
4. Resource conflicts: energy worth fighting for?

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INTRODUCTION

Because of its significant role in fuelling modern industrial economies and military forces, oil has been the subject of domestic and international politics and conflicts. The history of the international oil market and energy security has been one of prolonged conflicting interests, where both the major oil exporting and the industrialised consuming countries have resorted to various strategies to ensure security of supply and of demand or to influence prices, in such a way to meet individual interest. 'From the nineteenth-century battles over the Caspian Sea to the two Gulf Wars, oil has been the prize in numerous military conflicts' (Spero and Hart, 2003:229–30). In the same way the conflicts about offshore tracts in the Gulf of Guinea between Nigeria and Cameroon at Bakassi Peninsula, and between Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea at the Zafiro undersea oil field, were on oil (Klare, 2001:230).

Conflicts over oil resources in many producing countries are generally at two levels: the first, at the macro level, involves international oil companies (IOCs) and governments in the global North; the second is at local level in the oil producing countries. I argue that the main aim is to secure energy security by constant access to cheap oil and gas at reasonable prices, through engaging in whatever means possible and necessarily, including military interventions. An example is the USA-led gulf wars in Iraq in 1991 and 2003. This macro level also includes conflict of interest between national governments of oil producing states and international oil companies over fiscal regimes, corrupt practices, environmental degradation etc. The second analysis of oil conflicts takes place at the micro level within the national boundaries of oil producing countries, where conflicts emerge on how to share the huge revenues from oil between the national governments and sub national governments and other various stakeholders. The various dimensions of these crises will be critically examined to determine why conflicts emerge over energy resources, and why the economic benefits from both the buying and selling of oil and gas are worth fighting for.

This chapter will specifically focus on resource conflicts as they relate to energy security and conflicts generated by oil and gas resources. In doing this I will look at the historical overview of global oil conflicts issues from the Caspian and Middle East in Kuwait and Iraq to Africa in the gulf of Guinea Nigeria and Cameroon. I will analyse how resource conflicts are changing through the role of institutions, piracy, private security companies and the international oil companies (IOCs), using the traditional realist approach to resource conflicts. The realist analysis of the politics of international energy draws on the extent of state power to access and control over energy resources, and it also argues that such resources are becoming insecure and scarce and assumes that the contestation around resource capture will continue (Dannreuther, 2010:2–3). This will be explained in detail with the case of oil conflict in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.

AN OVERVIEW OF OIL GEOPOLITICS

The history of modern oil and gas industry began in the late 19th century when the first major oil company, Standard Oil, was founded by John D. Rockefeller in 1870 in the United States of America (Business Reference Services, 2012). In the early 20th century the use of oil eventually replaced coal as the world's primary source of industrial power. During the same century the oil industry also expanded rapidly at about 6.5 per cent; from 1913 to 1948 and from 1948 to 1973 it was 7.5 per cent (Bromley, 2005:235 and Business Reference Services, 2012). The availability and control of oil and gas played a foremost role in both the First and Second World Wars and still remains the critical fuel source that powers modern industrial societies (ibid).

Consequently, the emerging industrialisation and the growing dependence on imported materials at the advent of the 20th century necessitated the need to access resources from abroad for an expanding oil industry (Le Billion, 2004:3). For example Standard Oil expanded its business to the Caspian and bought 100,000 tonnes of oil at \$33 per tonne from the Azerbaijani government in June 1919 (O'Hara, 2004:142). The significant role of oil in the First World War led to the scramble for more oil after the war and the partitioning of the Middle East among the various Western Nations for secure supply of oil (Le Billion, 2004:3). This was further reinforced during the Second World War, Le Billion concludes thus:

... in their search for resource security and strategic advantage, industrialised countries continued to take a diversity of initiatives including military deployment near exploitation sites and along shipping lanes, stockpiling of strategic

resources, diplomatic support, 'gunboat' policies, proxy wars or coup d'état to maintain allied regimes in producing countries, as well as support to transnational corporations and favourable international trade agreements. (2004:3)

A good example was the military coup that overthrew the Mossadeq's government because of the nationalisation of the British oil corporations in Iran and replaced it with a pro-western Shah in 1953 (Peters, 2004:202).

There is now a 'return' of geopolitics due to structural changes after 2000 which followed two decades of low energy prices under a market based regime. The September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre twin towers in the US, the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, political struggles in Russia and the Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria resulted in rapid increases in oil prices and structural changes in the international oil market (Trombetta, 2012:15). Also, due to the rapid economic growth and development in developing countries particularly in the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), there has been a global contestation on how to secure energy security and also its attendant potential conflicts (Smith, 2010:121).

The competition for access to oil resources will intensify as the global energy consumption of oil and gas mostly from non-OECD countries is set to increase by 40 per cent in 2030 (Smith, 2010:122). Over the same period of time the production of oil and gas will decrease both in Europe and America, this puts more pressures on the international oil supply market leading to the 'securitization'¹ of energy, making energy security issues a national priority for all oil importing countries (Trombetta, 2012:15 and Smith, 2010:120).

