue, 'the distinctive institutional hallmark of African regimes is neopatrimonialism… [in which] the distinction between private and public interests is blurred.' Chabal and Daloz (1996: 6) finger patrimonialism

as militating against the emergence of defined public and private spheres. Roel van der Veen (2004) who argues that age-old African principles, including patronage and clientelism, are to blame for Africa's woes takes this account of the African state to vulgar heights.

These studies strive to show a lack of separation between the public and private spheres in Africa, which distinguishes it from Europe. However, Bracking (2003: 13) demonstrates that corruption is 'part of the institutional development of the EU.' Therefore, the binary between private and public in the literature does not reflect reality because the State depends on the corporation, privately owned means of accumulation, for its finance. Thus, the State has an institutional self-interest in ensuring the viability of capitalist accumulation (ibid: 14). The rent-seeking and patrimonial concepts prove inadequate in apprehending the networks of trans-local forces in which the State embed.

Arrighi (2002: 31) questions the argument that bad policies by African leaders ruined their economies. Arrighi argues instead that given that what is good in a particular country may be bad in another at the same time or in the same country at a different time, 'there exist no policies that are themselves "good" or "bad" across time and space'. William Easterly shows that adherence to the agenda of the Washington Consensus has been associated with deteriorating economic fortune, implying that economic performance is not only about good policies (Easterly, Kremer, Pritchett and Summers 1993). Easterly observes, contrary to the bad policies and poor governance thesis, 'worldwide factors like the increase in world interest rates, the increased debt burden of developing countries, the growth slowdown in the industrial world, and skill-biased technical change may have contributed to the developing countries' stagnation' (Easterly 2001: 135).

3.6.3   Social schizophrenia as cause

Ekeh provides, perhaps, one of the most engaging analyses of political morality in Nigeria. He claims that the presence of two public realms characterise Africa: the 'primordial public' and 'civic public'. In the former, primordial groups, ties and sentiments shape individual public behaviour. In other words, the primordial public realm is not only morally bound; it shares a common moral foundation with the private realm. To the contrary, the civic public realm, associated with the onset of colonial administration and postcolonial politics, is amoral and does not share the

moral basis of the private realm. Ekeh contrasts this situation with Western Europe and North America where, he argues, both the private and public realms have a common moral foundation. He continues:

> Most educated Africans are citizens of two publics in the same society. On the one hand, they belong to a civic public from which they gain materially but to which they give only grudgingly. On the other hand they belong to a primordial public from which they derive little or no material benefits but to which they are expected to give generously and do give materially. To make matters more complicated, their relationship to the primordial public is moral, while that to the civic public is amoral. The dialectical tensions and confrontations between these two publics constitute the uniqueness of modern African politics (Ekeh 1975: 108).

Ekeh goes on to argue that the tensions within this schizophrenic national moral character generate at least three maladies: tribalism, voluntary associations and corruption. That is the case because it provides political actors incentives to extract, through good or bad, legal or illegal means, from the civic public realm for the benefit of the primordial public realm. The ensuing competition among factions of the ruling elites result in tribalism and corruption.

While his analysis may provide insight into the political sociology of Africa, the claim that the two publics are uniquely African is debatable and so is the argument that the phenomenon is unknown in the West. History shows that while European states claimed and extolled the values of liberty, egalitarianism and equality at home, they were all over the world enslaving, exterminating and colonising other peoples. Beneficiaries of the trade believed in the legality of slavery even though in Britain they believed all men were born equal. A significant segment of British society saw that as an inhuman contradiction, and began to lobby for the abolition of slavery. That the abolition of the slave trade took some 30 years of agitation by the abolitionist movement indicates that the British public did not share a common moral ethos. Moreover, it shows that while a part of the British public shared a common moral value of equality at home and abroad, the other segment accepted the first but not the second component. If making a claim about a common public and private moral ethos, it is imperative to avoid the erroneous suggestion that such common basis is natural and uncontested.

Ekeh does not offer any explanation for how and by what generalising mechanism the whole of Africa came to devise and adopt, simulta-

neously this particular solution and not another. He does stress, however, the role of colonialism and the dilemma of educated Africans who found themselves between two mentally contraposing orders in the emergence of the moral duality. If colonialism and its effects are to blame then, the logic of two publics should not be unique to Africa. The reality Ekeh grapples with is more complex than his explanatory tool. It is not altogether correct that ruling elites steal from the public arena to enrich their ethnic bases. The significant transformation of Igbo villages in Eastern Nigeria by enterprising Ibo men and women with money remitted from far and near where they engage in business is well known. If those who have presided over vast resources at the federal and state levels had siphoned national wealth for the benefit of their villages, many Niger Delta villages would rank among those of the East (Dibua 2006: 6). Moreover, and more importantly, Ekeh would suggest that the two publics predate competition, which precedes corruption and tribalism.

What is clearly lacking is detailed attention to the amorality of the colonial state given its predominant goal of surplus extraction, through legal and illegal, moral or immoral, means. Importantly, the nature of politicking engendered within a context of expropriation. The nature of that relationship has changed little in the postcolonial state. Indeed, it exacerbated fractious division along ethnic and other sectarian lines, with the implication that the points of competition and conflict multiplied. The competition and conflicts are about attempts to control, expropriate resources and maintain dominance and corresponding reaction to thwart expropriation, domination and dispossession. It is important to note that the situation is more complex than simply two opposed forces. Shifting alliances, collaboration and non-partisans blur the distinction between the categories. Since the colonial era, these battles continued without institutional oversight. Where institutions of control existed, the ruling elites put them to their own use. It is not surprising that institutions have remained impotent in mediating the politics of domination, collaboration and resistance.

Colonial rule had been arbitrary, repressive, unjust, racist and inhuman. It was a system that privileged few at the expense of the many on the basis, solely, of skin colour. More than that, its divisive strategy privileged certain ethnic groups over others. For example, the British indoctrinated Hausa-Fulani in their assumed superiority to southern Nigerians as the Belgians held the Tutsi as the aristocratic class over the Hutu in

Rwanda (Cooper 2002: 8). Similarly, the British interfered with Nigeria's independence elections in 1956 and 1959 so its favoured group, the Northerners, would win and rule Nigeria after independence (Smith 2005). According to Smith:

> The Northerners never really wanted the British to leave. They feared the Southerners more than the British. The British and the Northern elites worked so closely together that differences of policy could hardly exist. The British claimed that the Northerners demanded-and must have- 50% of all the seats in a Federal legislature…. Whoever controlled the NPC controlled the North and the whole of Nigeria. As the British and the Emirs were inseparable, elections were a mere formality (ibid: 11).

British favouritism and bias fuelled the distrust and fear sowing the seeds of discord. The criteria for judging educational qualifications were purportedly universal.

The above subsections have identified less than benign government, lack of institutions, resurgent culture, natural resource curse, and social schizophrenia as explanations of why there is meagre development and so many conflicts in Africa. The arguments, however, fail to explain adequately how African countries got to where they are by neglecting detailed analysis of society-rooted politics, who benefits and why the system of domination subsists.

3.7   Confronting Denial and its Discontents

A disturbing similarity of the various attempts to understand the little progress in the country is the tendency to attribute causality to structural forces. The problem is located in a form of incorrigible state elements, structural dependence or natural endowment of mineral resources, or traditions lacking institutional or cultural relevance. Even more worrisome, many consider these structures self-existing and historicised only within a statist or cultural framework. Nobody denies that the problems identified as militating against progress exist. What is in dispute is how to understand and explain the dynamics and sources of the problems.

The various engagements with the reasons behind Nigeria's poor progress seem to proceed from the premise that colonialism was an intended paradise from which postcolonial states retrogressed. In other words, the colonial state erected a modern infrastructure that the postcolonial state mongrelised to its undoing. That way these scholars main-

tain a binary of colonised-coloniser and colonial-postcolonial, mystifying the way that each side intertwines with the other in the process. Cooper shows that movements disrupted the economic, and discredited the hegemonic, project of colonialism to the extent that European powers began to think more in terms of the Africa they had than the Africa they wanted (1994: 1536-7). Moreover, the failure of the colonial project manifested in its capitulation to the contradictory tendency of bourgeois Europe, the calculation of the costs and benefits of colonial rule. Independence leaders, Cooper suggests, inherited 'the unsolved problems of the colonial era' (ibid). Therefore, the view that the colonial period represents a viable example easily created with intention and from which the postcolonial conditions have regressed is a myth.

Cooper shows the core of the problem of Africa's development eloquently,

> In Africa, the encounters of the past are very much part of the present. Africa still faces the problems of building networks and institutions capable of permitting wide dialogue and common action among people with diverse pasts, of struggling against and engaging with the structures of power in the world today. Africa's crisis derives from a complex history that demands a complex analysis: a simultaneous awareness of how colonial regimes exercised power and the limits of that power, an appreciation of the intensity with which that power was confronted and the diversity of futures that people sought for themselves, an understanding of how and why some of those futures were excluded from the realm of the politically feasible, and an openness to possibilities for the future that can be imagined today (1994: 1545).

In response to the problems, Nigerian leaders evolved two political responses to deal with the problems: accommodation and transformation (Cartwright 1983). The colonial infrastructure of government concentrated power in the executive. The postcolonial state continued and defended many of the policies devised by the colonial state, some of which leaders of the new government had attacked before they took office. As the problems mounted and dissatisfaction grew, the new leaders attended to their own political survival. Such tendency may have been entrenched by the ambiguities of the political values introduced during colonial rule, instilling the concrete impression that government was capricious and illogical.

On the one hand, the colonial powers' own professed beliefs in liberty, the right of free expression, popular participation in government, and making rulers accountable to the people had been used effectively against them by the nationalist parties to demand self-government. On the other side, however, was the long record of arbitrary actions by the colonial admini-stration. Administrators generally had done what they thought best, re-gardless of the wishes of the people (Cartwright 1983: 54-5).

Social division and economic problems persisted. Insecure leaders tried to protect their positions by eliminating opposition. Civil society groups were weak and could not challenge the government. The tradi-tional institution had lost its autonomy undermining it as an instrument of colonial administration. With the consolidation of power, Cartwright argues, the leaders towed the path of arbitrariness and corruption. En-couraging similar patterns of behaviour at lower levels of government weakened people's commitment to the State. With independence, na-tional consensus gave way to conflicting visions and interests in addition to the goal of the State. The leaders were incapable of mobilising the people to address new goals because they developed their parties into election-winning machines rather than building institutions for educating the masses and implementing new policies (Cooper 2008).

Blaming the victim

Fatton Jr (1990) links the disintegration of liberal democracy in Africa to the absence of the 'objective criteria that have historically been associ-ated with the rise of bourgeois forms of representation elsewhere'. That deficiency explains why African leaders did not accept the European model entirely and why the European model inherited at independence 'disintegrated rapidly and without much popular opposition' (ibid: 458). Fatton's chagrin seems to exude what was pernicious about early mis-reading of development. 'Professional bias and the all-pervasive ethno-centrism of the time made most of the economists of the 1950s-1960s quite confident of the universality of the Western cultural model of tech-nical/economic accumulation and of the dominance of this process of overall social change' (Petiteville 1998: 117).

Guenther Roth argues:

For that matter, every American President, in order to be effective, cannot merely rely on his constitutional (legal-rational) powers, the institutional-ized charismatic aura of his office, or any personal charismatic appeals to

the public, but must build his own personal apparatus out of the so-called in-and-outers, who efficiently take the place of a permanent civil service of the British kind (Roth 1968: 198).

Roth emphasises that there are increasing numbers of semi-public agencies and corporations featuring patrimonial relationships and where officials become 'benefice-holders'. A good case in point is the recent scandal involving the President of the World Bank, an American who used his office to benefit his girlfriend. He sought to retain his position, with the express backing of US President, George W. Bush, until 'diplomatic' way to remove him materialised (Goodman and Williams 2007). In this regard, Roth is apt when he argues that the Weberian character of the bureaucracy may be changed when an official cannot be dismissed *de jure* or *de facto*, and when such an official is able to co-opt others, thereby displacing universalistic criteria of official recruitment.

In *Whose Dream was it Anyway*, Crowder (1987) argues that the blistering criticisms of everything African rest on a dream that dispenses with contemporary African realities and the legacy of colonialism. Similarly, Franck Petiteville argues that economic development theorists saddled the developing state with a misplaced 'Promethean capacity' for socio-economic transformation, believing the State elites could do so without any political problem (1998). Such was the result of an 'over estimation of the economic factor, serious neglect of the historicity of the relationship of the state to the economy and to society, and failure to analyse not only the state's development resources but also its mode of operation'. Even more serious, there is a scandalous tendency among scholars, including Fatton and van der Veen, to eulogise the distinctiveness of, and romanticise, liberal democracy in Western Europe and North America.

To the contrary, Rogers M. Smith argues that those who subscribe to the view that America was shaped by extraordinarily free and egalitarian ideas and material condition prevalent at its founding, neglect '...inegalitarian ideologies and conditions that shaped the participants and the substance of American politics just as deeply' (Smith 1993: 549).

For over 80% of U.S. history, its laws declared most of the world's population to be ineligible for full American citizenship solely because of their race, original nationality, or gender. For at least two-thirds of American history, the majority of the domestic adult population was also ineligible for full citizenship for the same reasons (ibid: 549).

Smith argues that the illiberal and inegalitarian policies of American life, perpetuated through much of the 20th century, were not outgrown in an evolutionary sense, but required dismantling through collective struggles. Such struggles include black and women's civil rights movements. Smith declares, 'it is not clear that these struggles have ended' (ibid: 562). This is not surprising because even after the mid-20th century, illiberal elements, including vicious discrimination (Marx 1998: 3), were prevalent in America despite its high mass consumption status. Marx argues that exclusion is central to how the social order is maintained rather than peripheral to the nation-state building project (ibid: 3). In light of the foregoing, it appears that those who expected liberal democracy to wipe away illiberal tendencies in Africa were unrealistic.

3.8 Authoritarian Rule: Context that Bore a Muted Capitalist Model

Colonial mystifications and arbitrariness characterised relations between the colonised and their coloniser. Chapter 1 showed how British traders seized control of the trade in the colony, subjecting indigenous traders to not only ludicrous regimes but also theft by official means. Colonialism undermined the balanced relation between the rulers and ruled, investing the former with despotic powers to extract taxes and labour with impunity. It shows how the colonialists desecrated the aura of grace and awe that surrounded the ruler by subjecting traditional rulers to public works, beatings, ridicule and suspension whenever they failed to act as expected by colonial officials.

Through divide-and-rule tactics, colonial officials deliberately disorganised ancient traditions. A clear example is the case of hereditary rulership. The colonial governments installed people with no links to the royal family as rulers. Indiscipline among invading colonial soldiers was rife; indeed, they were encouraged to take spoils; including rape of conquered peoples. The punitive expedition against Benin in 1898 turned into a frenzied looting of ancient treasures, including valued artefacts and priceless works of art, some of which the British government insistently refused to return to Nigeria. Toward the end of colonialism, the colonial rulers engaged in partisan politicking that pitched favoured ethnic groups against those that seem too audacious or radical. Thus, while the British government extolled its liberalism in advancing Nigeria toward inde-

pendence, 'Yet here was chicanery and cynical interference in the electoral process beyond belief' (Smith 2005).

The motives behind so-called, official laws were parochial and selfish interests. For instance, the British set in place laws that privileged Shell/BP over other oil concerns. Indeed, even when an oil company offered a better deal the Nigerian State was unable to alter the British arrangement and accept the deal. Indeed, it took the postcolonial state ten years after independence to review the Petroleum Act, and even when it did, it was little different in character. In 1961, Mallam Waziri Ibrahim, a former Nigerian Minister of Economic Development in a ministerial statement on economic planning admitted that economic domination and exploitation by the imperialists were inevitable and the near impossibility of breaking loose. According to Ibrahim:

> What do members think is the reason for the assassination of Patrice Lumumba?... Imperialists saw that he…was a real nationalist, that he was out to see that the resources of the Congo were used to improve the welfare of the Congolese people as a whole. When imperialists are in control of any country, it is not easy to free that country (Nwala 1981: 161).

British political partisanship and desire to transfer political power to their favoured Northern region coincided with concerted efforts to enact policies and laws to protect British privilege and economic interests. However, any understanding of the nature of the compact the British designed, with the collaboration of its protégés, as exploitative suggests that the former were less interested in institutionalising a participatory, democratic nation that remotely approximate British society than they were in economic gain. The double standard inherent in the view and practice that suggest that what is good for the British is not good for the colonised has a long history. It is little wonder then that the same people who claimed liberal democracy were the ones who entrenched and sustained, simultaneously, despotism abroad.

Uzodinma Nwala purports that although impotent in the face of imperialism and too feeble to initiate alternative systems of development, Nigerian leaders were well aware of the neo-colonial character of the system bequeathed by the British. Nwala shows that the leaders rejected socialist philosophy because it would have angered the imperialists, thus placing the physical and political security of the nationalists in danger.

> Certain measures have been taken to introduce a socialist philosophy of economic planning in certain neighbouring countries and this has resulted

in the imperialists sabotaging the country. Imperialists have got various means of defending their monopoly. They have got their newspapers and television, and they go to any extent to tell lies. They can say or write any amount of untruths to discredit us. If we want really to set about improving our economy in any particular ways, they may say we are communists. They can make our countrymen to suspect our moves. If they do not succeed by false propaganda, by calling us all sorts of names, if they fail to make us unpopular in order to win their case, they can arrange assassination. They can do it by poison or by setting our own people against us. They can go to any extent without discrimination (Nwala 1981: 161).

The veracity of the minister's understanding of the imperialists' ethos and inclinations is not the issue here. What is at stake is the official or public understanding of the colonialists (Cooper 2008: 520). Nigerian ruling elites, following political independence, saw the imperialists as an ever-present source of danger to those whose domestic policies might threaten external interests. The fear and powerlessness this engenders emanate from the fact that despite knowing what is right to do, they were unable to do it because the British would not want the right things done, ostensibly because the right things offend British interests. Nwala, however, underlines the role of self-interest among other reasons for nationalists' inaction (Nwala 1981: 160).

3.9   Prelude to Movement-State Politics

The concept of movement-state implies a system of goal-oriented political and economic elites, or the state, which seeks to control the transformation of society from one type to another through organisation of the means of production and production of symbolic goods (Touraine 1985).

Petiteville (1998) argues that since the 1950s successive prescriptions for economic development come from imaginary representations of the State. These include the myth of the developer state (1950s-1960s), the myth of the puppet state (1970s), and the myth of the minimal liberal state (1980s-1990s). Despite the tension between the three myths, they convey an impression of the State as a neutral arbiter or an entity with the potential to arbitrate conflicting societal interests. The World Bank raised initial doubts about the State (1981). The literature on Africa's political economy also arrived at the conclusion that the State is not the benign actor that the modernisation theory assumed. It established such

arguments by pointing to actions and behaviours of the State that had clearly undermined development efforts in the Continent. In the context of the debate over whether the African state can promote development within an imperialist global context, authors differed by casting the State either as a tool of global capital or domestic bourgeoisie. Beckman (1981), however, argues that the State cannot be pinned down as the instrument either of domestic or foreign forces. To the scholar, the fundamental goal of the State is to create necessary conditions for capitalist accumulation and to expand that prospect. The interests of the foreign and domestic bourgeoisie converge on that goal, given that in the absence of such conditions capital accumulation is impossible.

By means of territoriality, the State is able to shape the socio-political process within a territory: power, wealth, cultural and social elements (Taylor 1994). Taylor argues that the State plays four primary roles: war making, economic management, provision of national identity and provision of social services. These roles, or strategies of territoriality, amount to the containment of power, wealth, culture and society. Although Taylor admits the limitation of the 'state as container' metaphor, it is only insofar as it neglects the international dimension of the State (Taylor 1995). His conceptualisation does not adequately reflect the African reality. The African state, unlike their European counterparts, performs a fifth role: being beholden to the international constituency.

> The formation of states in the Third World is uniquely complicated by the disarticulating impact of domination exercised by the centre of the world system on its periphery. As noted earlier, countries of Third World do not have the advantage of the historical circumstances enjoyed by Western Europe when the modern state was formed simultaneously with the world capitalist system (Olugbade 1989: 80).

The different appellations by which scholars attempted to apprehend the state in Africa derive mainly from a fixation on its assumed behaviour or character.[2] Reference to 'the African tradition' and greed is the typical response to the question of the source of these behaviours. The simple logic of modernist's definition of the State seems to be that state misappropriates public resources or preys on citizens for its own parochial interests. Another is that the State is incapable of executing its obligations because it is weak or failing. Cooper (2008: 526) argues that it matters little to emphasise the failings of a government while discounting or neglecting the constraints and their sources. Tilly's (1985) argument

shows understanding of the importance of a shift in focus from behaviour to objectives. Rather than get excited about how criminal the State really is, Tilly pushes the point that state-making is a contingent effect of state organised racketeering, geared at the desire for unchallenged dominance within an expanding territory. Therefore, it should be a matter for empirical analysis and central importance why a given state acts the way it does (Marx 1998: 2).

Little of the energies surrounding the competition to describe what some view as a deficient state touch on a critical examination of why the Nigerian State acts the way it does. Van der Veen (2004) points to the resurgence of lethal elements in African culture. The institutionalists suggest the weakness or absence of strong institutions. Karl (1997) locates the problem in the persistence of a destructive development trajectory in some oil-exporting countries, including Nigeria, which failed to develop strong institutions before petrolisation of the economy occurred. For Omeje (2006), pervasive high stake rentierism is to blame. In these accounts, there is little history available on the Nigerian State's initial mediation. As well as little information on whom the mediating actors were, or what their interests were and what compromises they negotiated as a *sine qua non* to the actualisation of the State.

Dissatisfied with their exclusion from senior positions in the bureaucracy, these leaders began to clamour against alien rule. They successfully mobilised the masses in their struggle against colonialism. With independence, the nationalist leaders unwittingly demobilised the mass base of the nationalist movement. The national anti-colonial movement, accordingly, dissolved into regional movements of regional warriors rather than national warriors. With the masses demobilised, the political cadre, a movement within movement, inherited the reins of power from the departing colonialists, but not without the latter and transnational business mobilising to influence and shape decolonisation in ways beneficial to capital. That these elites extricated themselves from the grassroots base and inherited political power does not destroy their movement essence. Indeed that they remained regional warriors emphasises the retention of their movement character.

Delinked from the masses, Ajayi and Ekoko (1988) emphasise that the nationalist elites became promoters of regional or worse still ethnonationalist interests. The processes leading to independence were remarkable for their compromises and obstinacy. Anxious for self-rule,

Azikiwe and Awolowo (1988) were willing to shift positions to get the colonialists out. However, the leaders of the Northern region were not in a hurry for self-rule or the departure of the British. Thus, they predicated their acceptance of independence on conditions. Those provisos became British minimum prerequisites for granting independence. In contention, therefore, were sets of interests: those of the colonialists/British-European capital; the Northern regional warriors; the Western regional warriors and the Eastern regional warriors. Some paid lip service to the national and minority interests but they lagged behind. The state, or what this thesis terms 'movement state' that emerged was composed of regional warriors, pledged to uphold and pursue the negotiated interests that formed the basis of an independent and united Nigeria.

The overwhelming use of Weberian ideal types to define the behaviour of the African state resulted in a tendency to criminalise it, while ignoring what the State sought to achieve and actually accomplish. If Tilly's (1985) historical illumination on the European state is anything to go by, it is no news that the State is predatory, cunning or racketeering. What seems more important is what objective those 'contemptible' behaviours orient to and achieve. In this case, the regularly ignored seems essential. If the *raison d'être* of state racketeering in Europe was the need to enjoy supreme power, what is the aim of the Nigerian State at its becoming? Their orientation, stated or unstated, to objectives is a better way to apprehend state action, regardless of perceptions of their legitimacy. The politics of balance, the irreducible minimum providing for the interests of British/international capital and elites of the three dominant ethnic blocs, is the basis of a federal Nigeria.

Touraine (1985: 776) argues that there are three main kinds of social movements: social movement's proper, historical movements and cultural movements. Strictly speaking, social movements are conflicting actions to control the main cultural patterns within a given societal type, while historical movements, are organised efforts to control the transformation of society from one societal type to another.

> Here actors are no longer defined in purely social terms but first of all by their relationships with the State, which is the central agent of such historical transformations. Nevertheless, historical movements, as I already mentioned, are not completely separated from social movements because they combine a class dimension with a national and modernizing one (ibid: 776).

Touraine goes on to argue 'there is only one central couple of conflicting social movements' in a given societal type (ibid: 773). They operate in a given type of social production and organisation. That central conflict concerns itself less with labour and economic issues than cultural and ethical matters, 'because the domination which is challenged controls not only "means of production" but the production of symbolic goods, that is, of information and images, of culture itself' (ibid: 774). It is not possible, he asserts to disengage popular social movements from a social movement of the ruling class because their conflict represents the central conflict. He argues for the apprehension of the holder of economic and political power as a social movement. Although Touraine draws a distinction between social and historical movements, what is of interest is his remark that the latter embraces elements of the former, and the argument for analysing ruling elites as a social movement.

Implicitly, the State is not sitting by somewhere, watching and faithfully presiding over interests' intermediation. To suggest otherwise, Osaghae (1995) underlines, is a faulty assumption. He argues that the Ogoni and state confrontation shows that the State exists to further the interests of the majority groups against those of the minorities and to plot together with oil companies to exploit Niger Delta minorities. To be sure, the State responds to other societal interests, but it is possible to trace the relative power of the interests of capital and ruling elites, *vis à vis* other organised interests. Furthermore, changing conditions, such as political instability or stability may tilt the balance of such forces (Akard 1999). It also means that the State is not reduced to reactive responses to threats from the political field. To the contrary, the State engages actively in conflict with other actors over ideas of good society, discourses of development and other prized goods. The argument in this thesis is that the concept of movement-state best captures such a dynamic state. In Touraine's (1985) formulation, the movement-state seeks to control the means of production and production of symbolic goods. The symbolic sphere is important because it provides the values, meanings and visions by which actions in the material spheres are legitimated.

Thus, the Nigerian State is a movement-state because it is a system of goal-oriented collectivity. At various times, crises have overtaken the movement-state but it has been able to reconstitute itself and reassure its core units of its willingness to protect their interests (Ake 1996: 12). The concept of movement-state does not aim to dilute the notion of the State

as it applies to Nigeria or its stateness. The idea is to emphasise that the Nigerian State is composed of movement forces, formed before independence, to further and sustain the goals and interests of the dominant forces that mediated Nigeria. It is of no consequence whether the government at any time is construed as democratic or authoritarian. Like every other movement, the movement-state remains an arena characterised by conflicting interests, visions and ideas of good society, and factions struggling to maintain or enhance their privileges and those of the regions they purport to represent. Therefore, it is naïve to expect the movement-state simply to ignore the competition among its members and govern altruistically. Altruism in that context would simply imply both socio-political losses and geo-spatial disadvantages for the dominant. Consequently, asking the elites to dispense with competition is like asking the dominant factions to commit class suicide.

3.10   Conclusion

Like the colonial state, the Nigerian movement-state is largely unaccountable to its citizens. Despite protests, violence and bloodshed, the movement-state has remained committed to fostering and privileging the interests of the ruling faction and global capital, and exercising control over the main cultural patterns. Such tenacity to economic and cultural control is what Soyinka (1997) refers to as the 'principle of inviolability'; querying what gave the leaders the right to determine that certain questions were beyond discussion or subject to discursive interrogation by Nigerians.

   One major implication of development for the Niger Delta is that with the silencing of alternative discourses, the State managed to retain control not only over material production, but also over the main cultural patterns. However, the exercise of subtle power in no way means hegemony as Nigerians in their individual places continue to question the order of things and the ideas on which that order rests. The movement-state has on occasion acted in the best interests of citizens, but it has done so without relinquishing significant space or power to citizens to take active part in decision-making and exercise control over issues that affect their lives. To legitimise its obstinacy, the movement-state often premises its actions or inactions on its commitment to the indivisibility of Nigeria, to keep Nigeria as one, and/or appeal to being more knowledgeable.

Notes

[1] These included (1) the Minerals Ordinance of 1945, which vested ownership and control of all minerals in Nigeria in the Crown; (2) the Public Lands Acquisition; (3) the Crown Lands (Amendment) Ordinance, which converted all lands acquired by the government for public purposes into Crown Lands; and (4) the Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs (Amendment) Ordinance, which authorised the governor to appoint and depose chiefs in the Protectorate (See Ajayi and Ekoko 1988: 248).

[2] See Dibua for a telling critique of this approach.

4 Conceptualising Development as Conflict

4.1 Existing Development

In his seminal book, *Development as Freedom*, Sen (1999) argues for a view of development as a process of expanding the real freedom people enjoy. He emphasises that the lack of development is an 'unfreedom' and that freedom is the primary goal and means of development. The varieties of freedom are interdependent: as freedom of one kind furthers the realisation of others. He demonstrates the interrelations among different kinds of freedom by showing how political freedom enhances economic empowerment, protective security, social opportunities and transparency guarantees. Sen advocates the need to advance political freedom through public discussion. Democracy for him involves the presence and use of 'the opportunity of open public reasoning based on public knowledge which helps us to understand and value the freedoms of all members of the society' (Sen 2004: 14). The concern with development as freedom partly rests on the observation that despite worldwide increases in opulence, 'the contemporary world denies elementary freedoms to vast numbers—perhaps even the majority—of people' (Sen 1999: 4). Seen in that light, Sen's intervention is part of the general chagrin with the impasse in development sociology (Booth 1985).

A recharacterisation of development as freedom is, thus, a welcomed intervention. Sen's project appears as a concern with what development ought to be. Such normative approach comes into bold relief with Sen's emphasis on public reasoning or democratic participation as a strategy to expanding all kinds of freedoms people wish to enjoy. In this formulation, one gets the impression that there is a linear link between public advocacy and political confrontation, and expansion of freedoms. It hides the idea of the contestation of international development and that however defined development creates beneficiaries and victims (Goulet

1968; Edkins 1996). There seems to be no place for conflict in Sen's treatment of development, which relates to the assumption that development ought to expand freedoms and nothing else. However, the intentions of those who derive and benefit from development continue to produce a class of development victims (Edkins 1996). The failure to grasp the intentional and conflictual, explains Alex De Waal's (1990) critique of Sen's entitlement theory as blind to violence. In his focus on what should be, Sen tends to neglect that already existing processes of development, whether or not they enhance freedoms, are highly contested (Goulet 1968, 1980, 1992, 1996), and that entrenched interests intentionally sustain the process with a view to reproducing the attendant pattern of benefit and losses. In Sen's work, there seems to be a return to the pristine view of development as wholly beneficial to all. In other words, there is a neglect of the externalities of development.

Given that actual existing development and the costs it imposes on some, as well as the benefits it affords a few, are not accidental or aberrant, but intended by those who benefit from them. It is imperative to find tools to apprehend those actors and associations among them, who organise development as it is. This chapter deploys certain metaphors to foster understanding of the associations and dynamics involved in oil production, how they come into being, what set of actors benefit, why, how and what implications they have for other actors in the host community.

4.2   Perspectives on Development

In the 1980s, it became apparent that the various paradigms of modernisation failed to boost meaningful development in Africa. This awareness provoked forceful criticism of development economists by their neoliberal counterparts. The latter blamed internal factors for Africa's economic crisis. The Berg report blames domestic policy for the crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa (WB 1981). However, the report was silent on the role of external actors in shaping domestic development policies in Africa. The neoliberals held that state intervention obstructed the operation of free market forces and efficient allocation of resources, resulting in patrimonialism and corruption (Dibua 2006). Neoliberal theory, thus, reduces people to isolated creatures of the marketplace, devoid of history, culture and social relations (Brohman 1995: 297). It disregards power relations and institutional, historical and political contexts of state

intervention, and despises historically formed meanings and values (ibid: 298-305).

Whether apprehended as state or market-led, development theory and praxis mean different things to different people. To some it represents immanent or intentional development (Cowen and Shenton 1996), exploitation of natural resources (IBRD 1989), planned public, private or combined mobilisation of resources in the promotion of economic growth (Leftwich 2000: 22), or an unending process of economic growth (ibid: 25-7). One may also view development as the expansion of freedoms (Sen 1999) or as a discourse of domination (Leftwich 2000: 63-8). For Escobar (1984: 384), development has not only failed, it remains a discourse or tool by which Western developed countries create the Third World and seek to manage and control it. It is 'a series of political technologies intended to manage and give shape to the reality of the Third World'. Moreover, given that representations do not reflect reality but constitute it, development discourse constitutes the problem it seeks to analyse and resolve (Escobar 1995: 130).

Escobar's conceptualisation of development as discourse suggests that there exists a single encompassing development discourse. Such view neglects alternative and competing discourses such as basic needs and development as freedom approaches. It creates a dualism of impervious and top-down development discourse and bottom-up anti-development discourse, leaving little space for middling discourses that allow for heterogeneity, exchange of experiences, ideas and responsiveness to local views (Grillo 1997: 24-5). It becomes difficult to explore the varieties of struggles and alternatives at the grassroots that do not conform to such dualism. Grillo upholds the idea that development consists of multiple voices and sets of knowledge even if some voices are more influential. A view of development as composed of multiple voices and practices, rather than a single hegemonic discourse enables examination of the complex and contradictory relations between development discourses, and facilitates understanding of the heterogeneous and conflicting strands of thoughts within particular discourse.

Development is irreducible to discourse because there 'is no materiality that is not mediated by discourse, as there is no discourse that is unrelated to materialities' (Escobar 1995: 130). This implies that materialities have their own existence independent of discourse and that reality affects discourse when it responds to changing situations (Parfitt 2002: 30).

Escobar (1995: 46, 145) admits that the work of development agencies does contribute to the amelioration of practical human problems such as poverty. Cowen and Shenton (1996: 454-5) emphasise that development is not only composed of doctrines, but also by 'the practice of development'. The processes of development always involve 'the organization, mobilization, combination, use and distribution of resources *in new ways'* that inevitably result in disputes over how the resources are to be used and who should lose or gain (Leftwich 2000: 5). Approaching development as a set of conscious action geared at a desired goal is beneficial to this task.

4.3   Development: Agency and Structure Debate

During the 1950s, the established belief among British colonial officials and development scholars was that Westernisation was the best way to develop the newly decolonising societies. Westernisation would ensure the transition of the latter from backward and ancient condition to a modern state. In the economic sphere, Rostow's 'stages of growth' theory provided a blueprint for economic westernisation. It held up Western capitalist societies as the archetype of development. To achieve similar heights, African societies must pass through Rostow's five stages.

> Rostow identified the take-off stage as the most important component or watershed in the process of economic development in that it helped to lay the foundation for the attainment of self-sustaining growth and development. As a result of the prominence attached to the take-off stage, economic development planning in various African countries became primarily tailored toward establishing the conditions for take-off. Given this fact, economic development policies were preoccupied with attaining a certain amount of growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), capital formation, industrialization, urbanization, population, and infrastructures, among others (Dibua 2006: 29-30).

Development economists assumed that following take-off, economic benefits of growth would trickle down to all levels of society. Dibua argues that such perspective had the effect of conceiving economic development in technical and bureaucratic terms, and displacing human beings as the core of development. Political development theorists, steeped in structural-functionalist perspective, extolled modernisation as the basis for promoting enduring political systems, particularly Western-style liberal democracy.

The Marxist paradigm saw the economy as reflecting a dominant mode of production, which informed politics and ideology. Contradictions inherent in the capitalist mode of production create crisis between capital and labour. Opportunities for transformation of production relations adhere in such crisis. Workers organise as collective actors to struggle for their class interests. It is in this dynamic that a society attains advancement to a socialist society. The view of development is structural. The dependency literature saw underdevelopment as the effect of the peculiar relationship between developed countries and underdeveloped countries. If underdeveloped countries are to reverse their underdevelopment, they must delink their economies from the global capitalist system. Marxist-informed debate within African political economy in the 1970s argues that foreign capital could only frustrate capitalist development in Africa because alignment with foreign capital best served the interests of the domestic bourgeoisie and as such, the former have little potential for autonomous action.

These approaches share some common criticisms. They define the goal of development in terms of traditional societies yielding to the power and dictates of modern Western societies. Modernisation and Marxism deploy a unilinear conception of development. Similarly, dependency itself yields to a unilinear thought by arguing that development can only emerge by delinking from capitalist system. In the conceptualisation of the dependent economy, nothing happens therein that is of significance except for the impact of external forces. Such structural perspectives confuse the dynamics of mutually beneficial interaction between internal and external forces; how actors in the dependent country manoeuvre to adapt and benefit from external constraints. It obscures observation of how actions in the periphery frustrate the designs and intentions of external forces with the consequence that the effect of external intervention remains undetermined and the benefits of such outcomes have potential to move either way. Sewell argues,

> What tends to get lost in the language of structure is the efficacy of human action—or "agency," to use the currently favored term. Structures tend to appear in social scientific discourse as impervious to human agency, to exist apart from, but nevertheless to determine the essential shape of, the strivings and motivated transactions that constitute the experienced surface of social life. A social science trapped in an unexamined metaphor of

structure tends to reduce actors to cleverly programmed automatons (1992: 2).

Repudiating all structuralist explanations of development outcomes, rational actor perspective clearly locates the question of development and underdevelopment in the rational-choice actions of societal actors. According to this perspective, elites, politicians, bureaucrats and even civil society groups are rational self-interested actors who embark on actions they calculate to be in the best interest of themselves or their groups. As a result, they take measures to secure their interests heedless of the impact of such provincial and selfish actions on the broader society. Similar orientation led to the death of the debate in the African political economy in the late 1970s. Some theorists, at the height of the debate over the role of foreign capital in Africa argued for revisiting the assumption of a benign state that informed the debate. Scholars began to identify ways in which the State and ruling elites hindered progress in their countries by their own actions. The World Bank Berg report finally entrenched the argument by arguing that internal factors, namely the action and inaction of African leaders are responsible for Africa's poverty and conflicts.

What is clear from the structure-actor debacle is the tendency to retain dualism of structure and actor. Some find it convenient to take one extreme position or the other in the debate. Through the concept of 'structuration', Giddens (1984) attempted to integrate polar approaches. Giddens emphasises that structures are 'dual', that is 'both the medium and the outcome of the practices which constitute social systems' (1981: 27). He argues that structures do not only impose constraints on human agency; they are also enabling in that actors utilise their structured knowledge in creative ways. According to Giddens (1984: 2), in light of structuration theory, the focus of the social sciences should not be the experience of the individual actor or the forms of societal totality, but 'social practices ordered across space and time'. For him structures do not exist independently of actors and actions. Rather, structures are 'instantiations' produced by human action as well as the mediums of that action.

Charles Tilly argues, by adopting relational realism, the doctrine that stresses that connections, social ties and transactions constitute the 'central stuff of social life' (Tilly 1997: 4). Relational analysis follows networks, power relations across spatial scales and 'connections that con-

catenate, aggregate and disaggregate readily, form organizational struc-
tures at the same time as they shape individual behaviour'. Murdoch and
Marsden (1995) argue that the basic object of sociological analysis should
be 'action-in-context' rather than the individual as individual action is
contingent upon the action of others. Therefore, they emphasise:

> The outcomes of social episodes depend not on how variables, such as
> rules and resources, "structure" situations but on how these are repre-
> sented, interpreted and utilized by participants *within* situations. Structural
> variables do not specify a unique and unambiguous course of action for
> they have to be interpreted against a background of situational features
> (ibid: 371).

The authors consider the implication of granting relative autonomy to
micro-situations, namely how to account for continuities in social life
and the connection between one situation and another. In particular, the
point is raised that if social interaction within a specific situation is the
basis of social life, we are not able to account for pre-existing conditions
of social inequalities and unequal distribution of power and resources.
The authors argue that the structural cannot explain what happens in
situations given that it is itself made within micro-situations. Employing
Latour's (1986: 264-5) distinction between 'power in *potential*' and 'power
in *actu*', they argue that the amount of power an individual exercises is
not a function of how much power she has, but a consequence of the
number of actors involved in the composition of such power.

> Therefore, to "explain" power (and trace power geometry) we need to ex-
> amine how collective action comes about, how actors come to be associ-
> ated, and how they work in unison. And to understand what binds actors
> together, again, we cannot privilege the structural (Murdoch and Marsden
> 1995: 372).

