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NATURAL RESOURCE ABUNDANCE, EXPLOITATION AND AGITATION FOR RESOURCE CONTROL IN NIGERIA'S NIGER DELTA: A MARXIAN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Prolonged agitation for resource control in Nigeria's Niger Delta has attracted increasing attention of academia and policy makers. Key issues are involved-fiscal federalism principles, resource control agitation strategies/intensities and politico-philosophical bases within constitutional and theoretical frameworks, past and present governments' efforts aimed at resolving agitations by Niger Delta peoples for resource control have been examined from various traditional disciplinary perspectives in social sciences and humanities. This study explains conflicting postures of resources control, and dynamics of the struggle by applying fragments of the revolutionary Marxist ideology/ frameworks comprising Gramscian, Dialectical Materialism and the Frankfurt School's Critical Social and Neo-Marxist (conflict) theoretical perspectives espoused by Lewis Coser and C. Wright Mills. We argue that sections of Nigeria's laws (the Constitution, and 1978 Land Use Act) that vested absolute land ownership/control authority on Nigeria's Federal Government, among other obnoxious laws that promote marginalization of particular oppressed sections/strata of Nigeria's population thereby provoking persistent conflicts, such laws are overdue for amendment. We recommend, among others, that: non-exploitative variety of federalism applied in Scandinavia (Norway), Switzerland, etc. should be implemented in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS

- *resource control*
- *Marxian analysis*
- *federalism*
- *revenue*
- *exploitation*

1. Introduction

Nigeria's "national question" describes some of the most difficult challenges in the nexus of efforts aiming at creating a nation out of the State forged by force of British colonial amalgamation of the Southern Protectorate of Nigeria with its Northern counterpart (Protectorate) in 1914. Scholars argue that the problematic aspiration towards nationhood in Nigeria results from the sheer multiplicity of conflicts presented by complications in interaction among numerous (about 300 cultural groups also described as ethnic nationalities and their civil societies) of the former protectorates constituting the present Nigerian federation. Some have examined the crises from the lenses of ethnicity, ethno-class relations (Eteng, 2008). Others have viewed the challenges from the perspectives of frictions in the bonding or mutual acceptance of the multiplicity of civil society groups representing the cultural or ethnic groups. Recently, between the late 1990s to the present, the violent kinds of civil societies have emerged to undertake insurgencies in their bid to demand for larger shares of political and economic resources from the federation (Oyovbaire, 2000). While natural resources exploitation generally and petroleum oil exploitation in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta accounts for as much as over 90 per cent of the country's total revenue, the way this factor has contributed to nation-building (or otherwise) remains poorly understood. Resources refer to organic or inorganic substances that an individual, organization, community or a country identifies within the physical or cultural environment, and afterwards harnesses same for use in increasing available wealth. The resources of a given geographical area, determines her socio-economic and political status (Robinson, 1976). Nigeria presents an ideal country for studying and understanding the contribution of resources (both natural and human) to national socio-economic development. Among the many justifications of this assertion, is Nigeria's reputation for being rich in manifold human and natural resources and the potential of becoming one of the most developed nations in sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, the same country simultaneously exhibits scandalous poverty. Some of Nigeria's resources include huge oil reserve of over 32 billion barrels, vast deposits of solid minerals, large domestic market, a population of over 150 million and a land of 923, 768 square kilometers. Paradoxically, some areas in the country with wealth of natural resources are still very poor, especially that of the Niger Delta region. Areas in Nigeria that are endowed with natural resources especially those of the Niger Delta, but poor, often attribute their predicament to lack of control of their resources. This is true when we reflect on Walter Rodney's (1972) demonstration of "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa". He advanced that, Africa's recent and current impoverishment is traceable to successive adversities (Trans-Atlantic Slavery, Colonialism, and Neo-colonialism). This implies that the poverty in Africa today, has colonial origin. The exploitation of Africa by Europe gave no room for Africans to control their own resources. Ideas like these, might have informed nationalist movement all over the world to fight not only for freedom but also for economic emancipation.

The quest for resource control as evidence in Nigeria is not a new phenomenon in social history. It is a perennial malady plaguing nations of the world, a problem of the type which Karl Marx (1818 – 1883), traced its origin back to the feudal system in Europe (Callinicos, 1989). The struggle over resource control in Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, often ended in a gradual or revolutionary reconstruction of society; it produces changes, development and wonders that far surpass the Egyptian Pyramids, Roman Aqueducts, and Gothic Cathedrals. The affliction of the Niger Delta region and its people by extreme poverty, environmental degradation arising from oil production, state-sponsored violence and terrorism and associated adversities in the region is a problem that has been profusely documented (Omojola, 2007; Mittee, 2010). However, this has not been done in a comparative manner (by either, sub-national region or by preferably by socio-economic and political class) to make the analysis amenable to Marxian analysis.

2. Objectives and organization

The objective of this paper therefore is to show the extent to which agitation for resource control in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria poses obstacles to nation building. Considering the crises characterizing Nigeria's socio-political spheres namely ethnicity, ethno-class relations and the management of natural and human resources, generally, especially regarding the Niger Delta, we construct a theoretical framework that includes the Marxist research agenda as well as the Marxist political approaches to enhance understanding of the situation of that study area. The framing of the foregoing theoretical perspective, involves a nearly profuse review of the relationship between Marxism and exploitation in Nigeria's Niger Delta, from various perspectives of Marxism – from Dialectical Materialism to the Frankfurt School of Critical/Social theory to Gramscian Marxism. In the rest of the papers, we present our discussion in sections as follows; the introduce is followed by discussion on the concept of federalism, its original meaning and showing how the application of the federal system in Nigeria deviates from the fiscal federalism used in other nation-states. Although federalism was adopted in Nigeria in 1963 and has been practiced nominally thereafter up to the present, we show how resource sharing schemes (within federalism) to various components of Nigeria have differed in terms of the practices of federalism in the early post-independence era, on the one hand; and post-civil war era (1970 to the present), on the other. We show how dissatisfaction of groups of the Nigerian population with the adulteration of the federal system used in the country has prompted agitations for resource control under the context of unacceptable revenue allocation principles and formulae, then we describe various dimensions of resource control that expresses differently in selected sectors of Nigeria' economy.

Various strategies and policies devised by successive governments to resolve conflicts arising from resource control are described, and then we present conflict theory as exposed by various scholars such as Marx, Coser and Mills. The way agitation for resource control has been undertaken by various nationalities in

Nigeria is discussed. Finally, we suggest strategies that could be applied by Nigeria's federal government and stakeholders to promote good governance that is capable of resolving or ending violent agitations for resource control and then conclude the paper.

3. Problematic context of natural resource abundance, exploitation and poverty in the Niger Delta contrasted to the bases of Nigeria's elite

Originally, the Niger Delta region was delineated based on geographic homogeneity to comprise six states in the middle to south west and eastern Nigeria. Political factors were incorporated into the demarcation of the Niger Delta thereby extending its boundaries by including three additional states located in the neighbourhood during the first eight years of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party or the Obasanjo administration (1999-2007).

Therefore, the region currently covers about 110,624 square kilometers representing 12.2 percent of Nigeria's territory (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). It is located around Nigeria's coastal area and stretches from south western Nigeria (demarcated from Benin River) to south eastern Nigeria (Cross River). The Delta is reputed to constitute the world's third largest wetlands comprising mangrove forests, containing precious biologically diverse resources associated with the wetlands ecological category. Among the resources of the region include: about 150 species of fish, West African primates, hippopotamuses, and rare pigmy hippos (AMCEN/UNEP, 2007). Nigeria's reputation as one of the world's leading producers and exporters of hydrocarbons (crude petroleum oil, which occurs in association with natural gas, which has mindlessly been flared during the production of the former since the 1950s) and also, more recently regarded as a major exporter of natural gas, derives from huge deposits of these fossil fuel resources in the Delta.

A disproportionately large portion of the proven deposits of various natural energy resources credited to Nigeria are actually in the Niger Delta. These include the nation's 4635 million metric tons of oil equivalent (mtoe) of petroleum oil; 4497 million (mtoe) of natural gas; (WRI, UNDP, UNEP, and World Bank, 2005: 201). Other natural resources of which substantial portions are located in the Delta include: about 30 billion barrels of oil equivalent of Bitumen, 14,750 MW of small and large hydropower, 13,071, 464 hectares of biomass energy (TELL, 2008: 21-3).

Ruefully, after earning an average annual revenue of about US\$20 Billion from exporting these Niger Delta-derived minerals for over half century, the huge earnings has reportedly been appropriated by Nigeria's elite for massive building of federal capital (and allied) cities. The major petro-dollars-financed urban centres include: Nigeria's former federal capital (Lagos) and her incumbent federal capital (Abuja). This public policy inspired urbanization was contrived by the nation's power gladiators in the military, business, politics, academic and traditional ruling institutions, which have been globally acknowledged for their conspicuous since Nigeria's Second Republic in the early 1980s. In contrast, majority of the Delta's

non-elitist native population have been systematically pauperized and weakened through policies of marginalization that exclude and alienate them from the federal government-tier controlled hydrocarbon industry/economy which inflicts on them untold environmental problem that have destroyed the livelihoods of the people (AMCEN/UNEP, 2008: 272).

4. Exploiting/neglecting the “Goose laying the Golden Eggs” while intensively financing elite’s urban infrastructural development

Recent studies are elucidating on such sub-national variations in federal government controlled investment of national financial resources. For example, Richard Ingwe and colleagues report on disparities in the degree of urbanization phenomenon that has been determined by federal government policy of deliberate urbanization through successive creation of capital cities/towns to provide operational bases for sub-national regional administrations of states/local government, which have increasingly been created since the 1950s-when three regions were created up to 1997, when their numbers rose to 36 states and 774 local government areas. This policy has not been in favour of the Niger Delta region. Following their analysis of Nigeria’s 2004 population (projection for the 36 states and FCT from those of 1991), Ingwe and colleagues (2011) show that the Delta region presents a higher level of rural residence of its population –as much as 77.8% (i.e. lower urbanization associated with inadequacy of the “public goods” of modern life) compared to Nigeria’s national average: 63.7%.

The degree of rural residence in some of the member states of the Niger Delta were much higher with 94.3% and 87.9% recorded in Abia and Akwa Ibom states respectively. It was only in two of the nine Niger Delta states (Edo and Ondo) that presented rural residence that was below national average of 63.7% with 54.56% and 59.62% respectively. The only two of the nine Delta states that featured urban residence levels above the national average (36.28 %) in 2004 were Edo (45.44%) and Ondo (40.38%). The higher level of urbanization in the latter (two states) is attributable to other factors (innovative development championship) contrasted to the earlier mentioned federal government policy of deliberate urbanization, which in itself, was not capable of stimulating development in the Niger Delta in ways that would be commensurate to the enormous oil and gas resources extracted from the region. Massive industrial development of Edo State happened between 1960s-1970s- during visionary governorship (military dictatorship) of Colonel Samuel Ogbemudia (now retired) of Bendel State. The urban residence levels in the remainder (i.e. seven states) of the region were below the national average.

5. Demographic dynamics and regional agitation

Of the current geopolitical configuration of Nigeria’s federal government comprising 36 states and a federal capital territory, the Niger Delta’s total population of over 31.2 million (22% of Nigeria’s total population (140,003,542) in 2006. it was projected that 51.6% of the nation’s population was under the age of 25 years.

That excluded other youth of up to age 40 years (National Bureau of Statistics 2006). This demographic scenario indicates that the Delta presents the problem of “youth bulge”, which is associated with unemployment, despondency and social disorder. The region’s population stratum under age 25 years constituted about 16.1 million youth (over half of the total population in 2006 based on the national growth rate of 3.2% per year (National Population Commission, 2006). Therefore, the region’s population is projected to have risen to about 34.4 million in 2010. The serious insurgency or youth restiveness in the region has been attributed to high unemployment, as in other parts of Nigeria. However, lopsided and polarized sharing of political power and other economic/financial and social opportunities arising thereby has never favoured the Delta, as in other deprived cultural groups described as minorities in Nigeria (The Sunday Magazine, TSM, 1994). This policy has been viewed as systematic marginalization of the Delta, like other minorities in the country. It is aggravated by the youth bulge in the region.

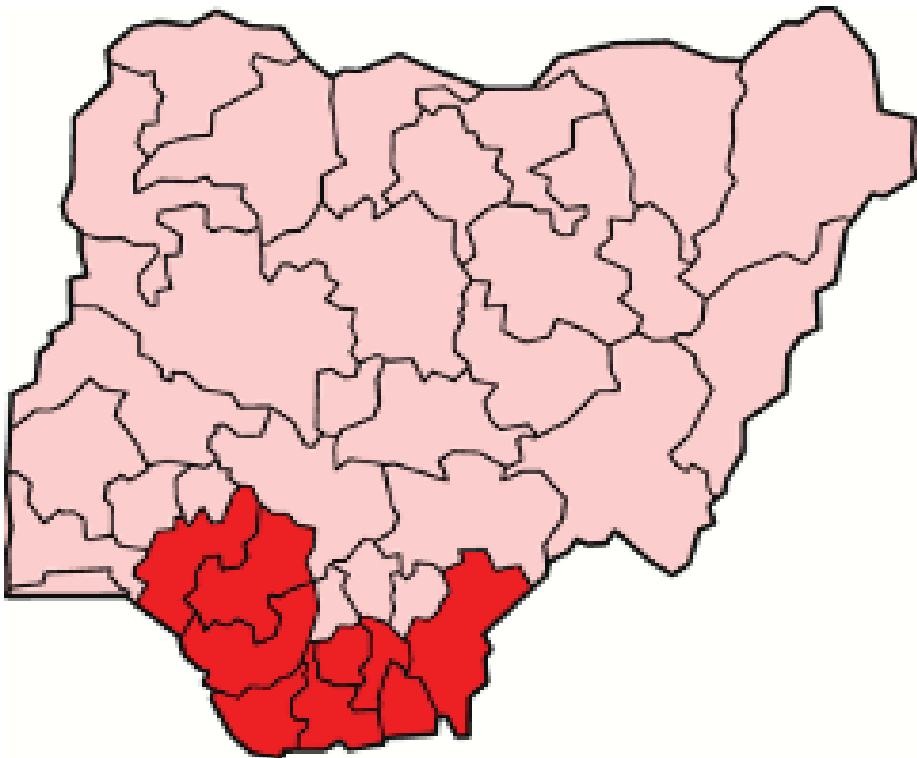


Figure 1. Nigeria showing the Niger Delta region (as shaded portions)

Table 1. Selected geographic and socio-economic features of the Niger Delta

| State | Population (2006) | Area (km ²) | Rural residence (%) | Urban residence (%) |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Abia | 2833999 | 4900 | 94.26 | 5.74 |
| Akwa Ibom | 3920208 | 6900 | 87.89 | 12.11 |
| Bayelsa | 1703358 | 9059 | See Rivers below | See Rivers below |
| Cross River | 2888966 | 21787 | 74.92 | 25.08 |
| Delta | 4098391 | 17108 | 66.85 | 33.15 |
| Edo | 3218332 | 19187 | 54.56 | 45.44 |
| Imo | 3934899 | 5288 | 67.33 | 32.67 |
| Ondo | 3441024 | 15,820 | 59.62 | 40.38 |
| Rivers | 5185400 | 10,575 | 68.65 | 31.35 |
| Total: Niger Delta | 31224577 | 110,624 | | |
| Nigeria | | | 63.72 | 36.28 |

Sources: National Bureau of Statistics, 2006-07; National Population Commission, 2006.

Table 2. Selected poverty indicators in the Niger Delta region

| State | Households people accessing water | Households using untreated water from rivers, streams, dams, surfaces, etc (%) | Households cooking with solid fuels (%) | Total Child Labour (%) | Girls getting married underage (before 18 th birthday (%) |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|------------------------|--|
| Akwa Ibom | 11.1 | 46.0 | 88.5 | 49.8 | 23.1 |
| Bayelsa | 3.0 | 57.0 | 53.6 | 32.3 | 45.0 |
| Cross River | 25.5 | 59.6 | 74.9 | 47.3 | 27.8 |
| Delta | 3.1 | 15.9 | 53.6 | 27.7 | 25.1 |
| Edo | 2.4 | 28.0 | 79.6 | 36.6 | 25.3 |
| Rivers | 6.2 | 10.2 | 56.2 | 28.1 | 21.9 |
| Abia | NA | 26.8 | 77.1 | 27.2 | 10.3 |
| Imo | NA | 33.3 | 85.5 | 35.5 | 11.2 |
| Ondo | NA | 38.2 | 73.5 | 22.5 | 14.2 |

Sources: National Bureau of Statistics 2007.

The paradoxical serious poverty scenario amid natural resource abundance presented above and the prolonged history of the agitation for resource control by the Niger Delta peoples/representatives and vanguard beckons for new

approaches and analytical approaches. Considering the failure of neoliberalism to resolve persisting poverty in Africa while Latin America achieves successes through socialist policies (Ingwe, Ikeji and Ojong, 2010, Bond, 2009, Igwe, 2005), we apply revolutionary Marxism to provide philosophies capable of enlightening dynamics between conflicting parties (Nigeria's federal government versus Niger Delta) of the resource control issues.

6. Methods and data

We used the method of aetiology in this study. This method is similar to causation because it involves creating the nature of the logical and empirical principles and laws that govern outcomes of phenomena. In this study, exploitation of the natural resources of the Niger Delta region for development of Nigeria's elitist cities while ignoring the needs of the former under the context of Nigeria's pseudo-federal government system are the issues at stake for analysis. We preferred to apply aetiology because this method facilitated our systematic and scientific study in the following several ways: description of the objects of this study; relating the study's objects to other pertinent issues; to study and explain causation of outcomes of these various phenomenon; and related issues.

We followed the usual procedure of aetiology by providing a foundation for subsequent analyses of the issues at the outset. This involved undertaking a preliminary description of the study's object; determining the fundamental constituents of the phenomena of interest in this study as well as the nature and principles governing inter-relationships among aspects of the key issues (exploitation of the natural resources of the Niger Delta region for financing infrastructural development in Nigeria's elitist cities while ignoring the needs of the former under the context of Nigeria's pseudo-federal government system). We established the interconnections among the origin, history and evolution of resource exploitation versus agitation for resource control based on consideration that the consequences of the foregoing interconnection are not discrete but developmental; not final but dialectical.

The dialectical characteristics of most issues refer to the way two aspects of a single situation make them to affect each other thereby facilitate aetiological analyses. We use this politico-development study to demonstrate the possibility achieving robust results similar to those earlier produced from the application of this aetiological analytical method to studies in various disciplines from medical sciences, where it was originally applied, thereby commending it to increasingly use for analyzing various issues criminology -example mafia and other gangsterism, cultism, delinquency, etc (Igwe, 2005: 6, 56-7).

7. Marxism, Exploitation and impact of Nigeria's federal policies on the Niger Delta

Marxian analysis employs the tenets, principles and arguments in the nexus of Marxism. The latter refers to an accumulation of theory originally contributed by two scholars (in order of seniority); Karl Marx (1818-83) and Friedrich Engels (1820-95). Afterwards, other scholars who were fascinated by this original duo emerged to create and gain the label: Marxists. Marxism, and by extension Marxian analysis, revolve around critical theoretical conceptualization of issues which challenge, alter traditional thinking about economics (example *Laissez Faire* espoused by Adam Smith, political theory, etc) thereby revolutionized paradigmatic orthodoxies in multiple social science disciplines (Politics, Sociology, Religion, Philosophy, Economics, History, Psychology, Culture, Law etc) as well as professional and pedestrian practice arising from the theoretical strands. Marxism became the most influential theoretical strands adopted for organizing societies and economics affecting over one third of the global population for a considerable part of the 20th century up to the end of the millennium.

Marxism is considered one of the most articulate critics of modern society whereby the application of free market capitalist mode of production leads to Man's (used in plural form to represent both female and male, gender and society) alienation from: (i) His product of labour, (ii) Man's productive activity; and (iii) his fellow men (social relations among other men and women or society. Marxism argues that capitalism highlights commodity production for exchange purposes thereby engendering an alienated system whereby the alienated form of Man's productive activity takes centre stage in an all-consuming form; the quintessence of capitalism. Ultimately, the social characteristics of Man's productive process is downplayed (obscured) and suppressed by the individual capitalist who is preoccupied with appropriating commodities/products of work or workers for the market. Although, production and exchange processes possess inherent social relationships among men, it is only in the latter that the social relationship is more noticeable. Consequently, man's relationship with fellow men is contrived by the capitalist system to take the form of interaction among inanimate objects (or things) (Etokudoh, 2011: 96-7).

The enormous influence of Marxism/Marxists on society has been reviewed by David McClellan (1983) and C. Wright Mills (1962). It has been praised for its potential to facilitate creativity in society is reorganization and critical enterprise (Marcuse, 1958). Ruefully, these potentials of Marxism were dented when the ideology was adapted in form of the Marxism –Leninism (a.k.a. Leninism) by Joseph Stalin (1879-1953), a soviet “repressionist”, and implemented in ways that led to dissatisfaction with it, rejection and failure in the defunct USSR. The ascendance of Marxism to its heydays in 1960s and 1970s presented opportunities for identification of some of its several versions including: the formulation in the 1920s of one of its ideological varieties by fusing the early works of Marx with those of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), a German idealist philosopher

credited with creating the concept of historical dialectical materialism, whereby history of thought and its political correlates are viewed as paths for approaching rational truth (Scott & Marshall, 2005). The most notable of this new form of Marxism were: Gyorgy Lukacs and Karl Korsch, whose propositions/formulations were discredited by orthodox Marxists and most of the Soviet Union, at the time (Scott & Marshall, 2005; 389).

There is a Gramscian Marxism whose origin is credited to Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) whose discourse of intellectuals, education, Italian history, political parties, fascism, hegemony and fordism in his post-humunously published book: *The Prison Notebooks* (1971) rose to great influence in the Marxist community in the 1970s. Gramsci's works/ideas were extended by Nicos Poulantzas to fabricate political sociology and other intellectual strands amenable to application in handling issues involving Marxism and "discourse analysis": (Joll, 1977). Gramscian Marxism was decimated by the imprisonment of Gramsci apart from other adversities (poverty and illness) that plagued his life. However, it is credited recently for its contributing towards the development of the theory of ideology through its notion of hegemony, which was achieved via incorporation of other instruments: (Linguistic and conceptual, example discourse analysis) (Scott and Marshall, 2005).

8. The Gramscian Marxist Theoretical Perspective of Hegemony

Drawing from volume four of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, N. Sekler (2009) suggested reconceptualizations of hegemony in various senses. It is founded on class domination, repressive forces and institutions, which could be employed by one nation at an international level. Hegemony can be constituted and consolidated within traditional political institutions in a nation. Another perspective is to conceptualize it as characterized by procedural and consensus-based phenomena which could be established and interrogated at multiple scales and expressed in daily attitudes or practices. Sekler laments that the Gramscian notion of that hegemony has been presented mechanically or descriptively to determine the solidity of a given hegemony, or analogically to question the effectiveness of hegemony". In other to strengthen it in the ongoing era of neo-liberalistic asphyxiation that strangulates national and supranational economies, societies and ecologies, she emphasizes the procedural aspects of creating and negating hegemony.

Sekler proposes the understanding of hegemony as a phenomenon that is deeply entrenched in civil society. The latter could be viewed as organizational platforms that society contrives for disputing and dissenting against hegemony and for developing/managing social struggles in the nexus of mental constructs and counter constructs (interpretations) and (variously) contrived "truths", multidimensional phenomena including institutions within political, economic, socio-cultural components of society encompassing various structures, processes. It also presents the platforms for both facilitating and stabilizing) or traumatizing, disabling (questioning) hegemonic phenomena. The Gramscian conception is praised for the value it adds through its presentation of civil society as "socially

constituted and embedded” and the distinctive contribution made by it through its practices and strategizing towards either facilitating or traumatizing (pressuring) hegemony in spatial and temporal dimensions (Sekler, 2009:60-1).

Marxism contributed immensely towards the development of the critical understanding of relationships between/among humankind, political, economic and social (re) construction of ideas that previously existed. However, assessments and perceptions of the influence and consequences of the ideology that it created have varied depending on the biases of those people who receive its postulations. It did empower people to exercise optimism pertaining to its use for creating laws and principles promising to reconstruct the human society, transform human political, economic and social circumstances into a purer form devoid of the fallibilities and injustices generated from defective capitalist theoretical perspectives contrived by earlier paradigms in the social sciences.

9. The impact of Marxism on society

Another major variant of Marxism is the Frankfurt School of Social/Critical Theory which emerged and flourished prior to the ascendance of the Nazi to power in Germany. Founded in 1923, by Jürgen Habermas (who was exiled between 1935 and 1953 to USA), this School was resuscitated in Frankfurt University by its founder who professed its ideals from the 1960s to the 1980s. It combined Marxism and psychoanalysis in analyzing subjects (authoritarian rulers), as an emancipatory tool for extricating the oppressed from their oppressors.

It developed the theory of “communicative action” aimed at promoting understanding among participants in dialogues characterized by systematic distortion of communication wherein ideal speech situations are created for facilitating cooperative participation. Habermas suggested that in the period of late capitalism, the consent and commitment sought by rulers from the ruled is jeopardized by the “legitimation crisis” (McLean and McMillan, 2003:205; Scott and Marshall, 2005).

Marxism enabled its proponents and followers to aspire towards uplifting oppressed people, freeing them from the strangle hold of repressive ideas used by the ruling class to practice hegemony through exploitation of the poor (*proletariat*) by the ruling class (*bourgeoisie*) and the oppressor controlling the state apparatus of power. It promoted the undertaking or implementation of bloody revolution as a means of extricating the oppressed from the bondage of which they are held by their oppressor, if this becomes necessary or inevitable (Marx and Engels, 1947). Although the former USSR (Soviet Union) represented one of the most advanced realizations of some of the theoretical tenets of Marxism as espoused by Marx and Engels, the way its revolution (which started in 1917 through the instrumentalities of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin (1870-1924) and the Bolsheviks in 1917 and expired by *perestroika* and the efforts of the British and USA in the 1980s, confirms the view that neither Marxism nor its earlier cousin (capitalism) have had their

theoretical bases implemented by its self-acclaimed promoters in unadulterated forms (Igwe 2005:253, Bidwai, 2009).

Some of the eloquent articulations of exploitation in theoretical formats have been identified in Marx's works such as *Das Kapital* (1867). *The Poverty of philosophy* (1847). Engels' contributions to this subject include: *A contribution to the critique of Political Economy* (1844). Despite the waning of Marxism in the 1980s (referring to the collapse of the Soviet Union), the strength of its fundamental principles and ideas continue to linger in various forms in such countries as Cuba and elsewhere in Latin American example Venezuela, etc, (Ingwe, Ikeji and Ojong, 2010, Igwe 2005:253).

10. Application of Marxism in a Spatial System

This denounces the use of capitalist concept of scarcity as a tool of exploitation by its restriction to the use of land while it is allowed to lie fallow or lie empty. This is seen as an ecological fallacy and a means of appropriating the resources of one of territory by another. The capitalist system dominated by the state and transnational corporations (TNCs) concentrates and consumes surplus product in socially undesirable ways. This manifests in conspicuous consumption, mass build-up of cities, militarism or mercenary capitalism, waste, etc). Contrastingly, the promotion of growth based on principles of social justice in Marxist-communist systems (example Cuba & China) are advocated for due to their superiority (Harvey, 1973:114-5).

Some Marxists scholars who have applied its analytical tools at a supranational regional scale include Andre Gunder Frank and Samir Amin whose works have contributed to the centre-periphery model/theory. The latter contains two major theory-laden debates. First, a theory of modes of production conceptualizes various economic systems based on relationships established by nations in terms of production and distribution of goods and services required by their citizenry. Second, explores linkages among specific sectors (areas) located within the spectrum described as centre and periphery (re)-constructed the capitalist system (globalizing) but mediated (obstructed) by socialist-communist interventions as it were, arising from influences, actions of promoters of the two major politico-economic perspectives.

Frank argues that the capitalist system exploits non-capitalist preindustrial colonies of European invaders at different levels (regional and local); all along appropriating resources of the foregoing victimized regions. Some of the victims include: landowners, merchants, peasants and even vulnerable landless people (laborer). This "chain" of exploitation leads to the emergence of the elite (capitalists) dominating the poor majority: the latter lose their economic surpluses to the former. While this exploitation afflicts from ordinate to subordinate positions, the latter could only shield (or resist) the predatory process as far as those occupying higher positions on the ladder can allow. Thus is created the multiple-level of

intensity of capitalism from global to national, and local (subnational) levels, each presenting various characteristics (structures, institutions, processes and attitudes) of predation. Conclusively, while capitalist regions experience growth and development, their non-capitalist counterparts experience retrogression, (loss of growth and stagnation as their resources and products are perpetually appropriated by the former (Frank, 1969: 31-2, 1978, Harvey, 1973: 262-3, Scott & Marshall, 2005: 61-2, Amin, 1976). It deserves mention that while the use of the concept of elite could be seen in the works of some Marxists, this departs from Marx's theory of classes as constituents of society contrasted to the elite and dominated strata of the population.

11. Relevance of Marxian Analysis to the Niger Delta Situation

Several aspects of Marxism described above are amenable to the analysis of exploitation of the Niger Delta region and people. A few deserve mention briefly. The Delta's huge deposit of hydrocarbons (petroleum oil and natural gas) which are appropriated by Nigeria's ruling class for earning foreign exchange for financing the elites conspicuous consumption and massive construction of cities (Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna), to name but a few of urban Nigeria construction from petrodollars, are among the confirmation or manifestation of exploitation of the region. The multiple levels of capitalist development are visible in Nigeria. Evidence of this include: the majority national capitals (Lagos and Abuja,) zonal centres of various hierarchy and intensities example Kaduna, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, among others. These conform to Frank's theoretical and/or modeling efforts.

Moreover, Nicola Sekler's suggestions that domination under the Gramscian Marxism could be reconceptualized as employable by one nation in an international sense and also within existing national institutions are relevant to Nigeria's federal government exploitation of the Niger Delta. In the latter sense, the delta has been dominated through Nigeria's distorted fiscal federalism which reversed previous revenue allocation formulae that were more beneficial to the three (later four) regions when agriculture earned revenues that sustained federal and regional economies in the 1950's early post-independent era before the 1967-1970 Civil War . The former form of domination (involving one nation at an international level) could be seen in the way that the imperialistic forces of prominent capitalist nations (example USA, Britain, France and more recently China) and their oil multinational companies (example ExxonMobil, Chevron, Britain Petroleum, Agip, Shell P.D.C. Nigeria, etc) have worked as representative and in connivance with their home governments to manipulate Nigeria's successive governments to "underdeveloped" the Niger Delta.

12. Conflict theory and the Niger Delta's resource control agitation

The quest for resource control has not only been a recurrent phenomenon in human history, but has come to stay with human civilization and growth. To understand the propelling force behind its persistence in society, particularly

in Nigeria, the intrinsic causes of the problem of the resource control can be understood from the Marxian Paradigm.

Coser (1954), in his work “The functions of social conflict” observed that, social conflicts, including the resource control problem are caused by the struggle over scarce values, status, power and resources. He observed that, conflict may break out over the distribution of a variety of scarce values, goods, such as: income, status, and power, domination over territory or ecological position. In line with this assertion, revenue allocation formula in Nigeria had been a driving force in causing and escalating the problem of resource control in the country. States and local governments, both in military and democratic dispensations often expressed dissatisfaction with the magnitude of revenue shared to them by the federal government. The quest for resource control in the Niger Delta is tied to this fact, and it corroborates Coser’s posture on social conflict.

Coser (1954) also argued that, legitimacy is an essential variable, before any antagonistic sentiment can be transformed into social action or conflict; the underprivileged group must become fully aware that, it is actually negatively privileged. From this assertion, awareness in the Niger Delta was low and slow in the 1960s and early 70s, but gathered momentum in the 1980s and 1990s till date. This awareness awakes the underprivileged people of the Niger Delta to agitate for resource control.

Similarly, considering the arguments and the ideology propounded by Karl Marx (1818-1883) the quest for resource control could be attributed to inequality in proceed sharing; that people who control means of production are positively privileged to the disadvantage of the “have nots”. Consequently, the less privileged engage in an open fight to over throw the oppressive tendency of the ruling class (Marx and Engels, 1952; Marx, 1971; Reitzer, 1996, 2008; Haralambos, Holborn and Heald, 2004; Giddens, 2006). According to Marx, the state/government is a committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie. Thus, all its output is oppressive; laws are made to perpetuate the dominance and status of the ruling class; putting resources in hands of the minority dominated class. In the same vein, C. Wright Mills (1916-1962) in his work *The Power Elite* (1956) provides evidence to show that power has become highly centralized in all sectors of the American Society. He observed that, American economy is dominated by few people. While Mill’s use of the concept of elite differs from Marx’s concept of ruling class, they both explained the domination of the majority by a minority. Some therefore argue that both the ruling class and the elite dominate the majority in various combinations of forms (Igwe, 2005). This argument justified our proposal that Nigeria’s federalism be made/fashioned after Scandinavian system because of its less exploitative compared to that applied in the USA (Harvey, 1932).

Hiding under the banner of the federal constitution of Nigeria, fashioned after the US constitution, the economy/resources of Nigeria are controlled by the parasitic (non-generative elite) (Harvey, 1973). The claims of Nigeria’s constitution,

that it is meant to redress the injustice are contradicted by numerous injustices perpetrated by the Nigerian state as represented by its parasitic elite on the people of the Niger Delta provides evidence therefore, that the claims stated in the document were seem to be dubious expression by the elite to deceive the poor masses of Nigeria. This flaw has been identified by scholars with regards to other forms of uncivil actions and offences perpetrated by Nigeria's elite (Ingwe, Agi, Adams, Ukwayi and Otu, 2009).

13. Federalism and history of resource control problem in Nigeria

Before we can meaningfully understand the controversy surrounding the past and the present quest for resource control in Nigeria, attempt must be made to discuss briefly, federal system of government and constitutional development in Nigeria. Federalism refers to the existence, in one country, of more than one level of government, each with different expenditure, responsibilities and tax collection powers (Nyong 1999: 286). It represents in one sense a compromise between unitary government and extreme decentralization (Oates, 1972). It is a method of dividing powers so that the federal and regional governments are each, within a share coordinate and independent (Wheare, 1964).

Federal system of government has been described as the best form of government because it offers a good resolution of the problems that constitute the economic *raison d'être* of the public sector. It is in this sense, that federalism may, in economic terms, be described as the optimal form of government. However, the greatest problem in a federal system of government is the problem of legislation, which tends towards uniformity.

Nigerian legislators tend to forget that the birth of a federal system is as a result of diversity in the country; thus government actions must as a matter of fact reflect these diversities (Okoh, 1982). One of the most difficult functions in a federal system of government is the problem of allocation of functions. This responsibility is difficult and controversial. Anyone who has followed closely the problem of resource control in Nigeria will no doubt agree with Musgrave's assertion.

14. Relating the historical development of resource abundance and exploitation under federalism to resource control in Nigeria

Federalism in Nigeria dates back to 1914 when the British government amalgamated the Southern and Northern Protectorates into a country called Nigeria. This also marked in earnest, the problem of resource control in Nigeria; as colonial over Lords (that is the central government) has and control resources of the country, through traditional rulers (Okoth-Ogendo, 2007). This situation continued till 1946 when the Richard's granted autonomy to the existing regional governments in the country (Nyong, 1999); with that constitutional reform, it became apparent that resources have to be galvanized to enable regional government

perform their assigned responsibilities (Obo, 1999). The Richard Constitution therefore, encouraged a tripartite political division in the country (The North, South West and South East); also economic autonomy was granted to these regions (Eteng, 1999). Although, regional economic autonomy was granted by Richard's Constitution, the Federal Government has the first claim on whatever revenue was collected and surplus is only shared to regions on the principle of derivation only after it needs have been satisfied (Nyong, 1999).

In 1951, the Hicks-Philpson Commission was set up by McPherson, who was at that time Governor-General of Nigeria. This Commission's recommendations granted greater autonomy to the regions; increased special grant out of revenue generated from the regions was more given to the regions for the development of education, capital projects and the police. Similarly, the Chick Commission of 1953 granted greater fiscal autonomy to the regions. Revenue derived from exports and imports was shared to regions on the basis of derivation. With the creation of the Mid-West region in 1963, the Binn Commission (1964) still recommended fiscal autonomy for the regions, but modified revenue formula to: Mid-West – eight percent, West – 20 percent, East – 30 percent and North – 42 percent. Between 1960 and 1966, revenue from regions was still shared on the basis of derivation of a proportion to the federal government and others to all the regions (Obo, 1999).

With incoming of the Military in Nigerian politics in 1966, twelve states were created in 1967 from the four existing regions; this further aggravated the problem of resource control and how revenue should be shared among states. This agitation continued until after the civil war in 1970. During Military regime, the relative regional autonomy that existed was further eroded, as government became more unitary; though retaining the federal system. National unity became the cardinal objective of successive military administrations. Consequently, the federal government controlled major resources in the country; while the federal tier has earned an average of US\$20 billion annually from export of oil. The areas endowed with these resources were abandoned in abject poverty, this situation forced most regions especially those of the Niger Delta to agitate for resource control (Omojola, 2007).

According to Onduku (2001:9), the origin of resource control problem is traced back to the 1950s following the discovery of petroleum in the country and the marginalization of the Niger Delta. He stated that:

...the marginalization and balkanization of the people of Niger Delta, the despoliation of their environment and the resultant conflicts have their roots in the discovery of oil, exploitation, exploration and production activities by the oil multinationals in the late 1950s... despite being the richest geopolitical region in terms of natural resources endowment, the Delta's potential for sustainable development however remains unfulfilled and is now increasingly threatened by environmental devastation and worsening economic conditions... incidental to and indeed compounding this ecological

devastation is the political marginalization and total oppression of the people and especially the denial of their rights, including land rights...

It is worth noting that during the cocoa boom, the Western region clamored most for resource control; while during the groundnut pyramids in the 1960's, the Northern part of the country led the vanguard in the quest for resource control and agitation for more revenue allocation based on derivation in the 1960s. Afterwards, governors, youth and people of the Niger Delta started the struggle for resource control in the 2000s. This struggle led many Niger Deltans to death; the dead including Ken Saro-Wiwa along with eight Ogoni's who were hanged on Friday, November 10, 1995. With the inception of the Fourth Republic, former Governor of Akwa Ibom state Victor Attah, among other indigenes of the Niger Delta, still clamoured for resource control.

15. Revenue allocation and the problem of resources control

There is a close link between revenue allocation and the problem of resource control in Nigeria. According to Akpan (1999), the upheavals in the Niger Delta, the marginalization cry, and the desire of some ethnic nationalities to opt out of Nigeria's pseudo federal system is connected to revenue allocation system which exploits the Niger Delta minorities. It should be that, in Nigeria's federal system, where federally collected revenue of over 90 per cent is derived from a particular region (the Niger Delta), the federal tiers has found it difficult to share revenue between the central government and the federating units in such a way that would compensate the region where the bulk of the resources are derived. This is because derived issues in the areas of ecological, political and socio-economic problems occasioned by oil exploitation are not neutral to all the federating regions.

The unfavourable revenue allocation to the Niger Delta, occasioned by unequal laws and force of arms wielded and applied by the federal government and transnational corporations engaged in oil production has denied the area of the right to manage their affairs and develop economically, socially and environmentally. This singular reason above all, has propelled ethnic revolt in the Niger Delta. Ethnic Nationalities of the Niger Delta agitate for fairness and justice. They argued that for government to achieve peace, stability, and neutralized ethnic revolt in the region, the resources of the Niger Delta should be controlled by the Niger Delta people, or alternatively, adequate revenue should be given to the area. In response to this demand, the federal government created more states and local governments in the area, as a means of enhancing the access of these oil gas-rich communities to the federal revenue. In line with the Africa Charter of Human and People's Right Article 20 (1), which states that: all peoples shall have an (imprescriptibly) and inalienable right to self-determination and freedom to ensure their economic and social development, the Ogoni people, while still reaffirming their wish to remain part of Nigeria, consistently demand that, the Ogoni people should be politically governed by the Ogonis, and their resources should be used for Ogoni development (MOSOP, 1992:2, Mittee 2007).

Nigeria's petroleum and mining laws as enshrined in the independent and republican constitution of 1960 and 1963 respectively, mandated the Federal government to pay 50 percent royalties to constituent regions where these monies are generated. This sharing formula was reduced to 20 percent in 1975 and completely removed in 1979 constitution. With this development, most regions, especially of the Niger Delta, were left with little or no resources for their socio-economic development, thus the quest for resource control.

16. Efforts of successive Nigeria governments to manage and resolve agitation for resource control

The perennial upheavals emanating from the problem of resource control, especially in the Niger Delta, without doubt, compelled past and present administrations to make concerted efforts to quell this crisis. For instance in 1970, the military government promulgated Distributive Pool Account Decree. Under this arrangement, 45 per cent of mining rents and royalties from on-shore production were allocated to states based on the principles of derivation. Again in 1986, Babangida's administration set aside 1.5 percent special fund to cater for ecological problems of oil producing states. This fund was increased to three percent. More so, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) was established to tackle the problems of the oil producing areas. However, few years after its operation, OMPADEC was seen as a failure as oil producing areas saw the Commission as a half-hearted measure taken by Babangida's dictatorship to address the problem of the oil bearing communities in the Niger Delta.

At the inception of the Fourth Republic, the Obasanjo administration, set-up the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The commission was saddled with the responsibility of promoting socio-economic development of the Niger Delta region. The Commission is involved in classrooms building, construction of roads, waste management, transportation, training programmes, building of jetties, enlightenment and poverty alleviation programmes. Like OMPADEC, the NDDC is already facing disapproval from the Niger Delta people, because of what they perceive as non-performance, and inability of the Commission to address the problem of the Niger Delta region. Consequently, in late 2004, the NDDC was almost scrapped by President Obasanjo. To alleviate the plight of the Niger Delta people, the Obasanjo administration, claimed that it was also committed to ensuring that revenue base on derivation was given to the states concerned, including those of the Niger Delta. Again, to address the problem of resource control, President Obasanjo eased his grip on offshore onshore oil dichotomy law; which barred oil-producing states from benefiting from revenue accruing to the Federal Government from its offshore oil exploration. The littoral states achieved this feat only after a prolonged legal tussle leading to Nigeria's Supreme Court ruling in their favour.

In 2009, the Yar'Adua/Jonathan's administration allocated more capital projects in the Niger Delta to quell the agitation for resource control and develop

the region. These projects included roads, electricity, hospitals, schools among others. The Amnesty programme was also introduced by late President Yar'Adua to ensure peace and justice in the Niger Delta and, it was also geared towards establishing lasting peace and development in the region.

17. Development from the problem of resource control in Nigeria

Development is the struggle of the opposite. The quest/struggle for resource control in Nigeria produced a mixed bag of development (positive and negative development). On the negative side, problem of resource control has produced all forms of human right abuses and chains of vices, lives and property are lost. Also, disunity among Nigerians has escalated, the emergence of all forms of tribal militant groups: Movement for the survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Survival of Oloibiri; in the South Western region and AREWA pressure group in the North. The operations of these tribal groups are sometimes detrimental to national unity.

On the positive side, unity among southern governors in early 2000s was enhanced during their struggle for 13 percent derivation formula. They spoke with one voice and stood united in their cause. Again, it spurred the Federal Government to establish the Niger Delta Development Commission, whose function is to cater for the socio-economic development of the Niger Delta region. Furthermore, it pressured the federal government and oil multinational corporations (OMNs) to build more schools, roads, hospitals/clinics etc to the boost socio-economic development of the oil producing communities. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) is also improving efforts towards fighting all forms of pollutions during oil exploration, today, agriculture, is also encouraged in the Niger Delta region by SPDC and Chevron Nigeria Limited.

18. Suggestions

Following the causes and problem of resource control in Nigeria, we suggest that, the model of federalism based on social justice, good governance and mutual acceptability by stakeholders of the federating regions, as practiced in Switzerland Scandinavia should be adopted in Nigeria. This model should replace the federal system practiced in the USA, because of its deep-seated concentration on appropriation of the surplus value and exploitation of the resources of well-endowed constituent regions (Harvey, 1973: 314). States should be given more autonomy as obtainable in Federal States. The constitution should be amended to foster true federalism. Some ambiguous sections of the constitution should also be amended; for instance, Second Schedule, Section 4, item 17, 24, 39 and 64 of the 1999 constitution, as well as the Land Use Act, should be amended to avoid over centralization of power and resources at the federal level.

Oil multinational companies operating in the Niger Delta, should be adequately supervised to ensure their compliance with their business social responsibilities

to host communities. These companies should also adopt environment friendly equipment that will protect or prevent environmental pollution in their operational areas. Strict environmental laws should be made and enforced by the Federal Government in cooperation with subnational regions; states and local governments.

19. Conclusion

Evidence in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world; reveal that the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of struggle for scarce resources. And this struggle takes different forms: simple to complex as society metamorphoses. In Nigeria, evidence of steady build-up of various forms of conflict between and among ethnic cultural groups and ethnic nationalities and regions started since the amalgamation of North and Southern Nigeria in 1914; intensified in 1946, following the creation of regional government. Concerted efforts made by past and present administration to quell the agitation for resource control have proved abortive. Resource control has produced positive and negative changes. On the negative side, precious and incalculable lives were lost and property destroyed while on the positive side, improved infrastructure and revenue allocation was given to agitating oil bearing communities. We recommended among others, that the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should be amended; and that true federalism patterned under the Scandinavia type should be practiced in Nigeria.

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