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Public-Private Partnerships in Sustainability in Low and  
Middle Income Country Contexts: Case Studies from  
Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are a popular concept in international policy making circles. Since the 1970s they have been increasingly advocated as a way to address a range of public service issues, as part of a global proliferation of neoliberal governance methods. PPPs have recently been presented as a solution to worsening global sustainability problems such as climate change, especially in low and middle-income countries. Of the body of literature that examines PPPs in low and middle-income countries, there are relatively few empirical studies that look at how PPPs in sustainability are implemented. This thesis aims to address this gap in the literature by analysing the application of partnerships in the Niger Delta, using qualitative research methods. The thesis presents a brief political history of the Niger Delta, followed by four empirical chapters that apply distinct conceptual approaches. First, I use stakeholder mapping to study an international partnership based in the Niger Delta. This approach serves to introduce important actors and highlight power relations between them but fails to capture some of the influences on these power dynamics that were expressed in the data collected for the study. To delve further into these influences, I build an analytical framework from concepts of structure, agency, and structuration, adapted to fit the empirical organisational context of the partnership. This approach allows for a novel analysis that accommodates influences on the partnership at multiple scales, including the individual scale, however the approach is not without limitations. In a second case study, I investigate the application of a partnership model of community engagement developed by International Oil Companies operating in The Delta. For this analysis I use concepts of governmentality, which serve to foreground processes of power formation, including subject formation, at multiple scales. This approach allows for an exploration of the motivations of individuals and organisations and the formation of power through the implementation of the model, giving some insight into potential mechanisms behind the model's outcomes. Through their application, the above analytical frameworks fail to fully capture the role of the state in the Niger Delta, which an integral conceptual component of PPPs. The role of the state in the two case studies is subsequently brought into focus in the final empirical chapter using an approach that aims to visualise the role of the state in the Niger Delta from differing perspectives. This exercise highlights some characteristics of the relationship between the state and the extractives industry in the Niger Delta. It also allows the analysis to consider how the relationship between the state and the extractives industry may influence the application of PPPs in the Delta more generally, relating findings back to the context of global sustainability issues. Each of these conceptual approaches have not yet been used to investigate PPPs in sustainability and have not been used in the context of the Niger Delta. Together these approaches aim to answer calls in social science literature for a new approach to the analysis of global, market-inspired governance



methods that foregrounds power and processes within the institutions that enact these methods. This study therefore presents a range of novel perspectives on PPPs as a tool central to future global sustainability policy, developed from a context where this governance method is designed to be applied.

## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>CDB</b>    | Cluster Development Board                                   |
| <b>CDM</b>    | Clean Development Mechanism                                 |
| <b>COP</b>    | Conference of Parties                                       |
| <b>CSO</b>    | Civil Society Organisation                                  |
| <b>CPC</b>    | Carbon Plus Capital   |
| <b>CSR</b>    | Corporate Social Responsibility                             |
| <b>CSP</b>    | Cross-Sector Partnership                                    |
| <b>DFID</b>   | The UK Department For International Development             |
| <b>EDS</b>    | Eco Delta Services  |
| <b>EU</b>     | European Union  |
| <b>EC</b>     | European Commission   |
| <b>EU-ETS</b> | European Union Emissions Trading Scheme                     |
| <b>FMG</b>    | Federal Military Government                                 |
| <b>GDP</b>    | Gross Domestic Product                                      |
| <b>GMoU</b>   | General Memorandum of Understanding                         |
| <b>IIED</b>   | The International Institute for Environment and Development |
| <b>IOC</b>    | International Oil Company                                   |
| <b>IMF</b>    | International Monetary Fund                                 |
| <b>IOGP</b>   | Integrated Oil and Gas Gathering Project                    |
| <b>OPPG</b>   | Operation and Procedural Guidelines                         |
| <b>LEFUK</b>  | Living Earth Foundation, UK                                 |
| <b>LENF</b>   | Living Earth Nigeria Foundation                             |

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>LDC</b>     | Less Developed Country                                       |
| <b>MEND</b>    | Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta             |
| <b>MBIs</b>    | Market-Based Instruments                                     |
| <b>MoU</b>     | Memorandum of Understanding                                  |
| <b>NAPIMS</b>  | National Petroleum Investment Management Services            |
| <b>NDDC</b>    | Niger Delta Development Commission                           |
| <b>NDLCGI</b>  | Niger Delta Low Carbon Growth Initiative                     |
| <b>NDWC</b>    | Niger Delta Wetlands Centre                                  |
| <b>NGO</b>     | Non-Governmental Organisation                                |
| <b>NNF</b>     | New Nigeria Foundation                                       |
| <b>NNPC</b>    | Nigerian National Petroleum Company                          |
| <b>NOC</b>     | National Oil Company   |
| <b>NPC</b>     | Northern People's Congress                                   |
| <b>OMPADEC</b> | Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission           |
| <b>OPEC</b>    | The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries        |
| <b>PE</b>      | Political Ecology  |
| <b>PES</b>     | Payments for Ecosystem Services                              |
| <b>PHEDC</b>   | Port Harcourt Energy Distribution Company                    |
| <b>PPP</b>     | Public-Private Partnership                                   |
| <b>REDD+</b>   | Reducing Emissions From Deforestation and Forest Degradation |
| <b>RNC</b>     | Royal Niger Company  |
| <b>SACA</b>    | Stakeholders' Alliance for Corporate Responsibility          |
| <b>SDGs</b>    | Sustainable Development Goals                                |
| <b>SDN</b>     | Stakeholder Democracy Network                                |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>SSA</b>    | Sub-Saharan Africa  |
| <b>SPDC</b>   | Shell Petroleum Development Company                                     |
| <b>SUNGAS</b> | Sustainable Utilisation of Nigeria’s Gas and Renewable Energy Resources |
| <b>UN</b>     | United Nations  |
| <b>UNDP</b>   | United Nations Development Project                                      |
| <b>UNFCCC</b> | United Nations Convention on Climate Change                             |
| <b>UNEP</b>   | United Nations Environment Project                                      |

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Global Sustainability - The Problem

Societies globally are now entering a new geological epoch defined by human impact on the environment. The current transition into what has been termed The Anthropocene defines a point where human use of natural resources has begun to permanently alter the behaviour of Earth's ecological systems through activities that drastically alter the nitrogen and carbon cycles, the climate system, global biodiversity levels and the configurations of landscapes (Lewis and Maslin, 2015). A conscious component of these ecological systems, people are becoming more aware of the impacts of their activities on the planet at a global scale. However, the beginning of The Anthropocene also presents a paradox: as awareness of the impacts of human activities is increasing, people are also intensifying behaviours that produce these impacts.

Economies worldwide now depend ever more critically on rapid short-term growth, yet this growth relies on intensive exploitation of planetary resources such as fossil fuels. This current level of exploitation of resources is unsustainable from a purely anthropocentric perspective; although it supports the functioning of economies now, it severely threatens the ability of these economies to continue to function in the same way in the future. As the resources the environment provides to economies are depleted or disrupted, the underpinning of these economies is undermined (Behrens et al., 2007). Also, from a non-anthropocentric perspective, humans ostensibly have an intrinsic willingness and desire conserve the environment for conservation's sake, where possible (Sandler, 2012).

In addition, awareness is growing of the impacts of current systems of resource use on people. Global patterns of resource consumption continue to exploit violations of human rights, especially those in low and middle-income countries. Demonstrative examples can be found in the impacts of coltan extraction in central Africa (Nadira, 2007) or, as will be investigated in this thesis, oil extraction in Nigeria. The effects of global climate change, for example, will be far greater in low and middle-income countries, where livelihoods are more vulnerable (Hallegatte and Rozenberg, 2017). The disruption of environmental conditions is linked to the disruption of livelihoods where people rely on ecosystems for livelihood support. The conservation of the environment in the Anthropocene is therefore intertwined with the protection of the rights of people.

The term 'wicked problems' has been used to describe the complexity of these sustainability issues. Their human component comprises multiple actors with interdependencies, institutionalized beliefs, norms, rules and habits, linked to environmental processes though complex, multivariate and non-linear relationships (Grundmann, 2016; Defries and Nagendra, 2017). Solving these 'wicked problems' of sustainability issues is one of the most difficult yet crucial challenges of the 20th century. An increasing urgency to address these problems and prevent harm-



ful changes to social-ecological systems has spurred the development and deployment of novel solutions.

## **1.2. Global Sustainability - Proposed Solutions**

Two major guidelines for global action to address sustainability issues are the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2015 Paris Accord. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an overarching framework of targets and indicators against which nation-states can gauge progress on a range of sustainability issues. The 2015 Paris Accord was a landmark agreement reached by the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to curb emissions and mitigate global warming, operating through voluntary pledges by member states to reduce emissions. Both of these frameworks outline requirements for rapid and radical changes to the use of resources globally (Sandler, 2012).

Logically, the most effective solution to meet the sustainability targets outlined by the SDGs and the Paris Accord is to rapidly curtail the human behaviour that is causing sustainability issues. However, there are major barriers to this solution. Capitalist economies become unstable when they do not grow, the majority of the world's economies are capitalist economies, and global growth would be threatened by any rapid regime change, risking crisis (Kallis, 2017). Furthermore, in modern liberal democratic political systems, pursuing policy that clearly presents significant short-term risks to the livelihoods of electorates is politically infeasible- a point demonstrated by the 2019 'gilets jaunes' protests in France against a carbon tax or the political-economic mechanisms behind the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Accord (Carattini et al., 2019). In the autocratic political regime of China, where energy consumption alone has outpaced economic growth since 2000, current policy still relies (to a degree) on economically empowering Chinese citizens, which means avoiding the potential of short-term threats to their livelihood security through a rapid economic regime change (Zhang, 2010).

In light of the above barriers to radical political and economic regime change, global policy faces a conundrum: How can global sustainability challenges be met whilst maintaining the functionality of current economic and political systems? One solution is to use policies that operate within the logic of existing economic and political regimes. In the majority of the world's economies, the governance solutions then available are those that comply with capitalist neoliberal ideologies.

Capitalist, neoliberal ideologies have proliferated through global economies over the last 50 years. Broadly, neoliberal principles involve a liberalisation of what is seen as individual economic behaviours through a retreat of government from regulation of the economy. This is done

within an institutional framework that supports the protection of private property rights and the functioning of free markets. These factors allow ‘market forces’ in the form of a collective entrepreneurial pursuit of self-interest to regulate economic systems, instead of governments (Harvey, 2007). This global proliferation of neoliberal ideology has also manifested in a proliferation of neoliberal ideals within sustainability governance. Globally, over the past 50 years, governments have eschewed centralised ‘command and control’ methods of regulation, such as direct taxes on populations, and instead opted for ‘market-based’ forms of governance of the private sector, based on the principle that the pursuit of self-interest within the arena of the market provides its own form of regulation (Gómez-Baggethun and Muradian, 2015). Neoliberal governance principles receive heavy criticism and debate within academia, particularly in respect to environmental regulation (Fletcher, Dressler, et al., 2016). Neoliberalism is seen by many as merely a bourgeois method of intensifying harmful economic activity and entrenching wealth inequalities (Harvey, 2007). Many academics decry using governance tools generated by capitalist and neoliberal principles to address problems that, in their view, are caused by those very principles (Spash, 2010). However, advocates of neoliberal sustainability methods (largely emanating from global multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the IMF) highlight that in light of short-term impracticalities of a major regime change, neoliberal governance tools are the best option available to address urgent global sustainability issues (Raco, 2005; Vatn, 2018).

Another, overarching argument supporting the use of neoliberal forms of governance in sustainability is that the private sector now exceeds the public sector in its capability to address sustainability problems. Concurrent to the proliferation of neoliberal modes of governance since the 1970s, governments have experienced a reduction in the financial resources they have available to address issues such as the provision of public services, regulation of the environment and, by extension, sustainability. This trend is particularly pronounced in many low and middle-income countries, where International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank measures have enforced neoliberal economic principles, resulting in disbandment of government bodies responsible for the regulation of social and environmental issues (Reed, 2013). A prevailing logic argues that if power and capacity to instigate change is measured through the amount of resources a sector controls, the power of the private sector far exceeds that of the public sector to instigate change—especially in low and middle-income countries (Scheyvens et al., 2016). Voices that propound this logic outline how most of the money in the world is held within the private sector (see figure 1.1 on page 5), and that through ‘engaging’ the private sector, more resources can be garnered to address challenges such as sustainability issues (Scheyvens et al., 2016).

A United Nations (UN) Global Compact White Paper, published in 2014 asserts that ‘A new paradigm in development thinking is recognizing the centrality of private enterprise in pursuit



**Figure 1.1.:** *Global Assets Held Within the Private Sector (Mahmoud-Mohieldin, 2017)*

of the sustainable development agenda' (UN, 2014) . This logic determines that the power to address global sustainability and associated wicked problems has moved away from the public sector and towards the private sector. Advocates within global policy-making circles also argue that in addition to controlling resources, the private sector is seen to have particular strengths to help deliver the SDGs, including, innovation, responsiveness, efficiency and provision of specific skills. Scheyvens et al. (2016, p372), outlines that following the millennium development goals “ one of the most significant shifts within the development of the SDGs has been the foregrounding of the private sector”.

### **1.3. Governance Tools and Strategies Available Within Current Political and Economic Systems**

Following the logic outlined above, governments globally are addressing sustainability targets set by the SDGs and the Paris Accord through neoliberal governance methods designed to engage and present incentives to the private sector through a range of governance strategies.

For example, Market-Based Instruments (MBIs) have been developed as governance tool and utilised to address regulation challenges in a range of contexts. A prolific example of an MBI in implementation is the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS) - a 'cap

and trade' system of emissions reduction designed to reduce industrial CO<sub>2</sub> emissions across Europe (Spash, 2010). Other examples include the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), a market-driven governance policy specifically targeting industries in low and middle-income countries (UNFCCC, 2012), or Reducing Emissions From Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), a UN policy mechanism directed at low and middle-income countries designed to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through deforestation (Fletcher, Dressler, et al., 2016).

### **Public Private Partnerships as a Governance Strategy**

Another example of a governance tool, or strategy, which is advocated within global policy-making circles is Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). PPP is a broad term which refers to a cooperative arrangement between two or more public and private organisations, to address work towards a common target (Jamali, 2004). Within global environmental and sustainability governance there has been recent a shift away from the use of solely public funds, towards the use of PPPs (Scheyvens et al., 2016). The emergence of this shift can be traced back to the 1992 Earth Summit, where Agenda 21 called for a “Global Partnership for Sustainable Development” and alluded to “public, private and community sectors” to boost the implementation of a global sustainability agenda (UN, 1992). More recently, in 2012, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio 20), the central role of PPPs was emphasized in the outcome document: “The Future We Want” (Pattberg, Biermann, et al., 2012). The narrative continued at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa in 2014, where ‘partnership’ was mentioned 28 times in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, after which the UN secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, stated that the results of the conference ‘give us the foundation of a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development’ (Scheyvens et al., 2016, p.278). The engagement of the private sector through PPPs is therefore currently seen as a central tool required to meet global sustainability targets, advocated at the global, policy-making level as a method to solve ‘wicked problems’ in sustainability.

### **PPPs in Implementation in Low and Middle-Income Countries**

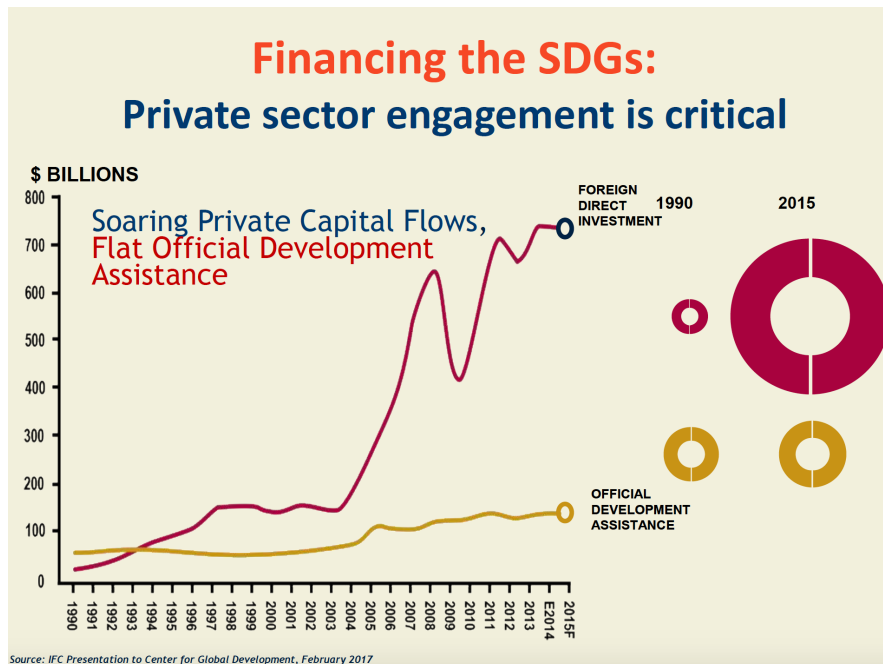
However, to be effective, the ideas created and circulated in international policy-making arenas need to be transferred into practice. Accordingly, it is important to consider the relationship between the advocacy of PPPs as a strategy of sustainability governance and the implementation of this strategy ‘on the ground’ .

An element of the rhetoric surrounding the use of PPPs to meet sustainability challenges is an emphasis in global policymaking discourses of the need for PPPs to address sustainability issues in low and middle-income countries. For example, in the outcomes of the 2012 United Nations

Conference on Sustainable Development, the use of PPPs is in low and middle-income countries is emphasised (UN, 2012) and paragraph 280d of the Rio Agenda strongly stresses the promotion of PPPs, in particular in 'less developed countries' (UNDESA, 2015). Wider examples of this trend include SDG goal 17, which advocates 'partnerships for the goals'. The UN describes on a website for SDG 17 that, "In developing countries, especially in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) and other vulnerable economies, public finances are central to investment in the Sustainable Development Goals. However, they cannot meet all Sustainable Development Goal-implied resource demands. The role of private sector investment will be indispensable." (UN, 2019). Jamali (2004) outlines mechanisms whereby international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF have linked the provision of financial assistance to low and middle-income countries with directions to governments to reduce direct involvement in sustainability governance and increase engagement with the private sector. With concepts of economic adjustment, privatisation and deregulation, PPPs have, therefore "evolved as a central component of foreign policy toward developing countries" (Jamali, 2004, p.415).

The major MBIs in global sustainability governance outlined above also have a bias towards low and middle-income countries. The CDM, for example, is specifically targeted at low and middle-income countries designed to transform energy use and reduce emissions by providing incentives to the private sector (UNFCCC, 2019). REDD+ is also targeted at low and middle-income countries. Recent analyses of the programme have outlined how, although it currently operates using public financing, it will require significant private sector financing to survive into the future (Dixon and Challies, 2015; Norman and Nakhlooda, 2015; Fletcher, Dressler, et al., 2016).

There are several elements to the logic behind this push for engagement with the private sector in sustainability governance in low and middle-income countries. A first notion that is rather outdated in academic circles but pervasive within some policymaking circles is that action on sustainability is more cost-effective in poorer countries. This is a view well demonstrated by the 2006 Stern Report, *The Economics of Climate Change* (Stern, 2006), which summarised a controversial idea that rich countries could more cost-effectively offset their emissions reductions in poorer countries (Spash, 2010). Another element of this logic is the notion that in low and middle-income country contexts, 'weak' governments lack the 'capacity' to carry out responsibilities such as the regulation of sustainability, and engagement with the private sector can, therefore, increase the capacity of governments to govern (Asaduzzaman et al., 2016). Finally, in low and middle-income countries, the private sector is seen to exercise superior control of resources compared to other sectors. Representatives in global policy-making circles argue that in low and middle-income countries, these resources need to be utilised to finance efforts to meet sustainability targets (see figure 1.2).



**Figure 1.2.:** Official Development Assistance and Private Capital Flows (Mahmoud-Mohieldin, 2017).

### 1.3.1. PPPs in Global Sustainability Governance - Knowledge Gaps

Amidst the heavy rhetoric advocating PPPs in sustainability, there are some significant omissions of details regarding PPP implementation. I was able to observe this gap when, as a researcher, I visited the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) 21 in 2015, during the process of the negotiation of the Paris Climate Accord, where delegates from around the world were hosting public panel discussions on all aspects of climate change mitigation and adaptation. In a majority of these discussions, panellists explained the importance of using PPPs to reducing emissions, especially in developing country contexts. However, none of these panellists used examples, explained methods of implementation or described *how* PPPs can be implemented. I became aware of a significant gap between an abstract yet unrelenting advocacy of PPPs and any grounded empirical knowledge to support this advocacy. This gap, as will be demonstrated in chapter three, also pervades the literature that concerns PPPs in sustainability. Many studies detail the centrality of PPPs within a global sustainability agenda yet very few detail empirical findings that can justify this advocacy (Scheyvens et al., 2016). This knowledge gap is especially

relevant in respect to the rhetoric surrounding PPPs in sustainability in low and middle-income contexts. Despite widespread calls for the use of PPPs there are very few studies that use empirical examples of the implementation of PPPs in sustainability in these contexts (Jamali, 2004; Aniche, 2015; Idemudia, 2017).

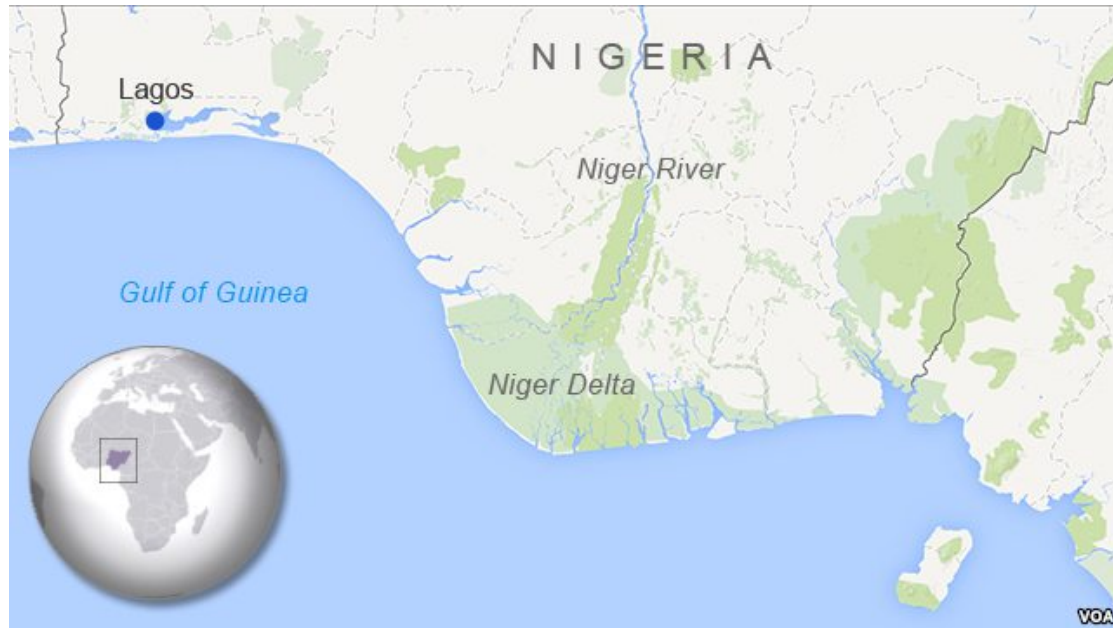
Given the strong rhetoric for PPPs as a global governance method to meet sustainability targets, applied pressure on governments and organisations to act upon this rhetoric and finally an increasing urgency to meet sustainability targets, there is clear a need to address these knowledge gaps. There is a gap in the literature for studies that use empirical examples of PPPs implemented in sustainability and a wider gap for studies that consider empirical examples of the implementation of PPPs in sustainability low and middle-income country contexts. The Niger Delta, the region in which this study focusses, presents an ideal context within which these gaps can be addressed.

#### **1.4. An Introduction to Nigeria and The Niger Delta**

So far this chapter has introduced global patterns of resource use as drivers of sustainability issues, PPPs as an advocated solution to these issues and low and middle income countries as advocated contexts for PPP implementation. The chapter also outlined how the impact of global resource use patterns is greater in low and middle-income country contexts, and that in these contexts the private sector is seen to command superior access to resources, supporting the logic of PPPs as a governance strategy. Based on this logic, The Niger Delta is an ideal context for the implementation of PPPs.

##### **The Niger Delta and a History of Wealth**

The Niger Delta region, (see figure 1.3, page 10) is historically one of the most resource-rich areas of the planet. It was geologically formed as sedimentary deposits over high-pressured carbonaceous shales that now hold vast reserves of hydrocarbons (Tuttle et al., 1999). Over history the geography of the region formed into as a dense network of silt-rich distributary creeks, mangrove swamps and tropical forests- a region containing some of the world's highest levels of biodiversity (Mmom and Arokoyu, 2010). At the same time, the region developed into an area of exceptional of human diversity, with some of the highest levels of population density and ethnic variation in Africa (Orogun, 2010). Resources began to flow out of the Delta as global maritime trade developed out of Europe. First, exports took the form of human resources, as slaves were exported across the Atlantic from the 16th to the 18th centuries. After the slave trade ceased in 1807, agricultural resources began to flow from the Delta, in the form of palm oil, which became the region's major export throughout the 19th century. Towards the second half



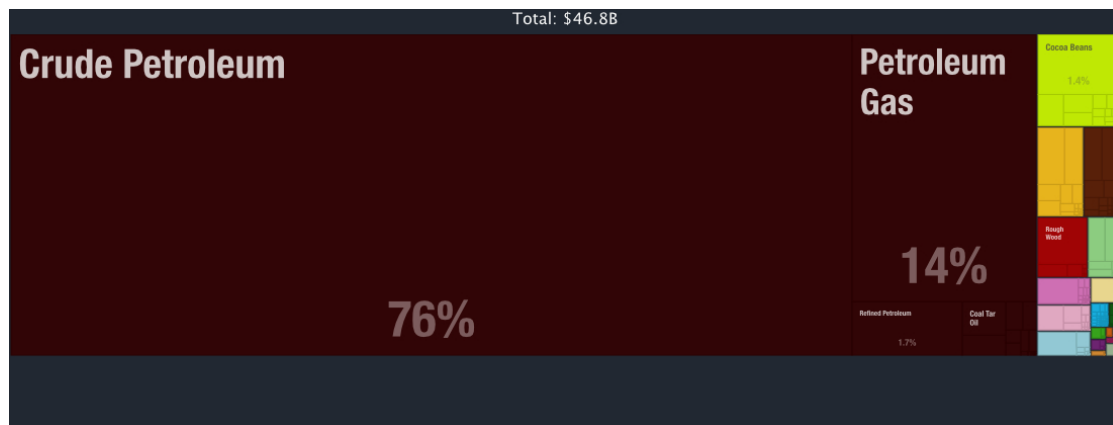
**Figure 1.3.:** *The Location of The Niger Delta*

of the 20th century, this trade was eclipsed as the region became the source of another globally prized commodity: fossilised energy. Since the 1960s oil and gas has been extracted from the region and consumed globally at an increasing intensity (Omeje, 2006c).

### **Modern Resource Extraction And Wealth in Nigeria**

The resources now exported from the Delta make the modern sovereign state of Nigeria the largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa, exporting on average of 1.6 million barrels a day in 2018 (OPEC, 2019). Before a collapse in oil prices in 2015, the region was exporting more oil to the US than Saudi Arabia. These oil and gas exports have brought immense wealth to Nigeria; from the 1960s to present roughly one trillion dollars in aggregate has flowed into the Nigerian exchequer as a result of oil production providing about 72 per cent of government budgetary revenues, with the petroleum sector comprising more than 40 per cent of GDP, and more than 94 per cent of exports (see figure 1.4, page 11) (Watts, 2017).





**Figure 1.4:** Exports from Nigeria (OEC, 2019)

Dubbed ‘the giant of Africa’, Nigeria became the largest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) after its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was re-based (and doubled in size) in 2104 (Jerven, 2013). Nigeria’s economy is still growing, posting an average economic growth rate of 7–8 per cent in the decade up to 2017 (Watts, 2017), with a slower aggregate growth rate in the years since 2016, due to a collapse in oil prices and a period of recession (World Bank, 2019).

### The ‘Paradox of Plenty’

Despite vast proceeds accrued from the export of resource wealth, the financial resources it generates are not well distributed within Nigeria. 85 per cent of oil revenues accrue to 1 per cent of the population, mostly an urban business and civil service elite (Watts, 2017). Much of this wealth seems to disappear. According to former World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, at least \$100 billion of the \$600 billion in oil revenues accrued since 1960 have simply ‘gone missing’ and it is estimated that \$130 billion was lost in capital flight between 1970 and 1996 (Watts, 2012). This poor distribution of funds impacts the lives of the general population. Between 1970 and 2000, the number of people subsisting on less than one dollar a day in Nigeria grew from 36 per cent to more than 70 per cent, from 19 million to 90 million (Watts, 2017). The World Bank estimated that per capita GDP in purchasing power parity terms fell 40 per cent from \$1215 in 1980 to \$706 in 2000. Income poverty rose from 28.1 per cent to 65.5 per cent and other indicators of welfare declined. Between 2004 and 2010, the number of millionaires

in Nigeria increased by 44 per cent (Watts, 2017). This lack of distribution of wealth leads to the characterisation of Nigeria as the epitome of the 'resource curse' or the 'paradox of plenty', whereby a wealth in natural resources does not correlate with expected levels of socio-economic development (Ross, 2015).

### **The Niger Delta's Loss of Wealth**

If Nigeria epitomises the resource curse thesis as a country, the Niger Delta does so as a region. Although the majority of the resources that produce Nigeria's wealth are extracted from in the Delta, the region experiences pervasive levels of poverty and environmental degradation. A landmark United Nations Development Project (UNDP) report (UNDP, 2006) on socio-economic development in the Delta was unflinching in its assessment of the region's social and environmental conditions, stating that the "appalling development situation" it found showed that after half a century of oil and gas exploitation, "the vast resources from an international industry have barely touched pervasive local poverty". Any recent socio-economic assessments of the region echo the findings of this report, consistently showing increasing rates of poverty alongside accelerating levels of environmental degradation (Adekola, Fischbacher-Smith, et al., 2017).

### **The Niger Delta: A Context for PPPs**

The Niger Delta is, therefore, a region that demonstrates a superlative wealth, power and capability of the private sector alongside an urgent need for action to protect the environment, facilitate social-economic development and address issues of sustainability. In the form of the multiple International Oil Companies (IOCs) working in the region, The Niger Delta possesses some of the most concentrated levels of private sector wealth on the planet. At the same time, increasing levels of poverty and increasing levels of environmental degradation, along with a government that is struggling to deliver public services, point to a requirement for new methods of governance in sustainability. If PPPs are an indispensable method of addressing global sustainability issues, the Niger Delta is a perfect location for the implementation of PPPs in sustainability.

## **1.5. Research Aims**

This research aims to address a lacuna within information available on the implementation of PPPs as a method of meeting global sustainability targets, using case studies from the context of Nigeria. It aims to interrogate the rhetoric of multilateral governance institutions outlined in this chapter to consider in-depth and real-world cases of PPP implementation to address sustainability issues in The Niger Delta. To address this research aim, the next chapter details the search for

conceptual frameworks to address the empirical data collected. Throughout the chapter an overall framework for the thesis is developed, followed by the presentation of appropriate research questions.

# 2

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION POLITICS IN THE NIGER DELTA**

## **Abstract**

This chapter presents the political context of the Niger Delta as a background to the empirical chapters of this thesis. It presents a brief history of politics surrounding resource extraction in the Niger Delta, in respect to three waves of globalisation: slavery, palm oil and hydrocarbons. It presents the main features of these three waves of resource extraction in respect to the political arrangements that surrounded them and the political changes they produced. The modern configuration of resource extraction in the Delta is outlined, along with several patterns that can be drawn between previous waves of resource extraction and the current political configuration of resource extraction in Nigeria and the Delta. Several relevant interpretations of current configurations of resource extraction: the resource curse, resource enclave and resource frontier literatures, are presented, but are shown to be limited in their ability to address explanatory processes behind the modern politics of resource extraction in the Delta. The chapter finishes by presenting research gaps and a context for the empirical chapters that follow.

## **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter aims to present a brief exploration of the history of The Niger Delta as a background context to the three empirical chapters and to the choice of the theoretical frameworks of each empirical chapter. The history of the region is rich and complex, and there are numerous angles from which it can be explored. As an in-depth historical analysis is not possible within the scope of this study, the chapter will aim to approach this history using a specific framing of the politics surrounding resource extraction. There are several reasons for choosing this framing. First, sustainability issues surround patterns of resource extraction and consumption and exploring these patterns can help understand sustainability issues. Also, the present political configuration of the private sector and the majority of the economy in the Niger Delta and Nigeria is based on the extraction and export of resources. Next, part of the logic of PPPs in sustainability, outlined in the previous chapter, is that the private sector controls financial resources which need to be accessed to meet sustainability targets. Exploring a history of resource extraction can help understand a modern context of resource and wealth control, and the context in which PPPs can be implemented. Finally, a theme of resources, in various forms, is one that occurs throughout the empirical analysis of the thesis. Therefore, to introduce the context of the Niger Delta and Nigeria, whilst retaining a conceptual focus, the chapter will present a brief history of the Niger Delta from the perspective of resource extraction and the politics that surround it.

### **A History of Resource Extraction**

In recent centuries, the political organisation of civilisation in the Delta has been significantly altered by successive waves of globalisation, beginning with the arrival and then proliferation of the transatlantic slave trade, followed by the palm oil trade, followed by the oil and gas trade. This chapter will focus on these three waves of globalisation. Through this framing it aims to present some of the political arrangements that produced and were produced by successive waves of resource extraction at differing scales, leading to the present configuration of resource extraction in the Delta and the political configuration of modern Nigeria. Colonisation by the British empire was of course a point in history where the political configuration of the region transitioned markedly, redefining territory, sovereignty, regional power structures and political relationships. However, many accounts of colonial history are told through a Eurocentric lens. By putting resource politics at the centre of analysis the chapter aims to focus on the themes present within this thesis but aims to avoid (as much as possible) a Eurocentric account of the region's history.

## **Chapter Structure**

The chapter will begin with some notes on the ancient Niger Delta before interactions with global trading networks, with a focus on resource distribution and political configurations. The next sections then consider resource extraction in the Niger Delta through the three waves of globalisation outlined above and detail how they reshaped institutional arrangements in the Niger Delta but also the wider region of modern Nigeria. It considers how political relations in the region were reconfigured across space by these three waves of resource extraction. The final section of the chapter will outline the challenges to understanding the modern Niger Delta as a region dominated by industries extracting petroleum resources. It is within this modern context that the three empirical chapters are embedded. This chapter will then finish by presenting some of the main ways in which this context is described in various forms of literature, and the gaps in where this literature fails to explain modern resource extraction and politics. This sets a framework that allows the following chapter to outline the theoretical perspectives and associated areas of literature that will be drawn upon to compose the main analysis.

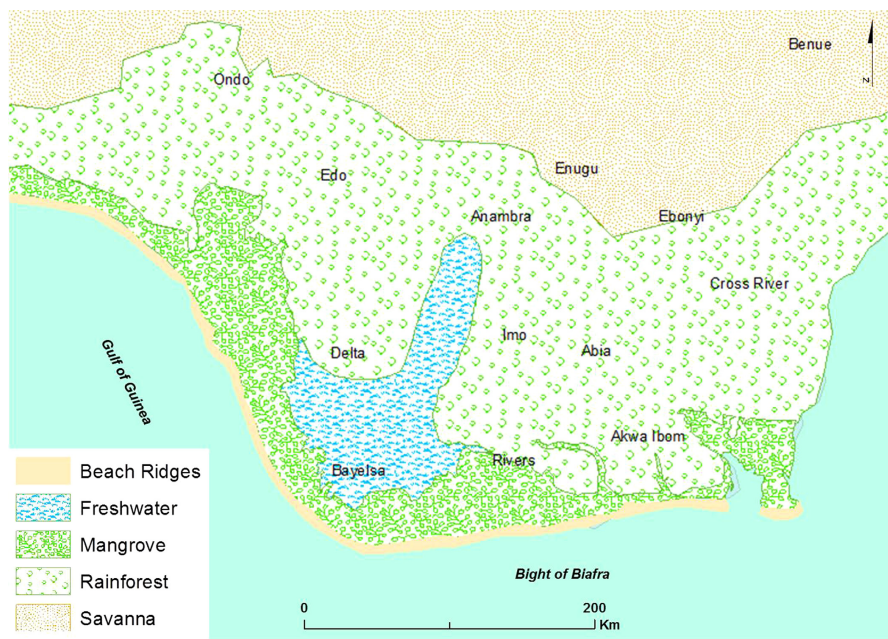
## **2.2. The Formation of The Niger Delta Region**

The Niger Delta is situated on the West African continental margin, at the apex of the Gulf of Guinea, on two boundary faults of the Cretaceous Benue-Abakaliki trough (Tuttle et al., 1999). Since its formation, the Delta has been fed by the Niger, Benue and Cross rivers, which between them now drain more than 106km<sup>2</sup> of continental lowland savannah (Doust, 1990). Over history, these rivers entrenched the West African continental shelf to reach mouths above submarine canyons at the shelf edge, where silt deposits created several stratigraphic layers. A formation known as the Akata formation consists of high-pressured carbonaceous shales and is the layer of stratification that has formed the major oil deposits which are extracted today (Tuttle et al., 1999).

Through millions of years of sediment deposition, the Niger Delta has formed into one of the largest regressive deltas in the world, comparable in scale to the Amazon or Mekong Deltas (Watts, 2017). The Delta covers an area of some 300,000<sup>2</sup>, a sediment volume of 500,000 km<sup>3</sup>, and sediment thickness of over 10 km at its deepest points (Tuttle et al., 1999). Within the deltaic flood plains, the River Niger splits into six major tidal channels and innumerable smaller outlets. These processes have resulted in the formation of a complex and fragile Delta system, rich biodiversity.

The Delta can be roughly categorized into four ecological sub-zones: coastal barrier Islands, mangrove, freshwater swamp forest and the lowland rainforest, the mangrove being largest and dominant eco-sub zone (see figure 2.1, page 18) (M. Ubom, 2010).

The Delta environment is highly heterogeneous at both local and regional scales. Over 50% of the delta is water, accounting for around 55% of all freshwater swamps in Nigeria. The wetlands of the Delta have had a vital role in providing food, water and livelihood security to people living around them. Internationally they are recognised for their exceptional levels of biodiversity, most recently have begun to be recognised internationally for their exceptional role in sequestering atmospheric carbon (Adekola and Mitchell, 2011). The Delta is considered a biodiversity hotspot, containing several IUCN ‘Red List’ species (Tonkin et al., 2016). It was included in a list of ‘biodiversity hotspots’ of the planet making it one of the most critical areas of the planet for biodiversity conservation (Myers et al., 2000).



**Figure 2.1.:** *The ecological zones of The Delta*

The region is also highly ethnically diverse. The floodplain of the Niger Delta is now home to some seven million people, grouped into numerous distinct ethnic groups speaking 250 languages and dialects (Watts, 2017). The major groups include the Ijo, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Isoko, Efik, Etche, Ibibio, Igbo, Andoni, Ikwere, Ogoni, Isoko, Edo and Kwale-Igbo. These groups, however, are further sub-divided into clans or distinct linguistic ethno-nationalities. For example, among the Ijaw are subgroups such as the Nembe-Brass, Ogbia, Kalabari, Okrika, Ibani, and



Andoni clans. Among the Igbo are sub-groupings such as the Ikwerre, Ekpeye, Ndoni, Etche, Ndoki and the Ogba-Egbema. Other ethnic groups who are indigenes of the Niger Delta include the Annang, the Efik-Ibibio, and the Oron, the Eket, the Ekoi and the Ogoja people (Orogun, 2010).

There are around 13 300 settlements in the Niger Delta region, 95 per cent of which have less than 5000 inhabitants. In the riverine areas, most people live in dispersed clusters and compounds housing 100 to 500 people and only accessible through the mazes of creeks and distributaries that comprise the wetlands. Around 90 per cent of rural Niger Deltans subsist below the \$2 per day poverty line and depend upon aquatic resources, farming and trading to support their livelihoods. The population continues to grow very rapidly, around 3.1 per cent per year and is projected to reach over 45 million by 2020 (Watts, 2017).