Most of the substantial proven oil and gas reserves are now located in the Middle East, Caspian and Africa region, where security uncertainties due to conflicts induced by oil and gas are major challenges to trade (Smith, 2010:121). There is also competition among the oil importers with each one trying to scheme out the other: while China is close to Iran and Russia, the Western oil consumers are also in alliance over Iraq and other countries in the Caspian (ibid). Some of the Western countries are also present in the Gulf of Guinea oil region in Africa, and China has also gained a foothold for oil operation in Angola and Nigeria.

ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS ARGUMENTS ON RESOURCE CONFLICTS AND ENERGY SECURITY

Studies by various scholars, economists and political scientists and others have produced series of explanations and arguments on conflicts generated

by natural resources, in this case oil and gas and energy security (Klare, 2001, 2008; Watts, 2004; Ross, 1999, 2001; Le Billion and El Khatib, 2004; Spero and Hart, 2003; Raphael and Stokes, 2011 and Collier, 2007, 2009 among others). Collier (2009) asserts that the explanations of natural resources conflicts are more deep rooted political economy issues, 'an interplay between politics and valuable natural assets'.

Resource conflicts and war in resource-dependent countries, particularly oil, are not limited only to the boundaries of their respective countries, but go far beyond it. The global consequences of the invasion of Iraq by the US-led allied forces in 1990 to 1992, and since 2003, have been far reaching. The intermittent skyrocketing increases in oil prices is the main direct cost to the world economy, and with its macroeconomic repercussions is 'approximately \$1.1 trillion' which 'dwarfs all other economic cost' (Stiglitz and Blimes, 2008:132–160).

Part of the consequences is the soaring cost of transportation in most countries, including the oil exporters, and increasingly resulting in 'higher food prices' (ibid). Beyond the threat to global peace and security through the growth of resistance and extremism throughout the world, the humanitarian and economic costs are also alarming not only in Iraq but also in the neighbouring countries of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt; civilian death estimated at over 100,000 people and '4.6 million people – one of every seven Iraqis uprooted from their homes' by December and September 2007 respectively; an estimate of over \$1 billion for Jordan alone and \$123 million budgeted by the UNHCR in 2007 for the up-keep of Iraqi refugees (Stiglitz and Blimes, 2008:132–160).

The struggles amongst various factions and political groups to control political power at the centre in resource-dependent countries goes beyond corruption, it actually leads to conflicts and may degenerate in many cases to civil war if not properly managed. This is because those who control political power at the centre are the custodians of the revenues that accrue from the resources. Studies show that oil and mineral resource-exporting countries are more vulnerable to violent conflicts that are particularly secessionist in nature; they also last longer with higher casualties than conflicts with no resources to capture, and are mostly located in the regions where the natural resources are located (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004, 2006; Lujala et al 2005).

Table 4.1 below shows past and present civil wars, rebellion and militancy in 8 selected oil and mineral-dependent countries. The wars have lasted from three to 36 years, the free Aceh movement (GAM) rebelled against the Indonesian authorities and fought the national army (TNI) to break away the natural gas rich Aceh region. The conflicts in some of the countries have occurred intermittently and still persist, for example the Sudan and South

Table 4.1 Civil wars, rebellion and militancy in selected oil and gas dependent states

Country	Duration	Resources
1 Algeria	1991–2001	Oil
2 Angola (Cabinda)	1992–2001	Oil
3 Congo, Republic	1997–1999	Oil
4 Indonesia (Aceh)	1975–2005	Natural Gas
5 Iraq	1974/75, 1985–92, 2003–Present	Oil
6 Nigeria (Niger Delta region)	1967–1970, 1998–Present	Oil
7 Sudan	1983–Present	Oil
8 Yemen	1986–87, 1990–94	Oil

Source: Ross (2001:15) and Alabi (2010:58).

Sudan, Nigeria's Niger Delta region and particularly in Iraq from 1974 to 1975, then 1985 to 1992 and from 2003 up to October 2012.

'The discovery of resource wealth in a discontented region may add fuel to separatist sentiments' (Ross, 2001:15). For example the Biafra rebellion in Nigeria, the Cabinda enclave in Angola, and the Aceh rebellion in Indonesia. Karl argues that 'Oil may be the catalyst to start a war; petrodollars and pipelines may serve to finance either side and prolong conflict and this, of course, is the biggest resource curse of all' (Karl, 2005:26). The Azerbaijan government's additional US\$35 million in military spending in the 2004 budget did not provide any direct benefit to the citizens (Shultz, 2005:35).

Collier (2009) posited that an increase in the prices of natural resources in the international market also increases not just the propensity of conflict in resource-dependent countries, but also the period of war once it has started. In his analysis he identified three reasons for this: the first is that the atmosphere of conflicts creates the possibility for the rebel groups to have illegal access to the natural resource, be it oil or gas, as is the case in Angola and Nigeria, and use part of the proceeds from the sales to broaden and sustain the conflict. Secondly, most recruits to rebellion are motivated by loot-seeking rather than fighting for any political cause: even when the conflict began with a political motivation it will in the long run result in loot-seeking. Thirdly, rebellion might be a consequence of inadequate or lack of accountability to their citizens by governments of most natural resource-dependent countries (Collier, 2009:5–6).

