THE REALIST THEORY OF CONFLICT AND THE PLACE OF WOMEN DURING CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA: A CASE OF THE Ogoni Conflict

A PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.Sc) DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE (POLITICAL THEORY) IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

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PG/M.Sc/07/42576

MARCH, 2009.
This project report has been approved for submission in the department of political science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Almighty God who in His infinite mercy granted me a joy of actualizing my dream of being a Master’s Degree Holder. I also humbly dedicate it to my darling husband, Mr. Ugwu Nicholas Udoka.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude goes to Almighty God who made it possible for this work to be a success.

I am very grateful to my supervisor Dr. Ken Ifesinachi, who despite his tight schedules was able to dispose himself for me to benefit from his wealth of knowledge and experience through his supervision.

I also wish to extend my profound gratitude to all the lecturers in the Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria Nsukka who contributed in diverse ways to make this work a success.

I remain grateful to my children Chukwuka, Ruth, Kenechi, Paul and Paula friends and well wishers whose prayers and advice helped to make my dream come true.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines conflicts in Nigeria. Specially, it examines conflict in Ogoni and found out that in most of the conflicts in Nigeria and Ogoni community in particular that women do not play any significant role during the conflict. They are only seen as victims of the conflict.

Using the Realist theory of conflict to analyze the causes of these conflicts, it was found that the major cause is the personalized self interest of elites in Ogoni, the Nigerian government and the West represented by the multinational oil companies (Shell and Chevron) to control the oil wealth. The theory also explained that women are mostly victims of this conflict because they do not belong to the elite on both sides of the conflict therefore, could not make any influential contribution when decisions of the conflict are taken leading to the neglect of their rights, privileges and proper protection during the conflict.

It also portrayed that women do not belong to the elite in Ogoni due to their low level of education, job opportunities, and cultural vales e.t.c. placing them in a subordinate position in comparism with their male counterpart.

Lastly, this theory proffered prospects for improvement in women disempowerment in the Ogoni conflict.
CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Conflict occurs when two or more parties with perceived incompatible goals seek to undermine each others goal seeking (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/conflict).

Conflict theory therefore is a theory that presupposes the existence in any and all human societies of dominant groups and institutions which employ coercive power to impose their values upon others (Dervitto 2000). It is best epitomized by the classic pyramid structure in which an elite dictates terms to the larger masses. Also it approaches the problem of social inequality from the standpoint of the various groups of the society as a whole, their needs and desires rather than the need of the society as a whole (Lenski 1966). As a result of stratification, members of the elite class tend to connect their interest with that of the organization they are associated with (Collins 1994).

Due to the strategic position of the state, it plays a very significant role during conflicts which is always to protect the interest of the ruling class (elite).

Consequent upon this, Africa and Nigeria precisely over the past decades have suffered from armed conflict than any other continent.

Between 1960 and 1998, there were 32 wars in Africa, seven million people became refugees, returnees or even displaced. The trend is on the increase. In 1996 alone, 14 out of 53 countries in Africa were afflicted with armed conflict accounting for more than half war related deaths world-wide. (King 2001:1).

Inter state conflicts (the World War I and II) have given way to internal civil wars. The tragic Biafran war of secession in Nigeria (1967-1970) and the 1994 Rwandan genocide will forever remain the darkest pages in African history. This new type of war
no longer aims at defeating the opponents but at afflicting pain and humiliation on civilians by destroying their identity and sense of community. Conflict erodes the institutions that provide basics for the sustainability of African societies and undermine societal values, replacing them with institutionalized violence.

Apart from the Nigerian civil war, Nigeria has witnessed series of internal conflicts ranging from ethnic to religious, economic and socio-cultural conflicts. For instance, in 2001, there was the Jos conflict and the subsequent carnage that followed it. In 2008, there was yet another conflict in the same Jos following a local government election that was held there. There was also the Basa-Egbara conflict, in Toto Local Government Area of Nasarawa state. There was also the Ijaw-Ijesa conflict, the Warri conflict and the series of conflicts in Ogoni.

Nnoli (1989) in his study of ethnic politics in Africa maintained that conflict is inevitable in any human society. One thing is common in all conflicts; it is a fight about something.

In the words of Salim Ahmed Salim (1997), the major sources of conflict are the inequitable distribution of resources and power play at the national level. When the resources of a country are unfairly allocated to the various segments of the society and when power is concentrated in the hands of a group or clique, and when the rights of a people are trampled upon, then the trivial incident could ignite a flame (conflict). Such was the major cause of all the conflicts in Niger Delta and Ogoni community in particular.

Before and after the discovery of oil by shell in Ogoni, Ogoni and most of other ethnic groups in the Niger Delta lived in peace and in abundance. Since the discovery of
oil, its production has had severe environmental and human consequences on the indigenous people that inhabit the area contiguous to oil drilling.

The unsavoury tale of the Ogoni began with the discovery of crude oil by Shell in Ogoni land in 1958, during the period of the British Colonial administration in Nigeria. The anticipation at independence in 1960 was a better dividend from oil exploration that is yet to happen.

Literature reveals that Ogoni protest started during the military era in Nigeria and were at its heights during the Babangida and Abacha’s rule (Ibeanu, 2007:116).

With the Ogoni increasingly dissatisfied with government’s empty promises and their environmental, social and economic apparatus rapidly deteriorating, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP) was formed in 1992. MOSOP spear-headed by Ogoni playwright and author, Ken Saro Wiwa, became the major campaigning organization representing the Ogoni people in their struggle for ethnic and environmental rights. It’s primary target and at times adversaries have been the Nigerian government and the oil company (Royal Dutch Shell).

Beginning in December 1992, conflict between Ogoni and the oil infrastructure escalated to a level of greater seriousness and intensity on both sides. Both parties began to carry out violent activities against each other. The West and the Nigerian Government was partly responsible for the escalation of militancy in the region. For if Nigeria did not accede to the foreign military assistance from the West, the agitation would have remained at the protest level it was before 2004 when the military assistance was consummated.
Conflict according to (O.A.U. Conflict Bulletin 1998) are causing a severe humanitarian situation and traumatizing a considerable segment of the society: people who are exposed to these situations at best live in precarious and uncertain condition.

Studies of women during conflict with particular reference to Ogoni in (Ibeanu, 2007:154) reports that

in the cases of the Ogoni women, there has not been reported cases of women perpetrating violence, the only cases so far known of, have been of their being victims and resistors of violence.

Owing to the persistent of conflicts in Nigeria and Ogoni land in particular and owing to the persistence victimization of women in all these conflicts, this research work is aimed at using the Realistic Theory of Conflict to asses the plausible explanation to all these problems.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Ogoni people are not new to agitations and restiveness. What is novel is their degree and posture. This struggle for self determination and just-treatment under the supreme leadership of Ken Saro Wiwa and the Judicial murder of the Ogoni nine on November 10, 1995 re-kindled the Niger Delta Question and Ogoni Conflict in particular. The struggle for the survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP) though not exclusively an Ogoni affair was the first real and organized attempt after the botched one by Adaka Boro, to call the world’s attention to the plight of not only the Ogonis, but also the entire people of Niger Delta.

In all the conflicts in Ogoni masterminded by the Federal Government in collaboration with the multinational oil companies (Shell and Chevron), women like in
all other conflicts in the world, Africa and Nigeria in particular have always been the worst victims. As regards this (Indai 1992:21) has this to say

though the circumstances may differ in different countries, women as deliberate target groups of contemporary civil wars face different treats and horrors of violence and civil wars which are similar in manifestations of different shades of rape. They are victims of horrible atrocities and injustices in conflict situations.

In respect to conflict in Ogoni, an Ogoni female lawyer, Yime Joi Yowika expressed the same view when she said

I want you to understand that women suffered most in all the crises, everything that happened in Niger Delta … they are the ones that suffered most (Patterson, 1999:13).

In effect, all these entails that women rarely have the same resources political rights, authority or control over their environment and needs as men do. Their mobility and ability to protect themselves are limited by their care taking responsibilities.

All these are not meant to claim the innocence of women nor stress their inherent peacefulness as mere victims of conflicts. Wars can be a times beneficial to women’s status in countries and states as some take up arms to find other ways of expressing their political commitment. They can equally resist conditions and instruments that oppress them through mass action e.g. the Federation of Ogoni Women’s Association (FOWA), one of the nine groups of MOSOP. However, for a systematic and scientific understanding of reasons behind the persistent victimization of women during conflicts in Ogoni and Nigeria, and reasons behind the persistence of conflicts in Nigeria and Ogoni in particular, we pose the following research problems.
I. Does the theoretical postulates of realism present a plausible explanation for the effect of the persistent conflict in Ogoni land on Women?

II. Does the structural deductions of realism describe the position and role of women in Ogoni conflict?

III. Does realism adequately account for the prospects of transformation in women disempowerment in Ogoni conflict?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Owing to the persistence of conflict in Nigeria and Ogoni community in particular and the continued victimization of women during conflicts (Elizabeth et al, 2002:2) said until the state security and legal infrastructure are rebuilt, women’s security would continue to be threatened inside and outside of the home and would be subject to the rule of aggression rather than law.

This is for the mere reason that “though grave impact of conflicts on women and children have been receiving rapt media and research attention lately, not much have been done to the suffering of same” (Ibeanu, 2007:110).

In the light of these, the objectives of this research are to

i. Determine whether the theoretical postulates of realism present a plausible explanation for the effect of the persistent conflict in Ogoni land on women in this area.

ii. Ascertain whether the theoretical deduction of realism describe the position and role of women in Ogoni conflict.

iii. Determine whether realism adequately accounts for the prospects of transformation in women disempowerment in Ogoni conflict.
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Though grave impact of conflicts on women and children have been receiving rapt media and research attention, not much have been done to the suffering of same. Therefore, the significant of this work is that it will provide a new dimension towards assessing the effect of as it borders on women using the realist theory of conflict. Most of the works available focus on marginalization of Ogoni people on revenue that accrue from oil by Nigerian Government, the victimization of women, children and the whole Ogoni people during the conflicts and the environmental degradation and pollution as a result of oil drilling by Shell and Chevron.

Theoretically, the significance of study is that it provides a realist theoretical explanation of the conflict to enrich available literatures in the area of conflict.

Practically, it serves as a reminder to the Federal Government, partners of Shell and Chevron that the era of the Hobesian state of nature where life is solitary, nasty, brutish and short has gone. There is a need for a cooperate and symbiotic existence of people within a geographic boundary. The stage of civilization has transcended to a point that individuals are now too conscious of their fundamental human rights, especially right to corporate existence and property and can hardly give-up these rights no matter the extent of threats and brutality by the mighty.

To the National Assembly, it serves as a reminder for them to re-address more fundamental issues of human right especially rights to life, property and corporate existence between individuals or groups within a geographic boundary. They should also refine Nigeria’s revenue sharing formula to address the needs and aspirations of oil producing areas whose economic activities like farming and fishing have been halted by
oil spillage, rendering the available land and water in those areas impotent for agriculture (farming and fishing), subjecting the people of these area to abject poverty and disease due to pollution.

To Shell and Chevron, it serves as reminder for them not to hide under the cloak of Federal Government and suppress the people on whose land they operate, but to live up to their social responsibility for them to be able to retain social license to operate in Ogoni land.

To the Federal and Local Government in Ogoni, it serves as a reminder of the need to empower and mobilize women, educationally and economically and properly integrate them in matters of decision making especially in conflictual situations as this will go a long way to remedy the situation and at least go a long way to consider the plight of women and make adequate arrangement on how to handle the situation so that it does degenerate.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

Ever since man transcended from the state of nature where life was nasty, brutish and short, man started to form government to guarantee protection for his life and property, politics ensued. As it is defined by Nnoli in his book Introduction to Politics “Politics is the authoritative allocation of values”. He equally said again that politics determines who gets what, when and how. (Nnoli, 2003:8,9).

To determine these, conflict is bound to ensure. This triggered-off most of the conflict in the world, Africa and Nigeria. For instance United States face-off with Iran, American invasion of Iraq, the Nigerian Civil War of secession in 1967.
Because of the importance, the West attaches to oil, it has been its strategic resolve to guarantee the unimpeded access to and flow of it. Any threat to the continuous flow of oil, has been viewed as “threat to energy security”, an important component of National Security (Lubeck Watts, Lips Chutz, 2007). The West has waged economic, political and military wars, as a last resort on nations and regimes that it has viewed as a threat to her economic interest, especially as regards oil.

The seriousness with which the state Department and even ordinary American citizens view this oil could be seen in the recent call by Bible fundamentalist Pastor Pat Robertson, on the CIA to kill President Hugo-Chaves of Venezuela who opted to sell oil in Euro instead of Dolar to rubbish the US and dislodged the cowboy diplomacy of George Bush and give oil away to the needy in exchange for services (Badom, 2008).

Oil exploration and exploitation in Nigeria are mainly carried out by Western multinational corporations e.g. Shell, Chevron, Agip, Mobil e.t.c. Though classified as non-state actors, given the convergence of interest between these corporations and their home countries and the way and manner they operate, it is argued that these corporations represent the practical expressions of Western neo-imperialism. One thing is assured “in the bowels of imperialism are the fruits of its own destruction”.

Before and after the discovery of oil, Ogoni and most of the other ethnic groups in Niger Delta lived in peace and abundant food. The unsavoury tale of the Ogoni began with the discovery of crude oil by Shell in Ogoni land in 1958, during the period of colonial administration in Nigeria (Ibeanu, 2007:114).

The Delta region is home to some of the largest and highest quantity oil deposits on the planet and this resource has been the life blood of the Nigerian economy (Watts,
Okonta, Kemadi, 2004:1). Yet the average Niger Delta living conditions are in sharp contrast with the enormous oil wealth extracted from their land. It is estimated that since 1960, the value of oil exports is around $600 billion (Watts et al, 2004:1). No doubt the escalation of insurgency, and militancy in an unprecedented manner talk more of hostage taking.

Sources revealed that Ogoni land has yielded about 30 million dollars in oil revenue of which the Nigerian State depended because oil accounts for 80% of the country’s revenue (Facts Sheet on the Ogoni 2005).

There are in Ogoni 96 oil wells connected to five oil fields where gas has been flared for 35 years. Shell’s oil pipe lines criss-cross the surface of Ogoni land dangerously. There are as well a fertilizer plant, two oil refineries, a petro-chemical plant and a seaport.

In 1990, the Ogoni took stock of their conditions of living which are in sharp contrast with the revenue generated from oil by the Nigerian State. Samuel (1997:1) summarized the situation thus, Ogonis were faced with environmental degradation, political marginalization, economic strangulation, slavery and possible extinction.

On this note Ogoni people had no option than to demand and struggle for their rights. In reference to (Ibeanu, 2008), before the advent of the civil rule in 1999, the major issue in Niger Delta struggle was that of human rights. However, he observed that there has been a shift from human rights to resource control and management. The Ogoni struggle for self determination and just treatment spearheaded by Ken Saro-Wiwa and the “Judicial murder” on November 10, 1995 of the Ogoni-nine became the water-shed in the Niger Delta Question. The struggle under the framework of the Ogoni people (MOSOP)
was the first real and organized attempt to call the world attention to the plight of the
Ogonis and also that of the entire Niger Delta. It revealed the real political motivation of
the West in matters that concern the welfare of the region and how multinational oil
corporations support the state to suppress the legitimate aspiration of the people of the
region (Oparaku, 1999).

The crime of the Ogoni people is that they had the temerity to ask for their rights
from both the Nigerian government and Shell. The punishment for this crime has been
genocidal attack on Ogoni (Samuel 1997:4).

In reference to (Ukeje, 2002)

Indeed oil as a resource is such that it has failed woefully in creating the cognitive freedom for the national
elites to grip with the profound crisis facing the polity; a tragedy given the manner in which clientilism bankrupts
the country and short changes the ability to guarantee stability outside the frame work of official repression.

This situation was equally exacerbated by the systematic corruption funded by oil
industries which damaged the culture of hard work particularly the work ethnic of many
Niger Deltans (Okowa, 2008). Also, given the fragility of the Nigerian state, the minority
agitation for self-determination might bring about its disintegration and total collapse of
the Nigerian state.

Studies of conflicts throughout the world portray women as the most affected. On
this note, (Sannam and Rita 1999:10) revealed that

as a result of gory inhumanity to fellow beings, there is an estimated 9090 civilian victims of contemporary
civil wars and internal conflicts of which women are amongst the most venerable and largely affected.
In the same vein, information from the web site (www.ogoni forum.org.za) reveals that during the peak of the Ogoni struggles, it is the women that were raped, maimed forced to cook for the military squad that invaded the land. It is women that always becoming widows when their husbands are killed. The responsibility of caring for the children that had been orphaned always falls on the woman. It is also the girl child that has to sacrifice her schooling for the boy when a family’s source of income is destroyed by shell, the government and other agents. The sacrifices by Ogoni women in struggle for the liberation of Ogoni land is countless yet we observe that Ogoni men especially of the older generation who are alighted to party politics had used the collective suffering of the women especially to enrich themselves through contracts and government appointments.

On this note in (Patterson 1999:13) an Ogoni female lawyer Yime Joi Yowike expressed the same view when she said

I want you to understand that women suffered most in all the crisis, everything that happened in Niger Delta… they are the ones that suffered most.

Although women participated in the struggle for the liberation of Ogoni land, they mainly formed protest groups and were never participants in the actual conflict as combatants e.g. Gbene Ogoni Women Association formed by Ogoni women exile in Benin Republic, also Federation of Ogoni Women Association an affiliate and umbrella body of MOSOP that mobilized women at grass root levels. These they formed to break the jinx of male domination of the struggle and false branding of the youths protests by federal troops. In respect to this, a women leader of FOWA reveals
we decided to take the diverse because our youths used to do this for us but the government and its companies would label them terrorists, mobilized soldiers to trail and kill them. But this time around harmless women are in charge, let us hear their next story (Ukeje, 2002:11).

All these go a long way to buttress the fact that Ogoni conflict was triggered by the interest of the West represented by the multinational oil companies and Nigerian government on oil and the struggle of a marginalized minority ethnic group to have a fair share of what belongs to them. Explicitly clear also was that in these conflicts like in other conflicts in Nigeria women were the most vulnerable and victimized.

**Gap in Literature**

From the literature thus reviewed, it can be deduced that the unsavouring tale about Ogoni started since the discovery of oil by Shell in 1958. As a result of oil drilling, there were ecological problems as both the equatic and torrential environments were rendered impotent as a result of oil spillage.

It can be remembered that the Ogoni people are predominantly farmers. This crippled farming activities which the Ogoni people are dependent on for survival and sustenance. As they are faced with abject poverty and revenue from oil does not even reach them they protested because a hungry man is an angry man. The protest was at its peak during Babangida and Abacha’s regimes respectively.

This led to the formation of MOSOP to fight for the rights of the Ogonis. Instead of listening to their plights, and finding a better means of solving their problems, the federal government of Nigeria in conjunction with the oil companies that represent the interest of their respective countries (West) succeeded in suppressing, brutalizing and killing people of this minority ethnic group. The most heart-rendering being the hanging
of the leader of MOSOP, Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others by the Nigerian government on 10th November 1995 to secure Shell continuous stay in Ogoni land.

Those authors that have written much about Ogoni conflict failed to grapple with the theoretical postulates of realism to present a plausible explanation for the effect of persistent conflicts in Ogoni land on women in this area to ascertain if the theoretical deductions of realism describe the position and role of women in and if realism adequately accounts for prospects for transformation in women disempowerment in Ogoni conflict.

The essence of this research therefore is to provide plausible answer and explanations that will fill the gap noticed from available literatures on Ogoni conflict.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

This study is based on the realist theory of conflict. Some theorists see it to be invented by men in an aggressive, uncompromising and destructive manner based on authoritarian principles held in place by coercive force which assumes unequal value among and between human beings (African woman, 1995:6, Belty 1996: 10-11).

Conflict theory is a theory that emphasizes the role that a person or groups has to exercise influence or control over others in re-producing the social order. It states that a society functions so that each individual participant and its group struggle to maximize their benefit which invariably contributes to social order. This theory was first founded by Karl Marx and later developed by theorists including Max Weber (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/conflict_theory).

The realist theory of conflict is an aspect of conflict theory which emphasizes the role that a person or groups has to exercise influence or control over others in
reproducing the social order. Obviously violence or conflict is no doubt motivated by the theory of “realism-the hard core theory of international competition and conflict” (Vasquez, 1993). The general promise of this theory by modern classical realists like Morgenthau, Carrand Kaplan, implicitly and explicitly are based on three assumptions of power. It states that each individual participant and its group struggle to maximize their benefits, which inevitably contributes to social order. All the modern classical realist assumptions about power - maximizing actors are:

1. The centrality of the state in international system as anarchy prevails in the absence of a world Government.
2. The state as a rational unitary actor in the strife to maximize expected utility is assumed to have carefully ranked different alternatives and calculated the cost and gains of each action.
3. States seek power in order to expand or preserved their position in the international system thus separating the actors into the status quo oriented and the revisionist/imperialist powers.


all nations actively engage in the struggle for power must actually aim not at a balance of power that is equality of power but at superiority of power in their own behalf. Until one Nation gains or believes it has gained a decisive advantage over the other, then either the weaker yields to the stronger or war decides the issue

Accordingly (Kaplan 1957:23) argues that maximization of power through war is paramount, thus declaring that states should fight rather than pass up an opportunity to
increase capabilities. It implies that unless an essential national actor is capable of protecting its own interest, those interests are unlikely to prevail. Therefore, capabilities are to be increased even at the price of war”. Implicitly too neo-realists (Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981) argue that the highest preference of state actor is security. In effect, a situation of anarchy which is the source of insecurity brings to focus the imperative that "only if survival is assured can states safely seek such goals as tranquility, profit or power (Waltz 1979:126).

However (Bueno 1980:373) in his balance of power theories argue that the above assumptions are problematic because if the actor is imperialistic; the array of options will implicitly allow for the possibility of waging war, regardless of the distribution of power. More importantly too, the exercise of power always appear to beget the appetite for more power (Carr 1946:112), hence in the noble goal of both power and security which supposedly count as the motivation for state actors to embark on war, seem not to consider the possibility of drawing a sharp line between the will to live and the will to power (Neibuhi, 1932). Also the escalation of casualties/victims of man and women with more burdens borne by mainly the later who are vulnerable does not count.

The pertinent question therefore is that while realists agree that states pursue their self interest, is their goal best expressed as maximizing their own power, maximizing their chances for survival or maneuvering to weaken dangerous opponents (Cusack and Stoll 1990:38). This is in relation to the protracted domestic conflict in Ogoni premised by the maximization of power by the Federal Government in collaboration with multinational oil companies (Shell and Chevron) to suppress weak opponent' to achieve self interest (oil revenue) but which appear not to be rational in anyway because of its
execution at the whims of men who are more motivated by honour, greed and above all fear (Thucydides quoted in (Gilpin, 1986:506).

It is lamentable that only 2% of the world military personnel are women (Smith 1999:10) Expectedly, women are at disadvantage because the implication is that it is the men who decide when to start a war or conflict, who decide the allocation of military resources during conflict and when to end a conflict (Inger 1997:30). In effect the society, and Ogoni community in particular became militarized, breeding new levels of violence as well as impunity for gender based human rights violation, sexual violence, forced aviction, custodial violence and lack of effective protection for women. This among other reasons was what led to the 1995 fourth World Conference on women during conflict held in Belgin China to draw the world's attention to it.

The multinational oil corporations being the representative of their countries are the expressions of western neo imperialism. To protect their vested interest they in collaboration with their countries, gave all manner of political and military support to the Nigerian state and this is one of the subtle forms of the manifestation of imperialism.

The position of women during conflicts in Nigeria and Ogoni community in particular portrays them as innocent victims of male violence and aggression (Ibeanu 2007:1).

The relevance of this theoretical frame work is that it offers a plausible scientific explanation for the interaction of oil revenue and the persistent conflict in Ogoni. It also offers a scientific and historical explanation of the conflict for a better understanding of whether the conflict compounds the position and fortunes of women in the conflict. Lastly, it offers a credible path for prospects in transformation of women
disempowerment during conflicts.

1.7 HYPOTHESES

i) The theoretical postulates of realism present a plausible explanation for the effect of persistent conflict in Ogoni land on women?

ii) The theoretical deductions of realism describe the position and role of women in Ogoni conflict

iii) Realism adequately accounts for prospects of transformation in women disempowerment in Ogoni conflict.

1.8 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

For the purpose of data generation, this study relied on observation of both primary and secondary sources of data. Observation implies a purposefully planned and systematically executed act of watching or looking at the occurrence of events, activities and behaviour which constitute the subject of focus of research or study (Obasi 1999: 169). The propriety of observation method of data generation has been articulated. Ikeagwu (1998: 172) contended that observation of political phenomena yields accounts descriptions and explanations of such phenomena. Belltz et al (1977: 201) maintained that observational technique yield data that relates directly to typical behavioural situations. Nichmias and Nachonias (1981: 152) also averred that all social research begins and ends with observation.

Moreso, the usefulness of observation method in social sciences is further highlighted by Webbs (1932: 138) and Babbie (1983: 178) who opined that deliberate and sustained personal observation is an indispensable part of the study of any social institution form which the researcher classifies his ideas, revises his personal
classifications and test his hypotheses. Observation relies on first hand data and as such, reduces the theoretical and personal bias. Again, with observation, the opportunities for evaluating and analyzing the contextual background of behaviour are enhanced by the researcher’s ability to observe the environment in operation with the observed. For our purpose in this study, observation method is necessary especially as the study relies on primary and secondary sources data as well as ex-post facto research design.

Our primary sources data derived form addresses, memoranda, press releases, publications of Transparency International, Human Right Watch, and other NGOs.

Our secondary sources include recordings of developments on the conflicts in the Niger Delta in periodicals and archival records that are documented, preserved and supplied secondhand in books by authors, newspapers, journals, magazines and workshop/conference papers. The study also utilizes materials sourced from the internet that border on the subject matter.

Finally, observation of primary and secondary sources of data will be complemented by the technique of non-participant observation since the researcher has been a keen observer of national issues especially the contentious and protracted Niger Delta quagonise.

In this study, we rely on documentary analysis especially qualitative and quantitative descriptive analysis. Asika (2006: 118) contended that qualitative descriptive analysis basically borders on summarizing the generated information verbally, while quantitative analysis is used to summarize a mass of generated information so that appropriate analytical methods could be used to also discover relationships among the variables. The reliance on both primary and secondary sources makes the adoption of the
forgoing analytical method imperative.

**Research Design**

We adopt, in this study, the ex-post facto research design. According to Cohen and Manion (1980), “ex-post facto” means “after the fact”. This refers to those studies that interrogate the possible cause and effect relationships by observing already existing conditions and searching back in time for possible causal agent, condition or situations. Similarly, Kerlinger (1977) explained an ex-post facto research to mean a descriptive analysis in which an independent variable has already occurred and in which an investigator starts with the observation of a dependent variable then studies the independent variable in retrospect to discover its relationship to as well as effect on the dependent variable.

As a quasi-experimental design this research design do not require randomization and often depends on stimulus-response and property-disposition relations to explain the possibility that the independent variable influences the dependent variable. Stimulus-response relationship is characterized by the independent variable that is external, specific and well-defined, with a dependent variable being a particular response to it.

**Validity and Reliability of Data**

Validity and reliability of data are very important aspects of scientific investigation. Consequent upon this, the issues associated with validity and reliability of scientific inquiry need to be addressed satisfactorily if scientific utility is to be enhanced. Therefore, to enhance the validity and reliability of our study a rigorous use of
observational method was adopted. The study equally relied on ex-post facto research design which enabled us to structure our observation.

Again, a theoretical framework of analysis based on realist theory of conflict. This enables us to link the theoretical postulations of this research work with the observable consistent behavioural orientations of the Nigerian government as well as the multinational oil companies in their exploration and exploitation of oil in the Ogoni region.
CHAPTER TWO

2.1 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF OGONI

Ogoni land is situated in an area of about 10,000 km$^2$, east of Port Harcourt in Rivers State. Archaeological and linguistic evidence suggest that Ogoni have inhabited the Niger Delta for up to 500 years. They established an organized social system which worked under a monarchy and under which men and women of great courage and ability enjoyed special status. They are a diverse group, made up of six kingdoms that speak four languages: a minority ethnic group that have never had any political influence in Nigeria. The six kingdoms are: Babbe, Eleme, Gokhana, Ken-Khana, Nyo-Khana and Tai. Although the four languages that are spoken are related, they are mutually unintelligible. These languages are Khana, Gokhana and Eleme. Linguistic experts classified the Ogoni languages as a distinct group within the Benue-Congo branch of African languages or more particularly as a branch in the New Benue-Congo family (UNPO’s report 1993).

The true origin of the Ogoni people is not very well known. One theory is that they migrated into the area from across Imo River. A second theory is that the Ogoni came in boats from Ghana and settled in the southern part of the areas. Believers in this theory point to the name by which most of the Ogoni people call themselves (Khana) as a pointer to the Ghanaian origin of the people.

Despite all these, Ogoni is among the indigenous people that inhabit the areas contiguous to oil drilling. Some of these groups in Niger Delta are the Andonia, Efik, Ibibios, Ijaw Iku, Ibos, Ikwerre, Itsekiris, Isokos, Kalabari and Lerhobo who make up one fourth of Nigeria’s population (Ibeanu 2007:114). The richness of the Niger Delta traditionally allowed its people to make a good living as subsistent farmers and fishing
people. However this life style has been threatened by the authorities of various oil prospecting multinationals in Ogoni land. On this MOSOP testified “the once beautiful Ogoni countryside is no more a source of fresh air and green vegetation. All one sees and feels around is death” (http:www;insular.com/tmc.politics/Africa/ogoni.fact.html).

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF OGONI CONFLICT

After the Berlin Treaty of 1885, Nigeria came under British colonial rule, but it was not until 1901 that British forces arrived Ogoni land. The cultural differences led to resistance on the side of the Ogoni people, but as they were not strong enough to resist the British patrols, the Ogoni people were finally subjugated in 1914. The British saw Nigeria in terms of three major ethnic groups: the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and Igbo, thereby ignoring more than 250 smaller peoples, including the Ogonis. The Ogoni were regarded with contempt by all other groups in the Delta region and were often positioned at the bottom of the social ladder (UNPO’s record 1993).

In 1958, Shell Oil Company struck oil in Ogoni land, which set in motion a process that dramatically affected not only Ogoni society, but Nigeria as a whole. Today, oil accounts for over 90% of Nigeria’s export earnings and some 80% of government revenue, controlling the entire Nigerian economy. The land of the Niger Delta is the source of over 90% of Nigeria’s oil. For the Ogoni, who live in this region, the environmental and social cost of oil exploitation were painfully high. Despite this, Ogonis attest that during this time, the government began forcing them to abandon their land to oil companies without consultation and offering negligible compensation.
The Conflict

Researchers agreed that the conflict had the same pattern from when they started and the crux of the discussion had been the Ogoni bill of rights. A youth leader in Deeyor community explained that the conflict pre-dated Ken Saro Wiwa. He opined that it was Dr. Paul Birabi of Gokana that started the struggle revealing that its root can be traced to some questions put to Dr. Birabi by a group of Ogoni women that questioned why they were being denied their rights because of the deplorable state of things in Ogoni at that time. The answer he gave to those women made them support Ken Saro Wiwa. In this, Teresa (1997) said “so we supported Ken”.

The 1970s and 80s saw the government empty promises of benefit for Niger Delta people fall through, with the Ogoni growing increasingly dissatisfied and their environmental social and economic apparatus rapidly deteriorating. The movement for the survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP) was therefore formed in 1992. Spearheaded by Ogoni playwright and author Ken Saro-Wiwa MOSOP became the major platform uniting the Ogoni people in their struggle for ethnic and environmental right (Conflict in Niger Delta, The Case of Ogoni land 1992-1995).

Generally, oil communities have demonstrated their agitation against environmental pollution dwindling socio-economic opportunities and political domination. To this end, Gboyega contents that

Initially
such
exasperations
where conducted
in peaceful
manner with
communities embarking on non-violent demonstrations, petitions, picketing, sponsored and paid adversaries, opinion editorials in national dailies, expansive litigations in law courts as well as raising high powered delegations to present grievances to government. With the failure of such non-belligerent overtures, oil communities have changed tactics by becoming more militant and assertive, and on occasions, violent (Gboyega, 1997:177).

The framework of the movement for the survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP) though exclusively an Ogoni affair was the first real and organized attempt after the botch one by Adaka Boro to draw the world’s attention to the plight of the Ogoni’s and the entire Niger Delta at large. It x-rayed the political motive of the West and how the West represented by the multinational corporations support the state to suppress the legitimate aspiration of the people of the region. Thus revealing the level of oil exploration and
exploitation of Nigeria by the West. Given the way and manner they operate, it can be argued that they represent the practical expression of Western neo imperialism. This also explains more of the reason why the West gave military assistance to Nigeria which aggravated the conflict. Warning on dangers inherent in this, General Malu, then Chief of Army Staff in Obvious reference to America said

“our interplay with any country should not in anyway compromise our military strategy, national interest and national objectives which our sovereignty as a nation is sustained” (This day on line, retrieved on August 18, 2008).

The implication of the foregoing is that Nigeria state lacks the capacity to protect oil exploration and exploitation in the region.

Beginning in December 1992, the conflict between Ogonis and the multinational oil companies escalated to a level of greater seriousness and intensity on both sides. Both parties began carrying out of violence and MOSOP issued an ultimatum to the oil companies (Shell, Chevron and the Nigerian Petroleum Corporation) which demanded some 810 billion in accumulated royalties, damages and compensation and immediate stoppage of environmental degradation and future drilling (http://www.nigerianmuse.com/Nigeria watch/oputa/oputa volume two. Pdf).

The Ogoni’s threatened to embark on mass action to disrupt their operation of the oil companies if they failed to comply. By this act, the Ogonis shifted the focus of their actions from irresponsive Federal Government to oil companies engaged in their own region.

The government responded by banning public gathering and declaring that disturbances of oil production were acts of treason. Oil extraction from the territory had
slowed down to a trickle of 10,000 barrel per day (600 m$^3$/d) (5% of natural total). Because of the interest the West attaches to oil, it has been its strategic resolve to guarantee the unimpeded access to and flow of it. Any threat to the continuous flow of oil to the West especially the United States has been viewed as threat to energy security, an important component of Natural Security (Lubeck, Watts and Lip Chutz 2007). The West has wagged economic political and as a last resort military wars on regimes and nations that have been viewed as threats to its economic interest most importantly in the area of oil e.g. The US face-off with Iran which was as a result of the reign of deposed Shah, through which America, controlled the vast oil wealth of Iran remains a true testimony for American quest for oil. Also the US wagged war with Iraq when her oil interest was threatened by Saddam Hussein led regime in Iraq which annexed the oil-rich Kuwait. So one doesn’t have to wonder why it offered a ready military assistance to Nigerian Government during and thus escalated the militarization of the conflict.

Military repression escalated in May 1994. Soldiers and mobile policemen appeared in most Ogoni villages, on that day four Ogoni Chiefs (all on the conservative side of a schism within MOSOP over strategy) were brutally murdered. Saro Wiwa, head of the opposing faction had been denied entry to Ogoni land on the day of the murder but he was detained in connection with the killings. The occupying forces led by Major Paul Okuntimo of Rivers State internal Security on the pretext of searching for those directly responsible for the killing of the four Ogonis engaged in terror operations against the general Ogoni population. Amnesty International characterized the policy as “deliberate terrorism”

By mid June, 30 villages had been completely destroyed, 600 people had been
detained and at least 40 had been killed. A total of around 100,000 internal refugees and estimated 2,000 civilian deaths resulted from the activities of the occupying forces (Ogoni land: A Genocid Museum Hogne.sandvik @ isf.uib.no).

This source also revealed that on 12th June 1993, the Ogoni boycotted the nation's presidential election simply because MOSOP had to remain neutral among the two existing Nigerian parties, and that a boycott would make the point that Ogoni were disenchanted with the constitution under which the elections were being held, since its provision deprived them of their oil resources and this was regarded as discriminatory. As the Ogoni planned peace and dialogue, Shell and Nigerian military plotted death and destruction. The crime of the Ogoni people is that they have the temerity to ask for their rights from both the government of Nigeria and Shell.

In May 1994 nine activists from the movement would become known as “the Ogoni nine among them Ken Saro-Wiwa were arrested and accused of incitement for murder following the death of four Ogoni elders”. Sarowiwa and his comrades pleaded not guilty but were imprisoned for a year before being found guilty and sentenced to death by a special convened tribunal hand selected by General Sani Abacha in November 1995. In this Ibeanu (2007) said “The crisis caused the death of four Ogoni and the subsequent murder of the late environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight Ogoni Compatriots by the military Junta”.

The execution were met with an immediate international outcry. The trial was widely criticized by human right organizations and the government of other states who condemned the Nigerian government long history of detaining their critics, many pro-democracy and other political activists. The Commonwealth of nations which had also
pleaded for clemency suspended Nigeria’s membership in response. The United States, the UK and EU, all implemented sanctions, however none of these had an impact on oil production.

From January 4, 1993 to January 4, 1998, over 2,000 were reportedly murdered by Federal troops led at different times by Lt.-Col Paul Okuntimo and major Umahi (Guardian 2005: 6). It is opined that Ogonis died of shock, sickness and other forms of psychic and physical assaults. The crisis also led to the death of Saro Wiwa and eight Ogoni Compatriots.

As at 2006, the situation in Ogoni has eased significantly, progressed by transition to democratic rule in 1999. However, no attempts has been made by the government or international body to bring about justice by investigating and prosecuting those involved in the violence and property destruction in Ogoni land (Human Rights Watch, 2002).

Although Saro-Wiwa was hanged to secure Shell’s return to Ogoni oil wells, but the Ogoni have not lost sight of the vision and the oil company is still persona non grata in the area after its first peaceful expulsion from Ogoni oil fields. The present intimidation of the people of Niger Delta through military bombardment which started during the era of Olusegun Obasanjo’s democratic dispensation will not yield positive results because it is bound to lead to the escalation of the violence as exemplified in the 1999 invasion of Odi town and Ke-Dere town for protesting against Shell’s forceful unilateral return to Ogoni (Ibeanu 2007).

It should be remembered that Ogoni is a rural community that relegates the position and power of women to the back ground. This may be one of the reasons why although the Federation of Ogoni Women Association (FOWA) was one of the
umbrella’s of MOSOP, that mobilized women at the grass root level also even though MOSOP is a cultural and political organization yet the activities of these women during the conflict was largely auxiliary thereby lending credence to this assertion:

Although it was not officially announced but men dominated the affairs of the organization, women were used for purposes and places that were obvious that the activists could not reach, like the seduction of soldiers to divert their attention when men wish to turn off oil wells (www.ogoni.forum.org.za).

The same source also reveal that the Gbene Ogoni women Association (GOWA) was also formed by women that are exiled into Benin Republic to resist shell pipelines to run through their farm lands and spill oil on their land and make it impotent. The GOWA was formed to run along with the vision of Ogoni solidarity forum which was formed as a mouth piece for the Ogoni community in Benin Republic

From the afore said, it can be understood that during as in other conflicts around the world and Nigeria, women were neither at the decision table nor do they participate as combatants during periods of the conflict. This then justifies the words of Smith

It is lamentable that only 2% of the world military personnel are women”. In effect the society becomes militarized breeding new levels of violence as well as impunity for a gender-based human rights violations sexual and racial violence, forced aviction, custodial violence and lack of effective protection for women refugees and internally displaced people (Inai Safon in Sanam and Rita, 1999:10).

2.3 EFFECTS OF THE CONFLICT ON WOMEN IN Ogoni
Conflict exists in every level and type of human society. Conflict by no means is not a negative force rather it is a natural expression of social difference of humanity’s perpetual struggle for justice and self determination. It is a manifestation of accumulated aggression and hostility.

The nature and dimension of conflict today portrays it as gender based violence and aggression. This is for the fact that during conflict, women are only seen as victims occupying insignificant auxiliary position as people engaged in the conflict. It is in line with this that we are going to discuss the effects of Ogoni conflict on women in Ogoni under these headings: physical, social, psychological and economic effects.

**Physical Effects**

During the greatest numbers of casualties recorded are women and children. This is because as armless people they are left at the mercy of Nigerian soldiers and even Ogoni Militants who with their sophisticated equipment inflicted great injuries on the civilian especially women. Many even lost their lives as a result of great shocks, beating and severe torture and even rape. Comfort Aluzim testified to this when she said during the conflict they started beating the women, dragging them into the bush. They started loosing their clothe and raping them. My mate was pregnant. One army man just used his leg and hit her stomach an she miscarried (Ibeanu 2007:137).

**Social Psychological Effects**

An average Ogoni man had not been able to live with the reality that rape is an accident which women does not have any control, so the women are always double victim of rape. The Ogoni people regard marriage and hold family values in the highest
esteem. For the Ogoni woman that is married, sex outside marriage is a taboo that haunts your family generation after generation. Sex for the Ogoni woman is an expression of very deep love for a particular man either your husband or an acceptable partner anything other than this is discretion of one’s womanhood.

Incidents of rape during was so alarming that Mus Kanayorks explains her ordeal in the hands of Nigerian military when she said

after using their koboko on us they started kicking us with their foot. They dragged some of the women into the bush. We were naked, our dresses were torn, and our wrappers were being loosed by a man who is not our husband. They tore our pants and began to rape us in the bush. The raping wasn’t secret because about two people are rapping you there. They are raping you in front of your sister, in front of your mother. It was like a market (Sokari in [WWW.authorsden.com](#)).

But these kinds of incidents are mainly kept away from the husbands and male folks because of the stigma that is associated with rape and sex outside marriage. We live with the secret fear that most of the women in our midst may have contacted HIV/AIDS through rape and there is no means to undergo test because of lack of money or medical attention as most of these women are illiterates and poor.

Besides, those whose dignities have been stolen through forceful separation from their husbands and partners during the conflict (many ran into exile in Benin Republic) in 1996. The group of Ogoni that joined their husbands in the refugee camp from early March, 1999 were also plagued with several problems to scale through family reunification process and therefore barred from joining their husband and partners in second countries of resettlement.
Economic Effects

Ogoni is a strong cultural society that runs its affairs on the basis that females were second class to their male counterparts, thus the ratio of educated male is more than that of the females. Since the men are armed with better educational background, they always get any little employment position that open for the oil producing communities, reducing the women mostly as farmers, petty traders etc. This makes them economically unbalanced compared to the men. The economic powers of these women are often worsened during conflict as they cannot farm or trade during the conflict. On this note Mercy Nkwagha recounts how she lost her market wares and all she had to make a living from “they started beating us, all that we were carrying to the market to sell they took”. (Soraki in WWW.authorsden.com).

The economic impact of conflicts as in most conflicts and post conflict economies include very high cost of living within these areas while the standard of living is extremely low. Ogoni women have been taking on non traditional female roles because of widowhood caused by the conflict. On this note, information from the website reveals that during the peak of the Ogoni struggle, it is the women that are always becoming widows when their husbands are killed. The responsibility of caring for children that have been orphaned always fall on women, it is also the girl child that has to sacrifice her schooling for the boy when a family’s source of income is destroyed by Shell, the government and their agents. (The negative impact of oil drilling on rural women and the role of Ogoni women in Niger Delta. Retrieved 30th March, 2009).

Health
Closely tied to health problem are economic, social and psychological problems. This is for the fact that the World Health Organization stipulates that health is not only absence of disease but also the presence of physical and social well being (Patricia 2004: 6). This encompassing view on health means that housing, food, a secure future, education and general sense of safety from all kinds of violent acts within one’s place of abode etc. are all part of physical and mental well being.

The main point here is that social well being can only be guaranteed in a socially just society in a healthy environment which was totally absent in Ogoni during the conflict due to the conflict. The little economic, medical and social structures were destroyed due to breakdown of civil society and security.

Also the aquatic and terrestrial environment that provided good drinking waters, healthy environment and source of food were all destroyed by pollution as a result of oil spillage caused by Ogoni militant groups who vandalise oil pipelines, exposing their people to disease and all kinds of skin infection. Also because of long stay in bushes, women and children are exposed to harsh weather conditions and attacks by wild animals.

Due to high incident of rape, women were exposed to HIV/AIDS scourge and other types of venereal diseases due to poor and unhealthy environment as they ran to safeguard their lives and the lives of their children and old ones.

The type of huts we live is not fit and conducive for human dwelling. We have to make with the strength of the local church congregation whose optimum capacity can only afford us three open compound for over 833 persons. The obvious, is pressure upon facilities such as bathroom, drinking well, unavoidable disease and epidemics as a result of the unroofed compound in tropical rainfall and violent sunshine” (www.Ogoni forum.org.za).
CHAPTER THREE

THE STRUCTURE OF REALISM AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE
OGONI CONFLICT

3.1 THE THEORETICAL POSTULATES OF REALISM

Realism in political theory is an aspect of conflict theory which highlights inherency of conflicts in human behaviour and traces the root cause of conflict to a flaw in human nature which is seen to be selfish and engaging in the pursuit of personalized self interest defined as power. The theory originates from classified political theory and shares both theological and biological doctrines about an apparent weakness and individualism inherent in human nature (Shadrack 2007: 44-45).

Because of this, we explain conflict from the individual level.

Realism believes that competitive processes between actors primarily defined as states are the natural expression of conflict by parties engaged in the pursuit of scarce and competitive interest (Morton Deutsch, 1973). This theory has three component parts.

i. Descriptive Realism: This sees the world as an arena of conflict.

ii. Explanatory Realism: This seeks to show that there are genetic defects which push humankind into behaving negatively (Koestler, 1967) therefore war becomes inevitable because there is no mechanism to stop them from occurring (Watt, 1959: 232). This justifies the claims of biological theories that human kinds are evil by nature. Since our ancestors are instinctively violent beings and since we evolve from them we too must bear destructive impulse in our genetic make up. This justifies the theories of Hobbes, St. Augustine, Maltus e.t.c. that human beings are driven by natural instincts to
self-preservation. This makes Hobbes describe life in the “state of nature” as solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. In the same vain Saint Augustine, (1948) and Neibuhr (1953) and other theologians referred to the linkage between violent behaviour and original sin in humanity Neibuhr maintains that human beings are driven by a natural quest; “will-to-live”/will-to-power, to seek power, personal security and survival at the expense of others around them (Shedrack, 2007: 46).

iii. Prescriptive Realism: This is derived from the argument of descriptive and explanatory realism to say that decision makers (individual, groups, or nations) have a moral justification to defend their basic interests and ensure self-preservation using any means necessary.

Consequent upon this, Morgenthau in his thesis of power politics in Politics Among Nations. The struggle for power (Morgenthau 1973: 41) A realist he is, argues that realism is anti utopian. He faults idealism for believing that human nature is malleable and good. The idea of Morgenthau, Carr, Kaplan, Walt and other structural realists is that the imperfections in the world known as conflict has its roots in forces that are inherent in human nature; that human nature is selfish, individualistic and naturally conflictive leading to inevitability of conflict. Therefore, actors should be ready to take the consequences and outcomes of conflict since it is inevitable and manifest in all human society rather than wish there was none.

The Deductions of Realism

The deductions of realism is that the root cause of conflict is due to inherency in human nature which is seen to be selfish and engaging in the pursuit of personalized self
interest called power. Because of scarce competitive interest, individual competitions (represented as nations, groups and states) engage in the pursuits of this interest thereby turning the world as we see it today into an arena of conflict. This defect in human nature is such that man has no control over it or there is no mechanism to stop it from occurring.

Because of this, states and nations representing this competitive interest has the moral justification to defend this selfish personal interest and ensure self preservation by any means available and necessary. This is why Morgenthau and other structure realists posit believe that imperfection in the world today known as conflict has its root in forces that are inherent in human nature, and that these forces are selfish, individualistic and naturally conflictive leading to the inevitability of conflict. This goes a long way in supporting the words of Nnoli who contends that conflict exist in every human society (Nnoli, 1989).

This again may be the reason why the realists criticize the naturalist by insisting that the moralists are too sanguine about the possibility of achieving either normative or practical consensus in our society. Therefore actors should be ready to face the consequences and outcome of conflict rather than wish there was none. This is due to the fact that realists take their bearing from fear rather than hope and preventing the worst is the first duty of political leaders and striving for far reaching social improvement makes sense only when doing so does not significantly increase the odds that some previously abated evil will re-appear. And in assessing the odds leaders and citizens must never assume that a good once secured is secured for good. Disruptions are always possible and the task of shoring up the conditions of decency is never ending (Bernard, 2005: 3, 31).
Therefore it is emphatically and unquestionably true that political conducts is driven by motives and desires and while they can be contained, disciplined and to some extent laundered through political procedures and institutions, and through deliberations and debate, they cannot ever be expunged of personal desires and ambitions (Mark, 2007: 111).

Realists acknowledge important inequalities among individuals. This does not mean a rejection of the Aristotelian selection of leaders or the political arrangement of modern democracy. What it entails is that there is a coexistence of empirical inequalities among individuals alongside their moral and civic equality, a fact that constitution drafters and policy makers ignore at their peril. Therefore realists reject the assumption that human beings are equal in what Rawls identifies as two fundamental moral powers. Therefore political deliberations is and will always be incompletely rational and the theoretical presumptions of deliberate democrats are too demanding ever to be met in practice (Diana, 2006).

3.2 HOW REALISM AFFECTS THE POSITION AND ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE Ogoni Conflict

Since the turn of the 1990’s, the Niger Delta has literally become a cauldron of political and ethnic turmoil. Although this region is not new to agitation and restiveness what is new is their degree and character.

Indeed the nature of oil as a resource is such that it has failed woefully in creating the cognitive freedom for the national elite to come to grip with the profound crisis facing the polity; a strategy given the manner in which clientilism bankrupts the country and
short changes the ability to guarantee stability outside the framework of official repression.

The brutality inflicted on the Ogomi community under Abacha’s regime has became another major signifier of the extent the Nigerian state is willing and able to go in order to impose such a tenuous and delicate form of order and stability that can ensure the continuation of oil extraction (Ukeje, 2002: 3).

Historically, women have played a critical role in challenging established authority, structure and values in whatever form they are disguised. For instance, the famous Aba and Egba women’s riots in eastern and western Nigeria against colonial legislations perceived as too arbitrary and regressive especially on taxation, the protest by women against the venality of military dictatorship; and those of Ogoni women and other oil communities in Niger Delta against multinational oil companies and/or Nigerian state (Ukeje, 2002: 1 – 2).

Realistic theory of conflict portrays that the Ogoni conflict was triggered by the moral justification of the personalized self interest of Nigerian government and elites in Ogoni to control the oil wealth. In this regard Ukeje (2000) said “without doubt almost three and a half decade of uninterrupted crude oil production has benefited foreign, national and local elites to the neglect, and detriment of majority of oil producing communities in the Niger Delta of which Ogoni is part of”.

The marginalization of women in Ogoni can be located in the fact that women are patently non-political citizens, meaning that they are primarily concerned with domestic, household issues as such cannot engage in conflict too distant from home front and
hazardous. Also socio-cultural and traditional taboos impede women to engage in conflicts.

Because Ogoni is a strong cultural society that runs its affairs on the basis that women are second class to their male counterparts, thus the ratio of educated male is more than that of women and more so because according to Rolhrich (1975:65); most societies in the world Africa and Niger Delta in particular are patrilineal society”.

Men see women as subordinate beings as such the role of acquiring wealth, protecting and controlling it falls more on men than women. This may be the reason why members of the elite in Ogoni and even the Nigerian state are predominantly men who dominate to ensure the protection and prevailing of their interest called power which is normally conflictive with the interest of others which has led to series of protests and conflict in Ogoni. Thus, they dominate the military personnel in most societies. When Ken Saro Wiwa formed MOSOP to fight against the foreign multinational oil companies and the federal government for the destruction of Ogoni land and streams through the activities of Shell and Chevron FOWA was equally formed as an affiliate of MOSOP and was used for auxiliary purposes. Information from the website reveals that because MOSOP was a socio-cultural and political organization, the women’s roles were largely auxiliary. Although it was not officially pronounced, the men dominated the affairs of the organization. The women were used for purposes and places that were obvious that the male activists could not reach, like the seduction of soldiers to divert their attention when men wish to turn off the oil wells.
In specific terms for instance one of the strategies by women protesters in an increasing number of cases is that of collective nudity (the deliberate display of female anatomy). In another respect of these Ukeje said

indeed apart from symbolically carrying household utensils such as frying pans, long spoons and chanting protest songs their only weapon seemed to be in the morality they evoke”. (Ukeje 2002 :1)

Therefore, in agreement with the realist acknowledgement of important inequality among individuals as our society acknowledges the superiority of men in military and all facets of life except in child bearing and rearing which are traditionally under the domain of women. Also, Robert Pen-Waren said in complement

masculinity is closed tied to every form of power in our society. Henry Kissinger’s telling but perhaps Apocryphal remarks “power is the ultimate aphrodisiacs” Nancy Hartsock (Abstract).

This patriarchal nature of our society and the superiority which the men feel over women leading to the domination may also be the reason Smith (1997:10) said “it is lamentable that only 2% of the worlds’ military personnel are women”. Expectedly, women are at a disadvantage because the implication is that it is the men who decide the allocation of military resources during a conflict and when to engage in conflict. In effect, the society becomes militarized breading new levels of violence as well as impunity for gender based human rights violation, sexual and racial violence, forced aviction,
custodial violence and lack of effective protection for armless women refugees and internally displaced people (Indai Sajor in Sanam and Rita 1999:10).

This does not mean that some women have not excelled during conflicts e.g. Queen Amina of Zaria and Aba women’s riot but what we are saying is that the proportion in comparison with males is glaringly low.

In Ogoni, education and job opportunities are left mainly for men except in places where there are no male qualified for the post. In modern times, educational and economic power are crucial means of rising to the elite groups. In effect, with the exception of the elite in the oil communities who are reaping bountifully from the formal and informal networks of state-administered corruption, most inhabitants of the Delta Basin have one sad tale or another to share about the miseries heaped on them from oil.

In another development at the same time that oil answered the material expectations of the elite, it also compounded the misfortunes of small scale artisans and subsistence farmers in rural oil communities (Frank, 1984:215-314). As we know the major constituents of these group of people are women. The Ogoni is an indigenous ethnic group that depends on agricultural activities for their sustenance. They are predominantly farmers and peasant fishing people. The Ogoni women traditionally takes the lead in the former mostly, as such the duty of gathering food depends on the women most more than men. The ratio of educated male is more than the women since the men are armed with better educational background, they always get any little employment position that open up for oil producing communities.

These among other factors have continued to pull Ogoni women backward. Few of them hardly rise to the top as to make influential impact in the affairs of the
community not to talk of being at the negotiating table when decision on important matters such as conflict are being decided thus they cannot make any influential impact as to improve the role and position of women during conflict in Ogoni rather they are pushed aside for auxiliary purposes and hardly benefit from the oil wealth directly except through their husbands, sons, or male relations.
CHAPTER FOUR
REALISM AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN THE OGONI CONFLICT

4.1 THE PROSPECTS OF REALISM

Realism x-rayed the root cause of conflict as inherency of conflict in human behaviour that is selfish in the pursuit of personalized self interest called power. Because of this conflict becomes inevitable in every human society making it pertinent for regimes nations and states to think of ways of handling conflict instead of wishing for an end to it. This is because politics and conflict go hand in hand. As Mouff fi puts it, conflict in order to be accepted as legitimate need to take a form that does not destroy the political association. This means that some common bond must exist between the parties in conflict so that they will not treat their opponents as enemies to be eradicated …… What is the nature of the common bond that distinguishes the state of politics from the state of war should politics be understood as conflictual and hegemonic “all the way down” or should it incorporate some idea of agreement?

Realist ultimately do not disagree about the nature of misguided relevant utopian thought; that certain features of human psychology, are fixed, at least until evolutionary forces transform the human specie and that these features restrict the range of feasible political structures.

Therefore the prospects of realism is that conflict is un ending in our society. Even though there can peace times, disruptions are bound to occur and the task of shoring up conditions of decency is unending.

In lieu of this, there is the need to check the continued victimization of women during conflict in Ogoni because this theory made it explicitly clear that this ugly
situation is triggered by cultural societal values, patriarchal nature of our society, 
Women’s low level of education and economic background of women in Ogoni.

4.2 HOW THE REALISM ACCOUNTS FOR PROSPECTS OF 
TRANSFORMATION IN WOMEN DISEMPOWERMENT IN THE 
OGONI CONFLICT

The first victim of war is society. The very fabric of society is torn into pieces. 
Whatever progress had previously been made is swept away.

In wars today, civilians not only make up the majority of victims, they are also increasing the targets. Women are more vulnerable than men when society collapses from rape and displacement to the denials of the right to education, food; and health care. Women bear the largest share of the suffering. They carry the heaviest burden. Even where there is no military conflict, violence against women is one of the most common forms of violence in the world; and it gets worse in times of war. (Welcome. Remarks at the conference “the impact of Armed Conflict on Women”

Sexual abuse against women stem from deep-rooted prejudice, inequality and discrimination and for the fact that it is indeed an effective weapon of war that humiliates and weakens. This style of atrocities committed against women and the general victimization of women through other means during wars are called war crimes and are crimes against humanity.
Due to the constant victimization of women in conflicts around the globe, Nigeria and Ogoni in particular there is the need to utilize the prospects of realism to improve women disempowerment in Ogoni conflict through the following means.

As the world is growing much in modernization and civilization, there is the need for the transformation of our society to meet the trends of time. The Aristotelian selection of power should take precedence in every facet of human endeavour. The patriarchal nature of our society and gender inequality that goes with it should be discarded. Men and women should be given equal opportunities in the pursuit and protection of selfish interest of individuals, nations and states called power through equal educational and job opportunities, equal cultural rites e.t.c. This when granted gives women the virtue, power and right to engage in the pursuit of power. This is because majority of Ogoni women are illiterate, armless farmers and petty traders. Thus coupled with the cultural values of Ogoni people, these women could not play influential role during periods of the conflict. They only took part as protest groups, playing auxiliary roles only. They are not adequately mobilized morally, educationally and financially. They do not belong to the ruling or elite class in Ogoni as to make influential impact when decisions about the conflict are being taken to guarantee their protection. All the traditional rulers, members of MOSOP and Ogoni militant groups are males. This results in disregard or neglect of the interest of their women when matters and decisions of the conflict are being taken leaving them only as victims of the conflict.

Government should build more schools in Ogoni and men and women given equal opportunities in admission from primary to university level. There should also be equal job opportunities. This will help Ogoni women rise to positions of trust and influence in
the society thereby helping to enforce laws that will guarantee women protection during conflict and even in peace time. It should not be forgotten that in the past year, the Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first women head of state in Africa and Liberia adopted an anti-rape law (Wellcome remarks at the conference “The Norwegian Red Cross and International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/utenriksminister_jonas_gahr_store/taler_artikler/... Retrieved 8 August 2008).

With equal educational and job opportunities for all in Ogoni, this will go a long way to reactivating the power potential and consciousness of women about men domination in decision making and power structure thus portraying the need for them to challenge the ugly situation to guarantee their rights and protection during conflict.

Also there is the need for gender mainstreaming in power structure in Ogoni. By this, I mean making power structure in Ogoni gender equitable and gender sensitive. This is for the fact that lack of access to critical resources such as income information, education, skills and job opportunities due to gender roles and responsibilities particularly disempowered women. Without any sense of power whatsoever their participation is minimal at home, within the countries and in power structure. Mainstreaming requires explicit knowledge of equality of goals entailing redistribution of power resources, and opportunities in favour of women (Mandaki, 2003: 1).

Mandate on gender equality have been articulated in many forums. These include the International Conference in 1990, and the Fourth World Conference on Population and Development, in Caro and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijin. Beijin Platform of Action (1995) clearly maintains that without the active participation of
women and incorporation of the perspective of women in all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality and development-improvement in women disempowerment during conflict in the world, Nigeria and Ogoni community in particular cannot be achieved (Nwogu 2008: 253).

With equal educational and job opportunities for all sexes in Ogoni, including women mainstreaming in power structures in Ogoni, women will one day rise to positions of trust and challenge even the cultural rights of men to dominate and relegate the power of women to the background in Ogoni. And in due course women will be reckoned with and their interests, right and privileges untrampled upon during periods of conflict both in Ogoni and in other places, thus serving as a reference point for other women around the world and Nigeria during periods of conflict. Thus alleviating the continued victimization and other repressive conditions of women during conflict.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

This work examined the historical background of the Ogoni conflicts and perceived the persistent conflict in Ogoni to be triggered by the interest of the elite in Ogoni and Nigerian government in collaboration with the West precisely the United State of America represented by the multinational civil companies in Ogoni (Chevron and Shell).

The Ogoni conflict predated Saro Wiwa the founder of MOSOP and other militant groups in Ogoni. It was Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw who at independence in 1960 revolted against oppressors of Niger Delta to effect a change on the environment so that “man can be man”.

In the 80s and 90s the Ogoni protest increased and were at it’s height during Babangida and Abacha’s regimes. This led to the expulsion of Shell in Ogoni land and finally to the hanging of Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni nine to ensure Shell’s unilateral return to Ogoni.

The conflict has not even been quelled completely as Ogoni people are incessantly protesting against their marginalization in the oil revenue and environment pollution due to oil spillage.

The ethical deductions of realism enabled us to find out that during periods of the conflict, Ogoni women due to their low level of education, societal values and low economic power were not adequately represented when decisions of the conflict are taken, they were merely victims of the conflict, suffering series of atrocities and crimes
visited on them by Nigerian soldiers and militant groups in Ogoni that took part in the conflict.

It is the theory that helped to project ways of transformation in women disempowered in the Ogoni conflict through equal educational and job opportunities which guarantee and trigger financial empowerment to question the cultural rights of men superiority and domination in political and decision making structures in Ogoni.

By so doing it will help restructure and improve the position and role of women during Ogoni conflict thereby guaranteeing their participation and involvement in decisions about important matters such as conflict, as such their rights and protection during conflicts in Nigeria and Ogoni community in particular.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The ethical deductions of realism portrayed the fact that the Ogoni conflict was triggered by the interest of elites in Ogoni and the Nigerian Government in collaboration with the West represented by the multinational oil companies (Shell and Chevron) to control the oil wealth.

It also portrays that in the Ogoni conflict, like all other conflicts in Nigeria, women were victimized and the victimization of women in Ogoni stem from the fact that Ogoni women were placed in a subordinate position in relation to their male counterparts due to the patriarchal nature of Ogoni society (superiority of men and women regarded as too inferior or weak to take part in conflict) as well as educational and economic disempowerment of women. All these among others resulted in deliberate exclusion of women when decisions on important issues like conflicts are being taken as such they were not represented to agitate for their rights and protection or even to take part during
the conflict. Realism therefore portrayed prospects of transformation in women disempowerment in the Ogoni conflict through mass women education, job opportunities and economic empowerment through which patriarchal Ogoni can be transformed and women’s superiority, rights and protection guaranteed during the Ogoni conflict.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should grant the Ogoni a fair share of the oil wealth and set up a monitoring team to ensure that the federal allocation to this community gets to the targeted population. They should also set up development programs as to make life more meaningful for the people by building more schools, hospitals, bridges, electricity and good road networks. A situation where the federal allocation and other funds allocated to Ogoni people get only to the elites should be reversed because it only enriches them leaving greater percentage of the population whose means of livelihood are destroyed due to oil spillage. The impoverishment of Ogoni people in the midst of wealth leads to unrest in Ogoni. A hungry man is an angry man.

- The oil companies should adopt a better and more efficient means of handling oil spillage to reduce pollution and its adverse effect on the Ogoni women who are mostly peasant farmers and petty traders, as this impoverishes them by weakening their economic power.

- States and local governments in Ogoni should map out campaign strategies to sensitize women to go to school by giving them free education, scholarships and bursaries at all levels of education. They should also be adequately employed both in the oil companies and other state, local government and federal establishments.
With proper education and economic power, women in Ogoni can rise up to the elite class. This goes to buttress the words of Igwe,

The concept of the elite does better in identifying the outstanding people within each group often separated from the means—whether economic, social, genealogical, hereditary, biological by which the distinction was achieved or preserved. (Igwe, 2007: 113).

What motivates the political elite or elite groups as they could be described, to play active role in politics was, the power theorists pointed out, “the inevitable and irrepressible urge in human beings to come to power” (Varma, 2006: 114). One can understand from this that behind the political and group elite, power is the ultimate urge.

With proper education and economic power, women in Ogoni can rise up to the elite class (political and group) as such play influential role in Ogoni’s political and decision making structures. This done, Ogoni women will no longer see the act of acquiring and protecting the personalized self interest of individuals represented as nations and states only to be in the domain of Ogoni men, thus, the erosion of Patriarchal nature of Ogoni society and men superiority over women in the pursuit of power. Ogoni women will be actively involved as such ensure their rights and protection when important decisions about issues like conflicts are taken thereby ensuring their right and protection.
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