### **2.3. Ancient Civilisation in Nigeria and the Niger Delta**

(See page 20)

# THE BIGHT OF BIAFRA AND ITS HINTERLAND

0 25 50 75 100 km  
Scale 1:2 800 000

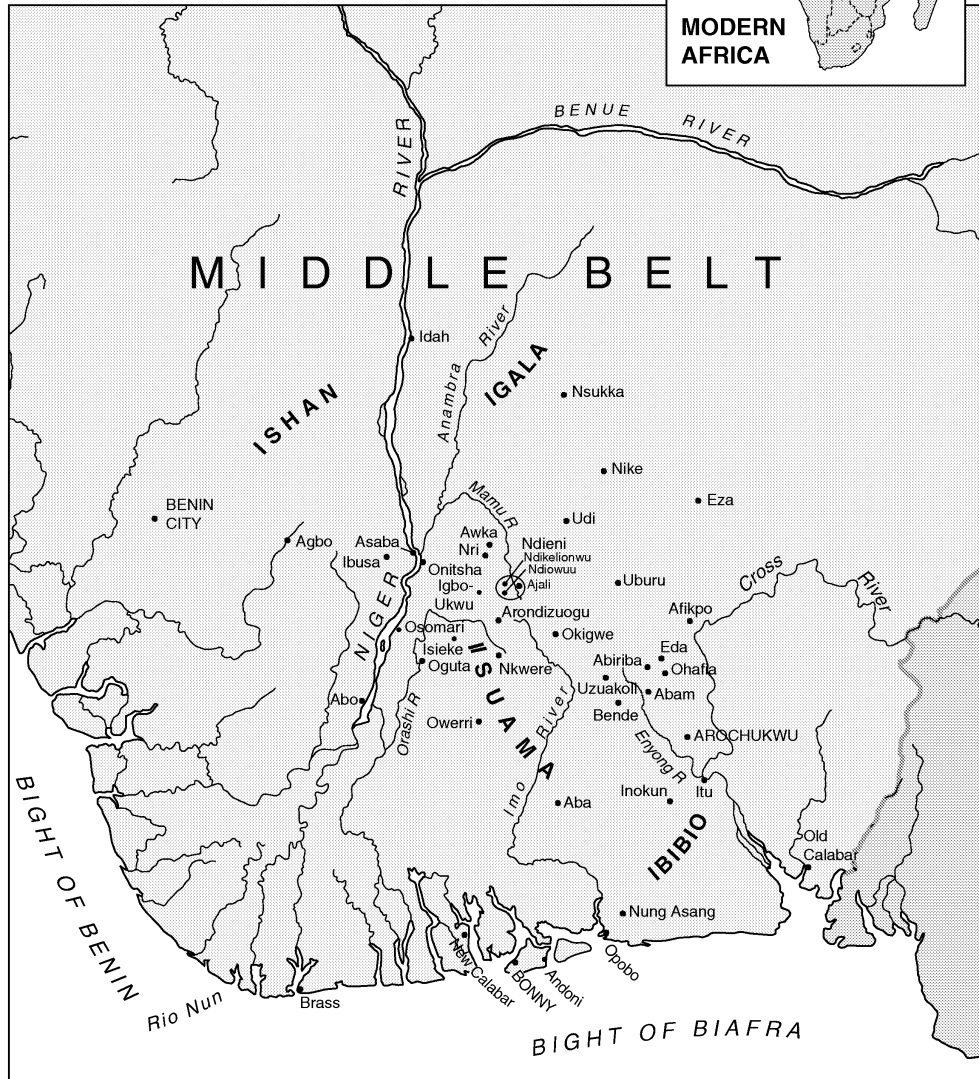


Figure 2.2.: The Bight of Biafra and its hinterland (Nwokeji, 2010a).

A political history of the Niger Delta is incomplete without a history of the region before the arrival of European traders. However, accounts of a social history of the Niger Delta region preceding the arrival of European traders in the 14th and 15th centuries are rare, with most histories starting at this point. This Eurocentric history is what (Wolf, 2010) describes as a view of ancient societies in non-European parts of the world as accounts of “people without history”. Scholarship has fairly recently begun to develop a less Eurocentric focus and illuminate the rich histories of non-European regions of the world, including Nigeria, which is explored in this section.

### **Early Societal Formations**

The archaeological evidence that does exist in Nigeria suggests that complex human civilisation had been present in the region of West Africa several thousand years before the arrival of European traders. Humans must have lived in the region well before this time, although due to a lack of evidence, there is some debate within archaeology regarding precise time-scales of their arrival (Agai, 2014). Early stone tools have been found in the Jos- Plateau, Afikpo in Imo, Iwo Eleru in Ondo, and Mejiro in Old Oyo state. Some writers of Nigerian history posit that these tools are the same as early stone tools found in the Olduvai George in Tanzania (Agai, 2014). If this assertion is correct the evidence suggests that stone tools in the modern-day region of Nigeria may have been in use as long as two million years ago (Ikime, 1980).

The earliest dated known human remains found in the region of the Niger Delta have been dated to around 9000BCE- a significant stage in the political development of the region. At this time, in suitable areas, using stone technologies, crops were domesticated, and agriculture was developed. This changing use of technologies signified a shift in lifestyle and resource use from nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyles to those based in permanent settlements. The political arrangements of societies the region at this point in history have been termed as ‘stateless’ by early scholars due to their high level of fragmentation. However, this idea is misleading, as it implies a lack of order. The societies that existed at this time were in no way anarchistic; they displayed forms of order through organisation around agriculture, that likely extended to the village level but not beyond this (Falola and Heaton, 2008b).

A shift to permanent settlements developed from 9000BCE, in tandem with diversification of local economies, including the beginnings of iron workings. The earliest evidence of iron smelting in the region of modern Nigeria has been found in areas associated with the Nok culture, centred in the now north-west area of modern Nigeria, dating to between the 800 and 500BCE. More generally, smelting works have been found across the region that is now modern Nigeria, extending as far south towards the Delta as Opi, in the South East, where smelting works date to 160CE (Shaw et al., 1993). There is no evidence of smelting occurring within the swamp regions

of the Niger Delta. However, the town of Akwa, north of the Niger Delta Region, which became famous for metallurgy, appears to have supplied these regions with iron objects, as these objects have been found across the modern-day Niger Delta. It is believed that travelling metalsmiths traded metalworks with groups in the Delta region (Neaher, 1976).

These developments in the region of modern Nigeria are unusual in world history as they involve a societal transition directly from an iron age to a stone age without an intervening bronze or copper age, when in other parts of the world, societies generally transitioned through a period working with softer metals. Moreover, techniques used to work iron were superior to those used in other parts of the world, leading some scholars to propose that the region may have discovered iron metallurgy autonomously (Killick, 2015).

The significance of the above evidence is its demonstration that around the beginning of the common era, the region of modern-day Nigeria, and the Niger Delta, had developed autonomous and complex societal structures. For example, the use of metal technology required 'guilds' of metalsmiths that held a central role in societies, possibly indicating class structures (Falola and Heaton, 2008b). To support the livelihoods of these metalsmiths, societies required political economies that could mobilise agricultural resources to support people who were not practising agriculture.

From this period until the 15th century, some areas of the region of modern Nigeria became more politically centralised, leading to the established kingdoms of centred on Ile-Ife and Benin in the southwestern part of the region, Kanem-Borno in the Lake Chad region of the Sahel in the north-east, and the various Hausa states in the north-central savannas. (Falola and Heaton, 2008b). Meanwhile, the Niger Delta region remained relatively decentralised. An example of this decentralised arrangement of governance that persisted until the arrival of the slave trade can be found in the ethnic groups of the Igbo in the South-Eastern region of modern-day Nigeria. Igbo village groups displayed varying governance institutions in respect to arrangements of power but adopted similar monarchical characteristics from neighbouring centralised states. Governance arrangements varied between villages, but these villages were all considered Igbo, due to practices such as intermarrying, sharing a common language and similar patterns of oracle worship (Afigbo, 1971).

Whilst the regions of modern Nigeria developed independently, from early stages of development they were connected through the trade of resources. Skilled migration flowed into various cities from surrounding regions and people also migrated across societal boundaries through intermarriage, displacement through war, and the indigenous slave trade. Cities became famous for their art, which was traded throughout the region. Iron tools and artefacts were distributed across the region, even in palaces where there was no smelting, such as the Niger Delta. The maintenance of trade routes to facilitate resource trade was an inter-societal task, requiring clear-

ance of brush and the provision of security, among other activities to make trade possible (Falola and Heaton, 2008b).

For many years scholars saw state formation in Africa as an inherently European process, assuming that any sophisticated political, economic, or social institutions in Africa were the result of intervention by outsiders. This idea has been dubbed the “Hamatic Thesis” (Falola and Heaton, 2008b, p.37). Similar notions are also described by Killick (2015, p.316), who notes how understandings are slowly moving away an image of a “stagnant pre-colonial Africa- a subcontinent without a history” - an understanding he terms the “Trevor Roper Trap”, after the historian Hugh Trevor- Roper, who famously dismissed pre-colonial African history as ‘the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe’ (Trevor-Roper, 1966, p.9). The Trevor Roper Trap and the Hematic Thesis are now understood as false in many academic circles, but Falola and Heaton (2008b) and Killick (2015) emphasise that their notions are still invoked by politicians and business journalists, and still relatively pervasive in some areas of public thought.

The above evidence has aimed to illustrate briefly the diversity, complexity, relative wealth and success of political economies in the region of modern-day Nigeria before the onset of interactions with Europeans. Until 14000 CE the region now known as Nigeria can be seen as a constellation of independent nation-states, which varied in size and political complexity from several large centralised states and hundreds of smaller decentralised states. These states were independent but also interdependently connected by the trade of resources. Over the course of 500 years, however, this arrangement would be completely reconfigured by several waves of resource exploitation and with it colonial occupation, culminating in the globalised hydrocarbon trade that exists today. The first of these waves was the transatlantic slave trade, which began in 1400-1500 CE.

## **2.4. Phase One: The Transatlantic Slave Trade**

Before the first arrival of Europeans to West African shores, the institution of slavery existed indigenously in African societies. Unlike the institution that developed within North American society, slavery was an indigenous component of West African societies that was not a defining feature of those societies. Indigenous slavery served as a supplement to labour, rather than a replacement for it. Slaves were often originally outcasts of communities; having committed a form of crime or social misdemeanour, they were moved to other communities to become slaves. Slaves tended to be assimilated into adopting societies and performed tasks similar to the ones performed by free men and women. They had the opportunity to trade independently and become wealthy, to acquire slaves themselves and to gain independence. Accordingly, before

European interaction, West African regions did not use systems of incarceration, unlike many other parts of the world at the time (Falola and Heaton, 2008b; Dike, 1956b) <sup>1</sup>.

It was this indigenous institution that was captured and then modified and exploited by transatlantic slave traders, starting in the 15th century. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive on the west African coast, establishing a trading post with the Benin kingdom by 1480. Slaves did not become central to transatlantic trade however until the advent of plantation labour in the the North America in the 16th century, with the slave trade intensifying in West Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries (Falola and Heaton, 2008b).

In the 17th century the Dutch and English began to replace the Portugese as dominant trading partners, when the sale of slaves began to become lucrative. Two main centres for trade with Europeans emerged on the coastal areas. These were located in the West, in the Bight of Benin and in the East, in the Bight of Biafra (see figure 2.2 on page 20). In both the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra, communities around the coast began to become organised towards selling slaves, although how the transatlantic slave trade influenced societies in the two regions differed. In the Bight of Benin, centralised states such as Dahomey and Oyo had developed, and these states each attempted to control the slave trade in the Bight of Benin throughout the eighteenth century. This resulted in frequent wars and political instability.

In the Bight of Biafra however, no centralised states dominated the slave trade. Because of a lack of domination by centralised states, societies in the Bight of Biafra, therefore, maintained their decentralized political structures. As a result, the slave trade tended to revolve around local interests, without drastically changing the political functioning of societies existing away from coastal trading areas. In the hinterlands, wars and raids were used to capture slaves; however kidnappings, the enslavement of criminals through judiciary ruling, and the religious decree of a religious oracle called Arochukwu were the most common methods slave supplies (Nwokeji, 2010b; Dike, 1956b). Slaves were procured mostly in these hinterlands, from where they were sold down the river Niger to slave traders in Bonny or Elem Kalabari, or down the Cross River to Calabar. Slave traders in the ports then sold the slaves to Europeans on the coast (Falola and Heaton, 2008g).

The overarching effect of the transatlantic slave system around this time was that slavery was transformed into an institution that existed in enclaves on the coast of the modern-day region of Nigeria (Lovejoy and Lovejoy, 2012; Falola and Heaton, 2008b). The most significant influence of the industry was propagated through trading posts used by European traders. The location of these posts determined which Ethnic groups became intermediaries between procurement in the hinterland and selling to European traders. In the eastern Niger Delta, the Efik of Old Calabar and the Ijaw of Bonny, Kalabari, Nembe, and Opobo came to dominate the trade and exploited

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed insight into the customs of the indigenous practices of slavery, see Dike (1956b, p. 36)

the Ekoi, Ibibio, and Igbo hinterlands areas to procure slaves (Ukiwo, 2007).

As (Dike, 1956b, p. 20) describes, the rise of the Delta states around this point in history must be attributed to the development of maritime commerce. The nascent 'seaboard trading communities', 'transcended tribal boundaries'... creating a history that belongs to an Atlantic and tribal history. As Dike (1956b, p. 20) notes:

Every item of the export trade in the ports of Biafra was a product of the tribal interior and the carrying-trade on which the prosperity and greatness of the Delta states rested linked their fortunes decisively with those of producers in tribal locations.

Each of the coastal communities that grew within the Delta states was different in language and culture and political organisation. "The Jekris of Warri could not understand the Ijaws on the Brass River. Migrants represented many different tribes in movement: "Ibos, Binis, semi-bantus from the Cameroons Highlands, Ijaws, Ekifis, Ibobos... to name a few." This haphazard mix of differing tribal identities, meshed through organisation around maritime commerce, represents the way in which identity can be a fluid component of the resource pursuit of resources and the construction of institutions around this pursuit.

In coastal areas the growth in the power, prestige, and wealth of slave traders in the Bight of Biafra resulted in a reorientation of power away from traditional political and religious authorities in favour of new forms of social organization centred on protecting the commercial interests of the slave trade, in which royal lineages were certainly involved but not necessarily in control (Falola and Heaton, 2008g). Generally, the effects of the slave trade on the political functioning of societies were limited away from coastal areas, but the rise of this new commodity did empower 'middlemen' around coastal areas, who profited off their access to commodity flows from the mainland.

The British abolished the slave trade in 1807. While this did not initially affect the volume of the slave traffic out of the Bights to any great extent, British naval security on the coasts and a decrease in demand for slaves in the Americas reduced the transatlantic slave trade to negligible levels by 1850. In its place, the British promoted what they called "legitimate commerce," by which they meant to trade in non-human commodities, such as gold or agricultural products. Palm oil and, later, palm kernels became by far the most important commodities traded in the southern Nigerian area by the 1840s (Falola and Heaton, 2008f).

## **2.5. Phase Two: The Shift to Palm Oil and ‘Legitimate’ Trade**

### **Palm Oil and its Uses**

Palm oil is made from the fruit of the oil palm tree which is indigenous to western and central Africa. The southern, forested region of southern Nigeria was naturally home to the largest and densest accumulation of oil palms in the world. Palm oil was a staple product in the region for many centuries and was internally traded within the region of modern-day Nigeria before the arrival of Europeans in West Africa. The palm oil trade then existed alongside the transatlantic slave trade, as Europeans used palm fruits to feed their cargo on the voyage to the Americas (Falola and Heaton, 2008f). From the late 18th century, however, British merchants transported increasing amounts of palm oil directly to the United Kingdom, where the commodity was becoming valuable in the manufacture of candles, soap, and industrial lubricants (Berger, 2003). In 1815, only eight years after the abolition of the slave trade, Britain imported over 2,000 tons of palm oil from West Africa. Of this, 1,200 tons came from Old Calabar on the Bight of Benin (Falola and Heaton, 2008f).

Throughout the 19th century, most of the palm products exported to the United Kingdom came from the Bight of Biafra. The region was by far the most productive for palm oil exports, as its hinterland held the densest population of oil palms in all of West Africa. Palm oil provided much lower local barriers to production in the Niger Delta than the slave trade, as palm trees are indigenous to the local area. Smallholders only had to nurture young trees for them to produce fruit that could be sold to traders- although the harvesting of this fruit required labour. By the 1840s Bonny had outstripped Old Calabar as the largest exporter of palm oil. Combined, these two ports shipped out over 12,000 tons of palm oil per year in the 1840s, and by the 1850s this number had risen to over 20,000 tons, which accounted for two-thirds of all the palm oil exported to the United Kingdom from West Africa at this time (Falola and Heaton, 2008f). In the early 1900s, produce from the Eastern Niger Delta accounted for 87 per cent of the total national output of the product, making it as significant as an export in relative value terms as crude-oil is now (Ako and Okonmah, 2009). However, the palm oil trade differed from the modern oil trade, through its empowerment of smallholders and particularly ‘middlemen’ from the Niger Delta.

### **The Rise of Middlemen and Increasing Competition in The Delta**

As the ‘legitimate’ trade in palm oil expanded over the course of the 19th century, it had significant effects on the political configuration of the region. As smallholder farms and larger plantations developed, they produced a demand for labour, which was filled through local slavery. A shift from human to natural cargo created a barrier between the activities of European



capitalism and the African economy but still relied on the local institution of slavery as a form of production. By the end of the nineteenth century, slavery was the basis of political economy in West Africa and the Niger Delta, whereas it no longer mattered in the European-controlled world (Lovejoy and Lovejoy, 2019).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, European traders buying palm oil were forced to rely on middlemen. This was mainly because malaria was a significant threat to the life of any European who ventured beyond the coast. However, Europeans were also unfamiliar with the complicated series of rivers, streams, and inlets that made up the Niger Delta. Only middlemen knew how to get from the coast to their hinterland suppliers, therefore effectively controlling the trade in hinterland goods (Falola and Heaton, 2008f). As the production of palm oil proliferated it empowered various local actors who could act as intermediaries between the central areas where palm oil was produced and the coast where it was exported. The success of palm-oil trading brought wealth to states such as Bonny, Brass and Owome. Local trading tycoons also became powerful, such as King Jaja of Opobo and Nana of Itsekiri, who created intricate webs of local and international business relationships (Ako and Okonmah, 2009).

With increased exports of palm oil, competition for commerce in the Niger Delta increased among a multitude of groups with a stake in its trade. For example in the western Niger Delta, the Itsekiri became middlemen between the Europeans and producers in the Urhobo hinterland. As a result, the Western Ijaw were excluded from trading and became known as ‘pirates’. These political dynamics disturbed once cordial relations between the Itsekiri and Ijaw. The Ijaw became frustrated by their geographical location and envious of the prosperity gained by the Itsekiri at their expense. Competition also increased due to lower barriers to entry of the palm oil trade where palm oil was produced. Slaves even began to trade the commodity (Ukiwo, 2007). At the same time, the number of European trading firms on the coast began to increase between older companies that had been involved in the trade for a long time and new firms capitalising on the opportunities of an increasingly lucrative commodity (Falola and Heaton, 2008f). Driven by the demand for palm oil within the UK economy, competition between multiple actors in the Delta intensified.

“Over half the oil handled in the Delta trade was sold at Bonny, all of which came from the exclusive markets of Essene, Obunku, Imo, Akwete, Urata, Azumiri, Ohambele, Ngwa and Ndele. In theory these tribal states which came under the Bonny sphere of interest were politically independent but in practice they were virtually protectorates of the latter” (Dike, 1956b, p. 41). It is worth noting at this point the role of identity surrounding the constellation of independent nations states that made up the Delta communities. It is a common misconception in writings of this time that all Delta peoples were descended from the Igbo tribe. Towards the end of the 19th century, an influx of immigrating Igbo peoples significantly changed the ethnic make up of the

entire region. However the Niger Delta tribes were comprised of a mix of identities. An excerpt from a description of a Calabar town cited in Dike (1956b, p. 30) identifies approximately 13 different ethnic groups present in the population of the time. Whilst the Igbo had a significant influence on the population of the region, “bequeathing their language to most of the city states... the population that evolved out of the mingling of these peoples was neither Benin nor Efik, Ibo nor Ibibio. They were a people apart, the product of clashing cultures of the tribal hinterland and of the Atlantic community to both of which they belonged.” Again this evidence illustrates the fluid and dynamic nature of identity throughout the history of the Niger Delta.

### **Increased Tensions and the Breakdown of the Trust System**

This increased competition for resource control among both European firms, middlemen and producers in the Delta resulted in high tensions in the region throughout the second half of the 19th century. Tensions began to fray around a business model of the palm oil trade known as the trust system. Under the trust system, British firms on the coast would pay credit to coastal middlemen to procure a specified amount of palm oil. The middlemen would use part of this credit to purchase palm oil from hinterland dealers. They would then bring the palm oil back to the British firms in completion of the bargain. The trust system caused increased tensions for many reasons. First, increased local competition for commerce meant that British traders could lower prices by playing local groups against each other. Delta traders would then refuse to trade at low rates or would look for better rates from different British firms, with the effect of angering British traders. Next, the more established British firms could also extend so much credit to Delta traders that the traders could never repay their debts and could not trade with other British firms, even if these firms were offering better terms. Also, disputes between British creditors and Delta debtors often resulted in British firms commandeering property traders, often in an incommensurate manner (Falola and Heaton, 2008h).

There is also evidence of a unity of identity across the Niger Delta ‘middlemen’ communities at the time. As Dike (1956b, p. 45) describes, “intermarriages, attendance at inter-clan festivals, blood covenants between neighbouring political units and the many communal-market groups in the tribal interior were effective instruments of cultural unity”. This ‘hidden strength’ of an ill-defined and loose political organisation was demonstrated towards the end of the century when it succeeded in holding at bay European attempts to break through to the markets of the hinterland.

Given growing problems with the trust system, British firms were eager to bypass the Delta middlemen altogether and firms began to deal directly with producers in the hinterland. In doing so, British firms could increase the efficiency of the supply of palm-oil to the UK, which was vital to maintaining the momentum of industrial revolution (Ako and Okonmah, 2009). Towards

the second half of the 18th century, the British began to venture into the creeks of the Delta. A particular advancement was an expedition in 1854 by Dr William Balfour, which made use of quinine as a prophylactic against malaria and proved that Europeans could survive in the interior. The ability of British firms to circumnavigate coastal middlemen of the Delta threatened to ruin the local economies of places such as Bonny, Brass, Opobo, and Calabar as well as the profit margins of established British firms that relied on the trust system. This created instability and this instability led to calls for a restoration of equilibrium to the trading system (Falola and Heaton, 2008h).

### **The Introduction of Regulation to the Palm Oil Trade**

To provide regulation both local traders and British firms looked to the British Consul at the time to negotiate and to settle disputes. Indigenous political leaders sought the friendship of the consul as an ally against rivals, preferring to cede authority to the British rather than to local competitors. In this way, the consul achieved a position of great power through his position as an intermediary. When disputes over kingships or chieftaincies arose, the favourites of the consul usually ended up winning out. Over time the consul was able to place whoever was willing to carry out his policies in a position of authority. The consul's primary function was to protect British trading interests, his decisions usually favoured British firms in disputes, at the expense of the local dealers (Lynn, 1981). The consul established courts of equity to resolve disputes that were made up of representatives of British firms with the consul as the chairman. The granting of judicial authority to such an alien institution simultaneously empowered British trading interests at the expense of local middlemen and undermined the sovereign authority of indigenous rulers in the Bight of Biafra (Falola and Heaton, 2008h).

### **Treaties, The RNC and the Royal Charter**

As consular authority increased, the resolution of disputes increasingly resulted in the signing over of sovereignty to the British government in the form of treaties of protection. In 1884–5, the British consul traversed the entire coastal region of the Delta and convinced numerous local rulers to sign treaties of protection. These treaties gave the United Kingdom political sovereignty over the signer's territory, allowing the British to conduct foreign relations on the part of the ruler and to interfere in local politics in the interest of peace and free trade. In 1885 the consul declared the establishment of the Oil Rivers Protectorate (long before the discovery hydrocarbons) in the name of the United Kingdom (Lynn, 1981).

At this time the two most powerful middlemen in the palm oil business, Kings Ja Ja of Opobo (who was once a slave) and Nana of Itsekiri, were threatening to increase the efficiency of their

trade by dealing directly with British firms in the UK and bypassing British traders. The British protected their control of trade by disposing and exiling Ja Ja and Nana to the West Indies in 1887 (Gertzel, 1962).

British merchants then gained control of the trade of the Niger Delta, and then consolidated into a single company, the Royal Niger Company (RNC). The RNC was then granted a royal charter in 1886, giving a high level of legal legitimacy to the actions of the company. Local traders were then prevented from shipping their palm-oil to the UK while the RNC traded directly with the hinterland. Locals attempted to resist these practices of monopolisation, but these attempts were rebuffed with force. For example, the resistance of Opobo Town resulted in a blockade of the town under the orders of the Consul to try to “bring them to their senses”. Also significant was the resistance of Brass which was razed to the ground after the town’s revolt against the actions of the RNC (Ako and Okonmah, 2009).

### **Benefits of The Royal Charter to The British**

From an international perspective, the charter was cost-effective as the cost of administration of the then-named “Niger Territories” was the responsibility of the RNC and would not be borne by the British taxpayer. Also, the charter was a territorial move. This point in history surrounded the ‘Scramble for Africa’ that began in 1881 and developed towards 1914 (Carmody, 2017). British concerns shifted from how to bypass the coastal middlemen in the Bight of Biafra towards preventing the French and Germans from undercutting British interests, especially on the Niger and Benue. The charter established a British sphere of influence over the Niger and Benue and kept France and Germany from gaining a foothold on these strategically and commercially important rivers. To avoid ceding power British government became increasingly willing to assert political power over the Niger Delta region, “through treaty wherever possible, through force wherever necessary.” (Falola and Heaton, 2008h, p.93).

From a local perspective, the charter ensured that the RNC was the only authority legally permitted to negotiate terms of trade on the Niger. The company then set those terms heavily in its favour through a range of tariffs and license fees. Investigations into the company’s business and administrative practices were even undertaken by British parliament between 1889 and 1891. However, the resulting report was favourable to the company. It promoted several reforms to curb the company’s monopoly, such as allowing delta traders from Brass and Elem Kalabari to use the Niger without paying taxes, however, these reforms were never implemented and the company continued to operate as before (Falola and Heaton, 2008h). These developments illustrate the implicit and behind the scenes support for the company from the government at the time, with the interests of public and private organisations dovetailing around the monopolization of resource extraction.

### **2.5.1. Unification and Indirect Rule**

In 1897 the kingdom of Benin was forcibly brought into the British protectorate, expanding the boundary of the protectorate to reach the eastern limits of the Lagos protectorate, which had been won by the British in 1886 (see figure 2.3, page 32). The British military might then turned its attention towards the emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate, killing the caliph in battle in July 1903 and thereby bringing under British imperial control the lands that were soon to make up a fully amalgamated Nigerian protectorate. The conquest of Sokoto was a final step in defining the boundaries of the British Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria (Falola and Heaton, 2008h). It was at this point that the region of Nigeria was named by Flora Shaw or Lady Lugard, in a letter to The Times newspaper, referring to the trading area of the RNC as the “Niger Area” (Bourne, 2015). The concept of modern Nigeria was not created indigenously. Nigeria, from its borders to its name was a foreign conception, borne from a regime of resource extraction. It is this conception of Nigeria that still operates today.

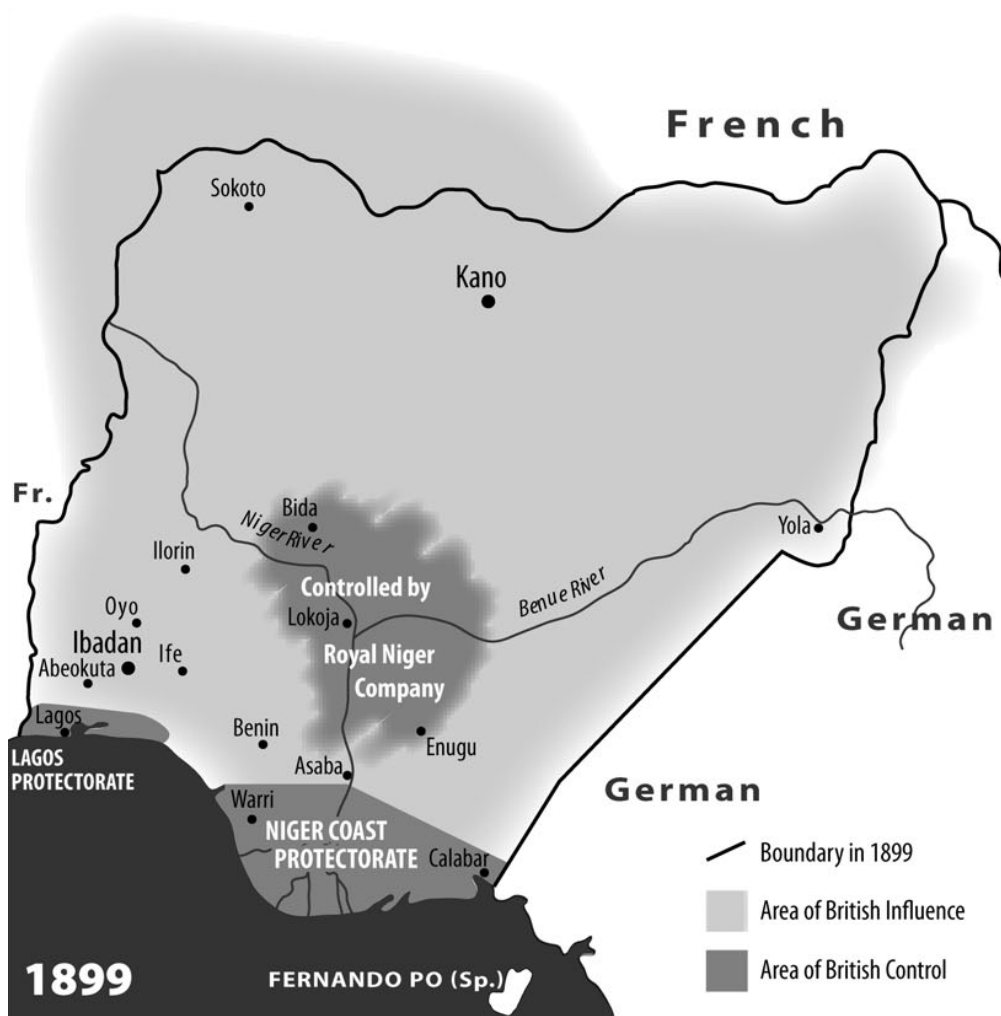


Figure 2.3.: British Colonial Nigeria (Falola and Heaton, 2008h).

Many parts of the protectorates continued to put up fierce resistance to British rule. Slowly over the first decade of the twentieth century, these pockets of resistance were brought to submission by British force. The widespread resistance, both passive and active, that the British faced in their bid to establish colonial rule was crushed only by violence. Sometimes this violence removed an obstinate ruler in favour of a more malleable one, other times it took the form of bombarding a state or region to the point at which resistance could no longer be maintained. The British extended their colonial power over Nigeria primarily through superior military power and the use of violence to achieve their objectives. “To refuse to play by British rules was to sign one’s own death or deportation warrant.” (Falola and Heaton, 2008h; Dike, 1956a, p107) <sup>2</sup> .

### **Further Consolidation of Resource Extraction**

Eventually Nigeria was officially amalgamated in 1914, by consolidating the North and South protectorates. The reasons for official consolidation again centred around resources; consolidation allowed the British government to reduce a subsidy that went towards Northern Nigeria by using surpluses produced by Southern Nigeria (including the Niger Delta). Northern Nigeria had comparatively meagre access to resources and had an unbalanced budget, requiring relying heavily on colonial government grants. Amalgamation then became a means to channel financial resources from the South to the North instead of from Britain to Nigeria (Uche, 2008). Amalgamation also allowed for a centralization of infrastructural and development schemes. This increased fiscal efficiency and acted to integrate southern and northern economies on a greater scale (Falola and Heaton, 2008a).

Cost-saving was pervasive in other areas of colonial rule, demonstrated by the system of ‘indirect rule’. Indirect rule was a method used by the British that used local political institutions to govern local people, by proxy, to meet the needs of the British (Falola and Heaton, 2008d). In the Southern Protectorate, political institutions were more diffuse than in the north and anti-colonial sentiment was stronger, meaning colonial authorities applied more authoritarian methods of indirect rule. This had the effect of weakening and sometimes obliterating customary institutions (Omeje, 2006c). The British often misunderstood institutions through which they governed, and often had difficulty identifying the legitimate traditional authorities. Also, if an ‘indirect ruler’ displeased the British, he would not be the local authority for long (Falola and Heaton, 2008d). Under colonial rule, elites within communities therefore maintained power by pleasing the British colonial authorities (Falola and Heaton, 2008a).

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<sup>2</sup>A more detailed description of the force used by the British can be found in Dike (1956a, p. 207)

## **Alterations to Local Political Configurations**

Colonial rule altered the political landscape of the Niger Delta in several important ways. First, it brought together what had once been a constellation of hundreds of independent nation states under an umbrella of an amalgamated Nigeria. Next, under this system, many local people were exploited for the profit of European firms. The British flooded huge quantities of European imports into the local market, and local manufacturers could not compete in terms of cost. The British also introduced a system of taxation into areas where there was no previous form of taxation, making it virtually impossible for local people to avoid participating in the colonial economy to some degree. To pay taxes, and importantly to buy European products, and to keep themselves and their families on the good side of the law, many people had no choice but to engage in the Nigerian labour force. In addition to the erosion of local institutions by indirect rule, these systems of rule caused many local people to feel alienated and frustrated (Falola and Heaton, 2008a).

The unification of Nigeria under colonial rule can be seen as monopolization of resource control by the British, borne from the inefficiencies of the extraction of palm oil caused by local interests. Once the British gained a monopoly over the Niger Area, they worked to make resource extraction more efficient, by transferring costs from the British to those living in Nigeria, through schemes such as taxation and indirect rule. European firms operating in the Delta took their profits back to Europe, enriching shareholders at the expense of exploited Nigerian labour. Because so much of the wealth of Nigeria was being extracted for European profits, very few Nigerians earned enough to invest in local development projects of their own (Falola and Heaton, 2008a).

These factors, along with the global economic depression in the 1930s significantly affected the attitudes of local people towards the colonial government, creating widespread disaffection and providing an impetus for the burgeoning nationalist movement that also emerged in the 1930s. This nationalist movement was defined by regional divisions, leading to the creation of a very fragile independence in 1960 (Falola and Heaton, 2008e).

### **2.5.2. Handing Over A Colonial Creation**

In 1960, Flora Shaw's conception of the 'Niger Area' was handed over to a people now collectively united under a new term: 'Nigerians'. The three largest ethnic groups of the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo in the Northern, Western, and Eastern Regions respectively each dominated a region of Nigeria, and hundreds of smaller ethnic groups feared the impending domination of larger groups at a regional scale (Falola and Heaton, 2008e). The new federalist political system was inherited from the centralised colonial system of the early 1900s and determined that access



to power and resources at the national level of Nigeria was to be derived from holding power at the regional level. In this way, the most powerful groups came to dominate their respective regions to contest for power and resources at the federal level. This alienation had the effect of creating even further subdivisions of identity, away from a collective Nigerian identity. In many ways, the new state of Nigeria was a state without a nation (Falola and Heaton, 2008c).

### **A Clamour for Resources Under a New Nation**

Following independence, the main political parties from each region fought to gain and maintain control of the federal and regional assemblies, which controlled the majority of Nigerian financial resources, which were increasingly becoming generated from the export of oil. Control at the regional and federal level was the key to power over how financial resources would then be distributed throughout the country. Resources could then be distributed to supporters at the denial of another group's access to these resources. Control of the branches of government, therefore, had strong implications for the future development of Nigeria. Southerners feared that a government controlled by the Northern People's Congress (NPC), that represented the interests of the Northern Region would redirect resources to the north, cutting southerners out of positions of authority in the government administration and the military. Likewise, northerners feared that Southern domination would direct financial resources away from a resource-poor north to the resource-rich Western and Eastern Regions, preventing the North's development. This national clamour for resources meant that the political system of Nigeria devolved into dysfunction in the period from 1960 to 1956 (Falola and Heaton, 2008c).

Under these circumstances it became important for parties in power to stay in power. Those without central power were required to build alliances with the majority party or move control of the government away from that party in the next election, with opposition parties facing a continual prospect of marginalisation. After independence in the 1960s, a large share of power was with the NPC, and it became clear that to gain power in the existing system, the best method was to attack and undermine this northern basis of power (Falola and Heaton, 2008c).

### **Coups and Counter Coups**

Since independence, Nigeria experienced attempts to gain central control of the country in the form of coup and counter-coup d'états. The first coup involved the violent overthrowing in 1966 of the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy installed by the British post-independence by Igbo officers, involving the killing of several civilian politicians. This coup was countered by General Aguyi Ironsi, also of Igbo decent, and the head of the Nigerian army, who then became head of state. Another coup occurred in the same year when Ironsi was assas-

minated by a team of commandos from the Northern Region. This coup was followed by a wave of violence in Northern regions of the country against Igbo civilians, resulting an estimated 80 000 to 100 000 fatalities (Omeje, 2006c, p.27).

This fragile point in the history of Nigeria was the point in which petroleum resources first began to be exploited within its territory. The first barrels of Nigerian crude oil destined for the world market departed from Port Harcourt on February 1958 (Watts, 2004b). A newly discovered wealth, at a critical juncture in the history of the country, marked the beginning of a new phase of resource extraction. Hydrocarbon resources were not discovered in a political vacuum but instead added fuel to a political fire that had been ignited by previous phases of resource extraction in the Delta.

## **2.6. Phase Three: Hydrocarbon Extraction in The Niger Delta**

### **2.6.1. Extractive Resources and the Civil War**

The Nigerian Civil War, sometimes referred to as the Biafran war, was fighting that took place between the Federal Military Government (FMG) under general Yakubu Gowon and the forces of Biafra. The war lasted for two and a half years, ending in Biafra's collapse and surrender on January 12, 1970. Biafra was fighting for independence from federal Nigeria, and the FMG was fighting for Nigerian unity, avoidance of a domino effect on the secession of more states (Zalik, 2004). Importantly, however, Biafra also contained 67 per cent of the known petroleum reserves in Nigeria. A secession of Biafra therefore threatened the loss of a very lucrative revenue base for the FMG and promised a gain to a new Biafran nation (Falola and Heaton, 2008c).

#### **A Local War of Resources**

The influence of the competition for petroleum resources on the politics of the civil war can be highlighted by the first tactical move made by the FMG under Gowon. After Biafra declared independence, Gowon quickly created 12 new states. Three of these states were created in the former eastern region. Only one of the three states, the East Central State, was predominantly Igbo- the ethnic group laying claim to Biafra. Moreover, the other two states in the Eastern Region, Rivers and South-Eastern, contained most of the country's known hydrocarbon reserves. In this way, the FMG demonstrated its intentions to exclude Biafra from its claim to resources. The subsequent reaction of the Igbo political elite was to stake Biafra's claim to these resources. On 19 June 1967, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance of Biafra wrote to Shell-BP requesting royalties estimated for one-half of its operations in 1967 at £3.510 million under a revenue collection decree. Shell-BP was initially inclined to make this payment, believing that

Biafra was in control of the territory. However the British government intervened and blocked this payment, reasoning that if Shell-BP paid the royalties to Biafra, the Nigerian government would be forced to attack Biafra to show that Biafra was not in control of the territory. Regardless of these moves, the federal government imposed a naval blockade on the Bonny and Port Harcourt oil export terminals and then attacked Biafran forces in the Niger Delta (Uche, 2008).

### **A Proxy War of Resources**

The Biafran war was also a proxy conflict over resources. France had a major interest in oil in the Eastern regions of Nigeria. This oil at the time was being explored and extracted through a French Company SAFRAP Nigeria Limited (now Eni). At the time the civil war broke out, the company controlled around 7 per cent of oil production in Nigeria. This company's operations were unusual compared to others in the region, as most of its oil interests were in the East Central State. Also, in the event of secession, there was a chance it could inherit the assets of Shell-BP. From the onset of the crisis, the French company SAFRAP supported the Biafran side. France, therefore, was politically aligned with the Biafran cause, but denied being a major provider of arms in the conflict. There is substantial evidence, however, that French military support helped to sustain Biafran forces in the early stages of the war. *Paris Match*, in November 1968 wrote of how it was 'an open secret' that French weapons were being flown into Biafra from nearby Gabon and Portuguese regions at night (Uche, 2008).

In a similar way, Britain denied political support of the opposing FMG side. In official statements, Britain claimed that its interest was in the preservation of Nigerian unity. It insisted that it was only supplying light arms to the Nigerian side, which it had done before the conflict. In reality, however, the British government provided military intelligence to the FMG and there is evidence that it may have helped the FMG access heavy arms through third parties- shown by confidential foreign and commonwealth office memos from the time (Uche, 2008).

The main interest of the British government, just as before the conflict, was to keep resources flowing, and there was reason for Britain to have a strategic interest in maintaining resource flows from Nigeria. Arab countries at the time had embargoed exports to the UK, meaning the UK had to import oil from The Americas or The Middle East, at extra cost, which was described as "extremely damaging to the British Balance of Payment position" (Uche, 2008, p113). British ministers at the time asked the Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Power to explore ways of ensuring the resumption of Nigeria's oil flows.

Britain was interested primarily in protecting the investments of Shell-BP in Nigerian oil. In a background note prepared for the Prime Minister on the Nigerian civil war, archived in the national archives in London, it was explicitly stated that:

“ To refer publicly in the House to our economic stake in Nigeria would be inadvisable as it would be misunderstood or misrepresented . . . Nevertheless, the facts are that Shell and BP have invested at least £250 million in Nigeria on which we now expect a large and increasing return of great importance to the British balance of payments. Other investments are worth up to £175 million. Our annual export trade is about £90 million. 16,000 British subjects live in Nigeria. All this would be at risk if we abandoned our policy of support for the Federal Government and others would be quick to take our place. ”

(Uche, 2008, p.113)

By the time the war officially ended in 1970, it had ultimately taken the lives of between 1 and 3 million Nigerians, mostly in the Eastern Region. Many of these lives were lost due to starvation. Perhaps another 3 million people were displaced. Following the victory of the FMG, the process of reintegration and reconciliation began immediately (Falola and Heaton, 2008c). The FMG went on to establish full control over oil production and its associated revenues after the war. In this way, oil became central to the politics of revenue allocation after the end of the Nigerian civil war, buoyed by rapid growth in petroleum production in the 1970s (Obi, 2009).

### **2.6.2. End of the Civil War and the Beginning of the Oil Boom**

In the 1970s, the Niger Delta was the main source of oil and gas in Nigeria. Oil became the new fiscal basis for the Nigerian State, replacing agriculture. Federal monopoly over oil was officially established through Decree No. 51 of 1969 and Decree No. 9 of 1971, which vested the entire ownership and control of all petroleum in Nigeria with the state (Omeje, 2006c). The centralization of power over oil was then cemented by the state by progressively changing the level of derivation of oil revenues to oil-producing states of the Niger Delta from 50 per cent in 1966 to 1.5 per cent in the 1990s (Obi, 2009). Two military regimes and one civilian regime, then oversaw the growth of the oil economy in the period between 1970 and 1983 and contributed to the development of the political system that exists in Nigeria today. (Falola and Heaton, 2019).

### **Identity and Ethnicity in the Struggle for Resource Control**

The evolution of the power dynamics that inform contemporary state-society-IOC relations stems from this organisation, during the oil boom, of political groups in Nigeria around the pursuit of centralised oil revenues. The Nigerian state and the military during the oil boom was comprised of actors largely from Northern and North-western states and ethnic groups, namely Hausa-Fulani groups. The soldiers and the bureaucrats from these groups “wanted a centralising state to use revenues from oil-producing states to propel development, notably in

non-oil-producing states, fuelled by massive expansions in public spending” (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012, p. 298). This northern alliance comprises the modern military-state, or what Watts (2017) refers to as the ‘petro-state’. However, at the same time, fiscal centralisation also ‘splintered the national fabric by encouraging the articulation of ever smaller notions of what it meant to be Nigerian’. This fractionalising effect “produces the mobilisation of (often new) ethnic identities in particular by elite political entrepreneurs served as platforms for arguing for a larger share of the centrally distributed national cake – oil revenues” (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012, p. 298). In this way, the oil boom produced both a unification of Nigerian identity, in that it required collaboration on the part of Northern ethnic groups to comprise the state-military complex, but at the same time a fractionalisation of Nigerian identity in order to create means for the channelling of these centrally distributed resources to definitive groups within this Nigerian identity, to capture larger shares of resources. These dynamics can best be summarised in the following quote from Nwajiaku (2005).

The Nigerian state plays a critical role in creating incentives for new “ethnicities” to emerge around existing or desired states and LGAs. With the withdrawal of the Nigerian state from its role in social welfare provision in the wake of economic crisis and the introduction of the SAP, oil companies have now replaced and surpassed the role of the state in many host communities. Their ability to distribute patronage in much the same way as the state has done has set in motion similar processes of ethnic imagining and the proliferation of new and useful micro-identities capable of securing access to oil-related whilst denying access to “others”.

Indeed, when considering national competition for resource control, it is unwise to collapse myriad conflict scenarios into one: that is the conflict between the Nigerian state and the ‘rebels’ of the Niger Delta. Such explanations fail to fully capture the ‘shifting arena of alliances’ that characterise the struggle for resource control in the Niger Delta (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012). Within the Niger Delta itself, within the ‘rebellion’ against the petro-state complex there is an intricate and multifaceted history of ethnic identity in the struggles of opposing groups vying for resource control. In the words of (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012, p. 298):

Oil dependency generated new less-porous ethnic group identities among aspiring elites, each struggling to have states and local governments created for ‘their’ communities. These units were the main conduits for fiscally centralised revenue distribution which gradually replaced the fiscal autonomy of the former regions prior to independence in 1960, and which according to the ‘derivation principle’ had allowed regions to retain up to 50% of locally generated resources.

. A detailed exploration of the role of identity and ethnicity in the shaping of resource politics in the Niger Delta is beyond the scope of this chapter, and is one component in a complex array of multiple factors and variables that comprise these politics<sup>3</sup>. When considering the role of identity in this topic however, it is worth noting the tendency described in the literature outlined above for identity to be ‘mobilised’ as a means to generate increased control of resource streams. Another point to note, also outlined by Nwajiaku-Dahou (2012) is that identity, in this context at least, is not necessarily temporarily continuous. As the political context of the Niger Delta has evolved over time, so have definitions of identity. In this way identity and ethnicity in the Niger Delta is still as dynamic and non-definitive as it was in the 19th century, as described earlier in this chapter.

### **2.6.3. Modern Resource Extraction in The Niger Delta**

#### **Linking Past and Current Patterns of Resource Extraction in The Niger Delta**

The modern political system of resource extraction that exists in Nigeria today is a legacy of the historical processes of resource extraction outlined above, and several themes can be drawn from past waves to the current configuration of resource exploitation.

The first theme involves centralisation of resource control. Nigeria as a territory was created for the purpose of resource extraction, and in doing so, the territory amalgamated groups of people belonging to what was a constellation of independent nation-states. A centralised system of resource extraction was handed to the newly independent Nigeria; the control of this system granted control of resources, and ethnic groups were forced to compete to avoid domination by other ethnic groups that tried to gain control at the federal and regional level. Ethnic competition and conflict is a major element to oil politics in the modern Niger Delta and Nigeria (Suberu, 2001; Ikpe, 2009; Ejobowah, 2015; Omeje, 2006c). The control of resources at the federal level controls how these resources are distributed throughout the country at the sub-national level, this creates what some have referred to as patronage politics in Nigeria, where oil wealth is granted to those who pursue opportunities to develop patrimonial relationships to those at the federal level who control the allocation of resources to sub-national levels and thereby generate power (Ikpe, 2009; Omeje, 2005).

Another theme outlined in this chapter has been a consistent drive to increase the efficiency of resource extraction from the Delta, in many cases through monopolisation, whether this was by British or indigenous actors. The process of increasing efficiency of extraction reliably involved the exclusion of middlemen, in most cases indigenous middlemen, from the trade of locally produced resources. After the British monopolised trade in palm oil, they increased the

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<sup>3</sup>For a more detailed insight into identity in relation to resource politics, please see (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012, p. 298)

efficiency of trade through an amalgamation of protectorates, financing northern territories with revenues from the south. The civil war entrenched this arrangement, resulting in a control of oil revenues by the FMG following the war. Local ownership of oil resources, local rights to earn revenue from trade of these resources and questions of sovereignty then continued to dominate discourses surrounding oil extraction politics in the Niger Delta. The Ogoni struggle for self-determination, led by the Niger Delta activist Ken Saro Wiwa, was built on the principle that Niger Delta communities have been excluded from the trade of a resource that they see as rightfully theirs (Watts, 2004a). Exclusion of local people from involvement in resource trade is therefore a major part of oil extraction politics in the Niger Delta that continues to present issues (Fidelis and Samuel, 2011; Omeje, 2006c).

Finally, the monopolisation of resource extraction as a means to increase wealth of individuals or increase the efficiency of extraction is also a reoccurring theme. This pattern occurred through attempts to monopolise the palm oil trade by the British, and then attempts to monopolise the oil trade during the civil war. These moves were conducted or aided by governments at the time but carried out by private companies. Currently, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), an Anglo Dutch company, is the largest oil company in Nigeria, accounting half of Nigeria's oil production (Omeje, 2006c).

## **2.7. Describing Resource Extraction Politics in Modern Nigeria**

### **The State and Oil Extraction in Modern-Day Nigeria**

The relationship between the Nigerian state and IOCs spans more than 60 years and is an integral component of the history of the modern Nigerian state. This relationship converges at the federal level of government, where relationships between state and IOC actors are routinely practised. The primary institutional centre of relations between the Nigerian government and IOCs at this level is the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), a quasi-state (publicly owned but profit-driven) corporation that sits at a nexus of interactions between the public bodies of the state and the corporate bodies of the IOCs (Nwokeji, 2007). NNPC, through its functions, operations and practices is, therefore, an appropriate point of entry in trying to conceptualise power relations between the state and IOCs in Nigeria.

#### **2.7.1. Understanding The NNPC**

NNPC is a secretive organisation. Like many other state institutions involved in oil and gas extraction, it exerts significant effort reducing its visibility to the public. NNPC's management

has a history of resisting outside scrutiny. Its employees decline to be interviewed, making information on the institution difficult to obtain (Thurber. et al., 2011). The corporation discloses very little about its finances and operations, even though more than half of Nigeria's revenues flow through it, and officials from other government bodies say they cannot independently verify or challenge the oil sale figures provided by the corporation (Sayne et al., 2015). Despite these difficulties, however, there are a small number of studies that shed light on its operations, which can be used to conduct this analysis.

### **Formation of NNPC**

NNPC was formed in the 1970s, during a global wave of oil asset nationalisation via newly created National Oil Companies (NOCs). A driver of this nationalisation was the formation of The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which Nigeria joined in 1971. OPEC member states under OPEC Resolution No. XVI.90 were required to use NOCs as a tool to acquire 51 per cent of foreign equity interests (Omeje, 2006b). NNPC was set up for this purpose, through the merger of its precursor, the Nigerian National Oil Corporation, with the federal regulatory authority at the time, the Ministry of Mines and Power On 1st April 1977 (San, 2014). Following the OPEC resolution, each IOC operating in Nigeria became a joint venture with NNPC, in which NNPC was granted majority ownership of 51% in each of these joint ventures (Omeje, 2006b).

### **Function of NNPC**

Available studies outline several functions of NNPC. According to (Thurber. et al., 2011, p.702) its primary function is as a manager and quasi-regulator of the oil and gas industry, using the approval authority of its subsidiary National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS) to assert control over IOCs operating in Nigeria (see figure 2.4 on page 43). NNPC has a number of other regulatory divisions and subsidiaries that are designed for legisla-



| <b>Box 16.1 Most significant divisions and subsidiaries of NNPC</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Interface with IOCs</b>  |   |
| NAPIMS  | National Petroleum Investment Management Services                 |
| <b>Crude Oil Buyers and Sellers</b>                                 |   |
| COMD  | Crude Oil Marketing Division                                      |
| PPMC  | Pipelines and Products Marketing Company                          |
| HYSON   | Hydrocarbon Services Nigeria (marketing JV with Vitol)            |
| <b>Operational (Upstream and Natural Gas)</b>                       |   |
| NPDC  | Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (exploration & production) |
| NGC   | Nigerian Gas Company (natural gas pipeline operation)             |
| NLNG  | Nigerian LNG (LNG facility operation, 49% NNPC-owned)             |
| <b>Operational (Downstream)</b>                                     |   |
| WRPC  | Warri Refining & Petrochemical Company                            |
| PHRC  | Port Harcourt Refining Company                                    |
| KRPC  | Kaduna Refining & Petrochemical Company                           |
| EPCL  | Eleme Petrochemicals Company Limited                              |
| <b>Services</b>   |   |
| NETCO   | National Engineering & Technical Company (engineering design)     |
| IDSL  | Integrated Data Services Limited (seismic data processing)        |

**Figure 2.4.:** *Most significant divisions and subsidiaries of NNPC (Thurber. et al., 2011, p.702)*

As a regulator, the organisation effectively creates a bureaucratic ‘thicket’ for IOCs that adds significantly to their cost of doing business in Nigeria. For example, contract approval processes for IOCs are slow and bureaucratic, requiring 12-18 months to put in contracts compared to four months from tender to award in other parts of the world. Through bureaucracy, NNPC imposes massive burdens on the oil sector – it ties oil operators in red tape, increasing cost and uncertainties to IOCs, and increasing opportunities to extract rent from IOCs.

NNPC is not only a regulator. Through its joint ventures, the corporation receives equity in crude oil and sells the majority of this crude to marketers and middlemen for export. It then sends the proceeds of these sales to the bank account of the Federation of Nigeria held within the Central Bank of Nigeria. Further functions are ostensibly playing a role in upstream and downstream oil and gas transport activities and providing services to Nigeria’s oil and gas industry – although the evidence for this functionality is limited, and analyses emphasize its

primary function as an industry regulator and exporter of crude (Sayne et al., 2015; Thurber et al., 2011).

### **Interpretations of Functionality**

Studies that analyse NNPC frame it as an institution that lacks capability to carry out its mandate to effectively regulate the oil industry in Nigeria. Thurber et al. (2011) describe how authoritative figures within the institution are unable to exert “meaningful control” over the many individual actors within the institution. The study argues that the goal of regulation within the sector, through NNPC, appears to be the maximisation of the wealth of individuals within the organisation, stating that, “each additional transaction generated by its profuse bureaucracy provides an opportunity for well-connected individuals to profit by being the gatekeepers whose approval must be secured, especially in contracting processes.” (Thurber et al., 2011, p.703).

This failure to ‘properly’ regulate the industry, according to Thurber et al. (2011) comes from several influences. To begin with, the regulatory arms of NNPC are underfunded and under-resourced. Combined with a lack of technical expertise within the corporation these factors inhibit it from having “any real oversight” of the wider industry through NAPIMS. In contrast, IOC staff are “better trained, better funded and have better access to technology than their NAPIMS counterparts” (Thurber et al., 2011, p.372). NAPIMS staff review IOC budgets and request justifications for technical choices made by IOCs. NAPIMS staff may disagree, for example, with the number of wells to be drilled, but they “lack the technical expertise, confidence, and backing within the company and government to impose an alternative solution”. A more ‘capable’ sector manager and regulator than NAPIMS may be better able to ensure that costs are being minimised and that they are not being over allocated to the Nigerian government. More generally, NAPIMS lacks internal incentives that would reward staff for skilful regulation of the IOCs (Thurber et al., 2011).

A lack of ability to independently regulate by NNPC allows IOCs to interpret tax rules aggressively without being challenged. As one example, the government bodies “responsible for the collection of taxes and royalties, the federal inland revenue service and the department of petroleum resources, respectively – have little capability to question sophisticated IOC accountants and often have difficulty coordinating among themselves” (Thurber et al., 2011, p.716). As a direct result, IOC ‘cash call’ demands (requirements for NNPC to deliver cash to IOCs for operations as a partner in the joint venture) cannot be easily regulated by NNPC. When IOCs run into serious conflicts with government bodies including NNPC, they have “developed informal channels that allow them to resolve conflicts in a manner satisfactory to them” (Thurber et al., 2011, p.720). IOCs and NNPC have been successfully able to block reforms that with the potential to threaten their positions. Finally a lack of financial autonomy on the part of NNPC

ensures that the corporation “cannot become a self-sufficient actor in the oil sector that could threaten existing regimes that benefit from the status quo” (Thurber. et al., 2011, p.737).

In respect to its role as a buyer and seller of petroleum products, analyses character NNPC as an “administrative tool for government revenue collection through IOCs.” (Thurber. et al., 2011, p.705). NNPC is, therefore, neither meaningful oil operator or a real commercial entity. It lacks control over the revenue it generates and thus is unable to set its strategy. Privileged individuals in Nigeria with lucrative political connections can obtain allocations of petroleum products from NNPC at subsidised prices, which they then sell on at market rates. NNPC also distributes licences for the export of crude which makes it a locus for patronage activities. NNPC, as a buyer and seller of petroleum products, therefore, serves as a mechanism for transferring wealth generated through sales of oil and gas to the government.

The main point to take away from this discussion on NNPC is that the organisation, sitting at the apex of state / International Oil Company (IOC) relations is a clandestine organisation that serves to protect and capture oil revenues and distribute them along patronage lines. The relevance of these findings will be explored later on in the thesis.

### **Summarising the History of the Niger Delta**

This chapter has aimed to briefly outline the history of the Niger Delta from the perspective of resource extraction politics. Several reoccurring patterns of resource extraction politics have been demonstrated that carry through to modern configurations of resource extraction in the Delta. There are various schools of thought the attempt to understand the modern patterns of resource extraction seen in the Delta from a global perspective. This section will outline these schools of thought. This section, along with the summary above, will serve as a context for the empirical chapters, as a way to justify the theoretical frameworks these chapters use. I will make an analytical distinction at this point between work that attempts to *describe* the politics of the Delta from a global perspective and work that serves to *explain* it. Descriptive works and their limitations will be outlined here before the next chapter aims to draw on work explaining politics of the Niger Delta.

### **The Resource Curse Literature**

Some of the most prolific work concerning resource extraction in Nigeria is that of the *resource curse* literature. The *resource curse* literature, in essence, provides a macro-level comparison of nation-states with oil and gas-led wealth as the independent variable and levels of socio-economic development as the dependent. Accordingly, this literature generally considers Nigeria an extreme example of discord between levels of domestic resource wealth and levels of expected

social and economic development. There is a general theme in the *resource curse* literature that ‘weak institutions’ are responsible for Nigeria’s inability to translate resource wealth into expected levels of human development (Collier, Van Der Ploeg, et al., 2010; Mehlum et al., 2006a; Robinson et al., 2006). However, this analysis is limited in that it stops short of giving full explanations of how and why Nigeria specifically suffers from weak institutions, how these institutions function and how they contribute to lower than expected levels of development. Using the nation-state as the unit of analysis, the resource curse literature also tends to ignore sub-national political dynamics. Also, the focus of this literature on a narrow point in history (roughly between the 1970s to present) fails to acknowledge longer-term political trends. In this way, the literature fails to *explain* the politics of Nigeria and especially the politics of the Niger Delta.

### **Resource Frontiers**

Literature that adds a different perspective to the *resource curse* literature, and which attempts to visualise the formation of power around extractives capital is the *resource frontier* literature. In geography, history, and politics, the frontier is a deep-rooted concept, denoting the edge of a system and or a zone of contact between industry and wild (Thaler et al., 2019). The frontier has been utilised by scholars in relation to capital since the early 1900s, when Turner (1920), described a North American frontier in which the North American wilderness met expanding industrialisation. This conceptualisation evokes an image of capital as forming a boundary between “civilisation and the wild, the tamed and the untamed” the “formal and the informal” (Rasmussen and Lund, 2018, p. 396). It implies directionality from undeveloped to developed, between civilised and mastered.

The Niger Delta, based on the definition above, shows characteristics of a resource frontier. The capitalist and largely foreign-owned oil industry can be seen through this optic as a protrusion of the ‘ordered’ capital into the ‘wild’ and ‘untamed’ conflict zone of the Delta. Watts (2018) outlines this process in the Niger Delta one that involves the Nigerian state, a conception which will be explored in the final empirical chapter.

### **Resource Enclaves**

Another concept closely related to that of *resource frontiers* is that of *resource enclaves*. Enclave formations have been associated with capital and industrialisation since the term started being used in academic literature in the 1960s. Phelps et al. (2015, p.120) describes enclaves as:

"Physically, administratively, or legally bounded territory[ies] whose geography or morphology is intimately related to the following economic characteristics: de-

pendence on one or a few large firms; high specialization in one activity; and weak integration into the local economy, which is used primarily to access some local factors of production."

The Niger Delta also displays many characteristics of enclaves, as defined above. As will be discussed in more detail in the empirical chapters, a very large inequality gap exists between the wealth flowing through the oil and gas infrastructure and its various sites of extraction within the rural Niger Delta compared to its surroundings.

There are several overarching themes in the literature in respect to the current understanding of enclaves, frontiers and oil and gas extraction. The first overarching theme is that the literature draws attention to the fact that enclaves exclude local economies and local people from socio-economic development (Enns and Bersaglio, 2015; Ferguson, 2005). Enclaves also attract substantial levels of investment, regardless of and in many cases concurrent with the instability of the nation-states within which they are located (Reno, 1999). Next, political relationships surrounding enclaves are described as being complex (Phelps et al., 2015) and embroiled in unique local realities (Enns and Bersaglio, 2015). This is especially true when considering the relationship between states and the companies that control resource extraction. Enclaves are also generally seen as part of 'frontiers' in respect to extraction; both are formations of capital and tend to occur concurrently.

### **Limitations of the Resource Frontiers and Resource Enclaves Literature**

I argue that the resource frontier and enclave literatures are limited in several ways. First, economic exclusion as a result of resource extraction is mentioned by this literature in a number of instances. However, these studies seem to do more to draw attention to the fact exclusion is occurring than to explore the systemic drivers of exclusion, in other words, questions of *how* and *why* people are excluded through enclave-based or frontier based development. In addition, these studies consistently highlight complexity, however where complexity is highlighted, it is only highlighted as a finding, instead of explored (Phelps et al., 2015). By extension, in developing a method of analysis that addresses the state, communities and capital (in the form of IOCs), the literature does not explore *how* each of these components produces the dynamics observed within enclaves or how enclaves and frontiers may produce certain social relations. In failing to address the how and why questions of resource extraction politics, this literature largely serves to exhibit what it sees as social injustice, tied to implicit assumptions of class struggle. In doing so it lacks an exploration of complexity, particularly in relation to relations across scale and involving the state and capital.

These trends within the literature are perhaps most succinctly summarised through looking at

James Ferguson's 2005 seminal work, *Seeing Like an Oil Company*. Using resource extraction as an illustration, Ferguson notes how capital coalesces around areas that are 'useful' to accumulation and excludes areas that are not useful. He argues that rather than flowing, capital 'skips' from the global North to enclaves in low and middle income countries. Thus, while capital can be seen as global, or globalised; it does not yet "encompass or cover contiguous geographic spaces", thus contributing to the enclaved nature of oil and gas extraction in Sub Saharan Africa (Ferguson, 2005, p.279). Ferguson presents a succinct metaphor that has been cited extensively within literature on enclave based resource extraction (Kashwan et al., 2018; Enns and Bersaglio, 2015; MacEachern, 2010). However, I argue that the limits of this metaphor represent the limits of wider literature concerning resource enclaves. The aim of this literature appears showcase or exhibit what it sees as social injustices. Whilst this is a laudable aim, the approach does little to address how and why the complex relations surrounding enclaves and frontiers produce social injustice. It is clear that modern capitalism as part of globalisation excludes, and that this exclusion is no more apparent than in the formations of capital in sub Saharan Africa. Yet simply drawing attention to this exclusion does not address why and how this is exclusion occurs.

Despite lacking a more detailed analysis, observations of both the resource frontier and the resource enclave literature are insightful. They offer a starting point or a model that can be used for further analysis of the social relations that surround resource extraction and capital in countries like Nigeria. This starting point is a good basis for beginning an investigation into the role of PPPs in sustainable natural resource management. It opens up areas of questioning that can encompass oil companies, citizens and the state, and can be applied within and across scales. For example, Ferguson (2005, p.380) points out that countries that operate resource enclaves paradoxically attract considerable levels of investment but often display the most 'unstable' forms of government. He draws attention Reno's 1999 book: *Warlord Politics* which picks four countries for study, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo/Zaire and Nigeria, based on their "widespread violence and extremely weak state institutions". Ferguson (2006a, p.41), highlights that despite these 'weak' institutions, the nations outlined by Reno attracted over half of private capital inflows to Sub Saharan Africa (excluding S. Africa) in his sample year of 1994-1995. Although Ferguson merely points out this occurrence out to the reader, the observation leaves open the question of why and how investment is attracted to areas of weakness or instability.

The literature outlined above that describes resource extraction politics in the Niger Delta is limited, but in conjunction with the historical trends outlined above, can be used to begin to answer questions around the politics of resource extraction politics and thereby the implementation of PPPs in the Delta. The next chapter aims to bring together the themes outlined so far to build theoretical frameworks that can be used in the empirical chapters of the thesis.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

Commodities have defined the modern history of Nigeria (Watts, 2017), culminating in an economy that is now dominated by a single commodity. Accordingly, the Niger Delta can be seen as a region with a history of competing claims to resource control, sovereignty, institutional and political change in the face of globalisation. The history of the region is a history of diversity, differing cultures, perspectives and understandings. There are various forms of description of resource extraction politics in the Niger Delta but not many forms of deep analysis that aim to understand the mechanisms behind political formations within the Niger Delta from a global perspective. To begin to answer the main research questions of the thesis the political historical context of the Delta needs to be better linked with global perspectives on resource extraction politics.

This chapter has aimed to provide an insight into the history of Nigeria as a nation defined by resource extraction. It has then shown that modern methods of describing phenomena in Nigeria, such as the resource curse, do little to explain political phenomena, and rather describe them. This thesis aims to go further by explaining how political dynamics operate in the context of the Niger Delta and explain in depth the two case studies outlined. To do so, the various components of the research outlined so far need to be assembled and considered in relation to the two case studies.

# 3

## **THE SEARCH FOR A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**



## **Abstract**

This chapter aims to bring together the range of concepts presented so far along with schematic details from the empirical data collected to justify relevant conceptual frameworks for each empirical chapter. To begin, the literature on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in sustainability is outlined and found to either lack an empirical basis or present information removed from context. The chapter then considers the main points from the empirical data collected for this thesis. The first case study is of a large European Commission (EC) funded PPP that failed to reach full implementation, the Sustainable Utilisation of Nigeria's Gas and Renewable Energy Resources (SUNGAS) project. To understand this project, the analysis will first use stakeholder mapping to identify stakeholders and gain an understanding of some power dynamics between them. The analysis will then use concepts of structure and agency and strong structuration to analyse the relations between these stakeholders, addressing a need to appreciate multiple contexts, political environments, influences across scales and also a need to interrogate structure that may not have been possible with other frameworks. The second case study of a model of community engagement developed by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), the General Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) will use theories of governmentality, and its extension, environmentality to investigate formations of power in the uncertain and contested context of the /acGMoU. This approach allows for the analysis to avoid presuppositions of power relations that are inherent in existing analysis of contexts such as the Niger Delta, for example those within the field of Political Ecology. Finally, the last empirical chapter on the state will aim to avoid Eurocentric patterns of analysis and heuristic traps by investigating the state and capital in the Niger Delta using methods of visuality.

### **3.1. Introduction**

The previous two chapters have served to outline an introduction to the main concepts of the thesis, or the components of analysis, to justify the conceptual framework chosen for each chapter. The previous chapter outlined a history of Nigeria leading to the modern-day political configuration of Nigeria. To bring together this research context and the research topic of PPPs, this chapter will begin by summarising the literature on PPPs. Following this, the themes of each empirical chapter will be outlined, along with a justification for the theoretical approach taken. This chapter will work at a schematic level and the applied details of conceptual frameworks will be outlined in the empirical chapters.

### **3.2. Public-Private Partnerships in Sustainability**

The introduction chapter presented the wider context of public-private partnerships in global sustainability. This section will add further detail by reviewing some of the main schools of thought within the literature surrounding public-private partnerships in sustainability.

#### **The Ambiguity of partnerships and ‘PPP’ as a Term**

A starting point in understanding PPPs involves defining the term. Unfortunately, the terms ‘PPP’ or ‘partnership’ are extremely ambiguous. Critical analyses within the literature describe how there is no real definition for the term and by extension the concept (Brogaard and Petersen, 2017; Linder, 1999). As a result, some studies analyse PPPs but use the term without ever properly defining what they are analysing, for example, Stafford-Smith et al. (2017). Considering this ambiguity, it is possible to engage with a range of studies that are all strictly studies of PPPs, but present analyses of entirely different geographic and political contexts.

It is, therefore, important to clearly define the analytical parameters of a study of PPPs when conducting a study of PPPs. One way to do this is to define the geographic scale at which the PPP or PPPs within the analysis apply. In the following sections I classify relevant literature on PPPs in two ways: first I classify the literature that does not explicitly denote a scale of analysis, by theme; next I classify literature that explicitly denotes a scale of analysis, by scale. This method serves to create a general structure to summarise literature on PPPs relevant to this study.

#### **3.2.1. Relevant Literature Organised by Theme**

Much literature on PPPs fails to denote a scale of analysis, yet is worth referencing as it is relevant to this study. This section will categorise this literature into broad themes that allow for

the main characteristics of this literature to be covered.

### **Corporate, Anecdotal Literature**

In searching for literature that could apply to cases of PPP implementation in Nigeria, I worked with a collection of studies that I have grouped into a category that I will term corporate, anecdotal literature. This literature was useful in gaining an understanding of some common knowledge on PPP implementation that circulates within groups that have experience managing partnerships in sustainability. Although this literature was useful, it was also limited. I will briefly outline its characteristics below.

A good example of this literature can be found in a blog post published by the consultancy firm, McKinsey (Tobergte and Curtis, 2013). In this article, various experts with experience working on sustainability issues share their experiences of managing partnerships. The article is full of anecdotal quotes that shed insight into the operation of PPPs in sustainability. Numerous similar examples of this type of analysis can be found through imputing key terms into any internet search engine, and strong themes persist between these available examples. For example, the McKinsey article highlights that the success of partnerships depends greatly on a manager or broker that will devote extended time and effort to the partnership. Other similar themes include 'setting goals', 'sharing vision', and 'preparing for change' (Graham Rowe, 2011). This group of literature is designed to communicate strategies, methods for success and give advice for others managing partnerships. It generally focusses on questions of leadership and management of incentives (Brouwer et al., 2016; Dr. Stuart Reid, 2016; Tennyson, 2011).

There are considerable limitations to this literature. A first to note is that it is not peer-reviewed. Accordingly, the literature rarely involves empirical analysis. Instead, in essence, it corroborates anecdotes from people who have worked on partnerships. The potential bias of these accounts is also a significant limitation. Many sources, such as those within (Tobergte and Curtis, 2013) only outline perspectives of practitioners within the private sector. Many of those who give the advice included in the literature are consultants paid to do so, who are from high-income country contexts. Information that would conflict with the interest of maintaining a consultancy position may, therefore, be excluded from these accounts.

In light of the ambiguity of the terms partnership and PPP, this literature can also fail to specify the context of the partnership in question. Statements within the literature can apply to partnerships or PPPs in general, yet the scale and context of these partnerships is not specified, again contributing to a lack of empirical rigour to these accounts. These anecdotal assessments can be very insightful, but their findings need to be used carefully in conjunction with more rigorous methods and reference to peer-reviewed literature, using empirical evidence where biases have been acknowledged.

## **Management Literature on PPPs in Sustainability**

I conceptualise literature on PPPs within the field of management studies as an extension of the corporate, anecdotal literature outlined above. Similarly, management literature on PPPs tends to centre around similar themes of leadership, success, strategy and management of incentives (Kale and Singh, 2009). Again, this literature can be insightful, but also limited.

Cross-sector partnerships (as a type of PPP) constitute a subject of growing importance in management research (Ashraf et al., 2017; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012; Kale and Singh, 2009; Reed and Reed, 2009). This area of literature can give more of an empirical analysis than the corporate literature, appreciating varying sources of data and potential bias. Also, it is peer-reviewed. Useful insights include a strong theme that partnerships in sustainability and development “have often led to conflict-laden relationships and are frequently susceptible to failure” (Ashraf et al., 2017; Kale and Singh, 2009). Ashraf et al. (2017, p. 794) argue that “a distinctive source of failure of cross-sector partnerships is associated with how compatible the partners are regarding their cultural backgrounds and the objectives they seek”. “The different objectives that cross-sector partners pursue are not only a result of organizational-level decisions, but also of broader cultural templates, or institutional logics, which infuse organizations with specific values” (Ashraf et al., 2017, p. 797). Cross-sector partnerships bring together organizations that are embedded in multiple, often competing and overlapping institutional logics – a situation referred to as institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011). As a result organisations in partnerships often pursue potentially conflicting objectives.

There are also limitations to this group of literature. It fails to fully engage with the political context of partnerships. As the analysis of the two case studies will later show, this political context is highly variant and highly influential on partnership operation and outcomes. In developing a specialisation towards concepts such as leadership, or strategy, management literature fails to fully explore the background context of the partnerships considered. Also, this literature lumps all examples of ‘partnerships’ into general conclusions. On closer inspection, many of these examples are drawn from high-income countries, such as countries in the global north (Sel-sky and Parker, 2005; Ashraf et al., 2017), with very few studies from low- and middle-income countries (although this distinction is not often made explicitly). In this way, generalised conclusions are drawn on ‘partnerships’, without an appreciation of the specific and contextual nature of the examples that have been used to reach these conclusions. These conclusions tend to be a-contextual, nebulous and generalised.

## **Critical, Conceptual Literature**

This literature concerns the conceptual elements of partnerships in relevance to political and economic trends and is generally found within the fields of critical geography and politics. It investigates at an abstracted level the antecedents and the implications of PPPs in sustainability and gives more contextualised political insight than the management literature. This literature is useful in understanding the global trends that produce and are produced by PPPs in sustainability, for example, those of neoliberalism and capitalism (Forsyth, 2010; Miraftab, 2004; Linder, 1999) and gives some interesting insights. For example, Miraftab (2004) presents a theory that PPPs are a ‘trojan horse’ of neoliberal development; one that advances the interests of the private sector and the market under the banner of sharing power with the poor and the state.

These studies are insightful conceptually but maintain a level of abstraction from the contexts they consider. Similar to other literature in this subsection (3.2.1), it again gives a somewhat superficial analysis of partnerships (Warner and Sullivan, 2004). As will be outlined below, there are many studies available that aim to describe the contextual elements of partnerships in much more detail.

### **3.2.2. Relevant Literature Organised by Scale of Analysis**

#### **The Transnational Scale**

There is a group of PPP literature that explicitly studies PPPs in sustainability at the ‘transnational’ scale. This scale can be defined as one in which the partnerships studied apply to multiple countries simultaneously. Such transnational partnerships are established between international NGOs and private sector organisations, and in most cases are created through multilateral institutional fora such as the UN.

A salient group of this literature studies transnational partnerships using quantitative measures (Dias et al., 2015; Pattberg and Widerberg, 2016b; Pattberg, 2012; Biermann et al., 2009; Pattberg, Widerberg, et al., 2014). This group of literature, whilst insightful, operates at a very low resolution of analysis, compiling quantitative data on a large number of transnational partnerships, based on surveys concerning a limited number of variables. It is useful in giving very basic background information on transnational partnerships in sustainability. However, information produced by this literature needs to be used with a recognition that transnational PPPs in sustainability may differ significantly to other partnerships in different geographical contexts, for example PPPs in sustainability that operate and produce deliverables at the local scale.

There are also *qualitative* social science research studies that consider PPPs at a ‘transnational’ scale (Andonova, 2017; Andonova, 2014; Dauvergne and Clapp, 2016; Stadler, 2012; Bäckstrand and Kylsäter, 2014; Prügl and True, 2014; Buse and Harmer, 2004). Rather than

using a broad quantitative analysis, this group of literature uses a more intensive, qualitative approach to investigate specific themes in transnational PPPs. An example that represents this group of literature can be found in a paper by Andonova (2010), which analyses three case studies of PPPs implemented at the ‘global level’ using a principal-agent perspective of international organisations to specify the conditions for organisational entrepreneurship of PPPs. The study finds that partnerships have “created niches of governance in the multi-lateral system” (Andonova, 2010, p.48) , though, for example, providing an overarching partnership framework to facilitate numerous community-based initiatives in multiple contexts that may have otherwise not been possible. This study provides qualitative insights that are relevant to the ‘multilateral system’ of partnerships, at a similar ‘transnational’ scale to those within the quantitative studies of international partnerships outlined above.

A unifying theme of the above qualitative and quantitative literature operating at the ‘transnational’ scale is that, although some of the impacts of the PPPs detailed apply to local scales, the studies themselves focus only on the global or transnational scale in respect to their data collection, analysis and conclusions. Insights gained from this literature therefore apply exclusively to the transnational scale of partnership operation. Whilst this focus is useful in presenting broader reflections on transnational PPPs the literature is limited in that it fails to articulate how these reflections are related to specific contexts, for example the Niger Delta. In retaining a ‘transnational’ focus, this literature therefore remains somewhat abstracted from local contexts.

This thesis investigates the implementation of PPPs at a lower geographic scale than the above group of literature considers. The type of partnership considered in this study is one that operates at a local scale, where the partnership involves local community groups, local governments or local civil society groups. The insights of this study are designed to apply to dynamics at this local scale and also create reflections that are relevant at an international scale, as opposed to an analysis and conclusions that remain focussed solely the ‘transnational’ scale. In these cases, collaboration is required between the public and private institutions at a given locality to implement objectives that are aimed to benefit people or the environment. This type of collaboration, at a lower scale, often requires the participation of local civil society groups or NGOs. Where civil society groups also participate in the partnership, the PPP can be termed a Cross-Sector Partnership (CSP), or a multi-stakeholder partnership (Brogaard and Petersen, 2017).

### **The Local Scale**

There is a significant literature of social science research articles that study the implementation of PPPs (including multi-stakeholder or cross-sector PPPs) at local scales, in a range of contexts and applications. Some studies within this group are relevant to this thesis and some are not.

This section will outline the relevance of studies of PPPs at the local scale to this thesis.

### **PPPs At the Local Scale in Contexts Outside the Niger Delta**

There are many studies that concern PPPs in contexts other than low and middle-income countries and that concern applications that are not directly related to the environment and sustainability. This literature has the potential to produce 'cross cutting' insights that may be relevant to other studies on PPPs, such as this thesis. For example, Ysa (2007) present a study of governance forms in urban PPPs, using examples of implemented partnerships for regeneration and management of city centres in the US and the UK. The study finds that different forms of governance exist in urban PPPs. These forms, or models of governance structure are "networked, market-based, and hierarchical" (Ysa, 2007, p.36). The study concludes that partnerships are processes as opposed to simply outcomes, and governance forms can alternate as partnerships progress. In another similar article concerning PPPs implemented by the labour government in the UK in the late 1990s and early 2000s Flinders (2005, p.2015), finds that PPPs represent a "Faustian bargain in that forms of PPP may deliver efficiency gains and service improvements in some policy areas but these benefits may involve substantial political and democratic costs". It is also questionable how well these insights from studies of PPPs can translate across highly variant contexts. A study comprised of an analysis of partnerships in urban centres in a high-income country will be drawn from a completely different context to a study based in the rural Niger Delta considering issues of sustainability. There is, therefore, a likelihood that when studies of PPPs are more focussed on local scales, that there will be a greater divergence between the individual contexts the studies are addressing.

There are, however, studies of PPPs in low and middle-income country contexts other than the Niger Delta that are more relevant to PPPs in the Niger Delta. For example (Jamali, 2004) presents a review of PPPs in low and middle-income countries using a case study in Jordan, highlighting the relevance of findings to PPPs in sustainability in low and middle-income countries. The study concludes that PPPs are mired in conceptual ambiguity, yet there are some 'success factors' that can contribute to their success, such as careful planning, establishment of trust and other factors such as 'commitment', 'interdependence' and 'individual excellence'. Whilst this study is useful in giving a broad background to the application of PPPs in sustainability in low and middle-income country contexts, the final conclusions it presents, whilst insightful, fail to fully analyse the detailed, contextual, political dynamics that may contribute to partnership success and failure at the local scale.

## PPPs in Sustainability in The Niger Delta

The literature relevant to this thesis can be narrowed down further, which at this point brings the literature review to consider studies on PPPs in sustainability that are similar to this thesis in terms of the scale, context and topic. There are several studies that specifically consider PPPs in the Niger Delta (Jamali, 2004; Aniche, 2015; Idemudia, 2017; Ekpenyong and Mmom, 2015; Nwagbara and Nwagbara, 2014; Ite, 2007). This section will briefly review these studies.

In a study of PPPs in tourism in the Niger Delta, Ekpenyong and Mmom (2015) describe a range of potential benefits of the implementation of partnerships in the Niger Delta. Based on this range of perceived benefits that can be gained from partnerships, the study also describes regional-level changes that are needed to produce more partnerships in the Niger Delta. Whilst this study is useful in presenting a context to PPPs in sustainability that is similar to the context of this thesis, the study is limited in that it does not critically evaluate specific partnerships or present any empirical cases to support the arguments of the study. Moreover, the study is relevant to PPPs in *tourism* in the Niger Delta, and is not directly applicable to PPPs in sustainability. A study like this may yield cross-cutting insights relevant to this thesis. However, this study does not.

A study within this group of literature that has a more relevant topical focus is a study of 'partnership' and sustainability in the Niger Delta by Nwagbara and Nwagbara (2014). The study details the potential of collaboration between a range of public and private organisations within the Niger Delta for the purpose of improving sustainability in the region. The study presents an idealised version of 'partnership', showcasing a range of potential benefits drawn from wider management literature on 'partnership' and PPPs, giving some examples of partnership initiatives that have been developed in the Niger Delta. Although the study is one of only a small number of studies that consider PPPs in sustainability in the Niger Delta, the study does not specifically analyse the dynamics of the partnerships in question. Similar to the study by Ekpenyong and Mmom (2015) (above), the study serves more to showcase perceived benefits of partnership, but does not present any analysis or critical assessment of partnership dynamics.

Critical insights into partnerships for sustainability in the Niger Delta, based on empirical analysis can be found in studies by Ite (2007), Idemudia (2017), and Idemudia (2009). Ite (2007) and Idemudia (2009) focus on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives by International Oil Companies (IOCs) in the Niger Delta, showing how partnership with civil society and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) groups is becoming a key component of CSR initiatives by IOCs in the Niger Delta. Ite (2007) highlight issues of responsibility in a regional partnership between Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and SPDC. Although the PPP investigated 'in theory' shows potential to deliver progress on sustainable development in the Delta, Ite (2007) foregrounds issues of power and responsibility to highlight that NDDC are largely un-



derfunded by the national government, reliant on IOC funding and are therefore unable to fulfil a perceived responsibility of “providing the enabling environment (e.g. mandating, facilitating, partnering and endorsing) to strengthen CSR and the business contribution to development in the Niger Delta”. The study concludes that in being unable to fulfil this responsibility, NDDC remains a ‘toothless bulldog’ in partnering with SPDC CSR initiatives. Idemudia (2009) take a similar approach, examining a range of CSR partnerships in the Delta, concluding that overall, partnership between the state (for example through NDDC) and IOC is ineffective at creating opportunities for sustainable development in the Delta because partnership does nothing to fundamentally change the behaviour of IOCs, meaning that CSR initiatives have a marginal impact on development in the Niger Delta. The study concludes, in a similar vein to Ite (2007), that success of PPPs in sustainability in the Niger Delta is dependent on an adequate enabling environment, and an adequate enabling environment is a responsibility of the state. A more recent study by Idemudia (2017) examines an environmental business NGO partnership for sustainable development in Nigeria, looking at the ways in which differing NGOs interact. The study finds that there is a ‘creative tension’ between NGOs working within the partnership, that influences the behaviour of the partnership. Similar to the studies by Ite (2007) and Idemudia (2009), Idemudia (2017) conclude that a “weak institutional” context reduces the ability of NGO groups to exercise influence in a partnership. The above insights are useful to this thesis and can be used as literature to guide the analysis.

After the considerable social science research literature on PPPs is narrowed down to studies that address PPPs in sustainability in the local context of the Niger Delta, and of these studies narrowed to studies that analyse political dynamics of partnerships, such as power dynamics, only a small handful of studies remain (Idemudia, 2017; Ite, 2007; Idemudia, 2009). However, the above review has shown that some insights can be gained from studies that do not fit strictly within this scope of analysis.

### **3.2.3. Summary of Literature On PPPs in Sustainability**

This section has aimed to present an overview of the literature on PPPs relevant to this thesis. In doing so, several gaps are evident in the literature.

First, the ambiguity of the terms ‘partnership’ and ‘PPPs’ leads to a lack of specificity in the literature regarding the empirical scale and scope of studies. Much relevant literature operates in a very general, abstracted level, removed from context, without explicitly communicating a scale of analysis. Some of this literature is not empirically grounded or peer reviewed. Some is, yet draws conclusions that are abstracted and a-contextual. Whilst this group of literature is limited, some findings and insights may be useful as source material for this study.

Within studies of PPPs that do specify a scale of analysis is a group of literature that is con-

cerned with the macro-scale. These studies involve a low-resolution, macro analyses of partnerships that operate at the transnational level. Whilst insights from this group of studies may be useful, this thesis is concerned with partnerships in the Niger Delta that operate at the local scale. This thesis will aim to make connections with the transnational scale based on a analysis that is grounded at the local scale, as opposed to this group of literature, which conducts the whole study at the transnational scale.

There is a range of social science literature of PPPs that specifies a scale of analysis of study. Of this literature, some is drawn from analyses outside of the Niger Delta. Similar to other studies reviewed here, it is questionable how well the findings of these studies, drawn from entirely different contexts, relate to the context of this study. There is also a group of literature on PPPs in sustainability drawn from analyses within the Niger Delta. Of this group of literature, some studies continue to present non-critical or abstracted analyses whilst some present critical analyses with findings relevant to this study.

There are some trends running throughout the literature on PPPs outlined above. First, there is a tendency of literature on PPPs to abstract and generalise away from context. Next, many studies lack a detailed contextual political analysis, even when context is defined. The result is that the real-world politics of the Niger Delta presented in the previous chapter appears detached from the generalised literature outlined above. There is therefore an opportunity for this study to present a contextually grounded, politically focussed analysis of PPPs in the Niger Delta, to address the above gaps outlined by the literature review. In doing so this study aims to marry the somewhat abstract concepts of PPPs, extant in the range of literature outlined above, with the political context of the three empirical chapters and by extension the political context of Nigeria.

In order to contribute to the global debate on public-private partnerships in sustainability, using empirical data from Nigeria, the thesis requires an overall approach, or an overarching framework that can capture the complex political context of the Niger Delta in an analysis of PPPs. This overarching framework will be presented, along with the overall research questions at the end of this chapter, after the frameworks for each empirical chapter have been presented.

### **3.3. Case Study One: The SUNGAS Project**

#### **3.3.1. Research Context**

This section will schematically outline the concepts used to develop the theoretical framework for the analysis of the first empirical chapters, chapters five and six, which concern a case study of the SUNGAS project.

The SUNGAS project was an international CSP, designed to operate in the rural Niger Delta.

An element of SUNGAS that I have termed the gas to power element aimed to capture associated gas from oil and gas drilling, normally flared on-site, and convert the energy of this gas into electricity for communities close to the flare site. The gas to power element of SUNGAS attempted to meet its objectives through a PPP between SPDC, as the supplier of associated gas, and a range of NGOs based in the UK and Nigeria. SUNGAS ran for approximately six years, before SPDC terminated their involvement in the project, effectively shutting the project down. The SUNGAS project is, therefore, a good example of the type of international PPP required to meet global sustainability targets and makes a relevant case study for this thesis. The case study conducted for this thesis is an analysis of the project, its outcomes, and how these outcomes occurred.

The analysis of SUNGAS is split into two parts, which are covered in chapters five and six respectively. Chapter five uses a method of stakeholder mapping to present an overview of the stakeholders involved in the project, in relation to two variables: perceived interest and perceived influence. As the selection of the method contains less of a conceptual element and relates closely to the empirical data, the justification for the choice of stakeholder mapping as an approach will be presented within the empirical chapter. The second section, stakeholder analysis, aims to present a deeper analysis of the relationships and power dynamics between the stakeholders involved in the project. This chapter uses concepts of structure, agency and structuration- distinct theoretical approaches which will be schematically outlined below.

### **3.3.2. The Requirements of a Theoretical Framework For Stakeholder Analysis**

After collection of the data for this case study, I realised it would be difficult to describe the themes outlined by interviewees using the literature on partnerships outlined above. I required an analytical approach that dug deeper into the relationships between individuals, organisations and wider contextual influences that led to outcomes of the project that was empirically oriented.

These main themes form the data concerned what some interviewees referred to as a project design or *structure* of the SUNGAS project. Designed in a European context, this organisational structure appeared to fail in the Niger Delta. Interviewees described influences on the outcomes of the project at a personal, organisational and a supra-organisational scale that were produced by and also produced outcomes, emphasising how these dynamics affected the implementation of the designed project. Interviewees focussed on the project design, or ‘structure’ and how this structure was (mis)applied or, in a way that mis(directed) the project towards certain goals and described how the project was “resisted”, “changed” or “distorted” in the context of the Niger Delta. In addition, interviewees spoke of various *resources*, such as finance and the gas feedstock supplied by SPDC, as a vital component of the project operation, detailing how the distribution of resources influenced behaviour by representatives of organisations. I required a

theoretical framework that would allow me to capture these themes.

On a personal level, I was interested in focusing the analysis on the relationships between partners at the ‘meso-scale’ of the project, which is often neglected in international development research (Peters et al., 2012a). I became interested in attempting to understand what respondents were referring to when referencing the project’s structure and other ‘structural’ influences. This reference to structure appeared to be a way of explaining how power dynamics were enacted by individuals and translated into outcomes through both organisations and individuals. I was used to encountering the term ‘structure’, which is used in international development literature often (Oates and Mwathunga, 2018), and more widely through terms such as ‘structural adjustment’, yet I had not had the chance to develop a solid understanding of the term. A theoretical framework that accommodated themes in the data and also these personal interests was therefore important.

### **3.3.3. Alternative Available Theoretical Frameworks**

#### **Institutional Theory and Critical Institutional Theory**

As the SUNGAS project involved numerous institutions, for example as SPDC, the EC and NGOs, as partners in the project, institutional theory may have been an appropriate framework to understand how these institutions operated and interacted (Vurro and Dacin, 2014; Vurro, Dacin, and Perrini, 2010). However, a limitation of studies using strictly institutional approaches such as the work of Ostrom (2014) is that they have been criticised for an inability to appreciate varying scale (Cleaver and De Koning, 2015). Instead, these studies tend to focus on specific institutional dynamics within defined institutional parameters at single scales, rather than larger dynamic ‘structures’ or inter-relational power dynamics across scales (Agrawal, 2005). Based on these limitations, institutional theory may not have been able to capture the political context of the Niger Delta, the NGOs operating from the UK and larger, political or ‘structural’ influences.

A development of institutional theory, critical institutional theory, claims to further institutional theory, by, for example, better capturing scale (Cleaver and De Koning, 2015). However, in my view, critical institutional literature is still limited by a tendency to focus institutional dynamics at the community level, without considering in detail how these dynamics are influenced by or influence larger political phenomena. In my view, critical institutionalism fails to adequately join up the wider scale political influences and interactions between institutions such as private sector companies or national governments and international governance regimes such as global sustainability governance regimes. An approach that allows for the analysis to move across scales and consider the behaviour of different organisations across these scales, whilst appreciating the politics of varying contexts is needed.

## **Political Ecology**

An approach that aims to understand the political context of issues such as those of sustainability and that also aims to appreciate elements of scale is Political Ecology (PE). Broadly defined, PE is the study of the relationships between political, economic and social factors around environmental issues and changes that looks to understand ‘who wins and who loses’ when aspects of the environment become environmental problems (Robbins, 2004). The field maintains a focus on power relations in environmental governance as well as the coproduction of nature and society within a wider political economy (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2019).

The field emerged in earnest from radical movements in Geography and Ecology in the 1970s and 1980s. It can be seen as the result of a confluence of trends. The first of these trends was the development of a Marxist critique against Malthusian ideas in environmental thinking of ecologists such as (Hardin, 1968). Ecologists and natural scientists were seen to assume a certain apolitical nature to their work, and the development of PE as a field set about to deconstruct and illuminate some of the implicit power structures that produced and then were produced by what was seen as the politics behind ecological research of the time (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2019). A second trend was an evolution of human ecology and cultural ecology as fields of research, and a developing perceived need to incorporate larger influences of power such as the power exercised by local and national governments into ecological explanations of human behaviour at the local level (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2019).

Since its beginnings the field has gained popularity, becoming adopted by a range of scholars across disciplines. The field has branched into numerous strands. These strands are not always explicitly articulated by authors but can be discerned from the varying definitions of the field that those authors use. These varying definitions of the field have stressed differing approaches to the term PE. Early progression of the field took a broadly political economy-based approach to understand social aspects of environmental issues. An example of this can be found in the seminal text of Blaikie and Brookfield (2015). Later on, other authors began to concentrate their work on the analysis of formal political institutions or to identify environmental change as most important elements of inquiry (Watts 1985). In the mid 1990s, scholars worked to move PE toward more poststructural perspectives (Watts and Peet, 1996). Strands of thinking that developed from here emphasized the diversity and contingency of human made arrangements and the dispersed nature of power. Studies drew on the work of Michael Foucault to look at how power is effected through forms of governmentality and the ways that change occurs through negotiation and in routinised everyday practices (Agrawal, 2005; Li, 1996; Cleaver and Whaley, 2018). Another element of this poststructural turn was a call for PE to focus on narratives, discourses or stories as a way to unpick power structures behind the creation and transmission of knowledge as a form of power (Escobar, 1996).

The contemporary field of PE encompasses is a diverse continuation of these trends, with many scholars drawing on the term PE to describe and analyse social, economic and political factors across a diverse range of contexts. Overall, field has evolved from a “Neo-Marxist inspired structural analysis explaining environmental conflicts mainly in terms of class relations and global capitalist systems (at the beginnings of the birth of the field), to studies which aim to “demonstrate a more ‘complex’ understanding of how power relations mediate human-environmental interaction” (Van Hecken et al., 2015, p. 121).

A PE framework may, therefore, be appropriate for this study. Studies that employ a PE approach have attempted to understand scale (Christopher Brown and Purcell, 2005) and have been applied extensively in the political context of the Niger Delta (Watts, 2009; Watts, 2004c; Watts, 2001; Watts, 2018). PE also offers the ability to analyse power and process in contexts like the Niger Delta.

PE could, therefore, offer a framework that does not encounter the same limitations as institutional or critical institutional approaches. However, I argue that a PE approach is also limited. First, most studies using a PE framework have a focus on a particular geographic area. Although these studies claim to appreciate scale, their focus on a small area often falls into a ‘local trap’, which Christopher Brown and Purcell (2005) outline as a distinct lack of appreciation of scale within the field, which I argue continues through to recent works using a PE approach (Verweijen and Marijnen, 2018). Using a PE framework would allow for a detailed illustration of the political context of the SUNGAS project but may lean towards a particular focus on one specific geographical area, for example, the Egbeda community where the SUNGAS project was targeted. Indeed, most works that use a PE approach tend to focus on a defined area and serve the purpose of showcasing a particular interpretation of economic, social and political issues within that particular area. The approach of PE would be inappropriate for the organisational setting of the meeting rooms of London, where the SUNGAS project was managed from, simultaneously with the context of the Niger Delta.

As Agrawal (2005) argues, one of the greatest limitations of PE is that its interpretations of local politics often contain heavy implicit assumptions of the power relations between predefined social groups. For example, the analytical component of the ‘community’ is consistently represented as engaging in acts of resistance to a hegemonic authority. This hegemonic authority is the analytical component of the company, the state, or as is often the case, the capitalist or neoliberal ideology. As Agrawal notes, PE’s presupposition of analytical components and the power relations between them leads to conclusions that are often cemented before the analysis begins. If a PE analysis concerns a local community, and an oil company, the conclusion of the analysis will centre around the emancipation of the community from the malevolent and hegemonic power of an oil company. In PE, local community groups are often romanticised, and

private sector organisations and perceived capitalist structures are vilified (Hecken et al., 2018). PE serves as a method to showcase what it sees as injustice in the form of class struggle. In this way I argue that the field, generally, continues to follow neo-Marxist tendencies. I do not want to discredit the principles of PE, and I consider it important to draw attention to class struggle, but I believe that an analysis should not implicitly accept the existence of hegemonic power structures. I believe there is a tendency to demonstrate in the work of Watts (2009), Watts (2004c), Watts (2001), and Watts (2018), who tends to implicitly grant a pre-determinism to the ill effects of oil and the ‘petro-state complex’ which can be considered structural influences, without an interrogation of the formation of these influences. As outlined above, in the SUNGAS study I aim to interrogate the definition of structure, and in this way, I required a framework that could look into the *formation* of structure across scale.

PE has also become an umbrella that encapsulates a wide range of work. Therefore, if using a PE approach, it is worth defining what approach within PE should be used. A final note is that none of the above theoretical frameworks have an ability to foreground, (along with notions of scale and the formation of structure) the role of resources in the formation and functioning of institutions. As outlined above, the role of resources, such as financial resources or the supply of the gas feedstock for the project, appeared to be influential in guiding the action of individuals and organisations in SUNGAS.

### **3.3.4. Structuration Theory As a Framework**

Guided by the above requirements I turned to literature on the formation of structure as a potential way to understand the political dynamics demonstrated by the SUNGAS project, in particular concerning structure and agency. This relationship between external structural influences and individual agency has been a central debate within the social sciences for considerable time (Fletcher and Büscher, 2019). A structuralist perspective argues that individual actors respond to larger systems of power that guide human behaviour according to *sui generis* principles (Althusser, 1970); whilst actor-oriented perspectives celebrate the ability of individuals to use agency and local creativity to create “everyday forms of resistance” (Scott, 1998) against “determinist, linear and externalist” views of social change (Long, 2001, p.11). Leftwich (2010, p94) notes that, however arcane these debates on structure and agency may now seem,

“...the question of structure and agency is nonetheless central to our understanding of the politics of development and, in particular, how locally legitimate and appropriate institutions – political, economic and social – are all formed, changed or decayed. And it is also central to contemporary discussions regarding the possibilities for the emergence of new developmental states.”

In the 1970s, scholars sought to resolve what at the time was an intellectual stand-off by advancing a new perspective that could marry structural determinism with individual agency. Two prolific intellectuals led this shift in thinking: Bourdieu and Nice (1977) developed a theory of practice which proposed that structures were erected through the everyday practices of individuals; and Anthony (Giddens, 1984b) developed structuration theory- a theory that proposed that structure and agency worked recursively to comprise social systems. With this theory, Giddens proposed a succinct definition of social structure as “rules and resources, recursively implicated in social reproduction” (Giddens, 1984b, p.1).

The strength of structuration theory is that it is a framework for understanding how societal structures are translated into social outcomes by or through individuals. There are several ways in which some of the basic ideas surrounding structuration theory appeared to resonate with the concepts I was interested in regarding the gas to power project. First, I had the impression that structuration theory was versatile enough to apply to a range of contexts, from meeting rooms in London to the political context of the Niger Delta. Next, it appeared to be able to explain the mechanisms behind the formation of organisations, and how these different organisations were both created by people and influenced their behaviour at the same time. Also, the apparent versatility of the theory appeared to provide a framework that considered how organisations and individuals could be influenced by large scale political events. Finally, integrated into the very definition of the theory was a reference to resources, which appeared to be a key determinant in the behaviour of individuals of organisations in the SUNGAS project, and highly influential in the project’s outcomes.

However, as I became familiar with applying this theory to the empirical data of the interviews I conducted, some fundamental limitations of the theory surfaced, meaning I was not able to use Structuration Theory as an outright theoretical framework to investigate the SUNGAS project.

### **3.3.5. Limitations of Structuration Theory**

The major limitation of structuration theory, as applied to a context such as the gas to power project involves the ontological scale at which the theory is designed to operate. As Rob Stones (2005) highlights, Structuration Theory operates at the ‘general ontological level’. According to Stones, this is in part because, at the time, Giddens believed this level of theoretical thinking was neglected both within the field of sociology and in the structure-agency debate. As structuration theory operates at this general ontological level, it is difficult to ‘downscale’ to the ontological level of a specific phenomenon being used in an empirical analysis. Giddens has therefore been described by some commentators as a ‘meta- theorist’ (Stones, 1996, p115) whose insights are most relevant to the large-scale, long-term processes of society. Giddens himself even warned away from drawing too heavily and specifically on his work for empirical analysis, describing



structuration theory as more of a 'sensitising device' to guide analysis (Giddens, 1984b, p.231). It is for these reasons that structuration theory has been criticised by some (Thrift, 1985) as too broad and theoretical to be applied to everyday situations. Thrift (1985) even to posits that in this way Structuration Theory may not even be a theory. Due to these limitations, Structuration Theory, as a tool to investigate SUNGAS, became both insightful and inapplicable, useful and useless, in equal degrees.

Despite these limitations, various studies have used structuration theory directly in empirical organisational contexts (Whittington, 2013; Jarzabkowski, 2008; Manning, 2008; Coopey et al., 1998). However, after becoming aware of its limitations, I decided to look for a way to explicitly translate Structuration Theory to an empirical setting. To apply the theory to the organisational context of the gas to power project, it needed to be adapted.

### **3.3.6. Strong Structuration Theory as an Adaptation**

As a way of addressing the above limitations to structuration theory, Stones's 2005 work *Structuration Theory* distils debates and criticisms of the theory into an enhanced version of structuration, which he presents as *Strong Structuration Theory*. Stones describes Strong Structuration Theory as a model to "allow us to advance our thinking about the power of external social forces to limit an agent's ability to do otherwise." (Stones, 2005, p. 7) It is not an alternative version of Giddens' theory but an attempt to provide a strengthened version of the theory that is primarily of use in empirical research (Jack and Kholeif, 2008).

Through Strong Structuration Theory, Stones (2005) continues the main concepts of structuration theory as the recursive implication of structure and agency in the reproduction of social systems, but with a focus on drawing down structuration theory from the ontological level of *ontology in general*, which deals with more abstract notions of social occurrences, to the level of *ontology in situ*, which deals with the application of these abstracted notions to empirical situations, thereby allowing them to be tested on real-world phenomena. Strong Structuration Theory has since been applied with a degree of success in various empirical organisational studies, (Jack and Kholeif, 2008; Coad et al., 2016). The advantage of strong structuration theory in these cases is that "it is a means of experimenting with theory, testing it and teasing it out using the empirical data whilst at the same time using the theory to mine ever further to get that data" (Jack and Kholeif, 2007, p. 210). Parker (2006, p. 122) outlines how, despite some limitations Strong Structuration Theory "forces the researcher to thoroughly engage with the *who did what, where, when, how and why* of the study" facilitating research as "drilling down... detective work" (Jack and Kholeif, 2007, p. 216). Stepping back from the details of the theory for a moment, the investigation into the failure of the SUNGAS project was, in essence, a similar form of investigation. Strong Structuration theory on a broad level, through its applicability, provided

an appropriate means to carry out this task.

### **Summary of the Conceptual Framework of Structure, Agency and Strong Structuration**

The structure agency debate appeared to delve into the heart of major questions surrounding the SUNGAS case study, which I argue could not be answered through other avoidable theoretical approaches. Structuration theory initially appeared to be versatile enough to apply to multiple contexts and scales and dig into explanations of why certain individuals and organisations behaved, including a foregrounding of resources. Strong Structuration Theory allowed for Structuration Theory to be ontologically downscaled to the empirical study of the SUNGAS project.

The above discussion has aimed to schematically detail the process of determining a relevant theoretical framework for the detailed analysis SUNGAS project. As mentioned previously, the applied details of the application of this framework will be presented within the empirical chapter. The next section will outline the search for a conceptual framework to understand the second case study, of SPDC's model of community engagement in the Niger Delta.

## **3.4. Case Study Two – Shell Petroleum Development Company's (SPDC's) Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU)**

### **3.4.1. Research Context**

This stage of the data collection process involved collecting data from a new geography and environment in Bayelsa state, described by respondents at the heart of the Niger Delta. This stage involved the collection of data on a model of community engagement designed and implemented by SPDC, termed the GMoU. The details of this model and the methods used to collect data will be presented in more detail in the empirical chapter on the topic, chapter seven. However, to justify the choice of the conceptual framing, some schematic trends in the data that guided the choice of the framework will be presented here.

The SUNGAS case study was a story of organisations in the UK attempting to design and implement an organisational structure in Nigeria. However, the data collected for the GMoU case study were very different. The story of the GMoU centred around a seemingly hegemonic power of IOCs and the development of methods of governance of IOC and community relations by IOCs. Stories of the GMoU concerned questions of how and why these governance methods were employed by the IOCs, and how communities responded to governance regimes where they were implemented. Stories were told by community representatives concerning the GMoU as

a conscious strategy or a tactic of power, developed and employed by IOCs to undermine community relations. Alternative stories, sometimes from IOC representatives, concerned the ability of community members to use the GMoU to undermine community relations. These stories gravitated towards questions concerning the mentality of various actors involved in processes of power, from the reasons why IOCs designed such forms of governance in the first place, to the reasons why certain community representatives responded to these forms of governance.

This stage of the data collection was a personal journey for me as a researcher. As will be explained in more detail in the methods section, my journey from the urban environments of Port Harcourt, Lagos and Abuja, to the rural environment of the Delta demonstrated how much information on a topic such as the GMoU can change depending on where this information originates. Descriptions of the GMoU from urban-based IOCs or NGO representatives compared to those from rural-based community representative varied so much that it appeared respondents were talking about a different topic. A variance of perspectives appeared to fundamentally alter the representation of information. At this stage in the research, analysing the motivations and the mechanisms behind varying perspectives and representations of information became a daily task for me while I was in the Delta analysing the GMoU. It was important to find a conceptual framework that could capture these dynamics encountered in the field.

### **3.4.2. Requirements of a Theoretical Framework**

The stories I encountered of the GMoU also involved battles between ideologies that were grounded in the complex history of the Delta. Respondents framed stories in a language of historically embedded power struggles between social groups such as communities and IOCs, with reference to the political history of the Niger Delta outlined in chapter two. It became clear that the GMoU was a topic that consistently brought up questions of power, and that in some cases the GMoU was being used to create power, in complex and uncertain ways. I required a framework that would allow me to explore how power is formed at certain instances yet appreciate how this power is embedded in the political history outlined in the previous chapter.

I also was interested in developing a conceptual framework that would complement the approach used to explore the SUNGAS case study. As outlined above, the SUNGAS case study appeared to be an attempt to implement an organisational structure. I was interested in understanding the nature of this structure and how it guided behaviour and exploring concepts of structure and agency appeared to allow me to do this. The GMoU case study, on the other hand, presented a picture of dispersed and contested power that was uncertain and unpredictable. Whereas the SUNGAS case study revolved around the idea that structure could be implemented, the GMoU case study questioned whether elements of structure even existed in the first place. By finding a framework for the GMoU study that could begin from the point of contestation and

uncertainty, I could complement the approach of the SUNGAS study, which appeared to begin from a point of order.

To analyse the data from the GMoU case study I needed a framework that could capture the formation of power, embedded in history, of actors and organisations involved in the GMoU. The framework was required to capture the motivations behind the actions of actors and organisations aiming to direct the behaviour of others, and how these actions influenced the behaviour of those it aimed to govern. The framework needed to appreciate heterogeneous perspectives behind motivations. Finally, I needed a framework that instead of starting from a point of structure, started from a point of the uncertainty of structure, foregrounding questions of how and why relations of power were formed at various instances.

### **3.4.3. Available Theoretical Frameworks**

Similar to the analysis of the SUNGAS project PE (defined above in section 3.3.2) is a framework that also could be used to analyse the GMoU case study. However, I decided against using PE as an approach for several reasons. First, as mentioned above, the collection of data on the GMoU case study was a process that involved the dismantling and reconstruction (sometimes multiple times), of a range of preconceptions I carried with me, from the UK to the Delta. These preconceptions surrounded the power relations between social organisations, largely IOCs and 'communities'. I discovered that in many ways I conceived IOCs and communities as pre-defined analytical components with predefined power structures. My experience in the Delta demonstrated that these analytical components and power structures between them were anything but defined and predictable. On closer inspection, the boundaries of community and IOC appeared to break down and power became unpredictable, dispersed and uncertain. I found that my preconceptions of structural relationships served to cloud my ability to analyse the context I encountered.

A demonstration of how such preconceptions can distort analyses be found in Agrawal's 2005 critique of PE. Agrawal's chapter resonated with my thinking when I returned from the Delta, and was an important juncture in my search for a conceptual framing.

However, to analyse the GMoU, I required a theoretical framework that could eschew presuppositions of relations and power dynamics to explore multi-faced and contested formations of power and their genesis that defied prediction. Following the logic of Agrawal, I decided not to use PE as a framework and instead to employ the more post-structuralist logic of governmentality and its extension, environmentality.

#### 3.4.4. Governmentality As a Framework

Originally propounded by Foucault (Burchell et al., 1991), governmentality has become a popular analytic used to explore political phenomena. Prolific proponents of the theory include works by Dean (2010), Murray and Li (2007), Rose et al. (2006), Agrawal (2005), and Rose et al. (2006), each developing varying interpretations and applications of Foucault's original principles of analysis. Governmentality, broadly defined, can be understood as the study of the "techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour" (Foucault and Faubion, 1997, p.82). In other words, the techniques and procedures that lead to *governance*, or put more succinctly, "*the conduct of conduct*" (Li, 2007a, p.275). Governmentality as an analytic therefore has a specific approach to understanding relations between people. It puts relations of power at the centre of analysis to explore how these relations are generated and enacted through institutions, the formation of new knowledges and certain techniques of governing. By foregrounding the formation of power, governmentality "regards the exercise of power and authority as anything but self-evident and in need of considerable analytical resources" (Dean, 2010, p9). Importantly, governmentality also looks at the behaviours that governance seeks to change, and how forms of governing affect these behaviours, uncovering 'modalities of being' that result from techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour (Agrawal, 2005, p. 229).

Environmentality is an extension of governmentality that applies the analytic principles of governmentality to the behaviour of people in relation to their environment. (Agrawal, 2005, p.229) defines environmentality as,

"A way to think about environmental politics... that attends carefully to: the formation of new expert knowledges; the nature of power, which is at the root of efforts to regulate social practice; the type of institutions and regulatory practices that exist in a mutually productive relationship with social and ecological practices and can be seen as the historical expressions of contingent political relationships; and the behaviours that regulations seek to change, which go hand in hand with the processes of self-formation and struggles between expert- or authority-based regulation and situated practices"

Environmentality is, therefore, an appropriate analytic to apply to the analysis of the GMoU in addition to governmentality, that can be used to consider issues of environmental politics surrounding the GMoU. Fairly recent and salient examples of the application of Environmentality include Agrawal's work, cited above and also the work of Li (2007b). The environment of the Niger Delta is such a fundamental component of the region's political dynamics, including in respect to the GMoU. Conservation of the environment of the Niger Delta is advertised as a

corollary of the success of the GMoU (SPDC, 2018b), and environmental issues are at the heart of wider issues in the Niger Delta.

The data collected for the GMoU case study involved complex networks of power relations operated through institutions, knowledges and subjectivities. The data also concerned the formation of relations of power surrounding the GMoU as a dynamic and contested process embedded in a rich history of interactions between groups in the Delta at differing scales. Once more these formations of power appeared to involve mentalities or techniques of governing, which in turn produced modalities of being in those who were subject to them. Governmentality and environmentality appeared to be concepts that would allow me to avoid presuppositions of power relations by exploring how these relations were formed. It is important to note at this point that a better understanding of only the GMoU is not the primary objective of the analysis. Rather the GMoU is a focus of analysis that can illuminate more systemic political trends in the Delta. It is these trends that have the potential to shed light on the genesis of the intertwined issues of environmental degradation and inadequate socio-economic development in the region.

### **Summary**

The GMoU case study was rooted in the complex political history of the Niger Delta, involving unpredictable and complex interplays between powerful groups and individuals. It required an analysis that appreciated these complexities of power, without relying on presumptions of power that are present in similar work from the Niger Delta that tackles the same issues. Governmentality, and its extension, environmentality, appeared to offer an approach that could do so. This approach, in starting from a post-structuralist perspective, could complement the framework for the SUNGAS case study of structure, agency and structuration - which started from a position of assumed structure.

## **3.5. Visualising the State and Capital in The Niger Delta**

### **3.5.1. Research Context**

The final empirical chapter aims to ‘fill in the gaps’ left by the two case studies. To do this, the chapter investigates the role of the Nigerian state in the two case studies and in relation to the functioning of capital in the Niger Delta. This chapter also aims to bring together themes from the two previous case studies to work towards conclusive summaries of the thesis. To bring these analytical components together, I was required to search for a relevant theoretical framework. This section begins with a summary of trends within schools of thought that theorise statehood in Sub-Saharan Africa, exploring some of the limitations to these schools of thought.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter on the political history Niger Delta, the politics of the Niger Delta are deeply imbricated with formations of capital and resource extraction and an analysis of the state in the Niger Delta would not be complete without an analysis of the state in respect to its relation to capital. This section therefore also lays a groundwork for an analysis of the state and its relation to capital by summarising briefly the gaps in the literature that considers formations of capital in the Niger Delta.

### **3.5.2. Available Conceptions of The State in The Niger Delta**

Conceptualising ‘the state’ has a rich history within the social sciences and in particular within studies of politics and power. As Hay et al. (2014, p.1) note - “no subject is more central to political discourse and political analysis than that of the state.” Studies of the state have produced explorations of notions of class, power, territory, identity, sovereignty and culture which uncover the very fabric of societies. By their nature studies of the state foreground issues surrounding the success and failure of the operations of societies they examine- often exposing significant assumptions about these societies and the way they operate (Abrams, 1988).

Many studies informally use the terms ‘government’ and ‘the state’ interchangeably, but the distinction between the two and how they will be investigated by this study needs to be made clear at this point. A definition of the state includes the government, citizenry, the territory, and sovereign power; whereas a definition of the government is restricted to the legitimate ruling body of a territory at a point in time. In this study, however, the state in the Niger Delta will be theorized through an analysis of the government, to explore questions of territory, sovereignty and its relationship with foreign forms of capital.

### **Limitations of Literature on The State in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Normative Traps of Eurocentric Analyses**

Modern scholarship theorising the state in Africa is currently grappling with a range of historically embedded conceptions of statehood, which often reflect notions rooted in a history of colonial relations between African and European societies. Although a largely European and American scholarship on African societies tries to tackle the remnants of colonial paradigms within their work, nearly all studies that consider the state in Sub-Saharan Africa still emanate from Eurocentric perspectives (Boege et al., 2008). As a result, recent critical scholarship considering notions of statehood in Sub Saharan Africa has highlighted what (Hagmann and Didier, 2010) term ‘heuristic limitations’ that emanate from these Eurocentric perspectives.

The heuristic limitations referred to by Hagmann and Didier (2010) can be found within narratives in several fields that consider Sub Saharan African States, including political science,

economics, development and other literatures. These schools of thought have a clear tendency to portray Sub-Saharan African states and societies in through a language of failure. Ferguson (2006b, p.2) summarises these trends, stating how Africa, “continues to be described through a series of lacks and absences, failings and problems, plagues and catastrophes”. Common conceptions centre around discussions of African criminality, corruption, shadowy and clandestine operations, producing a narrative centred around the notion of weak states. These themes are clear in examples such as Collier and Hoeffler (2004a) who present an analysis of ‘greed and grievance’ in conflict and civil war; or Bayart et al. (1999), in his work on the ‘criminalisation’ of the African state.

Themes of state failure also extend from academic literature into grey policymaking literature that concerns ‘state-building’. This grey literature forms the basis of an international policy-making arena strongly guided by Eurocentric discourses. Dinnen (2007, p.260) describes a “booming international state-building industry”, which consistently revolves around these narratives, contributing to what Boege et al. (2008, p.16) term a “deep-rooted horror vacui,” building an assumption that where there are ‘weak’ states, there “is chaos, corruption, death”.

Such conceptions can also be found in a more nuanced form in literature on African states. Ferguson (2005, p.379) explains how modern economics of mineral extraction in Sub Saharan Africa has caused a ‘thinning’ of state-society relations. His analysis concludes that there is ‘hollowing out’ of states in Africa, continuing notions of weakness or lacking in respect to state functionality. Watt’s Mar. 2004 theory of ‘ungovernable spaces’ in the Niger Delta, also uses notions of chaos and disorder to describe an absence or lacking state functionality within the Niger Delta. Literature on frontiers of capital in Sub Saharan Africa also contains notions of chaos, disorder and state failure (Watts, 2018), where frontiers are portrayed as “spaces of contact between, on the one hand, the wild and the untamed, the savage and the uncivilised and the conquered, mastered and civilised space” (Rasmussen and Lund, 2018, p.396). The *failed state* thesis is therefore pervasive across the literature on Sub Saharan Africa.

The *failed state* thesis is problematic in several ways. First, it can serve to constrain analysis. As (Cooper, 2001, p.2016) points out, “the price of persistently representing developments on the continent as ‘a lack, a failure or distortion ... is that one fails to ask what is actually happening in Africa.” This point is reiterated by Meagher (2012, p.1075), who notes that “since weak or *failed states* have not given way to complete anarchy in most parts of Africa” different forms of order should be acknowledged. Therefore, an analysis that stops at a conclusion of failure, lacking or weakness will fail to understand what forms of order might be present and functioning. A second point comes from a normative perspective and is outlined by Dinnen (2007), who shows how analyses that describe African contexts as lacking, chaotic or distorted may be perpetuating neo-colonial discourses that serve to set the ground for interventions that exercise



vested political motives, similar to dynamics described by Ferguson (1990). After all, describing phenomena in a language of failure implies the possession of a solution, and the implementation of a solution can facilitate the capture of power.

Finally, again from a normative perspective, when Western literature defines other cultures as distorted, lacking, corrupt or failed, it immediately creates a parallel conception of a comparator. As Bøås and Jennings (2007, p338) point out:

“To say that something ‘fails’ or ‘is failing’ is a normative judgement that is only meaningful in comparison to something else; in this case, that something else is the existence of a Westernised, ‘healthy’ state that, unfortunately, has little relevance to most of the states in question because it has simply never existed there.”

It can be argued that such Eurocentric analyses of African societies do more to highlight the ideals of the authors than reflect the reality of the context upon which they are applied. Such notions of comparability are also outlined by post-colonial literature, linked with the production of notions of national identity. Edward Said, for example, argues that a primary mechanism behind the labelling of cultures as deficient is to cement an image of one’s own culture as superior (Said, 1978). This idea is also articulated by Achille Mbembé (2001, p.2) who describes how “Africa as an idea, a concept, has historically served, and continues to serve, as a polemical argument for the West’s desperate desire to assert its difference from the rest of the world.” ‘Africa’ is thus often portrayed through analyses as a “dark continent” against which the lightness and whiteness of “Western civilization” can be compared.

Similar normative notions can be seen within policymaking literature. Within international policy-making discourses and associated grey literature on ‘good governance’ (Porter and Watts, 2017), there are clear depictions of what African states *should* be. These ideals have a tendency to envision the state- and by implication society- as a formalised, bureaucratic, uniform, predictable entity oriented towards efficient and equitable delivery of public services to a populace within a defined sovereign boundary. A clear illustrative example of these notions can be found in Ghani et al. (2006, p.2), who, identify ‘ten features of statehood’. These are:

1. “A legitimate monopoly on the means of violence,
2. administrative control,
3. sound management of public finances,
4. investment in human capital,
5. the creation of citizenship rights and duties,

6. provision of infrastructure,
7. market formation,
8. management of the assets of the state,
9. effective public borrowing,
10. maintenance of rule of law.”

The above normative principles can be found in many examples from the grey literature on good governance. A US aid document on good governance also shows these ideals in practice. According to this example, states in “crisis” are the ones “where the central government does not exert effective control over its own territory or is unable or unwilling to assure the provision of vital services to significant parts of its territory” (USAID, 2005, p.1). The UK Department For International Development (DFID) also outline a ‘working definition of weak states’, based on the ability of governments to provide services to citizens (DFID, 2010).

What that unites the ‘failed state’ and ‘good governance’ literature is that it is built upon assumptions of state functionality that are strongly derived from Eurocentric norms. However, these Eurocentric norms were built from theorisations that had the purpose of understanding the functionality of European states. Notions around a legitimate monopoly on violence, the authority to create rules within a sovereign border and a clear distinction between society and state can be described as reflective of Weberian ideals (Hay et al., 2014, p.7). The notion that the state has a duty to protect its citizens and provide public services can be seen as a later development of the modern European state, that can be linked with ideas surrounding discipline and sovereignty (Foucault, 1975).

If we take a Foucauldian position that political phenomena are an expression of a particular time and place, it seems impractical to impose ideas of societal functionality upon foreign contexts, where cultures, practices norms and values are an expression of a different context at any given time. It is possible that when analyses built upon European ideals are held up against the workings of African societies, they consistently produce results characterised by notions of lacking or failure that do not reflect other possible functionalities of states.

### **Conceptualising African States: New Directions in Scholarship and Policy**

In reaction to the limitations of this Eurocentric and idealised literature, more recent scholarship has been calling for researchers to resort to ‘either more empirically grounded or more conceptually innovative approaches to public and state authority in Africa’ (Hagmann and Didier, 2010, p.541). This is necessary, to “move beyond the ‘pathological’ approach to analyses of political

order... to engage with alternative systems of order... that have often been more successful” (Meagher, 2012, p.1074).

How can scholarship avoid producing research that perpetuates the *failed state* theory? One approach forwarded by Meagher is that of hybrid governance analyses, where instead of “denouncing kinship-based societal formations... one can also look at them as valuable social support networks, which have their own checks and balances... which can positively contribute to political order” Meagher advocates an approach that sits between ideals associated with formality and bureaucracy on the one hand and informality, ‘chaos and violence’ on the other hand. She advocates a more nuanced, comparative approach to informal governance that is capable of distinguishing between constructive and corrosive forms of non-state order, and that clarifies rather than blurs the relationship between local informal order and local legitimacy.

Whilst appreciating the need to understand informal modes of governance, it is also important not to slip into a trap of romanticising informal and in some cases violent governance structures that have little or no legitimacy from the perspective of the governed. A group of literature outlined by Meagher that can be described as ‘Neo-Tyllian’ suggests the current functioning of many African states, particularly in respect to informal power structures and violent events, may be a necessary step in state-building. However, this literature fails to address local legitimacy of these processes and critically detail why violence and informality are better processes.

Aside from theories of hybrid governance, one method of avoiding analyses that produce results characterised by a language of failure would be to use methods of analysis that are not derived from European contexts. However, this is a difficult task. Even the most prevalent voices in post-colonial literature, which call for new forms of analysis when considering Africa, have been criticised for using the forms of analyses they deride. In his work *On The Postcolony*, Mbembe (2001) calls for a new approach to African scholarship and denounces Western analytical techniques. However, at the same time, he fails to present any new and alternative analytical techniques and shows evidence of using the same techniques he denounces, such as Foucauldian forms of analysis and terminology (Weate, 2003). There is, therefore, no social analytical approach designed from within the context of the Niger Delta that helps to understand contexts such as the Niger Delta. The task of scholarship on the African state is now to advance an understanding that is conscious of the local context and local perspectives, without falling into the analytical shortcomings and normative traps outlined above. Perhaps in this way scholarship itself will always be limited in its ability to analyse any foreign contexts. To conduct an analysis, perhaps, until a new method of analysis that reflects African contexts is envisioned, analyses will keep falling into a trap of comparing African contexts with Western contexts. The solution, for now, is to be aware of the normative traps of extant analytical methods. The analysis presented in chapter six attempts to devise a way of analysing Nigeria in a way that is conscious of the

shortcomings outlined above, with a critical appreciation of their limitations, aiming to build a different perspective of statehood and regional power dynamics in the Niger Delta.