Conflicts create an atmosphere of fear, and may allow rebel or militant groups to illegally tap pipelines to steal oil, or seize gas fields, or carry out other nefarious acts like kidnapping and extortion to finance and elongate

conflict periods. The main motivation behind insurrections, rebellions and wars in resource-dependent developing countries is not just about greed or the desire to loot; in most cases it is resistance to and reaction against long-term neglect and socio-economic deprivation in the mineral resource rich regions, the capture and corrupt control of the revenues accruing from such resources by the central governments and their lack of accountability to the citizens. This explains why these type of conflicts over resources are not happening in Norway or other developing resource rich countries such as Qatar and United Arab Emirates. If the causes of wars are merely because of the presence of natural resources or greed to loot, and not resistance against socio-economic deprivation, marginalisation and lack of accountability, the same conflicts should be happening in other developing resource-rich countries. Thus Ake (2000) concludes that most conflicts labelled as ethnic conflicts are nothing but democratic conflicts where groups or societies who have been denied benefits from the national resources for so long struggle to regain their rights and access to the commonwealth as citizens (Ake, 2000:10).

THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENERGY SECURITY AND RESOURCE CONFLICTS

This section will help to explain the interrelationships between the energy security agenda of the global North and the nature of conflicts and under-development in the oil and gas producing countries of the global South. From the end of the cold war to the early 1990s there has been an increase in internal and regional conflicts in many resource developing nations, which have led to massive humanitarian interventions by international NGOs and the United Nations, and also a new form of global governance by governments in the global North (Duffield, 2001:1). In essence, it is clear that by 'the mid-1990s the need to address the issue of conflict became a central concern within mainstream development policy', which was previously in the purview of international and security studies (ibid).

The major explanation for this could be traced to the unequal integration of the South into the global capitalist system and the nature of this continued exploitative relationship between the global North and South in terms of trade, raw materials and cheap energy (oil and gas by all means and at all cost) to power the industrial development in the North. The conflicts were further aggravated by the concentration of formal trade, technology and international finance in the North and East Asia since the 1970s, to the severe exclusion of the global South (Duffield, 2001:2). This exclusion and declining investment particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa has now led to

escalating contestation around resource capture – including the state, criminalisation, breakdown of law and order and a global criminal economy network (ibid:6–7). The crisis in the oil producing Niger Delta of Nigeria is a classical example, where the militants in the early 1990s began to attack oil installations, kidnapping IOCs personnel and demanding ransoms for their release. This soon graduated into a large network of gangs in collaboration with high ranking military officers and top government officials stealing oil from the pipelines and selling to foreign vessels at a cheaper price on the high seas. Some of the proceeds are in turn used to buy arms and ammunitions to perpetuate their hold on the oil resources. The adverse social and economic effects of this are not only felt locally within Nigeria but also globally, as any major disruptions to oil production in the Delta or in the Gulf of Guinea sends the price of oil higher in the international oil market.

Therefore the current global security challenges go beyond interstate wars: ‘the threat of an excluded South fomenting international instability through conflict, criminal activity and terrorism is now part of a new security framework’ in which ‘underdevelopment has become dangerous’ (Duffield, 2001:2). This has led to the radicalisation of development policy, which is merging conflict resolution with a neoliberal global governance agenda of social transformation of societies in the global South (ibid). Although it is exclusion and contestation for the few resources that has led to the conflicts, viewing underdevelopment as dangerous and as an agent of destabilisation is enough reason for policing and engagement with the governments of the South (ibid:7). For example in the Gulf of Guinea the establishment of the United States African Command (AFRICOM) Africa Partnership Station to police the oil facilities in the region is unsolicited assistance to protect the energy security interests of the North (Raphael and Stokes, 2011:909–911).

Internationalisation of public policy is also part of the new security and governance framework; governments in the South are controlled by means of ‘conditional selective inclusion’ (ibid:7–8). Thus, they are required to execute international laws such as anti-terrorism, anti-money laundering and the Kimberley process, for the sake of global peace and security. The processes of inclusion are sometimes stratified, depending on which side is to profit most (ibid).

ENERGY SECURITY AND OIL CONFLICTS: THE CASE OF THE NIGER DELTA, NIGERIA

This section focuses on the persistency of the Niger Delta crisis and competition for resource control by those in the Delta, and argues that the

acceleration of struggle and contestation around resource capture has escalated dramatically and shaped policy regarding fiscal federalism. It then examines the resultant socio-economic and environmental impacts of the crisis and how that challenges the sustainability of oil production in Nigeria. The conflict in the Niger Delta has a fairly long trajectory: the structures for the present conflicts were laid by the colonialists and the first Nigerian political leaders, which successive regimes have built on and nurtured. After independence in 1960, the post-colonial Nigerian state continued unabated the totality of power it inherited from the colonialists over land and all mineral resources (Omoweh, 2006:40). Consequently, the first post-colonial Nigerian leaders jettisoned the Willink Commission's report, abandoned its implementation and the development of the Niger Delta Development Board, NDDB and thereby laid the foundation for the current crisis.

The first post-colonial oil conflict in the Niger Delta region was sparked by Isaac Adaka² Boro in February 1966 (Tebekaemi, 1982:6 and International Crisis Group, 2006:4).