In effect, the study of power is necessarily the study of associations.
In other words, power, society and structure are outcomes consequent of
the association of actors. To be powerful within associations is to be able
to sign up, persuade and enlist others into an association on conditions
that enable initial actors to represent all the others. Thus associated, ac-
tor worlds or situations are not independent but tied together in associa-
tions, which may result in the domination of some by others. Through
association, actors can do things in one place that affect or dominate an-
other place. The Actor Network Theory (ANT) employs *translation* as a

conceptual tool to explore how actors are enabled to determine other spaces. Translation refers to:

> The processes of negotiation, representation and displacement which establish relations between actors, entities and places…it involves the redefinition of these phenomena so that they are persuaded to behave in accordance with network requirements and these redefinitions are frequently inscribed in the heterogeneous materials which act to consolidate networks (Callon 1992: cf. Murdoch, p362).

There are two broad types of translation: 'spaces of negotiation' and 'spaces of prescription' (Murdoch 1998: 362). The former are networks where translations are perfectly accomplished or standardised and the latter refers to networks where the link between actors is provisional, divergent and in flux. These two types configure spaces differently. In the former, spaces are 'strongly prescribed by a centre as norms circulate, imposing fairly rigid and predictable forms of behaviour'. In the latter, spaces are 'fluid, interactional and unstable'.

Murdoch (1998: 357) argues that Actor-Network Theory (ANT) provides a means to navigate dualisms as it seeks to analyse how social and material processes become seamlessly interwoven within complex sets of relationships. Networks of associations are basic to the ANT because they are the means by which the world is constructed and stratified. The theory emphasises the heterogeneity of elements drawn together by networks. Such elements include natural, technical, social and political. The ANT criticises theoretical perspectives that deemphasise the non-human factor precisely because it is the alliance of human action and non-human materials that make networks durable and stable across space (Latour 1994a: 792). The ANT sees space and time as built within networks. The 'action in actor-networks configures space…these actions, and relations through which they are conducted, are "grounded"; they never shift registers or scales but remain firmly within networks' (ibid: 361). In other words, it is pointless shifting between, say, global and local scales as there are 'continuous paths from the local to the global' (ibid: 362). Spaces are enroled into networks in line with the terms of enrolment. The interconnection of spaces, and the underlying terms of linkage, allows certain actors to determine other spaces from a distance, and together they tie localities together (ibid: 362).

The relational realism framework rejects a view of development and underdevelopment as conditions imposed by one set of powerful actors

on another set of powerless actors. It contradicts and thus, allows for dismissal of the view of development as unilinear and predetermined outcome of some actors and not others. It dispenses with the Marxist view of development as the outcome of the conflict between already formed classes imbued with class identities. In eschewing a structural rendition of development, the framework argues that development is an outcome of the specific association between people and between places. Those associations are not only social but involve materials, texts and technologies as well. The associations are fluid and open to contestation; they involve interactions among a range of actors across spatial scales seeking to secure advantages, totalise or discredit given development discourses, of actors adopting or adapting to or contesting new situations.

4.4   Development as Oil Extraction

Traditional common sense construed primary commodity production for export as a primary engine of economic growth (North 1955; Mikesell et al. 1971: 16). Some argued that given the comparative advantage in the production of primary goods, developing countries should allocate a substantial portion of their productive factors to raw materials production and exports (Mikesell et al. 1971: 16). Critics argue that the benefits of trade in primary commodities accrue to industrial countries and that concentration on raw materials export could hinder industrial growth. Other economists stress, 'the role of resource industries as a leading sector that, under certain conditions, can induce broadly based development' (Mikesell et al. 1971: 17; Hulme and Turner 1990: 101). Although the governments of newly independent countries showed diffidence toward transnational capital, seeing them as neo-colonial agents (Koenig-Archibugi 2004: 16), the prevailing belief was that foreign direct investment (FDI) represented a *sine qua non* for the economic transformation of developing countries (Koenig-Archibugi 2004: 241; UNCTAD 2002).[1]

The arguments levelled against export-oriented development organise around three points. First, the creation of export enclaves that directs earnings to importation of consumer goods and non-productive investments, an overvalued exchange rate and the attraction of skilled labour and capital from the rural areas by the booming sector, leaving the non-export sector poorer and uneven regional development. Second, fluctuations in global demand and prices for primary commodities, decline in prices relative to manufacturers. Third, the need for sustainable mineral

exploitation and use. FDI relates to higher levels of conflicts and regime instability, with a possible weakening effect on the ability of state actors to design and implement workable development policies (ibid: 140). Mikesell et al. press the point that mineral dependence and the private capture of public mineral wealth is not a valid reason against such development (1971: 20). It is hard to prove that exporters would have been better off without mineral exports or that the presence of the latter does not currently contribute to their potential for development if they adopt appropriate policies (ibid: 20).

A teleological assumption of an inevitable link between investment in the extractive industry and economic development was characteristic of (neo) Marxist development theories and modernisation theory (Schuurman 1993: 12-13). In both sets of theories, the tendency was to relate the entire process of planning, action and effects, and to assume that the three stages were completely within the control of human intention or agency (Ferguson 1994). It failed to register that the outcomes of calculated human activities or development can spin out of control (Elias 1991: 62). Such modes of thought remain prevalent and largely inform state-led or neoliberal development and, why they fail (Scott 1998: 3-5).[2] Therefore, development action is a complex and unpredictable phenomenon, and may give rise to effects unplanned by its practitioners.

Worse still, development planners failed to admit that development is a mixed bag of 'goods and bads' (Goulet 1968; Goulet and Wilber 1996). In that vein, champions of development planning employed a sort of, development mantra 'profitability measure' (Stolper 1966). According to early development planners, the basis of economic investment decisions should be on the criteria of profit and nothing else. They assumed that economic growth would somehow trickle down and percolate every cranny of society. That their hope was misplaced is forgivable but what is not is their failure to reckon with the uneven distribution of development gains and industrial externalities. In that regard, little consideration went to the impact of foreign capital on the environment and the effect of environmental change on people and communities. Given the growing divergence between promise and reality from the 1960s, State-led modernisation came under serious scrutiny, along with the close association drawn between natural resource exports, capital and economic growth (Schuurman 1993: 5-8).

Political ecology scholars argue that politics occupies first place in any attempt to comprehend how the human-environment nexus feeds into environmental degradation. Some earlier structural accounts such as neo-Marxism, gave way in the late 1980s to a focus on 'how power relations mediate human-environment interaction' (Bryant 1992: 82). Power may reflect the ability of some actors to control the environment of some others and in 'conflicting perceptions, discourses and knowledge claims about development and ecological processes' (ibid: 87). For indigenous people, 'modern'' development has often been associated with disrupted livelihoods, cultural genocide and the degradation of local environments' (ibid: 86). Invariably, development entails benefits for some and losses for others, and the position of individuals in that context is a function of discourse and relative power (Bryant 1992: 85; Leftwich 2000: 69). Peter Berger (1974) argues that development exacts intolerable human costs on objects of development.

Oil extraction as development is best captured by approaching it as a network of social relationships, involving an array of individuals and organisations, through which processes of development operate (Bebbington and Kothari 2006). How such form of development is constituted and mobilised becomes clear by looking at the networks (ibid). The forms of development are also shaped by ideas and practices that are enroled into the networks. Thus, Bebbington and Kothari argue:

> Within such networks, ideas and normative arguments about development are debated and translated into intentional forms of intervention; resources are negotiated and distributed; and orthodoxies about "best practice" are formed and challenged. At the same time…the forms taken by such development networks, the ideas that circulate within them, and their geographical manifestations can only be understood in the light of the prior social and institutional networks out of which they emerged and/or onto which they grafted their activities (2006: 851).

The authors argue that transition from colonialism to development indicated a shift in emphasis, rather than the end of an epoch, and as such present development reflects relationships, perceptions and attitudes prevalent at the end of the empire, and which traverse spatial scales. In the case at hand, these networks of relationships manifest in a specific place or action field.

4.5 Oil Extraction as Trans-local Strategic Action Field

Development occurs within a field of encounters between different actors, national and international institutions, and officials of development agencies, NGOs and discourses (Ribeiro 2002: 169). Suffusing this field are differing political visions, interests and power positions. To Ribeiro, large-scale development works assemble an impressive array of financial and industrial capital, technical elites and workers, 'fusing local, regional, national, international and transnational levels of integration' (ibid: 170-1). These projects relied on powerful institutions some of which have been sources and centres of diffusion of development ideas and practice. To Bebbington and Kothari (2006: 850) forms of development form and mobilise through networks and flows, which reach across 'institutional domains and vast geographical spaces' (ibid: 854). The authors argue that after actors enrol in development networks, they become agents within it and conduits for the dissemination of dominant ideas and discourses (ibid: 858).

Dunning and Wirpsa (2004) examine the socio-spatial complexities surrounding resource extraction. To them, the rising dominance of FDI by multinational corporations in the extractive sector coincides with increasing global demand for oil and gas, and an increased readiness by the United States to deploy military protection of strategic energy sources. As a result, the interactions and linkages among local, national, trans-national and multinational actors 'with varied but abiding interests in promoting or restricting the flow of commodities like oil have a crucial impact on the incidence and character of localized conflict' (Dunning and Wirpsa 2004: 82). They argue that oil shapes the nature of conflict given the relationship of oil to actors and processes operating at the global level, implanted in the local environment. Oil resides only in fixed places, necessitating extractive activities at that specific locale.

The implication is that oil exploitation generates consequences for the security and livelihoods of communities. Fundamental to the control of oil is the availability of 'infrastructure, security and technology to convert it into asset transportable' (ibid: 82) across national boundaries. Because oil is simultaneously national and multinational, state oil companies and multinational corporations seek to influence the governance structure, in both the host country and global sphere, which regulate the extraction, production and distribution of oil. The linkages and interactions among local, national and trans-national spaces shape the material interests of

competing local actors and the 'discursive strategies upon which they draw to legitimate conflict and militarization' (ibid: 84). They fault a state-centric focus arguing that the State is just one of many actors attempting to exercise dominion over territories where oil-related violence emerges.

If oil extraction as development churns out benefits for some and costs for others, and has become a contested terrain, it is helpful to describe it as a 'strategic action field' or a social space where two or more organised collective actors engage in conflictual actions (Fligstein and McAdam 1995). Strategic action fields are socially constructed arenas within which differentially endowed groups employing their resources vie for advantage. According to Fligstein and McAdam (1995), the utility of the strategic action field (SAF) lays in its flexibility and the fact that some groups in the action field are themselves strategic action fields. What they perhaps pay little attention to is the view that SAFs could be transnational in scope, in which case they would encompass actors located across spatial scales. This oversight is inherent in the scholars' state-centric focus: 'What distinguishes the State from other SAFs is the distinct claim of its constituent fields to produce or at least ratify the rules for all other fields' (ibid: 9). Given that oil is an international commodity, its extraction necessarily cuts across spatial scales. Therefore, the trans-local SAF is composed of actors at the local, national and international scales.

Fligstein and McAdam (1995) argue that the first rule in an emergent field or unorganised field is to outline a stable definition of the situation, values and rules guiding relations within the field. Imposition of such rules may come from cooperative relations among the groups or, be imposed by members of a dominant group. Social relations among the field members may be cordial or hostile. Action in the SAF seeks to create and sustain the field in order to ensure uninterrupted flow of group benefits. The rules of engagement that crystallise in the field are 'conception of control' (ibid), which affirms that the rules are collectively shared cognitive constructs and play the role of controlling interactions in the field. The rules are, however, not benign, nor are they arrived at consensually. To the contrary, they reflect an order imposed by a more powerful or a set of groups that are more powerful.[3] Within the strategic action field, it is feasible to distinguish between 'incumbents and challengers'.

Incumbents are powerful organizations or groups which have the necessary political or material resources to enforce an advantageous view of appropriate field behaviour and definition of field membership on other groups…. Challengers are organizations or groups which define themselves as members of a given strategic action field, but generally accept the given social order and the advantages it gives incumbents either because they fear retribution by incumbents or because their survivability is increased by accepting such a view. Challengers are those groups who ordinarily exert little control over the field (Fligstein and McAdam 1995: 7).

Conception of control comes into being because of the determined efforts of some groups to fashion consensus on three issues: membership criteria; definition of the goals of the field; and the rules guiding social relations in the field. Efforts at fostering conception of control, the scholars argue, might require the dominant to impose consensus on the less powerful or engineer an encompassing consensus that transcends their own provincial interests. Values and norms in the action field are created through repeated performances such that the order-creating process is always contested and resisted (Henry, Mohan and Yanacopulos (2004). Therefore, there is need to avoid the materialistic approaches to actors' interests and motivations in organisational studies, which are less attentive to the non-materialistic aspects of networks (ibid: 2004).

4.6   Conflict in the Trans-local Strategic Action Field

This thesis presents a conceptualisation of development/oil extraction as fields of trans-local strategic action. A system or functionalist perspective would suggest that such a field is well integrated; its various parts functioning harmoniously to produce the desired goal of resource extraction and development while keeping all parties happy ever after. However, the field of strategic action is composed of processes of integration and disintegration, stability and conflicts, benefits and costs. The news of the commencement of extractive activities may generate opposition or excitement among the would-be stakeholders based on expectations. Beyond these potential initial responses, the extractive industry, as a network of relations, induces conflicting experiences, interests and visions of social organisation especially with regard to resource production, resource allocation, distribution of benefits and costs, environmental risks, environmental management, resource control, the nature and costs of development and the relationships between firm and stakeholders

(Albrecht, Amey and Amir 1996). Where development induced displacement and conflicts resonate with problems of socioeconomic marginalisation and poverty in the wider society, the hardening of differing positions and intensity of conflict assume dreadful dimensions.

The development process generates contradictions and 'polarization between functional elites and the functionally superfluous' (Apter 1993: 3). According to Apter, the functional elites organise capital-intensive production methods that engender the marginalisation of those who become functionally superfluous. Such production techniques contribute to the large-scale transformation of the physical topography, which in turn imperil the livelihood of the land dependent community. Priority goes to sustaining uninterrupted exploitation and supply or conditions favourable to capital accumulation over unemployment, local livelihood, social, cultural and environmental effects of development (Doyle and Risely 2008). As Apter emphasises, the political system is least responsive to the marginalised, occasioning the 'invisibility' of the latter. It is within such contexts that emancipatory projects begin to emerge. It seems important to note that both the incumbent and challenger mobilise resources to sustain or alter the status quo (Dreiling 2000).

Functional elites may attempt to protect their 'privileged access' and 'privileged accounts' by arguing the benefits their presence or operations provide the field and entire economy, and how any adverse form of intervention in the status quo might affect the economy (Freudenburg 2005). Moreover, the elites might resort to 'diversionary reframing' as a strategy of changing the terms of the debate (ibid: 104) in which strenuous effort is made to dent the credibility of challengers or directly point at something else other than what challengers named as the object of their grievances. Furthermore, elites maintain their privileges through the social construction of 'quiescence or "*non*-problematicity"' (ibid: 105). Situations and events described by challengers as displacing and destructive are energetically constructed by the elites as non-problematic, amenable to resolution, and/or defined as emanating from something other than the operations of the elites.

While early sociological exploration of system dislocation attributed dysfunction to passing aberrations, and held closely to ontology of social stability, Marxist-inspired conflict theories show society as composed of groups with competing self-interests. The conflict perspective argues that instability rather than equilibrium, conflict rather than harmony are the

norm, and not the exception, in social relations. A Marxian conflict perspective directs focus to the field of power play, and enables identification of the class basis of the conflicting actors, and what class of actors exercises hegemony over what other class. While class analysis has its uses, a structuralist perspective homogenises within a class a whole range of differing groups. It creates a dualism of class antagonism between capitalists and workers. In effect, the divisions, contests and negotiations within classes as well as the trans-class collaborations between elements of the bourgeoisie and workers remain hidden from view.

The resource mobilisation model suggests that the strategic action field is composed of actors competing to secure material resources, with little or no attention given to cultural and symbolic resources (Crossley 2003). Some argue conflicts as embodied by social movements revolve around struggles over identity, meaning and defence of ideology and way of life (Escobar 1996, 2002). Escobar sees social movements as resisting development. To the contrary, Schuurman is of the view that social movements are not in opposition to modernity but compose a demand for inclusion (Schuurman 1993). The implication of the debate is that there is a multiplicity of motivations behind conflicts. The situation, therefore, requires analytical tools that will enable a delineation of the complex interests and motivations that power conflict in terms of intra- and inter-group dynamics, and in regard to the object of conflict.

Some authors widen the analysis, showing that political factors evident in negotiation, collaboration, competition and conflict that arise from the pursuit of self-interests characterise oil development, and that such politics traverses local, national and global scales (Watts 2004, 2005; Dunning and Wirpsa 2004). Murdoch (1998: 362) shows how through 'translation' relations are established between entities, spaces and actors in line with 'terms of enrolment', which give some actors the ability to 'prescriptively "act-at-a-distance"', and 'dominate peripheries'. Instead of a dualism of power and resistance, Murdoch advocates that all spaces are 'complex interrelations between modes of ordering and forms of resistance so that "the effects of power and resistance are intertwined"' (ibid: 364).

Watts examines FDI in oil development and identifies the complex and violent transformations induced by extractive activities. According to Watts, 'how oil capitalism (what I call petro-capitalism) produces, from the realities of forms of rule and political authority into which it is

inserted, specific sorts of what I, following Rose, call "governable space" (that is a specific configuration of territory, identity and rule)' (2004: 53). He focuses on three such spaces, 'chieftainship', the 'space of indigeneity' and the 'nation', the conflict and violence associated with each, and the genesis of violence associated with the different 'sorts of governable or ungovernable spaces' (ibid: 53). Watts emphasises the contemporaneous making and reworking of varying forms of 'pre-existing rule and governable space' following the insertion of federal oil revenues (ibid: 54). Each governable space is a product of the oil complex[4] and petro-capitalism and the spaces work against one another. Moreover, each space has a central contradiction:

> ...at the level of the oil community, the overthrow of gerontocratic authority but its substitution by a sort of violent youth-led Mafia rule. At the level of the ethnic community is the tension between civic nationalism and a sort of exclusivist militant particularism. At the level of the nation one sees the contradiction between oil-based state centralization and state fragmentation (ibid: 54-5).

What the emphasis on economic benefits and interactions within the strategic action field neglects is the question of where differing values in the action field comes from or the role of socialisation in explaining the origin of values. As Carens (1981: 120) argues, a generalised conception of self-interest suggests that everyone has the same interests. Such a view ignores the critical role of socialisation in shaping interests. Individual interests depend on the values they hold dear, and may vary from actor to actor. Individuals within a culture may share similar self-interests because of their similar socialisation. Carens warns against elevating a culturally specific view of self-interest into an endless principle.

A case in point relates to the assumption of rational pursuit of self-interests as a theory of human motivation, and from which one can deduce that actors in the action field act to maximise their 'self-interest', increasing profit or more development projects. However, Parsons (1940) argues that economic pursuits happen within the institutional framework of society.[5] Parsons shows that individuals acquire the moral sentiments attached to the normative pattern through early socialisation, and that well-integrated individuals are able to integrate such moral sentiments with their self-interests.

> Both in the ultimate goals to which the proceeds will be applied, and in the choice of means there is no reason why disinterested moral sentiments should not be involved. But there is equally no reason why, on a comparable level, elements of self-interest should not be involved also (ibid: 193).

In effect, the root of the desire to acquire economic benefits in the action field is not one of the acquisitive elements in the motivation of actors, but bodes on the organising institutional context. Actors not only seek wealth, but also desire success, which implies devotion to hard work and adherence to the moral pattern governing such work. Actors desire to retain the recognition of significant others by conforming to the normative patterns. Thus, economic pursuit of self-interest is one factor that motivates economic activities.

Chapter 3 advanced the argument that in order to emphasise that its core faction is composed of elements of international capital, elites of the three dominant ethnic groups and their surrogates, it is preferable to capture the State as a movement state. Moreover, it was to suggest that the coalition, which came into being as a precondition for independence, actively serves to advance and secure the interests of its members. By so doing, the State runs into confrontation with the exploited and marginalised groups.

4.7   Social Conflict

One view of conflict is the outcome of long-standing structural inequities, environmental degradation, contradictory securities and attempts to secure a larger share of the national pie. Such views breach Alain Touraine's (1985) canon prohibiting analysis of social conflict utterly as a facet of a social system. Rather, a clear definition of protagonists and antagonists, and the resources or stakes they fight over mark conflicts. In other words, in conflicts actors organise and orient according to their own set of goals and values. Thus, he observes that any conflict has three elements, namely the identity (i) of the actor, the definition of the opponent (o), and the stakes (t), which define the field of conflict.

Touraine identifies several categories of social conflict, three of which are of interest here: the competitive pursuit of collective interests; a political force seeking to change the rules of the game; and, the conflict whose stake is '*the social control of the main cultural patterns*, that is, of the patterns through which our relationships with the environment are normatively organized' (ibid: 754). These cultural patterns are a model of

knowledge, a type of investment and ethical principles through which relationships with the environment are normatively organised. It refers to the conflict between hegemonic deployment of knowledge, investment and ethical principles and the redefinition by the masses of representations of truth, production and morality.

Touraine maintains that the degree of integration among the three elements of social conflict can distinguish each of the three levels. At the arena of the competitive pursuit of interests in organisations, the three elements are loosely integrated. The actors are self-centred and one can define the field of their conflict as a market, or independent from the actors (1985: 760-1). The political force represents a lesser integration of social conflict components. At the level of social control of main patterns, the components are integrated, homogenous and interdependent. Melucci correctly observes that a collective actor is a complex phenomenon and operates within an equally complex terrain,

> A collective actor operates within various organizational systems at once; it lies within one or more political systems; it acts within a society comprising various coexisting modes of production. Its action therefore involves a whole range of problems, actors, and objectives (1996: 37).

He suggests that empirical movements contain marginal and deviant groups, which may engender aggregate behaviour. This may result in fringe actions such as negotiating or violence, depending on whether the movement is able to maintain movement focus on the enemy.

Conflict analysis needs to distinguish among different orientations of collective action. Some collective phenomena breach 'the limits of compatibility of the system of social relationships within which the action takes place' (ibid: 24). When conflict respects the limits of its reference system, then action merely seeks reform within the system. Analysis that introduces the notion of transgressing boundaries must define a reference system. One view of a system is as a complex series of relationships among its constituent elements. Melucci characterises systems according to the types of relationships they support. These are systems that ensure production (antagonistic relations over production and appropriation and distribution of societal resources), systems that decide on resource distribution (political systems, which make normative decisions), system of roles governing exchange (relationships aimed at system equilibrium, and adaptation through integration and exchanges) and finally, *life-world*

or a system of social reproduction (where basic requirements of social life are reproduced and sustained).

Melucci defines a movement as the mobilisation of a collective actor (1) defined by specific solidarity, (2) engaged in a conflict with an adversary for the appropriation and control of resources valued by both of them, and (3) whose actions entail a breach of the limits of compatibility of the system within which the action itself takes place (ibid: 29-30). Thus, a movement's field of action distinguishes it from conflictual networks, claimant movement, political movement and antagonistic movement. Conflictual networks refer to conflict and breaking of rules at the life-world level. Here, action is directed at the rules governing social reproduction in everyday life. Claimant movement may emerge within organisations to press for a different logic of resource distribution, thereby clashing with the power behind subsisting rules of distribution. Political movements give effect to conflict by breaking the limits of the political system. For instance, when demands for expansion of access to participation arise, or when there is anger against injustice a systemic limit has been breached. Antagonistic movement is collective action aimed at production of society's resources; it questions production methods of such resources, the objective of social production and nature of development. To Melucci, these distinctions are important because the dominant tend to 'deny existence of conflicts which involve the production and appropriation of social resources. At the very most they acknowledge the existence of grievances or political claims, seeking however then to reduce all conflictual phenomena to these only' (ibid: 35).

The shortcoming of the above is the ontological privileging of systems. Systems are taken as given, as the force against which all else are oriented. Fligstein and McAdam (ibid) show that the strategic action field or system is emergent and thereafter consolidated in line with the interests of the dominant. The process of such consolidation is socially constructed and not given. As in the case of collective actors, the identity of the dominant is not given, but is framed within a context composed of other actors and interests. The dominant come into being by identifying their interests, framing such interests in a way to win adherents, defining the identity of the emergent group, and those of non-members. Those who dominate the system are organised groups formed to promote their own interests against those of others. The organised or collective nature of the dominant ensures their capacity to resist or thwart counter-

collective mobilisation to wrest control of cultural patterns. In this light, chapter 3 argues for a conception of the State as a movement state. The argument here is that the trans-local strategic action field is composed of no less than two antagonistic collective actors, and that the dominant group has no ontological salience as it emerges within a space of contestation.

It is important to make the point that the various referent systems are not so distinct and autonomous in reality. The boundaries among them are fuzzy and they are clearly interdependent. The distinction serves mainly analytical purposes, helping to tease out insights that might otherwise remain hidden. The value of the different conflict orientations lies in their analytical insights. A given conflict may comprise two or more orientations, and given the fuzziness among the boundaries of the various orientations, maintaining such distinctions may be misleading.

4.8   Collective Actors in the Trans-local Strategic Action Field

To Apter (1993), people penalised by development interpret their negative conditions with a view to transcending those circumstances by thinking beyond them. They achieve this through mytho-logics: turning events and experiences into stories and myths, which are in turn explained by means of logical principles. The collective action that develops is as much for as against. Thus,

> Theirs is the politics of the moral moment, disjunctive, redemptive or transformational. Claiming legitimacy against current principles as well as excesses of power, the defects of society are interpreted as failures of the state. Movements like these arouse controversy by their very existence and stimulate debates over political fundamentals. Their chief weapon is a discourse capable of threatening prevailing norms and principles of power particularly when combined with confrontational episodes (ibid: 12).

Such movements are least concerned with rectification of inequalities and exclusions as in undermining codes and discourses. That attribute, Apter argues, is what separates them from the 'old' social movements, which allegedly fought for greater participation and equality.

The New Social Movement (NSM) approach gives weight to the overriding importance of structural conditions in the emergence of social movements. The approach questions the economic and class reduction-

ism of classical Marxism, arguing that non-class issues such as the environment, gender and peace, rather than economic changes and the class position of actors, explain the emergence of social movements. For instance, Habermas (1987) distinguishes between the *life-world*, and the State and market. While communicative rationality gives the life-world structure, instrumental rationality is the structure of the State and market. The expanding processes of instrumental rationality inundate the life-world, continually absorbing it; a process he termed the colonisation of the life-world. Social movements, Habermas argues, are the result of such colonisation; they arise in reaction to colonisation of the life-world and seek to recreate lifestyle. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) attribute social movements to changes in the social structure. The Fordist mode of production engendered fundamental changes in production, in the nature of the State and culture itself, which resulted in increased commodification, bureaucratisation and massification. The increased penetration of wider spheres of social life by capitalist relations has led to the transformation of society into a big marketplace, or commodification. Social movements arise to challenge such processes.

Fuchs (2006) argues that the resource mobilisation paradigm originates in the functionalist tradition, which considers human action as selfish and rooted in instrumental calculations geared at maximising personal benefits. The NSM approach, offspring of the Critical Marxist thought; convey social movements as a critique of society, geared at social emancipation and societal wellbeing through structural transformation. Yet, as with the deprivation approach, both approaches remain deterministic and hindered with a linear ascription of causality. For the resource mobilisation, it is inconsequential why social movements act; the appeal is that they are able to accumulate resources to act. The NSM approach attributes structural causality to social movements but fails to examine the dynamics of movement mobilisation. Therefore, what the social movement approach needs is a tool that will assist the researcher to expose the complex dynamics of social movements.

Social movement theorists have long recognised the importance of the political institutional context in which movements emerge. Kitschelt (1986) traces how the degree of openness exhibited by the State impact on the strategies of movements in four European countries. Tilly (1984: 4) focuses on how broad societal transformations influence the emergence and outcomes of movements. Tarrow (1996) identifies four ele-

ments of political opportunities, which create space for activists' mobilisation. Oberschall (1989) provides another angle to the perspective by arguing that while grievances, notions of justice and capacity to act collectively combined with political opportunity to explain emergence of collective mobilisation in Eastern Europe, the decisive factor was international political opportunity. Resource mobilisation theory does not systematically explore the state-movement relationships (Gale 1986).

For McCarthy and Zald (1977), the State is simply an authority and agent of social control that works to either frustrate or facilitate resource mobilisation, and thus, the emergence of protest action. Gale (1986) attempts to fill this gap by focusing on the different stages of change in the dynamic state-movement relationship and, how such changes impact or shape movement transformation. What is common to these approaches is that they take the State as given. For them the State is the Western European welfare or liberal democratic state. However, one cannot equate the European state with the State in Africa. There is a significant limit to the applicability of these approaches to Africa. It is with similar sensibility that Smith argues, 'Scholars must differentiate among states to consider how a state's location within a global system of institutions and structural relations shape movement opportunities and constraints' (2004: 319). In other words, if global forces amplify the centrality of transnational actors in decisions affecting local actors, it is imperative to examine those forces, which structure the political contests within the State.

Some of the major views in the political science conceptualisation of the African state cast it as endogenous, bounded and sovereign. More importantly, the dominant view is as a mechanism by which the ruling elites accumulate wealth and power for private ends. Together, these views prevent examination of the transnational constitution of the modern African state, and the State as more than a container of wealth and power, culture and society (Taylor 1994). A robust view of the African state needs to see it in its complexity or totality. Taylor advances his proposition in a later article where, employing the concepts of 'internationality, interstateness and interterritoriality', he emphasises the point, that we cannot imagine the world as constituted of discreet containers; rather every state exists within a multiplicity of states (1995).

There is a tendency within social movement research to conceptualize social movement actors as opponents of the state. But a comparative and

global perspective demands that we abandon this a priori assumption and conceptualize the state as one of several actors within a field, and there are times when the state (or elements thereof) will be allies of social movements in their struggles against other actors in the broader political field (Smith 2004: 315).

It is imperative for this research to find a relevant conceptual tool that can help unveil the African state in terms of what it contains and the network of relations within which they embed. In line with the argument in chapter 3, the concept of *movement state* is eminently illuminating. First, the concept suggests that the State is a relatively enduring body of multiple disparate actors competing with other actors to secure control over some prized interests. Since the territorialising behaviour of the State accumulates wealth, power, culture and welfare, it is easy to proffer the argument that the State jealously guards its interests. The notion that the State is composed of multiple and disparate elements suggests the influence of multinational oil corporations, the World Bank and IMF, and other international bodies on the State and some of the state-like functions these actors undertake.

According to Kitschelt (1986), resource mobilisation focuses on the mobilisation of actors, adopting the best available strategies within constraints of scarce cognitive and material resource availability. Resource mobilisation theorists concentrate on variables internal to the movement. The strategic choices and societal effects of movements do not, *per se*, to the external political opportunity structure within which movements operate. Political opportunity structures can facilitate or hinder the capacity of movements to engage in protest in three ways:

Firstly, mobilization depends upon the coercive, normative, remunerative and informational resources that an incipient movement can extract from its setting and can employ in its protest…. Secondly, the access of social movements to the public sphere and political decision-making is also governed by institutional rules, such as those reinforcing patterns of interaction between government and interest groups, and electoral laws. These rules allow for, register, respond to and even shape the demands of social movements that are not (yet) accepted political actors…. Thirdly, a social movement faces opportunities to mobilize protest that change over time with the appearance and disappearance of other social movements. The mobilization of one movement, for example, may have a "demonstration effect" on other incipient movements, encouraging them to follow suit.

And the simultaneous appearance of several movements…presents the best opportunity to maintain movement momentum and to change established policies (ibid: 61-2).

Political process theorists focus less on material resources and more on states, strategies and mobilisation, thus creating space for grievances, ideologies and elite responses (Tilly 1978). In other words, the political process approach links protestors with other strategic actors in society.[6] McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996) argue that changing opportunities in the political environment, for instance, state's response to protest, existing levels of organisation and the group's appraisal of chances for success underlie the emergence of protest.

The political process perspective forces one to think of the State in dualistic terms, either as authoritarian or democratic. Neither of these labels offers much in the way of definition because regardless of regime type, the State may be unaccountable (Randeria 2003). The political process perspective gives the impression that the State in the developing world is an actor that can be democratic and at other times despotic. While that may be the case, the view is grossly misleading; as such states have exhibited authoritarian character across regime types.

4.9   Trans-local Strategic Action Field: Emplacing Conflict

Tilly (2000) argues that space relates to contentious action and vice versa in five ways. 1) Conflict happens in places occupied by people, in which case the spatial configuration may facilitate or hinder participation in collective action. 2) Everyday spatial routine, spatial distribution and proximity shape patterns of mobilisation. 3) Territoriality organises space for government, disrupted by collective challenges. 4) Routine political life, including protests and public ceremonies endows some places with symbolic significance. 5) Contention transforms the political significance of given places and spatial routine.

A major failing of approaches to conflict and social movement within the context of development is the near total disregard of space. In their conceptualisations, one perceives the unmistakeable impression that space is a mere background against which social events occur. Thus, in Touraine's (1985) definition of conflict, he disregards how place may be a component of the antagonist actors' identities and that a sense of place may thoroughly structure the prized object of contention. The role of place in generating emotions and mobilising collective action remains

largely neglected in the resource mobilisation school. Place is more than geographical context and dead geography; it is meaningful and symbolic, and is thus entwined with the social activities of those who live in it. However, place is equally the outcome of processes operating at wider scales. Therefore, sensitive to the wider space composed of distant and local actors whose activities affect the local place is vital. As presented here, one may view development as a wider space. Yet that view omits important considerations.

Colonial development engendered unequal regional development or spatial inequalities. Postcolonial national development has widened regional inequalities, making some places more politically strategic than others are (Okafor 1980). Chapter 3 showed how regionalisation created three dominant ethnic groups and regions and numerous minority groups and places. Given that elites of the dominant groups formed the core of the ruling elites, they use their political influence to initiate and locate development projects in their regions more than in minority places. Exercising political power, the elites employed constitutional means to organise, appropriate and distribute oil resources in favour of dominant interests and to urbanised places in dominant regions at the expense of minorities, including oil-producing communities. Worse still, oil development combined with expropriation to degrade and pollute the environment of oil-producing communities with the effect that the disparities between dominant and peripheral places have widened. Beyond environmental degradation, the connection between places and those who inhabit them degrades. Thereby, the meanings, values, inspiration and sense of attachment or ghosts people invest their place with are denigrated and profaned.

It is impossible to explain why and how conflict emerges in the translocal strategic action field, without addressing how development furthers and sustains spatial inequalities, enhances the opportunities of some and not others because of where they live and how these processes affect the bond between humans and non-humans and the sense of place people hold dear. Oil development practices seem to sustain relations of inequalities between peoples and places, and given the bond between environment and community, conflict within the strategic action field is about spatial inequalities as it is about social inequalities.

Mittelman (1998: 848) emphasises the need to defy ontological division between human and non-human entities. Cultural theory draws at-

tention to the interdependent relationship between human communities and the other-than-human world in which they are situated. Conceptualising the nexus as 'multiple articulations of community', Whitt and Slack (1994: 21-2) argue 'community and environment constitute a single integral and open system; they are mutually responsive to, reciprocally constructed and informed by, one another'. The authors eschew anthropocentrism, and argue for bringing the human and non-human together in 'relations of solidarity and significance'.[7] Such relations evoke a view of community as a 'unity in difference' rather than as a 'unity of sameness', in contrast to a conservative understanding of community (Young 1990). They say the concept of community makes sense because the processes of subject formation take place in communities. Moreover, community mediates the salience of global forces, ostensibly because it is within community that hegemonic oppressive forces are experienced and resisted (Whitt and Slack 1994: 8). They argue that failure to extend communal relations of significance and solidarity to other than humans 'is central in most environmental problems' and has worsened social conflicts (ibid: 19). Land and humans are articulated in relation to solidarity and significance. Since land is integral to a community, to lay claim to it 'is literally to steal community' (ibid: 19-20).

4.10   Conclusion

Chapter 4 argued that since, in conventional development, resource exports traditionally provide the fastest means to growth for poor countries; development should be conceived as oil extraction. Proceeding from the premise that development is inherently conflictual, it observes that the best approach to such development is not as impersonal phenomenon or structure but as a process involving identifiable actors and associations among people and places across spatial scales. These actors have interests, which are sometimes complementary and most often conflictual, which they attempt to realise by manoeuvring other actors. In other words, the externalities of development and the costs they impose of the less powerful are not accidental or fleeting. To the contrary, they adhere to development itself. However, the conflicting actors in the field do not separate into homogenous entities. Rather, collaboration among elements of conflicting groups of actors does exist. To capture such dynamics, chapter 4 utilised the metaphor of development as trans-local strategic action field. The conflict in the field is conceptualised as social

conflict, defined by three elements: identity of the protagonist, the opponent and the stake over which both struggle.

Drawing on Touraine (1985), the chapter underlines the problem of viewing conflict in SAF as mere reaction to structural conditions. In other words, one should not analyse conflict utterly as a facet of a social system, but in relationship to conflicting actors and a stake. Such conflicts may involve mobilisation of people, identity construction and the assemblage of resources. It is best to capture collective actors in SAF by asking why they mobilise and how. To explore that question, the chapter adopts social movement theories. It goes further to argue for emplacement of that social movement because place mediates collective action. The environment in which it emerges shapes a social movement, its impacts, nature and trajectory. Nevertheless, social movement mobilisation involves mobilisation of actor-spaces or the engineering of association of actors across spatial scales in the effort to realise movement goals in a given location.

Notes

[1] The argument resulted in a situation where most of these countries enacted regulatory changes designed to attract foreign capital (UNCTAD 2002).

[2] James Scott (1998) argues that state-led development planning in much of the third world has often led to human and environmental disasters as a result of the convergence of four factors: 1) administrative ordering of nature and society, and simplifying ground reality for purposes of planning, and in effect radically altering that reality; 2) adoption of high modernist ideology and faith in science and technical progress; 3) authoritarian enforcement of high modernist plans; and 4) a weakly developed civil society.

[3] The Nigerian State achieved through different strategies, including what Soyinka (1984) refers to as the principle of non-negotiability. As shown in chapter 3, by determining what is negotiable or otherwise, the State seeks to eliminate alternative visions and retain control over history.

[4] Oil Complex is defined as 'a unity of firm, state (and its security forces), and community that is territorially constituted through oil concessions. This complex is generative of substantial unearned income and strong centralizing effects at the level of the state' (Watts 2004: 54).

[5] These institutions comprise normative patterns, which define what proper, legitimate and expected mode of behaviour is in a given society. Moreover, they are supported by moral sentiment; conformity is a moral duty and the actor feels a sense of obligation. The society and individual himself expects to conform to the

pattern. Infraction results in moral indignation, and the actor might feel a sense of guilt or shame.

[6] That is reflected in Tilly's definition of social movements as 'sustained series of interactions between power holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which those persons make publicly visible demands for changes in the distribution or exercise of power, and back those demands with public demonstrations of support' (1984: 306).

[7] Relations to solidarity rest on the basis of prior relations of significance including shared circumstances, interests or commitment, which bind a given community together. Awareness and affirmation of the existence of a relationship of significance is to affirm solidarity (Whitt and Slack 1994: 10).

Mal-Development as a Factor in Collective Action among the Ogoni

5.1   Why the Ogoni Mobilised

There are many explanations offered regarding why the Ogoni mobilised against the State and Shell Company. Numerous explanatory variables have been identified. Engagement with the question of why has powered the tendency by some observers to frame the conflict as 'environmental', 'ethnic', 'ecological', or in terms of resource control. This is not to claim that the Ogoni conflict is not about the environment, ecology, group interest or resource control. Rather, it is to assert that such labels miss much of the intent of the Ogoni actors. As used by some, environment as a concept evokes the notion of a separation between community and environment (Adams 1990). Such Eurocentric conception prevents a firm grasp of the worldview of local communities, wherein there is no distinction between environment, other resources and daily life (Banks 2002). In other words, Banks argues, the social, economic, cultural, political and aspects of the landscape are intermingled in the environmental consciousness of local people.

