

THE NIGERIAN STATE AND CRUDE OIL BUNKERING IN NIGER DELTA:
EXAMINING THE ENVIRONMENTAL VULNERABILITY

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ABSTRACT

The exploration and development of the Nigerian oil resource date back to the 1950s. However, it is obvious that such bourgeois activity has not tangibly reflected upon the wellbeing of the people of Niger Delta, who are the immediate host to these oil resources. Hence, this paper evaluates the rising oil bunkering activities in Niger Delta and its effects upon the human environment. Methodologically, the qualitative method of data collection and analysis is adopted. The theoretical framework is based on the Frustration-aggression analysis. We argue that the failure of the Nigerian state to enhance the living conditions of the impoverished region that yields the *golden egg* accounts for the rising oil bunkering activities in the region. Consequently, oil bunkering has further led to rapid depredation of the Niger Delta agricultural land space. We recommend that the Federal Government should implement genuine poverty alleviation schemes and provide social security for the teeming jobless youths in the region.

Keywords: Niger Delta, Oil Bunkering, Environmental Criminality.

1. INTRODUCTION

The petro-business in Nigeria is not unconnected with its own peculiar problems and challenges. One of such is the rising concerns of environmental protection and preservation of the ecosystem, given the perceived operational exigencies associated with oil exploration in the country. Oil spillage, gas flaring and other related activities alike, committed by oil companies operating in Niger Delta often become unavoidable and uncontrollable and as such culminate into environmental plundering and depredation (Watts, 2007; Alapiki and Allen, 2006). In effect, a maximum threat is consciously and forcefully exerted on the human environment thereof. However, the consequence of these unfriendly acts is that the socio-economic life of the local communities implicated along the line is summarily disrupted and nearly made extinct. Of more concern, hereto, is that successive governments have rhetorically turned their eyes away to the lots of the Niger Delta people and their immediate environment (Ibeanu, 2002; Ikejiani-Clark 2007).

More or less, oil wealth has therefore ironically become a curse for the people of the region, who have been holistically distanced from benefiting appropriately and commensurably from the abundant resource of which nature has bestowed upon them. This development has triggered several acts of environmental criminality by Niger Delta youths, referred to as militants, who sought a means to pour and express their desperation, anger and frustration over the uncharacteristic suffocation and violation of their immediate environment and agricultural activities, in which they wholly depend on for livelihood (Obi and Iwuoha, 2009). In contradiction, such acts of criminality have further contributed towards the degradation of the environment. In particular, oil bunkering whereby oil are stolen and pipelines vandalized, leaving considerable quantum of oil to spill away uncontrollably into the land and water ways, is a major problem to grapple with. Therefore, this paper examines the rising trend of oil bunkering and the level of environmental threat faced in the Niger Delta.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The act of civil disobedience or crime against the state, as found in Niger Delta, is not committed without a psychological conviction of sort by the offenders. Thus, there is a psychological undertone or sensory/moral justification behind the urge by the Niger Delta able bodied young men to vent their anger upon the state. In this regard, the most popular behavioural explanatory framework in the study of violence, as articulated by the major proponents of relative deprivation theory and rising expectation and frustration-aggression paradigm, has been the integrative model. This model can be found in the original works of Gurr (1970) Dollard *et al.* (1939), Miller (1941), Berkowitz (1962) and Ritzer (1996). The central thesis of this model is that aggression is always a consequence of discontent of a kind. Therefore, this study has adopted the relative deprivation theory as a framework of analysis in explaining the incidences of oil bunkering in the Niger Delta. The relative deprivation theory has the central logic that the greater the discrepancy, howbeit marginal, between what is sought and what seems attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger vented through violence will occur.

Particularly, Gurr (1970) argues that relative deprivation is the fallout between the desired value expectations of the individual and their value capabilities. Here, value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which the individual believe he or she is rightfully entitled to; while on the other hand, value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining and maintaining, given the social means available to them. Gurr goes further to suggest some inherent variables that overwhelm the intensity of emotional responses to the perception and feelings of deprivation. The first assumption is that the greater the extent of discrepancy that individuals observe between what they seek and what seems to be attainable, the greater their anger and consequent disposition to aggression. The second assumption relates to opportunities. Men who feel they have many ways to achieve and attain their goals in life are less likely to become angry when one of such goals is hindered or prevented than those who have few alternatives. A third assumption, and a general proposition, is that the greater the intensity of a group's expectations, the greater their anger whenever they meet or encounter unexpected or increased resistance towards the actualization of those intents.

The theory equips us with some vital tools in assessing the level of environmental harm inflicted upon the Niger Delta by the frustrated militants. However, it should be noted that the Niger Delta people are the bonafide owners of the crude oil resource which has been explored for the comprehensive benefit of the Nigerian society, over a half century when Shell first struck oil at Oloibiri, Bayelsa state. In other words, having seen their counterparts in other parts of the country get even more than their fair share, the Niger Delta militants have taken to oil bunkering and other environmental criminality in order to vent their anger and also attract the attention of

the Nigerian state towards their plights/frustrations. Otherwise put, we are very interested in linking the impact of environmental criminality in Niger Delta with the insensitivity of the Nigerian leadership to cushion the grievances and marginalization of the Niger Delta people.

