

DEVELOPMENT AS CONFLICT

Ogoni Movement, the State and Oil Resources in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

A dissertation submitted by

John Osayere Agbonifo

(Nigeria)

in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR

of the International Institute of Social Studies

of Erasmus University Rotterdam

The Hague, The Netherlands

The Hague, 3 December 2009

Reading Committee

Promotor:

Professor dr M.A.R.M. Salih
International Institute of Social Studies

Co-promotor:

Dr C.H. Biekart
International Institute of Social Studies

Examiners:

Professor dr M.E. de Bruijn
Leiden University

Professor dr T.J. Doyle
Keele University, United Kingdom

Professor dr A. Fowler
International Institute of Social Studies

Dr M. Arsel
International Institute of Social Studies

This dissertation is part of the research programme of CERES,
Research School for Resource Studies for Development.

Funded by the Netherlands Fellowship programme (NFP).

© Copyright Shaker Publishing 2009

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

Printed in The Netherlands

ISBN 978-90-423-0380-5

Shaker Publishing BV
St. Maartenslaan 26
6221 AX Maastricht

Tel.: 043-3500424 / Fax: 043-3255090 / [http:// www.shaker.nl](http://www.shaker.nl)



Acknowledgements

Ank vd Berg. You were warm, friendly and welcoming. Sooner, though, I realised that you could be strict with regard to your time. I learned to refrain from standing by your door at such busy times. Over the years, your actions have shown you have a soul. Ank, you are special in a number of ways.

Dita Dirks and Maureen Koster. Words are not enough to express my gratitude to you for your devotion to your jobs, including facilitating the right conditions for PhD students to carry on their work. Frequently, we took time off to talk about the Niger Delta and Nigeria. On other occasions, you sought to know what progress I had made regarding my thesis. I appreciate all of your efforts and your time.

Professor Ben White. I remember the powerful letter you wrote on my behalf to the Dutch Consulate in Nigeria following delays in granting my MVV. I formally met you along with Bridget O'Laughlin, Ashwani Saith and others during my introductory courses in Development. Thank you.

Des Gasper. You represented the PDC during my thesis design seminar. Subsequently, you would unfailingly forward to me links to, and articles on, Niger Delta conflicts. You could not imagine how much I appreciated such gestures and I will always be thankful.

Professor Bert Klandermas read the first chapter of my thesis, invited me to his office in Amsterdam, listened to me, and expressed interest in being part of my supervisory team. While exchanging ideas, you promptly reached across the room to your shelf, pulled out a book and gave it to me. Moreover, at your suggestion, the editor of *Review of Books* contacted me for purposes of reviewing a book. Soon, the rapport I had established with you died. Something I will always regret.

Professor Dan Tschirgi and Conchita Tschirgi. You are in a league of your own. You are the inspiration behind my conflict trajectory. At the AUC, you offered me my first computer access and numerous well-remunerated assistantships, including personal and departmental. Many

times, you invited me to dine with your family. Professor, your goodness lives with me, something I will never forget.

Dr John Gerhard and Professor Gail Gerhard. Dr John has since gone on to be with the Lord. It was a great privilege to have met both John and his wife Gail, an Africanist indeed! The breadth of your knowledge about and contribution to Africa is compelling and worthy of emulation by all those who claim to know Africa. We met coincidentally at Prof. Barbara Harrell-Bond's home and life was never the same thereafter. You two were angels, and I am privileged and grateful to have met you.

Professor Mohamed Salih. Thank you a million times! As my promotor, you gave me a new lease on life. You were eminently encouraging and caring. You gave me books and emphasised the need for me to be patient. Working with you was heaven, and I will always treasure the bliss. Thank you for believing in me. What blows me away is that I did nothing extraordinary to deserve such trust. Your sense of humour, humane and meaningful, is legendary. I enjoyed every moment of it.

Kees Biekart. You came on board as my second supervisor. Thank you for your trust and willingness to supervise the preparation of my thesis. Your comments and suggestions greatly improved my work.