Chapter 1 emphasised existing explanations of conflict as a fleeting outcome of personal characteristics, pathological effect of the political order, and such circumstances as unemployment, pollution, poverty and marginalisation. No one approaches conflict as basic to how development proceeds ostensibly because of the assumption that development is a solution to the problem of conflict (Apter 1993). None of the theorists conceptualised conflict as intrinsic to the development process itself, and they tend to view development as the solution, and only unintentionally its roots. Development, while beneficial is not without its human and ecological costs (Routledge 1993). Routledge argues that in response to the costs, groups organised to prevent the destructive impacts of development. Apter makes the important point that functional superfluity is

not defined solely by loss, dispossession, privation or displacement, but also 'inability to control the circumstances of one's environment' (Apter 1993: 13). Resistance against development articulates alternative conceptions and models of development. In other words, they relegate taken-for-granted knowledge and claim superior ethical insight.

Building on the metaphor of development as field of strategic action, chapter 5 carries the understanding that development simultaneously happens in place and, inserts the latter in association with other places. A place's place in the stratified system of places has consequences for what happens there and for those who reside there. Thus, both development, and political decisions made in the wider societal context impinge on the strategic action field. These processes intrude into a context not only invested with meaning but the site of on-going performativity (Gregson and Rose 2000). While the nexus between logics of development and existing performativity is not wholly conflictual, it does produce conflict. Therefore, conflict and collective action within the strategic action field perturbs existing place, costs of development and the production of discourses through which activists frame the problem. Chapter 5 explores those aspects of community life, development and discursive articulations that gave rise to the Ogoni conflict. The next section reviews prominent explanations of the *why* of the conflict in three arbitrarily chosen categories.

5.2   Explanations of Why the Ogoni Mobilised

5.2.1   Resource curse thesis

Since independence, Nigeria's economic performance has been particularly poor. In terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), Nigeria's per capita GDP stood at US $1,113 in 1970 and declined to US$1,084 in 2000, Nigeria sits among the 15 poorest countries of the world (Sala-i-Martin and Subramanian 2003). The number of poor Nigerians increased from about 19 million in 1970 to a confounding 90 million in 2000 as the share of the population subsisting on less than $1 a day rose from 36 to about 70 per cent between 1970 and 2000 (ibid: 4). Nigeria's cumulative earnings from oil, between 1965 and 2000, amount to about US$350 billion (ibid). Evidence suggests that such wealth had no positive effect on the standard of living, confounding earlier optimism that mineral rich

countries would grow faster because of their mineral wealth (Stapleton 1958).

A central paradox of mineral wealth in the developing world is that mineral-rich countries persistently performed poorly compared with their mineral-poor counterparts with regard to economic growth, democracy, good governance and income equality. According to the World Bank, 12 of the world's most mineral-dependent countries and six of the world's most oil-dependent countries are 'highly indebted poor countries' (2004). Various scholars have shown that greater dependence on mineral wealth within an economy relates to proportionally slow growth in the same period (Auty 1993; Auty and Gelb 2001; Sachs and Warner 1995). Mineral wealth also correlates with poor governance and corruption. Mineral-rich countries tend to appear at the bottom of the World Bank Governance Research Indicators and Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) (ibid: 36). These countries have worse levels of poverty, child mortality and income inequality. They have a propensity toward authoritarian regimes.

Dutch Disease[1] is the most common explanation as the cause of poor growth in mineral-rich countries. Windfalls arising from a boom in the mineral sector lead to appreciation of the real exchange rate by shifting production inputs to the booming sector and non-tradable sector (services, retail trade and construction), in effect reducing the competitiveness of the non-booming export sectors (agriculture and manufacturing), resulting in collapse. The move to the non-tradable sector increases domestic inflation, which results in the rise in real exchange rates. The longer-run effect on growth is that Dutch Disease works against economic diversification and fosters reliance on exports from the primary sector (Weithal and Luong 2006: 37).

Given access to quick and easy external rents, the State has little incentive to build strong institutions. Such neglect results in weak institutions. Mineral-rich states 'inevitably become rentier states, which seek to exert social and political control over their populations through redistribution' (ibid: 38). The effects of this are that dependence on external rents damages social development and stability because it makes the State unaccountable and the population unable to restrain the State. By means of unrestricted spending, the State sustains patronage networks and populist programmes by means of which they control the populace and neutralise opposition; and the critical nature of the mineral sector

engenders the tendency for the State to conflate the sector's interest with its own leaving the State subject to elite privatisation. With unhindered access to massive rents, government commands excess funds to buy votes, silence opposition and remain in office. They can also create a climate of fear, a network of clients, all of which may serve to deter popular mobilisation (ibid: 38).

Many hold the assumption that primary commodity export, including oil development is the surest route to economic growth and political progress (Laugier 1948; Escobar 1995: 36; Hughes 1975: 817). However, the poor economic performance of oil exporting developing countries shapes the idea that mineral abundance may be more of a curse than a blessing. Beyond the poor economic performance (Auty 1997) of oil dependent countries, the resource curse literature also drew a link between resource abundance and conflict (Ibid: 34). Collier and Hoeffler (2002) argue that there is a correlation between poverty, natural resource abundance and violent conflict. However, large variations in outcomes among natural resource exporters such as Saudi Arabia, Botswana and Nigeria stagger the general applicability of the economic model (Dunning 2005). Collier believes that resource-dependent countries seem to be among the most conflict-ridden countries in the world (2001). What an approach based on resource determinism does is to de-emphasise politics as an essential explanatory variable (Watts 2004: 53).

5.2.2   How the resource curse thesis ignores Nigerian reality

In 1956, the first oil discovery in Nigeria occurred with export beginning two years later, in 1958. Before then, agriculture provided the bulk of foreign exchange. The ascendance of oil led to the abandonment of agriculture. Nigeria had its first coup in January 1966 and a counter-coup a few months later culminating in the Nigerian civil war. Some scholars remark that considerations of oil informed Biafra's attempt at secession. The immediate processes leading to the war was the coup of the five majors, widely seen as an Igbo-led attack on the leadership of the North. It does not appear that oil motivated this coup.[2] The ills that apparently motivated the coup leader were evident before 1966. What gave rise to such evils that was significant enough to elicit anger from and compel five intelligent young army officers to risk their lives in an attempt to force change (Obasanjo 2007)? It was clearly not oil because oil had not become significant revenue earner in Nigeria.

According to Amechi Okolo (1981), in the early 1940s and 1950s, the period of defining the fundamental characteristics of Nigeria's political systems, oil was hardly a factor. This is borne out by the significant pre-independence political restructuring that took place under the tutelage of British colonialists. The intrigues and biases of the latter in favour of the North ensured that the most educated and articulate southern nationalist leaders did not inherit the mantle of leadership. Although oil prospecting started in 1937, British economist and adviser to the colonial government, Brian Stapleton asserted emphatically: 'Nigeria is not…richly endowed with minerals or sources of energy. It is, in fact, the lack of these that is the major barrier to her rapid industrial development' (Stapleton 1958: 13). When contrary to his assessment, oil was discovered and the Niger Delta celebrated, he upbraided Nigerians on their optimism (ibid: 41). Okolo, thus, argues,

> It was not until 1964 that production and export of oil approached any appreciable quantity as to have some influence in Nigeria's political equation. But by then Nigeria's chronic political crises had already gathered momentum and the appearance of oil was rather late to be implicated within the ongoing crises. Oil simply missed the "excitement" of the tumultuous Nigerian First Republic (Okolo 1981: 109).

Perverse economic policies by state, crass corruption among the political class, unaccountable political system, client-patron relations and political instability and violence are not emergent post-oil characteristics of Nigeria. The presence and deepening of these features in the years following the oil boom occurred not because of but despite the oil.

Perhaps the most troubling problem with the resource curse literature is the way it lifts a country from its context and history, divests it of its socio-historical place and purports to understand and explain it solely by examining how the presence of oil affects it. In other words, there is a tendency to take the State as a *tabula rasa* on which the all-powerful mineral inscribes its dictates. Such an approach reflects a tendency to cut an empirical entity from its history in the mistaken belief that it is possible to demarcate the historical process neatly. Moreover, in such a way that one can view the present as emergent and uncontaminated by the past, discounting how mineral resources affect the socioeconomic history of a particular place (Watts 2004). Moreover, it never considers how networks of relations cutting across spatial scales intersect with history in place and the consequences thereof (LeBillon 2004).

5.2.3 Ogoni incorporated

Whether Western capitalism can promote sustainable industrial accumulation in the periphery became the subject of a raging Marxist informed debate within African political economy from the 1970s (Kaplinsky 1979; Leys 1978; Beckman 1980). Those who were sceptical of TNCs, misconstrued imperialism[3] as embodied by TNCs and foreign capital, as a design to frustrate capitalist development in the developing world (Beckman 1986). Yet, rather than a class of liberators, the domestic bourgeoisie was a part of 'imperialist domination and oppression directed against the masses of the third world' (ibid: 59). The domestic bourgeoisie, through its control over state power plays a tactical role in providing the territorial monopoly conditions for imperialism making it crucial to the continuation of underdevelopment (ibid: 70). However, not only did the domestic bourgeoisie offer monopoly protection for international capital; imperialism reinforces and protects internationally the political monopoly of the domestic bourgeoisie.

The arguments around the possibility of economic growth or benefit arising from foreign capital, failed to consider the impact of foreign capital on the environment and the effect of environmental change on people and communities. When attention finally went to the less than benign actions of the African state and how they hindered progress and the resulting rejection of the insightful elements of the debate, a shift in the focus on state action away from international factors became necessary. Some scholars recently corrected for both problems inherent in the imperialism debate, lack of attention to the environmental impacts of capitalist development and the subsequent lack of attention to international factors (Watts 2004; Dunning and Wirpsa 2004).

To Obi (1997), it is impossible to separate the Ogoni struggle from the process of globalisation. The control of oil by the oil giants, including Shell, links with the expansion and reproduction of global capital. There is a strategic link between the oil giants and energy needs of industrial nations. By expropriating peasant land, destroying ecosystems and local livelihoods in the course of extracting oil on behalf of global capital, Shell simultaneously accumulated and concentrated wealth and energy in certain locales while dispossessing other locales (see Chapter 4 sections 4.5 and 4.6). This way Shell's control of Nigeria's oil continued to 'grease the wheels of global accumulation' (Obi 1997: 141).

The globally determined social relations of production alienate the Ogoni from production, appropriation and distribution of oil revenue. Obi argues that the stakes in the struggle were Ogoni existence or capitulation to the forces of global capital. Since 1938, the exploratory monopoly over Ogoni lands ensured the integration of Ogoni into global capitalist relations, resulting in the differential concentration of wealth at local and global sites. Shell's control of Nigeria's oil ensured the exclusion of Nigerians from production and engendered stiff competition among the local dominant factions for oil rents. Although the State shifted from mere rent collector to a participant in the oil industry, it has a common stake with Shell in facilitating global capitalist accumulation. 'Shell derives 14 per cent of all its oil from Nigeria, while the oil-dependent state in Nigeria relies on Shell to produce 51 per cent of "its" oil'.

According to Dunning and Wirpsa (2004), the rising dominance of direct foreign investment by multinational corporations in the extraction sector coincides with increasing global demand for oil and gas, and an increased readiness by the United States to deploy military protection of strategic energy sources. As a result, the interactions and linkages among local, national, transnational and multinational actors 'with varied but abiding interests in promoting or restricting the flow of commodities like oil have a crucial impact on the incidence and character of localized conflict' (ibid: 82). They argue that oil shapes the nature of oil conflict given the relationship of oil to actors and processes operating at the global level, which thereupon embed in the local environment. They fault a state-centric focus arguing that the State is only one of many actors attempting to exercise dominion over territories where oil-related violence emerges.

5.2.4   Ogoni and the National Question

A large body of literature, referred to here as the National Question literature, deals with the historico-political development of Nigeria, how that evolution disadvantaged minority groups and engendered contests between the three major ethnic groups. Although in many cases the literature does not directly engage with specific conflicts, they painstakingly provide background detail to the emergence of conflict, particularly, oil-related conflicts in the Niger Delta.

The question of social justice and equality now falls under the rubric of the National Question. The core of the National Question relates to how people are organised, empowered or disempowered (Momoh 2002: 26). Osarhiemen Benson Osadolor (2002: 31) provides a concise historical overview of the National Question. To the scholar, the National Question arose from the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914, the subsequent incapacity to transform the complex into national societies and the consequent problem of what to do with the country. Colonialism engendered divisive policies and made little effort to create a united country. Some colonial officials did not believe Nigeria constituted a single country and expressed a lack of faith in the entity they had created (ibid: 32). These forces fostered and enforced the feeling or perception of difference, fear and suspicion to such an extent that Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and leader of the Northern People's Congress construed the 'Motion of Destiny' by which Anthony Enahoro moved for Nigerian independence on 31 March 1953 as an 'invitation (to the north) to commit suicide' (Osadolor 2002).

Mistrust persisted even after independence in 1960. Politics degenerated into a struggle for power at the federal level. Possession of the reins of power at the centre assured access to economic survival and benefits as well as other social ends. In their confrontation over sectional goals, rival groups dispensed with self-restraint leading to a series of political crises that resulted in Nigeria's first military coup on 15 January 1966. The ensuing civil war, which outcome favoured the federal side did not resolve the National Question but merely enforced forced unification (ibid: 45). The primary source of crisis in the post-war era has been the inequitable distribution of national resources, in which ethnic minorities of the oil-rich Niger Delta question the essence of Nigeria and advocate convening a sovereign national conference to debate continued coexistence (ibid: 43-4).

Anikpo (2002: 66) argues that extant inequalities in the distribution of wealth generates instability and protracts the National Question. In effect, the National Question is about the issue of equity with regard to resource distribution among the various ethnic and class groups that compose Nigeria. Interethnic inequalities and the question predate the emergence of oil as a major revenue earner for the country (Obi 2002: 97). The politicisation of interethnic relations, or the National Question, led the majority groups struggling to maintain domination at the expense

of the minorities. The tendency of the latter was to escape their domination by opting out of a 'contract of perpetuity in inequality', an option the dominant group actively resisted (ibid: 98). Minority fear and protests against majority domination led to establishing the Willink Commission, which failed to address minorities' anxieties (ibid: 99). Whenever minority groups took to political protests or violence as a strategy to ethnic self-determination, the State responded with greater violence or 'sought to buy out leading activists or figures in the minority's movement with "tantalising crumbs of office without their ethnic groups necessarily benefiting as groups"' (ibid: 99-100).

Fashina (1998: 93) deconstructs the notion of the National Question as a problem of interethnic relations. An ethnic formulation of the National Question not only hides intra-ethnic exploitation but also suggests that ethnic groups in Nigeria are all competing for socioeconomic and political advantages, whereas the ruling elites rather than ethnic groups compete for power and wealth. To Fashina (1998), the central issue revolves around the question of how to reorganise society in a way that ensures distribution of duties and social values that assures everyone's aspirations to a good life. He argues that entwined with the National Question is colonialism and neo-colonialism and that the latter impedes resolution of the National Question.

The National Question literature provides a broad state-centred context within which to understand the evolution of Nigeria and the problems associated with its political trajectory (Obi 1997). Imperialism literature complements such understanding by providing useful insights into how forces operating across scales interact with the pre-existing systems and structures, engendering differing configurations, including conflict and violent conflict. The literature remains bogged down with how political and economic marginalisation compel minorities to mobilise for a greater share of national resources or how, 'These struggles are animated by the desire to gain access to (i) company rents and compensation revenues, (ii) federal petro-revenues by capturing rents (often fraudulently) through the creation of new regional and/or local state institutions' (Watts 2004: 54). While they are strong on the issue of causality, they have very little to say on how collective mobilisation occurs. Similar to their notion of what motivates individual and group actions; they deploy a notion of the State as only concerned about its economic and political interests rather than power, wealth, culture and society (Taylor 1995: 1).

They conceive collective actors at best as provincial self-seekers and at worst as over-determined by the oil complex. Cast in such light, collective actors are robbed, *a priori*, of any symbolic aspirations, revolutionary vision or capacity.

5.3   Ogoni: A New Social Movement

The NSM approach gives weight to the importance of structural conditions in the emergence of social movements. The approach questions the economic and class reductionisms of classical Marxism, arguing that non-class issues such as the environment, gender and peace, rather than economic changes and class position of actors, explain the emergence of social movements. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) attribute social movements to changes in the social structure. The Fordist mode of production engendered fundamental changes in production, in the nature of the state and culture itself, which resulted in increased commodification, bureaucratisation and massification (Inglehart 1990).

In that regard it proves impossible to claim the Ogoni movement is a new social movement because given its place in a developing country, some view it as the 'environmentalism of the poor" always about survival (Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997). However, the dualism pushed by Inglehart, and Guha and Martinez-Alier incorrectly captures green concern in many parts of the developed world because not all first world social movements are oriented to post-material values (Doyle 2008: 311). Doyle (2008) and Douglas Torgerson (2003, 2006) emphasise the existence of different environmentalisms, suggesting that environmentalism in the South is best apprehended through the lens of postcolonial environmentalism. While the insight commends itself, nothing about any type of environmentalism, wherever it manifests, automatically limit its possibilities. Both authors show that such environmental concern is not entirely about the environment. To Haynes (1999), they reflect concern with wider political issues by the unempowered. Such issues may contain within it non-materialist and nationalistic aspirations.

Like the resource curse, National Question, and imperialism approaches to why the Ogoni mobilised, the NSM paradigm does not explain why Ogoni joined the mobilisation because, as Wolford (2003: 158) argues in the case of the Movement of Rural Landless Workers (MST) in Brazil, it 'does not locate the act of resistance in either people or place'. The approaches assume a direct linear link between broad structural

changes and collective action. Moreover, as meta-narratives, the approaches fail to give space to the specificities and emergence of contentious events. By eschewing diversity, they seek to explain mobilisation away in line with the limitations of a given theoretical framework.

Evident in the explanations of why the Ogoni mobilised is the assumption that people are economically motivated. Manning Nash (1967) argues that within the economy, people's motives may be non-economic. Carens emphasises that 'social-duty satisfactions could be as effective a source of motivation for economic activity as income-consumption satisfactions' (1981: 111). We can find evidence for this in Weber's argument that protestant capitalists were not motivated by the desire to amass wealth but by the desire to acquire evidence of eternal salvation. McClelland's n-Ach (or achievement motivation) is not rooted in the desire to accumulate wealth but in values about work and change acquired through socialisation. Yet, achievement motivation enhances economic growth. To McClelland and Winter, 'these men are interested in excellence for its own sake rather than for the reward of money, prestige, or power' (1969: 23). These authors show that values other than the need for economic benefits may be the motivation for economic activities.

5.4   Political Opportunity

The key features defining political opportunity structure are, the extent to which the political system is open or closed, stability of elite cohesion, whether or not there are elite allies and the State's capacity for and tendency toward repression (Brett 2008: 21). Osa (2003) argues that the concept of 'political opportunity structure' draws attention to western democracies where spaces are institutionally created for difference and opposition, unlike authoritarian societies where opportunities are contingent. Kitschelt (1986) traces how the degree of openness exhibited by the State impact on the strategies of movements in four European countries. Tilly (1984: 4) focuses on how broad societal transformations influence the emergence and outcomes of movements. To Brett (1996), the decisions and actions of a movement within its political opportunity structure may determine its success or failure. Sidney Tarrow (1996: 880) identifies four elements of political opportunities, which create space for activists' mobilisation. Anthony Oberschall (1996) emphasises international political opportunity.

Osa (2003: 172) contends that political opportunities vary between democracies and authoritarian regimes. In other words, political opportunities vary with the type of state. Western democracies have institutionalised stable opportunity structures. In contrast, in authoritarian regimes, challengers seek to take advantage of cracks in the system and elude surveillance. Thus, Osa argues that political opportunities are situational, showing how, as a result, different Polish mobilisations encountered different sets of political opportunity. Critical to such differences, Osa suggests, is elites' division and the support of the Catholic Church. Osa found a puzzling relationship between repression and elite disarray. Repression lessened both when elites were united and divided. Divided elites were associated with increased state repression and its lessening.

Neither the European approach nor Osa's qualifications enlighten the case of the Ogoni for two reasons. First, the labels *democratic* and *authoritarian* as applied to Nigeria are misleading. Ostensibly, government mediated through the electoral process is considered democratic, whereas military government is seen as authoritarian. Both types of regime have shown little difference between them. Violent state repression remains a factor in both democratic and authoritarian governments in Nigeria as the military shows an equal tendency toward both. This contradiction disappears when proceeding with the concept of, *movement-state* because the State remains a complex set of actors beholden to certain interests or factions regardless of whether it ascends to power by the electoral box or by the gun. Similar to Osa, repression of the Ogoni was not affected by the intraelite divisions that emerged following annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential elections and the consequent citizens' revolt.

The concept of political opportunity structure is difficult to apply in the case at hand. Political opportunity suggests that authoritarian regimes outside Western Europe and North America are distinct and ebbing, and when replaced by democratic systems, such systems are identical to the former. Such dualistic approaches to understanding the African state are grossly inadequate as there is little difference between supposedly democratic and authoritarian governments in Nigeria. It is presumptuous to suggest that a democratic Nigerian State have no interests that it actively pursues and protects. To the extent that both democratic and authoritarian governments adhere to a similar development trajectory, the emergence of conflict and collective action must look behind the façade of political system. This is not to deemphasise the utility of political op-

portunity but to underscore that the concept of *movement-state* enables us to look beyond appearance at the core nature of the State. The concept allows for better understanding of why a movement might emerge in an inclement political environment.

The resource mobilisation theory does not systematically explore the state-movement relationships (Gale 1986). For McCarthy and Zald (1977), the State is simply an authority and agent of social control working to either frustrate or facilitate resource mobilisation, and thus, the emergence of protest action. Richard Gale (1986) attempts to fill this gap by focusing on the different stages of change in the dynamic state-movement relationship and how such change impacts or shapes movement transformation. What is common to these approaches is that they take the State as given. For them the State is the Western European welfare or liberal democratic state. Still it is problematic to equate the European state with the State in Africa. There is a significant limit to the applicability of these approaches to Africa. It is with similar sensibility that Smith (2004: 319) argues, 'Scholars must differentiate among states to consider how a state's location within a global system of institutions and structural relations shape movement opportunities and constraints'. In other words, if global forces amplify the centrality of transnational actors in decisions affecting local actors, it is imperative to examine those forces that structure the political contests within the State.

> There is a tendency within social movement research to conceptualize social movement actors as opponents of the state. But a comparative and global perspective demands that we abandon this a priori assumption and conceptualize the state as one of several actors within a field, and there are times when the state (or elements thereof) will be allies of social movements in their struggles against other actors in the broader political field (Smith 2004: 315).

Several disciplines attempted to unravel the complex nature of collective action by relying on rational choice theory (Miller 1992). Geographers criticised the *homo economicus* understanding of human behaviour for ignoring the role of place and space. Miller (1992) is of the view that a comprehensive theorisation of collective action should begin with the realities of place and community. Wendy Wolford (2003) points out that the aspatial question of why movements arise has been privileged over why movements emerge in particular places and times, resulting in stories that seek to legitimate the motivation and strategies of insurgents. As

a way forward, Wolford emphasises the need to situate actors in their material and symbolic contexts, examine how actors negotiate spaces of resistance and domination generated by political, social and economic forces, and recognise diversity in attempting to understand how notions of community, place and tradition shape collective action.

5.5   Embedding Contention in Place

Routledge (1993) argues that collective action theories have yet to deal adequately with the mediation of social movement agency by place. Geographers increasingly focus on place and space as mutually constitutive of social movement agency (Oslender 2004). Oslender argues the importance of knowing the place where a movement emerges, where the movement activists live and the meaning living in that particular place conveys to them. The core of such sensibility is that the 'place and the subjectivities, identities and passions that it generates with locals make a difference to the ways in which a movement organises and articulates itself' (ibid: 958). Bell (1997: 813) refers to those passions as 'ghosts'. A place is constituted by the ghosts we take to inhabit and possess it; ghosts of the dead and living, individuals and collectives, of others and ourselves. Thus, we treat the ghostly place with ritual care and awe and we consider contradictory currents as denigrating and profane (ibid: 820). Until the recent emergence of the sociology of place, political sociology did not examine social movements as phenomena originating in particular places. Nevertheless, place-informed analysis of social movement has uses, including awareness of why social movements emerge where they do, the nature of a given movement and 'the spirit of movement agency' (Routledge 1993: 21).

Oslender (2004: 958) argues for an examination of the geographies of the pre-context of resistance, the 'pre-existing people, cultures, and places'. They form the preconditions out of which collective action emerges, the context for social movement agency and shape the nature of resistance. Place mediation of collective action should begin with the prior contexts of overt resistance and the subjective character people associate with a place. Such views resonate with Bell's insight that 'We experience in places the sentiments of sociality, sentiments of liking and disliking, trust and fear, renewal and loss, connection and disconnection, belongingness and foreignness, justice and injustice' (1997: 832). To approach social movements in this perspective means transcending the

conventional focus on movement structures, politics and strategies (Oslender 2004: 958). Lise Nelson (2003: 559) advocates a need to de-centre the social movement as the central category of analysis for a place focused approach. The essence of his argument is that collective action and its ripple effects yield to comprehensive understanding when not framed in terms of the limited boundaries of social movement. Collective action articulates with 'local histories and power relations, impacting multiple arenas and actors', many of which are unconnected to the movement (ibid: 564).

The politics of place still receive little attention (Moore 1998). Similar to the perception of space as dead geographies and immobile, localities are very often conceived as already formed, dead and static backdrops or stages on which identity struggles unfold. Studies of place-specific struggles fail to see localities as products of such struggles (ibid: 347). Moore argues, in a different context that the sense of place does not depend on an 'essentialized understanding of cultural attachments and rootedness to birthplace, but rather on a political location relative to a particular historical struggle…while simultaneously shaping understandings of collective identity' (ibid: 367).

Agnew (2005: 86) defines place as 'the encounter of people with other people and things in space. It refers to how everyday life is inscribed in space and takes on meaning for people and organizations'. Agnew disentangles the concept of place thus:

> Interwoven in the concept of place…are three major elements: *locale*, the settings in which social relations are constituted (these can be informal or institutional); *location*, the geographical area encompassing the settings for social interaction as defined by social and economic processes operating at a wider scale; and *sense of place*, the local "structure of feeling" (1987: 28).

Location captures the physical geographical area and the ways in which economic and political developments, operating on a wider scale, impact on it. The emphasis is 'macro-order' affects on a place and 'the ways in which certain places are inscribed, affected and subject to the wider workings of economic and political structures that normally originate from outside the area itself' (Oslender 2004: 961). Examples would include uneven development and uneven impacts of development. Oslender is of the view that the idea of location guides against a drift into subjectivism. *Locale* refers to the formal and informal arena in which everyday social interactions and relations take place. *Sense of place* refers to

the ways in which 'human experience and imagination appropriates the physical characteristics and qualities of geographical location' (ibid: 962). It stresses how individuals and communities develop attachment to places through experience, memory and intention (Relph 1976; cf. Oslender: 962). Oslender suggests that rather than separate rigid entities, it is best to consider the three components of place as entangled (Oslender: 963).

This thesis uses Agnew's definition of place to outline the forces that shape Ogoni as place. The particular way in which the relations between Ogoni and transnational capital, including the Nigerian State, affected pre-existing Ogoni location, locale and sense of place is a crucial factor in the decision to mobilise or to join the mobilisation. The struggle, while localised was never merely local; it is about the terms of connection between people and between groups of people, the non-human and the physical world. Moreover, 'it is about the terms of connection between local and larger places, both earthly and spiritual' (Escobar, Rochelean and Kothari 2002: 35).

5.5.1   Location and resource exploitation

Ogoni is one of several ethnic minorities in Rivers State. They occupy a territory approximately 404 square miles, which forms part of the gently sloping plateau bordering the eastern Niger Delta, between the Imo River on the east and north, Port Harcourt on the west, and Andoni and Bonny on the south. The area lies between latitude 4.05' and 4.20' north and longitudes 7.10' and 7.30' east. Estimates put the Ogoni population at 500,000. There are two main Ogoni origin myths. The first claims that the Ogoni migrated into the area from across the Imo River, and the second allude to migration from Ghana. Historical accounts hold that the Ogoni settled in the area and established themselves in six kingdoms, namely; Babbe, Eleme, Gokana, Nyo-Khana, Ken-Khana and Tai, more than 2000 years ago (Kpone-Tonwe 1997). The clans are composed of villages or communities, each headed by a traditional chief or Gbenemene. The central town of Bori is capital of the entire Ogoni land. The Ogoni languages of Khana, Gokana and Eleme are a distinct group within the Benue-Congo branch of African languages. There is mutual intelligibility among the speakers (Civil Liberties Organization 1996).

As shown in chapter 2, the Niger Delta, and particularly in Ogoni, both the land and rivers are central to all economic, social and domestic

activities. Given that about 90 per cent of the total Niger Delta area consists of water, canoes were critical and indispensable to movement, communication and trade. Long distance commerce required large canoes to convey bulky goods. With time, acquisition of large canoes became the means by which the Ogoni acquired wealth. As farmers, the Ogoni produced food products such as yams, plantains and palm wine. They also produced lumber, building materials and fish. These bulky goods required large canoes for transportation to markets. The use of large canoes provided employment for canoe builders, those who operate and protect them (Kpone-Tonwe 1997: 25). The people of Kono Boue distributed upwards of 5000 pots per week throughout the eastern Niger Delta by large canoe (ibid: 26).

The need for commercial fishing, trade and long distance travel in turn stimulated the growth of the canoe industry. Timber for construction was rare as the Delta is a mangrove terrain. Areas such as Ko village had thick forests and timber and became centres for canoe building. Expanding canoe and pot industries and bountiful farm harvests concentrated huge wealth in Ogoni. The accumulation of goods created the problem of storage. They converted their wealth into other forms of wealth, land, permanent tree crops such as palm oil and coconut trees and money (ibid: 131). Kpone-Tonwe argues that by the 16th century, a class of wealthy men, whose wealth derived from commercial enterprise, had emerged in Ogoni (ibid: 34-6).

Oil exploration and production in Nigeria has a colonial origin (Agbonifo 2002). The first oil discovery came in 1958 in Kegbara Dere, Ogoni. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), in joint venture partnership with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Elf and Agip operates five major oil fields and 96 wells, linked to five flow stations in Bomu, Bodo West, Ebubu, Korokoro and Yorla, all Ogoni communities (Banjo 1998). In 1914, the colonial state passed the Mineral Acts declaring sovereignty over mineral resources empowering the Governor-General to grant licences and leases to British companies and subjects. In 1938, Shell obtained rights to prospect for oil in the entire Nigerian land space. The company later concentrated on an area of high expectation measuring 15,000 square miles and returned the remaining land space to the colonial state. Shell drilled its first oil wells in 1956 and began oil export in 1958.

It took the postcolonial Nigerian State nine years after independence to repeal the 1914 Mineral Act and enact new oil-related legislation. Shell continued to operate freely within the favourable institutional framework crafted by the colonial state almost a decade after independence. Even then the 1969 Ordinance was little different from its colonial antecedent (Frynas 2000: 81). Between 1971 and 1990, there was no formal operating agreement between the State and Shell. For two decades, Shell operated within an institutional void and without obligations (ibid: 89) ostensibly because the Mineral Acts placed responsibility for oil exploitation in the hands of two monopolies: British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell. The monopoly rested on their agreement with the colonial state to share oil proceeds 50-50 (Osoba 1987). Seeing Shell with its huge capital base as a partner in development (Agbonifo 2002), the State had little incentive to change the status quo (Tanzi 1991: 237).

Ogoni celebrated the discovery of oil with excitement and hope (Agbo 2008). Held by the power of development (Crush 1995), the Ogoni willingly ceded land and symbolic places to Shell. The installation of oil facilities generated jobs for unskilled labour and attracted small service sector industrialists, job seekers and other migrants to the region. The processes of urbanisation increased, Ogoni boomed, and the people were excited. However, as Gaventa (1982) argues in the case of the Appalachian Valley, below the surface of the boom, the legitimacy investors enjoyed and the 'momentary Zeitgeist, there was quietly occurring the structuring of inequalities that was to have major long-term impact upon the political economy of the region' (ibid: 56). The structuring of inequalities occurred via spatial and social stratification, the predominance of multinational capital exercising control over oil resources and mode of production, and predatory accumulation by the State (see chapter 4). While hope and menial jobs existed, it appeared the State, Shell and the Ogoni shared a common goal.

By the early 1970s, the hope in oil was dashed and in its place, a grim realisation of despoliation settled. Ogoni leaders resorted to petitioning the State.[4] The estimate of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from gas flaring in Nigeria stands at about 35 million tonnes annually, the highest annual emission from gas flaring in the world. Gas flares negatively affect the environment, destroying plant growth and wildlife. Gas flaring releases large volumes of green house gases such as CO_2 and methane, contributing to global warming (Orubu, Odusola and Ehwarieme 2004).

The Ogoni ecology is undergoing profound changes (Boele, Fabig and Wheeler 2001). The soot released causes acid rain, fouling bodies of water. As a result, the Ogoni no longer drink rainwater. Acid rain on farms destroyed a once fertile land. Farmers harvest less returns yearly despite hard work. Ogoni now must buy food from outside (Amanyie 2001: 18). Huge oil spills in the Niger Delta aquatic environment has done massive damage to the ecosystem. Oil spillage leads to the death of all forms of marine life, birds and plants in the region. Constant gas flares that illuminate the environment 24 hours a day drive away important species (ibid: 25).

The Ogoni are primarily Delta fisherman, they lack the equipment and experience to thrive at ocean fishing and with the scarcity of fish in the Delta region from gas flares and other oil activities, many Ogoni have lost their livelihood (ibid: 18). This reality also affects canoe-carvers, local gin brewers and fish merchants (ibid: 44). Activities that degrade the environment impoverish vulnerable groups of farmers and fish merchants, compelling them to intensify exploitation of marginal resource bases. As a result, the 'pressure on land as a result of pollutive oil industry activities also leads to the exploitation of marginal farmlands, over-farming and deforestation' (Orubu, Odusola and Ehwarieme 2004: 207). The Ogoni sink further in destitution due to environmental pollution and the absence of adequate regulations on multinational companies as they become more vulnerable to 'food shortages, health hazards, loss of land, pollution, forced migration and unemployment' (Moesinger and Maglio nd).

5.6   State and Territoriality: Displacement and Dispossession

Chapter 2 provided insight into the industry, cultural diversity, interconnection and intermixture of the people that inhabit the Niger Delta. The region became a space of growing economic activities since European explorers made contact in the 16th century. Following penetration of the interior and eventual colonisation, colonisers set territorial processes of stratification in motion. First, it moved administrative and trade bases from the coastal areas to the interior reducing the fortunes of formerly booming coastal areas. Second, formerly independent places were lumped under administrative units, losing autonomy. The situation of the Niger Delta worsened following the national consolidation of Nigeria.

The immediate effect of the regionalisation of Nigeria was the construction of the Niger Delta as less politically influential. Oil exploitation had the added effect of structuring the region as a mineral enclave, the prized possession of the State. Positioned in the stratification system as a resource exclave for maximum exploitation, the wellbeing of the region and its inhabitants became secondary to the interests of the movement-state and global capital. The contradiction of interests and its negative impacts structure the TSAF (see chapter 4).

5.6.1 Rural dispossession

Aka Jr (1995: 61-6) traces the origin of regional disparities in Nigeria to the 100 years of British colonialism and differential rates of operation of colonial administrative, political and economic development processes. This would sound superfluous against the persuasive argument by Hirschman (1958) that inequality was inevitable in the early phase of modernisation, and that such differences would pale in significance as prosperity somehow 'trickled down'. Myrdal (1957) provides support for Aka's assertion by arguing that Hirschman's suggestion is not the way events unfold. Rather, lack of state intervention exacerbates inequalities. Aka (1995) argues that awareness of regionalism and the seeds of regional disparities trace back to Lord Lugard's policy of indirect rule or 'divide and rule'. Under Lugard, different administrative standards were set for the different Protectorates. The result was socioeconomic disparities and ethnic rivalries.

The resulting stratification of place puts rural places at a disadvantage: as a site for the cities to parasite on. Otite (1990: 327) argues that colonial capitalism meant 'rural genocide'. The colonial government employed coercive strategies to ensure the proletariansation of the population. This included forcible expropriation of land, forced labour, an avalanche of taxes and reorientation of agriculture to exportable crops (ibid: 327) and migration. Otite (ibid) argues that colonial capitalism also ensured labour migration from rural areas, progressive impoverishment of the masses, expropriation of surpluses and its repatriation to Britain and, the undermining of traditional systems (ibid: 328-9). The 'oil rush' of the early 1970s unleashed rapid land alienation, quickly resulting in mass landlessness. The massive dispossession or 'material haemorrhage' that became a characteristic feature of the Niger Delta came about

through forcible expropriation, deceit, corruption and state acquisition (ibid: 332).

Eziakor (1989) argues that despite industrial development receiving priority since independence, the industrial path failed to address rural, regional and national inequalities, and rather than trickle down, the benefits of industrialisation has trickled up from the bottom.

Table 5.1
Urban-rural investment in selected sectors: 1970-1974 development plan

Item	Total Planned Capital Investment	Urban-based investment		Rural-based investment	
	Pounds million	Pounds million	%	Pounds million	%
Industry	86.1	77.7	91.2	8.4	9.8
Electricity	45.3	40.3	89.0	5.0	11.0
Water/Sewage	51.7	42.2	71.6	9.5	18.4
Town/Country Planning	19.1	18.0	94.3	1.1	5.7
Education	138.9	98.4	70.9	40.5	29.1
Health	53.8	45.2	84.0	8.6	16.0
Social Welfare	12.0	11.0	91.7	1.0	8.3
Others	373.1	307.7	82.5	65.4	17.5
Total	**780.0**	**640.5**	**82.1**	**139.5**	**17.9**

Adapted from S.A. Aluko (1973: 440)

Some scholars, engaged in the problem of rural poverty and decay and potential solutions emphasised rural industrialisation in order to stem rural urban migration and poverty (Eziakor 1989: 438). Otite expresses trepidation that the dynamics of 'rural genocide', which prevented retention of capital in rural areas, may frustrate the new initiative by reinvesting surpluses from rural resources in urban areas (ibid: 21-2). Up until then, the dominant problem in the field of national development was how to accomplish rural development and transformation through industrialisation. Enchanted by the promise of modernisation, scholars scarcely spared analytical attention to the impacts of industry on rural livelihoods, environment and culture.

Recent developments, as shown in chapter 1, justify Otite's apprehension. The Human Development Report (UNDP 2006) shows that vast

revenue from the oil industry 'have barely touched pervasive local pov-
erty' and that past development planning failed to meet the needs of the
people (ibid: 13-14). The sensitivity to the spatial inequalities suffered by
Ogoni compared to some non-oil producing places is a major factor in
the mobilisation of grievances by MOSOP.

5.6.2 Extractive industries and exploitation

This researcher argues above that the Nigerian State, unlike states in
Western Europe, serves to ensure global capitalist accumulation. The
inactions of the State with regard to the pollutive activities of oil compa-
nies and the violent actions of the State against communities protesting
oil activities led Ake to describe Nigeria as privatised by Shell. Others
make similar arguments (Osaghae 1995; Frynas 2000; Saro-Wiwa 1992;
1995). Omoruyi (2000) suggests that the bias of the State is a function of
the minority status of the Ogoni. As Naanen (1995) argues, through 'in-
ternal colonialism' the State, having appropriated ownership and control
over Ogoni environment, reduced Ogoni to a resource space for maxi-
mum exploitation by Shell. The mutually reinforcing logic of predatory
accumulation and capital accumulation ensure the continued indifference
of the State and unsustainable exploitation of Ogoni lands by Shell
(Reyna 1999).

   Adebayo and Falola (1987) argue colonial exploitation of Nigeria's
mineral wealth, as well as agricultural production was integral to the co-
lonialists' economic policy. Oil-related legislation and policies date back
to 1914, when the British colonial government enacted the Minerals Oil
Ordinance No. 17. The ordinance subsequently amended in 1925, 1950
and 1958, granted oil exploration monopoly in Nigeria to British compa-
nies (Omeje 2006: 35). The German company, Nigerian Bitumen Corpo-
ration began petroleum exploration in Nigeria and drilled 14 wells
around Lagos in 1908 hoping to find oil in Nigeria. The company faded
away following the end of World War I. In 1937, Shell d'Arcy Petroleum
Development Company of Nigeria, an associate of Shell Petroleum
Company and British Petroleum Company, started prospecting for oil.