The contemporary crisis threatens not just the oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta region but 'everything' about Nigeria: unity, politics and socio-economic development to its foundation. Echoing this fact Bush (2007:613–4) posits that:

Resistance is at fever pitch in the Niger Delta. It is opposition to international oil companies and Nigerian state collusion with exploitation in the region. It is opposition to corrupt local politicians and leaders and it is driven significantly by the youth.

By the late 1990s, the situation in the Niger Delta had transformed into aggressive agitations and violent protest of unprecedented dimensions that shook the very foundations of the Nigerian nation (NDDC, 2002:5). Violence and youth restiveness increased greatly as Nigeria approached the return to democracy in May 1999. Youths in the region began to lay siege to oil installations and kidnapped oil workers from various IOCs, making it unsafe for any socio-economic activity to thrive (Djebah, 2003:3). The armed resistance started by Isaac Adaka Boro's 12-day revolution in February 1966 transformed to the commando-style operations of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).³ Consequently, militant groups have increased deadly attacks on oil facilities and IOCs personnel from 2000 onwards and have taken a higher dimension since 2005 with activities of MEND, attacking offshore oil facilities 200 kilometres below sea such as the Bonga FPSO platform and shooting at IOCs servicing helicopters.

The conflicting claims to oil resources in the Niger Delta between the

federal government and the oil producing states provide major challenges to the Nigerian state, due to the intensity with which several oil producing states are clamouring for control of oil resources in their region. As asserted by the International Crisis Group (ICG) ‘a potent cocktail of poverty, crime and corruption is fuelling a militant threat to Nigeria’s reliability as a major oil producer’ (ICG, 2006:1). Corroborating the ICG, Soyinka (2008) noted:

What is happening in the Delta today, points a finger of guilt in so many directions and of course, the primary is within Nigeria itself and what Nigerian leaders have made of this incredible opportunity and however, but at the expense of some of the people within the Delta region. Then of course the oil exploration companies with their contempt for basic minimum standard of conduct towards the areas, the indigenes from whom this wealth is been dredged. So very often it is a matter of embarrassment, a guilt feeling and so they pretend it is just a few people restless, violence and kidnapping and so on whereas this problems goes back decades.

The Niger Delta Crisis: From MOSOP to MEND 1990–2012

From 1990, the late Ken Saro Wiwa,⁴ the founding leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), led the Ogoni struggles against the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and the federal government to put an end to the environmental destruction orchestrated by SPDC against the Ogoni people in the name of oil exploration (Rowell et al, 2005:2; Watts, 2007:652). MOSOP produced the Ogoni Bill of Rights, which was signed in August 1990 and presented to the federal government. It demanded ‘political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation’ (Rowell et al, 2005:3). Instead of responding to the Bill of Rights, the IOCs and the federal government deployed the security forces to all the oil installations and the towns of Ogoniland, banned all public protest, and decreed any demand for self-determination and obstruction of oil production in any form as an act of treason which is punishable by death (Osaghae, 1995:336). The threats by the government only propelled the full scale mobilisation and mass attendance of thousands of protesters at the Bori rally of 3 January 1993 (ibid).

This Bill of Rights and the tenacious campaign both at local and international level to popularise and enforce its aims drew the attention of the international community to the Ogonis’ plight. The publicity and campaigning forced SPDC to call off its production throughout the Ogoni land in 1993 (International Crisis Group, 2008:2 and Osaghae, 1995:336). The ensuing circumstances brought MOSOP, led by Ken Saro Wiwa and

the Ogonis, into direct confrontation with the Nigerian government and SPDC. On 21st May 1994 a crisis led to violence between the pro-SPDC Ogoni elders, who were accused by the radical Ogoni youths of receiving largesse from SPDC to scuttle the Ogoni struggle process; four Ogoni elders were killed. It was the moment the government had been waiting for to finally nail MOSOP and its leaders (International Crisis Group, 2008:2–4).

Ken Saro Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders (including Mr Ledum Mitee, the chairman of the Federal government 2008 Technical Committee on the Niger Delta who was arrested but later released), were tried by a Special Military Tribunal that was constituted by the Abacha regime to try their case in 1995. They were sentenced to death by hanging with the collaboration of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and other IOCs. Although the SPDC strongly denied their involvement in Saro Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders' trial and death, they had a legal representative, a hired Queens Counsel (QC) flown into Nigeria from London on the account of SPDC, who monitored the whole trial process (Rowell et al, 2005: 4–5).

On 10th November 1995, Saro Wiwa and eight others were executed by hanging after 18 months incarceration. To make matters worse the government created more psychological torture for the families of the dead MOSOP leaders: rather than releasing the bodies to the families, acid was poured on to the bodies to be sure that they were destroyed, even after they were certified dead by medical personnel at the hanging (Rowell et al, 2005:4–5). Apart from protests against SPDC in Europe and America where it had operational bases, and in a couple of Nigerian foreign missions, the Commonwealth reacted to the killings at its summit in New Zealand by suspending Nigeria, and its delegation led by Mr Tom Ikimi, the Nigerian former foreign minister, walked out. The Nigerian government and Shell were also condemned by the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the European Union and the US States Department.

However, all of them failed to act with any real effect, because the issue at hand was about security of supply;⁵ an oil embargo on Nigeria 'was deemed unacceptable to the United States' (Rowell et al, 2005:12). With the inability of the international community to reprimand Nigeria's military regime, it was 'mission accomplished' and the resumption of business as usual by both SPDC and the federal government in the Niger Delta. As the security forces continued their crackdown on the residents of oil producing communities Soyinka (2008) noted:

The international community to some extent felt that this crime committed against the representatives of the Nigerian people, the defenders of the ecology,

the protectors of the right of indigenous people, Ken Saro Wiwa and his companions, when this crime was committed under such a public global glare that it would compel the oil companies to tidy up their acts, and to some extent it did for a short while. But they become complacent once again (Soyinka, 2008).

The Rivers State Internal Security Task Force (a military special squad put together by the military regime) in conjunction with Lt Colonel Musa Komo, the state military governor, started negotiating with SPDC to resume operations in Ogoni. At the same time the chiefs and villagers were also intimidated into signing documents for SPDC to return to Ogoni. At the final sitting of the Special Military Tribunal in 1995 Saro Wiwa made this closing statement:

I repeat that we all stand before history. I and my colleagues are not the only ones on trial. Shell is here on trial . . . but its day will surely come and the lessons learnt here may prove useful to it. There is no doubt in my mind that the ecological war that the company has waged in the Niger Delta will be called to question sooner than later and the crimes of that war be duly punished. (Rowell et al, 2005:211)

This statement by Saro Wiwa found fulfilment on 4th June 2008 when the federal government announced the final withdrawal of SPDC's operating licence which has been suspended since 1993, and ordered the closure of all its operations in Ogoni land by December 2008. According to late President Yar'Adua it was evident that 'there was a total loss of confidence between the Ogoni people and Shell, government decided that another operator acceptable to the Ogonis will take over all oil operations. Nobody is gaining from the conflict and stalemate, so this is the best solution' (Nigerian Tribune, 2008). On 6 June 2008 Corroborating President Yar'Adua, Ledum Mitee said 'we agree that the relationship between Shell and the Ogoni people has been damaged irreparably and therefore, the president's decision is timely and appropriate' (Nigerian Tribune, 2008).

After the Ogoni crisis, from April 1997 onwards protest against all the IOCs in the Niger Delta increased considerably and this time it was not just against SPDC. The military government and the oil technocrats had 'feared all along; that other communities, inspired by Ken Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni struggle, would rise up against the devastation of their environment' (Rowell et al, 2005:18). Thus, the various youth groups began to form resistance movements across the Delta region. The first of such groups was the 'Chicoco movement' formed in August 1997 by Oronto Douglas⁶ in Ijaw town of Aleibiri, Bayelsa State with over 1,000 youths (Rowell et al, 2005:18).

The Chicoco movement was a forerunner to the formation of the Ijaw National Congress (INC) which managed the implementation of the

Kaiama declaration. In Bayelsa State, the Ijaw youths, under the umbrella 'Egbesu Supreme Assembly', drawn from over 500 communities and 40 clans that made up the Ijaw nation and 25 representative organisations, met in Kaiama on 11th December 1998, 'to deliberate on the best way to ensure the continuous survival of the indigenous peoples of the Ijaw ethnic nationality of the Niger Delta within the Nigerian state' and put forward the 'Kaiama Declaration'. The declaration states that:

As a step towards reclaiming the control of our lives, we, therefore, demand that all oil companies stop all exploration and exploitation activities in the Ijaw areas. We are tired of gas flaring; oil spillages, blowouts and being labelled saboteurs and terrorists. It is a case of preparing the noose for our hanging. We reject this labelling. Hence, we advise all oil companies' staff and contractors to withdraw from Ijaw territories by 30th December, 1998 pending the resolution of the issue of resource ownership and control in the Ijaw area of the Niger Delta. (Ijaw Youths Centre, 1998)

This declaration was synonymous to declaring an 'Ijaw Nation' and war on almost all the oil companies in their area (Essien, 1999:5). They also set up the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) to coordinate their struggles for self-determination and justice (ibid). Installations owned by oil companies were not only seized, but oil production ground to a halt which also led to a substantial revenue loss to the Nigerian government and increased oil prices in the international market.

Federal Government and IOCs Security Responses to the Oil Conflicts

The state continued with the militarisation of the oil producing communities as a response strategy at the instance of community protest. The position of the government and the IOCs was that the community protests, agitations and losses which result from these disasters amounted to acts of sabotage, and this prompted their actions in an attempt to stem the rate of increasing communal clashes and violence. Whenever there are crises, the government often reacts aggressively by drafting the security forces for reprisal attacks to quell the militants, who are branded criminals, looters and saboteurs⁷ of the economy. Generally when the militants could not be found, the security forces turned their grievances on the communities resulting in many casualties and loss of innocent lives, and in the process exterminating some villages and communities in the Delta. This led to the emergence of more youth groups: from 1998 to 2012, apart from MOSOP and the Chicoco movement, over 30 ethnic-based minority rights groups have emerged across the Delta region (Adejumobi, 2002:6 and Ojakorotu, 2005:3). The strategies and tactics of these movements have changed over

the years from non-violence to increasingly militaristic and commando-style armed groups; this was to 'counter what local groups viewed as military's repressive tactics' by the Nigerian government's security forces (International Crisis Group, 2006:5). Thus there are constant conflicts between state and various movements in the Delta over resource extraction.

The IOCs are too confident of protection from their own security forces and that of the federal government, and are quick to call for the State's security forces to quell community protest. That normally leads to heavy casualties on the side of the host communities due to the excesses of the security forces. For example on 29th October 1990 the SPDC Divisional Manager in Port Harcourt ordered state security forces through the Rivers State Commissioner of Police to quell the 'impending militant attack' on Umuechem flow station (Frynas, 2001:50). The events of 30th and 31st October 1990 were a serious crisis as 'Mobile Police moved in with teargas and gunfire, killing about 80 people and destroying almost 500 houses' (ibid and International Crisis Group, 2006:6). The judicial commission of inquiry later found there was no planned attack, as alleged by SPDC's manager, because the youth protests were non-violent and the youths were not armed (Rivers State Government, 1991).

The oil producing communities are therefore at the mercy of armed security personnel, police and military, who constitute the Joint Task Forces. Some of these use the cover of providing security and maintaining law and order to torture and terrorise innocent citizens, openly demanding bribes from motorists and cyclists. Thus, 'the ugly relationship between oil and violence has played out along very clear lines in Nigeria' (Klare, 2004:127). From 1966 to 1999 the country was ruled at various times by the military, which having forcefully taken power had squandered massive oil revenues, leaving the Niger Delta region to wallow in poverty: this led to the increase in ethnically based militias in the Niger Delta (Klare, 2004:127). Consequently, the few key actors in Nigerian domestic policy facilitate and encourage a mutually dependent process of systematic looting of the country's oil wealth (White and Taylor, 2001:324), and therefore have no incentive to change the fraudulent mutual dependency between the IOCs and the various regimes that have ruled the country. The responses of the IOCs and the government through militarisation have been counterproductive as they generate more crises. The next section will examine the impacts of such crises.

The Socio-Economic Impacts of the Conflict on Nigeria and the International Oil Market

The conflicts in the Niger Delta have impacted negatively on Nigeria and is difficult to quantify. The international community feels the effects par-

ticularly in terms of volatility in the price of oil in the international market. This section will examine the impacts of the conflicts in terms of economic and other social losses including kidnapping, sabotages, oil bunkering,⁸ gangs and the resultant effects.

Events in the Niger Delta took another dimension in January 2006 when four expatriate oil personnel were kidnapped. All were employees of the Shell contractors Tidex and Ecidrill and were kidnapped from a support vessel in the Exploration Area (EA) shallow offshore field operated by Shell Petroleum Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCO) (Oduniyi and James, 2006). The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) claimed responsibility for the kidnapping; MEND demanded the release of Mujahid Asari Dokubo, the leader of another militant group, Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), who had been incarcerated but was later released by the federal government as part of the efforts to calm the militants' activities. They also demanded US\$1.5 billion compensation for oil pollution to the Ijaws, an ethnic group in the Niger Delta (Daniel and Olaniyi, 2006).

As a result of the attacks on oil installations across the Niger Delta, IOCs including SPDC, Italian energy giant Eni SpA, ChevronTexaco and ExxonMobil among others, declared force majeure intermittently from the emergence of MEND in December 2005, culminating in up to 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd) shut-in of crude oil by the end of 2006 (Nigerian Guardian, 2008). MEND sent a clear signal to the IOCs and federal government that no oil installation within the Delta was unreachable when they launched a major attack on the 225,000 barrels per day floating production storage facility in SPDC's Bonga oil FPSO, about 200 kilometres below sea on 19th June 2008. It was automatically shut down and resumed production after a few weeks (Amaize, 2008) and according to General Boyloaf⁹:

We really wanted to prove that nowhere is untouchable that is why we visited there. We wanted to make this point because Shell and Chevron, all of them are moving offshore. So we visited them to prove that there is nowhere to hide. (Lloyd-Roberts, 2009)

The Commission for Africa (CFA), in its report on the British All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) delegation's evaluation of the Niger Delta, urged the Nigerian government to stop the yearly theft of an estimated N625 billion (£2.5 billion) of the country's oil resources (Obayuwana, 2006:1). Mutiu Sunmonu, the Managing Director of SPDC, also told the delegates at the Nigerian Oil and Gas conference and exhibition in Abuja on 24th February 2009 that 'even with low oil prices, the Nigerian government loses between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion every year to crude theft

and pose a threat to oil loadings from export terminals' which was then reduced to six hours daily because of the security situation in the Niger Delta (Igbikiowubo, 2009). The restive Niger Delta youths exchanged the smuggled oil for firearms from their buyers, and the youths in return used firearms to attack and vandalise oil installations for the accumulation of more crude oil to be smuggled out for sale (Laba, 2004:3). In his overview of the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) of Nigeria to the British All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on the Niger Delta in August 2005, Basil Omiyi, the former Nigeria Chair, declared that 'it is clear for this level of oil theft to continue at its current rate, it is highly organised' (Obayuwana, 2006:1).

Other costs included huge annual expenditure on security for oil workers and facilities by the IOCs. According to the country security manager of Addax Petroleum Nigeria, at the 2008 Offshore West Africa (OWA) conference in Abuja, IOCs operating in Nigeria jointly spent an estimated \$3.7 billion on security in the Delta in 2008 alone, while the figures for 2007 stood at \$3.5 billion (Alike, 2009). It is disheartening to note that in 2008 alone security against the militants cost the IOCs \$3.7 billion (N432.9 billion) (ibid), almost five times as much as the government's budget for the region in 2009 (N77 billion).

Intra-Community Crisis, Inter-Community Conflicts, Inter-Ethnic Clashes and Conflicts Between Communities and IOCs

Since the early 1990s, intra and inter-community, inter-ethnic conflicts and community protest and violence against the IOCs in the oil producing areas have been increasingly rampant, resulting in serious socio-economic loss to the Delta region and the country. The increasing unrest has been mostly due to the high level of underdevelopment in the Delta.

The intra-community crisis

The intra-community crisis is usually between members of a clan, village or ethnic group with communal identity (UNDP, 2006:113). A good example was in Nembe, Bayelsa state, where the IOCs reached an agreement with the local chiefs on the mode of payment of compensation through cash, job opportunities and contracts for the locals, but through greed the chiefs allocated more of the benefits to themselves and their associates. The youths and other excluded members of the community began a protest: they occupied flow stations, harassed oil workers and took hostages to force the IOCs to renegotiate and pay them their dues (ibid). Because such payments are huge, at least in local terms, the youth group soon disintegrated into several gangs and continued to extort money from the IOCs.

The result was a reign of terror in Nembe, with violent clashes between the various rival youth groups resulting in mass loss of life and property (ibid, 115).

The manner in which the pursuit for compensation was carried out among the communities has over time helped to exacerbate conflict. Onosode (1998) posits that:

There is a considerable mistrust between elders and youths, between traditional rulers and their subjects. The older groups are perceived by the youths to have 'sold out'; others are branded 'Oil company chiefs'. (Onosode, 1998:39–41)

According to a World Bank report, 'compensation may not be paid to the affected community or individuals – because other communities, disbursement agents, or powerful individuals may keep the compensation funds' (World Bank, 1995: 72).

In an article on this subject, Ibeanu echoes the World Bank's view by asserting that 'The leaders of communities in the Niger Delta are very rich, and at the same time their people are extremely poor' (Ibeanu, 2002:163). By the end of February 1998, about 14,000 claims for compensation for oil related damages totalling an estimated US\$100 million had been submitted to Nigerian courts by individuals, groups and communities in the region (ibid).

Inter-community conflicts

Inter-community conflicts occur when communities are not satisfied with the outcome of a settlement by the government, traditional authorities or court. In an on-going agitation, usually over ownership of land and other natural resources, mostly the male youths of two or more warring communities begin fighting, setting houses and business premises ablaze (UNDP, 2006:115). For example, the conflict that emerged as a result of the location of SPDC's oil flow station in the Olomoro and Oleh communities of Delta State, occupying 20 per cent and 80 per cent of land in the two communities respectively. The government responded swiftly and drafted the security forces to maintain law and order, but the security forces instead burnt down the Oleh community (ibid, 118).

Ethnic clashes

Ethnic clashes have also been on the increase in various parts of the Delta region; these include Urhobo versus Itsekiri, Ijaw versus Itsekiri in Delta state, Ogoni versus Okrika, Andoni versus Ogoni in River state and the Ilaje versus the Ijaw in Ondo state. While some of these conflicts are historical and predate the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta, others were

provoked by the actions of the government and IOCs (UNDP, 2006:118). For example the violent conflicts which involved the Ogonis and Andonis from July to September 2003, and the Ogonis and the Okrikas in December of the same year, seemed to have some support from the government and IOCs in order to thwart the Ogoni agitations, as the leaders of both the Ogonis and Andonis asserted publicly through the media that they had no disagreements before the attacks (Osaghae, 1995:37–38). At the end of the conflict, over 1,000 Ogonis had been killed and 30,000 people displaced from their communities (*ibid*).

Conflicts between communities and IOCs

Conflicts between communities and IOCs emerge as a result of general dissatisfaction with the benefits from oil. They bear the impact of the consequences of oil exploration – gas flaring, oil spillages, blowouts and so on – and government policies failed over the years to translate oil wealth into meaningful socio-economic development for the communities. The reactions to their frustrations over the years sometimes resulted in protest against the IOCs, epitomised by hostage-taking, sabotage to oil installations, damage to pipelines, flow stations and oil export terminals. This series of reactions from the communities in the Delta propelled the IOCs led by SPDC to establish a ‘supernumerary police’ in the early 1990s in conjunction with the Nigerian Police Force in the Delta to protect their facilities. On 1st December 1993, Phillip Watts, then SPDC’s Nigeria Managing Director, requested the police authorities to increase the ‘supernumerary police guards’ (or the ‘spy police’) from 1,200 in 1993 to 1,400 in 1995; this was in addition to other private security personnel engaged by the company (International Crisis Group, 2006, HRW, 1999:116; Frynas, 2001:51). The Joint Task Force (JTF) – the Army, Navy and the Police – was also deployed by the federal government to provide security in the Delta region and the waterways, which come under the federal government’s authority (SPDC, 2006:8).

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter started by examining the significant role of oil in fuelling modern industrial development, and then examined the role of oil in both domestic and international politics and conflicts. It noted that the history of the international oil market has been one with prolonged conflicting interest where both producers and consumers strive to influence the direction of the market in their favour, and argued that the main aim on the part of the consumer nations is to secure energy security. Various factors are

responsible for the instability of oil prices in the international oil market and conflicts in different oil and gas geopolitical zones of the world. Some of the major factors include the two gulf wars of the 1990s, the September 11 terrorist attack by Al-Qaida on United States in 2001, and the US-led invasion in Iraq in 2003. After these events oil prices began to rise and there was a related realignment in global geopolitics of oil and gas.

This chapter also posits that there is an interrelationship between the energy security agenda of the Western world and the nature of the conflicts and underdevelopment in the oil and gas producing countries in the global South. The unequal integration of the South into the global capitalist system and the nature of this continued exploitative relationship between the global North and South is driven by uneven terms of trade in relation to raw materials and cheap energy (oil and gas by all means and at all cost) to power the industrial development in the North.

Two levels of resource conflicts were also analysed: at the macro level which concerns conflicts of interest between the IOCs, the Western nations and producing nation governments over fiscal regimes and contracts, negotiations and unwillingness to grant access to particular IOCs; and at the micro or local level between national governments and other stakeholders in the producing nations. A detailed illustration was provided by the case study of the Niger Delta in Nigeria where various militia groups turned the oil producing region into a battle ground as a result of lack of access to socio-economic development and opportunities from the oil industry in their region. The main motivation behind insurrections, rebellions and wars in resource-dependent developing countries is not just about greed or the desire to loot; in most cases it is resistance to and reaction against long-term neglect and socio-economic deprivation in the mineral resource rich regions, the capture and corrupt control of the revenues accruing from such resources by the central governments and their lack of accountability to the citizens. Therefore, I conclude that most conflicts labelled 'resource conflicts' occur where groups or societies who have been denied benefits from their national resources struggle to regain their rights and access to these benefits. The Western nations, IOCs and oil producing governments need an alliance to ensure the benefits of the resources reach the citizens of the producing nations. Otherwise, the conflicts will continue as it will always be worth fighting for denied benefits.

NOTES

1. Securitisation is 'the discursive process through which an inter-subjective understanding is constructed within a political community to threat something as an existential threat to

- a valued referent object and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures' (Buzan and Wæver 2003, 491). This process 'legitimizes actions outside the normal political process' (Buzan et al, 1998, 24, quoted in Trombetta, 2012:2).
2. Isaac Boro an Ijaw, former school teacher and police officer in the Nigerian police force, was born on the 10th September 1938 in Oloibiri where the first oil was struck by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC). He landed in Tontoubau in Bayelsa State on the 23rd February 1966 accompanied by 159 men, and launched a guerrilla war against the Nigerian government. He led an armed showdown against the Nigerian Police Force in a bloody battle and defeated them with a ragtag force of native comrades. They then grounded all oil exploration activities in the region, declared the State of the Niger Delta People's Republic and instructed all IOCs to deal directly with Boro. They engaged in battle for 12 days before they were rounded up by the federal government forces with the help of the SPDC and were tortured, tried and condemned to death (Tebekaemi, 1982:6).
 3. Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta is an armed and formidable militant group based in the cities and creeks of the Niger Delta, particularly in the western region of the Delta in and around Warri (the so-called 'Warri axis'). MEND is responsible for 'shutting-in' 40 per cent (November, 2008: approximately 900,000 barrels per day) of Nigeria's oil industry through making direct attacks on facilities, taking hostages, and generally creating an inhospitable and unsafe environment for the oil industry (Kashi and Watts, 2008:3).
 4. Ken Saro Wiwa is an author, environmental activist and businessman.
 5. The energy security (security of supply) issue is also about geopolitics: consider the geopolitical position that Nigeria seems to have in relations to the ECOWAS region, and the US Africa Command (AFRICOM). Nigeria is seen as a steady regional policeman for the whole Gulf of Guinea up to Angola. Michael Watts posits that a geo-strategic driver was involved (Watts, 2004).
 6. An environmental activist and lawyer and one of the youngest attorneys on Saro Wiwa's defence team against the Nigerian government tribunal in 1995. Senior Special Assistant to the Nigerian President on Research and Strategy 2011 to the present.
 7. The accusations by the governments and the IOCs against the people of the Delta of sabotage and belonging to criminal gangs are similar to the way oppressive regimes treat resistance to law and order issue. This started in the colonial period when the Colonial government reacted in a similar way to the attacks on the Royal Niger Company headquarters by the youths who protested against RNC's monopoly in the palm oil trade in Brass in 1894.
 8. Oil bunkering is the illegal tapping of both crude and refined oil into barges or other containers and loading them on to tankers or cargo ships for sale locally or to neighbouring countries and other buyers in the international oil market.
 9. One of MEND's senior commanders.

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