I acknowledge Professors Louk de la Rive Box and Ashwani Saith and Dr Dubravka Zakov, Nicholas Awortwi, Georgina Gomez and Erhard Berner. Special thanks to Dr Berner, Dr Georgina Gomez and Dr Nicholas Awortwi for the wonderful TRA opportunities you offered me. Through you, God drove away my flies. Dr Helen Hintjens, thank you for the intellectual discussions, and the fruit and nuts! Dr Murat Arsel, thank you for listening and for your support. You are kind. The points you made were invaluable. Dear Judith Treanor, thank you for the opportunity to write reviews in the journal *Development and Change* as much as I could. I appreciate the kindness and friendliness of Renee de Louw, John Sinjorgo, Jola van Beek, Lenneke Warnars and Cynthia Recto-Carreon. My journey at ISS is incomplete without mentioning Martin Blok. In many ways, you showed uncommon insight and understanding. Thank you for recommending my membership to the 55th Lustrum Committee. And many thanks for your interest in and support for ISS PhD students.

Special thanks to the staff of the library for their warmth, efficiency, patience and kind support. And to Joy Misa for her editorial assistance. I will miss you.

Many thanks to my siblings, Victoria, Favor, Patience, Magdalene, Kingsley, Bridget, Tony, Amenaghawon, and my nieces, Joy, Precious, Destiny, and my nephew Joshua. I especially thank Urdice Sno for her love and

friendship. I will always appreciate your friendship. Thanks to my dear friends; Barrister and Mrs Edionwe, Dr and Mrs Osaze, Greg Edionwe, Dr and Mrs Shittu, Mr and Mrs Ehigiator, Dr Kingsley Omoyibo, Dr Idiaaghe, Mr and Mrs Olaide, Edwin Ibude, Dr and Mrs Agbontaen, Professor Abubakar Momoh, Professor Bob Osaze, Mr and Mrs Ejemai, Dr Yinka Akinyoade, Dr Sunbo Odebode, Mr and Mrs Ogbebor, Ehiosu Okundaye, Barrister Chris Odiete, Dr Chioma Onyige, Deacon and Rev (Mrs) Adagbonyin, Godwin Odiete, Evangel Odigie, Pastor Mancho, Ese Niesi, Ese Omwenyeke, Professor Genov, Ben Edokpolor, Zepherin, Harrison Obayagbona and Vera Kusters, Nosa and Tonie Faluyi. Special thanks to my pastor, Engineer Matthias Akhideno and his wife, Deaconess Hilda Akhideno. I stand victorious today because you nourished my spirit and made my arm strong. All the brethren at the Tabernacle of David (TOD), too numerous to mention here, I acknowledge you. However, I must mention a few: Pastor Ben and his wife, Helena, Deaconess Tuvie Uwhuba, Deacon and Deaconess Ouko, and Pastor and Deaconess Faba.

Jerome Abban, Bilisuma Dito, Lu Caizhen, Moushira Elgeziri, Manohara Khadka, Mallika, Rose Namara, Martha Awo, Shuchi Karim, Pascale Hatcher, Daniel Oshi, Henry Kifordu, Ampadu, Hania Abdu, Sara Pavan, Claudine, Lillian, Tausi Kida, Eno and Gloria. You are special.

My fieldwork informants and respondents made my work easy and I am thankful to you. I especially thank Ledum Mitee, president of MOSOP, Rev (Dr) Kpone-Tonwe, Dr Ben Naanen, Mrs Rumuna, Terrence Taneh, Fortune Chujor (JP), Chief Emmanuel Sorue Nkalaa, Bariara Kpalap, Legborsi Pyagbara, Dr Innocent Barikor, and the staff of the MOSOP office who gave me unhindered access to the office and their facilities.

Special thanks to Joy, my inestimable gem, for making it happen for me.

Above all, I ascribe all praise to Jesus Christ in whom I live, and move, and have my being. You have been faithful. Your blessings are too numerous to recount here. Thank you for being my true friend, helper and shepherd.

Dedication

Ken Saro-Wiwa and ordinary Ogoni women and men,
whose enduring asset is the belief in the ultimate triumph of a just cause.

Hope may well be ill-informed in a world where men love darkness
more than light (St. John 3: 19 NKJV).

Yet it is not life that matters but the courage you bring to it
(Hugh Walpole, 1913).



Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	<i>xiii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Getting the Fundamentals Right	1
1.2 Underside of Development in the Niger Delta: Socio-historical Note	5
1.3 Signposts	8
1.4 Problem Analysis	10
1.5 Re-reading the Niger Delta Landscape	13
1.6 Research Methods	15
1.6.1 Research site	15
1.6.2 Sample selection	15
1.7 Data Collection and Fieldwork Strategy	16
1.7.1 In-depth unstructured interviews	16
1.7.2 Interview and documentary review	17
1.7.3 Case study	18
1.7.4 Personal experience and observation	18
1.7.5 Modernist views of knowledge construction	18
1.8 Unit of Analysis and Value	20
1.9 Organisation of the Thesis	22
Notes	24
2 SETTING	26
2.1 Historical Flows and the Making of Place	26
2.2 Niger Delta	27

2.3	Ogoni: Background to a Periphery	29
2.4	Atlantic Slave Trade and Abolition	33
2.5	Hinterland Trade and the Niger Company	35
2.6	Control through Coercion	37
2.7	Forced Labour	38
2.8	Conclusion	39
	Note	40
3	DEVELOPMENT, POLITICS AND SOCIETY: COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL	41
3.1	How did We Get Here?	41
3.2	Political Context of Development	42
3.3	Politics of the Transfer of Power	46
3.4	Anatomy of a Postcolonial State	50
3.4.1	Elite-dominated politics	52
3.4.2	Politics of the poor	53
3.5	Peripheral Capitalism and Nigeria's Political Economy of Oil	54
3.6	Why are There So Meagre Development and So Many Conflicts?	56
3.6.1	Exceptionalist paradigm and political denial	57
3.6.2	Revisionist modernisation	58
3.6.3	Social schizophrenia as cause	62
3.7	Confronting Denial and its Discontents	65
3.8	Authoritarian Rule: Context that Bore a Muted Capitalist Model	69
3.9	Prelude to Movement-State Politics	71
3.10	Conclusion	76
	Notes	77
4	CONCEPTUALISING DEVELOPMENT AS CONFLICT	78
4.1	Existing Development	78
4.2	Perspectives on Development	79
4.3	Development: Agency and Structure Debate	81
4.4	Development as Oil Extraction	86
4.5	Oil Extraction as Trans-local Strategic Action Field	89
4.6	Conflict in the Trans-local Strategic Action Field	91
4.7	Social Conflict	95

4.8	Collective Actors in the Trans-local Strategic Action Field	98
4.9	Trans-local Strategic Action Field: Emplacing Conflict	102
4.10	Conclusion	104
	Notes	105
5	MAL-DEVELOPMENT AS A FACTOR IN COLLECTIVE ACTION AMONG THE Ogoni	107
5.1	Why the Ogoni Mobilised	107
5.2	Explanations of Why the Ogoni Mobilised	108
5.2.1	Resource curse thesis	108
5.2.2	How the resource curse thesis ignores Nigerian reality	110
5.2.3	Ogoni incorporated	112
5.2.4	Ogoni and the National Question	113
5.3	Ogoni: A New Social Movement	116
5.4	Political Opportunity	117
5.5	Embedding Contention in Place	120
5.5.1	Location and resource exploitation	122
5.6	State and Territoriality: Displacement and Dispossession	125
5.6.1	Rural dispossession	126
5.6.2	Extractive industries and exploitation	128
5.6.3	Land use decree	130
5.6.4	State, revenue and oil minorities	130
5.7	Locale, Social Relations and Conflict	137
5.8	Terrain and History of Struggle	139
5.9	Place and History of Disasters	141
5.10	Locale and Mobilising Structure	144
5.11	Ogoni Sense of Place	147
5.12	Ogoni Worldview	150
5.13	Conclusion	151
	Notes	153
6	PLACE REVISITED: SOCIAL RELATIONS AND MOBILISATION	155
6.1	Processes of Collective Mobilisation	155
6.2	‘Oh Pharaoh! Let My People Go’: Ogoni Reclaim their Voice	156
6.3	Spatial Collective Action: Connecting Trans-local Actor-Spaces	157