### **3.5.3. Understanding Formations of Capital**

As outlined in the previous chapter, The Nigerian State has relied on oil and gas derived capital for over 50 years for a majority of its revenues, demonstrating a close relationship between capital and the state. Linking the state and capital also has relevance to the overarching focus of this thesis on PPPs, as the premise of PPPs is that environmental challenges of the Anthropocene cannot be addressed without utilising the revenue streams of the private sector. In Nigeria, and in the Niger Delta, where the two case studies of this thesis are based, the majority of private sector operations, and the vast majority of private sector revenue streams are centred around oil and gas capital. There are several schools of thought that try to understand what I will term *formations of capital* in relation to capital in the Niger Delta and similar environments. The next few paragraphs will review these main schools of thought before the analysis conducted in chapter 8. In conceptualising the state, the final chapter aims to fill in gaps in the thesis so far, moving towards a more detailed understanding of how resource extraction shapes development in the Niger Delta. To do so, however, it is worth recapping briefly how modern resource extraction in the Niger Delta is understood.

#### **Understanding Resource Extraction and Capital In the Niger Delta**

As shown in the previous chapter, section 2.7, the *resource curse* literature provides a macro-level perspective on oil and gas led development using the nation-state as the independent variable (Collier, Van Der Ploeg, et al., 2010; Karl, 1997; Ross, 2015; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004b; Mehlum et al., 2006a; Robinson et al., 2006). However, this literature is limited in that it stops short of giving full explanations of how and why Nigeria specifically suffers from weak institutions, how these institutions function and how they contribute to lower than expected levels of development.

Similar trends can be seen in the *resource frontier* and *resource enclave literature*, which also tries to understand formations of capital. I also argue in the previous chapter that this literature describes rather than explains the behaviour of capital in environments like the Niger Delta. This literature contains a lack of exploration of complexity, particularly in relation to relations across scale and involving the state, in addition to avoidance of addressing questions concerning formations of capital head-on.

Further limitations of the *resource frontier* and *resource enclave* can be outlined in relation to theoretical discussions presented throughout this chapter. The resource frontier literature is

grouped by Thaler et al. (2019) into loosely structuralist and post-structural categories. Thaler outlines how structuralist conceptions can be found in political-economic analyses that consider frontiers as the expansion or reproduction of capitalist relations of production surrounding resource extraction (Moore, 2015; Hall, 2012); on the other hand post-structuralist perspectives purportedly see a more variegated landscape where frontiers emerge and are shaped through contested socio-ecological relations at multiple spatial and temporal scales (Tsing, 2010; Watts, 2004b; Peluso and Lund, 2011; Eilenberg, 2018). Poststructuralist accounts aim to portray instances where diverse actors come together variously and often violently around ‘contested frontiers’ that are dynamic products of sedimented socio-ecological processes ‘disarticulated’ from each other and linear narratives of national development and capitalist structure (Thaler et al., 2019). I argue, however, that any analysis that uses the frontier as the unit of its analysis implicitly acknowledges capital as a structural formation, as the frontier itself is conceptualised as the frontier of capital. Therefore, a post-structuralist analysis of resource frontiers is somewhat contradictory. Prominent analyses focusing on social relations surrounding frontiers, most notably Rasmussen and Lund (2018) and Watts (2004b), thus carry an implicit directionality to these social relations. Companies as embodiments of capital are seen as malevolent entities engaged in a class war with local communities, who in turn engage in acts of resistance. In this way, such works carry neo-Marxist undertones which are inherently materialist and not post-structuralist. These neo-Marxist undertones also resonate with the limitations of PE outlined in section 3.4.3.

I argue that the resource frontier and resource enclave literature has the same tendency as PE to only showcase its interpretation of class struggle. The literature draws attention to the fact that capital, in the form of oil companies, is pervasive and exclusionary, with an implicit assumption that capital *should* be inclusive- a theme that carries through the resource frontier and resource enclave literature. That these themes are implicit in the literature means they are not explicitly or critically addressed. Explicitly and critically addressing these implicit assumptions requires a re-analysis of formations of power at multiple scales. This analysis inevitably comes back to questions of the state, its relation to capital, its ability to regulate capital to be inclusive, and its ability to transform capital towards the provision of public services, and finally the notions that produce the idea that the state *should* do so. These questions are not fully addressed by the literature and are instead neglected and pushed to one side under a banner of ‘complexity’. In this way the resource frontier and enclave literature is vague and there is room to explore further. It is these questions that chapter six aims to address.

#### **3.5.4. Summary- A Conceptual Framework to Study The State**

Unlike the previous two sections, where a theoretical framework was found and justified, it is more difficult to develop a theoretical context to study the state in Nigeria as the topic is notoriously difficult to study and embroiled in normative arguments. The analysis will aim to avoid the traps of Eurocentric analysis and explore the deeper questions of the state and capital outlined above. As a starting point of analysis, the chapter will use an approach of visuality, to attempt to visualise the state from the perspective of the rural Niger Delta. As this approach is closely related to the empirical data and the analysis of the two case studies, it is more appropriate to present it, along with the relevant literature, in chapter eight.

### **3.6. Defining an Overall Framework For the Study and Defining Research Questions**

Finding the appropriate conceptual framework will allow a clear articulation of the contribution of the outcomes of the analysis, as a whole, to the academic literature. There are a number of requirements of an overall conceptual framework for this thesis. The framework first needs to allow the analysis to consider the grounded historical, political contexts of the partnerships examined in the case studies, thereby addressing the gaps in the literature on PPPs in Sustainability outlined above. Next, the framework needs to be able to combine historically grounded findings gained at the local-level with global-level discourse on PPPs in sustainability outlined in the introduction chapter. If possible, the framework should also be versatile enough to resonate with the theoretical frameworks of the empirical chapters that consider structure and agency, governmentality and the visualisation of the state.

An overall conceptual framework that will fit the above requirements is a framework presented by Van Hecken et al. (2015). In this article, which details approaches to Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) projects, Van Hecken et al. (2015, p. 117) argue that current approaches to PES present a “superficial understanding of the roles of culture, agency, social diversity and power relations in the shaping of PES institutions and their outcomes”. These weaknesses in the PES literature are similar to those encountered in the literature review of the partnerships literature at the beginning of this chapter, which found a need for more historically embedded, contextual, analyses of the political dynamics that intrinsically shape the institutions involved in PPPs. In response to these perceived weaknesses in PES, Van Hecken et al. (2015) aim to direct the PES research agenda towards a more reflexive, historical and adaptive approach to exploring and explaining the dynamic social and political processes surrounding individual and collective action in PES schemes. In addition, the authors, in presenting this framework, aim

to guide research towards an approach that allows contextualised findings gathered at the local level to be synthesised and contribute to wider, global-level debates. In this way the approach outlined by Van Hecken et al. (2015, p. 123) aims to ‘integrate anthropological style research with political-economic structural analysis’. This approach is very similar to the aims of this study, to synthesise contextualised findings at the local level to contribute to global debates. To allow for this type of investigation, the approach of Van Hecken et al. (2015, p. 117) aims to foreground concepts of structure and agency to better investigate how the grounded political contexts analysed in PES projects influence and are influenced by wider ‘structural’ political forces. This interrogation at the confluence of structure and agency is an ongoing area of inquiry within the field of ecological economics. There is a wealth of literature that explores the link between ‘on the ground’ initiatives and global debates using concepts of structure and agency (Hecken et al., 2018). In this way the framework resonates directly with the exploration of structure and agency within the empirical chapter on the SUNGAS project, creating a way to explore the link between local dynamics of PPPs and global structures such as the global push for PPPs implementation in international policy making circles, outlined in the first chapter.

### **Linking the Approach to PES of Van Hecken et al. (2015) to the Approach to PPPs of This Thesis**

PES is a different concept to PPPs. PPPs in sustainability are a tool advocated by the international policymaking community to address global issues of sustainability through the partnering of public and private institutions from the international to the local level. PES is a tool that aims to investigate how land users, who tend to be poorly, if at all, motivated to protect ‘nature’ on their land, can be encouraged to adopt environmentally-sound land use practises that secure ecosystem conservation and/or restoration through direct economic incentives from ecosystem services beneficiaries Engel et al. (2008). However, PPPs and PES are remarkably similar. Both schemes are born from a global drive for sustainability related action, advocated at the international level, to be implemented at the local level, and both are part of a collection of seemingly novel, market-based instruments devised by the international policymaking community. Despite the subtle differences between the two initiatives, these similarities allow for a translation of the concepts outlined by Van Hecken et al. (2015) to be used as a tool to investigate PPPs in this thesis. The approach of Van Hecken et al. (2015) is an ideal approach for addressing the gaps previously outlined in the literature review.

A final advantage of this conceptual framework is that it allows for an integration of PE into this analysis. The framework of (Van Hecken et al., 2015) aims to avoid some of the structural preconceptions of PE (Agrawal, 2005) detailed in this chapter. In doing so the framework allows for a more nuanced exploration of the interaction of local, historically embedded, contextual

dynamics, with wider structural political forces. This study is sympathetic to the ideals of PE, yet wants to avoid the traps described by Agrawal, outlined in the PE section above (3.3.3) . In addition, in response to the proposition made earlier that the field of PE is too broad to create a study that only draws on PE as a framework, using the approach of Van Hecken et al. (2015, p. 117) allows for a more specific and nuanced inquiry that does not sacrifice the principles of PE. In utilising this framework, the approach can be sympathetic to the principles of PE whilst avoiding the traps outlined above.

The framework will be applied to the thesis by drawing on the main conceptual elements presented by (Van Hecken et al., 2015), to create the main research questions of the thesis. The conclusions of each empirical chapter will be referenced back to these research questions, thereby linking findings back to the overall framework. The final conclusion chapter will synthesise these findings to fully answer the main research questions.

### **3.6.1. Research Questions**

- How do contextualised, historically embedded dynamics, of power, process and meaning and culture influence the implementation of public-private partnerships in Sustainability in the Niger Delta?
- How do the grounded, contextual, findings of the empirical chapters relate to the globalised ‘structural’ elements of public-private partnerships as tool in global sustainability governance regimes that were outlined in chapter one of the thesis?

## **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has brought together a range of analytical components outlined in the previous introduction chapters. It has aimed to bring together theoretical frameworks that can be used to marry the overarching themes associated with PPPs in sustainability with a historical context of resource exploitation in the Niger Delta and the data of the three empirical chapters. In doing so it has explored a range of theoretical perspectives and associated literature. The first case study of SUNGAS will use stakeholder mapping to identify stakeholders (explained in more detail within in the empirical chapter) and then concepts of structure and agency and strong structuration to analyse the relations between these stakeholders. The second case study of the GMoU will use theories of governmentality, and its extension, environmentality. Finally, the last empirical chapter on the state will aim to avoid the Eurocentric and descriptive nature of many analyses of the state and capital, beginning from a starting point of ‘visuality’.



The overall framework of the thesis will draw on the conceptual framework of Van Hecken et al. (2015) through the framework's contribution to the design of the main research questions and then through the response to these research questions at the end of each empirical chapter. The framework will then be used to structure the main conclusion of the thesis. Before the empirical chapters are presented, however, the methods of the study need to be outlined.

# 4

## **METHODS: ADAPTING TO A CHANGING CONTEXT**

## **Abstract**

This chapter outlines and justifies the methodology and the methods of the research used to compile this thesis. The first part of the chapter introduces the background to the research and the deterministic influences on its design and implementation, outlining successive challenges that created a need to regularly adapt the research design. The next section of the chapter considers the overarching methodological themes of the research. It returns to the main research questions to justify a general research strategy and the specific methods used. The research is classified as intensive qualitative research, which allows for a justification of the particular qualitative research approaches used. It is determined that the thesis leans towards a ‘case-study’ approach to qualitative data collection and analysis. However, it is emphasised that the research should not be constrained by this category, and at points borrows methods from other styles of qualitative research, for example, some ethnographic methods and some narrative research. The use of interviews, elite interviews and ethnographic methods to collect data is justified and outlined in relation to the literature. The coding techniques employed are explained before issues surrounding my positionality and ontological and epistemological assumptions are presented. The chapter finishes by outlining the overarching limitations to the research, and some concluding notes.

## **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter has two overarching aims. First, it aims to give a background to the research conducted for this thesis, by briefly outlining deterministic factors that influenced the research design and the implementation of this design through four stages of data collection. Next, the chapter aims to justify the specific research methods used for data collection, explaining why these methods were used over other available methods to answer the overarching research questions. Finally, the chapter will outline the strengths and limitations of the research methods used. The chapter is split into three sections: the research background, overarching methodological themes and research limitations.

## **4.2. Research Background – Deterministic Influences on the Progression of the Research**

### **The Designed PhD Research Partnership**

This PhD project was designed as a research partnership between a private-sector research partner Carbon Plus Capital (CPC) and the department of Geography at the University of Sheffield. CPC, are a development finance company based in London that focuses on low-carbon enterprise solutions to environmental and social issues- information on CPC is available on their website (Capital, 2019). The research partnership was designed around an ‘informal’ agreement between the Department of Geography and CPC, which appeared to be mutually beneficial to the PhD researcher and to CPC. CPC would allow the PhD researcher unique access to their projects and networks to conduct research. In return, CPC envisioned the PhD researcher as a ‘third party’ auditor of their practices (private communication, Anonymous, June 2016). Originally the agreement stipulated Mozambique as the location of the PhD research.

The agreement outlined a £5000 travel fund, provided by CPC, to cover the costs of travel for the researcher, which complemented other sources of funding for the PhD research. The majority of funding was provided by a University of Sheffield scholarship, with other funding topped up by the Grantham Centre for Sustainable Futures. Overall, funding supported a stipend for four year’s of study, with a Research Training and Support Grant (RTSG) available to cover research costs.

### **The Research Partnership in Practice**

At an early stage in the research, CPC changed the research location from Mozambique to the Niger Delta. This change of location altered the practicalities of the PhD research considerably,

requiring many alterations to the project design.

My security in the Niger Delta became an immediate concern. Parts of the Niger Delta can be considered conflict zones and are listed as areas of ‘all but essential travel’ by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2019). Consequently, when in the Niger Delta I would not be able to conduct fieldwork in rural community settings, due to a risk of kidnap. I would need to stay in secure hotels and also would need to work with trusted drivers when travelling. These security factors significantly raised the cost of the PhD project. Also, the general costs of researching in Nigeria is greater than in many other countries in Africa, such as Mozambique. Despite the range of funding available to the PhD researcher, the increased expense of The Niger Delta as a research location meant that the £5000 travel contribution by CPC became vital to completing the project. The change in location of the research, therefore, conferred power to CPC, as the organisation responsible for the release of travel funds.

A further significant change to the context of the research was that the project CPC was running in the Niger Delta, the Niger Delta Low Carbon Growth Initiative (NDLCGI) was in its infancy, with a large scope, but no evidence of implementation.

In conversations with CPC I was assured that the additional security concerns and the increased cost of research were manageable. I was also assured that the NDLCGI would reach implementation imminently. Based on the changes to the research context, I redesigned the PhD research plan, creating a project that would assess the NDLCGI from planning through to implementation, focusing on the application of global carbon standards throughout the implementation of the project.

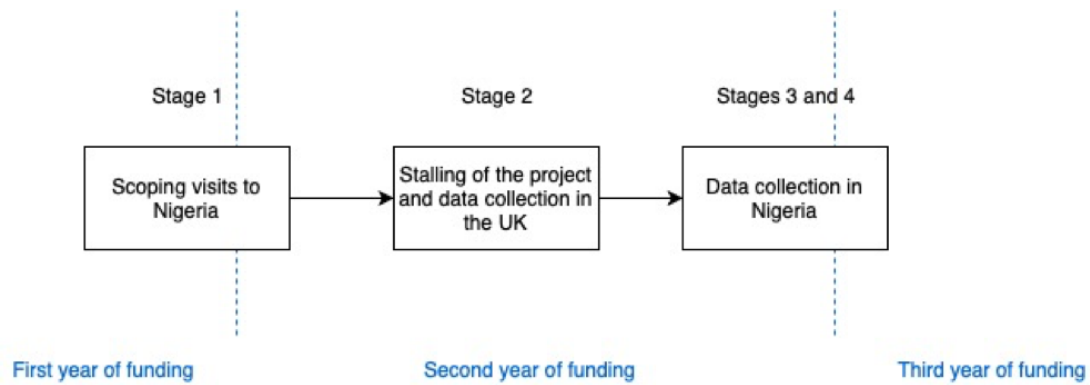
#### **4.2.1. Fieldwork Stages**

The progression of the research can be considered in four stages (see figure 4.1). The next sections will outline the research context and the research methods applied at each of these stages.

#### **4.2.2. Fieldwork Stage One – Scoping and First Visits to Nigeria**

##### **Research Procedure and Methods Used**

The first two visits to the Delta were conducted in July and November 2016. This stage occurred at the end of the first year of the four funded years of PhD research. The first visit to Nigeria involved an introduction to stakeholders involved in the NDLCGI, including the Nigerian partner of the NDLCGI, Inemo Samiama. The second visit was centred around a workshop involving consultants associated with the Initiative outlining plans for its implementation. Both visits



**Figure 4.1.:** *Stages of Data Collection*

lasted about a week and a half, were located in Port Harcourt and were organised by CPC, who arranged accommodation, travel, and the programme of the visit.

### **Limitations**

My movements were organised by CPC and restricted to hotels, with one visit to a rural farming project that was a prospective site for the implementation of the NDLCGI. My interactions were supervised by CPC and confined to local consultants hired to advise on the NDLCGI and other representatives, sourced by CPC. There was little opportunity for chance encounters and to experience the day-to-day reality of the Delta, and limited ability to communicate with people outside of the circle of influence of CPC.

By the second visit to Nigeria in November 2016, I was entering the second year of the research partnership with CPC. At this stage, the NDLCGI had not progressed any further towards implementation than when I began the PhD research more than a year earlier. It became likely that my PhD research would be considerably constrained by this lack of progress on the NDLCGI. In contrast to this lack of progress, however, conversations with CPC about the NDLCGI consistently centred around exciting new developments. Each conversation raised my expectations through impressions of imminent implementation. From my perspective, it became very difficult to realistically interpret the true progression of the initiative. Whilst no progression was being made on implementation, all communication suggested otherwise.

At the same time, discrepancies arose surrounding travel arrangements organised by CPC. Travel dates for the two scoping visits were each arranged by CPC, dates of travel were promised, but then incrementally delayed, week by week, over a period of months. For my first trip to Nigeria, incremental delays to the travel date resulted in the delay of the trip past the three-month

entry date of my visa. These incremental delays contributed to a significant amount of time spent 'in limbo', waiting for travel arrangements to materialise. I was unsure of a date of travel but unable to take any alternative measures. As a result, planning the PhD project during these periods was impossible. This dynamic of delayed travel dates continued throughout the duration of the research. I estimate that throughout the total course of the research, approximately 8-12 months were spent waiting for travel arrangements to become concrete. Also, a significant amount of my time was also spent chasing up CPC to inquire about arrangements for travel.

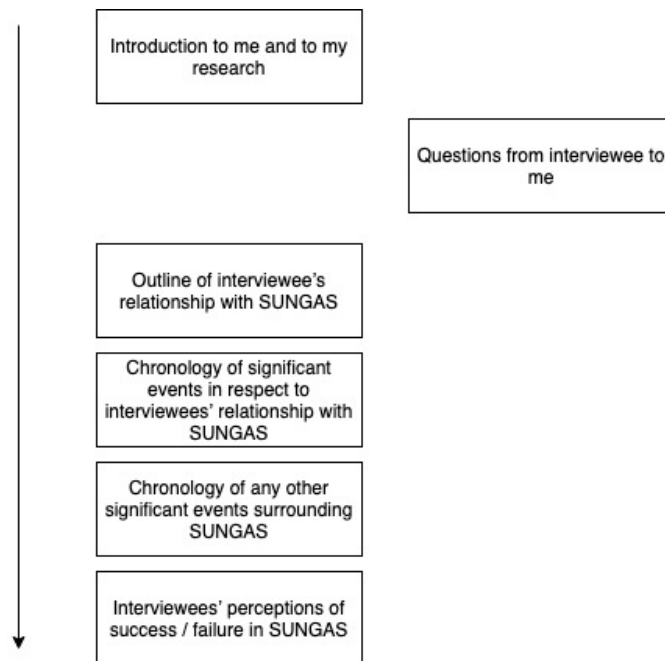
### **Changes to the Project Design**

It became clear that the restrictions to sample sizes of respondents and the lack of implementation of the Initiative and restrictions to travel meant that relying on CPC as a research partner risked jeopardising the completion of the thesis. During the second year of PhD research, I, therefore, redesigned the PhD project. To move the research topic away from a reliance on CPC and the implementation of the NDLCGI, I decided to study another project, the Sustainable Utilisation of Nigeria's Gas and Renewable Energy Resources (SUNGAS) project. Developing a case study of the SUNGAS project moved the PhD research away from a reliance on CPC but retained a focus on a topic that could be linked with the NDLCGI, if it reached implementation. Also, as SUNGAS operated in part from the UK, I could conduct interviews in the UK while waiting for plans to travel to Nigeria to become concrete. These changes made the PhD research feasible again.

### **4.2.3. Fieldwork Stage Two – Investigating SUNGAS in the UK**

#### **Research Procedure and Methods Used**

To investigate the SUNGAS project I used a snowballing approach to contact interviewees in the UK, asking interviewees for the contact details of other partners involved in the project. The initial contact to begin this snowballing approach had to be obtained from CPC, and it took close to a dozen attempts to obtain these contact details. Once an interview was conducted with this contact, I obtained a list of other organisations and contact details, which allowed me to progress the research further. In total I contacted around 15 people in the UK who were involved in the SUNGAS project, I used emails, phone calls and on-line social media networks contact potential interviewees. I ultimately conducted interviews with five people involved in the SUNGAS project and the remainder declined to be interviewed or failed to respond. As the SUNGAS project was managed from the UK, these interviews were elite interviews with representatives of organisations.



**Figure 4.2.:** *Interview Guide for Interviews on SUNGAS*

See 4.2 an example of the interview guide used for interviews on SUNGAS, adapted from Cloke et al. (2004). The guide detailed in 4.2 served as a basic structure of interviews, but interviews deviated from this plan considerably. At some points, the interviews moved into a co-constructive format, with the interviewee and interviewer discussing opinions on a topic.

### **Limitations**

Limitations at this stage stemmed from the heavily charged political backdrop to the SUNGAS project. The project was abandoned after several years of grant extensions and had left many implementation partners frustrated, resentful and dejected. Accordingly, most partners involved in the project were very reluctant to meet to talk about its failure. Also, at this stage of the research, the European Commission (EC) (the primary funder of SUNGAS) were investigating the failure of SUNGAS. Some stakeholders involved in SUNGAS were also likely reluctant to share information in light of this investigation, presumably unwilling or unable to risk a conflict of interest. Another complication of investigating SUNGAS was that CPC were planning to implement a project very similar to the element of the SUNGAS project I was researching. My



position as a researcher working in partnership with CPC likely invoked mistrust from some respondents. There is a likelihood respondents assumed I was working on behalf of CPC to uncover information on SUNGAS that might be used by CPC to conduct a new project. Two-thirds of stakeholders I approached for interviews, therefore, did not respond to my request for an interview.

The political context of the fallout from the SUNGAS project undoubtedly introduced bias into the responses of interviewees. Interviewees were naturally keen to lay blame on other partners involved in the project, abdicating responsibility for the project's failure. Generally, respondents interviewed regarding the SUNGNAS project laid the blame for the failure of the project on other partners equally. I have been very careful not to use accusatory information deriving from one source, only considering information a finding when it was a theme in the data, deriving from multiple sources.

### **Ethical Procedure**

Due to the politically charged context of SUNGAS some interviewees wished to remain anonymous. I decided to keep all interviewees associated with the SUNGAS project anonymous. I was required to avoid questions from respondents on who I had already been in contact with. These questions came from all respondents and also from CPC, who were interested in the progression of my research and who I had been talking to. Explaining to interviewees the process of upholding anonymity was straightforward but was more difficult with CPC. I believe being unable to disclose the procedure of my research may have alienated CPC from the research process, perhaps reducing their investment in the research project.

As the NDLCGI had outlined plans to operate a 'gas to power' project, similar to the objectives of SUNGAS, some interviewees attempted to gain information on the progression of this gas to power project through me. I was repeatedly asked by some interviewees 'what was happening' with the gas to power project under the NDLCGI. At these points, my knowledge was interrogated, and I became the topic of research. In transferring information, I could end up interfering with the project and did not want to adversely influence the political situation I was researching. On numerous occasions, I had to deflect questions attempting to exploit my perceived position as a source of information of CPC. This may have had the effect of alienating me from respondents and may have caused respondents to withhold certain information.

### **Changes to the Project Design**

Stage two was a critical stage in the survival of the PhD project. The data I collected on the SUNGAS project in the UK were not sufficient to create a PhD thesis, as I had only been able

to conduct seven interviews. It was a requirement for me to travel to Nigeria again to collect more data, but CPC appeared reluctant to facilitate this. In total, I waited around 10 months to be able to travel to Nigeria for the third stage of research. Perhaps a distancing of CPC from the supervision of my research reduced their commitment to funding travel in these later stages of the project, although this point is speculation. Eventually, CPC provided funding for a three-month trip to Nigeria which comprised the third and fourth stages of the research.

#### **4.2.4. Fieldwork Stage Three – Investigating SUNGAS in Nigeria**

##### **Research Procedure and Methods Used**

The main purpose of this stage of the research was to talk to Nigerian stakeholders in the SUNGAS project, to gain perspectives from the Nigerian side of the project operations. This stage of the data collection began at the end of year two of the PhD funding and continued into the beginning of year three. This stage was initially based in Port Harcourt, where I arrived with a short list of contacts involved in the operation of SUNGAS on the Nigerian side of the project. I attempted to implement the same methods of sourcing respondents and conducting interviews I had used for the previous stage of the research in the UK.

I was required to learn different methods of sourcing respondents in Nigeria. Contacts preferred using phone calls to communicate as opposed to emails, with phone calls used to make arrangements to meet in person. Arrangements to meet were often made on the same day, or the evening before the meeting. It took several weeks and some mistakes to learn how to fit in with this different approach to working. I began each day with a round of phone calls to contacts to arrange potential interviews. To maintain a level of organisation in sourcing interviewees, I mapped the social networks I navigated and kept notes on each phone conversation. Approximately one-third of interviewees I contacted resulted in a meeting and interview. I worked closely with Inemo Samiama to gain new connections and pursued existing connections to find new contacts. Whilst the methods used to source interviewees were different from those used in the UK, the interview methods used in Nigeria were identical to those used in the UK and presented in section 4.2.3.

##### **Limitations**

I experienced what I perceived to be a very large degree of mistrust from potential respondents, and very few respondents were willing to share information on SUNGAS. The dynamics I experienced were similar dynamics to those I had experienced in the UK, in that most respondents did not want to talk about a failed project. However, I also gained the impression that some potential respondents did not trust the authenticity of my identity, perhaps assuming I might be

posing as a researcher to gain sensitive information. To mitigate this sentiment, I offered to send emails summarising my research from my university email account. Despite these efforts, however, some potential respondents continued to show a significant degree of mistrust.

### **Changes to the Project Design**

After several weeks in Nigeria, I had conducted around five interviews with respondents familiar with the SUNGAS project operations on the Nigerian side. At this point, it became clear that the number of respondents available to discuss the SUNGAS project was exhausted. Once this handful of interviews had been conducted in Nigeria, I had obtained 12 interviews in total. Whilst these interviews were rich in information, I decided they did not constitute enough data to compose a whole PhD project. Also, I wanted the thesis to consider more information than this analysis of one specific partnership. Whilst in the field, I began to look for ways to widen the scope of the research.

As mentioned above researching SUNGAS potentially allowed conducting a comparative case study with a gas to power project under the NDLCGI, however at this stage in the project it became clear that due to a lack of progression of the NDLCGI this comparative case study would not be possible. Three years into the PhD project, the NDLCGI existed largely as a pre-implementation plan, and this plan only existed in the ideas of a very small number of people, namely those representing CPC and Eco Delta Services (EDS). In my opinion, whilst interesting, this arrangement did not constitute a substantive research project. I did not want to research only an ideology and was keen to investigate real-world dynamics surrounding the *implementation* of public-private partnerships in sustainability.

This stage of the research involved another redesign of the PhD project. I had exhausted all available contacts for the SUNGAS project, but at this point had conducted 12 interviews. I spoke to a contact who offered to provide access to an Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) he directed in Bayelsa State. This contact did not have any involvement with the SUNGAS or gas to power projects, but had significant experience working with communities in the rural and urban areas of Bayelsa state. He invited me to work with his NGO in Bayelsa, where I would be able to visit communities safely and gain first-hand information on their interactions with Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC). He directed me towards a PPP model developed by SPDC, termed the General Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU)- a topic that had surfaced in various discussions after I arrived in Nigeria. Although pursuing this option was a major divergence from the original research plan, it was a significant opportunity. In light of a stagnation of other opportunities to conduct research, I decided to follow this opportunity and begin studying the GMoU in collaboration with the NGO in Bayelsa.

#### **4.2.5. Fieldwork Stage Four - Investigating the GMoU in Nigeria**

##### **Research Procedure and Methods Used**

This stage of the research was unusual as it was relatively unplanned and ad-hoc. I did not have a chance to research the topic in advance or plan the methods. Therefore, the methods applied at this stage of the research differ from those used previously and can be considered largely inductive (Lund, 2014). Also, the logistics of the research changed during this stage. Instead of the research continuing to be based in Port Harcourt, where I met respondents in cafés or hotels, I was travelling with the NGO to visit communities in their setting in Bayelsa State.

The NGO, I worked with, Stakeholders' Alliance for Corporate Responsibility (SACA), was comprised of people local to Bayelsa State, who possessed a great deal of experience working with communities in the local region and had a good rapport with these communities. Representatives were experienced judges of the local context. Security with this NGO was therefore adequate, and I was able to travel to relatively rural areas to speak to community representatives in person.

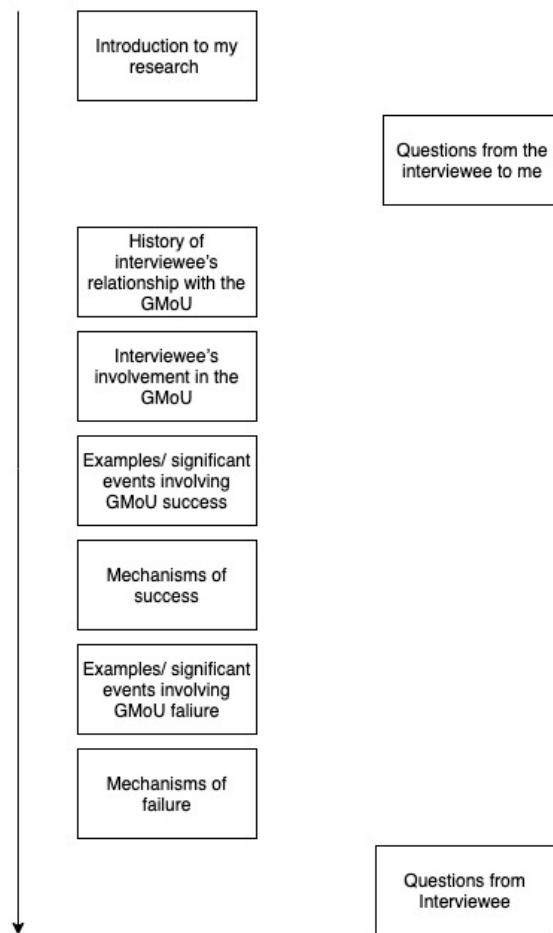
During this stage of the research, I had no input into the planning of each day. I usually received a phone call in the morning from my colleges and was picked up from the hotel with only a rough idea of where we were going. Plans would often change at the last minute. Therefore, my methods were modelled in response to these conditions and I had to adapt to this context as it changed.

SACA took responsibility for the formalities of meeting communities. The organisation called ahead and arranged each meeting. On the way to each meeting they informed me on the appropriate way to introduce myself to the community leader and conduct my behaviour. I was welcomed into each community in a rural setting, as a guest, and as a colleague of a trusted NGO. I believe these circumstances gave me access to information I would not otherwise have been able to access and that relatively few foreign researchers have the opportunity to gain this level of access to rural Niger Delta communities. For example, I was able to conduct an interview with the King of Ekpetiama Kingdom, whose account became integral to the analysis of chapter five on the GMoU. In the car on the way to visit, I was told the procedure of the visit, and how to formally introduce myself in the region's local dialect. I was therefore welcomed into the house of the king and was able to speak to him on his terms. He detailed a full oral history of his kingdom and valuable insights which I would not have been able to obtain from another source. This information was invaluable to my final analysis.

I had very little control over the direction of research at this stage and hence had little opportunity to impose my perspectives on the research process. I was taken to numerous locations where I was required to listen and work out the context myself and I had no control over the

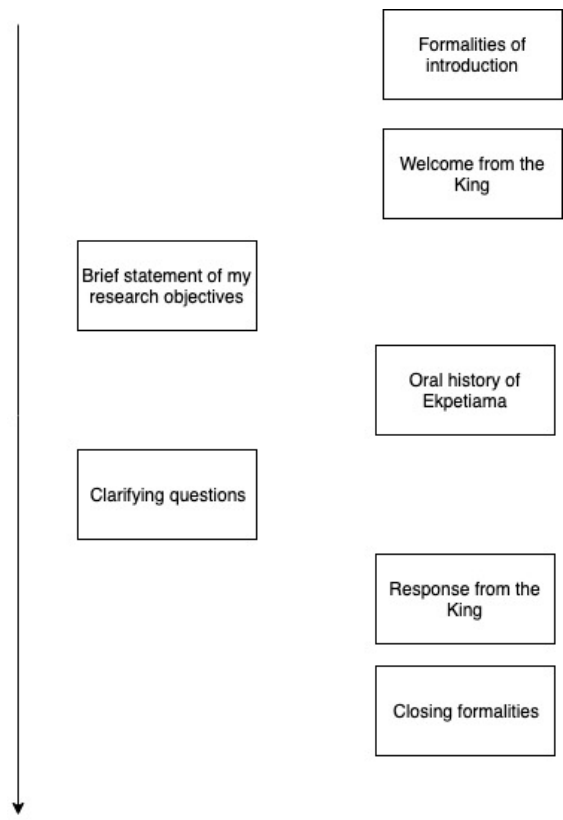
selection of respondents. Generally, all elements of this stage of the research were out of my control, aside from the specific questions I asked. Overall this was a positive experience, I was able to obtain unique information and gain, in my opinion, a deeper and more unique insight into topics than in other stages of the research. I was able to gain a view on the relativity of perspectives I had obtained throughout the research process, gaining a comparison of the opinions of Nigerian urban elites with community representatives.

The specific methods used at this stage of the research can be described as inductive, as there was little opportunity to prepare for this stage of the research. A loosely planned interview guide was drawn up before each interview but changed considerably, depending on the interview I was conducting. An example of a planned structure for the interview with the king is outlined in figure 4.3 , page 96.



**Figure 4.3.:** *Interview Guide for Interviews on the GMoU- Planned*

However, the logistics of interviews at this stage of the research were very much out of my control and required me to fit in with the formalities and practices of my hosts of the local area. The interview was full of information but did not necessarily go to plan. The structure of the interview with the King of Ekpetiama that transpired is shown in figure 4.4, page 97.



**Figure 4.4.:** *Interview Record for Interview With the King of Ekpetiama*

**Limitations**

A limitation at this stage was that SACA were in control of each of my meetings and interactions. As an activist organisation, it was their prerogative to show me examples of situations where there were considerable problems with SPDC’s implementation of the GMoU. The organisation did not take me to communities where the GMoU was successful and tended to focus discussions towards the mechanisms behind GMoU failure as opposed to success. The perspective of the King, for example, was likely to be motivated by activism, as he spent considerable time working as an activist with large international organisations. In other interviews I conducted, the same King was referred to negatively. The information shown to me during my time with the NGO was therefore likely biased, in support of the NGO’s objectives.

However, I do not believe that this biased perspective was detrimental to the final findings of

the research. Whilst the GMoU is successful in some areas, it is unsuccessful in many, and I have been careful to mention in the analysis that the results of the GMoU's implementation are mixed. This discrepancy between success and failure was the main point articulated to me by SACA. Representatives of SACA maintained a focus on examples of where the GMoU had failed as a counter-narrative to the very accessible narrative of SPDC, who characterise the GMoU as a universal success. Appreciating this bias allows for the comparison of SACA's perspectives with those given to me by representatives of oil companies and other respondents in urban areas, as a component of the research. Without the help of SACA, I would have very little representation of local perspectives on GMoU implementation, which tended to focus on failure as a counter-narrative to other narratives. In this way, the experience with the SACA gave balance to the data I collected.

### **4.3. Overarching Methodological Themes**

The previous section, 4.2, has outlined the background to the research at each stage of the data collection, with emphasis on how the conditions of the research influenced the design and implementation of the research plan. This section will now address the overarching methodological themes that are applicable to research in general. This section revisits the main research questions to determine the type of social enquiry appropriate to the research. From here the type of qualitative research approach is justified, along with the specific qualitative methods used. The section also presents some notes on positionality and my ontological and epistemological assumptions before finishing with a summary of the research limitations.

#### **4.3.1. Justifying the Case Studies Used**

The above section has outlined that the case studies implemented were chosen, to a degree, due to the severe constraints of the research process. However, these case studies were also chosen because of their relevance to the research conducted, in particular, in relation to the research questions. This section will briefly add some detail demonstrating why each case study is relevant to the research questions and to the thesis as a whole. The research questions, for reference are:

- How do contextualised, historically embedded dynamics, of power, process and meaning and culture influence the implementation of public-private partnerships in Sustainability in the Niger Delta?
- How do the grounded, contextual, findings of the empirical chapters relate to the globalised 'structural' elements of public-private partnerships as tool in global sustainability



governance regimes that were outlined in chapter one of the thesis?

### **Case study 1 - The SUNGAS project**

As is explained in more detail in chapter six the SUNGAS project was a collaboration between, primarily, the EC (a state organisation), The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (an international NGO), Living Earth Foundation, UK (LEFUK) (a UK based NGO) and importantly SPDC in the Niger Delta. By definition this is a public private partnership, as it is a collaboration that involves one or more public and private organisations. This case study offers a rich and detailed example of the implementation of a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in practice in the Niger Delta. It gives the opportunity to explore some of the lived politics of a partnership in sustainability, allowing for the investigation of power, process and meaning in the creation and maintenance of a number of institutions that were required to implement the partnership, thereby giving the opportunity to explore the first research question. In respect to the second research question, the international nature of the public private partnership allowed for an investigation in the interplay of structure and agency over scale. It allowed for a look at the way in which the contextualised dynamics of power and process in the institutions investigated transferred to the global level. In this respect the investigation of the SUNGAS case study offered an ideal case study for this thesis.

### **Case study 2 - The SPDC GMoU**

This case study could be seen by some as a more of an example of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project, as opposed to a PPP study. SPDC's engagement with communities in the Niger Delta is typically viewed through the lens of CSR, and indeed the case study of the GMoU could be classified as a CSR study. However, there is good justification for this case study fitting the remit of the research questions. First, the GMoU is a good example of a public-private partnership model that is focussed on sustainability. Ite (2007) outlines in detail the partnering strategy of SPDC in the Niger Delta, within the context of PPPs as a global sustainable development initiative. The study shows how SPDC, since the early 2000s, has taken a distinct partnering approach in the Niger Delta, and that the company's approach is emblematic of a global drive for partnerships in sustainable development. The approach of SPDC to the GMoU can therefore be considered an example of the company's wider approach to creating partnerships for sustainable development. The partnering approach is also not unique to SPDC, with other oil companies advertising an approach to sustainable development in the Niger Delta explicitly run through PPPs (Idemudia, 2009). Next, the GMoU is a form of community engagement that is directly built from a World Bank partnership model, as outlined in detail by Sera and Reynolds

(2008) and Joyce Malombe (2000). Therefore, whilst the GMoU may be seen as a CSR strategy by some, there is ample evidence that the GMoU is an example of exactly the type of partnership that is advocated by multilateral institutions as a method of meeting global sustainability targets. The case study of the GMoU offers a perfect example of a partnership between one or more public and private entities that is grounded in a historically contextual, politicised environment such as the Niger Delta. The study of the GMoU also gives an opportunity to understand how interactions at this local level relate to the global, structural elements of PPPs as a method to meet global sustainability targets.

### **4.3.2. Defining a Research Strategy**

Although the design of the research needed to be altered many times, it is still possible to outline an overarching research approach, or a “wider research strategy” (Cloke et al., 2004, p.217). This will allow me to justify the specific methods of enquiry I employed during data collection and analysis to produce the work within this thesis.

To define this wider strategy, I will refer to a framework for classification of research social research developed by Harre (1979) and outlined summarised in Sayer (1984). This classification separates social research strategy broadly into two groups: *intensive* and *extensive* methods (see figure 4.5, page 101). Using this framework social enquiry can be classified into general categories. The first, *extensive* social research, involves “work focusing on patterns and regularities found among a large-scale representative group of people... using methods of data construction such as formal questionnaires and standardised interviews, and data interpretation typically involving statistical analysis”. By contrast, *intensive* research “pursues specific processes with a small number of people using interactive interviews and ethnographies for data construction and qualitative analysis as the strategy for data interpretation” (Sayer, 1984).

|                          | <b>Intensive</b>  | <b>Extensive</b>  |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Research question        | How does a process work in a particular case or small number of cases?<br>What produces a certain change?<br>What did the agents actually do?   | What are the regularities, common patterns, distinguishing features of a population?<br>How widely are certain characteristics or processes distributed or represented?   |
| Relations                | Substantial relations of connection   | Formal relations of similarity  |
| Type of groups studied   | Causal groups   | Taxonomic groups  |
| Type of account produced | Causal explanation of the production of certain objects or events, though not necessarily representative ones   | Descriptive 'representative' generalizations, lacking in explanatory penetration  |
| Typical methods          | Study of individual agents in their causal contexts, interactive interviews, ethnography. Qualitative analysis  | Large-scale survey of population or representative sample, formal questionnaires, standardized interviews. Statistical analysis   |
| Limitations              | Actual concrete patterns and contingent relations are unlikely to be 'representative', 'average' or generalizable. Necessary relations discovered will exist wherever their relata are present, e.g. causal powers of objects are generalizable to other contexts as they are necessary features of these objects | Although representative of a whole population, they are unlikely to be generalizable to other populations at different times and places. Problem of ecological fallacy in making inferences about individuals. Limited explanatory power. |
| Appropriate tests        | Corroboration   | Replication   |

Source: Sayer (1984: 222)

**Figure 4.5.:** *Intensive and Extensive Research: A Summary (Sayer, 1984).*

Using these criteria, it is possible to classify the approach of this thesis by referring again to the overarching research questions. These are:

- How do contextualised, historically embedded dynamics, of power, process and meaning and culture influence the implementation of public-private partnerships in Sustainability in the Niger Delta?
- How do the grounded, contextual, findings of the empirical chapters relate to the globalised ‘structural’ elements of public-private partnerships as tool in global sustainability governance regimes that were outlined in chapter one of the thesis?

The research questions illustrate that the overarching enquiry of this research is into the *power* and *processes* of PPPs in the *cases* encountered during data collection. The cases in question are the two case studies of PPPs designed to operate in the Niger Delta: the SUNGAS case study and the GMoU case study. In considering these case studies, I am interested in the factors that produce certain changes, through considering the behaviour of individuals and organisations. In the final empirical chapter on the state in the Niger Delta, the enquiry is again into processes that produce certain changes. The type of enquiry to be used for the three empirical chapters, therefore, can be classified using the above framework outlined in Sayer (1984) as *intensive* research. Due to the limitations to data collection, the sample size was limited to a relatively small number of sources. However, this sample gave rich, contextualised detail. The research was not, on the other hand, looking to define the distinguishing features of a population or define taxonomic groups and create generalisations, in line with a *extensive* research strategy. As will be shown during the empirical chapters, the strategy of the research was at many points to critically examine definitions generalisations and taxonomic groups. Intensive research requires a *qualitative* research strategy- an approach that serves to uncover the complexity of a defined topic, embedded in processes, relations and often presenting information that contradicts generalisations.

### **4.3.3. Defining the Type of Qualitative Approach Used**

Now that the wider research strategy of an intensive qualitative approach has been justified, it is possible to now define the type of qualitative approach that this study employs. To do so, I will refer to the “five approaches of qualitative research design” as outlined by Creswell and Poth (2017) (see figure 4.6, page 103).

| Foundational Considerations                       | Narrative Research   | Phenomenology   | Grounded Theory   | Ethnography   | Case Study  |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| Research focus of approach                        | Exploring the life of an individual  | Understanding the essence of the experience                 | Developing a theory grounded in data from the field                         | Describing and interpreting a culture-sharing group                   | Developing an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple cases |
| Unit of analysis                                  | Studying one or more individuals   | Studying several individuals who have shared the experience | Studying a process, an action, or an interaction involving many individuals | Studying a group that shares the same culture                         | Studying an event, a program, an activity, or more than one individual      |
| Type of research problem best suited for approach | Needing to tell stories of individual experiences  | Needing to describe the essence of a lived phenomenon       | Grounding a theory in the views of participants                             | Describing and interpreting the shared patterns of culture of a group | Providing an in-depth understanding of a case or cases                      |
| Nature of disciplinary origins                    | Drawing from the humanities including anthropology, literature, history, psychology, and sociology | Drawing from philosophy, psychology, and education          | Drawing from sociology  | Drawing from anthropology and sociology                               | Drawing from psychology, law, political science, and medicine               |

**Figure 4.6.:** *Contrasting Foundational Considerations of Five Qualitative Approaches in Creswell and Poth (2017, p.104).*

Again the main aim of this research is to look at the processes evident within the cases presented. This study looks at two cases of two cases within a “real-life, contemporary context or setting” (Yin, 2017), to develop an in-depth description to provide an understanding of a specific programme, in this case, PPPs.

Case study research is defined as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources* of data collection, such as observations, interviews, audiovisual material and documents and reports. The case study approach then reports a *case description* and *case themes*. The unit of analysis may be a single case or multiple cases. Methods for case study analysis are outlined in depth by Creswell and Creswell (2017)

and Yin (2017).

This research is looking at cases or the implementation of PPPs, which operate within real-life, contemporary bounded systems. It may be possible at this point to fully categorise the qualitative approach of this thesis as a case study approach. However, I agree with the approach of Cloke et al. (2004), who outline limitations to following a particular research approach too rigorously. They define how, in choosing a research strategy, it is important to avoid *methodolarity*, where “we become compulsively preoccupied with a method of knowing, which is exalted without serious consideration of how successful it is in producing knowledge” .

I agree with the argument of Cloke et al. (2004), in that if I were to employ the methods of a case study approach too rigorously, this may occlude other qualitative research approaches that may help with the wider enquiry. For example, throughout the research, there were many instances where interviewees told stories of individual experiences, such as the interview with the King of Ekpetiama, who gave a detailed oral history of his kingdom. In many cases, interviewees described the essence of a lived phenomenon or referred to the culture of their group. Rigorously following a case study approach would require me to neglect information from this interview from the analysis. However, this information is too valuable to be omitted. Also, the final empirical chapter on the state in the Niger Delta is not strictly a case study. As will be explained in more detail within the chapter, it serves to corroborate information from the two case studies and consider social relations at a regional level embedded in a historical context. To do so, I am required to draw on a range of information that could be applied across the range of qualitative approaches outlined by Creswell and Poth (2017, p.104).

Therefore whilst using a case study approach, looking at the application of PPPs in specific instances, I also employ methods from other qualitative approaches classified by Creswell and Poth (2017). Therefore, although the study leans towards a case study approach, it cannot be categorised strictly into one qualitative approach. The next sections will outline the specific methods I used to collect and analyse qualitative data.

#### **4.3.4. Interview Methods**

##### **Justification for Using Interviews to Collect Data**

Based on the classification of the research into *intensive* enquiry, the appropriate methods of data collection need to be defined and justified. Intensive enquiry searches for rich contextual detail using a relatively small sample size, uncovering processes of formation, causal mechanisms or relations of connection. Interviews are an appropriate method for this type of enquiry, as they allow for the “analysis of issues that fall between or below analyses of surface-level comparability... Instead, interviews allow for an emphasis on explaining processes, changing conditions,

organisation, circumstances and the construction, negotiation and reconstruction of meanings and identities.” (Flick, 2014, p.207). In this way, interviews go beyond ‘broad surface patterns’ involving large numbers of people that would be associated with *extensive* social research and would normally be investigated through broad surveys or questionnaires. The level of detail required to answer the research questions could not be accessed through questionnaires. These outcomes would not have been available using techniques such as questionnaires or surveys.

To address the overarching research questions, I was also interested in assessing a plurality of perspectives on the issues surrounding the topics of the study. Surveys or questionnaires associated with *extensive* research fail to pick up on ranging perspectives. Instead, they attempt to use the responses of questionnaires or surveys to mirror the social and geographical worlds of respondents to arrive at a seemingly objective truth. The strength of using interviews, on the other hand, lies in an “inter-subjectivity which permits a deeper understanding of the whos, hows, whereas whats of many aspects of human geography research.” (Cloke et al., 2004, p.150). Interviews in this way can allow for an enquiry that embraces a plurality of perspectives on a particular topic.

### **Methods Employed**

The specific methods of conducting interviews can be linked to my ontological and epistemological approach to the research in general, which is covered in more detail in section 4.3.8. The aim of each interview was to gather differing perspectives of interviewees on each topic and consider how these perspectives related to each other and with themes in the literature. In this way interviews were not seen as ‘reports’, that is as directly reflective of either ‘interior’ states of mind, or ‘exterior’ states in the world. Instead, interviews were seen as ‘accounts’ or ‘interpretations’ (Roulston, 2010b). For example, in working with SACA, I was aware that accounts given by the organisation and community members I interviewed were representative of a particular perspective on the issue of the GMoU. Accounts given by representatives of International Oil Companies (IOCs) differed considerably from those collected whilst working with SACA. However, as comparing and contrasting opinions and perspectives became part of the investigation into the topic of the GMoU, interviews were a method of exploring these varying perspectives (Cloke et al., 2004).

I aimed to avoid the notion that the interviewee was the subject of the research. Instead, I viewed the interview as a process of working with the interviewee to uncover information based on the interviewee’s perspective. I made efforts to remove my opinions and perspectives from the questions presented to the interviewee, by presenting any views and opinions as not my own. In this way, I aimed to make the interview non-invasive and aimed to avoid antagonising the interviewee. The main goal of the interview was to allow the interviewee to be comfortable and

to reassure the interviewee that I did not want to tell them how to think or push forward my opinion or perspective. This approach resonates with the techniques of 'responsive interviews' outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2012), where the importance of building a relationship with the interviewee is emphasised and questions are designed to search the experience and knowledge of each interviewee.

I also employed the idea, at some points, that data from interviews can be co-constructed by the interviewer and interviewee through a constructive conversation around an issue (Roulston, 2010a). At the start of the conversation, I tried to divulge as little of my knowledge as possible. I wanted to make sure the interviewee did not presume any predispositions I may have to certain conclusions, as I did not want the interviewee to respond based on these presumptions. Once an interviewee's perspective on an issue had been explored using this approach, in some interviews there was room to place a topic under analysis to be investigated by interviewer and interviewee at the same time. As my understanding of the topics I was investigating progressed, I could introduce differing opinions and perspectives, sometimes from other interviews I had conducted, to work with the interviewee to reach conclusions. This was only done after I had explored the interviewee's perspective, however. The contributions I made to each interview were a reflection of my level of understanding of the topic at each point in the research process. At points, particularly at the beginning of the research process, I was unfamiliar with the subject matter I was encountering.

The interviews used a loose structure or format based on some of the main topics and ideas I was aiming to explore. With each interviewee, I aimed to follow up specific areas of enquiry that might be relevant to their particular knowledges or experiences. I did not produce a specific script of questions, but rather a set of notes beforehand to guide me through the research process (demonstrated in the diagrams in sections 4.2.3 4.2.5). I designed interview guides to include topics I was focusing on and some specific questions that were tailored to the interviewee. I prepared these guides in my notebook before the interview occurred. In some cases, interviews were conducted at short notice, and I had little time to prepare. In these cases, I used notes prepared for other interviews and improvised. The notes I prepared were non-sequential and were used as a guide to prompt topics of conversation. In many cases the interview took on a life of its own, diverging from the topic I was looking to investigate. In these cases, I attempted to steer the conversation back towards planned topics if I felt it necessary to do so. In most cases, however, these divergent conversations were interesting and relevant and remained fruitful when taking their course.

There was a general formality to conducting conversations in Nigeria, which was evident throughout my fieldwork, but particularly prevalent in the rural areas I visited. This formality framed conversations in a format where each party would have opportunities in turn to give re-



spective statements. As a visitor to rural communities I was expected to listen carefully, whilst my host, who had clear authority, gave statements. In turn, I was expected to give a response statement, followed by my next question. This procedure was based on an established power dynamic, that granted control and possession of the conversation firmly with the host. Accordingly, there was substantial room for the statements given by the host to move away from any plan I had constructed, with the interviewee directing the course of the conversation. Some interviews required a dedicated effort to bring them back towards the topic I was aiming to investigate, but some interviews inevitably lingered on topics separate from the research topic. This affected the data in that I obtained rich, detailed information on a variety of topics, based on narratives, lived experiences, and knowledges. However, these data were in places disparate and removed from the topic in question. This dynamic also made it more difficult to rigorously apply a specific method of qualitative data collection as outlined in section 4.3.3 with interviews spontaneously moving between different qualitative approaches.

Approximately three interviews were conducted as group discussions. Group discussions were often not planned and occurred on an ad-hoc basis, where friends, family or colleagues joined in on the conversation with an interviewee. These groups materialised spontaneously, especially in the fourth stage of the research, in which I did not have control over the research process. For example, when I visited the Niger Delta University, I was expecting to meet one academic, but this academic was joined by colleagues from across a department in the University. Group discussions were conducted similarly to interviews, in a responsive manner, to gather differing perspectives on a topic.

### **Elite/Expert Interviews**

Research in the UK and in Nigeria aimed to consult experts in certain fields about their experiences with the case studies. These experts represented specific positions of power and expertise, they “held, or have held a privileged position in society and... are likely to have had more influence on political outcomes than general members of the public” (Richards, 1996, p.199). As I was researching the implementation of case studies of PPPs, those with a detailed understanding of this implementation were elite respondents. For example, for the SUNGAS case study, those with knowledge of the implementation of the partnership in practice were consultants and NGO representatives with substantial experience, connections and international exposure (Mikecz, 2012). In the study of the GMoU, respondents with knowledge and information on the GMoU were academics, representatives of communities and representatives of NGOs. The same respondents also contributed data used for the final empirical chapter on the state in the Niger Delta. Therefore in defining the scope of research around the two case studies, those with knowledge and experience were also defined as elites. Based on this definition, the majority of

interviews conducted for this thesis can be classed as elite interviews.

Elite interviewing, therefore, gave access to specialist knowledge and information appropriate to the study but also presented some unique problems. As Desmond and Desmond (2016, p.262) describe, “Working in an elite field poses major difficulties which stem from the challenges of researching ‘up’ , which are quite different to those encountered in studying ‘down’ ”. First, the requirement to interview elites produced some of the difficulties in gaining access to respondents as outlined in section 4.2. Whereas locating these elites appeared relatively easy, getting a “foot in the door” proved particularly challenging (Mikecz, 2012). Gaining access to elites has to be carefully negotiated, which can take a much longer time and higher costs than non-elite studies. Elites “purposefully erect barriers, which set them apart from the rest of society” (Shenton and Hayter, 2004), making them visible but not necessarily accessible. An example of this difficulty was in attempting to gain an interview with a representative of SPDC. I had tried for the duration of my three months of fieldwork to gain an interview, each time I tried, I was told the manager was busy. However, towards the end of the fieldwork, I used a new strategy, referring to a mutual contact of ours and explained how this contact insisted that we meet. An interview was arranged for the next morning. This was an exceptionally difficult interview to secure but reflected the general difficulty of acquiring interviews throughout the data collection process. Although securing interviews was difficult, once they were secured, this allowed for unique perspectives and the access to information that would have not been available through non-elite interviews.

Positionality and power dynamics are also very important factors to consider in elite interviews. Smith (2006) notes structures of power in elite interviews are “complex and unstable”, noting that geographers need to reflect more on the dynamics of power between interviewee and interviewer. The main assumption before going into the interview is that the elite being interviewed holds more power than the interviewee and that the interviewee is doing the interviewer a favour (Mikecz, 2012). This assumption places requirements on the interviewer to impress the elite in question, to validate the use of the interviewee’s time, gain respect and better answers to questions. Methods outlined in the literature to achieve this range from the interviewer dressing appropriately, ‘doing your homework’ (Berry and Browne, 2002) to appear well informed, to even flattering the interviewee with compliments to gain their respect (Lilleker, 2003). In interviews within the UK, power appeared firmly established with the respondents I interviewed. However, in Nigeria power dynamics were less certain. I argue that in light of my positionality as a white researcher, which is explained in more detail in section 4.3.7 below, power dynamics within each interview were in many cases uncertain and attempts were made within the interview by many interviewees to demonstrate power, in my view in light of these uncertain power dynamics. I contest, in line with the arguments of Smith (2006) that power dynamics within elite

interviews should not always be presupposed as favouring elites and can be viewed simultaneously as dynamic. Regardless, in both the contexts of the UK and Nigeria, short of going out of my way flatter interviewees, I made an effort to show respect courtesy and understanding as to build trust with and earn respect from interviewees.

#### **4.3.5. Ethnographic Methods**

Ethnography, defined by Creswell and Creswell (2017) is “a state of enquiry in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged time, by collecting primarily observational and interview data”, using a flexible research approach that evolves to the lived realities encountered in the field setting. Rather than being “realities extracted from the field”, ethnographies are “inter-subjective truths... negotiated out of the warmth and friction of an evolving iterative process” (Hoggart, 2002). They aim to understand the “processes and meanings that undergrid sociospatial life” (Walford, 2000).

Ethnographic research is often associated with long periods ‘in the field’ that allow the researcher to imbibe the culture of a certain group (Crang and Cook, 2007). However, as described in section 4.2, due to the financial and time constraints of the study, I was unable to spend extended time in the field to conduct research that could be categorised, according to the above definition, as ethnographic. As described above, the overarching research questions lend themselves to research methods more associated with case study research, so to answer these questions a full ethnographic study would be inappropriate. However, as argued above, the study also aims to avoid methodolarity and the exclusion of certain methods by a specific rigorous remit of qualitative study.

As well as formal, elite interviews, my time in the UK and Nigeria involved innumerable conversations, meetings, observations, chance encounters and other activities that could be seen as ‘getting to know’ cultural elements of a specific group (Creswell and Poth, 2017, p.104). In the UK I worked closely with CPC. This work involved participating in and observing meetings, holding regular, extended, informal conversations with various contacts working with CPC and being part of different efforts to attract research funding to the operations of CPC. In this way, I shuffled between insider and outsider roles (Walford, 2000). I was often asked to be part of and contribute to meetings and gained experience liaising with different stakeholders within the university and the private sector. This work with the NDLCGI allowed for a unique insight into the workings of consultancies conducting work in the area of carbon sequestration in Africa. This was in spite of a limitation to the scope of observations to the environment CPC operates in. I gained a good insight from CPC into experiences working on partnerships, which served as a good background to working on the project. This element of the research also allowed me access to documentation (Herod, 1999).

During my fieldwork, I lived and worked in Nigeria for three months. In Nigeria I made a significant effort to socialise. This was partly a product of the isolation of research and my desire to leave the hotel I was staying in, but also due to a desire to experience Nigerian culture during the brief time I was in Nigeria. As a result, I spent time socialising in informal circumstances, in some cases with interviewees and friends. I believe this contributed significantly to my learning experience. Issues discussed in interviews were contextualised in reference to stories and anecdotes I heard. In these circumstances, it was much easier (for both parties) to have a conversation as opposed to conduct an interview, and these experiences were formative in my understanding of many topics. I spent time socialising in Port Harcourt, Abuja and Lagos. Also, I watched TV shows, listened to radio shows and read newspapers. I aimed to try and understand a sense of what it was like to live in Nigeria and the Delta.

I used some 'field' notes when I was working in the UK, particularly after interviews and particular meetings. These field notes were used to reflect on the day and write down any thoughts or feelings, occurrences, conversations and chance encounters. Where I could, I also compiled field notes when I was in Nigeria, although sometimes days researching were so intense and busy that I only had the chance to briefly compile summary notes.

Due to the limited time I spent working with CPC in the UK and then working in the Delta, my work cannot be strictly defined as ethnographic, however I believe the informal and sometimes social element to my research was a vital component to the synthesis of information that contributed to the analysis in the following empirical chapters. My limited time 'getting to know' the culture of groups in the UK and Nigeria respectively produced a familiarity with certain topics and issues that resonated with themes in the data whilst coding and compiling information. Based on the above points, parts of the research can be considered ethnographic.

#### **4.3.6. Analysis and Coding of Data**

Analysis of data was conducted in the UK and used a process of developing a coding technique alongside developing conceptual frameworks of analysis. The selection and application of these theoretical frameworks were based on my sense of how these different frameworks resonated with the data I had collected. The process of analysis was, therefore, iterative and involved moving back and forth between the data and literature on theory. As the analysis and theoretical frameworks of each chapter are somewhat closely linked, the methods of analysis that apply to each framework will not be explained in this section. Instead, how each framework is used with the data will be explained in the introduction sections of each empirical chapter.

I decided to transcribe interviews myself, even though this took considerable time. The option of outsourcing the transcription process may have caused difficulties because respondents often spoke with strong Nigerian accents and the recording environments contained high levels

of background noise. The process of transcribing allowed me to work closely with the data, allowing for extensive notetaking, inserting of pre-coding annotations, thinking through and understanding the data and ultimately leading to the development of a greater level of familiarity with the issues covered.

From here I used thematic coding to identify themes in the data (Gibbs, 2019). I created a separate coding file for each empirical chapter and developed coding themes accordingly. One of the main components of thematic coding is deciding what counts as a theme (Flick, 2014), and different categorisations of themes developed throughout the coding process. I recoded interviews often, as the theoretical framework of chapters developed, in turn developing coding frameworks based on the theoretical frameworks of each chapter. Eventually, I settled on a process of coding that reflected the theoretical framework. For example, when working through the SUNGAS data, I coded instances of the utilisation of allocative and authoritative resources. When working through the GMoU data, I would code for, for example, instances that could relate to processes of subject formation. When coding for the chapter on the state, I coded for themes of visibility. In sum, the process of coding was iterative and happened in a series of stages, which developed in line with the development of theoretical frameworks of each empirical chapter.

#### **4.3.7. Positionality**

Researching in Nigeria as a foreigner brings about questions of positionality. Researching in Nigeria as a British researcher also brings up questions related to colonial power, its legacy, and how this may affect perceptions of the researcher, and ultimately the data collection process. Geography's formation as a university subject in the late nineteenth century was linked to its utility as a science of exploration and mapping to provide a service of colonial expansion. The famous explorer H.M. Stanley noted how geography "has been and is intimately connected with the growth of the British Empire" (Cloke et al., 2004). The position of a British researcher of geography in Nigeria is, therefore, a position that is linked with a history of power relations that will undoubtedly influence the research process.

Throughout the research, the topics of colonialism and power relations between the UK and Nigeria were always present. In Nigeria, in some instances during my fieldwork, the topic of colonialism was made explicit by friends, colleagues and respondents in conversations. In one instance a friend said that "You British gave us Christianity when you arrived here, and now you've abandoned it." Similar comments were fairly common in conversations, where the legacy of colonialism was often attributed to me as a representative of the UK. I was often put 'on the spot' when the issue of colonialism arose during conversations. During some formal interviews, I perceived a pushing back against assumed and implicit power dynamic that saw me as representing a malevolent power. At some points, I experienced what I perceived to

be mild hostility in the form of offhand comments about my appearance and behaviour. At one point a chief I was visiting said, 'You walk in here so elegantly and confidently.' At the time I was not feeling confident, or elegant, but I get the impression this comment reflected an assumption of power dynamics and a perceived need by the chief to make these power dynamics explicit. However, after this confrontational start to the interview, the chief appeared to become more comfortable, ultimately giving more than an hour and a half of his time to discussion. In several instances, I experienced what I perceived to be a similar mild hostility at the beginning of interviews or meetings. I made strong efforts to show courtesy and respect to interviewees, where I could, and to demonstrate a level of awareness and understanding of a history of unequal power relations, where appropriate. I explained where possible that my research was aiming to highlight inequalities and injustices. Generally, hostility towards my position was short-lived and, in my view, I went on to develop a good rapport with nearly all respondents (although I stress this is my view). Also, I gained the sense that my collaboration with locally respected NGOs in Nigeria was also a factor in providing help to lay the groundwork for a good rapport with respondents.

However, as (Rose, 1997) has pointed out, researchers need to be aware that they cannot ever fully recognise or represent their positionality. And while it is important to try to understand positionality it is also important to recognise limits to subjectivity (Cloke et al., 2004, p.129-130). Whilst I made an effort to counteract what I saw as the presence of post-colonial power dynamics when conducting interviews, I will not have been able to perceive many power dynamics that may have affected the data collected.

My introduction to potential benefits of my positionality was from a Nigerian friend, who told me before I travelled to Nigeria that, "It sounds bad but you don't have to worry much when you're doing research in Nigeria, because you're white, and people will want to listen to what you say." On reflection following fieldwork, there were likely many advantages to being a white researcher in Nigeria. I was often treated as a high-profile guest and welcomed into situations that some Nigerian researchers may not have been able to access, for example meeting the King of Ekpetiama Kingdom, meeting chiefs, academics and community representative and representatives of the government. I was likely given the chance to work in a level of society that others, possibly Nigerian researchers may have difficulty accessing. Where interviews were secured, I was given time and priority by respondents, sometimes at the expense of local people.

At points, I was seen as a conduit for transferring information from the Niger Delta to an international audience. Respondents wanted to share their experiences and expected that I would be able to publish their story internationally. I tried to be careful to manage expectations at this point, using the phrase, 'I can't promise anything, apart from that I will try my hardest.' The idea that I could publish stories and accounts may have produced accentuated and biased accounts

from respondents, who may have portrayed a certain impression of facts and occurrences with the hope that this impression would elicit a response from an international audience. I could have appeared to be more important than I was in the eyes of interviewees.

Overall my positionality will have affected the way information was presented to me, with both positive and negative effects. In a positive sense, I gained a level of access to respondents in Nigeria that I may not have gained as a local researcher. However, at the same time, I was at points seen as the embodiment of a history of unequal power relations between the UK and Nigeria. In general, there may have been a possibility that certain information was accentuated by respondents to present a narrative. This final point emphasises that interviews were a way of accessing differing perspectives on issues, reinforcing a need to consider the data collected as representing perspectives.

#### **4.3.8. Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions**

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, my understanding of the topics I was considering went through a progression that I can categorise into three stages. Before conducting fieldwork, I had a sense of tensions between my world view and the work I was reading, without fully understanding the reason for these tensions. During fieldwork, I experienced confusion and a stronger feeling that the work I had been reading was limited, again without being able to explain why. Following my fieldwork and during the write-up process, I became more capable of articulating my ontology and its contrast to other ontologies I had encountered in the literature after deeper engagement with various theories.

The literature I engaged with before travelling to Nigeria was largely the work of Michael Watts (Watts, 2001; Watts, 2004b; Watts and Ibaba, 2011; Kashi and Watts, 2010; Watts, 2004b), the *resource curse* literature (Coller and Hoeffler, 2005; Collier, Van Der Ploeg, et al., 2010; Ross, 2001), reports from organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch and media reports on Nigeria. Generally, this literature portrayed what I considered to be a dichotomous narrative that concerned predefined social groups. This narrative placed blame on some groups, for example, oil companies, the Nigerian state (as articulated through the ‘bad institutions element of the resource curse literature (Mehlum et al., 2006b)) as the perpetrators of crimes against communities. However, in portraying this narrative, this literature appeared to gloss over or ignore certain facts that would contradict their defined narrative. For example, there appeared to be very little space in this literature devoted to the actions of local people, from ‘communities’ in the Niger Delta that were counter-productive to social progress or environmental conservation. Examples of these actions could include local-level corruption or vandalism to pipelines. Also, this literature appeared to essentialise oil companies, the Nigerian state and communities into homogeneous units, and these units were then attributed with pre-

defined power relations. Before travelling to Nigeria, I developed the opinion that the reality in Nigeria may be considered to be far more complex.

When I began research in Nigeria, many people I spoke to gave views that did not reflect narratives in the literature I had become familiar with. For example, I began to meet many people from the Niger Delta who had positive opinions of oil companies and the oil industry. In contrast, I also came across negative sentiment towards communities. Local people I met spoke, for example, of corruption within communities as a disruptive influence on benign efforts of oil companies to provide development financing. Power dynamics between communities and oil companies were sometimes portrayed as community members exercising power over oil companies. Oil company representatives presented very convincing arguments that succinctly and accurately de-constructed the narratives of prominent literatures concerning power relations within the Delta, an example of this is covered later in chapter seven. The contradictions I was experiencing between the literature and my perceptions of the local context made me further question presuppositions inherent in the narratives I had become accustomed to.

I began to view most literature on the Niger Delta (particularly the work of Watts) as being constructed with a purpose. The purpose of this literature appeared to be to showcase power relations between predefined social groups. These social groups (such as the community, the state, or the oil company) and the power relations between them appeared to be largely predefined. The composition of these groups and the relations of power between them were presented as static truisms. Importantly they were considered by the research as injustices to be foregrounded through the production and dissemination of knowledge.

My sentiment towards social enquiry and the production of knowledge differs from this approach. I support the sentiment it is more difficult to presuppose the composition of social groups or power relations between them. I found resonance with this sentiment in the work of Agrawal (2005), who, in his work on the theory of Environmentality, presents a justification for alternative methods of social enquiry in respect to environmental conservation. In a critique of Political Ecology (the field in which Michael Watts' work is situated), Agrawal highlights a tendency of its literature to make easy connotations of social groups with power dynamics, for example of "communities with resistance or states with power". He goes on to state how, "depending on the initial assumptions, communities, states, or markets can conveniently be chosen to fit the analysis" (Agrawal, 2005, p. 2015). Due to these predictable narratives, the conclusions of this research can often be assumed once the main components of the research are presented. In research on the Niger Delta, particularly research in the field of Political Ecology, but reflected in other fields and in journalism, narratives depict a resistive citizenry universally oppressed by the hegemonic power of capitalism in the form of the oil company, the Nigerian state, or an alliance between the two. As my research progressed, I realised I was uncomfortable with literature that



made these assumptions. In sum, the most prolific research on the Niger Delta did not resonate with my ontology.

Chapter seven on the GMoU is in parts reflection of my struggle to find an approach to methods of analysis that resonated with my ontology and with the data I collected. As my research progressed, the information would be turned on its head constantly, forcing me to reconsider my understanding. In Bayelsa, I spoke to people who gave me a polar opposite account to that given to me by people in the Port Harcourt. An example I mention highlights the possibility of an oil spill in the Delta taking on many forms simultaneously, with some declaring a spill, some declaring no spill and others declaring a spill, but a harmless spill. Researching in the Niger Delta became a process of a continual breaking down and reconstruction of my understanding of topics. At points, I had absolutely no idea what to think.

A quote from an expatriate interviewee (who at the time of the interview had spent many years working in the Delta) demonstrates this process. In talking about a British Foreign and Commonwealth Office method of rotating staff in Nigeria every two years, he explained the following:

“How can you get to grips with a country in two years that’s as complex as Nigeria? Every day it surprises me and makes me re-evaluate whether I actually know anything. Every day.”

After coming back from the field, I felt that a lot of the information I gathered did not have an attachment to a defined theoretical perspective that I was aware of. I was required to find a theory that matched the data and experiences I had collected from the Delta.

To build an analysis reflecting my way of understanding the information I had encountered in the Delta, I decided my analysis should accommodate contrasting perspectives and narratives. This approach ruled out a neo-positivist approach, as I was not looking to confirm or deny any specific theory (Roulston, 2010b). Burrell and Morgan (1979) view positivism and anti-positivism (or interpretivism) as an epistemological dichotomy associated with realist and nominalist ontology respectively, while Morgan and Smircich (1980) view these different ontologies as the extremes of a continuum. My decision to accommodate varying perspectives and narratives, therefore, can be understood as utilising methods of research and enquiry that can be classed as a reflection of a more nominalist than realist ontology. In choosing a more nominalist approach to data analysis, the research has been designed to reflect my particular ontological position, that presuppositions of power dynamics between particular groups cannot be made, and instead need to be interpreted.

#### **4.4. Overarching Research Limitations and Conclusions**

A major limitation affecting each stage of the thesis was an inability to plan and implement the research. This translated to difficulties in planning methods of data collection and analysis, such as phases of fieldwork, until the opportunity arose, often at the last minute. This inability to plan had several causes. First, relying on CPC to arrange and finance the logistics of travel resulted in the delay of the beginning of fieldwork. Next, lack of progress on the NDLCGI, coupled with an inability to conduct research independently meant that late on in the progression of the thesis, I was required to scramble to find new topics. The political sensitivity of the SUNGAS case study reduced the number of respondents willing to be interviewed, meaning that whilst in the field, I was required to substantiate the thesis with a new, additional topic. Finally, general progress on the NDLCGI was too slow to implement the original plan I had developed to research it. However, during this time I was being told, falsely and consistently, that implementation was imminent. The above factors resulted in me spending too much of the time I had available holding on to plans that ultimately became impossible. Periods waiting to be able to conduct fieldwork resulted in wasted time. If fieldwork had occurred on time, each time it was promised, I would have had many more months available for the analysis and write up sections of the thesis.

Constraints to being able to prepare the research also required me to ‘muddle through’ and adapt to conditions on the fly. Aside from inducing stress, these constraints meant I was not ready for some aspects of the fieldwork, particularly in respect to my background knowledge of some issues, such as the GMoU. Although a lack of preparation allowed for a somewhat inductive approach to some of the research, my ability to ask poignant questions to retrieve better data may have been reduced by a lack of background knowledge.

Another general limitation to the research was the amount of time I was able to spend in Nigeria. These time constraints were largely due to the cost of conducting fieldwork the Delta as a foreigner. A similar level of funding for travel and accommodation may have allowed me to live in another country, for example, Tanzania, or Malawi, or even Mozambique for several months to a year. Limitations to funding constricted my stay in the Delta to 3-4 months. The security constraints of the Delta raised the cost of travel and accommodation, limiting the time I could spend in the Delta using the research budget I had access to. Also, the ‘informal’ agreement reached between CPC and the department of Geography did not formally commit CPC to funding travel. This limitation was also compounded by the unreliability of travel arrangements. After numerous delays to each period of travel, there was limited time available for further visits to the Delta before I needed to begin the analysis and write up of data. Limited time in the field also meant I was in the pursuit of limited, high-value opportunities. More time in Nigeria

would have allowed access to more and better information and would have allowed me to pursue lower value opportunities to build a more comprehensive picture of each topic. I was not able to linger in Nigeria and imbue the culture, like many other researchers, including some colleagues researching African contexts. I had a quick opportunity to gather limited data. Time constraints are perhaps the most significant limitation to the thesis but based on the security constraints as a foreign researcher they are unavoidable. These aspects need to be considered when reviewing any research conducted in Nigeria. The research was also limited by restrictions on data collection by the gatekeeper of the project, CPC. Through delays to fieldwork, an unwillingness of CPC for me to conduct research independent of supervision, withholding of contact information and provision of false hope on the progress of implementation of the NDLCGI, the research process was impeded. The cause of these restrictions may have been a misunderstanding by CPC of depth and breadth of information required to compose a PhD thesis. CPC may have assumed that the depth and breadth of information they provided may have been adequate, without realising it would not hold in a PhD viva. Assuming this misunderstanding was the reason for withholding information, taking on a PhD student may have been a challenge for CPC, in that the PhD student may have obtained access to contacts and information that if not managed properly could have result in posing a risk to CPCs interests, such as the NDLCGI.

Many PhD projects are now required to be conducted in partnership with private-sector organisations, and other projects may be able to reduce risks posed by this type of collaboration by learning from the research process of this project. Such projects should aim to give as much control as possible to the researcher. If a travel budget is available, it should be provided to the researcher upfront, in full. The private-sector research partner should be able to advise the researcher on the best way to use this fund but placing full control of this fund with the private-sector organisation risks the completion of the PhD project. The research partnership agreement, whilst giving as much control to the researcher as possible should also be a formal agreement, with contingency plans made available to the researcher if the agreement is not adhered to by the private-sector partner. The agreement should be reviewed in full with the researcher, supervisor and private-sector partner before the initiation of the PhD project. This review should also involve an explanation to both parties of the depth and breadth of information required to conduct a PhD thesis. It should contain a risk assessment, covering risks to both parties, for example, risk of damage to reputation to the private-sector partner. Had this model been applied at the beginning of my research, many of the limitations encountered throughout the process would have been mitigated.

Despite these limitations, the unique opportunities presented by the research partnership should not be overlooked. The opportunity to work with a private-sector organisation, work with their contacts, and gain a unique insight into private-sector operations was extremely valuable. After

a lengthy and difficult process, I was able to adapt the project to the changing circumstances of the research context to compile this thesis.

# 5

## **STAKEHOLDER MAPPING OF THE SUNGAS PROJECT**

## **Abstract**

This chapter and the next chapter analyse the attempted implementation of a large-scale international public-private partnership designed to be implemented in the Niger Delta, the Sustainable Utilisation of Nigeria's Gas and Renewable Energy Resources (SUNGAS) project. To gain an overview of the main stakeholders involved in the project, this chapter will apply stakeholder mapping as an exercise. The chapter introduces the project, along with the problems in the Niger Delta that it was aiming to address. Methods of stakeholder mapping are outlined, with a brief overview of their development and application in international development contexts such as the SUNGAS project. Following this, each stakeholder involved in the project is analysed using the same methods, to order to produce an interest/influence matrix. The main indications of the exercise are that stakeholders with a high degree of influence in the project had a lower degree of interest in the project. Stakeholder analysis as a methodology is useful for gaining an overview of stakeholders in this project, but it is limited in its ability to assess the dynamics of interactions between stakeholders. Furthermore, it is limited in its ability to analyse interactions between stakeholders and influences outside the remit of analysis.

## 5.1. Introduction

### 5.1.1. An Introduction to Gas Flaring as a Problem

The burning on-site of associated methane and other flammable gases produced by the extraction of oil is routine practice in the extractives industry. When drilling for crude oil, associated natural gas is released from reservoirs, which can build in pressure around drilling and extraction equipment. To protect this equipment and reduce the risk of explosion, this gas can either be extracted, transported and sold, vented into the atmosphere or flared on-site (Akinola, 2018). Gas is flared where the cost of capturing, transporting and distributing associated gas is per unit is greater than the price that can be fetched on its destined market, be it a local or international market (Ibitoye, 2014). The transportation and distribution of natural gas uses a different infrastructure to that of crude oil; in areas where this infrastructure is not present, and local demand for natural gas is low, the costs of transporting and distributing gas are compounded by the cost of creating this infrastructure. A final reason for flaring gas, as opposed to venting it is that gas containing hydrogen sulphide and other needs to be disposed of if it cannot be processed (Bott, 2007).

Gas flaring has significant impacts at multiple scales. Complete combustion of pure methane produces only carbon dioxide and water. However, combustion in flares is rarely 100 per cent complete. Incomplete combustion of hydrocarbons can lead to the formation of carbon monoxide. Nitrogen in the air is also oxidized during combustion to form oxides of nitrogen, known as  $\text{NO}_x$ . As a result, flaring and incineration emit many substances that can affect human health, livestock and the environment (Bott, 2007). In addition emissions from flaring include carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, unburned hydrocarbons, particulate matter, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). One of these VOCs is benzene, which is classified as toxic and is a known cancer-causing compound. If the natural gas contains hydrogen sulphide ( $\text{H}_2\text{S}$ ), emissions can include sulphur dioxide ( $\text{SO}_2$ ), carbon disulphide ( $\text{CS}_2$ ) and carbonyl sulphide ( $\text{COS}$ ). Oxides of nitrogen such as nitric oxide ( $\text{NO}$ ), and nitrogen dioxide ( $\text{NO}_2$ ) contribute to ground-level ozone (a component of smog) and acid deposition (Emam, 2015).  $\text{CO}_2$  emissions mean gas flaring is a significant contributor to carbon dioxide emissions, contributing to around 400 million tonnes of emissions of  $\text{CO}_2$  annually (Aniche, 2015).

Gas flaring is therefore recognised as a major problem globally. In developed countries such as the US and those within the European Union, legislation and regulation have resulted in a reduction in the practice. For example, in the North Sea oil fields, the percentage of associated gas flared was reduced from approximately 90% to 2% over the course of around 25 years of operation. However, in Nigeria, the percentage of associated gas flared continues to be between 80% and 90% (Osuoka and Roderick, 2005). In 2018, Nigeria flared 7.4 billion cubic metres

of gas, annually it emits around 40 million metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> (Anomohanran, 2012), out of 400 million globally (Aniche, 2015) accounting for around 50% of Nigeria's total anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Doumbia et al., 2019). Accordingly, the elimination of gas flaring by 2030 is the first key priority of Nigeria in meeting its nationally determined contributions to the 2015 Paris Accord (Environment, 2015).

Gas flaring as a problem in Nigeria is unique due to the number of people living in densely populated areas close to flare sites (Dung et al., 2008). A 2015 satellite survey of active gas flares in the Niger Delta found over 150 active flares in the region, many close to local populations communities (Anejionu et al., 2015). Local health and environmental impacts of flares are well documented and include acid rain (leading to acidification of water bodies and farmlands and the corrosion of rooftops), reduced plant chlorophyll levels, reductions in soil bacteria, heat stress and microclimate modification, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide pollution, increased aerosol concentrations, respiratory conditions in children and increased rates of cancers (Anejionu et al., 2015) and hypertension (Ezejimofor et al., 2016).

An irony of gas flaring in Nigeria is that most people living near flare sites have no access to electricity. About 45.8 billion kW of heat is released into the atmosphere of The Niger Delta from flared gas daily, which produces enough energy to meet Nigeria's total energy demand (Aniche, 2015). However, only about 40% of Nigeria's population is connected to the national electricity grid with consistent (60%) power cuts (Otene et al., 2016). The economic loss due to gas flaring practices is estimated to be around \$2.5 billion annually in Nigeria (Doumbia et al., 2019).

Gas flaring in Nigeria embodies the neglect of externalities of oil production. Despite attempts to reduce the practice in Nigeria through government programmes (Doumbia et al., 2019), the practice has only seen a modest reduction. Many areas of The Niger Delta remain without electricity.

### **An Introduction to SUNGAS as a Solution**

The gas to power element of the SUNGAS project was designed to address problems of gas flaring in the Niger Delta. Under a multi-million Euro grant from the European Commission (EC), the project aimed to capture associated flared gas, and use this gas to generate electricity and provide cooking gas for communities living close to gas flares. The project convened a range of partner organisations based in the UK and Nigeria, including Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) under a cross-sector partnership model. In doing so, the project hoped to reduce the environmental impact of gas flaring around flare locations and address local gaps in energy provision for local communities. Replacing burned fuelwood as an energy source also had the potential to reduce rates of deforestation around rural communities. The replacement



of diesel generators with electricity provided by the utilisation of the flared gas also had the potential to reduce emission carbon emissions.

The SUNGAS project, therefore, appeared to have to the potential to transform the environment and the livelihoods of local people in the Niger Delta through a range of positive impacts and what appeared to be logical straightforward solutions to ongoing problems. As one respondent who worked on the project explained, it seemed like a straightforward task or a simple solution.

However soon after the beginning of its implementation in 2009, the SUNGAS project began to miss targets and experience severe delays. After numerous extensions of the project, years past its three-year deadline, and several reconfigurations to the original group of partners, the project was abandoned in 2015. Despite the importance of the project to the local people it was designed to help, and the significant sums of money and resources allocated to the project by partners, there has been no completed investigation of the reasons into this failure to date.

This chapter and the following chapter aim to conduct an analysis of the gas to power element of the SUNGAS project as an example of a public-private partnership in sustainability. This chapter will serve as an introduction to the partnership by conducting stakeholder mapping to get an overview of partners involved and the relations between them. The next chapter will look more deeply into the relationships between partners using a framework built from concepts of structure, agency and structuration.

### **5.1.2. Table of Stakeholders in SUNGAS**

See page 124.

| Organisation  | Acronym | Role                                      | Location     | Involved  | Notes                                      |
|---|---------|---|--------------|-----------|--|
| European Commission                                     | EC      | Primary donor                             | Brussels     | 2009-2016 | Put out a call for bids before 2009        |
| International Institute for Environment and Development | IIED    | SUNGAS project manager                    | UK           | 2009-2016 | De-facto project manager                   |
| Living Earth Foundation (UK)                            | LEFUK   | Partner (gas to power)                    | UK           | 2009-2016 | None                                       |
| Living Earth Foundation (Nigeria)                       | LENF    | Nigerian Subsidiary of LE-FUK             | Nigeria      | 2009-2011 | Removed from project in 2010               |
| Social Action   | SA      | Partner                                   | Nigeria      | 2009-2010 | Voluntarily left project in 2009           |
| Niger Delta Wetlands Centre                             | NDWC    | Partner (Renewable energy side of SUNGAS) | Nigeria      | 2009-2016 | None                                       |
| Shell Petroleum Development Company                     | SPDC    | Partner and CO-financier in SUNGAS        | Nigeria      | 2009-2016 | Secondary Role to supply gas               |
| Egbeda Community  | N/A     | Pilot community                           | Nigeria      | 2010-2016 | None                                       |
| New Nigeria Foundation                                  | NNF     | Replacement for LENF                      | Nigeria      | 2013-2016 | Replaced LENF in 2010                      |
| Stakeholder Network                                     | SDN     | Partnership coordinator                   | UK / Nigeria | 2014-2016 | Joined in the final 2 years of the project |

**Table 5.1.:** Table Of Stakeholders in the SUNGAS Project

## **5.2. Project Timeline**

### **2007-2008**

- Different organisations working disparately on different topics. Living Earth Foundation, UK (LEFUK), Living Earth Nigeria Foundation (LENF), The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Niger Delta Wetlands Centre (NDWC) had potential to work together on an EC funded project.

### **2008**

- EC call for proposals. Partners were convened to apply for EC grant.

### **2009**

- First meeting of project partners in May 2009.
- SUNGAS officially launched in April 2009.
- Sourcing of a pilot community began.

### **2010**

- Egbeda community identified as a pilot community.
- Social action voluntarily left the SUNGAS project

### **2011**

- LEFUK decided to cease relations with LENF.

### **2012**

- April 2012 was the official deadline of the 3-year project. The project was then extended by a year.
- LEFUK sourced another Nigerian foundation called New Nigeria Foundation (NNF).

### **2013**

- April 2013 was the deadline for the extension of the project.
- Project extended again to August 8th, 2014.

## **2014**

- The review deadline set by IIED due by August 8th, 2014 expired.
- Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN) officially joined the project.

## **2016**

- Involvement of IIED in the project officially ended.

### **5.3. Methodological Notes**

Stakeholder mapping was conducted after the interviews on the gas to power project were completed. The analysis presented data from around 13 interviews conducted with respondents who worked on the SUNGAS project. It is also compiled using data from observational and participatory study along with the interviews.

Interviews with participants were used to gain information on the project in general, using questions on roles and responsibilities. The questions centred on significant events used to build a timeline. Around these significant events, interviewees discussed their perspectives on the relations between stakeholders or organisations in the project and how this affected the outcomes of the project. The data were compiled and coded to conduct the stakeholder mapping, which is based on my amalgamation of the data.

#### **5.3.1. Literature on Stakeholder Analysis**

Stakeholder analysis is a term that can be applied to a range of methods that seek to either identify stakeholders, differentiate between and categorise stakeholders or investigate the relationships between stakeholders. It has become increasingly popular with a wide range of organisations in many different fields, and it is now used by policy-makers, regulators, governmental and non- governmental organisations, businesses and the media (Reed, Graves, et al., 2009).

However, the term is rather broad, leading to some confusion over a concrete definition, described as “slippery creature”, “used by different people to mean widely different things” (Reed, Graves, et al., 2009, p.1). A first step in defining stakeholder analysis is defining the term stakeholder. This term can also range in meaning, but most definitions in the literature centre around a definition outlined by Mitchell et al. (1997, p.1) as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation’s objectives”. Some studies are more conservative in defining who can be classed as a stakeholder excluding more groups from their analysis,

while others are more liberal in their definition, including groups such as future generations in analysis (Nash and Hudson, 2006).

Therefore, an analysis of stakeholders is one that aims to identify, differentiate, categorise and investigate the relationships between those who are affected by or affect a project. In doing so, stakeholder analysis is a versatile tool that can draw out interests of stakeholders in relation to an organisation or a project's objectives, or the problem that an organisation is seeking to address. It can identify conflicts of interests, look for coalitions between stakeholders, look for points of intervention where relationships could be improved and help to identify appropriate areas of participation at successive stages of a project's cycle (ODA, 2012).

Importantly, stakeholder analysis has developed with a focus on inclusivity, developing as a tool that can be used to empower marginal groups, such as women or racial minorities (Reed, Graves, et al., 2009; Bryson et al., 2002). It has developed in parallel with and been enriched by the development of participatory methods for project design and planning (Grimble and Wellard, 1997). Participation is becoming increasingly embedded in international environmental and sustainability policy, as decision-makers recognise the need to understand who is affected by the decisions and actions they take, and who has the power to influence their outcome, i.e. the stakeholders, as defined by Mitchell et al. (1997).

Many different methods of stakeholder analysis have been developed. Summaries can be found in Nash and Hudson (2006) and Yang et al. (2011) - who highlight 30 different types of stakeholder analysis that can be applied to differing situations. It is important given this range of methods available to be clear on the method of stakeholder mapping to be used and why.

### **Critiques of Stakeholder Analysis**

The choice of method depends on the reason for its application, and it is worth noting that there is a difference between my application of stakeholder mapping and the application of many stakeholder mapping exercises (as a form of stakeholder analysis) in the literature. Many studies that apply stakeholder mapping as an approach are looking to highlight inequalities and marginal groups (Reed, Graves, et al., 2009), however, in this application, I am looking to highlight the relationships of power in the SUNGAS project.

A popular method of stakeholder mapping uses interest and influence to classify stakeholders into "key players", "context setters", "subjects" and "crowd" by defining their interest and influence on a matrix, a process termed *stakeholder mapping*. A good example of how stakeholder mapping is applied in this way can be found in a report compiled by the ODA on rural water supply in Malawi (Oates and Mwachungu, 2018). In this analysis, an interest/influence matrix is drawn to "visualise the relationships between actors in terms of their relative influence and interest in the long-term functionality of rural water supply" (Oates and Mwachungu, 2018,

p.11). The analysis within this chapter aims to approach the SUNGAS project using similar methods. Stakeholder mapping will be used in the same way, to get an overview of the relationships between stakeholders before the next chapter will look into these relationships in much more depth.

A weakness of a lot of literature that uses stakeholder mapping as a method is that it does not define the methods used to map stakeholders. For example, the salient studies of Zeitoun et al. (2012) and Newcombe (2003) both construct interest influence matrices without any reference to methods. Therefore, before I begin the analysis, I will outline the methods I will use.

### **5.3.2. Stakeholder Mapping: Methods**

The process of mapping involves an abstraction of reality or a transfer of features of the 'real world' into the 'cognizant world'. Aligica (2006) categorises the process of mapping into three dimensions or levels:

1. the territory or the phenomenon to be mapped,
2. the map itself and
3. the metatheory of mapping,

where all levels reciprocally determine the dynamics of each other.

This schematic can be applied to the stakeholder mapping of the SUNGAS project. The territory of the phenomenon to be mapped has been defined as the stakeholders involved in the gas to power element of the project, outlined in table 5.1, according to the definition of stakeholders in section 5.3.1. Important to note here is that the SUNGAS project was not solely designed to address the problems of gas flaring, electricity and cookstove supply. Other elements involved the provision of solar panels and solar lights. This exercise will, therefore, map stakeholders that affected or were affected by the gas to power element of the SUNAGS project. I will use a fairly conservative measure of these stakeholders and confine them to organisations partnered in the SUNGAS project. Based on this definition the stakeholders to be mapped are The EC, LEFUK, LENF, SPDC, DFID, IIED and the Egbeda Community. SDN will not be included as they joined later on in the project and there was less data on their interest and influence.

The design of the matrix itself is fairly self-explanatory, I will use an interest/influence matrix that from the data plots (my) perception of the level of influence of stakeholders on one axis and the level of interest on another axis, as used in the methods of Zeitoun et al. (2012), Newcombe (2003), Oates and Mwachunga (2018), and ODA (2012). The map will be split into quadrants which serve to categorise stakeholders under the terms 'subjects, key players, crowd and context setters'.

The meta theoretic level outlined by Aligica (2006) involves determining the background theories applicable and the standards of accuracy required of the particular map. As mentioned above, few studies that employ stakeholder mapping as an approach define the methods they use. The next sections will aim to address this gap.

### **5.3.3. Stakeholder Mapping: Interest, Influence and Power**

Interest and influence were prevalent themes in the data collected on the SUNGAS project. Some stakeholders were mentioned more often than others in respondents' descriptions of significant events and appeared to have more of an influence on the outcomes of the project. At the same time, some stakeholders appeared to have interests contrary to the objectives of the project, with one respondent noting that even before the SUNGAS project began, he knew that some of the partner organisations were 'not serious'. The dynamics of interest and influence were communicated by respondents as influential in the project's outcomes.

Respondents noted how power was granted to certain organisations involved in the project, but how power was also contested, causing altercations. At this point, it is worth defining the term power and how it differs from influence. In an analysis of operational approaches for stakeholder analysis and engagement Yang et al. (2011) define 'stakeholder power' as the ability to control resources, create dependencies and support some organisation's interests over others. However, the term power can apply to contexts in a more nuanced way. For example, Lukes (2005) outlines three dimensions of power. The first dimension, *issue* of power, corresponds to the definition of Yang et al. (2011), where power is visible, overt and direct and seen as a relation among people, where one group or individual directs the behaviour of another. The second dimension, *agenda*, is more subtle and involves the setting of a context by one group or individual to guide the behaviour of another. The third dimension, *manipulation*, is more subtle still and involves the manipulation of psychology to change the boundaries of what groups or individuals "think is right" thereby changing behaviour.

Coming back to this analysis, the stakeholder mapping approach will use instances evident in the data of clear and overt exercises of power by stakeholders to determine levels of influence-concurrent with the definition of Yang et al. (2011) or Lukes (2005) first dimension of power. As the exercise in this chapter is aiming to achieve an overview of stakeholders and their relations throughout the SUNGAS project an investigation into nuanced forms of power can be saved for the next chapter.

### **Defining Influence:**

Influence is defined by Reed, Graves, et al. (2009) as the ‘process of affecting the thoughts, behaviour and feelings of another’. This description of influence defines influence as *applied* power, i.e. influence materialises when power is exercised. Policy-orientated definitions of influence can be vague and despite the importance of power in stakeholder relations, there is no consistent method in the literature for determining relative levels of power, or for defining power (Salam and Noguchi, 2006). In mapping influence in stakeholder analysis, this analysis will focus on instances in which power is exercised as a measure of influence.

For this analysis, based on instances where influence has been exercised overtly and directly, a more technical checklist is appropriate. The ODA (2012) define a list of considerations for assessing influence with and between formal organisations:

- Legal hierarchy (command and control, budget holders).
- Authority of leadership (formal and informal, charisma, political, familial or cadre connections).
- For informal interest groups and primary stakeholders.
- Social, economic and political status.
- Degree of organisation, consensus and leadership in the group.
- Control of strategic resources for the project (eg. suppliers of hardware or other inputs).
- Degree of control of strategic resources significant for the project.
- Possession of specialist knowledge (eg. engineering staff).
- Informal influence through links with other stakeholders.
- Negotiating position (strength in relation to other stakeholders in the project).

### **Defining Interest:**

Definitions of interest in literature are even vaguer than those of influence. Whereas the ODA does not define a list of considerations for assessing interest, variables of interest can be gathered from the same report (ODA, 2012).

- Benefits or losses likely to accrue to the stakeholder through the achievement of the project objectives.



- Resources committed by the stakeholder to the project.
- Other interests of the stakeholder aside from the project objectives.
- Degree that the stakeholder clashed with other stakeholders.
- The degree to which a stakeholder would be affected by the failure of the project to meet its deliverables.

### **Finalised Methods of Analysis**

The above definitions are repetitive in some places and can be refined. As a result, the refined parameters used to assess interest and influence to compile the influence/ interest matrix will be:

#### *Interest*

- What benefits (losses) were likely to accrue to the stakeholder through the achievement of the project objectives?
- What resources did the stakeholder commit (not commit) to achieving the project objectives?
- What other interests did the stakeholder maintain which may have conflicted with achieving the project objectives?
- To what degree did the stakeholder collaborate (clash) with other stakeholders involved in the project?
- To what extent would a failure to meet the project aims affect the stakeholder?

#### *Influence*

- Did the stakeholder exercise control over strategic resources to influence the project?
- Did the stakeholder utilise specialist knowledge to influence the project?
- Did the stakeholder exercise authority in instances of negotiation?
- Did the stakeholder exercise legal authority?
- How much did the stakeholder's involvement in the project contribute to the project outcomes?

The next section will work through each stakeholder involved in the project to assess their interest and influence based on the data collected in interviews.

## 5.4. Compiling Analysis

### EC

#### *Interest*

The interest of the EC in funding the SUNGAS project appears to be to spend money allocated to aiding the development of the Niger Delta in respect to energy, and to reduce emissions. In addition to this, an interesting element to the SUNGAS project was that a large amount of advertising, of the EC, was required to promote the project. This occurred through local radio programmes, setting up a website, and erecting billboards within the pilot community. This suggests there was a reputational element to the EC's decision to provide the grant. In respect to resources committed to the project, the EC committed significant financing to the project but did not appear to commit a high level of human resources. IIED was the grant holder and appeared to be in charge of managing the project, but the EC seemed to play a role in authorising budgets, for example requesting receipts transactions. The EC did not appear to have other interests that would have conflicted with the project. They extended the project grant on several occasions and 'bent the rules' to allow the project to continue.

- Interest: High

#### *Influence*

The EC, as the grant distributor had a high degree of influence in respect to the distribution of resources, as they controlled the release of the monetary resources for the project. The EC did not utilise any specialist skills or resources, instead, they outsourced the job of doing this. There is no evidence of the EC utilising any informal connections to allow the project to continue. An important point that the EC set the rules of the game throughout the project. Whilst the EC did not commit much in terms of human resources for project management, the organisation set the rules by which the grant was managed. The EC also appeared to have the highest legal authority in respect to the project. For example, after the project failed, the EC was conducting a review of the project.

- Influence: Middle - High

## **IIED**

### *Interest*

Respondents noted how there was some conflict between the stated deliverables of the project and the aims of IIED. Whereas the project deliverables were to provide electricity to the pilot community, an interview with one respondent stated that the real interest of IIED was more in relation to the lessons learned from the project. Interviewees representing other organisations working around SUNGAS mentioned that an overriding interest of IIED was the production of reports, with the organisation's actions appearing to illustrate less of an interest in the delivery of the project's main outputs. IIED appeared to provide few if any, monetary resources to the project. Despite the very high workload allocated to the organisation, the organisation provided relatively few human resources. Only one person was allocated to running the project for the first three to four years of the project (the original duration of the project). Those from IIED allocated to the role of project management had little experience and interest in managing the practical elements of the project and had a greater interest in the research elements of the role. Also, staff from IIED allocated to project management were expected to manage the SUNGAS project alongside other projects being run concurrently by IIED, reducing the possible level of commitment of allocated staff. IIED experienced significant problems in relations with other partners, particularly with LEF. Accounts of mistrust and combative behaviour between these partners were given by a range of anonymous interviewees. Accounts were given of general frustration with IIED from other stakeholders in the project, appearing that relations were strained between IIED and all other stakeholders. This evidence suggests that the interest level of IIED as an organisation in achieving the deliverables of the project was questionable. The resources committed by the organisation to the project appeared inadequate, and the outputs focused on by the organisation do not appear to match with the project's main deliverables.

- Interest: Middle - Low

### *Influence*

IIED were allocated under the grant as the primary liaison between the partners of the SUNGAS project and the EC. IIED were also given the position as grant manager for the EC, a position that was contested by some other partners. IIED were therefore in control of strategic resources for the project, and therefore the organisation's actions were instrumental to the progression of the project. IIED had the power to independently create new deliverables for the project, with limited to no consultation or co-design with partners expected to deliver them. The role of IIED in the project was brokered through connections that were less formal than those with the main partners. These connections were with partnership brokers, who influenced project management,

before leaving the project. In situations of negotiation, IIED appeared to be willing to exercise authority, although this caused frustration of other partners.

- Influence: High

## **SPDC**

### *Interest*

SPDC's interest in achieving the project objectives is questionable. Achieving the project objectives would be a break from business as usual, allowing for an increase in the reputation of the company's operations in Nigeria. How important this reputational aspect was to the company is difficult to determine. Gas flaring in the Niger Delta as a practice has not been significantly abated since the onset of the project, and this has not impacted the company's operations. SPDC committed considerable resources in the form of feedstock gas and cash, in relation to other partners. However, SPDC is a huge organisation, and the resources committed were small in relation to the overall resources available to the company. Despite the project being highly technical, SPDC did not commit any technical personnel to the project. SPDC were difficult to work with – decisions would take a long time to be approved within the organisation. SPDC did not seem to lose anything in the project failing. SPDC's main interests were not in the project succeeding, they were always in production continuing and returning profit to shareholders. SPDC withdrew resources at the end of the project and this was a factor in the project.

- Interest: Middle - Low

### *Influence*

SPDC had a very high level of influence in respect to the control of strategic resources, the organisation controlled access to the feedstock gas that was essential to the project. The organisation had specialist knowledge, but they did not utilise it to influence the project. SPDC would have held a wealth of informal connections but did not use them to influence the project. Possibly the lack of commitment of specialist knowledge and further resources had a large influence on the gas to power component of the project. SPDC in Nigeria would have had significant legal and negotiation authority, but there is not much evidence of the organisation utilising it. It is important to note that the withdrawal of funds at the end of the project was enough to finally terminate the project. There were many instances mentioned where 'top-level' support was given to the project in kind, but less was given in action.

- Influence: High

## **LEFUK**

### *Interest*

Successful completion of the project would have benefited the reputation of LEFUK. LEFUK did not provide any resources but used political connections to secure co-financing from SPDC and The UK Department For International Development (DFID). Considering the relatively small size of the organisation as a whole, the level of commitment of human resources was adequate. LEFUK underwent significant conflict with IIED, which caused delays in the project. The interest of keeping the organisation going could have conflicted with those of completing the project quickly, although this view is not substantiated with significant evidence.

- Interest: High

### *Influence*

LEFUK secured co-financing from SPDC and DFID and managed this co-financing, gaining influence within the project. However, this influence was short-lived, as DFID pulled out their co-financing. However, the main strategic resources in the form of the grant from the EC for the project were controlled by IIED. Therefore, a greater influence over the whole project was held by IIED. The specialist knowledge of LEFUK was in project management, but they were unable to utilise this specialist knowledge because the role of project management was given to IIED. Therefore, the influence of LEFUK over the gas to power element of the project was ceded to LEFUK. There were several instances of negotiation cited by LEFUK in which IIED utilised authority, which meant LEFUK were constricted in their influence on the project direction. LEFUK did not utilise any legal authority.

- Influence: Low

## **LENF**

### *Interest*

LENF gained benefit from being involved in the project, but there seemed to be limited interest from the organisation in completing the project. Benefits were accrued from accessing budget lines accessed through LEFUK. LEFUK obtained funding from SPDC, DFID and IIED.

LENF committed human resources to the project but did not source co-financing or commit their resources, instead of relying on revenues from LEFUK. The resources required and committed by LENS staff on the side of community engagement were significant. There was evidence of a conflict between the wider long-term interests of the project and the short-term benefits that could be accrued by some members of the LENS team. There was considerable conflict within the organisation, and it is difficult to categorise the organisation as an entity. However, conflict within the organisation and with LEFUK meant that the organisation was unable to pursue interests that contributed to the achievement of the project aims and objectives.

- Interest: Middle – Low

#### *Influence*

LENF had some control over resources once they were allocated to the organisation but depended on other organisations to supply resources. LENS had specialist knowledge in interacting with the communities but did not have much ability to source further specialist knowledge. The organisation did not exercise much legal influence. LENS were directed by LEFUK and had little autonomy. In relation to other stakeholders, they exercised relatively little influence aside from being involved in altercations that ultimately delayed the project. The organisation were eventually replaced. These events on their own had somewhat of an influence on the project, but not as much influence as the delays caused by organisations such as IIED.

- Influence: Middle

## **DFID**

#### *Interest*

DFID joined the project as a co-financier sourced by LEFUK. After hearing about difficulties in relations between LEFUK and LENS, they withdrew funding from the project completely. The organisation therefore committed funds but withdrew them very quickly. The organisation did not commit any funds to the project long term, suggesting a lower interest in the project. DFID did not stand to gain much from the completion of the project objectives, aside from benefits to their reputation. The organisation did not appear to have much to lose in withdrawing from the project or the project not meeting their commitments. DFID played a proximal role, so did not directly clash with other stakeholders, at the same time did make much effort to repair relations.

- Interest: Middle - Low

#### *Influence*

DFID had a high degree of control over strategic resources. The withdrawal of these resources from the project caused a significant delay to the project, of over one year. Considering their level of control over resources, DFID had control over the progression of the project. DFID did not exercise legal authority during the project. The amount of specialist knowledge that they contributed to the project was unclear. The organisation's involvement was important in realising the project's objectives, its withdrawal had a significantly detrimental effect on the project outcomes.

Influence: Medium - High

### **Egbeda Community**

#### *Interest*

The Egbeda community were likely to gain from the success of the project as the project promised to provide reliable electricity, a resource to which they would not normally have access. The community committed human resources to the project where possible but had relatively few resources to commit generally. The community for the majority of the project had no alternatives than the project so could not maintain any interests that conflicted with the project. There was no evidence of members of the community clashing with other stakeholders. Also, the community would be most severely affected by the failure of the project, as it would result in a continued lack of electricity. The interest of the community can be best summed up by an account of an NGO representative, who mentioned how the community leader was at one point on his knees, begging for electricity to be supplied via the project.

- Overall interest: High

#### *Influence*

The community had no control of the project's resources, relying on other stakeholders to provide any form of resources. The community also had no specialist knowledge of what was a foreign project. They had no legal authority and appeared to have no authority in instances of negotiation, as the delays in the project were out of the control of the community.

Influence: Low

## 5.5. Stakeholder Mapping Plot

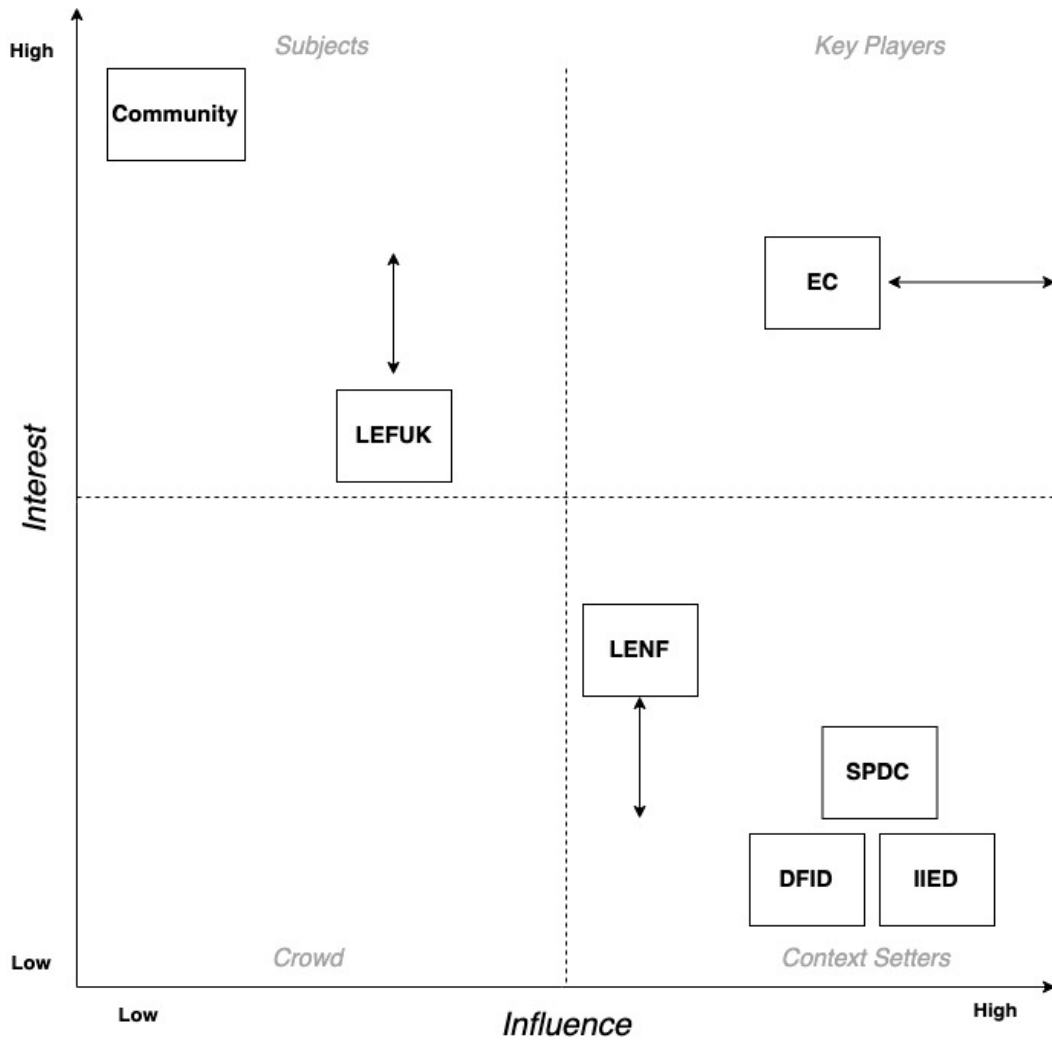


Figure 5.1.: Interest / influence matrix for the SUNGAS project

### 5.5.1. Relative Stakeholder Interest

The first observation that can be made is that the majority of stakeholders involved in the gas to power element of the SUNGAS project were assessed to have relatively low interest, in respect to achieving the outcomes of the gas to power project. LENF, SPDC, DFID and IIED, due to



their perceived low interest, each find themselves in the lower area of the chart. This resonates with a common theme in the interviews from stakeholders and other respondents who were not necessarily involved in the project but were able to observe the process and compare it to other projects that have been run in the Niger Delta. This theme concerned the general interest of the stakeholders and centred around the conclusion that stakeholders were 'not serious'. Essentially this observation showed that across the project, there was generally relatively little interest in achieving the aims and objectives of the project. Commonalities in the reasons for allocating levels of high or low interest between stakeholders were: stakeholders with low interest were commonly described by other stakeholders as being difficult to work on a collaborative basis. For example, representatives from IIED and LEFUK were involved in tussles and personal arguments, unwilling to make compromises that would have helped to move the project along. SPDC was described as being a cumbersome collaborative partner. The conclusion was reached that an inability or unwillingness to collaborate with other partners indicates low interest in achieving the stated aims of the project. The stakeholders with a low level of interest did not commit resources that would have helped to achieve the project objectives. For example, SPDC, despite committing monetary capital and proposing to commit gas feedstock did not provide human resources for technical means, despite having access to world-class resources that would have aided the progression of the project. IIED, for the majority of the project, committed resources that were inadequate for meeting the needs of the project. These stakeholders also had reasons for participating in the project that were divergent from the main aims of the project and the subsequent roles that were allocated to them, which were roles that were allocated to help achieve the project's aims. LENF as an organisation (despite variation between individuals within the organisation) showed more interest in short term benefits that could be gained from the project, rather than achieving the project's overall aims.

### **5.5.2. Relative Stakeholder Influence**

It was concluded that many of the stakeholders in the project exercised a high level of influence on the project outcomes, although this influence was not necessarily positive. Many of the stakeholders who exercised influence did so in a way that was detrimental to the project achieving its objectives. Commonalities between stakeholders with a high level of interest involved the exercise of control over strategic resources. The EC and IIED had primary control over funds vital to the project. SPDC and DFID also exercised a high degree of control in providing co-finance to the project, with SPDC also providing resources in the form of the gas feedstock. Authority in negotiation was an important factor in determining relative influence. Instances, where authority in negotiation was exercised, were important to the level of influence that was given to each stakeholder. Those with the highest level of influence generally showed authority in the

instances of negotiation that were outlined by the stakeholders in interviews.

### **5.5.3. Relationship Between Interest and Influence**

Generally, there is a negative correlation between interest and influence. There is a tendency for those with the greatest influence to be the least interested in achieving the specific project outcomes. These organisations fall within the ‘context setters’ area of the chart, where interest in achieving the project outcomes is relatively low yet influence is relatively high. The stakeholder group with the least influence, the Egbeda community, were also shown to have the greatest interest. To resolve the problem of having several stakeholders with a high level of influence yet low level of interest, ODA (2012) recommend that these stakeholders should have a higher capacity. There are few stakeholders involved in the analysis that fall into the ‘crowd’ category of the stakeholder analysis chart. Perhaps this was because the stakeholders mentioned by respondents were those who had significance within the project. Social Action, for example, was an organisation mentioned by respondents but only in passing.

## **5.6. Limitations of this Stakeholder Analysis**

Whilst this analysis served its purpose in respect to gaining an overview of the stakeholders involved, there were several limitations to the technique.

The first limitation is that the analysis only provides a view of stakeholders that has no spatial or temporal variability. An organisations’ influence or interest in the project may change over time, or change depending on where that organisation is operating. Another example of variability can be found in legal power, which varies over distance. LEFUK in the UK could have less legal clout that LEFUK in Nigeria and vice versa. In providing a single static representation of interest and influence, the stakeholder map fails to capture these dynamics.

A theme that appeared in the data was that organisational backstories had a large influence on how representatives of organisations behaved within the project. For example, some organisations were going periods of *cultural change* that respondents noted had a heavy influence on the way an organisation interacted with the project. These changes then were then attributed to an organisation behaving in an ‘uncharacteristic’ manner. In operating only around outcomes of behaviour, a stakeholder mapping approach does not illuminate some of these, perhaps hidden, influences.

The mapping exercise treats organisations as formed and homogeneous entities, when in fact organisations can also be seen as are a mixture of different internal processes, different world-views and attitudes, which produce an overall output attributed to that organisation. When look-

ing for the explanation of some of the outputs in terms of the behaviour of organisations, the stakeholder analysis misses these internal dynamics.

The analysis also fails to account for contextual influences happening around the project, external to the stakeholders analysed. For example, there may be wider trends in financing that affect the decision-making processes of organisations and their representatives. Decision making may be compromised in these situations, with organisations looking to make decisions that act in the interest of the organisation as opposed to contributing to the deliverables of a project.

Also, the variables of interest and influence can be multi-faceted. An organisation could be interested in both delivering project outcomes but also be involved in a project to suit their own needs. In this way, an organisation may show a high level of interest in a project, yet not be interested in the project meeting its deliverables.

The exercise also fails to analyse absent stakeholders. If an absence of stakeholders contributed to the failure of a project, stakeholder mapping will not capture this. For example, one of the main problems with SUNGAS quoted by some respondents was a failure of the project to work with a local entrepreneur to achieve implementation. If stretching out this point, it could be said that a project with a complete lack of productive stakeholders may fail, yet a stakeholder mapping exercise of this project would not explain the reasons for this failure. Interestingly, the government was conspicuously absent from this analysis. If this absence influenced the project, it was not captured by the analysis.

As mentioned above the approach of this analysis considered basic forms of power, where power was overt. This means that some elements of power mechanisms of the *creation* of power may fall through the analysis. For example, if an organisation such as SPDC is deemed to be influential within the project, the factors that lead to the *generation* of this influence, for example, historic political trends, are not captured. Therefore, stakeholder mapping potentially fails to ask deeper questions of how power imbalances may be addressed, instead only illustrating where power imbalances occur. These imbalances could be dynamic and insightful when interrogating why a project failed to meet its predefined objectives. To analyse some of the more hidden contextual influences that contributed to the genesis of power, a different methodology is needed.

In many cases, stakeholder analysis is used during a project to gain a better understanding of the relationships between stakeholders involved. In this sense the exercise was productive. However, the limitations of the methods and the results produced do not allow for a detailed explanation of the outcomes of the project and in this sense fail to fully work towards answering the research questions of the thesis. Instead, the results of the stakeholder analysis can be seen as a starting point to begin a deeper analysis of the influences on the project, acting as a framework around which to introduce some more inquisitive methods of social enquiry.

*“International development organisations are supposed to be there to help people in other countries and the biggest problem is our own finances, our own management. . .”*

UK-Based NGO Representative

# 6

## **STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS OF THE SUNGAS PROJECT USING CONCEPTS OF STRUCTURE, AGENCY AND STRUCTURATION**

## Abstract

This chapter aims to analyse the gas to power component of the Sustainable Utilisation of Nigeria's Gas and Renewable Energy Resources (SUNGAS) project in more detail than the previous stakeholder mapping chapter. This chapter uses a theoretical framework built from concepts of structure and agency and strong structuration, adapted to fit an empirical analysis of interactions between agents, organisations and large-scale influences that led to the outcomes of the SUNGAS project. The first section of the analysis begins by outlining the design of the SUNGAS project's organisational structure, which is conceptualised as a set of rules imbricated with the provision of resources, denoting power relations between organisations and their representatives. It considers how this designed organisational structure and its implied power relations were created, interpreted and in some cases resisted by partner organisations and their representatives in the UK and Nigeria. The analysis exposes the difficulty of upholding a designed project organisational structure across a geographical and cultural distance between London and the Niger Delta. To manage various forms of resistance to the project's organisational structure, The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)- the organisation responsible project management- were required to employ extra managerial capabilities. The analysis first illustrates how the organisational structure of IIED, along with larger-scale determinants, influenced the organisation's capability to manage SUNGAS and caused delays to the project. The second part of the analysis shows how, considering the contested nature of SUNGAS power structures, representatives of partner organisations used different techniques to create new power away from the designed project organisational structure. Such techniques included accessing additional resources from external organisational structures and manipulating the organisational structures of the SUNGAS project to procure resources. These attempts to generate new power led to unintended and perverse complications as a result of the incompatibility of different organisational structures, in the form of organisational logics and larger-scale influences- further delaying the project. The theoretical framework of this chapter allows for a new perspective on the decision making of individuals in a dynamic organisational setting such as a Public-Private Partnership (PPP), showing how structural influences at varying scales can produce behaviour detrimental to project objectives. The chapter concludes with reflections on how the implementation of SUNGAS may have been improved, along with reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical apparatus used.

## **6.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented a background to the SUNGAS project and introduced the main partners involved, highlighting some initial trends. It was limited in that it failed to capture the changing dynamics of relationships between partner organisations, which, according to interviewees, contributed to the failure of the project. It also failed to capture how complex influences at multiple scales (for example, trends in international development financing or organisational culture) may have influenced the behaviour of organisations and the individuals representing these organisations, in turn influencing the outcomes of the project. This chapter aims to address these limitations by using concepts of structure and agency and strong structuration applied to the organisational context of the SUNGAS project.

## **6.2. Notes on the Methods of This Chapter**

As detailed in chapter three, there are some points regarding the application of methods within this chapter that apply more directly to the empirical analysis and are therefore better presented alongside the empirical analysis of this chapter. This section will outline these points before moving onto the analysis.

### **6.2.1. Defining a Focus of Analysis**

The SUNGAS project was an international cross-sector partnership which operated through organisations in the UK, Nigeria and Brussels, and presents many areas of potential enquiry. To retain focus for this analysis, the parameters of the study need to be considered. A first parameter to consider is the geographic scale of the project. As outlined in chapter three, international development research and research on partnerships in sustainability tends to focus on either intra-community dynamics or macro-dynamics. As a result, the area in between these two scales, the ‘meso-scale’, sometimes referred to as ‘the messy middle’ or the ‘management-level’ of research is often neglected (Cleaver and De Koning, 2015; Rasmussen, Friis-Hansen, et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2012b). Respondents interviewed for this case study, as representatives of organisations, worked and interacted with the SUNGAS project at this scale, and accordingly focussed discussions at this scale.

SUNGAS involved numerous partners focusing on a range of projects in addition to the ‘gas to power’ element, including efforts to provide solar-powered water pumps, electric lanterns and social work in areas of the rural Delta. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to also consider the implementation of these elements of the SUNGAS project and instead the analysis will focus on

the implementation of gas to power elements and the influences that respondents attributed to this implementation.

The project also involved a significant technical element in respect to the capture, utilisation and distribution of associated gas through an electricity mini grid. There is potential to investigate in detail these technical elements of the project, as interviewees stressed their influence on the outcomes of the project. Unfortunately, a detailed technical analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter, which is focusing on the relations between partners in the project as a central analysis. Therefore, where technical elements of the project are considered, they are considered in respect to their influence on interactions between representatives of partner organisations.

The content of this study is politically sensitive. At the time interviews were conducted, the European Commission (EC) was investigating the failure of the SUNGAS project. Any blame perceived to be directed at specific agents or organisations could lead to ramifications for respondents who kindly gave their time to be interviewed for this study, or others involved in the SUNGAS project but were not interviewed. Therefore, the anonymity of respondents is maintained throughout the text. At some points, this may cloud the analysis and lead to non-specificity of description, but it is a necessary measure.

### **6.2.2. Theoretical Notes**

The justification of the theoretical framework of this chapter is covered in detail in chapter three along with the appropriate groups of literature. The purpose of this section, however, is to explain in more detail how the analysis in this chapter will apply the theoretical framework to the empirical data.

#### **Notes on Structuration and Strong Structuration**

The chapter's theoretical framework is built using concepts of social structure and agency. The framework is built mostly from concepts of Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens, 1984b) and an extension and refinement of structuration theory, Stones' Strong Structuration Theory (Stones, 2005). Whilst Giddens' structuration theory was a seminal progression in reconciling the long-debated relationship between social structure and individual agency, it is a theory designed to operate at an abstract level, otherwise described as the level of ontology in general. Structuration theory, as I have discovered whilst writing this chapter, is a theory that resonates a low-resolution, abstract level where it is divorced from context; but can break down when considered in detail and applied to examples. To apply Giddens' concepts to empirical case studies, or ontology in situ, they need to be tailored to an entirely different ontological level. Strong Structuration Theory aims to achieve this tailoring, or a 'sliding of the ontological scale', away

from ontology in general and towards ontology in situ. In doing so, it allows the concepts of structuration theory to be applied to empirical studies or organisational contexts such as this case study.

A note to make at this point is that in developing his extension of Structuration Theory, Stones neglects some of Giddens' key concepts. The concepts he neglects that are relevant to this chapter are those concerning resources and their relation to power. In part Stones neglects these concepts because Giddens is very unclear and contradictory in his description of them. I argue, however, that they are useful and can be applied to this analysis. In building an analytical framework for this chapter I draw significantly on Stones' approach of tailoring Structuration Theory to empirical analysis, but at the same time carefully draw on some of Giddens' key concepts as further tools to complement this approach. In using Giddens' concepts, I aim to be explicit in demonstrating how I am translating from ontology in general to ontology in situ.

