

Chapter 10

Conflict and Peoples' Insecurity: An Insight from the Experiences of Nigeria

Katsuya Mochizuki

1. Introduction

Sequential deterioration of the macro economy has seriously affected human security in African society since the 1980s. Multilateral financial institutions advocated structural economic adjustment as a panacea for stagnant economies. In Nigeria, the economic growth of the early 1990s showed comparatively better performance than the previous decade. However, economic gain had not trickled down to the life of ordinary people. Their substantial income further declined as devaluation of national currency and inflation followed in this period. A common phrase among people to describe their situation was "SAP (Structural Adjustment Program) saps us." The adjustment effort resulted in wider income gaps and social insecurity.

A sense of insecurity often leads people to struggle for resources. Faced with structural changes, people have been driven to secure their own share in the economy. Most African governments, however, failed to provide proper roadmaps to economic recovery. They failed to securing employment and earnings for their people, while immediate dismissal and delayed payment became commonplace, even in the public sector. The shrinking private sector had no capacity to absorb unemployed workers. Ordinary people tried to find alternative sources of income and economic space. Their survival strategies ranged from begging to self-help style petit trades. Strong desires for resources led people to try all kinds of ventures, including criminal ones. These adventures sometimes resulted in violent disputes, community clashes, and so on. As the most populous country in the African continent, Nigeria has experienced harsh

domestic confrontations, including the civil war (Biafran War). Conflicts in the oil-producing area of the country (the so-called Niger Delta) have also started to show their violent aspects since the early 1990s. One of the epoch-making incidents was the opposition movement of the Ogoni people (the Movement of the Survival of the Ogoni People: MOSOP) which, in spite of its peaceful character, had a great impact on other popular movements in the country. The leadership of the MOSOP behaved tactically, and their bargaining method showed itself to be an effective strategy for securing resources. Following the MOSOP, many groups and movements emerged in the Niger Delta. They became more radical in their demands and actions, given their youth elements. Even women became involved and began to take an active part in these oppositions.

The objective of this chapter is to amplify an understanding of human (in-) security by examining the popular movements and the conflict-tone situation of African society. The behavior of such groups as the youth and women's movements are detailed with their historical backgrounds. Various social struggles and conflicts in the Niger Delta have thus far been assumed to be inter- or intra-ethnic in character. Even recent research portrays communities and ethnic groups as a single and monolithic entity. They tend to over-simplify the structures of struggle and conflict, and often neglect the human dimensions of movements. Reflecting on this point, the present inquiry starts from empirical observation of the realities of popular movements. The youth and women become the focuses of description in following sections. In each case, the emphasis will lie on historical inquiry for the purposes of addressing the source of these groups' insecurities.

The first question to be answered in this inquiry concerns methods of attaining human security in such a society. What kind of social system do ordinary people utilize to mitigate their insecurities under such conditions? On a community level, the youth and the women challenge the elders for the sheer reason that resource distribution is unfair. On the national level, however, people - including the younger generation - expect some political benefits from the existing system controlled by elder politicians, even though the interests of these distinct groups do not always coincide. This contradiction needs to be analyzed within the African context.

The second question concerns the rules and order of conflict management. How

and with what mechanisms can ordinary people resolve their disputes and conflicts? Declining social institutions and changing social relations used to place major constraints on the process of conflict resolution. The search for an alternative mechanism presents an urgent matter for both people and the government. The method of outsider intervention is also examined in this analysis.

2. Theoretical and Historical Backgrounds

The Concept of Security in the African Context

The advocacy of the concept of human security has afforded chances to reconsider traditional security agendas. Historical examinations of the concept of security in the former chapters made it clear that the traditional concept is contingent in character, and that the national security is a metaphorical expression. Democratization, internationalization and socialization are addressed as the key aspects that gave birth to the concept of human security.¹

The above arguments imply that the state's governmental power must be strong enough to overwhelm any other domestic groups to protect the rights of people. It is assumed that the modern notion of security requires a role committed to maintaining domestic rule and order. Accordingly, the government of a nation-state shall fulfill this requirement. In addition to this minimized role, the state must have enough coercive power to meet its physical challenges. Here appeared the idea that the state responsible for security of its people corresponds to its modern role in a system of constitutional government.

Very few African countries, however, could meet this requirement as nation-states. Unlike Western countries, the fundamental rights of people have not been protected, even under their modern constitutions. In addition to the shortcomings of those independent governments, de-centralized power structures in the society prevented them from meeting security requirements. As African governments couldn't manage parochial power relations at its independence, they failed to maintain domestic rule and order. National integration took priority over national security agendas.

As a matter of course, the welfare and security of the people were left behind. Financial and human resources were concentrated on national development, and their

residual drops trickled down to communities that were managed by elders under patriarchal rule and order. Just as the security of a state mechanism possessed by a king in the pre-modern era was not perceived as national security, the security of a community controlled by traditional chiefs is not defined as people's security. The concept of human security shall be derived from the progress of identities among members of a group, association, and community.

The promotion of identities in African society had been a double-edged sword that can split a society into fragments during the process of national integration and development. Nationalism in African countries diminished in the domestic sphere after independence, though it survived and developed internationally in the form of Pan-Africanism. The absence of a common ideological base and political consciousness led people back to intolerant ethnicity. It caused the transformation of identities among people, and let them fall into identity politics under socio-economic changes.²

3. Historical Settings of the Niger Delta

The integration of people with diverse cultures under the common umbrella of new statehood made up the political scene for ethnicity and ethnic identity in Nigeria. Ethnic minority issues in the country were the outcome of a political process that provided political maneuvers and leverage to ethnic groups on the basis of the size of their populations. As a result, ethnic minorities were at a disadvantageous position in the distribution of spoils under the colonial rule. Major ethnic groups like the Hausa-the Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo were dominant in Nigerian politics even after the independence.

Among all ethnic minorities around the country, those in the Niger Delta were of special note, their situations reflecting keen linkages between the polity, the economy, and the natural environment. Since the 17th century, the Niger Delta had been a trading outpost connected to European and American markets, first for forest products and then for slaves. After the abolition of slave trade in the early 19th century, the palm oil trade became dominant in the area. The so-called village states and kingdoms of the Niger Delta were prosperous in trans-Atlantic trade. People there acted as middlemen, while providing labor and other services to foreign traders. Europeans had extended their

control over the sources of palm products in the hinterland. Through this process, the Niger Delta and its people were included in British colonial rule and were formally incorporated into the protectorate.

The end of colonial rule and formal creation of Nigerian federation caused ethnic groups to compete for autonomous status and political leadership. The ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta suffered marginalization by the dominant ethnic groups which strongly agitated for their own administrative units. In 1963, a new state (a sub-unit of the federation) was created by the central (federal) government with the intention to split the votes in the opposition party's stronghold in the western part of the country, while appeasing the minorities in the same area. However, the creation of a new state did not contribute the welfare of the people in the Niger Delta.

This picture changed in the mid-1960s as international cash crop prices declined. On the contrary, interests in oil reserves in the Niger Delta had grown and continued to do so when oil revenues began to rise in the 1970s after quadrupling of the crude price. In the midst of the growing importance of oil production, there appeared an activist group which attempted to secede from the Nigerian federation on the eve of Nigerian civil war. The group named itself the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), and their armed members seized some governmental premises until they were arrested. This occurrence might have marked the first case of ethnic minorities' protesting violently against marginalization within the federation. After this incident, in 1967, two new states were additionally created in the area.

By the end of the Biafran war in the early 1970s, the ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta had emerged as host communities for the oil which became the major source of national wealth. However, it also became obvious that their expectations of using total control over oil wealth as leverage for accessing power at the federal level were not realized. The central government progressively vested control over oil in itself, resulting in the persistent exclusion of ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta. The fiscal centralization of oil revenues was largely effected through eliminating the allocation principle of derivation, in favor of equality among the country's whole population. The relationship between ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta and the government backed by dominant ethnic groups further deteriorated. These tensions were exacerbated by shrinking oil revenues, worsening economic conditions, and the collapse of civilian rule

in the 1980s.

Concurrently, old disputes and antagonism among communities were revived, leading to brutality all around Nigeria. The basic nature of those conflicts has posed a challenge for the status quo. Under distressing economic conditions in the post-adjustment era, ordinary people wished to bypass the mechanism of resource distribution sustained by governments and those in power. People, especially youths, attempted direct access to the source of wealth.

The local power structure also changed in its mechanisms of patronage. With economic liberalization and so-called democratization, there appeared a steep decline in the capacity of traditional rulers to cope with the demands of local populations. Elders of the community could not provide enough financial resources to meet community development needs because governmental grants diminished substantially following fiscal reforms under the structural adjustment. Traditional titles also fell short of the increased number of candidates in communities where the population growth remained at a high rate. As a result, untitled and financially dissatisfied youths became a majority among their generation. They were eager to extend political space, and were thus mobilized by politicians who could control scarce resources. The youth were easily involved and manipulated by politicians in the election and other political rallies.

In the Niger Delta, the youth did challenge both the governments and the elders of their own communities to re-distribute oil wealth produced in their living space. Their main target of their direct actions was the oil company. Activists were reported to be occupying production facilities and taking personnel as hostages. The present rule and order of the society could not assure rights of those young residents. It is also worthy of special mention that they sometimes leveled their opposition against each other. Even the MOSOP experienced internal disputes after the decease of its prominent leader, Kenule (Ken) Saro-Wiwa.³

3. The Youth Element

Historical Role of the Youth

In African modern history, youths and their movements have been deemed important leverage for directing a society toward political independence. African youth have been

strongly instrumental in mobilizing opposition for political change, and many young candidates participate actively in electoral campaign.⁴ Many post-independence African leaders had their political backgrounds in student protest, the youth league and so on.

The youth had been one of the most active agents in the African colonial politics. In British West Africa the youth movements led political independence from the colonial rule. They account for the student body and the intellectuals, who advocated social change and development. For example, the Sierra Leonian journalist and trade-unionist I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson played a key role in establishing the West African Youth League (WAYL) which dwelt upon the many travails of the less affluent members of the society like teachers, clerks, artisans, the self-employed, the unemployed, and unskilled workers.⁵ Accordingly, the youth became an important element of the opposition movement in the post-independence era.

In the 1940's and 1950's Nigerian youths had formed the vanguard of the anti-colonial movement, as they were the rising generation both for the polity and the economy. They joined forces with the nationalist movement that led struggles for independence. At the end of World War II, the youth groups were re-organized by the nationalistic political parties that succeeded those struggles. The youths became mobilizing forces and catalysts for the political movement for Nigeria's independence. While Nigerian youths played a critical role in advancing the political wave for independence, they were gradually demobilized after attaining their political goal. Their morale also diminished as the government settled down fully to exercise its political power. Under such conditions, the multi-party democracy had brought ethnic division and disunity among people. In case of Nigeria, the military has been acting as a powerful social force committed to the preservation of status quo. The youths in the society could not be free from their socio-economic context and the balance of power among forces in the society.

The Youth Movement in the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta has substantial oil and natural gas reserves. Oil mined in the area accounts for 95% of the country's foreign exchange earnings and about a quarter of its GDP. Nigeria's current proven oil reserves, estimated at over 20 billion barrels, is located both onshore and offshore. In spite of these abundant resource endowments, the

Niger Delta is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped parts of the country. Majority of inhabitants there still live in rural, subsistence conditions characterized by a total lack of such basic infrastructures as roads, electricity, pipe-born water, and so on.

The Niger Delta maintains one of the highest population densities in the country. The population growth, almost equivalent to the country's 3% average, exerts accordingly strong pressure on arable land which is naturally scarce. Local populations have been pushed out from their own communities and have migrated to major towns and cities in the area. Such destinations like Warri and Port Harcourt were already too populous to absorb newly-arrived people into the work force. Since the country's oil boom in the 1970s, the populations of those "oil cities" have been exploding, but their urbanization process does not necessarily keep pace with their economic growth.

It was under these circumstances that youth movements reemerged in the Niger Delta, which also resulted in the dispossession of oil wealth produced in their living space. Furthermore, the military regime did not provide any political space for the popular forces of the Niger Delta to express their grievances, or to participate in the political process. Thus, the youth resorted to their ethnic identities to mobilize the people towards the struggle for rights to secure their minimum living standards. In this regard, they criticized the centralization of Nigerian fiscal system and demanded the control of resources by local population. These claims and demands received international support and were gradually recognized as part of the struggle for the protection of global human and minority rights. Since the 1990s these groups have been transforming themselves into global actors and linking themselves to international networks against the violation of human and environmental rights.

Various factors can explain the (re-)emergence of youth activism as a major element for change in the Niger Delta. The organizational structure, the leadership, and the internal politics of youth movements shall now be examined from different perspectives. This emergence cannot be separated from the convergence of other global and domestic factors. It has also become clear that these movements were reacting to worsening socio-economic environment in the Niger Delta.

It is nevertheless indispensable to understand implications of ascendancy of the youth as a radical social force in the Niger Delta. The role of the youth has been further reinforced by the rise of oil economy since the mid-1960s, and youth movements have

become more significant in the oil politics of the country. Thus, the youths found themselves representing popular interests in an ethnically minor, marginalized, but oil-rich area, in a context where the people in the area lack access to the oil wealth produced in their land. Politics in the Niger Delta became more radical as a result of repression by the military administration. The youths have themselves been transformed into a social force of local resistance and protests.

Another interesting dimension is the way the youth convulse local power structures constructed around the authority of elders and traditional rulers, which carries interesting implications for the volatility of local politics in the area. Youth movements overturned local politics hitherto exercised by the elders and other people in power who have close connections with oil companies and governments. This has resulted in a tug-of-war between generational social forces and in the escalation of tensions among communities. While the youths have ever recognized the leadership of elders as an established one, they now oppose, challenge, and sometime impose pressures in the form of criticism, disregard, or neglect.

Context of the Youth Movement

When the youth find that their presence in the community is marginalized, and their present status does not offer much in terms of access to resources, they are prone to organize protests and mobilize people for change. It is clear that when the youth fail to secure their position in the community as a result of economic and political transformation, they had no option but to start the struggle for survival. These struggles were supposed to be directed at the expansion of political space and the defense of previous gains that had been eroded by harsh policies adopted by governments.

The youths mobilized themselves in order to protest their marginalization, and resist the erosion of their rights. The structural adjustment program, for example, seriously affected people's daily lives. Not only youths but also their families and relations lost their jobs, while unemployment and social misery worsened. Such conditions provided a social basis for mobilization and organization within the community and for popular movements, by which the youths could struggle for political and economic reforms. At the heart of their struggles was the quest for an alternative hegemony based on peoples' power, in order to guarantee the people's standard of

living.

Not all youth movements favor social change. Indeed, some of them are organized by the government, and depend heavily on its patronage for their relevance. They exist either as youth wings of ruling political parties, or as pressure groups with keen connections to powerful politicians. For example, so-called Youths Earnestly Ask for Abacha (YEAA) was established to campaign for the then military head of Nigeria, General Sani Abacha and his self-succession plan as the elected President. Such is an example of how easily the youth are manipulated in general.

In order to understand the roots and evolution of youth movements in the Niger Delta, it is important to analyze its connections to their ethnic identity. After all, it is through the medium of ethnic minority politics that youth movements in the Niger Delta constructed their struggles. With a view to connecting with local people, youth groups had to organize social struggles for changing political and economic relations in their communities.

What is more relevant in this context is the linkage between the youths and ethnic minority politics, which explains the immersion of Niger Delta youth movements into the competitive and conflictive relations between ethnic minorities and majorities over access to political space, power and resources. The youth can be directly connected to the construction of ethnic minority identity as a political instrument for solidarity, empowerment, and the staking of claims. They adopted ethnic identity as a tool for the mobilization of minority groups in the power struggle. They also used it as the basis of negotiation with other ethnic groups either for coalition building or for the formulation of agreements over power and resource sharing.

Strategies of the Youth Movement

The most important strategy of the youth movement has been the youth-driven transformation of such ethnic minority movements in the process of economic and political transitions. The youth faced grim prospects of continued unemployment and neglect from the oil companies operating in the Niger Delta. They insisted that they themselves were the main victims of environmental degradation, having bleak prospects in the region. As a result they confronted the government and oil companies for access to resources, social welfare services and infrastructure, and compensation. In many

instances, the youths either became victims or victimizers. However, within the context of popular movements in the Niger Delta, they sought to resist the further exploitation and pollution of their lands and waters. They also required compensation for the harm already done by oil companies.

In order to achieve their own agenda, youth movements mainstreamed themselves within umbrella organizations. One example is the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP) that played a central role in the politics of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). Other examples operated as distinct entities such as the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) or as human rights organizations such as the Environmental Rights Action (ERA). These groups drew up their demands either in the form of bills of rights, charters, or declarations, which were endorsed on the occasions of mass rallies before being disseminated widely. The movements also operated through mass action, and international campaigns.

It is also important to point out that youth movements had a definite gender-bias, reflected in the violation of gender rights, various acts of violence against women, and the marginalization and suffering of women. Such female youth groups as the Egi Women's Movement, Niger Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ) and the Federation of Ogoni Women Associations (FOWA) have played prominent roles in the mobilization of people in the Niger Delta. They took the lead in providing care to displaced people, together with their local and international campaign against the violation of women's human rights.

The surge of youth activism was also related to the widespread perception that elders in the community have been responsible for the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta. Those elders were believed to collude with oil companies and the central government in depriving their people, which aroused the peoples' anger. Well-educated youth leaders had evolved a radical outlook. From the foregoing, it can be seen that the youths had become a most potent force in the popularization of opposition movements in the Niger Delta, and in raising the effectiveness of the protests and blocking power of minority groups. In pursuit of their political goals, some of them have sought to build popular alliances across ethnic and gender lines in the Niger delta. Indeed, they have transcended the locale of the area to connect global spaces and causes in empowering their claims and grievances.

4. Women's Movements

Historical Development of Women's Movements

It is important to draw attentions to the emergence of women's movements, not only because male power is still dominant in African society, but because these movements embody the female struggle against the exploitation and oppression of women there. In this regard, women come forth as key actors in the process of social struggle. They are not passive victims of a male-dominated society, but active agents of change that have started to confront the social force and structure that has marginalized them. It is therefore possible to locate women movements as often neglected but very important players in advancing social change.⁶

Women's organizations and protest movements can be traced through Nigerian history. They first appeared in the pre-colonial era and expanded during the colonial period, developing remarkably after independence, even under the military rule. A historical turning point in the colonial period was so-called Women's War (or Aba Women's riots) of 1929 in the southeastern part of modern Nigeria. Then, women protested taxation without representation, and the actions of male chiefs who collaborated with the colonial authority. The women attacked government premises and market places and protested against the colonial authority until their demands were met. It is worthy of special mention that Ogoni women also participated in this Women's War of 1929.

Thereafter, other women protests emerged from the 1930s to the 1940s. In the southwestern part of the country, a notable movement called the Egba Women's Protest of 1947 was led by a famous female educationist, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti. Two female organizations bearing the name of their town, the Abeokuta Women's Union and the Abeokuta Ladies Club, protested against discriminatory colonial laws and policies that threatened women's socio-economic interests. They also forced the traditional ruler, a collaborator with the colonial government, to abdicate his throne in 1949. Women's protests continued even after then. In the post-colonial period, the women's movement expanded its terrain of struggles to include issues of women's emancipation and empowerment.⁷

In the 1980's through 1990's, a new phase of female protests was caused by the harsh socio-economic consequences of the structural adjustment program. At this stage, the women's movement was characterized by three distinct organizational stances. These were namely the conservative (pro-government), the development-oriented and the feminist. The conservative stance is represented by women's groups which sought to improve the position of women in the society without overturning the socio-economic and political status quo. Development-oriented groups such as grassroots development organizations focus on improving the standard of living for their members and communities. They have sharpened their organizational skills in the course of resource mobilization against the harsh consequences of the structural adjustment program. Groups with the feminist stance also seek to change the position of women drastically through a total transformation of basic social relations.⁸

Women's Movements in the Niger Delta

While a lot has been written on popular movements led by men in the Niger Delta, little attention has been paid to women's movements. There was an obvious gender-blindness in the analysis of those social struggles. There have also been very few discussions of the social context of emergent women's activism in such areas as rights, survival and networking. Given the volatility of interests in the Niger Delta, women's struggles can also be described in the context of local politics. Regardless of this fact, women's movements have provided reactions to deepening tensions and social crises, which were also the outcome of worsening exploitation, underdevelopment, and repression in the Niger Delta.

Women in the Niger Delta have organized themselves into a potent social force in seeking survival from the devastation of economic and ecological basis of their lives. Their movements are distinct not only because they laid down motherhood and gender to mobilize fellow women at the grassroots, but also because they have implied their own local cultures to demonstrate their demands, while sharing ideas with international rights groups and global civil society to empower their local claims and protests. It is this strategic way of thinking that has differentiated the post-adjustment women's movements from the earlier ones of the colonial period.

It is even possible to discern a certain level of cross-gender collaboration and mutual support. There has been evident support from and collaborations with the youth groups. Indeed, it seems that the combination of women's and youth power has been the most potent force behind opposition struggles in the Niger Delta. This combination proved most important for the youth group that insisted on compensations for the damages to their lives, given that women have been the greatest victims of the contradictions emanating from oil production.

Women's movements seem to have been less visible than the broad popular movements even in the 1990s. Indeed they were organized within the context of wider social struggles. Apart from providing a balanced gender basis for struggles and social movements in the Niger Delta, women's movements played their roles both in front of and behind the lines. Among all, women have played prominent roles as victims and resisters of victimization. Apart from being victims of violence, environmental degradation, poverty and oil politics, they have risen above victimization to mobilize local populations to struggle for their own rights.

Women in the Niger Delta have been confronted mainly by the power of government, acting through security forces that have routinely subjected female protesters to intimidation, harassment and brutal forms of physical abuse. They have also been excluded and discriminated from the oil companies that expropriated their lands and destroyed their environment as a result of their oil production. In resisting powers of the government and the oil companies, women's movements have successfully networked with other rights groups in the area and within Nigeria, as well as with donor organizations around the world. At the local level, women's protests have taken the form of songs, dance and the use of the threat of nakedness – believed to be a taboo or curse, to strengthen their cause and political agency.

A couple of major women's groups in the Niger Delta are worthy of introduction. They are the Federation of Ogoni Women's Associations (FOWA), an affiliate organization of MOSOP, and the Niger Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ). Both groups have always remained in the front of struggles for women's rights in the area by drawing on local and international support. It might be useful to understand the role of these groups in social struggles, the challenges they face, and their prospects in the Niger Delta.

Women and the Environment

In order to properly locate women in the Niger Delta, the social context is defined more by resource insecurity for the majority of population. It seems important to examine the linkage between women and the environment. A study of gender and the environment should examine gender relations as a set of power relations operating at the levels of household, economy/society, and its links with the outside world.

Even though local people, including women, are a part of the environment, they exploit the environment in the course of production, either as a source of raw materials or for the discharge of waste. In the same manner, the environment is a source for subsistence needs, livelihoods, habitats, and the daily reproduction of life. Thus, in the course of the daily renewal of their lives, people exercise power over their environment. Yet, there is another sense in which the social and the environmental contexts interact and sometimes merge, having to do with how issues of access, ownership and power over the environment are socially organized. It is in this way that gender as a social construction tends to marginalize women in terms of access to environmental resources even though they tend to carry a greater burden in terms of more difficult labor, household and reproductive roles for little or next to no reward.

The oil companies, their local partners and the government have damaged the environment, deepened resource scarcities, and denied basic rights to the local people. They have also deployed violence as a modality of defending their monopoly of resources, in their bid to crush women's protests and resistance, illustrating the mult-layered suffering of women, first in terms of resource insecurity and denial of subsistence rights, and then as victims of violence. This situation best captures the state of women in the Niger Delta, who for decades have been on the receiving end of exploitation, environmental insecurity, and violence from the oil companies-government alliance. This condition also explains the context of the emergence of women's movements in the Niger Delta as one framed by the logic of liberation and resistance.

Women and the Oil Economy

Since oil became a source of power in Nigeria, its social relations of production have tended to alienate local people in the Niger Delta. For example, Shell (Nigeria's largest on-shore oil producer which had operated in the region for over fifty years) required neither local labor nor local ecological propriety. In this context, it is the politics that define women as victims. The alienation of local people, the expropriation of their lands and the destruction of their environment by the oil industry have further fueled oil politics and local resistance. Change for the better requires a form of collective action against further alienation, expropriation and environmental degradation, and forcing through a mass action of restitution and self-determination. By its very nature the local protest is a social movement shaped and influenced by the host community.

The interaction between oil companies and the local oil-rich environment breeds a host of contradictions which reflect a geography of power that enriches the global and impoverishes the local, thus feeding into local resistance, through which the local blocks global extraction until it attends to demands for restitution, justice and equity. In the case of Nigeria, the politics of local resistance in the prolific oil region of the Niger Delta targeted Shell first of all, the oldest operator in the area. In its well-known campaign, MOSOP took on Shell and successfully brought global attention to focus on the Ogoni and the Niger Delta. In 1993 MOSOP was able to block Shell operations in Ogoniland, and the company has yet to return there. More recently, women's groups have targeted Chevron-Texaco as the politics of local resistance in the Niger Delta continues in its bid for restitution and respect for the rights of the people of the oil producing communities, who are ironically being impoverished as hosts of one of the world's most powerful and wealthiest industries.

The oil is so important to the Nigerian economy because the economy's oil exports account for over 90 % of the country's foreign exchange earnings and over 80% of all the revenue of the central government; the Nigerian economy is wholly dependent on oil, which is therefore inextricably bound to governmental power. In a context where oil production is dominated by foreign companies, the Nigerian government is hard pressed to promote oil production as a way of increasing its own power and the continued access of the politicians to providential oil wealth. In the power relations spawned by oil politics, women are subject to relations of exclusion and domination, which are also reflected in the environment of the Niger Delta.

At this point, it would be apposite to draw attention to the linkage of women to the oil economy. Women are alienated from the social relations of oil production. The acquisition (or expropriation) of land by oil companies and the attendant environmental degradation hits women the hardest. In the fields of farming, fishery and trading, the expansion of the oil industry with its monopolistic approach provides no economic space for women, who already suffer from oppression in male-dominated society. Moreover the politics of oil with its pervasive commoditization of the oil-rich ecology also excludes local women from its labor needs. Such marginalized women are forced into acts of desperation, either to fight back, or in varying degrees to insert themselves into the fringe economies around oil locations, petty trading, contract labor, and closeted or open prostitution with all its own attendant risks.

The politics of oil often implies the subordination of local people in the way it subordinates the so-called oil economy. Thus, when the people protest or seek to interrupt oil production in order to call attention to their demands, Nigeria as an oil economy reacts with a “carrot and stick” policy. While the “carrot” goes to local collaborators, politicians and authorities, in most cases, the “stick”, usually coercive power through the deployment of armed forces, is wielded against local people. In this case again women become the main victim of violence sponsored by the oil company and the government.

The bulk of pressure falls back on resident women. Women in the Niger Delta in particular have suffered with adverse effects of environmental degradation, and they have been forced to bear the burden much more than men. For instance, these women search for firewood in an ecologically degraded environment. They search for potable water in a situation where pollution has rendered communal ponds and stream water undrinkable. The risk of ill health is also borne disproportionately by women, especially when there is an outbreak of an epidemic due to environmental pollution.

There are other notable consequences of the oil industry, such as the expropriation of farmlands, which leaves women with less or no lands to farm. However, the forceful aspects of the nexus of women’s victimization and oil can be gleaned from the violence they have suffered in the Niger Delta. The international coordinator of the NDWJ casts in sharp relief the acts of violence committed against women by the security forces of Nigerian government, which consisted of sexual violence such as rape and prostitution,

physical violence such as beatings, maiming and murder, and violence against women's property.

What is important at this point is to locate violent actions against women within the infrastructure of force that backs the Nigerian oil economy. The government intends to maintain the oil industry by breaking the will of the people to organize protests or seek to block oil production. Violent actions, even in the case of violence sponsored by the oil companies and the government, often take the form of men in uniforms punishing women for engaging in the politics of local resistance. Clearly in such circumstances of gendered violence, women suffer the most.

From the foregoing, the relationship between women and the political economy of oil becomes one in which the power relations subordinate women and victimize them. However it must be noted that such "victimization" is not synonymous with surrender or defeat, as it is dialectically transformed into an agency by which women organize and protest the inequities of oil companies whose activities directly deepen resource scarcities and threaten the ecological basis of the survival of local women (and men).

5. Summary and Tentative Conclusions

The youth and women have been recognized as critical social forces in post-adjustment Nigeria. Democratization in the political arena of Nigerian society has accelerated their (re-)emergence as active stakeholders in the social struggle. As shown in the case of the Niger Delta, the youth and women appeared to initiate opposition against the government and oil companies. They demanded a fair share of resources and performed in their respective manners. Both the youth and women seemed to approach the issue from the same direction. Their common objective was to secure enough of the resources with which their living spaces were endowed.

Youth movements in the Niger Delta are described within the context of community dynamics. Historical review of Nigerian youth movements shows similarities and differences between movements in the independence era and those in the 1990s. Experiences in the Niger Delta suggest that present youth movements have a strong inclination to control resources on the community level. The youth can also expect benefits on national level through, for example, political representation, but such

a political maneuver is out of their scope. Rather it may increase the risk of manipulation by the politicians closely connected to the government. Out of strategic considerations, the youth tend to skip national benefits and to access international ones utilizing their organizational networks.

Women's movements are described differently from the conflict-tone movements of the youth in this paper. Both women and the youth have kept common goals in their movements, but women's movements were developed mainly outside the community, supported by nation-wide women's organizations. On the local level, most women's actions were limited to formal protests and symbolic performances. Women did take actions peacefully in the Niger Delta. As a result, women's movements were comparatively invisible to the eye of the outsider. Accordingly they have seldom attracted international attention as radical movements of the youth did in the 1990s. The scene changed after 1999, when the political transition to civil rule was completed. New organizations emerged on the community level and demonstrated their opposition and demands in the form of direct action. Now the women's movement has become one of main actors in the oil politics of the Niger Delta.

Finally two questions raised earlier in the paper shall tentatively be answered here. The resource allocation mechanisms on the community level were not functioning as well as possible so far, under the authority of elders and traditional rulers. The youth and women are openly challenging such a traditional system. Their movements require alternative social mechanisms for mitigating their insecurities. However, their approaches also contradict one another between community and national levels. Behaviors of the same people are often different on two different levels.

Methods of conflict resolution which are successful on the community level are not necessarily applicable to disputes and conflicts on the national level. It is expected that the application of customary settlement mechanisms to conflicts will result in more community involvement, and thereby contribute to eradicating root causes of dispute. This mechanism works on the assumption that traditional rulers and elders can sustain rule and order of the community.⁹ However, their authority has been challenged by the local population as the youth movement has shown itself more vividly. As the existing power structure's capacity for resource mobilization shrank, its role in conflict management also diminished.

On the other hand, expectations for intervention from a third party and the international community have been increasing. These actors are expected to build bridges between the people concerned and to fill up the resource gap, especially in the post-conflict phase. In Nigeria, for example, NGOs are making reconciliation efforts such as dialogues, mutual understandings, and the promotion of peace education among conflict-tone communities.¹⁰ Many of these groups are receiving financial supports from foreign donors and introducing know-how from foreign counterparts. Local stakeholders become fully understanding of the meaning and the merits of foreign interventions. Such a human-centric approach allows more room for development amidst and resolution of community conflicts.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The authority of elders and traditional rulers is challenged even in the community.

Resource allocation mechanisms on the community level had functioned under the authority of elders and traditional rulers. This mechanism is based on the assumption that the ruling people of the community could supply enough resources for the local population. However, the resource base has been shrinking since the introduction of the economic structural adjustment. Local populations, especially the youth and women, are not satisfied with such a traditional system and are openly challenging it. They require alternative socio-economic mechanisms for mitigating their insecurities.

An alternative mechanism for conflict resolution shall be sought out and recommended in multi-ethnic societies.

Conflict resolution methods successful on the community level have primarily depended on the authority and leadership of elders and traditional rulers. The application of customary settlement mechanisms to conflicts is still effective within a community, as far as those ruling people can sustain rule and order. In a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria, however, there are increased community clashes and ethnic conflicts for which effective resolution mechanism has never sought. Other than

conventional interventionist measures of state power, new ideas, such as a search for human security at the individual, group and community levels, shall be introduced in the context of peace-building.

Roles of the third party and the international community have been increasing in the peace-making and peace-building process.

With a top-down approach, if the ruling people are getting the absolute respect in conflicted communities, eminent personalities with public profiles could be invited to work effectively as peace-makers or peace-builders. On the other hand, there are alternate approaches for the local population, conceived to produce and sustain a cease-fire and peace agreements with follow-up mechanisms, such as a problem-solving workshop, conflict-management training and establishment of peace committees. In both approaches, individuals and agencies from the third party can play an effective role. The international community is the most suitable source for those human resources, since such people can secure neutrality and respect from the local population in the conflicted communities.

Notes

¹ See Chapter 1 of this Report.

² See Attahiru Jega (ed.), *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria* (Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, 2000).

³ See Ike Okonta, & Orono Douglas, *Where Vultures Feast: Shell, Human Rights, and Oil* (London: Verso, 2003).

⁴ Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (The International Africa Institute, 1999), p. 33.

⁵ Conteh-Morgan 1999: 57

⁶ See Jane L. Parpart and Kathlee A. Standt (eds.), *Women and the State in Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989).

⁷ See Nina E. Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activities in Southern Nigeria 1900-1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

⁸ Hussaina Abdullah, "Women as Emergent Actors in Nigeria's Political Economy: The Nigerian Women's Movement: Responses to Adjustment and Democratization" in Katsuya Mochizuki (ed.), *Emergent Actors in African Political Economy*, Africa Research Series No.9 (Institute of Developing Economies, 2003), p. 23.

⁹ See Olufemi Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s-1990* (Rochester: The University of Rochester Press, 2000).

¹⁰ See Onigu Otite and Isaac Olawale Albert, *Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1999).

Climate change is increasingly being called a "security" problem, and there has been speculation that climate change may increase the risk of violent conflict. This paper integrates three disparate but well-founded bodies of research on the vulnerability of local places and social groups to climate change, on livelihoods and violent conflict, and the role of the state in development and peacemaking, to offer new insights into the relationships between climate change, human security, and violent conflict. Conflict and people's insecurity: an insight from the experiences of Nigeria. K. Mochizuki. 2004. View 6 excerpts. Highly influential. Enduring Disorder and Persistent Poverty: A Review of the Linkages Between War and Chronic Poverty. experiencing political, economic and social insecurity, and these insecurities is orchestrated by the current leadership of these countries, which is a deviation of the wishes and aspirations of the colonial fathers and leaders of these countries [2]. However, it is a truism to say that these type of leaders exhibited leadership qualities and moral. crackdown this terrorist group called Boko-Haram proves abortive. As a result most people in Nigeria, especially the Southern Nigerian, working and residing in core Northern Nigeria are living in greater numbers to their various states for fear of insecurity.