The Nigerian oil is mainly hosted in the oil rich zone known as Niger Delta. The nine states that make up the Niger Delta include: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. The Nigerian oil sector began in Araromi in the present day Ondo State, as way back as 1908 when a German company called the Nigerian Bitumen Corporation explored for bitumen in the area. The outbreak of the First World War thwarted oil exploration in Nigeria. However, in 1937, Shell D'Arcy- the forerunner of Shell Petroleum started oil exploration again in 1937. Between 1937 and 1938, Shell had a full concession for oil exploration in the entire country. After the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 which also interrupted oil explorations, Shell resumed operations in 1947 and struck oil in commercial quantity at Oloibiri, Bayelsa State (NNPC, 1992). In 1958, the company began production from the Oloibiri field. In 1959, the concession rights granted Shell over the whole country was reviewed and by 1961 Mobil, Gulf (now Chevron), Agip, Safrap (now Elf), Tenneco, British Petroleum (BP), and Amoseas (now Texaco) had joined the exploration in Nigeria. Gulf made the first offshore oil discovery at Escravos in 1964. Shell and British Petroleum were moved to greater activity when concessions were granted to other companies such as Gulf whose early exploration proved to be positive, despite the physiographic difficulties at Escravos in the Niger Delta region. Quick expansion was also a consequence of favorable petroleum law and the strategic geographic advantage. However, during the Civil War (1967-1970), the expansion program was stopped temporarily while at the end of the war Nigeria steadily increased its exports making her the world's fifth largest oil exporting country in 1974 (NNPC, 1992, p. 18).

Nigeria became a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), in July, 1971 and established the Nigerian National Oil Corporation (NNOC) in 1972. In 1977, the Federal Government merged the NNOC and the Ministry of Petroleum to form the present Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) through Decree 33 of 1977 (Ikejiani-Clark 2007). Between 1973 and 1977, NNPC negotiated joint venture participation in all the major oil companies. Nigeria also entered the downstream sector following the establishment of the first Port Harcourt refinery joint venture with Nigeria having 50%, Shell 25% and BP 25%. The gains of this venture was sharply reflected in the country's export earnings as Nigeria's oil earnings shot up from N4.733 billion in 1975, to N10 billion in 1980 (Olukoshi, 1990).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative method of data collection to generate important data from both primary and secondary sources in carrying out the study. The primary data sourced include recorded human documents which have not been tampered or manipulated for the purpose of research such as: the National Bureau of Statistics, the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the 2008 Report of the Technical Committee on Niger Delta among others. Other secondary materials are generated from textbooks, journal articles, newspapers, internet sources etc. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive method to analyze such relevant data generated from both primary and secondary sources. We have embraced the relative deprivation theory as our framework of analysis, to provide a moral conviction for the study.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The state is a necessary product of circumstance. It is an unavoidable human contraption for the institution of peace, social tranquility and mutual coexistence within a territorial human society. However, there are numerous postulations on the concept of the state. Lin (1939:6)

defines the state as “a territorial human society which exercises, through a government, a supreme coercive power over individuals and groups within it for the purpose of regulating and maintaining a general hierarchy of social values and institutions”. Therefore, the state represents an objective force in a given polity that stands above the society to wield a supreme power/authority over its subjects through governmental authorities and rules (Ake, 1985; Alavi, 1973).

More importantly, the state arose as an outcome of the dialectics of industrial capital, at a time in which patterns of economic production, distribution and exchange had a direct clash with social relations of production and productive forces. Thus, the state became a reconciliatory tool which was to reposition the given society back on the trajectory of harmonious social relations/order (Engels, 1984; Okolie, 2008). Afterwards, the evolving character of the state became mutually consistent with the manner and level of development of the productive forces and social relations of production (Osegbue, Nwanolue and Ngozi-Osegbue, 2003). Hence, the state dramatically assumed a class character, of which serves the interest of the dominant class in the society. As a result, the state has become a tool of class domination (Engels, 1984; Ake, 1985; Ibeanu, 1998). To corroborate this, Laski (1980: iii) notes that:

The state, it is urged, is, in fact, the supreme coercive power in any given political society; but it is, in fact, used to protect and promote in that society the interest of those who own its instruments of production. The state expresses a will to maintain a given system of class-relations. It does so by the use of its supreme coercive power to that end.

Therefore, the Nigerian state is nothing less than a grown and protruding capitalist modality. Thus, the state in Nigeria overwhelmingly serves the interest of the ruling class who accumulates the wealth accruable from oil exploration in Niger Delta, without corresponding input towards assuaging the effects of oil exploration in the region. Remarkable, therefore, the involvement of international capitalist moguls in the political economy of Nigeria, especially in the case of multinational oil companies operating in Niger Delta, rather embourgeois the state and yokes it with a rentier character; than retaining its essential elements of objectivism and public-oriented character. Generally, this development is not so far unconnected with the prevailing character of international capitalism (Osegbue, 2008; Nwanolue, Osegbue and Iwuoha, 2012).

In this context, thus, the Nigerian state is largely implicated in the rising acts of oil bunkering in Niger Delta, as a result of its neglect and abandonment of the people of the region who suffer untold hardship out of the devastating effects of which oil explorations have had on their immediate environment.

5. DISCUSSIONS

According to UNDP (1994), security covers the integration of pragmatic strategies for the protection of human rights, human dignity, human environment, women empowerment, enhancement of the well being of children, democratic governance and development. However, Maniruzzaman (1982:2) described national security as “the protection of the minimum core values of any nation, political independence, environmental and territorial integrity”. In this sense, oil is a vital resource which is of utmost importance to Nigeria’s national security and survival. Therefore, the protection and preservation of the Niger Delta environment which harbours such a core value of national life have remained an issue of national concern especially giving the constant threat to oil facilities in the Niger Delta region. Therefore, one of the

important challenges is how to strike a balance between the continuation of the petrobusiness in the Niger Delta and that of the inclusion of the people of the region whose land hosts the oil resource in benefitting considerable from same in such a manner that the militant youths are effectively inhibited from further plundering of the environment through oil vandalism.

Actually, Nigeria has not been very passive in facing the challenges of environmental security in the Niger Delta. However, the early steps taken by the Federal Government towards handling the Niger Delta landed property was never encouraging. This was done by the promulgation of certain laws that merely turned the inhabitants of the oil producing communities into squatters in their own ancestral homes. Dafinone has simply highlighted that:

The existence and application of the Mineral Act of 1914, part of which has been extracted to form the Petroleum Act of 1969, the Land Use Act of 1978 and the Land (Title Vesting) Decree of 1993 have directly or indirectly contributed to the present state of neglect, underdevelopment and insecurity in the region (cited in Ikejiani-Clark, 2007:16).

However, in 1961, the Federal Government set up the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), but the board failed to achieve its objectives before the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War. Subsequent efforts at developing the eroding environs of the Niger Delta include the establishment of the Niger Delta Basin and Rural Development Authority in 1976, and the setting up of a Presidential Task Force with 1.5% from the federation account allotted for the development of the region (Saliu, 2008). After this came the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). The OMPADEC was structured to manage 3 percent of oil revenue accruing to the Federal Government from petroleum operations for use in oil mineral producing areas (Federal Government Decree, No.23, 1992). However, OMPADEC failed to meet the aspirations of the people and corruption was the main name of the agency. Change of name to Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has not been able to tackle the problem either (Ikejiani-Clark, 2007). Incidentally, the NDDC which was created to help catalyze economic and social development in the region has remained ineffective and opaque. The Commission has been reduced to that of an implementing agency of the state that appoints contractors to execute projects designed and approved by it and whose implementation is rarely monitored effectively. The Government spends an annual amount of about US\$40.00 million on NDDC for community projects in the Niger Delta (Ibeanu, 2008). The sum of N69.9 billion was earmarked for the commission in 2007. Of course, this is just a pittance in the face of the crisis of development in the region (Ikejiani-Clark, 2007).

Much more later, the NNDC was subsumed as a parastatal under the Ministry of Niger Delta which was recently created on the 11th of September 2008, by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, who stated that the Ministry would serve as a primary vehicle for the delivery of his administration's agenda for the rapid socio-economic development and environmental security of the restive region. He had emphasized that "The Ministry will coordinate our efforts to tackle the challenges of infrastructural development, environmental protection and youth empowerment in the region" (*ThisDay*, September 12, 2008:4). To do this, the Ministry of Niger Delta received about N52 billion in the 2009 budget (*Newswatch*, May 4, 2009:20). With the allocation of N64.419 to the Niger Delta Ministry in 2010, the entire Niger Delta received a total of N77.12 billion in 2010, including N27.12 billion for the NDDC. However, this allocation can only do little in the face of magnitude socio-economic and environmental challenges facing the area. The Vice President of the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) and Chairman, Oil and Gas Trade Group, Billy Harry, had projected that the Ministry would require about N900 billion for

development of the region in three years. He noted that the N64 billion allocated in 2010 can only go a half way towards the development of the region (See: allafrica.com).

The Federal Government had under the Acting President, Goodluck Jonathan, directed the Ministry of Finance to transfer N19 billion intervention funds for the dredging of the lower River Niger to the Ministry of the Niger Delta for shoreline protection and land reclamation (See: dredgingtoday.com). Further, the Special Assistant, Media to the Acting President, Mr. Ima Niboro, said that the action was part of the Federal Government effort in protecting the communities and reclaiming their lands adequately, before embarking on the dredging of the Niger, since the dredging will cause the water channels to become deeper and make flows become faster, which would have more adverse effects on the shores of the communities (See: dredgingtoday.com).