   The colonial government favoured this company, which later changed
its name to Shell BP Petroleum Company of Nigeria The colonialists
forbade the entry of any other oil company into Nigeria until 1955 when
Mobil Exploration (Nig) Ltd received exploratory licence. Even then,
such licence did not touch areas known to be oil-bearing that Shell had

reserved for itself (Adebayo and Falola 1987: 98). The bias in favour of Shell was an attempt to protect the economic interest of Shell and the British Empire (Omeje 2006: 35). The colonial government made few efforts to control or regulate oil company activities (ibid: 99). This supports Omoruyi's claim that Shell was always part of the British colonial order in Nigeria (Omoruyi 2000). Nigerians had no say over the colonial administration, let alone the companies (ibid).

A central but by no means novel issue was the question of access to and ownership of lands containing oil. After World War II, nervousness from the potential conflict over land ownership abated to a degree with the Minerals Ordinance of 1945. With this act, the colonial government made all minerals the property of the Crown: 'The entire property and control of all minerals and mineral oil, in, under, or upon any land in Nigeria, and of all rivers, streams, and water courses…is and shall be vested in the CROWN' (Omoruyi 2000). The Mineral Ordinance specified that owners of oil-bearing land shall be compensated for the economic crops on the land, but not for the land or the oil. The acquisitive ethos of the ordinance 'introduced a false dichotomy between "land" and "minerals"' (ibid). This researcher would like to add the category, land and community. According to Omoruyi (2000),

> Section 18 of the Interpretation Act of 1964 says that land does not include minerals. But this is at variance with elementary economics books and customary law, which make no such distinction and in fact subsume minerals within the land. The learned jurist, Justice T. Elias agreed with this interpretation too, as it is the practice in the United Kingdom. Elias cited Section 205 (1) of the Law of Property Act 1925 of UK, which defines "land to include land of any tenure, and mines and minerals" to buttress his point. Why was this false distinction made in the Nigerian law?

Although some nationalist leaders, including Nnandi Azikiwe had criticised the colonial ordinances, including the Minerals Ordinance, as obnoxious and called for their abrogation, they reneged when it became clear that they might be successors to the Crown (ibid). Thus, as argued in chapters 3 and 4, there is continuity between the colonial and postcolonial eras and a convergence of interests between the ruling factions of the Nigerian State and global capital.

5.6.3   Land use decree

The Land Use Decree of 1978 is one of the most controversial laws enacted in Nigeria (CRP 1999: 1). The Land Use Decree specifies that if required for mining or oil-related activities the government can revoke occupancy (ibid: 2). The land reform, according to Shittu Akinola (2006), has done much harm to ordinary Nigerians, given that it excludes them from ownership of their own land and the resources therein. The Decree expropriates land from their owners and confers ownership on state governors. The Land Use Decree derives from the difficulties government agencies experienced acquiring land and the speculation-driven prohibitive price of land in the urban centres (ibid: 6). The provisions of the Decree were subject to abuse given the arbitrary powers it gave governors. The method by which compensation was determined was oppressive and oblivious of inflationary rates. Given these considerations, Akinola (ibid: 7) argues, 'It can be said that the law is of colonial inspiration and feudal inclination for the purpose of exploiting, expropriating and oppressing the citizens'.

Customary land tenure in Nigeria rests on customs that regard land as community/family property. An individual member of the collective had rights to use a piece of land and could bequeath it to his heir; but never sell or mortgage it. Colonial administrators introduced various ordinances that allowed for individual ownership, legal conveyance and an empowered government to expropriate land. Although expansion of the money economy was an incentive toward private ownership of land, customary tenure exacted unabating force. Following rationalisation of the existing tenure as inhibiting development, government enacted the Land Use Decree, nationalising all land in Nigeria. Advocates of the Land Use Decree rationalised that the reform would make land available to individuals and corporations for development purposes. After more than two decades of policy implementation, it is obvious that contrary to expectations, the Land Use Decree has not achieved its set goals (Francis 1984).

5.6.4   State, revenue and oil minorities

The State employed its territorialising prerogatives to dispossess oil minorities and accumulate wealth for the benefit of itself and transnational capital. Soon after the civil war, the State employed the law to deprive oil minorities of their oil revenues. The territorial act of state creation be-

came a means whereby regional minorities became national minorities, paving the way for the powerful federal government to dispossess them of their resources 'legally' and with impunity. Oil revenue centralisation and the dissolution of regional structures was an important means for the State to accumulate power at the expense of regional governments. This weakened local governments to such an extent that none was powerful enough to challenge territorialisation.

The Independence Constitution of 1960 and the Republican Constitution of 1963 were unambiguous with regard to principles that should govern the sharing of revenue derived from any part of the country:

> There shall be paid by the federation to each Region a sum equal to fifty per cent of (a) the proceeds of any royalty received by the Federation in respect of any minerals in that Region; and (b) any mining rents derived by the Federation from within that Region (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 84).

Following the end of the civil war, the federal government set up the Dina Commission, which contrary to constitutional provisions recommended reducing the derivation principle to five per cent of royalties and mining rents. General Yakubu Gowon 'ignored this rejection and went on to decree the complete confiscation by the Federal Government of all off-shore oil in defiance of the Constitution' (ibid: 84). By 1972, oil had become a huge revenue spinner and the primary focus of intense ethnic competition. Without consultation, and for no justifiable exigencies, the military junta single-handedly reduced the 50 per cent derivation and forced 20 per cent derivation on the minorities (ibid: 85).

Philip Asiodu, a former Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Mines and Power, is perhaps the best illustration of the disdain the federal rulers felt for delta minorities in what Saro-Wiwa described as the 'language of colonialism': 'Given, however, the small size and population of the oil-producing areas, it is not cynical to observe that even if the resentments of oil producing states continue, they cannot threaten the stability of the country nor affect its continued economic development' (ibid: 87).

Omoruyi (2000) argues that the oppressive policies and actions of the State toward oil minorities are the result of their minority status and the fact that they cannot lead the military or become president. According to Omoruyi, oil could not have become federal property if it were located in the domain of any of the dominant groups. The leaders of the tripod 'exploited the relative powerlessness of the people of the oil producing

areas to lay claim to oil as a Nigerian property'. The unilateral whittling down of the derivation formula would have threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria were the oil located in the majority regions. By exercising power over space, the State controls its inhabitants (Sewell 2001: 68). Development as spatial reorganisation (Mabogunje 1980: 65) results in regional disparity. By maintaining the spatial organisation of Nigeria, which gives less economic and political privileges and preference to the Ogoni than majority regions, the State ensures the productive, appropriative and distributive exploitation of Ogoni environment and community.

State-Shell relationship

The question of the relationship between the State or indigenous bourgeoisie and imperialism or foreign capital is a long-standing one. While some argue that the State is a tool of the oil companies, others argue otherwise. Ake finds evidence for the privatisation of Nigeria by Shell. Orontos Douglas holds the view that power can be the possession of an entity and as such, he claims that in Nigeria, oil companies retain power and the State is powerless. To Omeje, the State 'primarily privileges itself in the making of oil legislation and oil policies' (Omeje 2005). Even though their interests may coincide, the 'interests of the TNCs may not be primary to the alliance.' Omeje argues that the State's interest in rents and patrimonial accumulation define oil politics and policies in Nigeria. He indicates instances in which the State acted against the interests of oil companies. The real issue is the effectiveness of such regulations (Dicken 1997: 83). Opponents argue that where the interest of Shell is at stake, it usually has its way (ibid).

Missing from the debate is attention to the literature on imperialism and the debates over its role in capitalist development in the periphery. The effect of such an omission is failure to understand both state and TNCs as embedded in networks of relations as argued in chapter 4 with the concept of TSAF. Although the idea of linkage is evident in the imperialism literature, it is hardly noticeable in Omeje (2005). Both entities exist as bounded and separate, harbouring personal and unique interests that may or may not coincide. Omeje finds it easy to argue that the interest of the State shapes oil-related politics. To the contrary, a better view of these actors is as a network of relations, involving conflict, collaboration and mutual interdependence (ibid: 78). These networks are rule-

governed. However, such rules remain contested. A spatial viewpoint enables coming to terms with the understanding that social institutions and relations are 'entangled in material processes that extend beyond the bounds of the nation-state and their transformation can no longer be wholly understood within an exclusively national framework' (Yeates 2005). A transnational perspective undermines the anthropological emphasis on bounded locality (Geschiere and Meyers 1998).

Historical analysis of oil development shows that the colonial era gave rise to the networks of oil development, designed to benefit firms and colonialists (Schatz 1984: 55). Schatz (1984) argues that the political class at independence saw the government as a tool for self-enrichment. The postcolonial State enroled into the arrangement in accordance with rules. This offers insight into why it took almost a decade before it began to contest the rules of engagement, and then it was a cosmetic alteration of the status quo. Over time, the State contested various terms of enrolment. At the same time, it provided TNCs with several attractive privileges and incentives. It matters little if what the State takes away with the right hand, it gives back with the left. Embedded within trans-local networks on which it depends for survival, it cannot reasonably be expected that the State would be motivated solely by its interest and in utter disregard of the interests of its significant others. As Beckman (1981) argues, the State serves as an organ of foreign capital and fosters the domestic bourgeoisie; however, it is not simply reducible to the interests of either section of capital. Beckman does not see how the State can privilege its interests over that of global capital accumulation on which its survival depends.

Ogoni-State relationship

James Short Jr argues that the perceptions of risks, 'including judgments as to the acceptability of particular risks, are a function of the degree to which the institutions which are responsible for the assessment and management of risks are trusted' (Short Jr 1984: 714). Trust in this respect refers to expectation with regard to competence, fiduciary responsibility, and the preservation and promotion of the moral social orders, confidence and fairness. Fairness, confidence and trust are critical to social relationships and systems. These relationships and systems lie at the core of the social fabric. Any examination of the relationship between the Nigerian State and minority ethnic group, must give attention to the emo-

tions engendered by the unresolved minority question and to what extent a sense of fairness, confidence and trust exists in that relationship.

Affect is a fundamental positive or negative sentiment toward people or place that can activate a sense of threat. The Ogoni juxtapose a positive feeling about their pre-oil community with the destructive onset of oil development. Attributing blame for the perceived threat, Saro-Wiwa argues that with the encouragement of a federal government Shell set about oil exploitation in an environment lacking minimum standards and in utter contempt of the 'peasant population' (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 44). The manner in which Shell went about oil development was so abhorrent that in April 1970, Ogoni leaders petitioned the Military Governor of Rivers State. In the petition, the Ogoni complained 'neither the nation nor the Shell-BP Company has ever given serious and deserved consideration to the effects which this industry has had, and will continue to have, on the economy and life of the people.' Apart from Shell's riposte, there is no indication that the government acted on the Ogoni petition. Saro-Wiwa claims in angry distrusting terms that through connivance with the State, Shell seized people's land at will, and the nation appears unperturbed so long as it receives royalties.

With the rise in revenue accruing from the industry and simultaneous decline in the importance of agriculture, Nigeria gradually became reliant on oil revenue. The interest of the oil industry, more than that of the Ogoni became priority consideration in policy calculations (Frynas 2003: 101). At independence in 1960, Nigeria produced only 20,000 barrels/day, rising to 540,000 barrels/day in 1969 jumping to 2 million barrels/day in 1973 (Op. cit.). While the early 1980s saw fluctuations in production levels following the global market glut, the government provided the industry enticing terms to encourage oil exploration and production (Frynas 2000: 17). There were eight oil companies operating in Nigeria in 1966, 12 in 1986 rising to more than 50 by 1998 (ibid: 35). In both boom and decline years, massive exploitative activities continued. It appears that more environmental damage occurred in the latter period because problems of falling oil revenue and political crisis in the 1980s caused government enhanced financial terms as a means to attract foreign investors to the sector (ibid: 34). In such a constricting period, environmental consideration meant little to the government.

Ogoni-Shell relationship

It is evident that from earliest times, basic trust was absent in the relationship between the Ogoni and Shell. The lack of trust may have triggered other negative emotions such as suspicion of Shell's intentions, resulting hostility and blame. The discursive conflict between the Ogoni and Shell that followed the events of 9 June 1970 is the clearest indication of lack of trust. Another was the refusal of Shell to dialogue with the Ogoni when the latter issued an ultimatum in 1990. Afterward, a long series of events stoked Ogoni hostilities. These include the support, material and otherwise, Shell provides to the State in its violent repression of the Ogoni; Shell's refusal to prevail on the State and spare Saro-Wiwa; the various attempts by Shell to re-enter Ogoni without proper resolution of its problems with the Ogoni; and failure of government organised reconciliation process (Kpalap 2008).

We can draw very useful lessons from the nature of the Ogoni-Shell relationship by examining Shell-BP's response to the Ogoni petition referenced above (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 50-6). From the response, reference NO. PUB/2110, 9 June 1970, it appears that the Ogoni petition was only one in a series of petitions from Ogoni years earlier. It made clear that Shell-BP's role was to 'find and produce hydrocarbons' and by so doing contribute to national development (refer to chapter 4 for a discussion of diversionary framing and non-problematicity geared at sustaining privileges in the TSAF). The attempt by the Ogoni to saddle the Company with development responsibilities that belong to the government is outside the remit of its agreement with the Nigerian government. Given that the company strives to ensure that its operations cause minimal disturbance, the Ogoni charge that the Company's operations exacerbate land scarcity and insufficient compensation are inaccurate (ibid: 50-1). Shell found it worthwhile to persuade any who would listen that the 15 per cent crude oil produced in Ogoni constitutes a small portion of total crude produced in Nigeria. The letter impugns Ogoni claims of population density, claiming that the actual density is less than one person per acre based on the 1963 national census, which showed that the Ogoni population averages 564 persons per square mile.

Shell-BP claims that the approximate land area of Ogoni is 264,320 acres out of which the Company occupies less than 1,000 acres of land for its operations. Shell does not recognise the veracity of the claim that 'the entire economy of our people has been completely disrupted'. Con-

trary to claims that 'each acre yields an average of F1000-F2000 (one thousand to two thousand pounds) per farming season' is an exaggeration, as is the charge of inadequate compensation. 'In addition to surface rights compensation (F1 266.8.7 in the case of local Bomu VNOM) an annual rental is paid. The rates of these annual rentals are approved by Government and have over the years been raised by the Company on its own initiative' (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 51). The company claims that because there have been no authenticated cases of people coming forward to complain, farmers were not displaced and left without alternatives.

At about this same time, a major incident occurred at the Bomu oil field. Initially, the company tried to cover the incident up, which meant it did not receive the attention it deserved. It took Shell several weeks to contain the situation but not before extensive environmental damage. Dere community youths bemoan the colonising mode of naming land, which Shell employed arbitrarily, albeit strategically, renaming Dere Bomu (Plumwood 2003). This is clearly an act of power over the land and its occupants because the so-called Bomu is not an empty or unoccupied space. What such naming does is erase the agency and meaningful relationship between the Ogoni and the environment (Bell 1997). The arbitrary and colonially-informed practice of naming and classifying people and places aims at control (Adams 2003: 24). In a different context, an Ogoni farmer lamented:

> I do not know what we have done to make God punish us by bringing Shell-BP into our land. Every year, we spend our time, money and energy to cultivate the land and then, suddenly one day, Shell-BP caterpillars come in to destroy our crops. Any house that falls within the company's area of interest must also be destroyed. Even though we are never adequately compensated, we have nobody to complain to (Saro-Wiwa 1993: 76).

Nineteen years after the Bomu blowout, some families, victims of the blowout sued Shell for compensation in Shell v. Farah. In March 1988, Shell claimed it had rehabilitated and handed the land over to the plaintiffs and that it had paid F22,000 in compensation for damaged trees, crops and other elements as well as another F1,000 for land degradation. The plaintiffs claimed ignorance of Shell claims and consequently initiated legal action in 1989. In Court, Shell relied on an expert witness who coordinated Shell's land rehabilitation exercise and argued that oil spills were not hazardous but functional to agricultural enterprise (Frynas

2000: 168). The main witness for the plaintiffs, Dr Edward Obiozo, a biochemistry lecturer at the University of Port Harcourt, argued otherwise, prompting the judge to appoint referees to reconsider the evidence. Their joint finding corroborated plaintiff's argument. The judge awarded the plaintiffs Naira 4,621,307 in compensation. Shell appealed the judgment. The appeal failed before the Court of Appeals. Frynas argues that expert claims, such as the one made by the defendant, while absurd, helped Shell avoid responsibility for environmental damage (Frynas 2000: 169).

Frynas (2000) shows that from 1981-86; Shell had 24 compensation claims lodged against it in Nigerian courts. In 1998, the number jumped to more than 500 cases. Most of them were oil-spill related. The rise in the number of lawsuits suggests that compensation arrived at through negotiation and mediation was unsatisfactory, which indicated that negotiation and mediation are inadequate methods for resolving community compensation claims. Frynas is of the view that given such a gap and the absence of compensation monitoring mechanisms, victims of oil operations may resort to violence or lawsuit. The latter is more likely if the victim has the means to initiate a legal challenge. Shell accuses the Ogoni of being saboteurs, responsible for 69 per cent of oil spills in Ogoni between 1989 and 1994 (ibid). When the company convinced the court of sabotage, as happened with Shell v. Otoko, it does not pay compensation to victims (Frynas 2000: 196). Shell employed the guise of sabotage to escape liability for damage; however, there is no evidence that Shell took legal action against suspected saboteurs.

5.7   Locale, Social Relations and Conflict

The Ogoni live in predominantly agricultural and fishing communities. The slopping plateau, nourished by sediment-bearing rivers and creeks, was fertile and supported bountiful agricultural production. The rivers brimmed with fishes and seafood. The Ogoni prospered as farmers and fisher folks. They grew mainly yams, rice, plantain, cassava and banana, transforming their territory into the food basket of the eastern Niger Delta (Saro-Wiwa 1992). The Ogoni retain a non-anthropocentric approach to their environment. The importance of the rivers and land exceed their physical utility. Beyond providing sustenance, the Ogoni see their entire territory as a spiritual legacy. The land is both the abode of ancestors and a god and accordingly venerated (Mitee 2002). Swearing by

the land is a sacred oath that carries grave consequences. It is not surprising that in Ogoni social hierarchy, the land priest is next in importance to the paramount chief (ibid). The Ogoni have many festivals honouring the fruits of the land, particularly yams. The Annual Festival of the Ogoni coincides with the yam harvest. The agricultural planting season carries considerable symbolic meaning. Planting is a spiritual, religious and social occasion.

> "Tradition" in Ogoni means in the local tongue (*doonu kuneke*) the honouring of the land (earth, soil, water). This respect for the land means that forests are not merely a collection of trees and the abode of animals but also, and more intrinsically, a sacred possession. Trees in the forest cannot therefore be cut indiscriminately without regard for their sacrosanctity and their influence on the well-being of the entire community, of the land (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 12).

Rivers and streams not only provide water for human use or fish and seafood for human consumption, 'they are sacred and are bound up intricately with the life of the community, of the entire Ogoni nation' (ibid: 12-13). The Ogoni see continuity between the human and animal elements. They believed that the essence of a woman or man could leave its human form and transmute into that of a beast, assuming in the process the incarnation of an animal. The culture deifies some such animals. According to Kpalap (2008), it is common belief that any harm to strong animals, such as tiger, elephants, reflect on individual Ogoni. The Ogoni appreciate the value of their environment as the material extension of their society. They jealously guard the integrity of their territory, and maintain the independence of their society and honour of their environment against external violations with ferocity.

The onset of the colonial enterprise led to forced seizure of local control over trade by the Europeans. The subsequent establishment of colonial rule disorganised the established and prosperous patterns of trade, flux and self-rule. In contradistinction to the indirect rule system in the North, the British colonists imposed direct colonial rule on the region. Colonial mindset about the Niger Delta was clear from the onset: the Niger Delta rulers are corrupt and biased in favour of the strong. The dominant view was that the native 'Negro race' was incompetent and unable to rule itself, which made it necessary for the European government to take its place (Ayotamuno 2003: 41-2). They designed a deliberate policy that sapped power from traditional authorities and institutions.

It is worthy of attention that in a system of checks-and-balances, the colonialists saw repression and authoritarianism.

Colonisation set in motion processes that not only destroyed the republican base of socio-political organisation, but also ensured the complete reversal of the fortune of the Niger Delta communities *vis à vis* other regions in Nigeria (see chapter 2). According to Alagoa (2006), the Niger Delta first made contact with the Europeans, establishing relationships that lasted centuries. Partly as a result, the level of sophistication of the region was high. The peoples enjoyed the privilege of the 'Atlantic impact.' Following colonisation, the British dismantled and moved all administrative infrastructures from the coast to the hinterland where it established seats of government. By relocating structures of colonial government to domains of the major ethnic groups, the Niger Delta became a periphery.[5] Also as a marker of the changing fortune of the region, Dappa-Biriye holds that the region's minorities initially exercised influence as 'masters' over their Igbo ethnic neighbours, who were mostly bought and sold as slaves, and employed as farm workers (see Etekpe 2003: 39).

The Ogoni environment has not remained pristine. Until the end of the 19th century, the Ogoni plain was densely forested. The fertile plain ensured that Ogoni became the food basket of the Niger Delta. One might argue that Ogoni produced provisions taken on board slave ships (Kpone-Tonwe and Salmons 2002). With population growth and increased demand for farm produce from the Delta, the early 20th century witnessed the Ogoni convert large areas of forest into farmland. 'Accelerated population growth…began to push the human population beyond ecological viability by about 1960' (ibid: 275). 'Today the pressure for farmland is so great that even the wetter areas are being cultivated for quick cassava crops in the dry season, threatening valuable water resources and impoverishing the soils. The ubiquitous oil and raffia palm trees…have grown in place of forest trees' (ibid: 275). The environment has undergone processes of change in which the Ogoni were active participants.

5.8   Terrain and History of Struggle

Colonial forces entered Ogoni and proclaimed the territory a British protectorate in 1901. Like several other communities in the Niger Delta, the Ogoni resisted British authority. Patrols, employed to pacify resistance

against colonial rule, went to Ogoni in 1903 and 1905. Their mandate was to 'enforce administrative control' in the course of which several villages were destroyed (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 15). Yet British high-handedness did not deter the Ogoni. In 1913, the British again launched an attack against the Ogoni. In 1914, British forces demolished an Ogoni religious centre, resulting in the weakening and end of Ogoni resistance.

Twenty years later, the British had no administrative machinery in Ogoni. Instead, administration of Ogoni went to Opobo Division within the Calabar Province. With the headquarters separated from Ogoni by the Imo River and Calabar some 200 miles away, administration in Ogoni was haphazard at best, in essence left to stagnate. Colonial rule meant nothing more than the collection of taxes and maintenance of law and order through the courts. Worse still, local Ogoni did not benefit from tax revenue in the area (ibid: 16). The tax burden became so unbearable that Ogoni women joined in the Women's Tax Riots of 1929. Several Ogoni women died in the haze of bullets meant to quell the riot at Egwanga, the Opobo Divisional headquarters (ibid: 16).

With the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Protectorates by the British in 1914, the colonialists effectively created a tripartite country the Yorubas in the Western Region, the Igbos in the Eastern Region and the Hausa-Fulani in the Northern Region. These three groups became 'the power-brokers in Nigeria, with the minority ethnic groups in each Region attached to them as appendages' (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 20). Rivalry and intense competition ensued among the three in the struggle to control the nation's resources. By creating a country of three regions, the British colonialists rendered the minorities invisible and made clear that only the three major ethnic groups were of consequence (see chapter 3).

The fear and experience of ethnic domination arose within such a context. As independence approached and as their marginal position in political calculation was entrenched, the minorities concluded that, their fate in an independent country would worsen unless they acted to save themselves. To overthrow Igbo lordship to which regionalism had consigned them, the minorities of the Eastern Region realised the need to close ranks and resist the Igbo. Their quest for self-determination snowballed, as was happening in the other two Regions, into a significant movement. In response, the colonial government set up the Sir Henry Willink Commission of Inquiry to investigate the fears of ethnic minorities and ways to allay their anxiety. The commission determined that the

fear was unfounded. It failed to recommend the creation of Rivers State out of the Eastern Region on the reasoning that such action would encounter Igbo resentment. As part of preparations for drawing up an independence constitution, there was a proposal presented that there could be no new state created out of the region without regional approval. Saro-Wiwa sees this as significant because it consigned minorities to a 'colonial status' (ibid: 22-3).

The development of colonial capitalism meant rural genocide (Otite 1990: 327). The colonial government employed coercive strategies to ensure the proletarianisation of the population in deference to the dictate of the primitive accumulation logic of capitalism. This included forcible expropriation of land, forced labour, an avalanche of taxes, re-orientation of agriculture to exportable crops (ibid: 327) and migration. Otite argues that colonial capitalism also ensured labour migration from rural areas, progressive impoverishment of the masses, expropriation of surpluses and its repatriation to Britain and the undermining of traditional systems (ibid: 328-9). The oil rush of the early 1970s unleashed rapid land alienation resulting in massive and rapid landlessness. The massive dispossession or 'material haemorrhage' that became a characteristic feature of the region came about through forcible expropriation, deceit, corruption and state acquisition (ibid: 332).

5.9   Place and History of Disasters

The literature on cost-benefit analysis recognises the centrality of environment to its inhabitants (Kanbur 2003; Cernea 2003). There is some convergence on the need to compensate environmental victims. It has not provided any means by which we can appraise the degree of importance of any given environmental resource. The ecological economics literature supplies such a handle with the use of two concepts, *importance* and *threat* as determinants of criticality (De Groot, Van der Perk, Chiesura and van Vliet 2003). Natural resources may be considered critical elements when focus is on their contributions to human survival, biodiversity and environmental integrity. A second dimension of criticality relates to the degree to which a natural resource is threatened. Natural resources may be critically important without being threatened even though it is not vital to human survival or well-being (see appendix A2).

Tables A2.1, A2.2 and A2.3, set out the linkages between the characteristics of ecosystems and the functions they engender. These character-

istics ensure the integrity of the ecosystem, but at the same time provide human societies, directly or indirectly, with natural goods and services. Table A2.3 identifies some of the most important criteria against which to determine the ecological importance of natural resources. The criteria of importance are matched with minimum threshold over which the capacity or health of the ecosystem is impaired. The extent to which the exploitation of the ecosystem is sustainable or unsustainable is measured by means of qualitative and quantitative units. Socio-cultural values and meanings influence how people value natural resources. De Groot et al. (2003) argue that in addition to its economic and material attributes, natural resources are important sources of non-material wellbeing.

The 25 April 1970 Ogoni leaders' petition to the governor of Rivers State, alleges that after Ogoni returnees, displaced by the civil war, had been encouraged to till the land to eke out subsistence, Shell-BP caterpillars entered cultivated farmlands and bulldozed several acres of crops. Prior to the petition, the leaders had shown the governor acres of mangrove swamps destroyed by incessant oil spills, imperilling the livelihood of the poor. Crude oil and mud polluted the once sparkling rivers and streams in Gokana area, leaving the people no alternative source for drinking water. 'Our people have been compelled to sacrifice all life-supporting necessities so that the nation may enjoy economic boom' (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 47). The uprooted and displaced farmers have no alternative means of subsistence, and Shell does not provide them jobs.

In July 1970, a blowout occurred in Dere, where Shell first struck oil in 1958, as if to underscore the fears and vulnerability of the Ogoni. According to one report from Dere, 'The blow-out continued day and night for about two months during which we were forbidden to make fire, we could neither cook our meals nor smoke tobacco' (ibid: 72). So severe was the disaster that it destroyed farmlands within a radius of about three miles, and from Onne to Bodo crude oil covered miles of water. Worse still, the blowout occurred during the harvest period destroying the first fruits after the civil war. Yet not a single relief material was received in Dere, as the victims 'were left to swim or sink within their miseries' (Osha 2006: 28). This reality links with the way Shell articulated the problem as, non-problematic (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 75). The gas flaring in the middle of villages or close to habitation has driven away and destroyed wildlife. Saro-Wiwa charges that what Shell has done to the

Ogoni people, land, streams and atmosphere amounts to genocide, murdering the soul of the Ogoni.

The impacts associated with oil development pose serious threat to the criticality of Ogoni environment. As De Groot et al. (2003) argue above, criticality is a function of importance and threat, even when the latter lacks importance to human life. Although lions perform no critical function for the survival of Ogoni, the latter mourn the loss of these creatures like other wildlife and seafood critical to the local economy and livelihood. Saro-Wiwa mourned the absence of the early morning chirpings of the birds. The Ogoni plains mourn the absence of the birds too. Here Saro-Wiwa personalises geography as, 'intrinsic psychic relationship between the Ogoni and their environment' (1992: 83). Introducing issues of 'generational fairness' (Albrecht et al. 1996: 668) and impact of Shell on the Ogoni, Saro-Wiwa laments for his children, compatriots and their progeny essentially because with oil disasters came the destruction of the spiritual, heritage and amenity values of the Ogoni environment.

Oil spills and associated impacts appear as the inevitable outcome of oil development. In fact, Shell and the Ogoni do not agree that much of the disaster episodes are the handiwork of saboteurs (Boele, Fabig and Wheeler 2001). However, spills are not inevitable, and deadly impact on local livelihood is not the inevitable outcome of pollution. Shell's spatial use pattern and the political and economic arrangement of the society concerned mediate the damage from spills. Thus, Apeldoorn argues, 'Disasters should be analysed not in isolation but as extreme situations that are implicit in the everyday condition of the population' (1981). Absent from all the rhetoric about corporate social responsibility is the willingness to ensure that the next time oil spillage occurs, systems are in place to avert damage to critical aspects of society. As a result, damage to local livelihood regularly accompanies spills, a phenomenon that has tended to naturalise the link between spills and oil damage. What makes the Ogoni vulnerable to oil disaster?

To Apeldoorn, disaster is about people. However, the focus on the immediate impact of a disaster is misleading because it suggests the need for relief and technology to deal with the disaster. It is imperative to see extreme conditions of disaster as extensions of the non-extreme situations of everyday life. The non-extreme is as important to the understanding of disaster as the disaster itself. One can view vulnerability as both the probability of damage, death, loss and disruption of livelihood

because of extreme events, and the nature of existing coping capacities, which shapes the ability to or difficulty of recovering (Birkmann and Fernando 2007: 82-105). Response to disaster and the harm it can inflict reflects how a society is organised (Apeldoorn 1981: 5).

Without recourse to oil legislation it is impossible to understand the history of disaster in Ogoni, Shell's spatial use pattern, the power relationships between Shell and the Ogoni and between the Ogoni and the State. Disaster in Ogoni also depends on how prepared and empowered the Ogoni are to cope with oil disasters (Birkmann and Fernando 2007). Oil legislation gives oil companies privileged access or right of way over agricultural lands. The Land Use Decree (1978) ensures that oil companies can access any land of interest without hindrance from the communities. Thus, Shell's facilities dot Ogoni. Shell's spatial use pattern has been indiscriminate. Oil pipelines run through living quarters, criss-cross farmlands and sometimes run on surface ground (Watts 2008). The combined effect of this scenario is immediate with direct affects on the home, farm and community livelihood in the event of an oil disaster. Shell's land use reflects existing power relationships, and so does the age-old discursive disagreement between Shell and the Ogoni over the question of compensation, land seizure, relief materials and sabotage.

5.10   Locale and Mobilising Structure

According to Kpone-Tonwe (1997), before the 17th century, marriage in Ogoni rested on an endogamous matrilineal system. The first ruler of Ogoni was a woman named Kwaanwaa. At her death, her first and only daughter, Za assumed the throne. Za Bariyaayoo succeeded Za, followed by Gbeneyaana, a great granddaughter of Za. Gbenebeka was the last royal ancestress. During this era, inheritance was matrilineal. For reasons that have to do with societal changes in the 16th century, a change from matrilineal andogamy to patrilineal endogamy occurred. Inheritance changed with the onset of patrilineal verilocal system.

Youth training was a fundamental aspect of social organisation. The *Yaa* tradition is the 'soul of Ogoni cultural heritage' (ibid: 46). Although the *Yaa* tradition was a means of training young men for leadership and life, Kpone-Tonwe argues that unlike many ethnic groups in the Niger Delta, age is not a determinant of political power in Ogoni. An individual could be an adult and not have political power. Instead, the *Yaa* tradition bestowed class and status upon both men and women. *Yaa* training in-

cluded a phase of identifying talented youths and passing pertinent information about them to tribal elders and secret societies where such skills may prove useful. Subtle recruitment of such youths into membership of such clubs then began regardless of age. A parallel of feminine *Yaa* existed to cater to the young women. Like the male *Yaa*, the female *Yaa* produced social class distinctions among women. Tribal customs says that performing the *Yaa* ritual is a means whereby a woman receives gifts of excellence, wisdom and intelligence in the spirit world like her husband. Similarly, by performing the Bogo ritual, she becomes a member of the upper social class. In effect, the woman could and have social space to rank equal with men in terms of class, status, intelligence and wisdom.

It should come as no surprise that women played very prominent roles in Ogoni mobilisation. As farmers and fishers, the women experienced grave impacts of pollution and spills caused by oil company activities. Aside from destroying their crops, and crippling their sources of income, women had to develop ingenious ways of catering to their children. Oil activities affect women as much as men and it appears they are as angry about their condition as the men are. The reason is, while the men could move to nearby cities to seek paid employment, the women were largely restricted to Ogoni and farming and fishing. In that sense, the threat to the local economy affected the women more. When Wilbros caterpillars began bulldozing freshly planted fields, they met women in the fields as they confronted the bulldozers and their military escort. During the incident, one protestor, Mrs Korgbara, was shot at close range and lost an arm.[6]

Reflecting the traditional Ogoni social organisation, the structure of MOSOP included a women's arm: the Federation of Ogoni Women Association (FOWA). See table A5.2 for a roll call of women leaders. Like the women, the youth played a significant part in the MOSOP. As Kpone-Tonwe argues above, the *Yaa* tradition is at the core of Ogoni tradition, which ensured the training and mobilisation of young men and their elders in preserving Ogoni. Not surprisingly, as a student of Ogoni history, Kpone-Tonwe recommended MOSOP adopt the *Yaa* tradition of grassroots mobilisation. Ogoni youths organised into an influential group, National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP). Kpone-Tonwe argues that the *Yaa* tradition would not have survived if Ogoni ancestors had been economically and environmentally impoverished.

Kpone-Tonwe argues that class or status was not a function of age but the *Yaa* tradition, which was a leadership training institution. Chujor remarks, pointing to his 18 year old, eldest son: 'He is not a youth. A youth is an individual who goes out to achieve an objective'.[7] To develop capacity to identify and achieve given objectives were the essence of the *Yaa*. The effect of joblessness was the emergence of a class of the 'functionally superfluous'. Saro-Wiwa claims he found this army of willing youths when he took a tour of Ogoni. The only explanation for this ready human resource lay in the widespread unemployment occasioned by land expropriation and river pollution. Ogoni youths resented the society they held responsible for their superfluous nature and thus, were willing to listen to activist mobilisers (Maier 2000: 93). It follows therefore that the youth would eagerly mobilise collectively in an effort to address a condition that had made them unessential, with little or no status in society.

If this thesis has any chance of transcending anthropocentrism, it is important not to restrict Ogoni social relations to human social relationships. Whitt and Slack (1994) argue mainstream social science tends to alienate human communities from their environments. This view interprets environment as no more than geographic place, 'dead geography' on which human actions are inscribed (Thrift 2000). To the contrary, a community is conjoined to and interpenetrated by the environment, which they alter and partially construct, and vice versa. Environment is the material extension of community: given environment does not exist apart from the community of which it is constitutive. Whitt and Slack emphasise, 'community and environment constitute a single, integral and open system; they are mutually responsive to, reciprocally constructed and informed by, one another' (ibid: 24-5). To destroy the environment is to destroy the community and the abode of the spirit and ancestors.

The idea of community, at least as distilled by Ogoni, evokes images of connection between human and the 'other-than-human' world (ibid). Communities embed in specific environments, implying the need to consider 'how material, geographical and ecological conditions and interdependencies are partly constitutive of community' (ibid: 9). Contrary to the views that restrict community to human actors, the authors emphasise that the basis of community, the interconnectedness, or interdependency, commonality or mutuality of interests, may be present. Yet those bound together in such relationships of significance may not see them as

significant. To see them as significant is to assert solidarity; it is to demonstrate relatedness in the context of difference, which holds the human and non-human actors together as a community.

> Land theft is not some kind of disruption external to an indigenous community which impacts negatively on it. Land is an integral part of such communities and to lay claim to it is literally to steal community. We cannot do justice to the nature or extent of such struggles, and the determination of the peoples engaged in them, without an understanding of community that permits us to conceive of the relations of solidarity and significance that hold not only among humans but between human and the other than human (ibid: 20).

The Ogoni eminently argue the interconnection between community and environment. In the local language, there is only one word for both the Ogoni as a people and Ogoni as environment. Similar common sense has been missing from the aspatial perspective of both the State and Shell, resulting in unmitigated disaster to Ogoni environment and community.

5.11   Ogoni Sense of Place

Sense of place refers to the ways in which 'human experience and imagination appropriates the physical characteristics and qualities of geographical location' (Oslender 2004: 962). It stresses how individuals and communities develop attachment to places through experience, memory and intention (Relph 1976; cf. Oslender 2004: 962). The Ogoni movement as a countermovement to the destructive impact of oil exploitation on Ogoni environment exhibits a sense of place that served to mobilise the people. The various ways the Ogoni conjoin, appropriate, use and protect their environment, the ways they reverence and invest the environment with ghosts is, in this section, called Ogoni sense of place.

Although the Ogoni environment has never been static, their environmental discourses dwell on the romanticisation of a past state when the countryside was green, the land fertile, the rivers teemed with fish, seafood and a variety of wildlife roamed the forests. In other words, the Ogoni environment, despite ongoing processes of bio-geo-physical change, not only provided bountifully for the basic needs of the people but also supported their health, wellbeing and prosperity.

Aside from the functional roles of their environment, the Ogoni conceive of their locale as an extension of the community. The land is god and hosts many spirits that they venerate. The forests, beyond its trees and animals, are sacred, and indiscriminate deforestation is unimaginable (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 12). The human and non-human animals are coextensive. The essence of a man or woman could leave its own body and possess an animal (ibid: 12). In other words, the environment and the community are bound together intrinsically. In their attachment to the land or abode of their ancestors, their sacred places and the roots of their existence, physically and emotionally, the Ogoni developed a sense of home in regard to their homestead and community (Cuba 1993). In other words, the Ogoni geographic location is more than mere space; it is a 'homeland', an historic territory, a heritage passed down by the ancestors through the generations, and, the rightful possession of the Ogoni people of today (Saro-Wiwa 1992, 1995). In that sense, Ogoni is a distinctive place.

Such sensibility evokes a worldview in which the Ogoni community belongs to Ogoni by natural right. The land as the material embodiment of Ogoni lies at the root of Ogoni identity, 'community memory' of their past, present and future, Ogoni prosperity and guidelines for negotiating the world (Livesey 2001: 73). The land was also distinctive in the sense that unlike their neighbours, it facilitated agricultural abundance, movement, trade and water-related prosperity.

Environmental degradation impacted Ogoni sense of place. The feeling of nostalgia or loss was accepted as necessary sacrifices for development. Hagberg (2006) argues 'ritual boundaries' are invented; and their boundaries are social norms, whose meaning is constantly challenged and negotiated. This is not to assert that the claim of a sense of place is spurious but to suggest that it is dynamic in the sense that while its overall complexion remains, its elements undergo gradual change. Such changes are not necessarily imposed from outside. Initially, the Ogoni actively participated in the process of land cession with a view to reaping the gains of development and personal compensation. Thus, questioned as to why the Ogoni allowed the initial degrading activities of Shell, Chief Deemua claims that they had expected that such would bring them development.