6.4	Master Frame and Framing Activities	160
6.4.1	Oppressive order master frame	162
6.4.2	Collective action frames and framing activities	165
6.5	Creating Mobilising Identities in Submerged Networks	173
6.6	Recruitment and Commitment: Identity and Incentive	176
6.6.1	Identity and variations in commitment to MOSOP	178
6.7	Politics of Contingent Opportunities at the Margins	180
6.7.1	Gender and mobilisation	180
6.8	Choice and Purpose: Identity, Tactics and Strategy	181
6.8.1	Moral motivation and choice	184
6.8.2	Role of religion	185
6.8.3	Role of the Church	186
6.8.4	Space and Ogoni movement	188
6.9	Emotions and Mobilisation	189
6.10	Conclusion	191
	Notes	193

7	OGONI ACTIVISM: BETWEEN MORAL MOTIVATION AND SELF-INTEREST	195
7.1	MOSOP: Tracing Motivation Complexities	195
7.2	Redistribution/Recognition Debate	196
7.3	Debate on the Nature of Ogoni Activism	197
7.4	Social Conflict and the Ogoni Movement	198
7.5	MOSOP: Contradiction of Motivations?	204
7.5.1	Environmental valuation and salience of redistribution	208
7.6	Love of Country and Why the Ogoni Mobilised	211
7.7	Rise of the Subject and Why Ogoni Mobilised	212
7.8	Activists' Self Understanding and Mobilisation	214
7.9	Ogoni Activists' Identity, Moral Motivation and Self-Interest	217
7.10	Processes of Ogoni Mobilisation	219
7.10.1	<i>Miideekor</i> : Beyond redistribution and recognition	219
7.11	Leadership and the Colour of Contention	220
7.12	MOSOP, Leadership and Motivation	221
7.13	Conclusion	222
	Notes	223

8	CONCLUSION	225
	<i>Appendices</i>	231
	<i>References</i>	242



List of Tables and Figures

Tables

5.1	Urban-rural investment in selected sectors: 1970-1974 development plan	127
7.1	Levels and dimensions of social conflict in the TSAF	199
7.2	Ogoni demands and elements of conflict	202
7.3	Three problem frequencies	205
A2.1	Social criteria to measure criticality of natural capital	235
A2.2	Economic criteria to measure criticality of natural capital	236
A2.3	Ecological criteria to measure importance of natural capital	236
A3.1	Functions, goods and services of natural capital	237
A4.1	Ogoni Bill of Rights: Preamble or grievances	238
A5.1	Ogoni underground activists who kept MOSOP alive	239
A5.2	Ogoni women leaders	239
A5.3	Phases and manifestation of trauma	240
A6.1	Ogoni 9: Leaders of MOSOP hanged November 1995	241

Figures

6.1	Oppressive order master frame	163
6.2	<i>Miideekor</i> (property owner's rights) frame	165



List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank or Asian Development Bank
AG	Action Group
ANT	Actor Network Theory
CA	Constituent Assembly
CDHR	Committee for the Defence of Human Rights
COU	Central Ogoni Union
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSN	Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria
EZNL	Zapatista National Liberation Army
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOWA	Federation of Ogoni Women Association
FSLN	Sandinista National Liberation Front
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRW	Human Rights Watch
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MNCs	Multinational Companies
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
MST	Movement of Rural Landless Workers
MVIC	Marginalised Violent Internal Conflict model
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
NPC	Northern People's Congress

NPE	New Political Economy
NSM	New Social Movement
NWRO	National Welfare Rights Organization
NYCOP	National Youth Council of Ogoni People
NYM	Nigerian Youth Movement
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OBR	Ogoni Bill of Rights
OCC	Ogoni Council of Churches
ONOSUF	One Naira Ogoni Survival Fund
PAPLRR	Pan-African Programme on Land and Resource Rights
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RM	Resource Mobilisation
SAFs	Strategic Action Fields
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SIPC	Shell International Petroleum Company
SMO	Social Movement Organisation
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company
TNCs	Trans-national Corporations
TNOCs	Trans-national Oil Corporations
TSAF	Trans-local Strategic Action Field
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank