Globalization and Governance: Impact on Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria’s Niger-Delta Region

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Abstract
With the discovery of oil in commercial quantities in 1958 in the Niger-Delta region came intense oil exploration within the region. Consequently, various Multi-National Oil Companies (MNCs) commenced oil exploitation in the region. Steadily, cases of pollution, resulting from oil spillages, increased as the quantities of oil production increased over time. Almost 50 years of exploration has resulted in widespread environmental degradation in the form of land, surface and ground water pollution. This has affected the region’s livelihood capacity from farming to fishing, which reflects in endemic and systemic poverty among the communities within the region. This study focuses on establishing the impact that globalization and governance have brought to bear on communities in Ogoniland, in the Niger-Delta region. The study area consists of 6 traditional kingdoms, all within 4 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Rivers state. The study suggests that bad governance and corruption, rather than globalization, is responsible for the poor state of underdevelopment in Ogoniland. There is a near-absence of infrastructure and amenities with a rapidly degrading environment due to pollution from oil spillages and unsustainable oil exploration activities. It is recommended that multi-disciplinary actions be adopted in order to reverse the observed trend. These could be achieved by measures such as: good, responsible governance that abhors corruption in the disbursement of oil wealth; deployment of early warning systems for oil spill detection and cleaning technologies; appropriate compensation in areas affected by oil spillage; and improved Corporate Social Responsibilities by MNCs.

1. Introduction
Opening up to international trade has helped many countries grow far more quickly than they would otherwise have done [1]. A classical example is the expansive pace at which the Chinese economy has grown and developed over a relatively short period of time. In the case of China, its growth has been attributed largely to increased exports and exploitation of natural resources from countries mostly in, but not limited to, countries in sub-sahara Africa. Chinese institutions are found today foraying in diamond mining and in exploring the recently discovered crude oil reserves in Angola; construction, communications technology and transportation opportunities as well as solid minerals exploration in Nigeria and so on. Such benefits are not solely accruable to China. For instance, Akpabio and Akpan [2] reveal that over 88% of crude oil exploitation in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria is carried out by foreign multi-national oil firms from European and North American countries. While oil exploration activities continue to take place in the Niger-Delta region, obviously benefitting the MNCs, the host communities face the threat of dwindling livelihood sources resulting from pollution that arises from incessant oil spillages. This, in addition to Government complacency, has caused a situation of restiveness, strife and widespread poverty within the region.

Stiglitz [1] points out the wave of protests from developing and most recently, developed countries against globalisation. This perhaps suggests that the gains of globalisation may not be indeed fairly distributed among nations. In the Niger-Delta region, there has been a steady rise in reported cases of kidnappings targeted at foreign MNC expatriates and arson aimed at destroying their facilities and installations, all in the bid to disrupt oil production. In the wake of these attacks and the gory situation in the oil-rich Niger-Delta region, questions are arising as to whether the gains of globalisation are unfairly distributed between nations (on the one hand) or mis-management and corruption are responsible for the situation under discourse.

In any case, globalisation can be seen to be enmeshed in controversy in terms of reward to nations. Hence, it becomes imperative to understand the principal factors driving under-development and environmental degradation within the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, an explanation that should hopeful serve as a generalization for similar nations elsewhere. This study hopes to provide an understanding into the role of globalization and impact of governance on the development process and sustainability within the Niger Delta region. This is more so as the region has been severely degraded due to oil exploration and the consequent neglect of the region by both government and MNCs.

1.1 Globalisation and Resource Distribution among Countries
Today’s world is fast becoming a global village, where global interdependence, interaction and integration among socio-cultural, ideological, political and economic activities of human societies around the world are rapidly increasing. This situation is broadly known as ‘globalisation’. Globalisation simply means increase in cross-border trade and increased financial and foreign direct investment flows between nations, enhanced by rapid advancements in and liberalization of communication and information technology which, on a holistic basis, reflects in the collapse of socio-cultural, economic, political (and even geographical) boundaries of nations across the globe.

Globalisation is characterised by greater integration within the World economy via increased openness to international trade, cross-border capital and labour movements, cross-border flow of technology and cross-border flow of information, knowledge and ideas. It is therefore, the condition of a seemingly borderless world with ever increasing integration that enhances the living conditions of relatively divergent peoples from varying backgrounds, the world over.
Globalisation is also about a global division of labour, that is, the different countries (and regions/cities) will be ‘given’ different roles in the globally linked economy: providing skilled people, providing raw material and energy, providing cheap labour, providing investment funds, etc. which would encourage a relatively fair distribution of gains accruing from globalisation.

However, Collier and Dollar [3] and Zuma [4] agree that globalisation has produced two contrasting global villages: one which is indeed prosperous, rich and democratic; and the other, in which the majority are poor, alienated and marginalized. However, historical perspectives on global integration reveal that the pre-globalisation era was wrought with unique and challenging consequences. Understanding the explanatory factors behind the state of underdevelopment in Ogoni land constitutes the basis for this study. This has become necessary as crude petroleum extraction has increased along with rising inflow of Petro-dollars while on the contrary, physical development evades the region. Is the state of affairs in the Niger-Delta region due to, as Collier [5] suggests, ‘an ethnically diverse autocracy or misuse of economic opportunities from a lopsided democracy of electoral competition without adequate checks and balances’, or is it a factor of complex, changing global economic order? In any case, the resource-rich but poor Niger-Delta region represents a unique Nigerian case study that requires unravelling. This is hoped to be achieved within the contexts of the impact of globalisation of oil exploration activities; and the role of corruption in governance, as these collectively determine the fate of the Ogoni people and indeed others in Nigeria.

1.2 Globalisation in the Context of Economic Integration
The concept of globalisation has been a subject to considerable academic, political and economic debate. As such, the concept has been well researched by various scholars across the globe. The result has been various definitions with relatively different meanings deduced to the concept. For instance, such definitions include those by [6], which focus on culture and beliefs; Sasson [7] and Albassam [8], focusing on education and research; Lee and Vivarelli [9], with emphasis on the social aspect of societies; Nissanne and Thorbecke [10] focusing specifically on poverty and unemployment. In spite of the array of definitions, focus would be on the 5 conceptions of globalisation as internationalization; liberalization; universalization; modernization and supra-territoriality; by Scholte [11]. Davies and Nyland [12] stated that the definitions explained by Scholte are all “related and overlapping but also differ substantially in the emphases they each place on globalisation as a concept”. Scholte’s first definition conceives of globalisation in the same sense as internationalization, i.e., “the growth of international exchange and economic interdependence between nations”. Scholte’s second definition of globalisation places emphasis on liberalization, i.e., “the process of removing state-imposed restrictions on the movement of capital, finance, ideas and other resources between nations in order to build a borderless world economy”. The third definition weighs globalisation alongside universalization, i.e., “the worldwide diffusion of a common range of products, values and experiences to which people have access, wherever they are physically located”. The fourth perspective on the definition of globalisation emphasizes modernization, i.e., “a dynamic whereby the social structures of modernity (capitalism, rationalism, industrialism, bureaucratism, etc.) are spread the world over, normally destroying pre-existent cultures and local self-determination in the process” [11]. The fifth perspective “determines globalisation in both phenomenological and critical terms as the spread of supra-territoriality” [12]. In this sense, globalisation entails a reconfiguration of geography “so that social space is no longer wholly mapped in terms of territorial places, territorial distances and territorial borders” [11]. He proceeds to explain that only the fifth conception of globalisation accounts for the dramatic technologically-enabled difference, thereby providing accurate understanding to the contemporary understanding of globalisation.

For the purpose of this study, a combination of Scholte’s first and fourth conceptions of globalisation is most suitable. These definitions emphasize internationalization and modernization. Therefore, a combination of internationalization and modernization as explained by [11] can be modified to provide a much specific definition of globalisation thus: “a process/condition of the harmonization and integration of economies and societies (cultures) through cross-country (cross-border) flow of information and ideas, knowledge and technologies, goods and services, capital and finance, manpower and people”. This definition is preferred because it accommodates the interest of this study which is the structural (economic) development and its implication on society.

1.3 Tracking the Emergence of Globalisation in Niger-Delta
According to Rangarajan [13], “globalisation has been a historical process with ebbs and flows”. He opined that during the Pre-World War I period of 1870 to 1914, there was the minimum integration of economies in terms of movement of capital, transfer of technology and ideas, as well as migration of people. The advancement of globalisation was largely influenced by the proscribed League of Nations and subsequently, the post World War II United Nations (UN). The UN presented a platform upon which countries that were hitherto alienated (geographically and otherwise) began the process of effective collaboration and integration. Subsequently, several other regional Organisations sprang up. At present, regionalism (an aspect of globalisation) is deeply entrenched. The African Union, European Union, League of Arab Nations, North American Treaty Organisation, Economic Community of West African States, Southern African Development Commission, etc., are a few of such regional institutions. The roles these organisations play in regional integration of member states is significant. The ECOWAS presents a good scenario within the West African sub-region where crises were quelled by its armed intervention wing (ECOMOG) during civil crises in Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone in the 1980 and 1990s, respectively. Presently, geographical boundaries have also collapsed among member states within the region as travel between countries requires very relaxed, visa-free condition. In fact, member states have adopted a common travel document (passport), while efforts are underway towards a common currency and so on. After the Second World War, the drive toward integration was hampered by the ideological war between the West and East. The Soviet bloc, which formed the core of the opposing East in the Cold war, did not participate actively towards global economic integration. However, in the last 20 years, the process of globalisation has proceeded with greater vigour. The former Eastern bloc is now participating increasingly in the global scheme of events. Even China, which was for a long time well-known for its protective, closed and extremely regulated economy, today is a major player in global economic and technological issues. This applies to the Arab nations who have opened up to contemporary global integration pressures. Today, one of the global business hubs is Dubai, UAE. Two centuries ago, this could only be imagined. Due to the speed of transformation, globalisation continues to attract attention from all quarters now than ever [14]. In the Niger-Delta, globalisation is eminent in the presence of multi-national oil corporations, MNOCs (Table 1). These MNOCs actively engage in upstream oil activities in the Niger-Delta region. Again, the division of labour that is encouraged by globalisation is expressed there as the MNOCs possess the technology and expertise that Nigeria requires to extract crude oil resources. Therefore, it becomes imperative to involve the MNOCs if any meaningful discussion of the research problem must be obtained since their role (as agents of globalisation) is considerable in terms of oil extraction vis-à-vis the current deplorable condition in the region, mentioned by [15]:

“The long years of neglect and deprivation, coupled with the insensitivity of some previous government and oil companies as well as the failures of previous development intervention agencies, had created by the late 1990s a volatile atmosphere characterized by protests,
agitation and communal conflicts. By 1998, the Niger-Delta region had become a lawless zone, where youths disrupted oil production activities at will and communities frequently engaged, with little provocation, in destructive inter and intra-community strife”.

It is significant to note the enormous project resources at the disposal of the NDDC, yet it continues to fail in its primary responsibility of improving the living condition of communities in throughout the Niger-Delta region. One becomes deeply persuaded that corruption could be responsible for this gross failure.

Table 1. Multi-National Oil Companies (MNOCs) Operating in the Niger-Delta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consortium</th>
<th>Shareholding</th>
<th>*JVO</th>
<th>Production (2003 estimates)</th>
<th>Production %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shell Petroleum Devt. Co. Ltd</td>
<td>NNPC (Nigeria, 55%) Shell (Dutch/British, 30%) Elf (France, 10%) Agip (Italy, 5%)</td>
<td>Shell</td>
<td>950,000</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobil Producing Unltd</td>
<td>NNPC (Nigeria, 58%) Mobil (USA, 42%)</td>
<td>Mobil</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevron Nig Ltd</td>
<td>NNPC (Nigeria, 58%) Chevron (USA, 48%)</td>
<td>Chevron</td>
<td>485,000</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria Agip Oil Co.</td>
<td>NNPC (Nigeria, 60%) Agip (Italy, 20%) Philips (USA, 20%)</td>
<td>Agip</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elf Petroleum Ltd</td>
<td>NNPC (Nigeria, 60%) Elf (France, 40%)</td>
<td>Elf</td>
<td>145,000</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texaco Overseas Ltd</td>
<td>NNPC (Nigeria, 60%) Texaco (USA, 20%) Chevron (USA, 20%)</td>
<td>Texaco</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Producers</td>
<td>Ashland (USA) Dennnex (Germany) Pan Ocean (Switzerland) British Gas (British) Sun Oil (USA) Conoca (USA) British Gas (British) BP (British) Statoil (Norway) Conoil (Nigeria) Dubri Oil (Nigeria)</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,320,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Joint Venture Operator
Source: [16]

2. An Overview of Corruption in Nigeria’s Governance

Corruption is one of the key weaknesses, more than any other, that have led to inefficiency in the management of resources in most Third World countries [1; 17]. According to [2], “leadership corruption in Nigeria has manifested in various forms at high and low places, cutting across all sectors of the national fabric. It is not even different within the Niger-Delta Development Commission which was set up to specifically respond to the developmental needs of the (Niger-Delta) people”. “The abuse of public power for private benefit” [18] which is a form of corruption, is a common trait among Nigeria’s ruling class. Corruption is generally and commonly viewed as a perpetration of vice against the public well-being. The government of Nigeria has made hundreds of billions of dollars from oil revenue in the last over 40 years of oil production in the Niger-Delta [19; 20; 21; 22]. Yet, vast majority of people remain in abject poverty and deprivation as they lack basic amenities and infrastructure such as water, roads, health centres, schools and electricity.

Furthermore, International Crisis Group [23] amply stated that of the seventy-four countries to be in situations of current or potential conflict 35% have known oil and gas resources. Nigeria ranks prominently among these countries with its huge annual earnings from oil and gas. In the succeeding chapters, it would be shown that the gory situation in the Niger-Delta is attributed to widespread corruption on the part of government officials and traditional rulers and sharp practices on the part of Multinational Oil Corporations.

2.1 The Failed State Paradigm

Explanations have been proffered towards the deeply entrenched state of backwardness in underdeveloped economies. These include, but are not limited to, the ‘failed state’ and ‘oil resource-curse’ paradigms. This study adopts the failed state approach because its provisions are consistent with the trends of activities taking place in Nigeria. Some scholars of state ‘collapse’ and state ‘failure’ in the developing world have shifted their attention away from questions of formal institutional collapse toward questions of the micro-level survival strategies that individuals,
A decade into the 21st century, the possibility of moving forward appears to be vague in many countries across the globe. A growing number of countries have experienced severe crisis (some are still experiencing such) and state failure has become a widespread phenomenon in several regions, including parts of the former Soviet Union, Central Asia and a large number of Sub-Saharan African states. Most Third World Nations are faced by either outright state collapse, or have been weakened, as indicated by such defective features as violent conflict, institutional incoherence, widespread absence of infrastructure, widespread corruption and partial loss of control over state territory.

While there are several studies which point to the relevance of poor economic performance as a cause of state breakdown and the onset of civil war, there are indeed many poorly performing (African) states in economic terms such as Tanzania, Zambia, Niger and Chad that have not experienced anything like the breakdown of some other poor economic performers such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Sudan [26]. Indeed, in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, the persistent crisis that continues unchecked questions the integrity, competence and capacity of national security forces to quell uprisings. This is in addition to observed traits such as endemic poverty, widespread official corruption, bearing of arms against government, failed and failing institutions/infrastructure, etc. If this is true, then Nigeria as a state is exhibiting the traits of a failed state, a reflection of the broader scenario in sub-Saharan Africa.

### 2.2 Evidences of a Failed State Paradigm

**General insecurity and arms proliferation:** Turning to examples of failed states, the “security dilemma” (involving spirals of mistrust and mutual armament) is a now classic explanation for the kind of ethnic/civil conflict that frequently plagues failed states [29; 30]. According to Forney [31], “the basic dynamic that has been repeatedly documented in failed and collapsed states involves a precipitous rise in violence and insecurity and an accompanying rise in demand for small arms-demand that, especially since the end of the Cold War, is rapidly satisfied by highly efficient international black and grey markets. Demand for arms feeds upon itself as a result of mistrust among local individ, and an accompanying rise in demand for small arms...”

**Militarized/arms-bearing youth:** According to Forney [31], “every society hosts some population of armed youths whose anti-social collective behaviors represent desperate, angry responses to insecurity, social marginalization and the unfulfilled promises of modern materialism”. These arm-bearing youths (in failed states) are variously known as child-soldiers, militants, rebels, thugs and so on. Their underlying motivations for joining armed, violent organizations are remarkably similar across geographical and cultural divides (perhaps, an aspect of globalisation). The similarities extend into the violent techniques they employ in carrying out their supposed crusade. Acting from perceived, deeply-entrenched anger arising from socio-economic marginalization, militarized youths (usually from a minority section of a broader and expansive population) are faced with dim prospects for material and social advancement both because of their backgrounds, identity and origin [32] and most importantly due to failure on the part of constituted authority. As Vigil [32] puts it, they live on the other side of the tracks; have limited access to entry-level jobs; receive harsh, uneven treatment from authorities, including and especially law enforcement; and are faulted for their own problems’

**Organized crime:** Forney [31] attributes drug dealing gun running and protection racketeering, as common to failed states. According to him, “these lucrative forms of criminality require relatively high levels of organization on the part of the participants. Contraband goods and services flow through established networks of producers, buyers and sellers, typically intersecting with (instability) war-economies in failed states. The inefficacy of state policing and justice systems become a benefiting factor as warlords also require some modicum of security in order to operate successfully-knowing that their infrastructure and transactions will not be threatened by law enforcement agents. Various examples abound in Africa and elsewhere, where organized crime settings sometimes succeeded in hijacking the state thereby lending their violent profit-seeking a façade of legitimacy, as also attested to by Reno [33]. The Nigerian drug trade, rampant kidnapping and oil theft/bunkering and vandalisation of oil installations and power infrastructure provide an example of successful operations that has been aided by governmental weakness, ineptitude and lack of direction. Such areas become hot-spots/hubs for illicit trading of oil, drugs and arms. In the Niger-Delta region today, oil bunkering and arms proliferation abounds. It is often claimed that oil bunkering is the chief source of funds for acquiring arms by militants.

**Official corruption:** Cases of official corruption in Nigeria abounds [17; 20; 22]. The enormity of corruption and failure on the part of official policies is expressed by Fagbadebo [17]:

*The Nigerian State is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. Consequently, national development is retarded and the political environment uncertain. While the political gladiators constantly manipulated the people and the political processes to advance their own selfish agenda, the society remained pauperized and the people wallowed in abject poverty. This invariably led to weak legitimacy, as the citizens lacked faith in their political leaders and by extension, the political system. Participation in government was low because citizens perceived it as irrelevant to their lives. In the absence of support from civil society, the effective power of government was eroded. Patron-client relationships took a prime role over the formal aspects of politics, such as the*
rule of law, well-functioning political parties and a credible electoral system. In order to break this cycle and ensure good governance, accountability and transparency must be guaranteed.

2.3 The Study Area

The Ogoni people are among the several other ethnic groups within the ‘South-South’ geopolitical region of Nigeria. The origin of Ogoni people points to ‘Benue-Congo’ descent. Traditionally, Ogoniland is made up of 6 Kingdoms namely; Babbe, Eleme, Gokana, Ken-Khana, Nyo-Khana and ‘Tai. According to Vobnu [34], the 5 languages spoken in Ogoni land are related but not mutually intelligible. They include ‘Khana’, ‘Gokana’, ‘Tai’, ‘Eleme’ and ‘Ban-Ogoi’. In the context of Nigeria, the Ogoni people had relatively early contact with the British colonial soldiers, as early as 1901, before which time they operated an autonomous system of living. The Ogoni people have an internal political structure subject to ‘community-by-community’ arrangement, with each community solely responsible for the appointment of their rulers [34]. Like every other African tribe, it is believed that the Ogoni people were integrated into a succession of economic systems at a pace that was extremely rapid and exacted a great toll from them. One can only imagine how much confusion and difficulty they must be enmeshed in when face when polluted sources of livelihood. The population of Ogoni people is 831, 792 [35]. The area is inhibited by the indigenous Ogoni people and also plays host to a few settlers engaged in commerce and trade. The presence of oil exploration activities has also played a significant role in diversifying the population of especially semi-urban settlements within Ogoniland. The Ogoni people are predominantly fishermen, hunters, farmers and also engage in boat carving.

The study area is located in Rivers State, within the South- South geo-political region of Nigeria. It comprises 4 LGAs namely Tai, Gokana, Eleme and Khana, generally located along the coastal area of the Gulf of Guinea. The study area (Fig. 1) is located with the Niger-Delta floodplain which accounts for 7.5% total land mass of Nigeria and the third-largest drainage basin in Africa. The area is covered with forests and creeks. The region is an incredibly endowed ecosystem and is among the highest concentrations of bio-diversity on the planet.

The soils are mainly rich and fertile alluvial, a result of deposition over a long geologic period [36]. The area lacks infrastructure and basic facilities such as good road network, jetties and modern boats, potable water, sustained electricity, affordable and available health facilities, good schools and so on [37]. The infrastructural base within the study area is generally dismal. This however, does not imply the total absence of these facilities; the problem lies in firstly the quality of structures and services; and secondly the number of facilities in proportion to the population they are meant to cater for.


Ideally, globalisation is characterised with greater integration within the World economy via increased openness to international trade, cross-border capital and labour movements, cross-border flow of technology and cross-border flow of information, knowledge and ideas. It is therefore, a condition of seemingly borderless world with ever increasing integration that enhances the living conditions of relatively divergent peoples from varying backgrounds, the world over. A study carried out by Osmani [38] in Bangladesh revealed that the country’s engagement with globalisation helped the accelerated growth of demand and reduction in production cost. He further stated that by adopting this policy, globalisation had contributed positively towards engendering the growth process of the economy which in turn, led to faster reduction of poverty in the 1990s in Bangladesh. However, Khor [39] differs from this point of view as he believes that developing countries are adversely affected in all dimensions of globalisation.

Osmani [38] believes that: Contents of section 3 goes here. It might include some subheadings. Format of subheadings are shown below:

“for globalisation to be able to reduce poverty, it must be complemented by public policy that goes beyond measures designed merely to deepen the forces of globalisation. In particular, public policy must address issues of social safety net to deal with the poverty-enhancing disruptions that are inherent in the process of globalisation and of enhancing the capabilities of the poor so that they can take full advantage of the opportunities opened up by globalisation...”

The various interpretations of globalisation in this section reveal certain similarities and differences among nations/regions. The similarity is in the fact that globalisation is influenced by individual national policies; whereas the difference is in the fact that other nations/regions are reaping gains from globalisation while others are incurring losses, as is the case with Nigeria as a country, as well as the localities and people (say, the
3.1 Globalisation and Developing Economies
International mobility of capital, resulting from advances in communications technology and liberalization of financial markets has intensified as the world economy witnesses the unleashing of market forces. Deregulation of domestic markets, their opening to competition, privatization and the retreat of the state from economic management are also features of the current global order. However, this same process encourages rising inequality among nations. The liberalization of the world economy, for instance, has proceeded in such a way that the growth prospects of developing countries are being undermined. Thus, while restrictions have been lifted on the freedom of capital and skilled labour to move to areas of high returns, the restrictions on the mobility of unskilled labour remain. Moreover, as developing countries have increased their capacity to produce and export manufactured goods, the developed countries have become active in promoting tariff peaks and escalations [40].

According to Nissanke and Thorbecke [10], “globalisation offers participating countries new opportunities for accelerating growth and development but, at the same time, it also poses challenges to, and imposes constraints on policy makers in the management of national, regional and global economic systems. While the opportunities offered by globalisation can be large, a question is often raised as to whether the actual distribution of gains is fair. In particular, whether the under-developed nations benefit less than proportionately from globalisation, and could under some circumstances actually be hurt”.

A gloomy picture of the situation in the vast numbers of underdeveloped countries of Africa was presented by Ake [41]:

“Most of Africa is not developing... Decades of efforts have yielded largely stagnation, regression or worse. The tragic consequences of this are increasingly clear: a rising tide of poverty, decaying public utilities and infrastructures, social tensions and political turmoil, and now, premonition of inevitable drive into conflict and violence”

The case is however different for some developing nations (such as China, Bangladesh, South Africa, Ghana, Malaysia, Brazil, etc.) that have actually ridden on the tides of globalisation to economic prosperity. This observation contradicts the notion that globalisation is inherently unfair towards developing countries. Importantly, this realization cautions against generalizations and untimely fore-closures in our research topic.

3.2 Oil Production and Armed Agitation in the Niger-Delta
Ordinarily, oil discoveries hold a promise for improved living conditions for the people through accelerated economic growth triggered by increased foreign earnings. This becomes especially optimistic with unlimited access to technology and manpower that globalisation offers. It becomes difficult to comprehend why inspite of the glaring presence of MNOCs (institutions of globalisation) in the Niger-Delta, there is still backwardness.

Nigeria is Africa’s largest oil producing country, and the 6th largest oil producing nation in the world. Crude oil was first discovered in commercial quantity in a remote town called Oloibiri (present Bayelsa State), in 1958 [42]. Subsequent discoveries were made in different parts of the Niger-Delta region. Initial production was below 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 1970, and rose to over 2.5 million barrels in the early 2000s. Akinwumi [42] estimates an annual income of over $45 billion in crude oil earnings. Nigeria’s current crude oil production capacity stands at 3 million bpd while plans are underway to increase production to 4 million barrels by the end of 2010-2011. Given such a huge inflow of foreign exchange from crude oil export, it is easy to understand why oil has taken over from agriculture as (and still remains) the mainstay of national finance (oil proceeds account for over 90 percent of the nation’s total revenue). It would appear that the most difficult challenge has been how to ensure equitable distribution of proceeds from oil exports [43]. “The motivation for sharing this oil revenue is one of self-survival, a matter of life and death, exciting the deepest concern and strongest emotion”[42]. It is therefore, not surprising that, instead of rapid socio-economic development, the growth in oil production has been accompanied by a rise in corruption, poverty, and most importantly, violent conflicts, especially within the oil producing region [44].

From what started as peaceful protests in the early 1990s, these conflicts have metamorphosed into a more-or-less full-blown armed rebellion against the Nigerian state [45]. The principal organizations involved are locally-nurtured emancipatory social movements, such as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Niger-Delta People’s Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND) [46] and several others that keep springing up. Incidentally, this outbreak coincided with the re-birth of a supposedly liberal democratic government in 1999. According to Albert [46], the newly elected government in 1999 initially favoured dialogue with militant groups in the Niger-Delta. As the trend of violence and sabotage rose, losses in oil rents also increased (on the average 50% of total collectable oil revenue according to some estimates), in addition to threats to human lives and properties, and the possibility of the disintegration of Nigeria, the dialogue approach was reviewed. Enweremadu [45] observed that three major initiatives were subsequently introduced and pursued simultaneously. These included a constitutionally-backed increase in revenue allocation in favour of the major oil bearing states (which came into effect in 2000); more development projects in oil producing areas via a Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC); and military action aimed at dismantling the militias. Despite the heavy military deployment to the region, the approach has been, according to Enweremadu [45], “the most controversial and ineffective measure”, as military presence may only have intensified resentment among the people and hardened the resolve of the militants, thereby rendering any peaceful resolution of the conflict a near impossibility.

3.3 The Need for Good Governance in the Niger-Delta
The degree to which the governance system is able to address the question bordering on equitable and proper management of oil revenue is vital in enhancing the understanding of the oil politics in the Niger-Delta. Harriman [47] rightly noted that there has been “official rise in abuse of power, brazen corruption, disregard for due process and rule of law, intolerance of political opposition, abuse of the electoral process and the weakening of institutions.” This contradicts the tenet of governance, which presupposes “the process of social engagement between the rulers and the ruled in a political community” [48]. Good governance could be accomplished when the operation of government is in line with the prevailing legal and ethical principles of the political community. Deprivation of benefits and selective justice would not be encouraged, as individuals’ rights would be protected within the ambit of the law. Political leaders would hold dear the watchwords: transparency and accountability in governance. As rightly observed by Collier [5] [2008]:

“Governance and economic policies help to shape economic performance, but there is an asymmetry in the consequences of getting them right and getting them wrong. Excellent governance and economic policies can help the growth process... By contrast,
terrible governance and bad policies can destroy an economy with alarming speed”.

This positive scenario, however, has not been followed in the case of Nigeria. For instance, prior to the discovery of oil in Nigeria, agricultural produce did account for over 90% of foreign earnings. At present, the trend has reversed with oil revenue replacing income from agricultural produce. This represents policy failure on the part of government.

Osuoka [49] significantly states that “corruption has robbed the people of potential benefits from the oil industry, as the bulk of revenues have been looted or mis-managed by public office holders at all levels of government. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of Nigeria has estimated that the country lost as much as $380 billion to corruption between 1960 and 1999”. The situation has not improved even under a democratic setting since 1999.

Expectedly, several scholarly works have identified numerous causal factors, ranging from the problems of environmental degradation, rising and widening social-economic inequality in the midst of so much, the complete absence of basic, social amenities and infrastructure and youth unemployment, to anti-social or unwholesome practices by multinational oil companies operating in the region [20; 44; 49]. Okoh and Egbon [50] pointed to the political neglect of the area by the federal government and marginalization in national politics, not to mention the historical injustices perpetrated by the Nigerian state in terms of revenue sharing formula and pervasive/prevaling poverty in the region.

The limitations of most of these arguments have become very obvious, especially in view of recent political and constitutional developments. For instance, from 1999, state governments in the Niger-Delta region have had their statutory allocation multiplied [45]; 13% derivation fund from oil proceeds; introduction of economic empowerment programmes through the NDCC; and more recently, the establishment of the Ministry of Niger-Delta Affairs; granting of Amnesty to Militants who gave-up arms; and monthly welfare allowances for ex-militants; all intensified towards a better life for the oil-endowed communities.

Yet, the Niger-Delta region have not witnessed any significant development or become more peaceful than it was before 1999 [2; 17; 51; 52]. It becomes central to ask why increasing decentralization of oil wealth in favour of oil bearing states, massive security build-up and measures set in motion to ensure rapid economic growth since 1999 have failed to bring development, peace and security to the people of the Niger-Delta region.

With respect to the aforementioned, other scholars have attempted an explanation for the Niger-Delta conundrum of poverty in the midst of plenty. In his work on Nigeria, Smith proved that a “culture of corruption”, largely induced by massive oil wealth, is fuelling popular discontent across Nigeria potentially leading to widespread social unrest [22]. Ikelegbe [20] succinctly submits that:

“The oil economy has not only engendered a lumpen bourgeois class, driven by primitive accumulation, whose only basis is the romance with and compromise by the foreign oil companies, but it also engendered intense struggle and contests between those (communities, groups, elites and lumpen bourgeois) that have had access to oil benefits (compensation, larges, contracts and employment given by oil companies) and those that have been marginalized and pauperized. The disagreements, contentions, challenges and conflicts within and between the lumpen bourgeois, local leaders and local groupings undergird the disarticulation, in-cohesion and violence in the host communities, ethnic groups and the region”.

“Similarly, the increase of funds retained by oil bearing states from 3% to 13% have been dismissed as grossly inadequate by both the leaders and militants in the region” [45]. What readily comes to mind is the manner in which the supposedly meager 13% is being utilized. Indeed, the potential benefits of the federally-allocated 13% oil revenue have largely been eroded by massive corruption and mismanagement by local officials in the Niger-Delta. Thus, while the quest to control benefits of oil remains central to conflicts in the Niger-Delta, conflicts have in many ways been encouraged by the mindless looting of public funds by those in charge in the oil producing states.

Successive governments in Nigeria appear to have made efforts towards promoting good governance through the eradication of corruption [53; 54] as they believed that corruption was responsible for backwardness. Between 2000 and 2003, two anti-corruption agencies were established to fight corruption [21]. However, “the overall system remains deeply compromised. Federal government contracts are routinely inflated to provide kickbacks for office-holders, and contractors frequently provide sub-standard or non-existent services. State and local level of corruption have been far more brazen” [21], indicating signs of weaknesses in the State apparatus.

4. The Need for Environmental Sustainability in the Niger Delta

One of recent major global concerns is the problem of the declining land resources that are being threatened by the rapid human population-resource utilization expansion. There is an increasing need to use resources in a sustainable way, increasing production but at the same time protecting the environment, biodiversity, and global climate systems. This requires careful landuse/resource planning and decision-making at all levels [55; 56; 57; 58]. The Nigerian environment (at both urban and rural levels) have suffered an accelerating and unprecedented degradation in quality, leading to vegetation loss, diminishing soil fertility, soil erosion, micro-climatic changes, increasingly severe water scarcity and drought, etc. It is clear that sound natural resource management and planning are essential to tackle the aforementioned problems and to bring about sustainable development.

Therefore, the need for available environmental and natural-resource information at all levels of the public and research becomes necessary in order to support the decision making process and in planning for sound natural-resource management leading to sustainable development and environmental protection for communities in particular, and the country in general.

Within the last two decades, global concern have accelerated and focused on anthropogenic activities that alter the natural environment during resource exploitation and the attendant impact on the physical environment. These concerns have translated into several initiatives at the global level with the intent for adoption at national and local levels with a view to ensuring environmental sustainability.

Hence, in 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro produced an action document tagged Agenda 21. The document acknowledges the perpetuation and worsening deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being, amongst other social-economic disparities between nations. Similarly, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) came into force in 1994 (today totaling 194 parties/countries). The Convention did set an overall framework for inter-governmental efforts to tackle the challenges posed by climate change as it recognizes that the climate system is a shared resource whose stability can be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other Greenhouse Gases (GHGs). Further, the Millennium
Declaration in 2000 by 189 countries produced the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) document which broadly seeks to address socio-economic disparities among nations as well as environmental degradation issues starting from the year 2015. In spite of the broad dimensions of the various global instruments generally aimed at sustainability in environmental resources utilization, of specific interest to this study are:

i. The MDG No. 7 which states, inter alia: To ensure environmental sustainability. This goal is to be achieved vide: Target 7A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources; and, Target 7B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.

ii. The Agenda 21 document on Sustainable Development as clearly defined in: Chapter 10: Integrated Approach to the Planning and Management of Land Resources. To be achieved through objectives;
   a) To review and develop policies to support the best possible use of land and the sustainable management of land resources, by not later than 1996; and,
   c) To create mechanisms to facilitate the active involvement and participation of all concerned, particularly communities and people at the local level, in decision-making on landuse and resource management, by not later than 1996.

The bi-focal thrust of this study is in recognition of the intertwined effect that Man’s actions (governance and corruption) bring to bear on the physical environment (pollution and degradation). Also, the timeline stated for UNCED Agenda 21 as stated in the objectives above have elapsed without any significant improvements/achievements towards the set targets. Similarly, by 2015, the MDGs are expected to have attained a ‘significant’ proportion of its set targets. In addition, Nigeria’s Vision 20:2020 aims at sustainable economic development that would bring the nation into the Top 20 global economies by year 2020. Realities on ground however, point differently. This study therefore hopes to serve as a wake-up call regarding the status of the above identified instruments vis-à-vis their adoption at local levels in Nigeria.

5. Conclusion
There is a large volume of research that has been carried out on the Niger-Delta. However, much of this literature is devoted to oil and violence in the Niger-Delta, while there has been a dearth of studies highlighting the linkages between globalization, poor policy frameworks, corruption and environmental degradation in these conflicts. Yet, the persistence, the increasing frequency and the intensification of corrupt acts among political actors, community leaders and oil companies operating in the Niger-Delta have for some time been the hallmark of politics within the region. For example, out of the four immediate past governors of Nigeria’s major oil producing states (Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Delta and Rivers), three have either been accused or convicted for large scale corruption. Also, bribery scandals involving oil companies have been reported at various times in Nigeria. All of these, in addition to arms bearing against the state, support arguments that Nigeria might indeed be a failed state or at best drifting towards that direction.

It is expected that this study would provide a better revelation of the explanatory factors (failed government policies and official corruption) driving gross underdevelopment, crises, poverty and environmental degradation in the Niger-Delta region. This is the knowledge gap that this study hopes to fill.

Suggestions toward solving the identified problems are then proffered:

i. Genuine efforts that would eradicate corrupt practices in the disbursement and appropriation of oil revenue meant for the development of the region;

ii. In the areas where oil spillage have occurred, cleaning efforts should be embarked upon with a view to reclaiming these natural resources (land and water) to ensure environmental and socio-economic sustainability within the region;

iii. Government should focus on the region with a view to providing rapid and proportionate infrastructure and amenities for these disadvantaged communities;

iv. Oil Companies should be meant to (even if through legislation) show adequate corporate responsibility by assisting (the government) in providing such facilities such as potable water, schools, health centres and modern boats for transportation; and,

v. A Strategic Environmental Impact Monitoring should be carried out within the region to quantify the amount of damage caused by oil exploration over the past 5 decades. This could serve as a baseline data for pragmatic remediation efforts.

This study, as with several similar others [2; 17; 20; 44], shows that inept governance policies and corruption are the bane of development and instability in the Niger-Delta region. Lack of accountability and transparency in public policies and fund disbursements, accentuated by the environmental degradation as a result of unsustainable oil exploration practices, further impoverish the inhabitants of the oil producing areas. There, thus, appears an unequal distribution of ‘cost’ and ‘benefit’. Despite the enormous oil revenues generated from that region, it appears there are no benefits accruing to the host communities. The result is a cyclical pattern of underdevelopment, poverty and crises. Breaking this cycle would require guaranteed accountability and transparency and people-oriented policies. This position is better expressed by Chief Okrika in The Guardian (September 9, 2006):

“But the issue is that the people are aggrieved. They want to have a direct involvement in the development of their region. The people are sitting on top of oil yet they are poor. That is why we, the oil bearing communities, are agitating for the quick passage of the oil Revenue Formula Bill at the National Assembly, which would give communities direct access to certain percent of monies accruing from the oil derivation fund. When the oil communities become directly involved in the management of funds emanating from oil got from their backyard, they become partners and would put structures in place to protect the oil facilities allegedly being destroyed by militants. They do so because they are not benefiting anything from such facilities, which only pollute their environment”.

Different models, theories, assumptions and information [e.g. 2; 17; 45; 51] are often used to proffer solutions to the problems in the Niger-Delta. However, Akpabio and Akpan [2] believe that these do not often work owing to failure in governance and absence of fairness in the distribution of resources generated from oil.
The findings of this study suggest that although globalisation may be unfair in the distribution of its gains especially to Underdeveloped countries/region, globalisation is not the only factor accounting for the state of underdevelopment in the study area. Rather, it appears the failure of State to perform its duties effectively better explains the situation. The study does not claim to have exhausted the Niger-Delta question. Further work is needed to identify similar inherent problems (on the part of Government and that of local communities) that may possibly have a contributory role in impoverishing the Ogoni communities particularly, and others elsewhere in Nigeria and beyond.

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