Ogoni uniqueness may be another factor that shaped Ogoni sense of place. Part of Ogoni is riverine and part mainland. This unique combina-

tion of topographies conferred relative spatial advantages on Ogoni. Kpone-Tonwe shows, they were able to harvest scarce trees from the mainland with which they could build canoes; a major means of fishing, trading and transportation in the Niger Delta. The fertile plain was conducive to viable agriculture and Ogoni became the food basket of the region. Internally, the topography fostered greater interdependence between the farmers and the anglers. To the Ogoni, their place was unique. Against such uniqueness, Saro-Wiwa's dirge for his beloved homeland is justified in asking, 'Where are the antelopes, the squirrels, the sacred tortoises, the snails, the lions and tigers which roamed this land' (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 83)? In other words, the ghosts, real and imputed, that constitute the distinctiveness of Ogoni, and which fostered a sense of attachment or elicited emotions of beauty and joy, was under assault. Processes of development were divesting Ogoni of its salient place characters (Therborn 2006).

> To every man upon this earth
> Death cometh soon or late
> How can man die better
> Than facing fearful odds
> For the ashes of his fathers
> And the temple of his gods (Saro-Wiwa 1989: 256).

The first two lines of the poem reflect Saro-Wiwa's defiance of death as an inevitable and natural phenomenon, a suggestion of sensitivity to the possible consequence of collective mobilisation. In the third line, he advances that the natural and inevitable can be made valuable by facing fear itself in defence of 'the ashes of his fathers' and 'temple of his gods'. Both references unmistakeably refer to the environment because for the Ogoni, the land is the abode of their gods and ancestors.

> …for the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath reality neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain (ibid).

The notion of disinheritance by the State is replete in the discourses of the Ogoni. It is from that sense that the Ogoni surmise that they have the choice of either resigning to their gradual extinction or fighting for their own salvation.

5.12   Ogoni Worldview

Ogoni reverence and awe for the shrine of the Ogoni Spirit is such that when Mohammed Kobani took refuge at its shrine, none of his assailants dared enter the shrine to seize him. Kpone-Tonwe showed how the sanctions of a near-moribund tradition continue to exercise influence on converted elderly Christian individuals (2003). Kpone-Tonwe, pastor of Peace Gospel International Church, performed water baptism for his congregation in December 1999 at a stream called *Maawaabogo* in Kono Boue community (Khana Local Government Area). Two elderly men and one woman refused to enter the water for baptism stating that they had not performed the *Yaa* traditions so they could not enter. The pastor organised another baptism for them at a different stream some months later.

The Ogoni worldview entertains a mythical actor or *Wiayor* who would come from above to liberate the Ogoni in a manner reflective of the biblical Moses and Jesus Christ. Saro-Wiwa believed he was the Wiayor sent by God to liberate the Ogoni. When Saro-Wiwa sought his father's blessing for his project, Chief Wiwa acceded: 'if God has sent you, then go. After all, God sent Moses to Egypt' (Maier 2000: 78).

> One night in late 1989, as I sat in my study working on a new book, I received a call to put myself, my abilities, my resources, so carefully nurtured over the years, at the feet of the Ogoni people and similar dispossessed, dispirited and disappearing peoples in Nigeria and elsewhere (Saro-Wiwa 1995).

The Ogoni believe that deities and spirits populate their environment. The dead are not dead and gone; they remain ancestors overseeing the good of the community. There is a marked belief that society is made up of the dead, the living and unborn. A visit to Birabi endorses the point that to the Ogoni certain places invoke emotions and ghosts. To the Christians that would not receive baptism in Maawaabogo River, the river invoked fear and awe. Similarly, potential assailants feared to enter the shrine of the Ogoni Spirit to capture Mohamed Kobani. To Kobani the shrine site is a place of salvation, but to his assailants it is a sacred place and to violate it is to imperil one's soul.

On 31 December 1993, estranged MOSOP elders met at Port Harcourt, over concern with the activities of NYCOP. They took exception to NYCOP activities and blamed Saro-Wiwa. When they introduced a

motion to have Saro-Wiwa arrested, Kpone-Tonwe, displaying a keen sense of place and history, spoke up.

> I told the house that what was happening in Ogoniland was a revolution; that in history, a revolution is caused by a "spirit force", which rests on a single individual; that in the case of Ogoni, that individual was Ken Saro-Wiwa; that in a traditional setting, based on my study of Ogoni tradition, what the elders used to do, was to find out the individual on whom this "spirit force" rests. Once that individual has been identified, all the elders used to rally round that individual to give him their support, while at the same time sinking their personal differences or disagreements. I appealed to them to do the same with Saro-Wiwa; that if they did so, all what they set out to achieve would be achieved (2003: 63).

During interviews, this researcher asked Kpone-Tonwe how his ideas of 'revolution' and 'spirit force' developed. He stated:

> I am a son of a prominent Chief in Khana local Government Area. These things I observed from my youth. Normally, if Ogoni want to go to war, they consult the oracles. Unlike modern hierarchized armies, the leader of the battle is not the strongest or most senior general; but one that would lead the army to victory. So, they consult the oracles because there is a spirit of victory or revolution, which some refer to as charisma – special grace that makes you successful. That is what the Ogoni look for: who has charisma to prosecute the war successfully. Once the oracle indicates, the individual is made a leader and supported by all. From my recollection of the past, and observation of the struggle, I told the chiefs the spirit of revolution was on Saro-Wiwa. They did not see with me, and they failed. Every movement has its own spirit.[8]

Apparently set on a vindictive mission, the elders would not accept the wisdom of such a tradition. Their efforts to rein in the youths and Saro-Wiwa met with a brutal end at the palace of the Gbenemene where they converged to sign the Giokoo Accord. To Kpone-Tonwe, the elders made a grave mistake, meeting in Giokoo because Giokoo, traditionally, is not a place to handle contentious and difficult issues.

5.13   Conclusion

This chapter examined the question of why the Ogoni mobilised against the State and Shell. It relies on the metaphor of strategic action field, as enunciated in chapter 4, as a tool to understand the array of actors oper-

ating from across spatial scales in the field of oil development. In this case, oil development happens in a place already settled and transformed by the Ogoni. Both the Ogoni and forces of oil development entered into complex relationships or a SAF in which the actors attempted to secure their interests. Such relations are at times peaceful and at other times conflictual with the dominant actors seeking to stabilise the field and privilege their own interests.

The Nigerian *movement-state* acquired the actors and equipment necessary for the purpose of oil extraction in Ogoni. In the name of development, the *movement-state* ignored the reality that the development process creates winners and losers. It designed measures that appropriated and distributed oil proceeds in such a way that the Ogoni benefitted little. Worse still, the Ogoni bore the externalities of oil extraction, including land dispossession, river and land pollution, deforestation, and loss of wildlife. When they protested their marginalisation within the SAF, the more powerful actors in the field either upbraided or simply ignored them.

The SAF embeds in the wider political economy of Nigeria and the global economy. The thesis argues that the movement-state is composed of four major interests, which the former always seeks to provide for and protect. The *movement-state* continues to facilitate global capitalist accumulation, a process from which the domestic partners benefit. To assure the privileged position of the ruling elites, the movement-state employs territoriality in ways that legally distribute more oil revenues to privileged places instead of the oil-bearing Ogoni. The spatial organisation and reorganisation of the country ensures that minority groups, including the Ogoni, remain minorities and relatively deprived within the spatial stratification system. The concept of *movement-state*, thus, enables us to approach the State as an actor in conflictual relationships with the Ogoni in the SAF over stakes they both value.

What further stoked the anger of the Ogoni was that the territorial activities and spatial use of actors in the development field ran counter to Ogoni cultural worldviews and territoriality. While the Ogoni preserved aspects of their environment in veneration of their spirits and gods, oil development despoiled such places. Shell and its contractors routinely pollute sacred land and waterways, the abodes of Ogoni gods. The Ogoni environment is not external to the Ogoni. It is the material embodiment of the community, and so, to steal or violate the environment

is to steal and violate the community. These meant nothing to other actors in the strategic action field because in their aspatial view, exploitation of hydrocarbons wherever found was paramount. The strategic actions of the more powerful actors in the development field violated the Ogoni locale, location and sense of place.

In a strategic move to undo their marginalisation and reclaim control over their environment, Ogoni reflected that the processes of development were corralling them to extinction unless they acted wisely. Development conflict emerged over the penalising and displacing nature of relations among actors in the field, and the contradictory logics of traditional and development-induced territoriality. Yet, contrary to Escobar's suggestion of a post-development imagining, the Ogoni struggle is not a rejection of development. Rather, it appropriates the global discourses of environment, sustainable development and indigenous peoples to assert a claim to participative development, which respects Ogoni environment and dignity (Kothari and Harcourt 2004: 5). The struggle is not an evocation of 'fixed, already constituted antagonisms' against the State, Shell or development (Featherstone 2004). By articulating development in ways that delegitimised existing practices, the Ogoni enunciated political agency.

The metaphor of TSAF helps focus attention on the interactions between actors and the values they bring to bear, guiding against a view of mobilisation as reaction to structural strain rather than an expression of social conflict (Melucci 1996). The various factors identified in this chapter are not by themselves sufficient to give rise to collective action. There is no necessary link between space, injustice, marginalisation and conflict. Otherwise, conflict would be ubiquitous. Therefore, there is need to focus on the momentous step from such predisposing factors to contentious action to evince the mediating forces. The next chapter is dedicated to this task, examining the *how* of the Ogoni conflict.

Notes

[1] Term coined to refer to the problems the Netherlands experienced when it discovered huge gas reserves off its northern coast in 1959.

[2] Part of a speech read to the country by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu while declaring Martial Law on 15 January 1966. Available online at http://www.dawodu.com/nzeogwu2.htm.

[3] According to Beckman, imperialism means 'the backing of monopoly interests by the military and political power of advanced state institutions in a highly unevenly developed world capitalist system' (1981: 69).

[4] A petition written by Ogoni leaders and addressed to the Military Governor of Rivers State, April 1970 (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 46-7) (emphasis in original).

[5] E.J. Alagoa (2006) Personal interview (5 March).

[6] Mrs Korgbara (2002) Personal interview.

[7] Chujor (2007) Personal interview.

[8] Kpone-Tonwe (2008) Personal interview.

6 Place Revisited: Social Relations and Mobilisation

6.1   Processes of Collective Mobilisation

This chapter discusses how the Ogoni successfully mobilised against the State and Shell. In addressing the question of *how*, the thesis rejects the propensity to deterministic thinking and instead explores the role of forces not usually given causal relevance. While the factors identified in chapter 5 provide the precipitating background to mobilisation, the forces by themselves do not inexorably lead to contentious action. There are communities in the Niger Delta where similar forces have not generated political action. If a direct and necessary link existed between grievances and conflict, the Ogoni should have initiated collective action in the early 1970s following the devastating Bomu oil field blowout, they did not. This chapter strives to provide insight into *how* the Ogoni took the significant step from grievances over pollution and dispossession to movement mobilisation geared at reversing processes of marginalisation. Chapter 6 provides space to consider the mediatory role of place, leadership, emotions, frames, cognition, worldview and trans-local associations in the emergence of the movement.

What contentious discourses did the Ogoni movement deploy? Did it point to an aspiration for inclusion or reform? Did it concern itself with undermining existing political praxis and values? Did it involve both orientations? These are pertinent questions against the observations made in chapter 1 that some analysts conceive the conflict as no more than materialists and a fight for inclusion. The way the literature approached the conflict deprives it of its progressive impulse. If the movement undermines official codes and discourses, downgrading conventional knowledge, then the category of reform or inclusion fails in capturing it well. This chapter addresses the nature of the Ogoni movement, whether it is a project for rectification of exclusion or much more. To that end,

this researcher examines the different spatial, symbolic, material and ethical values that shape processes of micro-mobilisation.

6.2   'Oh Pharaoh! Let My People Go': Ogoni Reclaim their Voice

It was 4 January 1993. In ordinary times, the celebratory euphoria of the New Year was still strong in the south of Nigeria. Not this year, early that morning a large crowd led by Edward Kobani marched on K-Dere, the site of Bomu oil field to reassert themselves as the rightful property owners and symbolically reclaim the land. In his words, the thieves (Shell staff at the facility) ran away when the crowd appeared to take over their patrimony. Banners with various contentious inscriptions dotted major roads in Ogoni. Groups of men, women and children were everywhere holding banners and placards. They sang as they moved but there was 'anger in their legs and faces' (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 125). About 300,000 Ogoni converged to take part in an unprecedented protest march against the State and Shell.

The Birabi Memorial Grammar School playground, venue of the protest became a dust cloud as masquerades and dancers paraded around. To kick-start contention, two traditional rulers poured libations and invoked the spirit of Ogoni, entreating the gods of the land to deliver the Ogoni from their bondage by prospering their collective endeavour. Led by Saro-Wiwa, the crowd sang the Ogoni solidarity song 'Aaken, aaken, pya Ogoni aaken' (Arise, arise, Ogoni people arise).[1]

Threatened and angered by the MOSOP, the State, aided by Shell harassed and intimidated the Ogoni leaders. In November 1995, the State executed Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni leaders on trumped up charges of masterminding the murder of four prominent pro-government Ogoni chiefs.[2] Internal divisions that emerged within MOSOP prior to the military repression by the State coupled with other post-Saro-Wiwa contentious issues added to the problems of the movement but MOSOP did not waver on its demands.[3] The ways the Ogoni mobilised such opposition to the State and Shell are important issues to examine.

6.3   Spatial Collective Action:
Connecting Trans-local Actor-Spaces

Ogoniland, located on the coastal plains to the north of the Niger Delta in South-East Nigeria, occupies 404 square miles and is home to approximately 500,000 people. Shell discovered oil there in 1958, a welcome and exciting development at the time (Saro-Wiwa 1992: 65). By April 1970, Ogoni leaders petitioned the Rivers State government about the hazardous activities of Shell and the danger such operations imply for the lives and livelihoods of the Ogoni. They stated, 'the millions of pounds which Shell-BP constantly pays to our Government is blood-money, extracted from the very veins of our dying people' (ibid: 48). Shell reacted to the petition by accusing the Ogoni of an age-old attempt to saddle it with developmental responsibilities, which properly belong to the government. It accused Ogoni of exaggerated claims and concluded that the benefits the Ogoni receive outweigh any disadvantages (ibid: 50-1). Three months later, in July 1970, the Dere blowout happened, reminding the Dere people of its civil war experiences (ibid: 58, 65).

In a petition on the incident, Sam Badilo Bako accuses the State and Shell of neglect in their life threatening condition. Bako claims that the thought of it brought tears to his eyes, reminding him of an old ballad:

> 'The towns go down; the land decays…
> Poor folk for bread, cry and weep.
> The mournful peasant leads his humble band,
> And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
> The country blooms – a garden and a grave' (see Saro-Wiwa 1992: 63).

The ballad evokes images of violence and despoliation using emotionally charged words. Line 5 begins with the phrase, 'The country blooms'; but this country contrasts the town described in Line 1. The contradictory phrase: 'a garden and a grave', which is meant to express the inequalities between Ogoni and other places in Nigeria underscores this difference.

Similar emotion of exploitation was palpable when in 1990, the Ogoni examined their condition and concluded that oil had been a penalising phenomenon. They articulated their demands in the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) and appealed to the international community for support. In that regard, William Boyd whom Saro-Wiwa had met in 1988, became his confidant and adviser. Initial approaches to Greenpeace and Amnesty International proved fruitless ostensibly because the former did not work

in Africa and there were no human rights abuses to involve Amnesty. Two filmmakers from the UK, Glen Ellis and Kay Bishop, met Saro-Wiwa on a visit to Nigeria, and the Ogoni case became part of the documentary film *The Heat of the Moment*, which aired in the UK on Channel 4 in October 1992. Upon learning of his frustration with Greenpeace and Amnesty, the duo agreed to help Saro-Wiwa. In London, they accompanied him to Friends of the Earth, Survival International and others, with little progress.

In 1992, Saro-Wiwa took his case to the Society of Threatened Peoples in Germany and then to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva. Through the facilitation of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), Saro-Wiwa addressed the Working Group on Indigenous Populations the same year. In late 1992, Saro-Wiwa persuaded Greenpeace to dispatch a team to observe the protest march scheduled for 4 January 1993. They agreed to send a camera operator, and an official of the Rainforest Action Group, Shelley Braithwaite, agreed to witness the event.

Building on his television production experience, Saro-Wiwa publicised the protest march of 4 January 1993. Saro-Wiwa was well known to local journalists and publishers, as a regular contributor of essays to Nigerian newspapers. Saro-Wiwa capitalised on the social capital to draw sustained and positive publicity to the cause of the Ogoni. Some news magazines did cover stories on the protest and others published extended interviews with Saro-Wiwa or feature articles on the Ogoni crisis (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 139). The BBC African Service and the Bush House, London who had broadcast his plays and where he had granted interviews on his books were very familiar with Saro-Wiwa. While pushing the Ogoni case, the African Service provided him much support.

Locally, MOSOP sensitised, educated and mobilised the Ogoni, and in the process generated massive opposition to Shell. When Shell pulled out of Ogoni in 1993, the opposition transformed into an implacable opposition to their re-establishment in Ogoni. MOSOP spoke for the majority of Ogoni, and the popular protest chapter 6 illustrates reflects wide acceptance among the people. Despite unparalleled mobilisation, it is doubtful MOSOP would have recorded the level of success it achieved based on internal mobilisation alone. The incorporation of civil society elements and individual actors within the country, international actors, media, businesses and NGOs into the association of anti-Shell/State

protestors enhanced the significance and success of MOSOP (refer to the conceptual metaphors deployed in chapter 4). MOSOP organised an anti-Shell/State network of actor-spaces, which extended from Ogoni to the national and international spheres, and back again (Murdoch and Marsden 1995).

The success of the negative publicity generated about Shell's activities in Ogoni became a cause of concern to the oil giant. Shell and the State attempted to build associations of actor-spaces as a counter-measure against the Ogoni movement. A day after the Ogoni protest march, Shell Petroleum Development Company Limited of Nigeria (SPDC) and Shell International Petroleum Company (SIPC) staff met in London and The Hague to consider the internationalisation of the Ogoni protest (MOSOP 2004). In a leaked internal Shell document, the meeting determined the Ogoni case was a potential public relations problem for the company (UNPO 1995). It concluded by resolving the need to monitor the movement of key Ogoni activists, their speeches and audiences to avoid unpleasant surprises that could affect Shell's global reputation (UNPO 1995; Saro-Wiwa 1995: 146). Shell published a nine-page booklet entitled *Nigeria Brief: the Ogoni Issue* as well as briefing notes on the Ogoni issue and countless letters in its counter-mobilisation against MOSOP.

In a move to neutralise the threat posed by MOSOP, Shell public affairs representatives mobilised a range of actors, appearing on major international media and national dailies in several countries. The company embarked on visits to several foreign ministries (UNPO 1995). The Nigerian government initiated personal attacks against Saro-Wiwa and MOSOP on the diplomatic front. The Nigerian High Commission in London berated Saro-Wiwa for engaging in a crusade of violence and calumny for selfish reasons (UNPO 1995). At the United Nations, Nigeria's former Permanent Representative to the UN, Ibrahim Gambari defended the General Sanni Abacha junta and its execution of Saro-Wiwa and eight colleagues, calling them 'common criminals'. Within Rivers State, the Internal Security Task Force under Major Paul Okuntimo recommended in 1994 a 'wasting operation' within Ogoni, 'Shell operations still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence' (MOSOP 2004: 28-9; UNPO 1995). Evidence suggests that, to suppress the Ogoni the military enlisted and armed neighbouring tribes, namely the Andoni, Okrika and Ndoki

to execute unprovoked attacks against Ogoni villages. These tribal para-militaries razed villages to the ground and massacred hundreds of Ogoni. Shell helped finance and arm these groups.

The mobilisation of trans-local actor-spaces by Ogoni and the counter-mobilisation by the State and Shell reflect a contentious struggle over control of Ogoni territory, organisation of oil development in Ogoni and division of proceeds. Ogoni mobilisation disrupted the geography of the existing form of territorial order. In response to Ogoni mobilisation, the State deployed police and paramilitaries. The Rivers State Internal Security Task Force allegedly incited murder in Ogoni, orchestrating a perfect pretext to invade and occupy Ogoni. Activists faced arrest and in some cases, summary execution. Many fled into exile and others endured various forms of exploitation and dispossession (Kpalap 2008). The goal ostensibly was to destroy MOSOP. However, activists found ways to create safe spaces in and around Ogoni, from where they carried on the critical tasks of sustaining the struggle. Those who fled into exile utilised different spaces, the refugee camp, church shelter, seminar and conference halls in Europe and North America, to advance the Ogoni struggle and sustain existing actor-spaces.[4]

6.4   Master Frame and Framing Activities

The other major problems with most attempts to explain the conflict is the focus on meta-narratives that attribute causality to macrostructures. For instance, Obi (2001) embeds the conflict squarely in the processes of globalisation, and Osaghae (1995) in the National Question. The collective behaviour literature focuses on how structural or societal impacts give rise to grievances and by extension participation in collective action. In this literature, personality defect, anomie, psychological strain incline some people, more than others, to collective action. Reacting to a collective behaviour thesis of the irrationality of collective action, resource mobilisation theory argues that collective actors are instrumentally rational. People participate after the rational process of cost-benefit analysis of action. Given the many contentious episodes of the 1960s, resource mobilisation school pushed the argument that grievances cannot explain collective behaviour because even though grievance is ubiquitous, collective action is not. Notwithstanding the corrective value of resource mobilisation, its two basic assumptions ignored interpretive issues (Benford 1993).

Feminist scholars criticise the resource mobilisation paradigm for discounting the role of grievances (Buechler 1993). It presents an essentialised view of rationality and removes individuals from their social contexts, erasing emotional altruism (Ferree 1992). By focusing on instrumental rationality or strategic action, resource mobilisation ignores collective actors' aspiration to construct new identities, and control historicity (Cohen 1995). Benford stresses that generally, resource mobilisation is unable to address the issues of how grievances are collectively constructed and shared, how actors agree on and construct collective identity, and why some movement claims resonate and others do not. Recognition of these limitations and growing interest in culture within American sociology has given rise to a focus on interpretive issues. The social constructionist approach admits the role of structural conditions, but adds that a significant number of actors need to define the condition as warranting ameliorative action and persuade others to accept its definition as true. This process of constructing reality, Benford argues, entails the use of framing activities and generating vocabularies for the motives behind movements.

To be successful, activists must actively link and coordinate diverse groups and other individuals. Activists must integrate this array of collective and individual actors ideologically. An interpretive schema commonly shared by movement participants constitutes a master frame. Osa (2003: 178) emphasises 'Master frames are overarching cognitive and symbolic frameworks that accommodate a number of themes articulated by various groups.' Although they function much as collective action frames, they operate on a larger scale (Snow and Benford 1992). One can argue that the core Ogoni interpretive frame is the OBR. The document consists of sets of linked and complementary arguments. The OBR sets out a brief history of Ogoni problems and struggles, oil exploitation and the problems confronting Ogoni as a result of the nature of existing political economy of oil and Nigeria's federalism. It outlines its demands, and in the addendum spells out how the Ogoni intend to achieve such demands. This thesis refers to the frame as an oppressive order. Frames perform three functions: diagnosis of the social condition in need of remedy; prognosis on how to actualise such remedy; and rationale for action. It refers to 'the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of their world and of themselves that le-

gitimate and motivate collective action' (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996: 6).

6.4.1 Oppressive order master frame

1. The elites of the majority ethnic groups, their clients from minority groups, the State and Shell compose a federal system, a colonising order.
2. The colonising order serves the interests of those who compose it while exploiting and marginalising the minority oil-bearing communities.
3. The root of the exploitative nature of the federal system lies in its productive, appropriative and distributive systems.
4. The system of exploitation has given rise to numerous problems for oil-bearing communities, including impoverishment, land confiscation and environmental destruction and political marginalisation.
5. MOSOP aims to roll back these problems. It is necessary to attack the problem at its root, by restructuring the federal structure and administrative workings of the federal system.
6. The Ogoni outline their strategy as one of grassroots mobilisation, local demonstration and appeal for the intervention of the international community.

In the oppressive order master frame, the dominant portrayal of Ogoni is as space controlled and exploited by the State and Shell in ways that utterly ignore the environmental degradation and wellbeing of its inhabitants. The nature of rule enriches places and actors beyond Ogoni at the expense of the latter. The Ogoni need to repossess control over the environment, benefit from the resources therein and, overturn colonial exploitation. Thus, an environmental discourse that claims inseparability between the Ogoni and the environment shaped the colonising order frame. The frame provides numerous entry points for other groups of Nigerians who share some of the grievances of the Ogoni. For instance, oil-producing communities in the region share the charge of environmental devastation, land shortage and marginalisation. The prognosis, which emphasises Nigeria's skewed federalism and the need for a restructuring is shared by a broad section of elites and most ethnic groups in the country. The discourse of environmental protection and human rights found resonance with actors at the local and international levels.

Figure 6.1
Oppressive order master frame

Elites thirst for power and wealth → Federal system as an oppressive order → Shell's hunger for profit

The Government and Shell as representatives of an oppressive order
- Productive injustice
- Appropriative injustice
- Distributive injustice
- Ethnic policy
- Betrayal of national values
- Environmental violation

Land confiscation

Land shortage

Destruction of local livelihoods
- fishing and farming

Women most affected

Environmental degradation
- Forests, rivers, and land

Slavery and gradual extinction

Loss of culture

Intensification of social problem

Minority rights trampled

Socio-economic marginalisation
- lack of jobs
- lack of amenities
- lack of participation

Youth most affected

1. Political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni
2. Right to control and use of a fair amount of Ogoni resources for Ogoni development
3. Direct representation in all national institutions
4. Full development of Ogoni culture
5. Right to religious freedom
6. Right to protect Ogoni culture

Local protests
Internationalisation of campaign
Grassroot mobilisation

Source: Developed by author (2009)

Miideekor's (landlord's rights) frame

1. The oil resources in Ogoni belong to the Ogoni.
2. It is only right that as the property owner, Ogoni receives a fair share of the resources.
3. However, the State and Shell who are tenants on Ogoni land conspired to deny the Ogoni their due.
4. At the same time, Shell pollutes and confiscates Ogoni land without compensation, and with impunity.
5. This situation is thievery, exploitative and unjust.
6. What the Ogoni demand is a fair share or *miideekor*; not everything.

Miideekor is an Ogoni word, symbolising the relationship between the owner of a palm field and the palm wine tapper. The Ogoni have a five-day week. Traditionally, the palm wine tapper may keep the palm wine produced in four out of the five days. However, the remaining day's production belongs to the landowner. The one day a week proceeds due the landowner is *miideekor*.[5] Applying this cultural frame, the Ogoni defined themselves as owners of the oil in Ogoni and the State and Shell as the tenants. What they expected from the latter is their *miideekor* or fair share as landowner; not everything. In the cognitive frame, *miideekor* is a widely shared vocabulary in Ogoni.[6] Its deployment in the struggle served to construe the State and Shell as thieves, exploiters and oppressors who deny the Ogoni what belongs to them, their right. The frame helped break the psychological barrier to participation. Damgbor Moses (2008) and Carolyn Barinen Nagbo (2008) argue that because *miideekor* resides in everyday experiences, its frame was coherent and resonated with all Ogoni, greatly aiding mobilisation.

As a cultural tool, the *miideekor* frame resonated powerfully among the Ogoni, but not with the larger public. Unlike the oppressive order master frame, it provides little space for linkage with other actors concerned with other issues.

Framing refers to the construction of meaning in ways that resonate with different audiences. The collective deployment of new ways of seeing and in ways that resonated with Ogoni was crucial to the mobilisation. How the Ogoni activists accomplished that feat is the focus of the next section.

Figure 6.2
Miideekor (property owner's rights) frame

| Elites thirst for wealth | ◄──► | An order that refuses Ogoni its *miideekor* | ◄──► | Shell's hunger for profit |

The State and Shell as representatives of a dispossessive order
- Tenants take everything, even the fair share that belongs to the landowner
- In return all the Ogoni have is pollution and impoverishment
- Such is immoral, unfair, and culturally unacceptable
- Amounts to internal colonialism

Land seizure

Lack of compensation

Land pollution

Dispossession

Exclusion from oil resources

| Ogoni demands its *miideekor* |

Source: Developed by author (2009)

6.4.2 Collective action frames and framing activities

Collective action frames refer to emergent action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that motivate and legitimate collective campaigns and actions. They define a situation as unjust and attribute causality to specified actors. Such processes involve three tasks: 1) diagnostic framing, the diagnosis of situation as problematic and in need of change, attribution of blame and/or causality; 2) prognostic framing, that is the specification of a solution to the diagnosed problem, needed strategy, tactic and target;

and 3) motivational framing, which involves invitation to, and rationale for, participation. In the context of social interaction, movement actors construct rationales and justifications for their participation. These rationales or 'vocabularies of motive', Benford argues, provide participants with good reasons for identifying with the goals and values of the movement. Framing activities and vocabularies of motive 'are the primary micromobilization processes by which movement actors give meaning to their participation' (1993: 200). Benford identifies four motivational frames deployed by disarmament groups he studied. These are frames of severity of problem; frames about urgency of problem and immediate action; frames about the efficacy of action; and frames concerning the necessity of and propriety of action.

Diagnostic framing and its severity

According to Snow and Benford, a frame refers to an 'interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the "world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment' (1992: 137). Collective action frames are:

> Accenting devices that either underscore and embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefine as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable. In either case, activists employ collective action frames to punctuate or single out some existing social condition or aspect of life and define it as unjust, intolerable, and deserving of corrective action (ibid).

The definition of an unjust condition is insufficient to mobilise action. To galvanise political action, a collective action frame must attribute causality to an identifiable actor. An adversary or social structure must receive blame or responsibility through the dynamics of diagnostic and/or prognostic mechanisms.

According to Polleta and Ho (2006), frames matter. Frames are not by themselves enough to mobilise people. For frames to be effective, certain conditions must occur. First, representation of the other as the enemy must concretise the enemy. In other words, it should be a well-known, present enemy. Mobilisation must be against a physically present, known enemy or, one whose interests are present. Framing or representation of the enemy as the problem is therefore effective because mobilisation is a goal-oriented activity. Through rhetoric, leaders must provide

social actors courage to redefine reality, force change, and to endure over the entirety of the campaign (Lachmann and Pichardo 1994). Lachmann and Pichardo believe that only such rhetoric or ideology can explain the mobilisation of groups against all odds. Conversely, they argue, the inadequacy or absence of rhetoric is a pointer to the common absence of collective action.

The preamble to the OBR contains a concise framing of the problem (See appendix A4). The diagnostic framing deployed in the OBR may sound radical but it would be a mistake to attribute it to the radical nature of Ogoni leaders. It is also problematic if examined outside the structural context from which it emerged. What changed with the emergence of collective mobilisation were not the personalities of Ogoni leaders or the structural conditions, but the social situation or interactional context that facilitated a representation and reinterpretation of existing conditions as bad and unacceptable (Murdoch and Marsden 1995). Beyond identifying the situation confronting the Ogoni as problematic and in need of change, movement activists attribute blame to identifiable actors. During the launch on 27 February 1993 of the One Naira Ogoni Survival Fund (ONOSUF), many Ogoni men, women and children committed to the struggle. Saro-Wiwa employed a diagnostic frame to attribute causality (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 147-8).

Benford argues that simply because people agree with a diagnostic frame on the existence of a problem is no guarantee that they will give up their own endeavours and help alleviate the problem. There is a difference between identifying a problem and convincing people that the problem is serious and deserving of urgent action. Although expropriation, pollution and impoverishment was the lived experience of the people, the identification of the twin problems of ecological devastation and political tyranny and the need to end both wars did not readily mobilise Ogoni into action. Legborsi states that MOSOP had earlier employed frames that did not resonate with the Ogoni.[7] MOSOP embarked on public education by visiting Ogoni Kingdoms and villages to present the contents of the OBR to the people in Ogoni languages. Saro-Wiwa shows that Mitee was one of those entrusted with the task, and MOSOP increasingly relied on such forms of public education in the course of the struggle (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 71).

Kpone-Tonwe argues that KAGOTE had been aware of and concerned about the problems imposed on Ogoni by oil exploitation for

years. That awareness and their deliberation about it never lead to collective action. The decision to draft and sign the OBR and to transform KAGOTE into MOSOP was problematic. Saro-Wiwa claimed that he attended several meetings with KAGOTE and Ogoni Klub pressing his views on the need to form a mass organisation to confront their problems (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 66). Ideas and persuasion on the need for action, the legitimacy and efficacy of action may have convinced KAGOTE to accede.

Saro-Wiwa argues that the risks and externalities Shell burdens Ogoni with, coupled with the latter's political marginalisation amount to the destruction of Ogoni life. What Shell and Chevron have done to Ogoni environment and community equate with genocide. He argues that the 'soul of Ogoni people is dying'. Additional frames by which MOSOP underlines the severity of their problem is the appeal to 'slavery and possible extinction'; 'domestic colonialism'; 'ecological disaster'; and while very rich, the Ogoni wallow in poverty. MOSOP employs what Benford refers to as 'doomsday framings'. Ogoni impoverishment stems from the transfer of Ogoni wealth to other parts of the country.

It is important to note the range of the colonising order master frame. It pointed at a lopsided federal system, revenue allocation formula, environmental abuse, state and local government creation, ethnicity, multinational oil corporations, global discourses on indigenous people, human rights and environmental protection. Jurgen Gerhards and Dieter Rucht (1992) argue that the scope and heterogeneity of problems deployed in a master frame creates points of advantage for a range of political actors concerned with one or more of the problems. They stress that the larger the number of problems dealt with by the frame, the more societal actors that can be appealed to, and the greater the mobilisational reach of the frame. They assert the need for plausible connections with the identified problems if the mobilising capacity of an extended frame is to be achieved. Doubtless, the range of the colonising order frame enabled MOSOPs appeal to important elements of civil society and international community, even if some of these could not openly support the movement, and capacity to tap into various bases of international support.

Internally, the master frame skilfully incorporated the concerns of both the local elite or ordinary Ogoni and issues that cross gender lines. MOSOP adeptly shows how colonial rule situated Ogoni in a Nigerian framework ruled by majority groups, and how the common interests of

both the State and Shell facilitated the ruination of the Ogoni environment. Considered a minority, the State used the laws to expropriate Ogoni resources and marginalise it socio-politically. The master frame further shows how environmental abuse affected the local economy, resulting in functional superfluity. The master frame successfully linked ordinary Ogoni individual troubles to the social problems confronting Ogoni as a whole.

Prognostic framing and sense of urgency

Snow and Benford hold that prognostic framing advances a solution to the problem (1988: 199). MOSOP deploys various prognostic framings in some of its communications. In the OBR, the movement advances the best way to resolve the problem already diagnosed (see Appendix A1).

In *Genocide in Nigeria,* Saro-Wiwa argues that the nemesis of Nigeria inheres in its political administrative structuring: 'As organized today, the country is not a workable possibility. There is no country. There is only organized brigandage' (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 91). Continuing, Saro-Wiwa points out that aside from political structuring and the inequities of revenue allocation the administration of the country works against the Ogoni because the wielders of power—the ethnic majorities—administer by cheating. Appointments to coveted jobs in the military, the civil service and parastatal organisations are not based on merit but on jobbery, nepotism and chicanery. Naanen (1994) claims that *Genocide* is a work of propaganda designed to provoke.

In a keynote address at the annual luncheon of KAGOTE on 26 December 1990, Saro-Wiwa outlined a strategy for realising their goals. He argued that the Ogoni have an agenda to which every Ogoni man and woman must commit.

> Wherever an Ogoni man or woman may be, he must not forget our agenda to save our nationality, our language, our culture, our heritage. Ogoni people must co-operate with one another, as individuals, as groups, because that is the only way we can survive. Wherever they may be, they must proclaim their Ogoniness…I believe that the Ogoni agenda is the only one that can save Nigeria from future destruction. This agenda postulates the equality of all ethnic groups, big or small, within the Nigerian federation as well as the evolution of proper, undiluted federalism in the nation (1995: 75-6).

To be successful, every Ogoni must understand the nature of the cause and believe religiously in the grassroots mobilisation. Saro-Wiwa continues, 'This is not, I repeat, NOT a call to violent action. We have a moral claim over Nigeria' (1995: 75).

The Ogoni master frame went beyond diagnosis and prognosis to suggest means for reaching the proposed solution. According to the OBR, the solution to the Ogoni problem rests on granting the Ogoni people political autonomy to participate in the affairs of the Republic as a distinct and separate unit by whatever name called, and equal treatment of the component ethnic groups regardless of size. In *A Day and a Month*, Saro-Wiwa amplifies the means by arguing for a sovereign national conference at which the constituting ethnic groups will fashion the basis of coexistence. Key informants related that most Ogoni, particularly in the villages, expected to have their own Ogoni state and through it would control their own environment. Having always fought for autonomy, a master frame incorporating autonomy as a strategy would have resonated with the Ogoni. Gerhards and Rucht (1992) hypothesise that the closer a frame is to providing solutions to a problem and implementation of the solutions, the higher the mobilising capacity of the frame.

Motivational framing and efficacy of action

Motivational framing involves a call and rationale for, involvement in ameliorative action. Gerhards and Rucht (1992) argue that consensus on problem definition, causality and solutions advanced preconditions for mobilisation, but such consensus does not itself engender mobilisation. It is critical to create motives for participating in a given action. Saro-Wiwa argues that although the diagnostic framing seems to suggest hopelessness, Ogoni can and must do something to save themselves. He argued that the responsibility lies with every Ogoni person. They must all cooperate to redeem their nationality and save their descendants. In response to the question of whether the Ogoni can achieve their goals, informed by the odds against them, Saro-Wiwa (1995) responded in the positive.

Saro-Wiwa, in his 26 December 1990 keynote address to KAGOTE, pointed out that the present situation dwarfs whatever problems they confronted in the past. He reminded his people about the bravery and fearlessness of the Ogoni in confronting their problems. He argued, Ogoni have made significant contributions to human development in the

past and present. He blamed British colonialism for shattering Ogoni society and subjecting it to processes of backwardness from which the Ogoni sought to extricate itself. Then, drawing on the salience of Birabi, he reminded his audience of the struggles of Ogoni nationalists in the 1930s. Internal colonialism occasioned a situation where the Ogoni lost pride in themselves and their ability, viewing themselves as no better than clients of other ethnic groups.

Ogoni culture is disappearing, most Ogoni children do not attend school and those who graduate cannot find jobs. Land has become scarce and Ogoni can no longer feed itself. Saro-Wiwa then questioned where the Ogoni children would live in the near future. He juxtaposed such neglect, decay and dispossession against the fact that Ogoni is one of the richest places in Africa. The State accrued 30 billion dollars worth of oil from Ogoni land. Yet, they received nothing but the externalities of oil development. He concluded that this situation was unacceptable.

Apart from providing rationale for collective action, movement activists also frame a vocabulary of motive, which persuades recruits and potential recruits that collective action will produce the desired changes. Benford supports the idea that optimism about the outcomes of collective action enhances the likelihood of participation. The Ogoni worldview retains a subsisting belief in a mythical being whose advent will mean Ogoni liberation. To Kpone-Tonwe, the spirit of revolution rests on one man and Ogoni tradition dictates that they rally around that person regardless of his faults.[8] The idea is that, because this person is the chosen one, they succeed. When Saro-Wiwa appeared with his gospel of freedom, the people eagerly embraced him as one sent by God to liberate Ogoni. This thesis argues that this belief was a compelling reason for mass recruitment into mobilisation (Agbonifo 2002; Tschirgi 2007: 125).

Kpalap explains that the Ogoni believed that their ancestors not only supported but also led the struggle. 'To be honest with you, every Ogoni believes there is a spiritual touch to everything. The belief in ancestral leadership is a culture of Ogoni'.[9] This explains why the Ogoni view anyone or anything, no matter how highly placed, they see as betraying the cause of the struggle with anger and suspicion. A significant number of Ogoni go to Christian churches, however, they all believe that the climate and content of the struggle were the result of traditional spiritual dynamics. According to Kpalap, one could literally see such spiritual dynamics when priests, elders and Ogoni marched to the grave of Birabi on

3 January 1993. After the elders poured a libation, 'everyone present and even the atmosphere became so charged that it seemed the Ogoni protest was taking place that day, instead of the next.'[10]

Further evidence for the strength of traditional belief is in the statement of Kiobel Barika, father of Dr Kiobel who was slain alongside Saro-Wiwa:

> Whenever I remember this or somebody talks about it, it worries me most especially that the head (body) has not been released to me. Though I am a Christian, he was a Christian too, but since our tradition demands that our head should be buried in our compound, this keeps on disturbing me that something is left undone (Ogoni Star nd).