Though some sorts of socio-economic, environmental and infrastructural development packages were initiated to address the Niger Delta problem, there is an absence of political will in implementing them, hence, the continued agitation in the region. Apparently, such efforts initiated by the government in achieving safe environment in Niger Delta have not translated to the betterment of the lots of the people, neither have the environmental challenges associated with oil exploration been taken adequate care of. For instance, it is quite perplexing that the former Minister of Niger Delta, Chief Ufot Ekaette, proposed the whooping sum of N1.7billion, to fund a boxing tournament between Nigeria's Bash Ali and Gunn of the United States in honor of one Edo man from the meager resources directed towards the development of the area. Such ordinarily, should have been taken care of by the appropriate agency such as the Federal Ministry of Sports (See: nigerdeltaunrest.blogspot.com). This shows the level of concern put in by the state towards improving socio-economic life of the people of Niger Delta whose natural environment, which forms the sources of their livelihood, has been disrupted by the exigencies linked to oil exploration in the region.

Indeed, the rising instances of crude oil bunkering have enormous implications for food security in the Niger Delta region and beyond. For Abubakar (2010:4), food security is determined by a number factor, namely: sustainable farming and food production systems, our circumstances such as the ability to grow, exchange or purchase food needs as part of maintaining livelihoods. More so, Clay et al (1988:3) takes a comprehensive view of food security both at the macro and micro economic levels. They added that food security has two main senses: national and individual. At the national level, typically, it means the availability in the country of sufficient stocks of food to meet national need (however defined) until such time as stocks can be replenished from harvests or imports. At the individual level, it means that all members of society have access to the food they need, either from the market, from their own production, or from the public food distribution system (e.g. the ration system, or food for work).

In fact, the reality of food insecurity in the country is well documented. For example, about 65% of Nigerians have been described as food insecure (i.e. do not have sufficient access to the amount and variety of food for a healthy and productive life; while about 40% of children under five years of age are stunted; 9% are wasted and 25% are underweight, owing to widespread deficiencies in Vitamin A, Iron and Iodine and general poor food lifestyle (Abubakar, 2010:9). Calorie supply per capita in Nigeria in 2007 stood as low as 2,741. Between 2003 and 2009, about 27.00% children were undernourished. While, between 2005 and 2007, about 6.00% of Nigerians were undernourished. Also, between 2004 and 2006, net receipts of cereals as food aid dramatically rose to 3,500 tonnes (FAO, 2011). In the light of these catastrophic food condition, thus, Nigeria recently ranked 20th out of 42 African countries studied on the 2006 Global Hunger Index (GHI); improved to 18th position on the 2009 GHI and 46th out of the 84 developing countries captured globally for the study in 2009 (Abubakar, 2010).

However, the problem is both natural as well as man-made. Natural factors such as climate change, drought, flood, etc are major challenges. More importantly, however, crude oil bunkering activities in the Niger Delta have contributed in diverse measures in the stagnation of agricultural ventures in the region, thus, ever complicating the reality of food security in Nigeria. Obviously, crude oil crime, which the government has failed to tackle and overhaul, impacts negatively on the Niger Delta land boundaries, agricultural farmland and general landscape. This odd development disastrously results to land conflicts of indescribable dimensions. By extension, land conflicts have ultimately led to colossal depletion and annihilation of human population of Niger Delta, and in particular, a dramatic and acatalectic dispersion of quantum degree of the agro-manpower/population, churning out refugees everywhere and worsening food crisis in the country. These agonizing and excruciating food conditions and attendant human sufferings thereof demand urgent and collaborative rescue by the government and relevant international bodies, in order to sustain the reality of human existence in Niger Delta, both in the present and beyond.

More significantly, the thorny cases of crude oil theft impinge on the ability of oil producing firms to turn out considerable quantum of crude oil for human and industrial consumption (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2011). Hence, the inability to satisfactorily meet daily oil demands by most Nigerian households. This has pronouncedly led to resort in the use of environmental crop materials to alternate energy supply. One of such is the hasty resort to biofuels. Though there may be different forms of bioenergy, biofuels remain highly outstanding, and overwhelmingly fascinate the attention of this discourse. In fact, the global energy community is witnessing an increased interest in biofuels development. For instance, the EU perceives biofuels as sustainable energy source; United States perceives biofuels as alternatives for reducing oil-dependency and a technical option to respond to climate change. Some countries like Brazil, Malaysia and Mexico see biofuels as export-oriented development. These alternative energies are perceived not only as one of the answers to the present energy crisis on a global level. However, in the Nigerian case, there is undesirable rising and excessive focus on the use of biofuels, not as a minimal outcome of the global rush for alternative energy, but mainly and disappointedly, as direct approach by the helpless and vulnerable Niger Delta inhabitants to supplement poverty and food insecurity in the region. Of course, as earlier mentioned, this scenario is a direct consequence of government's neglect of the Niger Delta people, such, leading to crude oil theft, which invariably situates environmental degradation, and subsequently, serious disruptions and shortages in crude oil production. This development generally, counteracts and impinges efforts towards environmental sustainability.

Indeed, there is no doubt that the absence of human security, environmental protection and socio-economic development of the Niger Delta over the years have remained a nagging and reinforcing factor in the crisis going on in Niger Delta (Ibeanu, 2008; Watts, 2007; Alapiki and Allen, 2006). The Nigerian government receives about 95% return on crude oil investments, but the local communities are getting nothing in return. Yet, with little or no effort, the government has not addressed the rising environmental issues predominately in the Delta Niger. The communities are seeking compensation for the utilization of their oil resource and violation of their agricultural activities that forms their daily life. As a reaction to the lack of commensurate compensation from the government, a good number of local youths have begun taking their argument out on the oil companies operating in the region. The youths in the area are compelled by reason and moral judgment to pick up arms to express their aggression and grievances by engaging in all sorts of environmental criminality: pipeline vandalization, blowing of oil facilities such as oil rigs, flow stations, oil vessels etc.

Indeed overwhelming statistics on various environmental crimes committed by militant groups in the Niger Delta, which have largely furthered the degradation of the environment,

abound. Appendix 1 highlights the various environmental crimes impacted by various militant groups operating in the Niger Delta from January 2006 to September 2008.

5.1 THE IMPACTS OF OIL BUNKERING

Particularly, oil bunkering constitutes the greatest rate of environmental deprecation and pollution. The theft is estimated at about \$4 billion yearly (*The News*, Vol.23, 2004; *Scroll*, Feb.11, 2008, p. 36). Specifically, Nigeria has lost over N53 billion to petroleum pipeline vandalization alone between 2006 and 2007 (*The Guardian*, Feb.16, 2008, p. 3). In fact, the November 2008 Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta, revealed that the country has lost about N8.84 trillion or \$61.6 billion to oil theft and sabotage in the volatile region between 2006 and 2008. In 2006 alone, the total cost of oil loss per barrel due to the activities of the militants was N2.45 trillion or \$27.2 billion while an additional N283 billion or \$1.9 billion was lost to oil bunkering. In 2008, Nigeria lost estimated revenue of about N2.97 trillion or \$20.7 billion to attacks on oil installations, resulting in shutdowns and spillages in the first nine months of 2008. The tables below show comprehensive statistical information on the various acts of pipeline vandalization in Niger Delta, total barrels of oil loss as well as a detailed financial cost of the crisis between 2002 and 2007.

Table 1: Pipeline Vandalization, 2002-2003

Zones	2002			2003		
	No. of occurrence	Products loss ('000mt)	Value of occurrence	No. of occurrence	Products loss ('000mt)	Value of occurrence
Port Harcourt	444	222.32	5,462.19	608	225.81	8,121.00
Warri	26	12.03	296.81	90	27.93	1,002.00
Mosimi	40	70.64	1,824.56	70	109.05	3,860.00
Kaduna	2	2.63	62.77	11	0.20	7.00
Gombe	4	0.78	13.30	-	0.14	-
Total	474	211.08	3,867.75	779	363.13	12,990.00

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2008, p. 311).

Table 2: Pipeline Vandalization, 2004-2005

Zones	2004			2005		
	No. of occurrence	Products loss ('000mt)	Value of occurrence	No. of occurrence	Products loss ('000mt)	Value of occurrence
Port Harcourt	429	7,765.00	7,765.00	1,017	20,591.00	na
Warri	266	3,148.00	3,148.00	769	9,854.00	na
Mosimi	152	8,011.00	8,011.00	209	9,251.00	na
Kaduna	122	163.00	163.00	243	990.00	na
Gombe	2	573.00	573.00	20	929.00	na
Total	971	19,660	19,660	2,258	41,615.00	na

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2008, p. 312).

Most of the oil bunkering recorded occurred in Port Harcourt and Warri, major sites of oil exploration. Indeed, the number of oil spilled in pipeline vandalism is well enough to subject the totality of the Nigerian ecosystem into overwhelming threat. The overall implication of this oddity is that the generality of human environment where these acts are particularly perpetrated are further set out for maximum danger. The logic here is that the more the Niger Delta people are neglected and distanced significantly from their oil wealth, the more their youths (militants)

engage in oil bunkering, which do not only deplete the income derivable from oil exploration but variously debase the human and business environment and renders it impotent and vulnerable.

Table 3: Pipeline Vandalization, 2006-2007

Zones	2006			2007		
	No. of occurrence	Products loss ('000mt)	Value of occurrence	No. of occurrence	Products loss ('000mt)	Value of occurrence
Port Harcourt	2,091	21,885.00	Na	1,631	6,333	na
Warri	662	1,052.00	Na	306	-	na
Mosimi	486	13,709.00	Na	479	10,634	na
Kaduna	176	-	Na	126	273	na
Gombe	268	-	Na	702	-	na
Total	3,683	36,646.00	Na	3,244	17,240.00	na

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2008, p. 312).

The vulnerability of the Niger Delta environment, which is mostly occasioned by such acts of oil bunkering, has so many effects on the human environment. Particularly, pipeline vandalism, leading to oil leakages, triggers the decomposition and crumbling of community farmlands, causing intense erosion and deforestation by incremental grass wiping, tidal waves, flooding, clearing of mangroves and falling of economic trees, polluting wetlands, creeks, fish ponds, air and rainwater, and obstructing the natural sequence of waterways. In aggregation, it quickens the cause of osmosis, distorting the atmospheric condition. And in effect, the natural weather cycle is compulsorily violated, leading to climate change and global warming (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012).

However, beside the usual visitation of the Niger Delta militancy with extensive force, which has not only proved abortive and futile in quelling the militant uprisings in the region (Ibeanu, 2002; Lubech, Watts and Lipschutz, 2007; Alapiki and Allen, 2006), one of the seeming effective carrot approach regularly applied to the Niger Delta militancy has been that of the amnesty programmes, which is done alongside arms collection. Therefore, we move ahead to examine the politics involved in amnesty programmes and the corresponding impact such exercises have had in preserving the Niger Delta environment through effective containment of acts of environmental criminality in the region.

5.2 IS AMNESTY A STRATEGY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY?

In fact, there have been well over three successful amnesty/arms collection exercises in Nigeria, in an effort to mop up illegal weapons that flood the Niger Delta, with which environmental crimes of divergent dimensions are being perpetrated. The calculation here is that if the Federal Government is able to woe out the militants from engaging in environmental crimes, especially that relating to oil bunkering, by paying them off and discounting of their offences, then, those illegal weapons used in such acts of oil bunkering would be retrieved by the government and the whole militancy issue put to eternal rest. Howbeit, the amnesty assumption has not only proved abortive and unsuccessful in containing the Niger Delta unrest but has variously faced serious abuse and misuse over the years. The following table depicts the various amnesty/arms collection exercises undertaken by the Federal Government since 2001.

Table 4: Illegal Weapons Collected by Federal Government in Disarmament Programmes (1999-2009)

Year	No. of Illegal Weapons Surrendered	Participants	Coordinating Body	Destruction Exercise
July 2001	428 riffles 494 imported pistols 287 local pistols 48 dane guns	Ijaw Youths and many cult groups located in Niger Delta	National Committee	buried at sea
Jan. 2002- June 2003	1,902 assorted firearms 13,271 rounds of ammunition	Niger Delta cult groups	National Committee	not destroyed
2004	1000 guns (AK-47s and SA. Vz 58s)	NDPVF and NDV	FG Committee (chaired by Peter Odili)	not destroyed
2007	Not successful	MEND	Rivers State Govt.	-
2009	Over 10,000 weapons- 2,760 assorted guns, 287, 445 ammunition of different caliber, 18 gun-boats, 763 dynamites, 1,090 dynamite caps, 3, 155 magazines, eight rocket launchers and several dynamite cables, bullet proof jackets and jack-knives	Over 1,000 Niger Delta militants (ungrouped)	Amnesty implementation Committee	not destroyed

Sources: Compiled from Asuni, J.B. (2009); International Alert (2003); Ginifer, J. and Ismail, O. (2005).

Inter alia, the above table informs that none of the amnesty programmes organized in this country has had any meaningful or sustainable impact on the attendants, that is, the militants. More importantly, when juxtaposed with appendix 1 and previous tables, one would clearly observe that oil bunkering and related environmental crimes committed by the Niger Delta militants rather escalated in the said period of amnesty programmes. What an irony. Apparently, the last amnesty programme rather gave more impetus to a rise in oil bunkering and environmental criminality. To corroborate this truth, in an interview with *Weekly Trust*, Mr. Tobore Isaac, a resident of Warri in Delta state, who says he does business daily as a boat driver confirmed that:

We all watched the militants surrender their arms during the amnesty program, but I tell you, when you see them operating on the high sea now, it is as if they have not surrendered anything. They are still well armed, if not better armed than before. They still fill ships with oil from broken pipes and flow stations (Weekly Trust, May 8, 2010:8).

Recently, Shell Petroleum Company shut down its Imo River flow station (located in Imo State) owing to constant bunkering of the oil facilities in the station, such leading to a loss/shut-in in production of about 25,000 barrels of crude oil (*MBI News*, September 26, 2011). This goes on to show that either of the parties, that is, the government or the militants, has never been fully sincere and committed in making things work. However, some governing elites and other respected members of the political class have been deeply involved and so enmeshed in funding oil bunkering activities. In fact, high level government officials are not only involved in oil bunkering business (Lubeck, Watts, and Lipschutz, 2007), but have protected and backed armed militias to enable them to continue operating without interference by security forces (Hazen and Horner, 2007; Agboton-Johnson et al, 2004).

Unfortunately, it is the same political class that is mostly entrusted with oil windfalls to attend to the pressing socio-environmental needs of the region. This poses a sort of irreconcilable contradiction. Therefore, it may not be improper to hold that the leadership of the country lacked the political will in surmounting and conquering environmental questions associated with the petrobusiness (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012). Logically, herewith, the governing class is intimately incriminated in environmental crimes. The consequence of this uncharacteristic accomplice and connivance of the political class in acts of environmental criminality is that the environment is further plundered, harassed, debased and bastardized in such a manner that the survival of the entire nation is constantly put into abundant threat. In all, the environmental issues necessitated by oil bunkering such as erosion, flooding, deforestation, air, water and land poisoning; all of which tantamount to climate change and global warming, as well as other health risks involved, are what the country and its people are compulsorily subjected to.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the issue of oil bunkering in Niger Delta and the effects it has on the human environment. It is argued that it rests on the onus of the government to display high profile of responsibility, integrity and assertive political will in attending to the environmental challenges mutually linked with oil exploration in the Niger Delta. The imperative of tackling the issues of oil bunkering in the Niger Delta do not only rest in dissuading the militants from causing disruptions and shut-ins in oil production and returns, but quite holistically, covers all spectrum of environmental protection and preservation. Hence, there is utmost need for the government to rise to the challenges of oil bunkering in Niger Delta with sincerity of purpose and intent.

More importantly, however, while the already proffered legal instruments and systematic frameworks for controlling environmental problems are significant and germane, it should be noted that they have not been very attainable in terms of implementation and practicability. For instance, most oil companies operating in the Niger Delta have continued in oil spillage as well as gas flaring, which result to the emission of toxic substances into waters and atmosphere of the Niger Delta, which continues to provide justification for crude oil bunkering in the region. Hence, a considerable proportion of people in the Niger Delta has remained in abject poverty, and suffering from various degrees of abuse, as a result of Government's neglect and insensitiveness to systemic plan implementation in the Niger Delta area. Therefore, in the face of the lingering challenges posed by oil exploration and concomitant oil bunkering in the Niger Delta, Government should go beyond mere rhetoric, i.e. policy declarations, conferences, legislations and verbal commitments, and implement a coherent workable framework of action. Oil companies should be compelled to stop gas flaring in the Niger Delta, so as to reduce the detrimental health effects on the immediate inhabitants of the areas harbouring gas stations. Strict safety measures should be implemented to ensure environmental sustainability. Particularly, as the international standard stipulates, residential areas should be situated at a minimum of 450m away from the flare point. These strategies would go a long way in preserving the fast eroding environment of the Niger Delta.

Socio-economic development and environmental protection of the region must be keenly addressed. Only this approach can broker a lasting peace that will potentially give the Niger Delta militants some moral conviction to disengage from environmental criminality, which in any case goes further to plunder the human environment and mars national security in general.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Environmental Crimes Committed by Various Militant Groups in Niger Delta from Jan. 2006-July 2009

Date	Incident	Location	Casualty
Jan. 11, 2006	Attack on Royal Dutch/shell's oil facilities	Offshore field Rivers State	4 foreign workers kidnapped
Jan. 11, 2006	Explosion on major crude oil pipeline operated by Royal Dutch/Shell	Forcados, Delta	-
Jan. 15, 2006	Royal Dutch/Shell facilities was attacked by MEND	Port Harcourt	17 soldiers killed
May 10, 2006	An executive with US based oil company, Baker Hughes was shot and killed	Port Harcourt	1 death occurred
June 2, 2006	A Norwegian offshore rig was attacked	Port Harcourt	16 crew members kidnapped
Aug. 21, 2006	Clash between MEND and security agencies	Bayelsa	10 MEND fighters killed
Sept. 12, 2006	Militants attacked Chevron offshore oil field	Delta	1 worker killed
Oct. 2, 2006	MEND fighters attack Nigerian soldiers patrol boat	offshore	10 soldiers killed
Oct. 2, 2006	A Nigerian/Royal Dutch Shell convoy was attacked	Port Harcourt	Some officials wounded
Oct. 3, 2006	Western oil workers taken hostage	Bayelsa	7 Western oil workers Taken hostage
Oct. 4, 2006	Nigerian soldiers stormed a militant camp	Rivers	9 soldiers were killed
Nov. 22, 2006	Clash between Nigerian soldiers and some militants When soldiers stormed a militant camp to rescue Kidnapped oil workers	Rivers	1 soldier died
Dec. 7, 2006	Kidnap of foreign oil workers	Rivers	4 foreign oil workers Kidnapped
Dec. 21, 2006	Obagi pumping station attacked	Delta	3 guards killed
Jan. 16, 2007	Militants attacked an oil vessel near Bonny Island	Bonny Island, Riv	-
March 4, 2007	Major spill at a pipeline feeding the Bonny export terminal due to sabotage	Rivers	-
May 1, 2007	Six expatriate workers from an offshore facility Owned by Chevron were seized	Funiwa, Delta	6 oil workers kidnapped
May 3, 2007	MEND fighters seized eight foreign oil workers from an offshore vessel	Rivers	8 foreign oil workers Held hostage
May 4, 2007	Saipen site was attacked causing shuts in production	Okono/Okpoh	Several oil workers Wounded
May 7, 2007	Protests caused Chevron to shut down the Abiteye flow station that feeds Escravos export terminal	Abiteye, Delta State	-
May 8, 2007	Three major oil pipelines (one in Brass and two In the Akasa area) run by Agip were attacked	Brass/Akasa, Bayelsa State	-
May 10, 2007	Protesters occupied the Bomu pipeline system Causing She shut-in production feeding Bonny Light export route	Bomu, Rivers	-
May 16, 2007	Gunmen attacked the country home of the Vice President (now President Goodluck Jonathan)	Ogbia, Bayelsa	-
May 28, 2007	Protests at Bomu pipeline system made Shell to Shut-in production through its Nembe Creek trunk	Bomu, Rivers	-
June 14, 2007	Gunmen stormed the Ogainbiri flow station operated by Eni Petroleum	Ogainbiri, Delta	24 workers taken hostage
June 18, 2007	Militants overran the Chevron-Eni Abiteye flow station causing shut-in crude oil production	Port Harcourt	30 innocent citizens died in the attack
Aug. 3, 2007	Militants attacked Port Harcourt city destroying some public properties such as the NNPC mega filling station and radio station	Port Harcourt	30 innocent citizens died in the attack
Sept. 20, 2007	Gunmen claiming to be MEND kidnapped 11 Members of the ruling PDP	Southern Ondo State	11 persons kidnapped
Oct. 20, 2007	MEND attacked a Columbian oil worker	-	1 death
Oct. 26, 2007	Six oil workers attacked	-	Six oil workers kidnapped
Oct. 30, 2007	Naval warship, NNS Obula, deployed to rescue the EA Field belonging to Shell was attacked	Offshore, Rivers	1 death and five others Sustained serious injury
Oct. 31, 2007	MEND attacked a naval officer	Rivers	1 naval officer killed
Nov. 12, 2007	35 militants engaged naval officers manning the Qua Iboe terminal of EXXON Mobil	Iboe, Akwa Ibom	A pregnant woman Killed and 25 persons wounded
Nov. 15, 2007	MEND attacked Shell facility	Rivers	-
Nov. 25, 2007	JTF clashed with MEND near a natural gas facility of Shell	Soku, Rivers	-
Dec. 4, 2007	MEND attacked Exxon Mobil	Rivers	1 killed
Dec. 31, 2007	Militants invaded two police stations at Trans Amadi and Borokiri	Port Harcourt	4 police men and 11 Others lost their lives
Jan. 11, 2008	Petroleum tanker ship was attacked at the Nigerian Ports Authority by Freedom Freelance Fighters (FFF) of MEND	Port Harcourt	2 persons injured

Feb. 3, 2008	MEND attacked a military house boat stationed At the Shell Petroleum Tara manifold	Tara Manifold Bayelsa	2 killed
Feb. 11, 2008	Gunmen attacked a supply vessel belonging to Total Oil Nig Ltd. MV Patience at Buoy 35	Kalaibama, link Bonny island	-
Feb. 11, 2008	Militants attacked a naval gunboat belonging to the Pathfinder Naval escorting NLNG boats From Port Harcourt at Bonny	Rivers	4 people killed
March 19, 2008	Exchange of fire between militants and oil Industry security Ship	Rivers	-
March 21, 2008	MEND attacked naval ship causing explosion	Rivers	-
April 2, 2008	Two oil flow station belonging to Agip Oil Company located offshore Forcados were blown off	Rivers	-
April 13, 2008	Agip vessels bombed	Forcados, Rivers	10 naval officers died and Some militants
April 15, 2008	Serial attacks launched on pipeline belonging to NNPC	-	-
April 19, 2008	MEND fighters crippled Shell Adamakri crude flow station	Delta/Edo	6 people killed
April 21, 2008	MEND in 'Operation Cyclone' attacked two Major pipeline of Shell Soku-Buguma and Buguma-Aklakri	Adamakri	10 killed in the clash
April 24, 2008	MEND sabotage a major oil pipeline of Shell at Kula	Rivers	6 expatriates kidnapped
May 2, 2008	Bayesa State Shell facility attacked, key facilities damaged	Bayelsa	5 persons kidnapped
May 13, 2008	Chevron oil vessel hijacked	Kula, Rivers	-
May 26, 2008	Assault on Rivers State Shell pipeline, forcing Closure	Rivers	8 hostages taken
June 9-10, 2008	Clashes between security forces and militants	Delta	6 militants and 29 soldiers reportedly died
June 19, 2008	MEND struck Shell's Bonga facility on deep Offshore field	Rivers	Over 100 deaths
June 20, 2008	Chevron facility attacked by militants	Rivers	-
June 28, 2008	Clashes between militants and soldiers	Delta	-
July 16, 2008	Clashes between militants and security forces	Rivers/Bayelsa	-
Jul. 24/26, 2008	Foreign oil workers attacked and kidnapped	Rivers	-
July 28, 2008	Two major attacks on Shell oil pipelines		-
Aug. 8, 2008	Militants attacked Ondo State Oil Producing Development Commission (OSOPADEC) and 4 others	Ileje, Ondo	-
Aug. 12, 2008	Militants destroyed oil gas pipeline in Rivers State	Rivers	-
Aug. 19, 2008	Oil pipeline destroyed in Delta State	Delta	-
Aug. 24, 2008	Oil vessel at Bonny Island, Rivers hijacked	Rivers	-
Aug. 30, 2008	Militants and security forces clashed	Rivers	-
Sep.13-15, 2008	Kula oil platform operated by Chevron and Alakri, and flow station operated by Shell were attacked	Rivers	-
July 12, 2009	MEND attacked Atlas Cove Jetty with caliber machine gun	Lagos	4 Naval officers

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