The beliefs in the *Wiayor* and leadership of the ancestors are firmly rooted to Ogoni as place. Barika, who stresses the importance of burying the dead in a particular place, the family compound also demonstrates this reality. The *Wiayor* was expected to descend to a specific place, and the ancestors are known to inhabit specific places. To the extent that such cultural cognition served to mobilise Ogoni, place became important. Those ghosts and beliefs in them turned Ogoni into a space of emotions, a complex of natural and supernatural forces to the extent that in the face of all odds, the people believed nothing could hurt them in Ogoniland and that their cause would triumph. Long after the death of Saro-Wiwa and despite the repression MOSOP endured, members of MOSOP interviewed still exude an uncanny belief that their struggle will achieve the desired change. Asked to rationalise their faith in the ultimate triumph of their cause, most respondents appeal to the idea that God is on their side.

According to Tanee, 'Our objectives can still be realised because we are focused, and we are not stopping until we get there. God is on our side. By the grace of God it will be actualised'.[11] Asked why she continues to participate in the movement when she benefits nothing from it, Dickson (2008) asserts,

> I am in it because we are fighting for our rights. We must succeed. Wicked people thought by killing Ken (Saro-Wiwa), they would destroy our struggle. But they are worse for it because they have failed and will continue to fail. One day, it will be well. I believe that God will help us.[12]

Benford holds that a sense of moral duty is essential to action mobilisation. Movements must be involved in the motivational task of con-

structing and amplifying beliefs about why it is proper and moral to take action to ameliorate a situation. He observes that without such framing, micro-mobilisation efforts might stay stuck in the consensus mobilisation stage. Saro-Wiwa (MOSOP 2004) locates his involvement in the struggle on a moral plane. In diagnostic frames included in the OBR and other publications, Ogoni leaders provided motivation to participate in moral terms. To Saro-Wiwa, the exploitation of Ogoni amounts to theft, slavery and genocide. Environmental motivations came to the fore when the Ogoni argued that destruction of their environment, the theft of their lands and resources, would lead to their extinction. The risk of extinction and genocide proved useful motivation for the Ogoni to take immediate action to avert their own extinction because there was no government to save them.[13]

6.5 Creating Mobilising Identities in Submerged Networks

The framing activities of Ogoni activists were effective and contributed to successful mobilisation. Such framings and identity articulations required a safe context for incubation (Couto 1993). This section addresses questions of the role of safe-places in the Ogoni mobilisation.

> I am recreating the Ogoni people, first and foremost, to come to the realization of what they have always been which British colonization tried to take away from them. So 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 1993; Comfort 2002).

Examination of the submerged networks within which Ogoni collective identity emerged must begin with the cognitive liberation of key Ogoni activists. The Ogoni people were well aware of the gap between the promise of oil development and reality. Even the local elites and chiefs who benefited from the order of things were aware of the negative effects of development on their own people and environment. The people experienced development as a penalising phenomenon. What was lacking was the sociological imagination; not many could link their private troubles to oil development and federal structure. Saro-Wiwa outlines the obligation of the State to the oil-bearing communities of the Niger Delta:

> The present division of the country into a federation in which some ethnic groups are split into several states, whereas other ethnic groups are forced

to remain together in a difficult, unitary system inimical to the federal culture of the country, is a recipe for dissension and future wars. Chief Awolowo put it most succinctly: "Under a true Federal constitution, each group, however small, is entitled to the same treatment as any other group, however large. Opportunity must be afforded to each to evolve its own peculiar political institution. The present structure reinforces indigenous colonialism – a crude, harsh, unscientific and illogical system (ibid: 63).

He held that the Nigerian ruling elites had turned the Niger Delta into an ecological disaster, dehumanising its inhabitants. Therefore, the people must demand their rights. Toward that end, he engaged in a number of submerged networks as a strategy to mobilise the Ogoni.

Saro-Wiwa first organised a seminar under the auspices of the Ogoni Central Union of which he was president. Ogoni scholars presented papers on aspects of Ogoni life, and the conclusion pointed to the critical importance of self-organisation (1995: 65). Saro-Wiwa then engaged in a series of meetings with the Ogoni Klub[14] and KAGOTE[15] where he canvassed and sold the idea of forming a mass organisation. He authored the Ogoni Bill of Rights and proposed the signing of the bill. When the final document circulated, six representatives from five Ogoni Kingdoms signed but Eleme Kingdom abstained. Saro-Wiwa took time to engage in informal intellectual discussions with academicians about the problems of the Ogoni and the Niger Delta.[16] As part of such efforts, Saro-Wiwa approached Soyinka to enlist his support for the Ogoni case (Soyinka 2006). Ben Naanen, first Secretary-General of MOSOP, was a postdoctoral student at the time in the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. In London, Saro-Wiwa and Naanen met several times to brainstorm over issues.[17]

Efforts to raise the political consciousness of all Ogoni through seminars and meetings held at the village and Kingdom level appear as aspects of submerged networks. According to Nwigani,

> Ken created the awareness that we were being cheated. We were not getting our dues. So, we got up and joined the struggle. We used to hold rallies from Kingdom to Kingdom creating awareness. When you are a novice and you are taught you have been cheated, you become more angry and mobilised even more than the educated.[18]

A number of the activists interviewed credited attendance at such submerged meetings as the beginning of their involvement with the movement for the survival of the Ogoni people. 'I was in the village helping

my mother as I had no job, when Saro-Wiwa called a meeting in Bori. And I went.'[19] For Chujor, his contact with the movement happened when the late John Kpuinen invited him to a meeting of MOSOP in 1998.[20] Asked how he joined MOSOP, Emmanuel Sor-ue Nkalaa said he was working in Port Harcourt when he heard of MOSOP and attended a meeting in Bori, where 'we were made aware how the federal government cheats us. As I listened, my interest grew because we were already experiencing marginalisation. There and then I decided to join regardless of the consequences.'[21] It was within such networks that activists developed inversionary discourses.

Free spaces created room not only for interrogating the mythologies of development and progress and, one nation but also for the generation of alternative mythologies. The essence of a safe place lies in being a private place where activists are safe from the law or state. Tilly refers to the importance of safe places whose occupants 'enjoy some protection from intervention of authorities and enemies' (2000: 144). Tilly distinguishes three types of links between contention and safe places, which may increase the ease with which activists meet, communicate, or organise and evade repression. These include places that shield activists from surveillance and repression by reason of 'terrain, built environment, or legal status'; public places, such as bars, which permit subversive conversation; and public occasions, which authorities encourage or tolerate, at which subversive claims are aired. Some of the groundwork took place in London and other places in and outside of Nigeria, the ways Ogoni engaged in identity construction do not entirely suggest stealth.

While often deployed in analysis of the covert emergence of social movements, the role of safe spaces in sustaining a movement during government and/or enemy reprisals have yet to receive similar attention. Ogoni activists went underground following the militarisation of Ogoni and invasion of MOSOP offices.[22] Activists utilised business offices in Port Harcourt as their meeting place. Those who stayed back in Ogoni utilised forest cover for meeting places. Business offices enabled activists to fax reports abroad, make telephone calls and receive responses. Embassies provided safe spaces where activists could receive financial support, store valuable documents, and alert the world to what was going on in Ogoni. Without such safe spaces, it would have been near impossible for the movement to coordinate, keep abreast of developments, mount and sustain an international campaign and put pressure on the govern-

ment and Shell. The attempt by the Abacha regime to destroy MOSOP failed because the latter had safe spaces in which they could coordinate their actions and reactions (see Holmquist 1980).

The constitution of collective identity in submerged networks occurs covertly. The network turns public when collective actors publicly engage an identified enemy. Melucci emphasises the critical role of submerged networks in the process of 'creating collective identities, interpreting grievances, and evaluating the potential effectiveness of collective action' (Melucci 1989: 235). The idea of submerged networks suggests that the initial challenge of the *status quo* or 'the police order' occur on symbolic grounds. Melucci argues that the symbolic challenge aims at demystifying the dominant code, offering an alternative way of imagining and naming the world. It signals the presence of what C. Wright Mills refers to as 'the sociological imagination', that is the capacity to link private troubles to public issues (Wright 1959). The question that arises is how individuals arrive at this point.

6.6   Recruitment and Commitment: Identity and Incentive

Olson (1965) raises the question of why rational actors would engage in collective action when they could free ride. To him it takes more than shared interest for people to participate in collective action; selective incentives for the participant are an essential factor. The resource mobilisation approach argues that selective incentives are required to overcome the free-rider problem. A social psychological approach argues that identity exerts a direct and indirect effect on participation (Klandermas, Sabucedo, Rodriguez, de Weerd 2002: 236). Directly, people who identify with a group or cause may participate in a struggle not necessarily for instrumental reason. Indirectly, collective identity can mollify instrumental or strategic logic such as to make free rides less attractive. 'High levels of group identification increase the costs of defection and the benefits of cooperation. In other words, collective identity has an impact on the instrumental pathway to protest participation' (ibid). The dualistic thinking about why people participate is equally evident in Sturmer (2000) who argues that participation generated by identity considerations result in automatic behaviour, whereas participation informed by instrumental reasoning is deliberative (ibid: 236). If either instrumental or identity logic inform action, what is the best way to categorise behaviour generated by both identity and rational calculation? This is an important ques-

tion considering that there are no pure motivational types, only hybrids (Frey 1997).

In interviews with Ogoni activists, the researcher sought to understand what motivated their participation in the struggle. According to Chief Dennis Deemua, 'All Ogoni sons and daughters belong to MOSOP. People willingly joined and they did not have to be provided incentives.'[23] Tanee argues,

> I received no incentives either to join or to remain a member of MOSOP. I am not paid; rather I make personal sacrifices because it is a thing I believe in. We are not working for the president, Ledum Mitee, but for our objectives. If they kill me, let it be as a MOSOP activist. If I am killed as an ordinary individual, I won't be happy in my grave.[24]

According to Kpone-Tonwe,

> There was nothing of incentives. There was no need to persuade people to join. Every Ogoni man, woman and child felt the pinch of oil exploitation over the years, and they were looking for a vent to let out their pent-up anger. Our committee recommended presenting the case of MOSOP to the people and allowing them to decide what to do. While other leaders looked to Abuja, Saro-Wiwa looked to the people. When he spoke, the people saw eye-to-eye with him and exclaimed: "God has sent Saro-Wiwa to help us". The people were voiceless and were looking for a voice to speak for them.[25]

Widespread community anger emerged in the face of ubiquitous damage from oil development. The anger relates to different aspects of Ogoni life. For some informants, anger is a function of the degradation of the environment. Others are unhappy because Shell does not pay adequate compensation for confiscated land or destroyed crops. Still others feel uneasy about the changing nature of their environment manifested in deteriorating farm yield and the growing scarcity of fish, which compels many Ogoni to travel as far as Cameroon to ply their trade. It is arguable that many Ogoni were unable to relate their private troubles to the broader problem of oil exploitation. For example, Chief Deemua claims that the Ogoni 'was in darkness, until Saro-Wiwa came and opened' their eyes. Bari-ara claims that the effect was like putting fire to fuel. These corroborate Saro-Wiwa's explanation: 'Indeed, on reflection, I now realize what happened. I was not telling these people anything they had not known' (1995: 103).

The Ogoni mobilised within a context structured by material lack, yet activists claim they received no incentive. The avowal dovetails with conventional understanding of incentives was material inducement to secure or sustain participation. While the focus on the impact of identity is corrective to that view, incentives can be moral as when inducements are non-material (Goulet 1987). Saro-Wiwa described Ogoni collective action as a key civic duty (MOSOP 2004: 50). By appealing to pre-colonial autonomy of Ogoni and the need to reject internal colonialism and re-establish the *status quo* ante, Saro-Wiwa (MOSOP 2004) deployed moral incentive. When Saro-Wiwa used the spectre of hopelessness for Ogoni children and gradual extinction, exhorts Ogoni to act to save themselves, he is using a sort of negative incentive as well (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 74). Goulet (1987) makes the important point that moral incentives are meaningful only when related to material incentives.

Another form of moral incentive deployed by MOSOP includes appeal to the support and involvement of the divine order in their struggle. Disinherited by the Nigerian movement-state, Ogoni had a helper in God, and as the cause of the Ogoni was just, the latter would emerge victorious over the forces of evil (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 132). Here Ogoni identify with the will of God, and the State and Shell with evil. In the classic encounter between good and evil, the former always triumphs. The Ogoni, therefore, were encouraged to play their role in this epic battle knowing that they would inevitably triumph. Supernatural help from above, which would empower Ogoni to engender a new space where they can participate in negotiating their life chances, was a powerful moral incentive for collective action participation.

6.6.1   Identity and variations in commitment to MOSOP

Trust, the church and people's commonsense contributed to heightened mobilisation and commitment to MOSOP. However, these elements were not strong enough to make the Chief of Eleme sign the OBR or keep the conservative chiefs from disowning MOSOP. They were not powerful enough to guard against the defection of many elites including Leton and Kobani, or make B.M. Wifa participate actively in collective action (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 104). What explanation is there for the variation in commitment reflected in these actions? Some argue that such variation is a function of the feeling that Saro-Wiwa erred by resorting to grass-roots mobilisation and boycotting elections (Wheeler, Fabig and Boele

2002). To Watts, individual political aspirations explain why Leton and Kobani opted out (Watts 2004). In both explanations, one can discern elements of selfish and materialist considerations. Arguable as such explanations may be they are partial, providing ammunition for those who seek to demonstrate that greed was at the core of MOSOP. Analysis rooted in a study of identity may enable better comprehension of the subject.

The collective ascription of the elements of a given identity to all members of a community, fail to yield to isolation of the differences among members of a group, anchored in social location and interaction (Stryker, Owens and White 2000). It has the effect of focusing attention entirely on the movement identity, which participants share while ignoring other potentially salient external identities of the participants and what impact they may have on their commitment. The merger of individual and collective identities, thus, obviates the use of identity in explaining commitment. Commitment refers to playing one's expected role; it absorbs time and effort. Commitment to outside groups, unrelated or adversarial to the movement threatens participants' commitment to the movement.

Naanen suggests the motivation behind Ogoni elites who insisted on participating in politics was more than only personal political careers. Another significant factor was belief that foreclosing the political process meant closing an influential path to political engagement and potential resolution to Ogoni issues. Therefore, it was more of a question of strategy than career.[26] It appears equally true that many of the local elites have clientelist links with both the State and Shell. Such links were lucrative because political appointments and favourable contracts flowed through them. By these associations, these elites acquired identities such as 'friend of the government', the political party stalwarts, or Shell contractors. These identities emerged before MOSOP. Naanen suggests that these elites participated in the movement hoping that it would lead to more patronage.

Saro-Wiwa's uncompromising, youth-supported style, demanded absolute loyalty from participants. At that point, the balance between two loyalties, which they managed successfully before was in jeopardy. When Wilbros' activities in Ogoni led to vandalism of its equipment, the decisive moment came for the conservative chiefs to choose the more salient identity. They disowned MOSOP, and wisely ran away to Port Harcourt

to seek government protection. Leton and Kobani remained henchmen of the movement at the time. Trouble, however, broke for them when MOSOP decided to boycott the 1993 presidential elections. At this time, Leton was a prominent leader in the Social Democratic Party whose presidential flag bearer was the popular Abiola. In their calculation, an Ogoni boycott would mean failure to deliver the Ogoni electorate to the winning party, which in turn would imply the Ogoni vote was of no consequence in the electoral process. Insofar as that was the case, these leaders could not make personal political claims on the president or party. Their identity as SDP stalwarts and relationship to the party machinery became more salient than their identity as MOSOP members following the lifting of the ban. To secure the former, they severed their relationship with MOSOP.

6.7   Politics of Contingent Opportunities at the Margins

6.7.1   Gender and mobilisation

A woman instigated the catalyst that changed the direction of MOSOP. Like Rosa Parks who refused to relinquish her seat to a white man in the Montgomery, Alabama bus event, Mrs Korgbara refused to allow Shell and Wilbros, under the protection of Nigerian soldiers, to bulldoze her farmland and newly planted crops to lay pipe on 29 April 1993. Soldiers beat her for daring to protest the destruction of her crops. Wilbros had begun bulldozing crops across a number of Ogoni villages the previous day. Her people became angry when they saw her condition. The following morning, thousands of Ogoni marched between American contractors, soldiers and construction machineries and farmland, waving twigs. Soldiers opened fire on the unarmed demonstrators. Many protestors sustained injuries from mild to severe. The police shot Mrs Korgbara resulting in amputation of her arm (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 156).

Gender overlaps with socio-cultural inequalities to disadvantage women in Ogoni. Kpone-Tonwa shows that the *Yaage* tradition facilitated youth (male) training, recruitment into the class of rulers, and was therefore a mechanism of social stratification. The feminine *Yaa* also produced social distinctions among women. While rites like the feminine *Yaa* elevates women to the same social status and level of spiritual intelligence as their husbands, women still suffer exclusion from the class of community leaders. The implication is that women could not attain

membership in elitist cultural organisations such as KAGOTE even if they had achieved spiritual parity with their husbands. It is no surprise then that women held few significant offices after formation of MOSOP.

Removed from the top-echelons of MOSOP leadership, women brought their specialties in the cultural sphere to bear. Women composed new songs, adapted existing ones and sang them as occasion demanded. These songs, Kpalap (2006, 2008) asserts, elicited the emotions and courage with which MOSOP embarked on its activities. Some of the songs reminded the Ogoni of their history, of the support of Ogoni spirits, of God, and gave assurances of certain victory. Women's participation in collective action became, 'opportunities for political and cultural experimentation and learning' (Eyerman 2002: 445). The women turned MOSOP into a singing movement articulating a collective memory through songs. That way, the singers embedded MOSOP in a long tradition of Ogoni resistance against domination and quiescence (Eyerman 2002: 447). The women formed an invisible leadership cadre that through their songs, not only turned Ogoni into a community of musicians, dancers and poets, but also attracted participants to MOSOP (Kuumba 2002).

6.8　Choice and Purpose: Identity, Tactics and Strategy

What considerations informed Ogoni decisions to mobilise against Shell and the state, how did they arrive at whether to participate, and whether to employ violence or non-violence? The literature rarely addresses how protestors select their tactics and make strategic decisions (Jasper 1997: 234). The social psychological perspective on collective behaviour ignores the question of strategy. Given resource mobilisation's focus on the centrality of mobilised resources, the perspective drew attention to the problem of determining the best means of utilising scarce movement resources to achieve the desired goal (Barkan 1979). Early resource mobilisation and political process accounts averred that changing tactics is a rational response and adjustment to existing circumstances and opportunities. In this account, actors make rational decisions based on cost-benefit calculations (Kitschelt 1986: 67). To Barkan (1979), the choice of a movement's strategies and tactics orients toward the need to mobilise resources, win outside support and maintain group solidarity.

One argument states that activists also make decisions based on their self-conception or, 'who we are', as revolutionaries or Blacks. In this instance, attention is required on an expressive logic. Making decisions based on collective identity presents an alternative to the strategic or instrumental logic of cost-benefit analysis (Polletta and Jasper 2001). Well aware of the violent nature of the Nigerian State, MOSOP claimed moral superiority by its insistence that it was a non-violent struggle. This self-understanding continues to influence activists' decisions. This explains why the struggle has not resulted in the death of a single soldier or oil company employee since inception (Naanen 2008). MOSOP's decision to decline offers of military assistance and training in subversive activities stems from this self-conception.[27]

Polletta and Jasper caution against the tendency to oppose strategy and identity, arguing that making identity claims is a form of protest strategy. Instrumental logic usually does not exclude identity concerns as often the former rests on collective identities that are 'widely associated with particular strategies, tactics, organizational forms, and even deliberative logics' (2001: 293). Polletta and Jasper also argue that the anti-nuclear Clamshell Alliance saw themselves as opponents of nuclear power and opposed to organisational domination. The latter identity informed the group's unique strategies of consensus decision-making, non-violence, and its demise as the need for consensus paralysed the organisation.

> They would rather see an organization collapse than compromise their overriding commitments to democratic process. None of these activists abjure considerations of instrumental efficacy; they seek rather to balance them with the principled commitments that define who they are. Strategic choices are not simply neutral decisions about what will be most effective, in this view; they are statements about identity (ibid).

In 1992, at the residence of MOSOP's first president, Dr G.B. Leton, the young organisation established a four-member committee to develop group drive and direction.[28] In its report, the committee emphasised MOSOP had to look inward and draw upon its age-old cultural resilience to be effective. One factor that had shaped the evolution of the Ogoni was the *Yaa* tradition. According to Kpone-Tonwe,

> This was very important because, if MOSOP was to become a movement to be reckoned with in Nigeria, it had to carry all Ogoni people along. It had to be a movement, which the people at the grassroots understand and

belong to. MOSOP must draw on the traditional organization and the principles of the *Yaa* tradition (2003: 75).

Ogoni elders received the report with mixed feelings. However, Saro-Wiwa warmly embraced and implemented it, touring and mobilising all segments of Ogoni society. Cultural antecedents informed Saro-Wiwa's grassroots strategy. By the principles of *Yaa*, the Ogoni successfully organised their community maintaining their autonomy and living with pride among their powerful and less powerful neighbours. The historian, Kpone-Tonwe, resurrected these principles presenting them as a time-tested strategy by which the current struggle of Ogoni would succeed.

When flown by presidential jet to Lagos and asked by the Inspector-General of Police, Aliyu Atta to list their needs; rather than ask for amenities as advised by the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Saro-Wiwa, Leton, Kobani and Bennet Birabi asked for an Ogoni state and stood by the OBR. Two other meetings followed, and on each occasion, asked what they wanted, the Ogoni leaders resisted the entrenched politics of clientelism and patronage. If private privilege was their aim, all they needed to do was seek development project funding. They could have asked for political offices as compensation for their neglect. Earlier, when the State government was courting Saro-Wiwa to dissuade him from the January 1993 protest, he could have asked for and received favours to end the protest. Saro-Wiwa eschewed such opportunities inherent in Nigerian politics. To the activist, cosmetic development projects were not the answer. The issue of personal gain did not arise. The system needed to be overhauled (Saro-Wiwa 1995).

To what extent did taste shape the tactics of the Ogoni? There is little history of non-institutional political action in Ogoni. Saro-Wiwa rationalises that his earlier failure to mobilise the Ogoni may explain the condition of Ogoni, which implies that he also had no experience in identity works. However, as a student of history and a politically engaged activist, Saro-Wiwa convinced himself of the continued failure of institutional politics because of its elitist flavour. A more meaningful strategy would be grassroots mobilisation of the Ogoni for non-institutional collective action. He recalls that Awolowo and Azikiwe had effectively employed that strategy in the past. Saro-Wiwa's belief in the efficacy of collective action stems from his historical understanding of the Nigerian State and Nigerian politics, and failure of institutional methods.

Historical context can also shape a movement strategy. Shell accused Saro-Wiwa of being an ethnic champion. He was trying 'to single out the Ogoni for particular attention' whereas their situation was no different from other oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 162-5). Saro-Wiwa ripostes by asserting that Shell is wrong in the view that his actions were the localised action of a self-professed Ogoni spokesperson. Naanen indicates his earlier discomfort with adopting an ethnic mobilisation platform. Saro-Wiwa emphasises that his strategy is a lesson from the history of political mobilisation in Nigeria (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 101). No salient strategies of mobilisation, traversing ethnic boundaries existed. He was restricted to contemplating what exists and works. Informed analysis of the risks, and resources required for delta-wide mobilisation proved foreboding so he chose the most readily commended, time tested, effective method available (ibid: 168).

The repertoire of collective action refers to the limited and established means of action aimed at securing shared interests (Tilly 1977: 39). The 'bounded rationality' of a group shapes the range of available means (Simon 1957), conceptual, organisational and other resources within its reach. Tilly draws attention to aspects of the nature of repertoire: continuity and change over time (1986a). While Ogoni historically employed institutional means in their struggle for autonomy under colonial and early postcolonial eras, their adoption of non-institutional protest march in January 1993, and the flying of banners emblazoned with contentious inscriptions along major roads in Ogoni transformed their repertoire. They also utilised cultural symbols by deploying various masquerades, traditionally featured at specific occasions in specific roles. By using the masquerades, the Ogoni latched onto a cultural repertoire to express a sense of insurgents' identification with the heroic past of the Ogoni, and to mobilise emotions.

6.8.1   Moral motivation and choice

While the argument that a sense of who we are shapes movement strategies complements the view that instrumental reasons explain tactics, the literature has given little attention to how moral incentives[29] shape contentious action. Socialisation may provide moral incentive to exhibit certain behaviours, and actors who have imbibed the logic of such action may derive satisfaction from acting accordingly (Merton 1968). While sociologists focused on the conscious attempt by societal institutions to

socialise their members, they have said little about the socialisation individuals derive from their study of how society works in contrast to formal values, particular experiences and readings of history. For instance, Saro-Wiwa saw the efficacy of collective action based on his reading of the prior success of nationalist leaders, and how elites and clientelism have prospered by marginalising ordinary Ogoni (MOSOP 2004: 12). It is conceivable to view such lessons from socialisation and efforts to effect change as moral incentives.

Max Weber argues that the protestant ethics, rather than mere pecuniary factors, explain the rise of capitalism in Western Europe. With the Ogoni, Saro-Wiwa, while vociferous about the economic and political wellbeing of the Ogoni, located his activism in the voice or call of the spirit of Ogoni to liberate them and other oppressed groups. In effect, religious beliefs provided moral incentives to contention. Besides religion, moral incentive may derive from the need for achievement. Monetary incentive tends to be insufficient incentive for those with high n-Achievement and, when the work benefits the group more than themselves, their concern for achievement is unaffected (McClelland and Winter 1969). Carens (1981) argues that values other than the desire to acquire income could motivate actors. Saro-Wiwa may have been an individual with high achievement motivation given his achievement in various human endeavours. Kpone-Tonwe (2009) holds that Saro-Wiwa was one who always wanted to stand out, to be noticed wherever he was. Given the vision he enunciated for the Ogoni in his 1968 pamphlet and his unflagging commitment to the vision, it is clear that he was highly motivated by values related to personal achievement and improvement of the Ogoni (1995: 49).

6.8.2 Role of religion

Religion, in the sociological definition is a system of beliefs and practices oriented to the sacred and which furnishes meaning and direction for the experiences of its adherents. By providing meaning and explanations for human experiences, religion can legitimate the *status quo*. Religion can also become a tool for radical interrogation when the *status quo* violates sacred standards and becomes oppressive. The Ogoni religious belief system became a tool for questioning the role of the State and Shell in Ogoni. Religion also became a tool for motivating and legitimating challenges to the *status quo*. Saro-Wiwa linked the beginning of his activism to

the Voice, which commanded him to work for the liberation of Ogoni and all oppressed peoples in Nigeria. The activist linked his action with divine will and truth. Divine transcendence becomes very powerful because it is sacred and non-negotiable, with the effect that believers express strong commitment and an uncompromising attitude. The divine connection finds resonance in the pre-existing worldview in which the Ogoni expect the advent of a *Wiayor* who would deliver Ogoni from bondage. Saro-Wiwa was widely believed to be the *Wiayor*. Chapter 5 supports that assertion in analysis of Kpone-Tonwe's argument that the spirit of revolution rested on Saro-Wiwa.

Smith (1996), argues that religion is a 'major creator and custodian of powerful symbols, rituals, icons, narratives, songs, testimonies, and oratory', which together constitute a coherent worldview. Social movement activists can draw upon the sacred repertoire. Ogoni traditional religion provides symbolic and emotional forces that sustain the movement. The symbol of the *Wiayor*, the narrative of liberation, the sanctioning role of masquerades, traditional Ogoni war songs, the 'spirit of revolution', prayers and libation to Ogoni spirits and ancestors, and the shedding of blood when the first Ogoni death was recorded, provided some of the religious assets that mobilised and sustained Ogoni commitment to the struggle. Religious elements also served to limit collective action. An instance of religious dissuasion occurred at the Ogoni Shrine, considered too sacred to violate by assailants in pursuit of some elites who had taken refuge there (Agbonifo 2002).

6.8.3   Role of the Church

The Church aligned the cause of MOSOP with the sacredness associated with God's will and truth. Given that God's will is sacred and eternal, it is non-negotiable. Religious sanction serves to engender commitment, even strict conviction in the Christian members of MOSOP. Such conviction helped cement commitment and sustained activism under dire repression. Thus, divine compulsion was a tremendous asset to mobilisation.

The Church helped in large measure in the definition of the Ogoni situation as ungodly and worth changing. In describing the situation of the Ogoni, the Church likened it to the bondage of Israel in Egypt. They emphasised that as God delivered Israel, the same God was in favour of delivering the Ogoni from their situation. Smith (1996) argues that relig-

ion is a major provider of the moral standards against which people judge the *status quo*. The involvement of the Church in the movement contributed to the definition of the Ogoni situation as unjust. Without such justification, it would have been impossible for the church leaders and followers to join the movement. It is in that regard that women embarked on regular fasting and prayer for the deliverance of Ogoni. They were so committed and faithful that when security forces began to harass church pastors and members, the prayer warriors relocated to the forests (Bari-ara 2006).

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that before and during the repression, the Church assumed heightened salience as a meaningful place and stake for contentious politics. In fact, MOSOP held mobilising services in the church. Birabi's grave is located within the precinct of the church where MOSOP held a service on 3 January 1993. After the service, worshippers and priests marched to the gravesite. FOWA member believers met in churches to pray for God's deliverance and success of the movement. During the repression, the churches became sites of contestation. Smith argues that the Church provided ready resources to social movements. In the case of the Ogoni, such resources included leadership. In Ogoni, the church already had a well-educated, highly respected functioning system of leadership. A good example is Kpone-Tonwe, a pastor and university professor. By incorporating leadership of the churches in the top hierarchy of MOSOP, the movement was able to tap into their leadership skills, experience, knowledge and networks.

In a way, the involvement of the Church leaders created a powerfully charged spiritual atmosphere where the syncretistic could flourish. In such a context, the Christian God, the Ogoni spirit and other deities came together for the Ogoni cause, giving room for the emergence of a cocktail of beliefs in the miraculous (Agbonifo 2002). Although a large number of Ogoni converted to Christianity to the extent that erodes salience of tradition, the Ogoni retain awe for the Ogoni spirit (Maier 2000: 105). Ogoni leaders employed symbols and texts from different belief systems to mobilise members. During his trial, Saro-Wiwa quoted from the Holy Qu'ran saying, 'All those who fight when oppressed incur no guilt, but Allah shall punish the oppressor' (Sura 42, verse 41), thereby providing religious approval for political rebellion against unjust systems (Tschirgi 1999). The Ogoni earlier organised a memorial service, vigil and prayer service in honour of the cause. On 3 January 1993, after ser-

vices, church leaders and worshippers filed out in procession to the grave of Birabi where they invoked the spirit of the dead man in support of the struggle (Amanyie 2001; Saro-Wiwa 2005).

6.8.4 Space and Ogoni movement

Social scientists often view space as a kind of container wherein social processes play out (Sewell Jr 2001). Space constrains, but also facilitates action. Space is subject to transformation via social action. Sewell argues that spatial constraints advantage strategic positioning, and inaccessible terrains confer relative security on insurgents and smugglers. He argues for attention to spatial agency, which can be turned into advantage in social struggles, and how such struggles reconfigure the meanings, uses and significance of space.

Social life happens first in specific locales, for instance, forests, a street or neighbourhood; and, such locale stands in definite relation to other locales and social, economic and political processes across spatial scales. Sewell argues that because different social activities play out in different locations, spatial differentiation in social life is revealed. Different spaces are, thus, different by function and social or natural landscape, but also in varying cultural meanings, both to inhabitants and outsiders. The configuration of space is subject to social transformation. The initiation, content, management and uses of such change may become the subject of contention (Sewell Jr 2001: 57).

The question of space was of central importance in the Ogoni mobilisation, and consequent demonstration of 4 January 1993. The demonstration was a watershed, not only because it panicked both the State and Shell (Saro-Wiwa 1995). The demonstration was a transformative experience for all Ogoni representing an end to the psychological barrier of fear (ibid). A major immediate impact of the collective action was the transformation of Ogoni into a politicised space. The Ogoni took action to repossess land taken over by Shell. Places where there should be quiet became places of noise, where oil exploitation should proceed unhindered became an arena for twig wielders and protesters.

Space is a meaningful location (Cresswell 2004). The meaning and uses of place may become a stake in conflict (Sewell Jr 2001: 64). To the Ogoni, the land is god, and tradition means *doonu kuneke* or the honouring of the land (earth, soil, water). The rivers and streams are sacred, intricately bound up with the life of the community and harbouring ani-

mals into which the human soul can transmute. Desecrating such animals can sometimes bring disaster upon their human custodians (Saro-Wiwa 1992). The MOSOP employed these meanings to stake their claims to a healthy environment and to de-legitimise the territorialising practice of land seizure and exploitation. MOSOP also transformed the emotional meaning of protest locations (Sewell Jr 2001). During the mobilisation, the MOSOP turned a secondary school playground into a highly politicised arena. They turned Birabi's grave into a politically significant place by beautifying, converging there and invoking the support of the dead for the struggle. MOSOP changed the existing significance of Ogoni as quiescent and inferior oil-rich place into a highly salient contentious political space. Ogoni became a place, a museum of injustice opened to the whole world to see (Dikec 2002).

Examination of the ecology (Zhao 1999) of the Ogoni demonstration suggests that the topography of Ogoni shaped the contentious strategies of the insurgents. Ogoni is an open flat and accessible terrain, unlike the almost impenetrable swamps of the Ijaws. Thus, Ogoni activists reasoned that a violent option would be self-defeating and not credible before the awesome might of the Nigerian military (Naanen 2006).[30] Aware of the deadly repercussions of non-violent protests, Ogoni leaders saw it as a better option (Saro-Wiwa 1995). Ogoni is one of the most densely populated places in the world (Saro-Wiwa 2004). While settled in four Kingdoms, the approximately 500,000 Ogoni live in close proximity.[31] Some Ogoni, live and work in Port Harcourt. Given that the Ogoni easily commute between Port Harcourt and Ogoni, they maintain contact with events at home. The Ogoni have dense settlements with intricate networks that aid effective organisation, rapid dissemination of information and mobilisation.[32]

6.9   Emotions and Mobilisation

Mindy Thompson Fullilove argues that displacement of varying types has become a worldwide phenomenon with consequential mental distress. Fullilove argues that place is important to health. Moreover, place can be a geographic centre or location that is 'good enough' to sustain life. Good enough places possess structures meaningful to inhabitants, fostering oneness with the natural world. A place can be a psychosocial milieu, which is where human interactions occur. To underscore the essence of a psychosocial milieu, Fullilove argues, 'Just as "toxic" features

of a setting may lead to ill health, "toxic" features of the psychosocial milieu may contribute to physical and mental malfunction' (1996). Human survival depends on a life-sustaining location.

Fullilove argues that individuals share a sense of place, which arises from three psychological processes: familiarity, attachment and identity. Displacement however ruptures emotional attachment, resulting in nostalgia, disorientation and alienation, which can damage the sense of belonging and mental health (ibid: 1518). People lose their sense of environment when they lose their home or community. In other words, losing one's sense of familiar place can have both physical and emotional repercussions. 'Familiar spatial routines are indelibly etched on the nervous system and the musculature; the sudden loss of the exterior world that conditioned those emotions is perceived as a loss of the self' (ibid: 1518).

Nostalgia results when the object of attachment is lost. It signifies a yearning for a better environment. Given that the community or home is a node of accumulated relationships and history, the loss of this heritage, occasioned by environmental alteration, is essential to understanding its impacts on people (ibid: 1519).

It appears that particularised trust played a major role in Ogoni mobilisation. Chief Deemua eloquently articulated trust in Saro-Wiwa.

> Ken was a dynamic leader. We found his "yes" to be yes, and his "no" to be no. We saw he is not a cheater. We have Ogoni sons and daughters in government, but it does not reflect on Ogoni. They do not do anything for the good of Ogoni. Saro-Wiwa was not like that.[33]

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the youth readily rallied to Saro-Wiwa. The genesis of the trust Ogoni gave Saro-Wiwa dates back to the days immediately after the civil war when Saro-Wiwa almost single-handedly saw to the rehabilitation of displaced Ogoni. There is evidence that generalised trust may also emerge within the context of collective mobilisation. Legbrosi and Bari-ara remark on the emergent trust and friendliness between Khana and Gokana people.[34] Damgbor Moses asserts:

> I believed so much in Saro-Wiwa because he was not poor; he had everything a man needed. Yet, he was not satisfied with the condition of Ogoni people. At a meeting in his home in Bane village one day, we were sweating and people began to fan themselves. I drew his attention to the drama to underline the need for electric fans and a generating set. Ken replied by

saying we should all suffer together. He would not install fans in his house because the people around had no fans. He said a private generator would not supply power to those around him, meanwhile they would suffer the noise pollution occasioned by it. I was touched and vowed I would never leave him and that I would follow the movement to the end.[35]

Here, the emergence of trust in the context of mobilisation, but which has deep roots in an activist's perception of Saro-Wiwa appears.

6.10 Conclusion

In resource mobilisation theories, social movements are the result of successful resource mobilisation and positive political opportunities, which facilitate the emergence of social movements (Tarrow 1998; McAdam 1996). Fuchs argues that reducing movements to political opportunity implies a questioning of the autonomy and power of civil society. The new social movement approach argues that change in the structural conditions of society results in the emergence of social movements. Both approaches to social movements remain patently deterministic. The emergence of the Ogoni movement was not determined. Rather it was a complex result of diverse interacting factors, including those identified in chapter 5, the framing activities of Ogoni leaders, failure of the State and Shell to act on early warning signals, and contingencies. A movement emerges when a perception develops of a problem situation, and when such perception guides practice. Beneath the redefinition of situation and social practice lies cognitive liberation (McAdam 1982).

The choice of action strategy, tactics and even intra-movement squabbles over strategy are pointers to the need to see collective action partly as cognitive praxis (Eyerman and Jamison 1991) rather than purely empirical phenomenon. Eyerman and Jamison agree with Melucci (1998: 249) that movements emerge as symbolic challenges to the dominant cultural codes. They argue that the concept of cognitive praxis presses the point that challenging the established order is, 'a socially constructive force… a fundamental determinant of human knowledge' (Eyerman and Jamieson 1991: 48). The Ogoni began the onerous task of questioning the order of things and suggesting a better vision of how things should be in the rather safe rural places, homes and exclusive meeting halls of KAGOTE. Other not-so-safe places like public school compounds and seminar halls served as places to discuss and articulate contentious issues with the Ogoni people. In these places, they deliberated on mobilising

identities and articulated action frames and deployed diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framings.

What informed Ogoni movement tactics? Did they choose tactics for emotional and symbolic value rather than efficacy; or did activists choose only what would work? Are the tactics chosen the most effective or did experience influence strategy and tactics? Herbert Kitschelt (1986) suggests that tactics flowed from the political opportunity structure. Polletta and Jasper (2001) argues that resource mobilisation and political process models obfuscate the insight that activists prefer certain tactics to others independent, to some extent, of their impact on outcomes. Evidence suggests that Saro-Wiwa was convinced that institutional politics had failed and will continue to fail because of its elitist flavour (MOSOP 2004). He readily accepted the idea of Ogoni grassroots mobilisation for non-institutional collective action as a credible option. It is arguable that Saro-Wiwa developed a taste for the efficacy of collective action based on history, his understanding of Nigerian politics, and failure of institutional methods. His refusal to accede to the protesting leaders' disquiet about the election boycott even in the face of threat to withdraw membership of MOSOP indicates that identity and principle rather than taste or goals largely shaped tactics.

MOSOP utilised everyday religious routines to mobilise the Ogoni. Ogoni churches formed themselves into an association that became an affiliate of MOSOP. By membership in MOSOP, the church, which has become very influential in Ogoni, provided spiritual sanction for the struggle. Whenever the people met, they prayed to God for support. In January 1993, the Ogoni carried placards bearing the inscription, 'King Pharaoh, Let my people go', which reflects adoption of a biblical interpretive lens. Religion shaped the course of the conflict. There is evidence of the admixture of different religious beliefs, including the mythical *Wiayor*, the Spirit of Ogoni, the Christian God, producing a syncretistic system suffused with belief in the miraculous. The Ogoni believed the spirit and ancestors of Ogoni were involved in the struggle, and that they chose Saro-Wiwa to lead the struggle. Thus, they completely gave their all to the struggle, believing they would win in their lifetime or afterwards.

A melange of emotions featured in Ogoni contentious action. Fear of extinction motivated them to do something about their situation. They were angry at the environmental degradation and even more so when

they learned that Shell was to blame. Emotions exploded at the demonstration on 4 January 1993. The day before, they converged at the Birabi grave, after church, the atmosphere became so emotionally charged that it appeared the planned protest was taking place that day. Anger at the destruction of their farms and the beating of Mrs Kogbara brought out a massive protest that spilled over to vandalism of Wilbros' equipment. When conservative Ogoni publicly disinherited MOSOP, in anger, Kobani labelled them vultures and perceiving the anger of the youth, the chiefs ran away to Port Harcourt. In the face of repression, passion for their leader and the need to keep his vision alive kept the activists going. Similarly, the people had trust in Saro-Wiwa. They found in his actions and words evidence of someone who cared about their interests. As a result, many committed to the struggle.

Notes

[1] This researcher personally observed a performance of the song during the 2008 Ogoni Day celebration.

[2] Detailed accounts of events leading to the death of the Ogoni leaders and the military repression that followed have been dealt with elsewhere (see Agbonifo 2002).

[3] Bari-ara Kpalap (2007) Personal interview.

[4] An Ogoni activist who fled but has since returned, Ferghalo Mitee was interviewed in Port Harcourt in 2008.

[5] Carolyn Barinen Nagbo (2008) Personal interview, Port Harcourt (December).

[6] Damgbor Moses (2008) Personal interview, Port Harcourt (December).

[7] Legborsi Pyagbara (2005) Personal interview.

[8] Kpone-Tonwe (2008) Personal interview, Port Harcourt.

[9] Bari-ara Kpalap (2008) Personal interview (20 May).

[10] Kpalap (2008) Personal interview (20 May).

[11] Wilfred Tanee (2008) Personal interview, Port Harcourt.

[12] Charity Dickson (2008) Personal interview, Port Harcourt.

[13] However, there are always some who would not be mobilised to participate regardless of the salience of framing work and motivation. An example is the retired Ogoni judge, who although provided legal advice to movement leaders, preferred not to participate actively (Saro-Wiwa 1995).

[14] Ogoni Klub is a club with membership consisting of young Ogoni professionals.

[15] KAGOTE is a club with membership consisting of Ogoni elites.

[16] E.J. Alagoa (2006) Personal interview (5 March).

[17] Peter Naanen (2006) Personal interview.

[18] Roseline Nwigani, FOWA Chairperson (2008) Personal interview (5 February).

[19] Wilfred M. Tanee (2008) Personal interview (9 March).

[20] Chujor (2007) Personal interview.

[21] Chief Emmanuel Sor-ue Nkalaa, Chairman of NYCOP (2008) Personal interview (5 February).

[22] Osarenomase (2008) Personal interview; for anonymity purposes, fictitious name used.

[23] Dennis D. Deemua (JP) The Menebuaboue (2008) Personal interview (9 March).

[24] Wilfred M. Tanee (2008) Personal interview (9 March).

[25] Kpone-Tonwe (2008) Personal interview (7 March).

[26] Peter Naanen (2008) Personal interview (9 January).

[27] Peter Naanen (2008) Personal interview (9 January).

[28] Kpone-Tonwe (2008) Personal interview. Members of the committee include Dr N.A. Ndegwe (Chairman), Dr Pius Kinako, Dr (Rev.) Sonpie Kpone-Tonwe (Secretary), and Dr Don Baridam.

[29] Moral incentives refer to motivation based on a desire to perform one's obligation to society or to serve society (Carens 1981).

[30] Peter Naanen (2006) Personal interview.

[31] During fieldwork in 2006 and 2008, the researcher was shown places where farmlands had been turned into residential areas. Moreover, in some places, the boundaries between some hamlets and villages have virtually been eroded as these communities expand living spaces.

[32] Kpalap (2007) Personal interview.

[33] Chief Deemua (2008) Personal interview at his palace.

[34] Kpalap and Pyagbara (2006) Personal interviews.

[35] Damgbor Moses (2008) Personal interview, MOSOP office, Port Harcourt.

7 Ogoni Activism: Between Moral Motivation and Self-Interest

7.1 MOSOP: Tracing Motivation Complexities

The NSM theory conceives of industrial era social movements as instrumentally oriented and concerned with economic redistribution (Offe 1985: 832). In post-industrial society, NSM, or movements oriented to post-material issues emerge (Melucci 1981). To Melucci (1989: 177-8), 'The Freedom to have…has been replaced by the freedom to be'. Martinez-Alier (2002), and Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) observe that the impact of economic growth on the environment generate protest of the environmentalism of the poor in the developing world. Material interest in the environment as a source of and a requirement for livelihood rather than concern with the rights of other species or of future human generations are the prime motives behind such protests.

New Social Movement theory 'is informed by inaccurate assumptions about the characteristics of "old" social movements' because qualitative values, including autonomy and self-actualisation have also dominated these movements (D'Anieri, Ernst and Kier 1990: 454). Cultural theory shows that the 'cultures of fatalism, individualism, egalitarianism, and hierarchy have recurred throughout history', even if the relative potency of each culture in a given society changes across time and space (Grendstad and Selle 1997).

> Neither is identity politics limited to the relatively affluent (the "post-materialists" as Inglehart calls them), as though there were some clear hierarchy of needs, in which clearly defined material interests precede culture and struggles over the constitution of the nature of interests – both material and spiritual (Honneth 2001: 53).

In the same vein, Touraine (2000: 90) draws attention to the prevalence of social movements or 'societal movements' that challenge 'the

modality of the social use of resources and cultural models'. He argues for a central conflict prosecuted by 'a Subject struggling against the triumph of the market and technologies, on the one hand, and communitarian authoritarian powers, on the other' (ibid: 89).[1] He continues:

> A social movement is never reducible to the defence of the interests of the dominated. Its ambition is always to abolish a relationship of domination, to bring about the triumph of a principle of equality, or to create a new society, which breaks with the old forms of production, management and hierarchy (ibid: 92).

The subject is manifest by the presence of ethical values that come into conflict with the order of things. A societal movement defends 'a social modality of the use of ethical values, and comes into conflict with the modality that its adversary is trying to defend or enforce' (ibid: 95). Touraine stresses the importance of not confusing the ethical dimension with the discourse of demand. Ethical discourses imply freedom, and basic rights, concepts irreducible to material gain.

This chapter comingles various theoretical and empirical findings to illustrate the possibility of apprehending the Ogoni movement by being open to its multiple constitutions. It points out that the binary redistribution and recognition or material/provincial and moral/national employed here serve analytical purpose in helping identify dimensions on which the literature is silent. Beyond drawing attention to the discursively erased, the categories mislead by suggesting that the various poles are separate.

7.2   Redistribution/Recognition Debate

Fraser (1995, 2003) argues that the ascendance of the grammar of recognition struggles marginalises and displaces redistribution struggles rather than supplement and enrich them, resulting in 'the problem of displacement' (ibid: 2003). Fraser's fear would appear well founded given the cultural emphasis of the New Social Movement. While sensitive to the cultural dimension of economic institutions, Fraser's approach remains confusing because of the suggestion that recognition struggles have come to dominate and displace redistribution struggles in a world of exacerbating material inequality (Fraser 1995: 72). Young (1997) questions Fraser's analytical distinction between economics and culture and the

suggestion that the separate categories could each have a life of their own. To Young, both poles are interconnected.

While acknowledging the uses of analytical distinction, Swanson (2005) took exception to Fraser's separation between economics, politics and culture. Such analytical choice is arbitrary and has no epistemological or ontological foundation, because no relationship or practice is ever purely economic, political or cultural. Honneth (2001) sees Fraser's understanding of a transition from redistribution struggles to recognition struggles as based on a simplified and mistaken view of social recognition. Bauman (2001) argues that the demand for recognition is a claim to humanity and the right to participate in its making and enjoyment. Moreover, Bauman (2001: 147) argues, 'Cutting off the claims of recognition from their natural distributive consequences makes the granting of recognition as toothless and ineffective as it becomes easy.' The idea of a 'good society' is meaningful when a society is interested in giving every one of its members a chance, and removing impediments that keep people from seizing such opportunity.

> Recognition is deceitful or at any rate incomplete unless coupled with distributive corrections, and distributive justice has no chance without the recognition of the right to participate, on an equal footing, in negotiating the mode of existence. We may conclude that melting together the tasks of distributive justice and the policy of recognition is the meaning of social justice in the present (Bauman 2001: 147).

Therefore, every struggle against injustice is a demand for both redistribution and recognition (Walby 2001).

7.3   Debate on the Nature of Ogoni Activism

Cox argues that although the marginalised represent a threat to the State, their instrumental outlook, 'conducive to clientelism rather than group solidarity and collective action' tempers the threat (1987: 389). Reno (2002) argues that although signs of institutional collapse ought to engender revolutionary mass movements, 'offering radical and reformist ideas and programmes', what we have are groups which aim at inclusion in the *status quo*, even when members of such groups are critical of the order of things (ibid: 838-9). The dilemma is that youths in Nigeria, lacking practical economic prospects mobilise through cooptation into exist-

ing patronage networks to improve their condition rather than fight the system that renders them superfluous and invisible (Reno 2000: 50-1).

Okome accuses Saro-Wiwa of provincialism by failing to incorporate all marginalised Niger Delta communities into the struggle (2000). However, the 'charge of narrow and virulent Ogoni ethnocentrism to the neglect of other oppressed peoples is, however, unsustainable' (Pegg 2000: 701-8). Saro-Wiwa, argues for a federal system that assures equality for all ethnic groups regardless of size. He blames past leaders, notably, Babangida and Obasanjo, for destroying the country and betraying the true values of federalism. He emphasises that the Ogoni agenda, with its insistence on a 'proper, undiluted federalism' is the only one that can save Nigeria from future destruction (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 76).

Watts holds that a legacy of MOSOP is the bitter and violent interethnic struggles over territory, and such is the case because MOSOP made 'the politics of territory and property of central concern' (2004: 71). He argues that MOSOP generated a 'space of indigeneity', resulting in a recapitulation of the 'post-colonial history of spoils politics in Nigeria' (ibid: 291). Orage accuses Saro-Wiwa of declaring war on the Andoni, Okrika and Ndoki; three neighbours with which the Ogoni were in violent conflict between 1993 and 1994. Human Rights Watch (1995) concludes that 'some attacks attributed to rural minority communities were in fact carried out by army troops in plain clothes' (Crow 1995). Ake and the World Council of Churches separately argue that the sophisticated weapons employed were well beyond the means and capabilities of fishing communities (Robinson 1996). Pegg argues that to blame the violence on 'Saro-Wiwa declaring war on his neighbours is outrageous and beyond cynical' (2000: 706).

7.4   Social Conflict and the Ogoni Movement

Chapter 4 argues that a social conflict has three elements, namely the identity (i) of the actor, the definition of the opponent (o), and the stakes (t), which defines the field of conflict (Touraine 1985: 275). Touraine also identifies three levels of conflict. At the organisational level, conflict emerges in the competitive pursuit of collective interests over organisational status and change. At the political-institutional level, conflict emerges as a political force, aimed at changing the rules rather than mere distribution of advantages in an organisation. At the cultural orientation

level, there are conflicts over 'the social control of the main cultural patterns' (ibid: 754), meanings, production and morality.

The first level, or competitive pursuit of interests, is represented by the variables i, o, t. In other words, the competing actors are self-interested, oriented to organisational status and change. They make their analysis more in terms of system than in terms of actors. The field of their competition can be described as a market, which is defined independently from the actors. It represents the least integrated. The second level of conflict, or political force, challenges the rules of the game but does not represent permanent opposition, symbolised thus: i-t, o-t, i-o. However here the elements are better integrated than in the first level. In the cultural orientation conflict, the component elements are integrated and interdependent, represented as i-o-t. It tends to identify an actor with societal values and exclude the opponent as violators.

Table 7.1
Levels and dimensions of social conflict in the TSAF

Levels	Dimensions	Stakes	Integration
Organisational	Self-interest	Benefits and negatives from resource distribution	i, o, t
Political-institutional	System reforms	Participation in decision-making	i-o, o-t, i-t
Cultural	Radical change	Definition of meanings, values and reality	i-o-t

Source: Developed from Touraine (1985).

The immediate utility of the model is that it fixes our gaze on the heterogeneous types of conflict in the TSAF. This permits observation of actions that are oriented to mere self-interest, actions that work within the system or ones that breach the system's limit of compatibility. Dwivedi (2006: 25) suggests that such actions may succeed one another. However, they may exist within a single collective action.

The TSAF allows observation of making a social conflict. Chapter 4 argues that the movement-state actively advances and protects its interests from encroachment by other actors. It also argues that like every

other state, the movement-state accumulates wealth, power, culture and welfare. In other words, within the TSAF the State aggressively pursues similar aspirations. In the process, it exploits, dispossesses and despoils the Ogoni environment and economy. Juxtaposed against Touraine's three elements of conflict, it starts to become clear that adversaries within the TSAF include the State, the Ogoni and Shell because the movement-state accumulates power in order to exercise sovereignty over its territory. However, lacking the technology to extract oil, it must engage Shell. Yet, because of divergent interests, the unequal distribution of benefits and externalities, the parties remain opposed.

The Ogoni self-definition is as 'a distinct and unique people' involved in two grim wars: a '35-year-old ecological war waged' by Shell, and 'a political war of tyranny, oppression and greed designed to dispossess the Ogoni people of the rights and their wealth'. He argues that both wars against a small defenceless people are genocide and a 'grave crime against humanity' (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 148). The Ogoni refused to yield to both deadly enemies and are fighting doggedly for their survival; the alternative to victory is extinction. The Ogoni are 'a minority in search of dignity and survival in Nigeria' (MOSOP 2004: 44), and their only crime is that they had 'the temerity to ask for their rights from both the government of Nigeria and Shell'. Despite the non-violent nature of their struggle, Ogoni suffered genocide attacks as punishment for defending ideas of the environment, human rights and the rights of indigenous people (MOSOP 2004: 32).

The Ogoni define their 'two deadly, greedy, insensitive and powerful enemies' as Shell and the State (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 148). They portray these enemies as engaged in a war of attrition and ultimate genocide against the Ogoni. Saro-Wiwa claims that Shell displays double standards being environmentally responsible in Europe and irresponsible in Ogoni (ibid: 166), adopting a godlike 'we can do no wrong' attitude toward the Ogoni because the State is dependent on it for foreign exchange. They portray the State and Shell as violent institutions employing violence to control Ogoni and its oil (MOSOP 2004: 3). Thus, there is a perceived alliance between the State and Shell. The latter holds down the Ogoni through decrees, threat of, and actual use of violence, so that Shell can 'wage its ecological war without hindrance', and in turn provide the petro dollars and diplomatic support the State depends on (MOSOP 2004: 4).

MOSOP seems to have disturbed this comfortable, if criminal network (Saro-Wiwa 1995).

Unsustainable oil exploration turned Ogoni into a wasteland. Land and water pollution from Shell resulted in ecosystem destruction, and farmlands rendered infertile. Nigeria grew from three regions to 30 states, created for the benefit of majority groups who rule the country. Royalties and mining rents for Ogoni oil were not being paid (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 96). Despite stupendous oil and gas wealth, the Ogoni are extremely poor, lack basic infrastructures, and remain powerless to alter their condition (MOSOP 2004: 2). Arguably, the stake in the TSAF is the right to control oil development in Ogoni or the TSAF. That right is the foundation of state sovereignty and Shell's prosperity. It promises the route to Ogoni vision of the good society. Earlier, this thesis presented an argument that the Ogoni movement was not a rejection of development but an attempt to redirect it in ways that respect the modality of being and benefit the Ogoni. In that endeavour, the Ogoni advanced an alternative vision of development or organisation of the TSAF and society generally. They sought control of the main cultural patterns.

Examination of the OBR, however, reveals that certain Ogoni demands did not question the legitimacy of the system; rather, they sought reforms or a change in the rules of the game. Other demands appear as the competitive pursuit of group interests in the marketplace. Here the interests of ethnic groups, oriented to maximising their advantages, are opposed. This suggests the diversity of the movement's goals and values (Castells 2004: 152).

Inclusion in national institutions does not appear as a valuable objective over which the stakeholders compete to acquire or control, and it is largely irrelevant to the TSAF. MOSOP claims that Ogoni is not represented in national institutions, but that has not always been the case. MOSOP fails to show that the State or Shell equally values the objective and were therefore competing with Ogoni to secure it. With this element lacking, it seems that the Ogoni are involved in the competitive pursuit of self-interest to be on par with the relatively better off ethnic groups. In other words, MOSOP is opposing the interest of the Ogoni against those of the majority groups in the competitive attempt to maximise advantages in the market. Therefore, the symbols i, o, t represent this aspect of the conflict. However, the Ogoni argues that ethnicity and political links form the basis of participation in national institutions, not merit

(MOSOP 2004: 51). The state needs to operate the mechanism of representation in a way that does not discriminate against minorities (MOSOP 2004: 50). There is a hint of a demand for reform to assure higher levels of Ogoni representation. In this light, the variables i-o, o-t, i-t express the conflict well. The claim can be seen as self-centred, competitive pursuit of interest, and the field of conflict can be defined independently of the State and Shell.

Table 7.2
Ogoni demands and elements of conflict

Ogoni claims	Category of conflict	Stakes	Integration
Right to control and use fair amount of oil derived from Ogoni	Challenging the order of things, meaning, discourses and substitution of alternative and subversive meanings and vision.	Control and use of oil resources.	i-o-t
Political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni	Challenging the order of things, meaning, discourses and substitution of alternative and subversive meanings, vision.	Political control over Ogoni affairs	i-o-t
Representation in all national institutions	Competitive pursuit of self-interest and reform seeking	Inclusion in national institutions, and participation in decision-making processes	i, o, t i-o, o-t, i-t
Protection of Ogoni environment	Challenging the order of things, meaning, discourses and substitution of alternative and subversive meanings, vision. Reform seeking, participation in decision-making process	Control over Ogoni environment	i-o-t i-o, o-t,
Development of Ogoni languages	Reactive, self-seeking and reform seeking	Relative losses in cultural status	i, o, t
Development of Ogoni culture	Reactive and reform seeking	Preserving Ogoni cultural status	i, o, t
Religious freedom	Reactive	Relative losses in cultural status	i, o, t

Source: Developed by the author

The first claim in the OBR relates to Ogoni right to control and use Ogoni resources (see table 7.2). The demand questions the modalities of production, appropriation and redistribution of oil resources, the laws that form their base, and advances an alternative form of social organisation (Saro-Wiwa 1992, 1995; MOSOP 2004). The claim belongs in the category of conflict, which approximates the social control of cultural patterns more than competitive pursuit of interest or changing the rules of the game. The Ogoni define their enemies as the Nigerian State and Shell (MOSOP 2004: 3-4), and advance an identifiable stake (right to control and use oil resources derived from Ogoni). All three actors, the Ogoni, Shell and the State consider oil assets valuable. Thus, the conflicting actors and the stake are interdependent and integrated. Because there cannot be one without the others, the conflict appears as i-o-t.

A study of collective action must differentiate between a reaction to strain or crisis and the expression of conflict (Melucci 1996). When seen as effect of systemic crisis, social movement carries the label of systemic pathology. Here the definition of conflict is a struggle between two or more actors striving to capture or control resources considered by both of them as valuable. For an event to constitute a conflict, 'the actors must be definable in terms of a common reference system, and there must be something at stake' to which they are oriented (ibid: 22). By failing to distinguish between crisis and conflict, we are unable to understand forms of collective action. As Melucci (1996) points out, the subsystems against which collective action is directed exposes the nature of the conflict. A system is composed of the relationships among its elements, characterised according to the types of relations among them. Melucci specifies four sub-systems: system that ensures production of society's resources; system that decides on resource distribution; system of rules governing exchange; and life-world (ibid: 27).

It is important to emphasise that a system is composed of interrelating and interdependent parts. They are not separate and independent but entangled. It is difficult to compartmentalise actions that question things like the production sub-system as material because the system of production and the symbolic sub-system remain entangled. As an example, rules govern the system of production so; challenging the system of production is a challenge to its intrinsic rules. If as Parsons (1938) argues, ideas play important role in shaping action, then a demand on a system is equally a demand on the rules governing it. However, not all demands

breach the system's limit; some merely work within the system seeking reforms only (Melucci 1996). When a conflict respects the limits of its reference system, then action merely seeks reform within the system. Collective phenomena that breach 'the limits of compatibility' of the system they are directed at question the legitimacy of that system, and advance an alternative system (see chapter 4). The first and second Ogoni demands breached sub-systems of production, appropriation and redistribution as well as the federal system. As such, they contain elements of both redistribution and recognition.

7.5   MOSOP: Contradiction of Motivations?

The above section argues that meaning and values are vital components of the Ogoni decision to mobilise. Does it suggest that the question of redistribution did not feature in Ogoni calculation? In order to explore this question and generate data on what motivated Ogoni activism, the researcher designed a questionnaire to capture the salience of redistributive needs in activists' self-understanding.[2] The researcher prepared and administered 100 questionnaires, based on projections of the number of activists likely to attend a meeting of the MOSOP Steering Committee meeting, 11 March 2008.[3] The researcher administered the questionnaire before the meeting. The setting ensured that the major constituencies comprising the Ogoni movement were captured and their views represented. Half the questionnaires distributed came back after the meeting. The outcome was not disappointing given the contentious nature of the subject of deliberations and the emotionally charged atmosphere that prevailed in the meeting.[4]

    The questionnaire asked respondents to list the main problems confronting their communities. Analysis assumed that the first three problems identified were most important in the respondents' calculation. All 50 respondents' responses figured in the tabulation. Data analysis employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, or descriptive statistic, especially frequency distribution (see table 7.3).

    The table shows that the highest number of cases, 44 per cent, identified oil spills/pollution/lack of clean up as the major problem facing the Ogoni. This reflects a concern with the environment. This reinforces and is understandable given the evidence that the environment is not only a source of food but a sacred place as well. Harming the environment, to

the Ogoni, is like desecrating a sacred space, which portends grave consequences.

Table 7.3
Three problem frequencies

Allpro	Responses		
	N	%	% of Cases
1 = no electricity	20	13.7%	40.0%
2 = no roads	21	14.4%	42.0%
3 = no water/potable water	22	15.1%	44.0%
4 = no schools, illiteracy, no teachers	16	11.0%	32.0%
5 = oil spillage, pollution, no clean up	22	15.1%	44.0%
6 = poor health, no doctors	6	4.1%	12.0%
7 = Unemployment	14	9.6%	28.0%
8 = Frustration	3	2.1%	6.0%
9 = lack of development, no government presence	11	7.5%	22.0%
10 = Poverty	4	2.7%	8.0%
11 = land seizure	5	3.4%	10.0%
12 = no consultation - exclusion from decision-making	2	1.4%	4.0%
Total	146	100.0%	292.0%

According to Deebari G. Keeper (Teacher-Khana),

> We are confronted with huge environmental problems like oil spillage, gas flaring, and ecological damage. There are no infrastructural projects in my community. We have one non-functional health centre, the schools do not have enough teachers and the learning environment is very poor. The few health workers sent to the community could not stay because of the absence of basic infrastructure.[5]

Vopnu Barida (Teacher-Gokana) states,

> Shell pollutes the environment, refuses to pay compensation, fails to provide amenities like piped water, electricity, and roads. Instead, it resorts to divide-and-rule tactics, hiring soldiers to kill our people and arming some youths to fight against us. The schools are dilapidated, no library, no teachers, no teaching aids.[6]

Moreover, 44 per cent of the respondents identified the lack of clean drinking/piped water as a problem. An important factor to consider is that the lack of clean water relates to oil spills and pollution of drinking water in Ogoni. This shows mutually reinforcing links between the problems. Furthermore, 42 per cent showed concern with the lack of roads/bad roads, and 40 per cent pointed to the lack of electricity. These three problems reflect a significant concern with basic social infrastructure. An important consideration when trying to appreciate this perspective is, oil installations in Ogoni all have clean water, electricity and access to good roads making them little oases in a deprived land.

B.K. Oluji (Farmer-Eleme) said,

> We have no light, no roads, no water. There is only one health centre, and one doctor that shows up only once every three months. Decisions affecting us are taken by the chiefs and others above our heads. Shell is endangering our lives by forcefully entering Ogoni.[7]

A significant number, 32 per cent, identified the lack of schools/lack of teachers/illiteracy as a major problem in Ogoni. On the issue of health, 12 per cent saw poor health/no clinic/no doctors as a major problem. Moreover, 22 per cent identified the lack of development as a major issue. Respondents relate that the absence of teachers and medical personnel is a function of poor working conditions. When recruited, they do not stay long because of the poor accommodations and pay. Moreover, such personnel lack access to clean water, electricity and other basic social services. They have little incentive to stay on. Here the Ogoni show concern with literacy and well-being. However, the concern appears less critical, overall, than concern with environment and basic social services.

A high percentage of respondents, 28 per cent, show concern with unemployment. Activists relate joblessness with Shell's refusal to provide jobs to Ogoni workers and destruction of local livelihoods. With land confiscation, many Ogoni no longer have access to land for farming. Fieldwork in Ogoni also shows that population growth created incentives to convert farmland into homesteads. Land degradation and pollution impaired the two main means of livelihood, farming and fishing, for those who still have access.

Comrade Letam B. Nwibani stated,

> We lack employment and social amenities. We cannot farm, fish or hunt because of gas flaring and oil pollution. There are no teachers to teach in the schools because they go unpaid for months. No health centre in my place and we suffer from malaria, typhoid, TB. We are not involved in decisions affecting us.[8]

Fewer Ogoni, 10 per cent, identified land seizure as a problem, still fewer, eight per cent, pointed to poverty, and only four per cent identified non-consultation/divide-and-rule tactics as a problem. Whereas all of the problems mentioned by activists are dimensions of, and engender, poverty, only eight per cent actually mentioned it as a critical issue.

According to Lawrence Pyabara (Civil Servant-Khana),

> We have problems with Shell because it refuses to hold discussions with the oil-bearing areas. Rather, Shell employs divide-and-rule tactics to destroy us. Shell poses a danger to us because it is killing us by instalment. We have no road, no electricity, no clean water, and no health facilities. We need better education.[9]

From the above, it seems that the lofty vision of MOSOP leaders and the fellowships may be incompatible. The OBR references cultural developments and autonomy. Saro-Wiwa exuded a nationalist ethos, relating the problems of the Ogoni to those of other minorities. While centring the federal structure as the core of the problems of the minorities, he advocated restructuring in such a way as to ensure equality to all the federating ethnic groups regardless of size. Ordinary Ogoni seem to have lost the relevance of these dimensions of Ogoni claims and grievances. Many respondents are civil servants, schoolteachers and a few farmers. The gap between leadership articulation and membership assertion of Ogoni needs is not a function of ignorance or illiteracy. When confronting a key informant with the issue, he surmised that the leaders unveiled ideas that they owned to the people. This brings into question whether the latter would articulate the ideas accurately.

A better explanation is that Ogoni intellectuals held sway over analysis and articulation of the sources of Ogoni problems. They did not have to bother the membership of MOSOP with such abstract ideas because they were not germane to the task of mobilisation. Earlier, Pyagbara, and Kpalap related that MOSOP experimented with different mobilising frames. Therefore, the leaders saved the membership nationalistic ideals

about the 'Black man', oppressed peoples worldwide, political marginalisation, and a skewed federal structure. Instead, they maximised their effectiveness by pressing immediate material issues easily comprehended by all Ogoni.

It would be an error to conclude that because many activists did not emphasise recognition issues, distributional and provincial issues are their sole motivation. Such a mistaken conclusion stems from failure to accord cognitive respect to local people. Parsons (1938) shows that even economic activities with roots in rationality are not divorced from ideas and norms that may stipulate the conduct of rational economic activity. As shown later in this thesis, normative consciousness is part of, and drives Ogoni mobilisation. The mass of Ogoni, as Chief Deemua claims, were in darkness until Saro-Wiwa opened their eyes. According to Nwigane, 'Ken (Saro-Wiwa) created the awareness that we were being cheated.'[10] As a result, the women got up, went about Ogoni holding rallies, and creating awareness. To Kpalap, their anger related not only to the material deprivation of being cheated but also, to the feeling of having been treated as fools and without dignity (2008). Thus, the mobilisation, frames and actions of ordinary Ogoni are entangled with ideas, normative expectations, a sense of dignity and anger at being cheated their due.

Cohen captures the debate over the orienting logic of movements in contrasting 'strategy-oriented' and 'identity-oriented' movements (1985). Analysts argue that differences in movement's targets are a function of whether a movement is expressive or instrumental (Van Dyke, Soule and Taylor 2004). A movement may be both expressive and strategic. While the Ogoni sought monetary compensation for their environment, they also argue for a right to exercise control over uses of their environmental resources. Many respondents express happiness that their protests brought them increased respect. The struggle is not merely about economic redistribution, but also a creative intrusion in the processes constituting oil development and Ogoni as place (Featherstone 2004).

7.5.1 Environmental valuation and salience of redistribution

The author asked respondents how much they thought the Ogoni environment was worth. The idea was that the device would elicit responses that would show how much importance the Ogoni laid on monetary compensation for the destruction of their environment. A random sam-

ple of 10 Ogoni activists sat for interviews including three key infor-
mants, some activists the researcher encountered at the MOSOP office,
and some office staff.

Without saying why, the researcher reminded interviewees of Saro-
Wiwa's claim that Shell extracted US$30 billion worth of oil from Ogoni
land. Then they were asked the following: Is the Ogoni environment
worth US$30 billion? The responses were mixed, but overall it was obvi-
ous that the Ogoni felt that, with the passage of time, their environment
was worth more than US$30 billion. Below are sample responses.

According to Terence Taneh (Civil Servant, Uegwere-Boue),

> Seeing the degradation makes me feel so sad and down. Ogoni environ-
> ment is worth about $30 billion. It is important because our life depends
> on it for food and survival.[11]

According to Wilfred Miigbara Tanee (Civil Servant, Ogoni-Uegwere),

> I feel bad about the destruction of our environment. The Ogoni Bill of
> Rights indicated $30 billion; the worth of the environment has increased
> since that time. The environment is important to me.[12]

Following the ideas of Clark, Burgess, and Harrison (2000), the re-
searcher submitted the data derived to further analyses by organising an
in-depth discussion group of four persons once a week for two weeks to
assess the responses. Three of the four were among the ten people inter-
viewed earlier. On the first meeting, the group discussed responses to
the question of how much the Ogoni environment was worth. The re-
searcher asked them to think about it, and provide their reaction at the
meeting the following week. The group returned with a critique of the
valuation figures by stressing that the interview pressured them to give a
figure, and that they placed a figure on the environment as a way of giv-
ing it a value, not necessarily, because the environment is measurable in
monetary terms.

Now the researcher told them that they would be asked only one
question and that they should address the question freely. The question:
Is the real value of your environment captured in monetary terms? The
following answers capture respondents' views:

> I don't know how they can quantify environment in monetary terms. They
> are saying that in terms of what Shell takes from Ogoni. People feel that if
> government takes from their environment, they ought to be given some-

thing to use on their environment. It is not in terms of how much we can sell environment but to compensate because the environmental base of our livelihoods has been destroyed. So, if government says take this money, some people will be happy. But the issue of how much the environment is worth is completely ruled out.[13]

Peter Naanen explicitly states here that monetary valuation does not measure the worth of the environment to the Ogoni. Some people think it is the only way to give meaningful value to the environment. Such valuation is a tool for valuing claims for compensation not a reflection of the environment's intrinsic worth. John Nwidag argues that the value of the environment is beyond monetary valuation. In other words, the environment has more than mere monetary value. He cites some sacred Ogoni forests, preserved for ages, and wonders how to give that monetary value. Such incommensurability shows faintly in the response of Fortune Chujor who argues that the environment is as important as human life, yet, in the same breadth, claims that it is worth more than US$200 million.

> To my understanding the valuation of the environment in money terms is a problem: no amount of money can value the environment. It is not the best idea to sell land, although it is a natural thing to do these days. Ogoni land cannot be equated to any amount of money. There are three forest areas in my village, Sii, Khana local government area, Baabe Kingdom, which have been preserved for ages. Nobody dares enter because they are sacred. People farm close to them but never enter. During festivities, rituals are made close to them but no one enters. How do you value such sites in monetary terms? The monetary value in the questionnaire is our idea of an adequate compensation; not what we think our environment is worth.[14]

From the responses, one can infer that while the Ogoni impose economic valuations on their environment, they do not believe that such values equal the worth of the environment. The incommensurability between the economic value and unquantifiable value reflects the difference between economic and non-economic values. What is the essence of putting an economic value on what is unquantifiable? To the Ogoni, it is the only language to suggest the criticality of their environment. Monetary value merely serves to facilitate compensation. No amount of compensation is likely to convince the Ogoni to allow further environmental damage.

7.6   Love of Country and Why the Ogoni Mobilised

The researcher argues elsewhere that there is evidence that the Ogoni conflict is a case of marginalised violent internal conflict (2002). As such, the Ogoni movement evinces certain characteristics, which serve as pointers to its nature and objective (Tschirgi 2007). Among such features is that unlike secession movements, the Ogoni protagonists seek neither separation from the State nor attempt to overthrow the government, nor seize control of the State. Rather, they claim to represent the true values of the State and blame the government for betraying them. While sectarianism is a factor in mobilisation, appeals to universalistic values within the State overshadow its role (Tschirgi 2007). Scholarship on MOSOP, which operate on the assumption of localism, self-interest and redistribution fail to capture the entire scope of political motivation.

Ekeh's (1975) theory of two publics (see chapter 3), and Banfield's (1967) concept of 'amoral familism', contrasts Ogoni motivation. Osaghae (1995: 68) observes that the root of amoral familism lies in alienation, which explains legitimacy crisis in Africa. The problem of legitimacy, however, suggests that some citizens retain a sense of what is right, moral, and appropriate. Thus, Thomas, Walker and Zelditch Jr (1986: 380) argue, a collective moral order 'presuppose that there is a known institutionalized order within the collective.' Such binding rules regulate and constitute action, and within that ontological order, individual actions make sense (ibid). Ogoni mobilisation against marginalisation makes sense in an institutional context that purports to rest on equality and social justice. Thus, the scholars argue, 'To act even in the most instrumental way is to act out an ontological reality that is collectively shared' (ibid: 380). Quiescence may also reflect a disappointment with and withdrawal from an organisation or state (Haynes 2006).

The choice of voice may be a reflection of disappointment with the State (Tschirgi 1999). Agbonifo (2002) argues that the Ogoni case shows that disappointment over the emasculation of national values by the ruling elites occasioned Ogoni mobilisation. It is critical to understand the mobilisation in light of the argument that rules provide compelling motives and identities within a given context (Thomas, Walker and Zelditch 1986). Saro-Wiwa remarks on his disappointment with the State when he proclaimed his commitment to a state founded on 'civilized values' (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 82). Tanee (2008),[15] explaining his disappointment with Shell and the State over the devastation of Ogoni, argues, 'I was

committed to the struggle because of the truth. At that time I did not sing the national anthem because there is no truth in it.'

Therefore, elements of the quiescent and vocal may share a common disappointment with the State or authorities, even though they react differently (Merton 1968). The disappointment relates to the contradiction between national values and the actions of the leaders. Given this gap, Tanee could not bring himself to sing the national anthem. Such disappointment stems from nationalistic feelings or loyalty to the values of the State, which explains why marginalised insurgents do not seek to overthrow the State or capture state power (Tschirgi 1999; Agbonifo 2002). Following Hirschman (1970: 30), voice is an attempt to effect a change rather than escape an objectionable situation. The scholar argues that resorting to voice is a reflection of loyalty or attachment to an organisation. Saro-Wiwa had earlier demonstrated such attachment to Nigeria when he supported the federal government against the Biafra rebellion (1995). Naanen argues that for him and Ogoni leaders' commitment to Nigeria, it has been an article of faith.

7.7   Rise of the Subject and Why Ogoni Mobilised

To Dikec (2005: 172) space becomes political 'in that it becomes the polemical place where a wrong can be addressed and equality can be demonstrated'. Politics exist when police order, that is 'organization *for* government, is disturbed (Ibid: 174). A strike may or may not engender politics. A strike is not political because it calls for reforms instead of better pay; it is political when it reconfigures the relationships that determine the workplace. A thing becomes political when it gives rise to the meeting of police logic and the logic of equality.

Marginalisation is often conflated with 'exclusion' in regards to the Ogoni. The implicit suggestion is that the 'included' places benefits from development and doing well. By focusing on Ogoni as excluded, the developmental thrust of the police seeks to include the region. Police efforts to include the excluded are laudable. Dikec (2002: 94) argues that inclusion of the excluded is the wrong way to think politically because exclusion from the benefits of development is a form of inclusion in the police order. The opposition between the police and politics is not rooted in binary terms of 'the included' and 'the excluded'. To include the excluded is merely to modify the police order.

Touraine argues that a social movement draws attention to a type of social action, which allows a social category to demonstrate both general and particular injustices. Such a movement is not reducible to the defence of the interest of the dominated but aims at abolishing a relationship of domination, or championing the rights of the Subject. To MOSOP leaders, the root problem was a skewed federal structure not merely the absence of development projects or patronage. In chapter 3 and in the discussion of the 'National Question', this thesis remarks on this dissatisfaction. Osaghae (1995) argues that 'the Ogoni movement was part of a larger articulation of dissatisfaction with the structure of the Nigerian federation and of power sharing within it by several groups' (MOSOP 2004: 5-6).

Saro-Wiwa interrogated the transformative potential of oil-led development, and the very nature of Nigeria's federalism. The feeling of 'exploitation and economic slavery' results from the whittling down of the derivation principle, on which development is based, from 50 per cent to the state of origin to a negligible percentage in the 1980s (MOSOP 2004: 49). He asserts that it is incorrect to argue that such a revenue distribution formula is based on law because the process involved excludes owners of the resources. Denying Ogoni and other minorities such rights makes the 'beloved country a very unequal one or, for the Ogoni and their like, a slave society in which the master groups have all and the slave groups nothing' (MOSOP 2004: 45-6).

The Ogoni adroitly articulate a story of overt and subtle forms of injustice and demonstrate the existence of injustice against all minorities in Nigeria (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 168). They argue that the federal system is skewed against the minorities and that it permits processes that render some minorities invisible and lead to extinction. The Ogoni demonstrate the presence of 'durable inequality' (Tilly 1998), and question the logic of the order of things. The Ogoni also began to orchestrate an alternative mode of social organisation and vision of development. The Ogoni then exercised their voice where ordinarily, or in accordance with the logic of the police, there should be silence. By questioning the established order of things, or the police, the Ogoni turned Ogoni land into a place for addressing wrongs. The injustice instantiated in place permits the rise of the subject, the rise of ethical values that interrogate the existing social order.

There is no word in the OBR that suggests inclusion, recognition or redistribution. It is difficult to distinguish and isolate those concepts in the demands. More important, however, is that the demands represent not a tinkering with the established order of things but a fundamental restructuring. If the Ogoni were ever to control their own political affairs, there is no reason why their Ijaw neighbour would allow their own affairs to be controlled by another ethnic group, say the Itsekiri and vice versa. If the Ogoni were to control a fair portion of oil resources, why would the other oil minorities not demand the same privilege? The point is simple: Ogoni demands amount to a recalibration of Nigeria (MOSOP 2004: 46).

The attempt to construe Ogoni political action as a provincial, ethnic or local attempt to obtain more privileges for the Ogoni can have the effect of silencing the activists regarding their multifaceted vision and motivation. While protests often take on an ethnic quality, it is important to stay mindful of universal aspects of claims making (Tschirgi 1999). To Saro-Wiwa,

> My mind has always been for the salvation of the black man. I can see that happening if we are all cooperating. But under a just system. My quest is for social justice, not for a break-up of the country....I am the one protesting and trying to save the country. But a lot of people who don't read would not recognize that (ibid: 335).

In effect, rather than a governable space riddled with political spoils and the capture of communal power, the Ogoni evolved a form of politics that outstripped the limits of reforms and spoils or patronage.

7.8   Activists' Self Understanding and Mobilisation

Saro-Wiwa's final decision to walk away from his business and writing career and sacrifice it all for the Ogoni cause was a divine commission (MOSOP 2004: 44). Saro-Wiwa indicates the need for the Ogoni to organise given that regardless of regime type, there would be no development unless the people take their destiny in their own hands. Saro-Wiwa remarks that MOSOP was formed in the attempt to extricate Ogoni from internal colonialism and environmental strangulation, and to challenge 'the obnoxious, disgraceful and oppressive system' imposed by the military on Nigerians.

To Naanen (2008),

As I had already developed a pan-Nigerian view, I was concerned about narrow ethnic agenda. I later thought that both are not mutually exclusive – and that in the pursuit of national vision one needs a platform. The impetus that galvanized all Ogoni leaders may not have been the same. However, the failure of conventional politics to salvage minorities was of general concern. And mass movement became imperative. MOSOP had a national view but with a core Niger Delta and Ogoni agenda, employing ethnic agenda, which was available. There was no other platform to ensure mobilization. We are motivated by altruistic ideas: we did not think about personal gains.[16]

Material economic and political deprivations form the context in which Ogoni mobilised anger. The OBR makes clear that Ogoni grievances include lack of basic social infrastructure, absence of schools, hospitals and piped water. Their consequent demands include concessions giving Ogoni access to oil revenue for their own development.

For Charity Dickson: 'I joined MOSOP because we are fighting for our rights. Any day we get our freedom, I will benefit, even the unborn generations will benefit.'[17] To Wilfred Tanee, women sustain the struggle. 'Having educated them, the women became aware that their children cannot get jobs after school, cannot benefit from the clinics because there are no drugs because Shell was cheating.' When Shell attempted to re-enter K-Dere in late 2007, 'the women called for a protest and we went to Port Harcourt and had a demonstration at the gates of Shell'. Dennis D. Deemua, the Menebuaboue (Chief) argues that Saro-Wiwa enabled the Ogoni to see that Shell was cheating them. 'We permitted Shell then because we were hopeful of some benefits like employment, better roads, good drinking water, light, and scholarship. But we did not see any' (2008).

Saro-Wiwa employs powerful concepts to flesh out the deep roots of the Ogoni struggle. The concepts are powerful because they do not adhere well to the narrow confines represented by redistribution and recognition. For instance, there is nothing about redistribution or recognition in terms such as 'cruel', 'insensitive', 'primitive', 'indigenous colonialism', 'democracy' or 'progress'.

The call for self-determination was therefore a call to a return to the roots, to the *status quo ante* colonialism. It was also a rejection of indigenous colonialism which I have characterized elsewhere as cruel in the extreme, in-

sensitive and primitive. It must stand rejected in the interest of social pro-
gress, for it is this colonialism that is responsible for the backwardness of
Black Africa. All over the continent are despairing, distressed peoples, held
in thrall by their kind who usurp their rights and subject them to the status
of third-class citizens or outright slaves, thus destroying their culture
(MOSOP 2004: 47-8).

The debate over distribution and recognition and the treatment it re-
ceives in this thesis does not resolve the similar debate over moral moti-
vation and self-interest. While the distribution and recognition debate
reflects questions about material and cultural interests respectively, the
moral or self-interest debate concerns the divide between self and non-
self considerations respectively. Both debates maintain a dual thought
mode. Contest over matters of distribution or recognition can happen
for personal or public ends. To resolve the question of whether selfish
and parochial motivation explains why the Ogoni mobilised entails find-
ing a tool to deal with the problem.

Moral behaviour, Teske (1997) argues, stems from self-regarding con-
cerns and concern for something outside the self. Teske posits that the
rational approach shapes how some engage with political activists. Reac-
tive to the rational actor school is a trend that emphasises the role of
moral motives. The latter impulse contains two strands: first, is the view
that stresses the role of non-self-interest and altruistic motives in politics;
and the second examines moral motives as a complex interaction be-
tween moral and self-regarding motives. Teske posits an 'identity-
construction' approach to moral motives.

> This approach brings to light the ways that politics develop and expresses
> the identities of political actors and enables them to become something (or
> more appropriately, someone) that they otherwise would not have been
> able to become. The identity-construction approach does not construe
> moral motives as inherently opposed to self-interests as in the "dual" mo-
> tivation theory but instead stresses the ways that the construction of one's
> very sense of self in politics is itself a moral project….the identity-
> construction approach points to types of concerns that are morally rele-
> vant and self-regarding at the same time (Teske 1997: 74).

The next section examines Ogoni activists' self-identification and the
role of identity in their mobilisation. The section further examines such
self-understanding, whether it contains hints of a binary between moral
motive and self-interest.

7.9 Ogoni Activists' Identity, Moral Motivation and Self-Interest

Leton cast Saro-Wiwa in Machiavellian mould, willing to sacrifice everything to secure his selfish desires (UNPO 1995: 15). Shell argues in a similar vein that Saro-Wiwa was an impostor (see Saro-Wiwa 1995: 164-5). However, both Saro-Wiwa and Nannen argued that moral concern rather than selfish interests explain their resort to collective action. There remains conflict between those who point to evidence implying their self-interested motives and others who cite appeals to moral altruism.

Most interviewees cite a combination of the two motives for their activism (see Teske 1997: 75). Activist vocabularies too, comprise moral motives and self-interest in such a way that one cannot begin to imagine untangling them. Tanee argues:

> I enjoy the life of an activist. I am more experienced now. I have learnt a lot of lessons, which I am able to teach to others. The struggle has changed me because now I know the difference between good and bad. In the struggle, I am no longer afraid of people provided I am in the right. I am against corruption, bribery and deception of people. The struggle is all about the future of our people. If Ogoni benefit from the struggle, then I will benefit. If I am no longer here, my children will benefit.[18]

These are decidedly private or personal benefits. However, notice the link he draws: following his experiences, Tanee is able to impact knowledge to others. Given his new capacity to apprehend good and evil, he has become courageous. Both virtues translate to shape his interactions with others. In effect, a sense of morality, not strategic calculations inform his interactions.

One learns from activists what Teske terms the incomplete dichotomy between moral and self-motives. Self-related and moral inclinations mesh easily forming a seamless tapestry in activist's discourses. Tanee is self-confident; he enjoys activism, abhors corruption and is more politically experienced because of activism. These personal benefits enable him to lead boldly and legitimately. They provide him materials with which he teaches his followers, and he is able to lead transparently and forthrightly. This is the implication of what is good for the self and moral contents. The struggle changed Tanee; he is against corruption and deception, underscoring how activism has been a process of character development. Given his new lifestyle, he is able to walk freely every-

where without fear of molestation or accusation of graft. These are some of his rewards. Teske, in another context argues that such desire to be a certain kind of person focuses attention on self, but at the same time, 'it is clearly an important moral concern, as it has to do with one's dispositional response to others' interest and to moral principles' (ibid: 77).

Nwigani, having travelled overseas and participated in different political fora exchanging ideas, has become more politically conscious and knowledgeable. Nwigani emphasises:

> I have benefited from the struggle. Initially, I did not know Shell was cheating us but now I do. As a result of the struggle I have been privileged to attend seminars and conferences overseas. I am a teacher by profession but the struggle has made me a teacher with a difference because I can now use examples and experiences from the struggle to instruct my students. I am also now very self-confident as an Ogoni, and other people now come to us for advice.[19]

Such satisfaction must relate to moral motivation because they now shape her public function as a schoolteacher. Her students are arguably better off because of her experiences and psychological satisfaction.

Thus, Teske argues that the attempt to squeeze political motives into a category labelled 'self-interest' or 'moral' will end up in frustration. Such effort is ill advised because many of the satisfaction or rewards reported by interviewees and others are entangled in a way that defies the dualism of self/other. Tanee explains that he was elected as leader of Uegwuere Chapter. He accepted the election result because 'I thought may be God wanted to use me.' Des Laka explains that his own activism has a 'mystical ring to it'. According to Laka,

> Saro-Wiwa appeared to me in a dream, and wondered why I had not returned to Ogoni to join the struggle. In 1995, I returned home and a woman took me to a meeting of MOSOP clandestinely held in the forest. Whenever I feel tired, something seems to push me on. The benefits I have derived have to do with the fact that I have a name known all over Ogoni. I am known for my transparency and honesty. I have joy doing what I do; the joy is more than material benefit.[20]

Some activists appeal to a conviction or sense of divine inspiration to undertake certain tasks for the movement. These activists express firm commitment to the struggle and bravery regardless of the odds. They wish that their lives would be meaningful in some way. Tanee aspires to die as an MOSOP activist or martyr saying that if he dies as an ordinary

person, he would not rest well in the grave. While such is a concern with the self-being focused on their lives, it remains pre-eminently a moral concern. They express a concern to be meaningful and useful to MOSOP, to die in the cause of the struggle, executing the divine cause.

7.10   Processes of Ogoni Mobilisation

Chapter 6 examined how the Ogoni mobilised and showed that the framing activities of movement activists precede collective mobilisation. Activists drew a link between their problems and those of all other oppressed groups in Nigeria and Africa. The 'ecological war' waged by Shell was only one manifestation of the denial of Ogoni control over their lives and environment (Doyle 2008: 313). Thus, the Ogoni gave rise to an ethical concern, or the Subject, by arguing that the expropriation of the resources of Ogoni for the benefit of the elites of the majority groups is unfair, unjust, thievery and 'indigenous colonialism'. They claim that since the Nigerian Constitution fosters such negative poles, the law is by nature unequal and it is unable to engender the passion and loyalty of all its citizens (MOSOP 2004: 46).

   A consideration of MOSOP micro-mobilisation activities reveals the presence of appeals to the moral, non-materialist or universal interwoven with demands for the materialist, self or provincial. Such complex constitution is not limited to the framing activities of the activists but permeates the very processes of identity construction and collective action. *Miideekor* is a case in point.

7.10.1 *Miideekor:* Beyond redistribution and recognition

The *miideekor* frame provides a useful illustration of the inclusive, rather than binary (between the physical and ideational), worldview of the Ogoni. An ordinary Ogoni woman, Rhoda Komdu Nwinaalee, retrieved the concept, *miideekor* from Ogoni cultural repertoire. Nwinaalee's genius emerged in the face of the challenge of explaining what MOSOP stands for to ordinary people, unearthing a culturally resonant symbolism that enabled activists to surmount the problem of explaining MOSOP's mission, and the nature of its demands on the Federal government and Shell. Saro-Wiwa and Ledum Mitee agreed with her that it was a better way to convey their message (Alonale-Laka 2002: 7). Such was the resonance of *miideekor* to the struggle that she became instantly nicknamed Madam Miideekor.

Deekor stands for one day in those five days. In Ogoni, the owner of a field of palm trees may lend his field to a palm wine tapper. The tapper has a five-day week to tap the trees. However, he is obliged to present the production of one day to the landowner and may keep the rest for himself. A day's production of palm wine meant for the landowner is *miideekor*. Nwinaalee, rationalised that all Ogoni needs is its *miideekor* from the Nigerian State and Shell. The latter could keep the remaining for themselves. In other words, the Ogoni people are the landowner of Ogoni; Shell and the State are mere tenants. While they are free to exploit Ogoni resources, the Ogoni landowner is entitled to his *miideekor*. The resonance of this metaphor appears during Ogoni Day in January 1993 when Kobani addressing the Ogoni people asked rhetorically: 'Did not the thieves run away the moment, we, the owners of the property, showed up to reclaim it' (Saro-Wiwa 1995: 126)? The taper who fails to advance his *miideekor* is a thief, and the cheated landowner is entitled to reclaim his patrimony (Kpalap 2007).

One may dismiss or attempt to undermine the moral elements of activists' claims as the intellectual rationalisation of privileged elites. Rhoda Komdu Nwinaalee was not a member of the intellectual class, but an ordinary Ogoni woman. Employing cultural commonsense, she drew on traditional repertoire to express and legitimise Ogoni collective action. The elements of the symbolism are all material or economic. The symbolism itself signifies something more fundamental: failure for any reason to pay *miideekor* undermines social trust, amounts to theft or deprivation of what is due the landowner.[21] Given this double constitution of *miideekor*, collective action aimed at wresting control of the field from the palm wine tapper or extracting the *miideekor* from him/her is economic and cultural, redistribution and recognition.

7.11   Leadership and the Colour of Contention

The first steps of movement formation depend on leadership. However, the literature depicts palpable fear over movement organisation and leadership cadres (Hannigan 1985: 442; Piven and Cloward 1977). Resource mobilisation (Pickvance 1975) recognises the importance of movement organisation, unlike the NSM theory (Arsel 2005: 79). The literature on MOSOP is silent on how Ogoni leaders built what Kpone-Tonwe terms 'a political machine'.[22] This is intriguing given critique of leadership (Achebe 1984), and Rotberg's (2007: 126) claim that Africa lacks a 'prac-

tical ethic of the public service' (see Agbonifo 2009). The dominant sociological approaches to leadership and organisational transformation posit goal displacement (Michels 1949) and institutionalisation (Weber 1946). Did the building of MOSOP undermine aspiration for radical change? (Zald and Ash 1966; Rucht 1999).

7.12 MOSOP, Leadership and Motivation

Ganz (2000) argues that organisational attributes contribute to whether effective leaders and strategies emerge. Although leaders shape movement outcomes, the nature of organisations affects the quality of leadership that emerges within the organisation (Morris and Staggenborg 2004). Ammeter et al. (2002: 761) show that 'situated identity' is a reflection of who we are to others and ourselves in public, and it serves to guide subsequent behaviour. In other words, situated identity guides the pursuit of the objective, tactics and strategies. This thesis argues that Saro-Wiwa's decision to avoid compromises, and refusal to overturn popular decision reflects his situated identity (1995).

The criterion of rationality is inadequate to judge a leader's action (Edinger 1964). A leader reads his political context, and contextual experiences shape his perception and actions (Clark 1998: 1273; Saasen 1991; Therborn 2006: 513; Olotuntoba-Oju 1998: 164; Saro-Wiwa 1995: 92). Contrary to Bob (2002), a leader is successful when he pursues group-approved goals, elicits the trust and emotions and commitment of his followers (Ngaage 2003: 157).

House and Aditya (1997: 445) observe that a political understanding of leadership demands interest in the antecedents and effects of the political behaviour of actors in the political field. In their model of leadership, Ammeter et al. (2002) highlight three basic components: antecedents of leader political behaviour, actual leader political behaviour and effects of political behaviour. The historical legacy of leadership influences the political strategies adopted by the leader in the current episode. Over time, the leader develops a reputation, and such standing in turn serves as a contextual input for the subsequent leadership episode. The insight here is that both time and history inform a leader's behaviour. Some neglect such insight (see Bob 2002; Bob and Nepstad 2007).

Earlier episodes of leadership success and failure provided lessons that began to shape Saro-Wiwa's preparation for the next leadership episode. These spatial-temporal experiences present a useful background

against which to compare why Saro-Wiwa decided to mobilise the peo-
ple, why he democratised MOSOP by making it a grassroots organisa-
tion, and why he would not pander to the elitist demands of the conser-
vative elites (see chapters 5 and 6 for place specific experiences that
shaped MOSOP).

There is need to recognise behind the scene leaders (Couto 1993;
Burns 1978). Unsung informal leaders (see Appendices A5) were critical
to MOSOP (Kpalap 2008). Though shaped by social limitations (Rob-
nett 1996: 1666), Ogoni women exercise leadership in the informal
realm. At meetings, Ogoni women would bring traditional tobacco, mats,
drinks and fruits free of charge (Kpalap 2008). These gestures enhanced
the atmosphere of 'we-ness', encouraged and motivated the leaders, con-
tradicting the assumption that leaders always mobilise followers (Robnett
1996) for strategic reasons. Moreover, an Ogoni woman deployed the
mobilising frame *miideekor* (Moses 2008).

7.13   Conclusion

What motivation propelled the Ogoni social movement? Was the move-
ment motivated by issues of material/provincial needs or moral/national
aspirations, or a certain combination of both factors? Some scholars de-
scribe the MOSOP in relation to self and provincial interests, and as
such a recapitulation of spoils politics, bereft of any transformational
potential.

The argument in this chapter is that self and other orientation reside
mutually intertwined.

In their self-understanding, activists show deep concern with the de-
velopment and betterment of Ogoni, other minorities and the Nigerian
society in general. The form of movement organisation they created, the
diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames deployed, and the path to
resolving the conflict that activists identified transcended self and ethnic
boundaries, and touched on what is good for all.

Respondents show elements of self and moral bent in their explana-
tion of why they participate in the movement. They show no sense of
self-contradiction when they allude to both self and moral motivations.
The chapter argued that in the Ogoni worldview, there is no demarcation
of the self and moral poles. They intertwine. The chapter strengthens the
argument by appeal to a critical frame in Ogoni mobilisation, *miideekor.*

In examining why and how the Ogoni mobilised, it became clear both expressive and non-expressive issues played crucial roles in mobilisation. The movement constructed identities oriented to not only achieving set goals but also who activists thought they were. Religion shaped the movement in several ways. Beyond religion, locale, location and sense of place equally informed why and how mobilisation emerged. It is important not to discount the complex, multiple constitution of the Ogoni movement by reducing it to only one aspect.

Notes

[1] Touraine's (2000) central conflict argument is beyond the purview of this thesis. What is of interest is the idea of what such a conflict is: the rejection of domination and promotion of alternative vision of society.

[2] To test the validity of the instrument, this researcher initially administered the questionnaire to two informants with whom we discussed at length the results.

[3] The decision to administer 100 questionnaires was determined by one informant's anticipation of the number of activists that were likely to attend the meeting. The questionnaires were then randomly administered.

[4] The Steering Committee meeting was called in response to growing anxiety in Ogoni that Shell had clandestinely re-entered Ogoni. The response rate appears acceptable for this purpose because it captured voices from across a wide spectrum of Ogoni communities represented at the meeting.

[5] Deebari G. Keeper (2008) Questionnaire response (11 March).

[6] Vopnu Barida (2008) Questionnaire response (11 March).

[7] B.K. Oluji (2008) Questionnaire response (11 March).

[8] Comrade Letam Nwibani (2008) Questionnaire response (11 March).

[9] Lawrence Pyagbara (2008) Questionnaire response (11 March).

[10] Mrs Nwigane (2008) Personal interview.

[11] Terence Tanee (2008) Personal interview (20 March).

[12] Wilfred Miigbara Tanee (2008) Personal interview (20 March).

[13] Peter Naanen (2008) Personal interview (27 March).

[14] John Nwidag (2008) Personal interview (27 March).

[15] Wilfred M. Tanee (2008) Personal interview.

[16] Ben Naanen (2008) Personal interview (9 January).

[17] Charity Deekae Dickson (2008) Personal interview (11 March).

[18] Wilfred M. Tanee (2008) Personal interview

[19] Mrs Nwigane (2008).

[20] Des Laka (2008) Personal interview.

[21] Bari-ara Kpalap (2008) Personal interview.

[22] Kpone-Tonwe (2008) Personal interview.

8 Conclusion

In responding to the research problem of this thesis, I argued that there is meagre if any gain from the common tendency in the academic debate, which explain the Delta conflicts in either materialist or provincial terms. I attempted to utilise issues found in the dominant literature, which portrays the Niger Delta conflict as the legitimate action of local communities. Alternatively, the conflict is seen as no more than a struggle for inclusion in a patronage network propelled by the desire for personal accumulation. Despite the polarisation of approaches to the conflicts, both perspectives share a materialist understanding of conflict that is at best provincial and at worst egocentric. The tendency is a reflection of the proclivity to see conflict-entrepreneurs as self-interested actors, engaged in privileging particularistic interests, while being least concerned with the wellbeing of the larger society.

Reno (2002, 2005) and Omeje (2006), frame the Ogoni movement as a provincial endeavour geared toward the acquisition of material sectional benefits. Others like Osaghae (1995), Obi (2002), Ikelegbe (2001) and Ibeanu (1997), argue that well-founded concerns about marginalisation, environmental pollution and Shell's insensitivity explain the Ogoni choice of collective action. *A priori* sectional interests alone cannot be solely responsible for, or a motivating factor behind conflicts in the Niger Delta. The conflict invokes and is equally invoked by communal symbols. It should be a matter for empirical investigation whether provincial economic, political or nationalist interests or, a combination of forms creates the underbelly of the conflicts.

This study focused on why and how the Ogoni conflicts emerged, and engaged with data sourced from written materials, interviews and questionnaire. Empirical materials considered in chapters 5, 6, and 7 indicated that MOSOP appealed to provincial demands and others that

cannot be reduced to self-interest. In various texts, MOSOP pointed at a skewed federal structure as the basis of ethnic marginalisation, and proposed ethnic autonomy and equality as its resolution. Although the proposed resolution aimed at undoing Ogoni marginalisation, such strategy cannot be conceived as solely self-interested as its anticipated benefits cut across ethnic boundaries and is rationalised in terms of national values and progress. Data from the OBR and interviews with activists indicate that provincial and economic, and nationalistic and symbolic elements composed explanations of why they mobilised. The materialist and provincial dimensions of motivation are evident in Ogoni demand for greater control of oil resources for Ogoni development. At the same time, MOSOP appealed to the symbolic when they accused the ruling elites of betraying true national values. To the Ogoni, Nigeria cannot make progress unless the ethnic minorities were granted equal status with the dominant ethnic groups, couching its claims in the language of justice, fairness and rights. Chapter 5 provided empirical data, which detail both material and symbolic considerations implicated in the decision to mobilise.

Chapter 7 shows that the Ogoni social conflict was a complex of varying conflicts. The OBR contained demands that amounted to the competitive pursuit of ethnic interests within Nigeria, reform of existing rules or systems, and others that questioned the logic of social organisation. The first category of demands is provincial and material. The second and third categories are not particularistic as the first. They question the rules and value basis of social organization, even though not necessarily averse to material self-interest. The third category of demands breaches the limit of system's compartibility by delegitimizing the existing system and advancing alternative mode of organisation. In other words, the OBR demanded reforms or change of rules in certain areas and systemic change in others.

In addition, chapter 7 considers whether individual self-interest alone motivated activists' participation. Empirical data showed that some activists appealed to material needs and personal benefit, while Ogoni leaders emphasised moral motivation. Activists' self-understanding, however, employed a language that made it difficult to compartmentalise their motivation as either material and selfish or symbolic and non self-directed. In such discourses, the materialist and selfish is garnished with the symbolic and non self-directed, and vice versa. For instance, while interested

in provincial matters, activists located participation in the movement in the voice of the spirit or spiritual commission or the realisation of being cheated. However, the isolation of motivations served heuristic purposes only because in the discourses and worldview of the Ogoni there was little indication of such separation. For instance, while activists premised mobilisation on environmental pollution, ending the latter had symbolic significance as the land was god.

The thesis further engaged with how the Ogoni mobilised. It departs from existing approaches that made a linear link between grievances and conflict, arguing that they hide micro-mobilisation processes involved in collective mobilisation. This thesis argued that particularities of place shape the emergence of conflict, its dynamics and trajectories. The reasons people mobilise, what they mobilise for and the spatial dimensions of such dynamics demand empirical investigation. Chapter 6 provide evidence that experiences of pollution, marginalization and poverty were not sufficient in themselves to mobilise the Ogoni for contentious action. Activists had to define the condition of Ogoni as unacceptable, that it can be changed, and why and how it should be changed. They created a sense of existential threat and the urgent need to act to save themselves. Ogoni leaders engaged in a redefinition of collective identity and other framing activities, disseminating their ideas through formal and informal meetings. Activists evolved frames that resonated with the people, including the oppressive order and *miideekor* frames. Awareness creation and mobilisation of emotions through such frames galvanised the people despite high cost of participation.

There were other factors, such as the formation of a movement organisation (MOSOP), leadership and incentive, which were critical factors in mobilisation. By building a democratic and inclusive movement organisation, the leaders ensured that the collective aspiration rather than elites' desire propelled MOSOP. Material incentives played a role in mobilisation, as the Ogoni believed success would bring material benefits. However, moral incentives were equally important. Such incentives included the creation of space for ordinary Ogoni to participate in decisions. Ogoni leaders appealed to a glorious Ogoni past and achievements of their ancestors, calling on their age-old courage to confront the present predicament. Such would afford them the opportunity to reshape policies at the national level and assure themselves more negotiating power. The leaders, thus, held out personal sacrifices and risks as a

promise, or moral incentive, to improve Ogoni material wellbeing in the future. Similarly, there is empirical evidence that the Ogoni believed that their gods were involved in the struggle, which in turn mobilised their passion and commitment.

Chapter 6 provide evidence that collective identity shaped mobilisation and motivated individual participation. It, thus, suggests that selective incentive is not the only antidote to the free-rider problem. Chapter 6 and 7 provide data, which suggest that participants did not require material incentives to commit. Some activists refer to other-worldly inspiration or incentives or the moral authority of Saro-Wiwa or anger at being cheated. Thus, for some activists, participation in MOSOP rested on moral incentive, which though non-material, nevertheless harboured the promise of material benefits. Moreover, chapter 6 suggest that MOSOP's organisational choices, tactics and strategies were not simply determined by rational calculation of costs and benefits. Rather, identity, democratic values, cultural repertoires, syncretistic religious environment, and belief in the involvement of Ogoni deities shaped the movement and its *modus operandi*. However, the chapter provide evidence that the dualism between material and symbolic incentives is misleading, as the presence of one does not eliminate the other. Again, the thesis argues that instrumental logic does not exclude identity concerns and vice versa.

The thesis raised the question of what role material and self-directed incentives played in mobilising collective action. Chapter 7 provides evidence that in the Ogoni worldview, there is no separation between redistribution and recognition and between the symbolic and materialist. In their claims, activists did not isolate personal benefits from moral considerations. Activists demonstrated little awareness that in their discourses on why they joined the movement, they betrayed personal and non-personal motivations. Evidently, self/other dualism, while useful is misleading because the categories intertwine. The concept, *Miideekor*, emphasises that a phenomenon that is material at one level or perspective may be moral on another level. Ideas saturate human actions. Even the most self-centred idea may orient to moral rules about how to pursue individualistic ends or what to do with it once achieved. Thus, activists' descriptions of their benefits show how they have become more responsible, or what they would never have been without the struggle.

Consideration of why and how Ogoni mobilised centres attention on how spatial factors mediate collective action at multiple levels. Without

such sensitivity one would not know why action emerges in one place and not another. Chapter 5 shows how forces across spatial scales altered the Ogoni topography in ways that despoiled the local economy and landscape as well as imperil Ogoni sense of attachment to place. The Ogoni sought to reclaim control of their environment and protect the ghosts that inhabit it. Chapter 6 provides evidence that in mobilising, Ogoni drew on place-specific features such as beliefs in the *Wiayor*, and involvement of Ogoni spirit and deities, the flat terrain, cultural repertoires of inclusive organisation, the history of Ogoni marginalisation and environmental degradation. Such factors shaped Ogoni frames, strategies, and why and how they mobilised, and gave the movement its unique characteristics.

The thesis provides evidence that oil extraction as development became conflictual in Ogoni because it penalised the majority of Ogoni while generating immense wealth for the State and Shell. Such development occasioned land theft, destruction of the local economy and livelihoods, and imposed intolerable costs on the Ogoni. Ogoni demands for redress were regularly ignored. The ensuing conflict turned on the struggle to control the mode of development and its governing rules, or the TSAF, rather than mere demand for inclusion. The Ogoni struggle was, therefore, development induced rather than a reaction external to it. Such development is clearly undesirable, imperilling community wellbeing, environmental sustainability and national peace. Such development is clearly undesirable, imperilling community wellbeing, environmental sustainability and national peace. Although the majority of Ogoni experienced development as a penalising phenomenon, their struggle was not a rejection of development but a reappropriation of alternative environmental discourses, sustainable self-development and the right to assert a claim to participative development, which respects Ogoni environment and dignity.

Similar collective actions dot the global political landscape. Some of these conflicts are routinely tagged resource conflicts, and their protagonists as greedy and motivated by selfish and/or provincial interests. The thesis argues that the dualism of selfish and moral motivations is misleading because activists do not make such separation, and theoretical evidence suggests the mutual imbrications of both dimensions. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 suggest that the Ogoni as collective actors embodied virtues that promote the national symbol and while these may appear threaten-

ing, a perspective of openness shows their virtue. Their case illustrates that conflict within a resource-rich domain is never merely about resources or environment because in the understanding of the people the environment is 'economic, and it is social and political life and cultural sustenance' (Banks 2002: 42). In that regard, Salih (1999) rightly observes that African environmental politics transcends environment. Serious engagements with collective actions need to dispense with essentialist modernist labels and appreciate the complex worldview of local people in developing societies.

In short, any apprehension of the Ogoni conflict, and similar collective actions, in terms that portray it as only self-oriented is grossly inadequate. Similarly, supposedly corrective reactions, which emphasise genuine grievances remain equally less than adequate. They do not direct attention to the symbolic, other-directed, and nationalistic aspects of the struggles of the less-powerful. Premised on the *a priori* understanding of collective action as entirely provincial or self-oriented, either perspective fails to further theoretical understanding of reality. In effect, both perspectives trump attempts to understand why poor people risk life and limbs in an effort to engender change. Wittingly or unwittingly, they legitimise the status quo while silencing the voices and aspirations of the marginalized. To the extent that the thesis presents an alternative story, it takes a small first step in staking the nationalist and developmentalist visions embodied by grassroots collective action.

Appendices

Appendix A1

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 colonisation forced us into the administrative division of Opobo from 1908 to 1947.

3. That we protested against this forced union until the Ogoni Native Authority was created in 1947 and placed under the then Rivers Province.

4. That in 1951 we were forcibly included in the Eastern Region of Nigeria where we suffered utter neglect.

5. That we protested against this neglect by voting against the party in power in the Region in 1957, and against the forced union by testimony before the Willink Commission of Inquiry into Minority Fears in 1958.

6. That this protest led to the inclusion of our nationality in Rivers State in 1967, which State consists of several ethnic nationalities with differing cultures, languages and aspirations.

7. That oil was struck and produced in commercial quantities on our land in 1958 at K. Dere (Bomu oilfield).

8. That oil has been mined on our land since 1958 to this day from the following oilfields: (i) Bomu (ii) Bodo West (iii) Tai (iv) Korokoro (v) Yorla (vi) Lubara Creek and (vii) Afam by Shell Petroleum Development Company (Nigeria) Limited.

9. That in over 30 years of oil mining, the Ogoni nationality have provided the Nigerian nation with a total revenue estimated at over 40 billion Naira (N40 billion) or 30 billion dollars.

10. That in return for the above contribution, the Ogoni people have received NOTHING.

11. That today, the Ogoni people have:

(i) No representation whatsoever in ALL institutions of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

(ii) No pipe-borne water.

(iii) No electricity.

(iv) No job opportunities for the citizens in Federal, State, public sector or private sector companies.

(v) No social or economic project of the Federal Government.

12. That the Ogoni languages of Gokana and Khana are underdeveloped and are about to disappear, whereas other Nigerian languages are being forced on us.

13. That the Ethnic policies of successive Federal and State Governments are gradually pushing the Ogoni people to slavery and possible extinction.

14. That the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited does not employ Ogoni people at a meaningful or any level at all, in defiance of the Federal government's regulations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) Political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people.

b) The right to the control and use of a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development.

c) Adequate and direct representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions.

d) The use and development of Ogoni languages in all Nigerian territory.

e) The full development of Ogoni culture.

f) The right to religious freedom.

g) 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 fair play 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:

BABBE:

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

GOKANA:

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

KEN-KHANA:

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

NYO-KHANA:

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

Appendix A2

Table A2.1
Social criteria to measure criticality of natural capital

Social criteria (values)	Short description	Measurement units and assessment method
Importance to human physical and mental health	The provision of medicines, clean air, water and soil, space for recreation and outdoor sports and general therapeutic effects of nature on people's mental and physical well being	-Suitability and capacity of natural systems to provide 'health services' -Restorative and regenerative effects on people's performance -Socio-economic benefits from reduced health costs and conditions
Amenity value	Importance of nature for cognitive development, mental relaxation, artistic inspiration, aesthetic enjoyment and recreational benefits	-Aesthetic quality of landscape -Recreational use -Artistic use -Preference studies
Heritage value	Importance of nature as reference to personal or collective history and cultural identity	-Historic sites and features -Role in cultural landscapes -Cultural traditions and knowledge
Spiritual value	Importance of nature in symbols and elements with sacred and religious significance	-Presence of sacred sites or features -Role of nature in religious ceremonies and sacred texts
Existence value	Importance people attach to nature for ethical reasons (intrinsic value) and intergenerational equity (bequest value)	-Expressed (through, for example, donations and voluntary work) or stated (e.g. CVM) preference for nature protection for ethical reasons

Source: Adapted from R. de Groot et al. (2003: 194).

Table A2.2
Economic criteria to measure criticality of natural capital

Economic criteria (and values)	Short description	Measurement unit
Productive use value	Contribution of natural goods and services to economic productivity (through the market)	Dependence of a given economic production process, or economy, on marketable natural goods and services
Consumptive use value	Contribution of natural goods and services to non-market activities	Dependence of a given economic production process, or economy, on non-market natural goods and services
Conservation value	Contribution of natural ecosystems to maintain environmental health	Estimation of avoided damage or (theoretical) replacement of mitigation costs
Option value	Potential future benefits	Estimation of potential (critical) future uses and benefits

Source: Adapted from de Groot et al. (2003: 197).

Table A2.3
Ecological criteria to measure importance of natural capital

Criteria	Short description	Measurement unit
Naturalness/ integrity (representativeness)	Degree of human presence in terms of physical, chemical or biological disturbance	-Air, water, soil quality -% of key species -Min. critical ecosystem size
Biodiversity	Variety of life in all its forms, including ecosystem, species and genetic diversity; renewability of human restoration of ecosystems	-No. of species/surface area -No. of ecosystems/ geographical unit
Uniqueness/rarity	Local, national or global rarity of ecosystems and species	-Endemic species and sub-species -Genera with very few species -% surface area remaining
Fragility/ vulnerability	Sensitivity of ecosystems for human disturbance	-Resilience, energy budget -Resistance, carrying capacity
Life support value	Importance to maintenance of essential ecological processes and life support systems	-Critical functions that maintain ozone layer, climate regulation, genetic diversity, etc.
Renewability/ recreatability (of ecosystems)	Possibility for (spontaneous) renewability of human restoration of ecosystems	-Complexity and diversity -Succession stage/time/NPP -(Opportunity) costs

Source: Adapted from R. de Groot et al. (2003: 192)

Appendix A3

Table A3.1
Functions, goods and services of natural capital

1. Regulation functions: Capacity of natural and semi-natural ecosystems to regulate essential ecological processes and life support systems.
Biogeochemical cycling (air quality)
- Climate regulation (buffering extremes)
- Water regulation (flood protection)
- Water supply (purification and storage)
- Soil retention (erosion control)
- Soil retention and maintenance of fertility
- Bio-energy fixation
- Nutrient cycling (maintenance of the availability of essential nutrients through storage, processing and acquisition)
- Waste treatment
- Biological control (pest control)

2. Habitat functions: Provide refugia to wild plants and animals (and native people) in order to maintain biological and genetic diversity
- Refugium function (for resident and migratory species)
- Nursery function (reproduction habitat for harvestable species)

3. Production functions: Resources provided by natural and semi-natural ecosystems
- Food (edible plants and animals)
- Raw materials (for clothing, fabrics, etc.)
- Fuel and energy (renewable energy resources)
- Fodder and fertiliser (krill, litter, etc.)
- Medicinal resources (drugs, models, test-org.)
- Genetic resources (for crop resistance)
- Ornamental resources (for fashion, souvenirs, etc.)

4. Information functions: Providing opportunities for reflection, spiritual enrichment and cognitive development
- Aesthetic information (scenery)
- Recreation (eco-tourism)
- Cultural and artistic inspiration (nature as a motive and source of inspiration for human culture and art)
- Spiritual and historic information (based on ethical considerations and heritage values)
- Scientific educational information (nature as a natural field laboratory and reference area

Source: Adapted from R. de Groot et al. (2003: 191)

Appendix A4

Table A4.1
Ogoni Bill of Rights: Preamble or grievances

Issues Raised	No of times or items in which they appeared
British colonialism	Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Oil	Items 7, 8, 9, 10, 15
Representation, water, electricity, and federal projects, education, and health	Items 11 and 17
Ogoni language	Item 12
Ethnic politics, slavery and extinction	Item 13
Shell	Items 8 and 14
Jobs	Items 11 and 14
Land shortage	Item 15
Environmental pollution	Item 16
Poverty	Item 18
Minority right	Item 19
Autonomy	Item 20

Source: Developed by the author

Appendix A5

Table A5.1
Ogoni underground activists who kept MOSOP alive

Francis Ntagha	Chief E. Nkalaa	Lawrence Pyabara
A.S. Kote	B.S. Tornwini	Daniel Saganwi
Vincent Amanyie	Mrs Comfort Giadom	Banigo B. Jacob
B.B. Nwikabari	Innocent Naad	Solomon Adoo
Michael Kpone	Benjamin Dinee	John Damgbo
Deeyor Victoria	Peter Ndoonake	Alobari Money
Daniel Nsaanee	Emmanuel Ebel	Mrs Charity Ebel
Member Mene	Chujor Fortune	Chief Ngei, Ogale-Eleme
Barisuatam Deeyee	Ziinu Monday	Nnah Barikor
Deebari Deebom	John Ndeegwe	Gilbert Agbozi
Alfred Aguaue	Monday Aluzim	John Nwiwabe

Source: Adapted from Amanyie (2001)

Table A5.2
Ogoni women leaders

Roseline Nwigane	Chairperson
Nwidee Namon	Deputy Chairperson
Charity Bakpo	Secretary
--------------------	Assistant Secretary
Charity Nwidoh	Treasurer
Catherine Nwile	Financial Secretary
Rhoda (Deceased)	Provost
Comfort Ndogo	Publicity Secretary
Blessing Nwidoobee,	Head FOWA – Ken Khana
Mary Ue-bee	Head FOWA – Nyo-Khana
Comfort Nkor-ue	Head FOWA – Tai
Daughter Nbaah	Head FOWA – Gokana
Joy Ngedah	Head FOWA – Eleme
------------	Head FOWA – Baabe

Source: Based on personal interview with Roseline Nwigane (2008)

Table A5.3
Phases and manifestation of trauma

Phases of trauma	Manifestation
Cultural and structural environment conducive to trauma	Cultural disorientation emanating from unaccustomed way of life, sudden social change, events basically incongruent with core values, bases of identity, foundation of collective pride
Traumatising events	Enhanced sensitivity and anxiety, events that engender dislocation in routine or known ways of thinking and acting
Particular way of drawing from the cultural pool to frame the traumatising event	Collective effort to make sense of the situation; particular definition or interpretation of trauma; its cultural construction as salient or benign
Traumatic symptoms	Trauma has the effect of disrupting regularity. Humans value routine, order, predictability and repetitiveness. Trauma occurs when there is a break in the taken-for-granted universe. Trauma is disruptive, dislocating, painful, harmful, and repulsive
Adapting to trauma	As a result of differential sensitivity, perceptivity, and proneness to trauma, impact of trauma may be destructive for some and beneficial for others
Overcoming trauma	Trauma may be dealt with through innovation, rebellion, ritualism, and retreatism; or pragmatic acceptance, optimism, cynical pessimism, or radical contestation

Source: Adapted from Sztompka (2000: 453-63)

Appendix A6

Some of the tactics deployed by MOSOP include the following: Non-violence; grassroots mobi-lisation; drawing up of a Bill of Rights; appeal to federal government; appeal to the United Nations and other international organisations; direct physical action/confrontation; media publicity; protests; Christian religious rituals; boycott of elections; and barricades.

Table A6.1
Ogoni 9: Leaders of MOSOP hanged November 1995

Ken Saro-Wiwa

John Kpuinen

Saturday Dobee

Nondu Eawo

Daniel Gboko

Bariba Kiobel

Baribon Bera

Feliz Nwate

Paul Levura

SOURCE: Adapted from Amanyie (2001)

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DECLARATION:

This thesis has not been submitted to any university for a degree or any other award.