A final methodological note is that this chapter is not a study of Structuration Theory. Stones developed his framework as a way for empirical analysis to bring new insights to inform progress on Structuration Theory. Informing Structuration Theory is not the intention of this chapter. This chapter aims to use concepts derived from Stones' and Giddens' work to better understand the empirical context of the SUNGAS project. This chapter will finish with a reflection on its theoretical framework as a secondary output, but the primary aim of the chapter is to better understand the project, its outcomes and the relevance of the results to an understanding of public-private partnerships in sustainability.

### **6.2.3. Constructing a Theoretical Framework - Glossary of Terms to be Used for Analysis**

The best way to succinctly explain how the theoretical framework of this chapter will be applied to the data is through a glossary of the main terminology I will use within the analysis. This section summarises the terms used, shows how they have been conceptualised by Giddens and Stones, and then explains how I will use them in the analysis that follows. This section, therefore, aims to build a model of analysis that is then applied to the data.

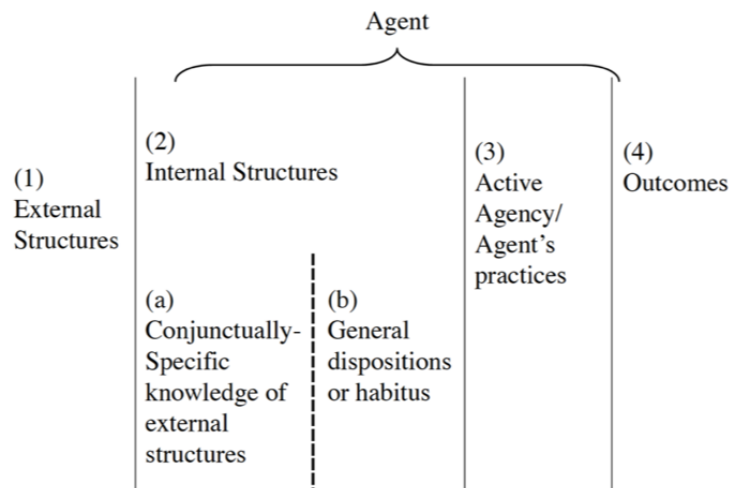
#### **Structure**

Giddens defines structure as "rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems" (Giddens, 1984b, p.337). The main component of Giddens' conception of structure is that of *duality*, which emphasises the role of both agents (term defined below) and social structures external to those agents in the production of social systems. As noted previously Giddens work considers *societal* structure, using an approach that considers structure 'at all times



everywhere' (Stones, 2005). This approach has also been termed at a scale appropriate to processes of 'historical formation' (Parker, 2006). Accordingly, Giddens' conception of structure is very difficult to draw down to the level of an empirical study, such as this study of organisational dynamics in the SUNGAS project- the focus of many critiques of his theory, for example, see Thrift (1985).

Through Strong Structuration Stones makes the concept of structure more applicable to an empirical context by reducing its scope from 'at all times, everywhere' to a 'practical horizon' surrounding an agent in a specific instance or conjuncture. He does this by creating a model, which he terms the quadripartite process of structuration (see figure 6.1), which defines the spatial (surrounding an agent) and temporal scale (within the agent's time frame) of analysis. In this way, Stones creates a model that can be used to draw Giddens' concepts from the scale of societal structure to a level of organisational structure.



**Figure 6.1.:** *The quadripartite process of structuration (Stones, 2005, p.85)*

Stones' model begins with structures external to the agent in phase one of the structuration process. These structures are rules and resources as perceived by the agent in question. The agent, in phase two, possesses internal structures. These are a mixture of the agent's interpretation of external structures and the agent's particular traits such as personality, worldview and also skill-sets. Stones splits internal structures into two categories: conjunctually specific internal structures are the internal structures available to an agent at a specific time and place,

whereas general dispositional structures refer to an agent's worldview, personality, and various internal motivations for a particular choice of action that transcend specific conjunctures. The agent will apply internal structures through practices (stage three), leading to outcomes (phase four) and the reproduction of structures. In this way, the grand concepts of Structuration Theory are distilled into a model that can be applied to a time and place.

As with many details of Structuration and Strong Structuration, there is a great deal of ambiguity between Giddens and Stones on the nature of internal structures and how they relate to external structures. Clearing up the ambiguity of such details is beyond the scope of this study. For this analysis, internal structures will be conceived of similar to Stones' interpretation. Stones states that internal structures are an agent's interpretation of external structures whether these are organisational structures or larger-scale societal structures, at a specific conjuncture. Internal structures are also composed of an agent's personality and world view. Through practices, an agent will draw on an interpretation of external structures, mediated by personality and worldview to produce outcomes as a result of agency. This is a process of "sifting and sieving" consciously or non-consciously of available options to an agent that produce an outcome through structuration (Stones, 2005, p. 120).

For this analysis, I will use Stones' conception of structure, through his quadripartite model, which allows for structure to be understood in respect to particular individuals and instances. This allows the concepts of Structuration Theory to be applied to an organisational setting.

## **Rules**

If structure is defined as rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems, rules are a central component to structure. Giddens describes rules as maintained in more or less loosely organised sets surrounding social structure, imbricated with practices, which cannot be conceptualised apart from resources (Giddens, 1984a). In Giddens' conception, rules have two essential components. On one hand, rules operate to sanction behaviour; on the other, rules apply to the constitution of meaning. For example, within a game of chess, breaking the rules of the game will result in sanctioning through disqualification. At the same time, the meaning and identity of the game itself is comprised of its rules.

Stones is less descriptive of rules and how they apply within Strong Structuration. He decides to avoid the term rules as he argues this imposes a "false sense of homogeneity on a varied and range of phenomena" (Stones, 2005, p.67). If going back to the example above, chess is defined by its rules, but the rules of chess cannot apply to other games. However, an agent participating in a game of chess is influenced by a range of structures external to the game itself, for example how often the agent practises, or their genetically inherited cognitive function. These influences produce the competition that comprises the game. By implying a focus on only *rules* within a

specific conjuncture the analytical focus is potentially narrowed.

For this analysis, I describe rules as a key component of structure within an organisational setting and as part of large-scale deterministic influences. In respect to an organisational context, I will use the term rulesets. I consider the term *schemas* (a term used by Stones) to be too broad. The term rulesets allows for the focus of analysis to highlight rules particular to a certain group of structures, such as the rules of chess, or the procedures created within the SUNGAS project; but it also implies that these rules are a set that can be related to other sets of rules. An organisational structure depends on methods of sanctioning to enforce rules, and these rules also constitute the identity and meaning of an organisation, yet these rules do not operate in isolation, they are a set that relates to other sets of rules.

I conceive of rulesets as used in conjunction with resources (explained below) to create organisational structure. I conceive of organisational rulesets imbricated with resources as external structures, which when perceived by a particular agent at a specific conjuncture comprise one of many competing internal structures, which are drawn upon during practices to produce outcomes. Organisations or even specific projects are comprised of a particular ruleset imbricated with the provision of resources, denoting identity to a particular organisational structure and also sanctioning the behaviour of agents.

## **Resources**

The second key component of Structuration Theory and Strong Structuration Theory is resources, and the role of resources in organisational structure is a core component of the analysis of this chapter. Unfortunately, the concept of resources within structuration and strong structuration theory is particularly poorly articulated by both Giddens and Stones. This limitation demonstrates how both theories are insightful and equally precarious in their application and leave a theoretical gap that I will try to address.

Giddens splits structure into three analytically distinct categories of signification, legitimation and domination, which are utilised in combination by agents during the process of structuration. He describes resources as being part of structures of domination, which can be analytically separated into *allocative* and *authoritative* resources. *Allocative resources* refer to objects, goods or 'material phenomena', that can be controlled as part of domination. An example of this would be the provision of cash as an incentive to work, or the provision of status symbols as a reward for achievement. *Authoritative resources* refer to types of control over persons or actors. An example of this would be the coercion of an agent by appealing to their aspirations. Giddens describes how both types of resources can be used in tandem and how structures of domination are used in conjunction with other structures, such as those of signification and legitimation. In this way, he maintains that his categorisations are analytical distinctions.

When looking more closely at how Giddens understands resources, it can be found that he contradicts himself at a fundamental level. For example, he has said in *The Constitution of Society* that resources are virtual, but in his book *Central Problems* that they are material (Stones, 2005, p.18). Considering the fundamentality of resources (for example money) to nearly every contemporary social structure, his contradictions expose an overarching ambiguity in his thinking that needs to be appreciated when considering an application of Structuration Theory. Despite this ambiguity, in choosing concepts of structure and agency as a framework for this chapter, I maintain an argument that the insights that can be gained from Structuration Theory, when used carefully, outweigh the detriments of the theory's inherent ambiguities.

Maybe as a consequence to ambiguities of Giddens' concepts, Stones, in building up his quadripartite model of structuration, does not place a particular emphasis on resources himself, loosely concluding that resources are both material and virtual. The analysis of this chapter does not aim to contribute to this level of debate- as mentioned above this study is not a study of the theory itself. Instead, the analysis focuses on power and authority within the SUNGAS project, considering the role resources play in building an organisational structure and thereby how they can generate power for certain organisations and individuals within the project.

This analysis will use Giddens' analytical distinction between allocative and authoritative resources to describe some examples of how individuals generate power within the SUNGAS project organisational structure. To apply these concepts to the case study, I will integrate them into Stones' model, applying them to particular agents at specific conjunctures. In this way, I aim to bring a new perspective to the operation of the SUNGAS project.

### **Agents and Agency**

In social theory, agency is the "capability or the power to be the originator of acts" (Clever, 2007). The power of agency implies that an individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently. The originator of acts in this definition, the individual, is the agent. Agents, sometimes referred to as actors, are integral to concepts of Structuration and Strong Structuration. In Structuration and Strong Structuration, agents recursively reproduce structure. However, between the two theoretical perspectives, there are some differences in the specificity of the processes by which this happens. Giddens conceptualises agents as individuals operating with discursive consciousness, practical consciousness and unconscious motives or cognition, that reproduce macro-societal structures. Within his model of the quadripartite nature of structuration, Stones conceptualises agents as conduits for the two types of internal structures he outlines, within the action horizon of the agent (Stones, 2005, p. 84).

I will conceptualise agents and agency along the lines of Stones' thinking, through the quadripartite model, as this allows for a more focussed consideration than Giddens presents of internal

processes of the agent in relation to structure. Within Strong Structuration Theory, however, Stones places a lot of emphasises on the study of single agents. I argue that this approach requires a methodological design that concentrates heavily on agents. This analysis focuses less on the processes that occur at the level of the agent and more on the organisational structures that influence the actions of the agent. This method can be explained further through considering agent conduct vs agent context analysis, also described as methodological bracketing.

### **Agent Conduct Analysis vs Agent Context Analysis – Methodological Bracketing**

A final methodological distinction is in determining whether the analysis will focus more on single agents and their interpretation and understanding of structures or focus on the structural context surrounding agents.

Giddens describes using *institutional analysis* (the study of chronically reproduced rules and resources) to support *agent conduct analysis* (how actors reflexively monitor what they do). Stones argues that this type of methodical bracketing is not adequate for empirical analysis as it is a vague attempt to bridge a wide ontological gap between grand societal dynamics and the micro-scale of the agent. Instead, he advocates the use of the concepts of *agent context analysis* to support *agent conduct analysis*. He defines *agent context analysis* as a way in which to consider how conjecturally specific internal structures of an agent “lead us more clearly outwards into the social nexus of interdependencies, rights, and obligations, asymmetries of power and the social conditions and consequences of action” (Stones, 2005, p.121). In other words, *agent context analysis* leads ‘out’ from the agent to wider structures, *agent conduct analysis* concentrates on the agent, focusing ‘in’, as it were.

Stones’ above conception of methodological bracketing is clearer and easier to apply to an empirical study than Giddens’. However, in general, Strong Structuration Theory places a heavy emphasis on an analysis of the agent and their ‘internal structures’. Stones conceptualises a methodology that centres around a detailed analysis of the internal decision-making processes of single agents and works outward to understand the contextual structures in which that agent is placed at a specific conjuncture. I argue that this approach fails to avoid a strong critique of Giddens’ approach: that Giddens neglects interactions that sit in the region between the macro-scale of grand societal structures and the micro-scale of individuals (Thrift, 1985). Whereas Giddens in *The Constitution of Society* leans toward the grand societal level, Stones leans towards the individual level. Both approaches neglect the meso-scale (outlined above), a scale that this study is aiming to focus on. Again, despite these significant limitations to both theories, I argue that their insights outweigh their detriments. In a review of Strong Structuration Theory, Parker (2006), argues that the main strength of Strong Structuration Theory over Structuration Theory is its increased emphasis on the context surrounding agents. This study aims to further

this emphasis on context.

Accordingly, an in-depth application of Stones' agent conduct analysis is beyond the scope of this study. This would require an explicit questioning of each interviewees' "ordering of concerns into a hierarchy of purposes, their motives, their desires and the way they carried out the work of action and interaction within an unfolding sequence..." (Stones, 2005, p.122). This level of questioning was not conducted with interviewees, as the theoretical framework of this chapter was determined after interviews were conducted. As the focus of interviews tended towards the 'meso-level' of social interactions around the SUNGAS project, with a focus from this level 'up and down' to the macro and micro levels respectively, this chapter will place more of a focus on agent context analysis. The internal conjecturally specific structures of agents will be considered, but not in the level of focus on single agents that Stones implies in the methodology of Strong Structuration Theory. Instead, they will be considered in respect to the context of the organisational structure of the SUNGAS project, the main focus of analysis. I argue that this approach best summarises the complex themes in the data obtained from interviews and focuses on the main strengths of Structuration and Strong Structuration Theories.

#### **6.2.4. Building A Model of Organisational Structure for This Analysis Using Concepts of Structure and Agency**

This study, therefore, proposes that the SUNGAS project can be understood using a combination of concepts developed by Giddens and Stones. For this analysis organisational structure is understood as sets of rules and resources (allocative and authoritative) that are designed to elicit action by agents across the project. These rules and resources are both designed and interpreted by actors or agents within the project. Whilst recognising the organisational structure of the SUNGAS project, actors are also each operating within organisational structures of their organisations – which themselves operate through sets of rules and resources. The way specific actors interpret and practise organisational structure, in conjunction with numerous other external influences (such as large-scale influences, meso-level influences from organisations or micro-scale personality traits), is integral to how projects and organisations operate. This analysis aims to use this model to analyse interactions between partners in the SUNGAS project as an organisational study, as a novel organisational perspective. It aims to highlight systematic influences on organisational outcomes, which are exercised through individuals, but embedded in context at multiple scales.

## **6.3. The Design, Implementation and Obstruction of the SUNGAS Project Organisational Structure**

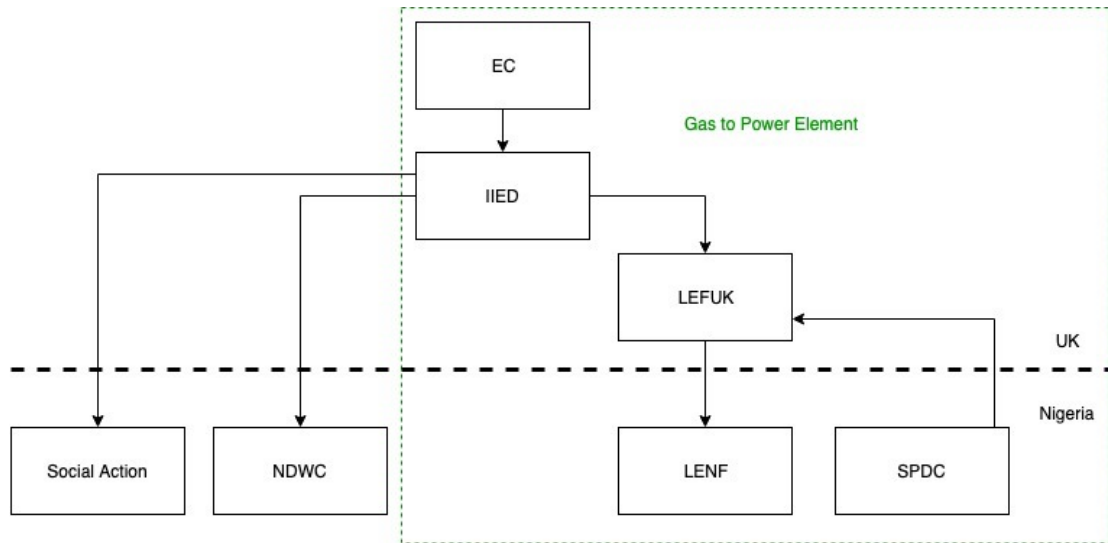
### **6.3.1. The Design Process of The SUNGAS Project Organisational Structure**

The design of the SUNGAS project organisational structure began with the conception of SUNGAS as a project. The creation of the project started in 2008/9 with the coordination of stakeholder organisations, or partners, to apply for a grant from the EC. The process of coordination and convening of the project partners was led by a consultant Brian Schaad who worked in collaboration with a social-environmental consultant. Both were independent consultants with extensive practical knowledge and experience of working in the Niger Delta. Both had previously worked on another unsuccessful project that aimed to utilise flared gas in the Delta, using financing from the World Bank. Both drew on a range of connections in Nigeria to convene the partners for the SUNGAS project, of which the gas to power element was a component (see fig 6.2). The respective partners convened for the SUNGAS project had limited experience working with each other, yet they all knew and trusted Brian Schaad. This trust gave him an ability at this initial stage of the project that allowed him to convene partners to apply for the EC grant and create SUNGAS.

During this grant application stage, the *organisational structure* of the project was decided. To be more precise, at this stage, it was decided how and by whom the grant for the project (an allocative resource) would be managed. Also decided were the conditions upon which the grant would be distributed (the project ruleset), in part a product of the design of the specific conditions of the EC grant.

### **6.3.2. The Resources of SUNGAS as Components of Organisational Structure**

During this design process, IIED were designated the ‘grant manager’ for the SUNGAS project. The grant from the EC was transferred from the EC to IIED, and IIED was given the responsibility of managing the allocation of this grant, across the project partners under the SUNGAS project- in the UK and Nigeria. The gas to power arm of the SUNGAS project saw the transfer of funds from IIED to Living Earth Foundation, UK (LEFUK), who then forwarded funding to LENF. Along with these resources, in the form of cash, came the power associated with allocating them throughout SUNGAS project. At this initial design stage of the project, the distribution pattern of allocative resources conferred a degree of power to organisations. IIED were given de-facto power over LEFUK, Niger Delta Wetlands Centre (NDWC), and Social Action; and LEFUK had authority over LENF as its subsidiary in Nigeria. This power can be considered a direct, overt and visible form of power, concurrent with, for example, Lukes’s 2005 first dimen-



**Figure 6.2.:** Schematic of designed SUNGAS project organisational structure with gas to power element highlighted. Arrows denote flows of allocative resources.

sion of power.

It is worth noting at this point that in addition to the flow of allocative resources outlined above, resources also originated from other sources. Project partners were using internal resources to pay staff for their time until the SUNGAS resources could be accessed. Some project partners interviewed noted how they conducted work without pay for a significant period, and how this was a point of tension between partners. This dynamic highlights the centrality of allocative resources in guiding action and building structure, even when these resources are only promised.

Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) did not receive allocative resources, despite being designed into the initial organisational structure of SUNGAS, making them an exception to other partners in the project. The organisation had agreed to participate in the project through providing associated (flared) gas from a flare site within their extractive infrastructure near the pilot community. The provision of associated gas was a core resource upon which the SUNGAS depended. Access to the feedstock of associated gas can be seen as an allocative resource that conferred a degree of power to SPDC, in the same way as the provision of a grant for the project confers power to a donor. Again, this power can be seen as a direct and overt form of power.



### 6.3.3. Rules as Components of Organisational Structure

Coupled with the structure of resource allocation was a designed procedure concerning the dissemination and enforcement of project rules, or a ruleset. Rules concerning meaning and identity included the branding of the project through advertising. For example, the project specified activities to build public awareness of SUNGAS in Nigeria, giving legitimacy and prestige to the project. Respondents responsible for the implementation of the project in Nigeria mentioned 'branding' required by the EC, such as posters in villages and a dedicated website. The project also ran radio shows in Port Harcourt advertising its intentions. Rules also provided a level of sanctioning: the project required partners to meet sets of deliverables in line with project progression. IIED, along with the responsibility of managing resource allocation, was also assigned the responsibility of upholding this ruleset.

The EC did not directly participate in the management of the project, despite having a large degree of authority within the project organisational structure as the grant provider. Instead, the organisation took a passive role in the project's implementation. IIED reported to the EC on project progression, and other partners reported to IIED as the project manager. This arrangement of responsibility placed IIED at the centre of the project organisational structure in respect to the responsibility to manage the project's ruleset. A respondent familiar with this process noted that IIED was chosen for this role because they were seen to be a 'neutral' organisation and thereby able to balance the interests of all partners within the project.

Using an understanding of organisational structure built from the theoretical framework for this chapter, it can be argued that the design of the project organisational structure conferred a degree of authority and responsibility to IIED by placing the organisation at the centre of distributing resources and managing the project ruleset. The consultants who put forward the application for the EC project grant and representatives of IIED will have applied their knowledge and conception of how, in their view, this organisational structure *should* be composed. This is the process that Stones (Stones, 2005, p.122) refers to as "sifting and sieving... where the conjecturally specific internal structures relevant to the context of immediate action forge a reconciliation of sorts with the active agency and general-dispositional frame of the meaning of the agent". In other words, internal structures in the form of knowledge and experience will have been instantiated into the conception of the project organisational structure, then to be actioned and formalised through bureaucratic practices such as designing and approving the grant application and gaining recognition from partners.

Interesting to note here is how SUNGAS was conceived of and designed using the knowledge of a select few consultants, without the participation of the wider group of proposed SUNGAS partners. This process produced a project organisational structure built using the knowledge of what these select few people assumed would work. Unfortunately, the organisational structure

produced was not appropriate to the context in which it was applied, obstructing its implementation.

## **6.4. Obstruction to the Implementation of the Designed Project Organisational Structure**

The SUNGAS project (through the designed organisational structure of the project outlined above) began early implementation in late 2009. This early stage of implementation required the identification of a pilot community and procurement of energy generation equipment such as the turbine generator for the gas to power element of SUNGAS, requiring significant cooperation between partners. Unfortunately, this cooperation was inadequate, and implementation was obstructed. Obstacles to implementation manifested in two ways: first, partner organisations gave active and explicit resistance to the authority within the designed organisational structure of the project using several techniques; second, the project ruleset was difficult for stakeholders in Nigeria to follow and were therefore implicitly resisted. This section details these two dynamics.

### **Explicit Resistance**

Resistance to the authority granted to IIED within the designed project organisational structure came from partners across the SUNGAS project. From the beginning of implementation, all other partner organisations in the SUNGAS project resented the ‘project manager’ role and the connoted authority designated to IIED. A common complaint from partners was that IIED should be operating on an ‘equal footing’ to the other organisations within the project. Partners did not like having to ‘answer to’ IIED and wanted more freedom to work independently with their ‘own agendas’. A respondent familiar with meetings in the UK explained how, in an early meeting, a representative for IIED described the organisation as “the fund manager for the EC.” A representative for LEFUK replied with, “no you’re not. . . no you’re not, you’re the partner. . . you’re the grant recipient. . . we’re partners! And partners have to share values”. This exchange highlights a conflict between different conceptions of the project organisational structure between agents. The design of this structure granted authority to IIED and other partners contested this design. The notion of shared values (brought up in interviews by other partners in the SUNGAS project, although not explained any further by these respondents) can be seen in this instance to be an *authoritative resource* used by the representative to contest and resist the authority of IIED, maybe even in direct opposition to the power implicit in IIED’s control of allocative resources. This action by the representative of LEFUK can be seen as a method of active resistance to the project organisational structure.

This type of active resistance from agents was exercised at different conjunctures, with clear outcomes. At the early implementation stage of the project, resistance came largely from LEFUK representatives through interactions in the UK. As an organisation, LEFUK were described as being particularly constrained by the designed organisational structure of the project. According to a respondent familiar with the management of LEFUK, the problem stemmed from the fact that LEFUK were accustomed to working on similar projects in Nigeria with a high degree of autonomy and a “direct relationship with the donor”. The idea that IIED would operate as an intermediary between the EC and LEFUK, controlling resources, was a point of contestation. Also, LEFUK resisted the authority granted to IIED on the grounds of IIEDs legitimacy as an organisation. LEFUK as an organisation did not see IIED as a legitimate project manager, perceiving the organisation as incompetent. According to one respondent, LEFUK would have been happy to work for IIED, if IIED “knew what they were doing”.

As a result, LEFUK representatives began resisting the authority of IIED in meetings. According to respondents, this resistance was expressed through articulated contempt for representatives of IIED and an unwillingness to share information. As the project began implementation, such power struggles, tussles and personal battles between representatives of IIED and LEFUK became a barrier to achieving effective collaborative managerial decisions. The inability to reach these decisions slowed down the progression of the project at the managerial level in the UK, and the slowing of the project progression propagated to the implementation of the project in Nigeria. One respondent noted how, at some points in the project, IIED and LEFUK had failed to communicate with each other for up to six months. Had representatives of LEFUK shared the same conception of the project design, agreed with the power structure, or perceived IIED to be a legitimate project manager, they may not have resisted the project organisational structure.

Clashes between IIED and LEFUK regarding values, norms and ideals were clashes at an organisational level but revolved around confrontations between individual agents. One respondent noted the importance of the influence of agency and posited that the role of personality was an important influence on the dynamics of the project at this stage. This point demonstrates the duality of agency and structure in action. Organisations manoeuvred into positions in contestations within the SUNGAS project, but these contestations were enacted through the practices of agents. Traits of agents, such as personality and worldview, were therefore expressed through attempts to instantiate the SUNGAS organisational structure.

### **Implicit Resistance**

In addition to a conscious resistance of the project organisational structure in London by LEFUK, there were also more nuanced and implicit barriers to adherence to project organisational structure, stemming from cultural differences between representatives of organisations based in the

UK and Nigeria (if culture is defined here as broad societal-level rulesets that direct agency, often invisibly, of individuals across a society). An example can be found in the level of bureaucracy the project required. Several partners in Nigeria referred to the SUNGAS project ruleset as ‘highly bureaucratic’ at the project onset, becoming progressively more bureaucratic as the project progressed. These bureaucratic rules and procedures were consistently difficult for SUNGAS partners in Nigeria to adhere to, as they were culturally incongruent with habitual practices of partners in the Niger Delta. One procedure, in particular, exemplifies these cultural differences, explained to me by one respondent. When working for a civil society organisation in Bayelsa State on a separate project, he went to buy petrol at the roadside. To claim back the cost of the petrol from the project budget, he was required to obtain receipts. After he had bought the petrol, he asked for a receipt. The petrol attendant was unaware of what the respondent was even asking for and assumed he wanted to buy something else. An inability to obtain receipts can lead to an inability to finance spending and the chance of inhibiting the project. In another conversation, a respondent described how, in the rain-soaked tropical waterways of the Niger Delta, where many transactions are traditionally carried out on boats, creating, issuing and storing paper receipts is immensely impractical. Further complexity can be introduced by looking at the general culture of business practices in the Delta, where most businesses operate informally and do not have an incentive to keep formal records of transactions. These examples show how differences in logics, embedded in the rulesets of a foreign project organisational structure can lead to an inability to adhere to that project structure.

When coming back to the moment of structuration as visualised through Stones’ quadripartite model, an individual representative of a partner organisation in the Niger Delta will draw on a range of competing ‘internal structures’ alongside those of the SUNGAS structure. If external structural constraints (the practice of not issuing receipts) inhibit a particular practice (the practice of claiming funds using receipts) then project organisational structure cannot be adhered to. Whereas the resistance of LEFUK to SUNGAS was active and conscious, the resistance to this element of the ruleset of SUNGAS by partners in Nigeria was less explicit and less of a conscious decision.

In summary, the project organisational structure and the authority and power it assigned to IIED was actively resisted by LEFUK under the gas to power arm of the project and by other SUNGAS partners in Nigeria. LEFUK had a competing conception of what the organisational structure of the project ‘*should be*’. LEFUK enacted conscious resistance through various actions. For partners in Nigeria, various competing cultural influences meant that the project organisational structure was difficult to implement and therefore implicitly resisted. At this point of implementation and effective adherence to the designed SUNGAS structure was being obstructed by clashes with logics and practices within other structures. This obstruction led to

unforeseen outcomes.

## **6.5. Unforeseen Outcomes as a Result of Obstruction**

As the designed project organisational structure was resisted and contested, a need was created to reassert and reinforce its ruleset. This process of reassertion and reinforcement was the responsibility of IIED as the allocated 'project manager'. IIED were required to 'chase up' partners to make sure they were, for example, obtaining receipts for transactions, adhering to other bureaucratic requirements, or effectively following procedures to meet the deliverables of the project.

To ensure the project would function, the rules and procedures of the project were required to be reiterated by IIED, through communication with SUNGAS partners. The significance and legitimacy of the project had to be explained and re-explained to make sure its procedure was followed correctly. The process involved negotiation and deliberation of the rules with representatives of each partner organisation- messy, complex and time-intensive processes. Also, the quality of communication between the UK and Nigeria was affected by an inability of representatives in the UK to meet representatives in Nigeria in person, giving further obstruction to reinforcement the project's ruleset and hence its organisational structure.

Further cultural differences between the UK and Nigeria become apparent at this point in the project. In the UK, emails and Skype meetings are a common form of remote communication. In Nigeria, however, phone calls are the most prevalent method of communication and usually used as a way to organise a meeting in person- in part due to inefficiencies of electricity supply and connectivity to the internet. The practice of meeting in person carries high value in Nigeria and builds trust. Such norms and values added complexity to the task of project management and significantly increased the workload of the representatives of IIED assigned to the SUNGAS project.

The difficulty (in respect to skillsets and time requirements) of the role of 'project manager' in cross-sector partnerships is mentioned in various corporate anecdotes, as outlined in chapter three, but is rarely examined empirically in literature on partnerships. At this early implementation stage of the project, IIED had assigned just one employee to the role of managing SUNGAS (later they would assign more), meaning one individual was required to manage the project. This employee also had the responsibility of managing other projects on behalf of IIED, separate to the SUNGAS project, reducing their time available to work on SUNGAS. The organisational structure of IIED imposed competing requirements on this particular agent alongside those of orientating the behaviour of partners in the SUNGAS project, reinforcing the project's ruleset and effectively enforcing the project organisational structure.

Specific skill sets were required for the role of project manager in SUNGAS. IIED and its representatives had limited experience in managing projects such as the SUNGAS project. In the years before SUNGAS, IIED was a smaller organisation and focused on conducting research. However leading up to SUNGAS, the organisation obtained new management and began increasing turnover by rapidly taking on management roles in large, lucrative projects. At the time of SUNGAS, the organisation was, therefore, undergoing a cultural (in this case culture can be defined as sometimes invisible rulesets, but associated with the organisational rather than the societal level) transition from a small research organisation to a larger, project management organisation. With this transition came requirements for employees with skill sets to manage such projects. However, in respect to the SUNGAS project, the organisation did not appear to display such skill sets. According to one respondent, the primary interest of representatives of IIED working on SUNGAS, rather than to manage projects, was to conduct research. This was perhaps a legacy from a previous culture of the organisation, which was orientated towards research as opposed to project management. One respondent described the interest of the organisation as ‘documenting the learnings’ of projects such as SUNGAS. This point was reiterated by representatives of other partners in the SUNGAS project, who stressed that IIED were not interested in or suited to the role of project manager, appearing to be more concerned with ‘producing glossy reports’ than managing the progression of the project towards its deliverables. Therefore, in both skill and interest, representatives of IIED may not have possessed the ability or desire to manage a project like SUNGAS, and especially manage the increased workload presented by the obstruction of the project. In the words of one respondent talking more generally about development organisations:

“International development organisations are supposed to be there to help people in other countries and the biggest problem is our own finances, our own management. . . .”

The above quote summarises the competing demands on agents working within organisational structures (such as those of IIED in the SUNGAS project) at specific conjunctures. These competing demands and requirements influence the ability of an agent to draw on their skill sets to contribute to the management of a project. These skill sets are then defined by the structure of the organisation they are working for.

Coming back to Stones’ conception of internal structures, the knowledgeability of a specific agent at a specific conjuncture is derived from that agent’s internal structures but is dependent on the conditions within which they can instantiate their knowledge through practices. In this case, the conditions of the project organisational structure of IIED were restrictive, in the sense that there were limited resources allocated by the organisation to the management of the project.

However, the knowledgeability of the agent representing IIED was also limited, as the skill set, was more suited to a different application.

There were numerous outcomes of inadequate management on the SUNGAS project. Long delays to decision making produced delays to the project's progression. When the project finally ended in 2016, the original EC grant had been extended three times due to these delays. Delays in the reinforcement of the project's ruleset meant a decreased adherence to the project's organisational structure. In addition, IIED lost legitimacy within SUNGAS. Partners within the project lost trust in IIED as a project manager. These partners made more efforts to create room for agency away from the project's designed organisational structure (covered in more detail in section 6.7).

### **Summary**

To summarise this section, following implementation, adherence to the project's organisational structure was obstructed by an active and implicit resistance from partners in the UK and Nigeria, as a result of an opposition to a power structure implicit in the design of the project organisational structure, conferred through the designed pattern of the allocation of resources, and to the cultural incongruity of its ruleset. This obstruction compounded the workload placed on IIED as the manager of the project by creating unforeseen resource requirements. Managing these requirements was constrained by internal organisational structural influences, which overwhelmed the representatives of the organisation at the time. However, the knowledgeability of this agent was incongruent with the required tasks, again due to the organisational structural influences. These influences combined produced outcomes that delayed the progression of the project.

The analysis demonstrates how organisations and their representatives responsible for managing projects can be required to rely on specific skill sets, the application of which is restricted by time, which can be restricted by internal organisational structural influences, which are influenced by wider structural dynamics. Rather than placing blame on a particular organisation, these dynamics illustrate the complexity of managing a cross-sector partnership in different cultural contexts and wider structural influences that can produce unintended outcomes.

## **6.6. The Breakdown of the LEFUK – LENF Relationship**

Other events that occurred within the project demonstrate the difficulty of upholding organisational structure across varying cultural contexts. The gas to power element of the project was implemented by LEFUK and LENF through an existing internal organisational structure established before the project. A year after the implementation of the SUNGAS project, however, the relationship between LEFUK and LENF encountered difficulties. In 2011, the second year

of the project, LEFUK began to experience what one respondent called ‘differences in opinion’ with LENF. Respondents interviewed were not willing to explain in detail what these differences were and how they manifested. However, the information given suggested misuse of funds by LENF, funds which were channelled through LEFUK to LENF. According to one respondent, funding for LENF was not enough to cover the organisational operational costs of LENF on the ground. LEFUK asked LENF to downsize to reduce operational costs, but LENF refused. LEFUK as a result decided to part with LENF.

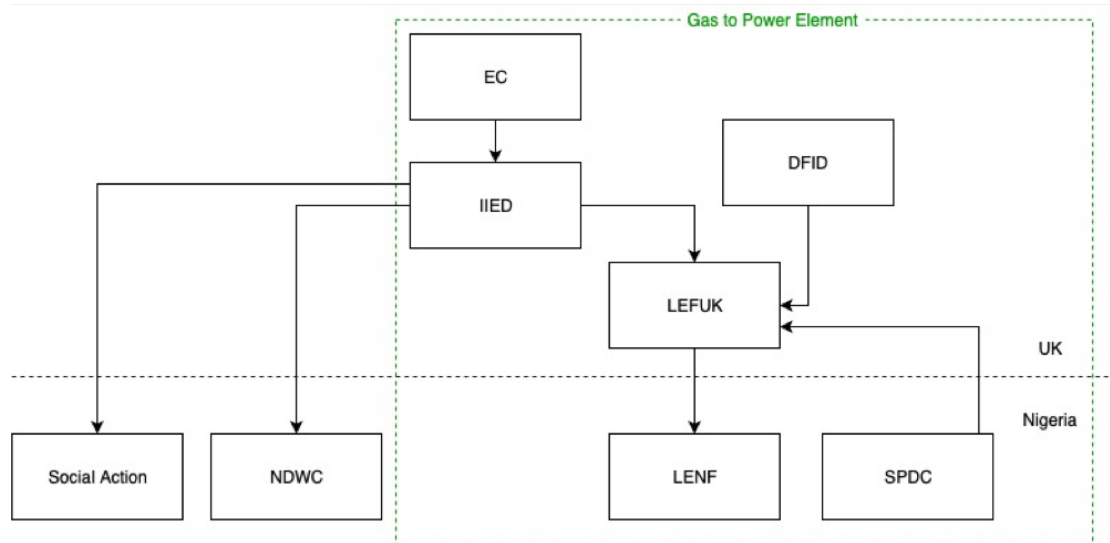
Upholding organisational structure over geographical distances and cultural divides can be difficult for any organisation. Although details on this example were not forthcoming through interviews, similar dynamics to those experienced by IIED may have been influential. In creating a geographical distance between organisations and their agents by attempting to uphold organisational structure between the UK and Nigeria, agents may experience structural influences from beyond their practical horizon and their repertoire of skill sets existing as internal structures- for example, though problems in communication, unexpected behaviours and motivations for action of other agents, leading to more unintended outcomes and more requirements to reinforce a conception of organisational structure, perhaps fruitlessly. Cultural factors, as broad societal rulesets, may also contribute to unexpected behaviours of agents. These factors combined may result in a reduction of an ability of agents to reflexively monitor their environment and control outcomes, leading to unintended outcomes, increased workloads and the breakdown of organisational structure.

## **6.7. Creating New Forms of Power Away from the Designed Organisational Structure of SUNGAS**

The analysis so far has focussed on factors that have influenced the implementation of the designed SUNGAS project organisational structure, how the implementation of this structure was obstructed by partners and how this obstruction produced unintended outcomes. It has also demonstrated how similar dynamics were seen in other areas of the project. In addition to exercising resistance, however, representatives of partner organisations also used methods to create power away from the restrictive organisational structure of the SUNGAS project. The next section will consider the methods used by partners to create alternative sources of power, away from the designed project organisational structure of the SUNGAS project.

Representatives of partner organisations in the SUNGAS project attempted to create greater agency through two methods: drawing on the allocative and authoritative resources of multiple external organisational structures and purposefully manipulating the SUNGAS organisational structure. This section will explore some of the various techniques representatives of partner





**Figure 6.3.:** Schematic of the gas to power element of the SUNGAS project organisational structure after LEFUK accessed co-financing. Arrows denote flow of allocative resources.

organisations used in these processes.

### 6.7.1. Drawing on the Allocative Resources of Alternative Organisations

Under the conditions, or ruleset, of the EC grant for SUGNAS, partners within the SUNGAS project were required to access external funding from other sources. In the case of the SUNGAS, these sources included project donors and private sector organisations. This is a relatively common requirement of large energy grants, such as the EC grant, referred to as co-financing (Dixon, Scheer, et al., 2011). According to one respondent, LEFUK was the only partner within the SUNGAS project that successfully secured this required co-financing. A respondent mentioned how, although securing co-financing was a requirement of the grant, LEFUK in part secured this co-financing as a way to gain more autonomy from what they saw as the constraints of the structure of the SUNGAS project. Co-financing promised a direct relationship between LEFUK and additional donors, as opposed to relying on IIED as an intermediary. This direct relationship was a relationship LEFUK as an organisation was more accustomed to.

#### Overt Rulesets

Co-financing was sourced by LEFUK to target the gas to power arm of SUNGAS project and came from two separate sources: The UK Department For International Development (DFID)

and SPDC. The rulesets bundled with the provision of finance differed between SPDC and LEFUK. Financing from SPDC was loosely designated for the purchase of technical equipment for the project. SPDC attached very few, if any, conditionalities to the money they transferred to LEFUK. This was described by one respondent as financing with ‘no strings attached’. This type of financing for NGOs was said to be common in the Niger Delta when originating from large IOCs. Financing from DFID was more prescriptive and required specific actions, referred to by a respondent as ‘specific activities around the establishment of the community enterprise model’. This community enterprise model required a degree of ownership and decision-making to be granted to the Egbeda community through a management board comprised of Egbeda community members. This board would then oversee the distribution of generated electricity to the Egbeda community. DFID outlined requirements for the design, monitoring and reporting of the community engagement activities as a conditionality of financing and LEFUK agreed to follow these requirements.

### **Reactive Rulesets**

The main problems resulting from DFID’s co-financing were not, however, a result of the overt and agreed-upon procedures for the use of project funds. Instead, they resulted in a response to unforeseen circumstances, which appeared in the breakdown of the relationship between LEFUK and LENF, outlined above. When DFID learned that the relationship between LEFUK and LENF had broken down and that LEFUK were no longer implementing the SUNGAS project in partnership with LENF, they retracted co-financing for the project. This was despite DFID’s agreement to supply finance to the project in the knowledge that the Niger delta is a high-risk environment.

This action caused significant delays to the SUNGAS project and was a major, and arguably fatal, setback to the progression of the SUNGAS project. After the dissolution of LENF, LEFUK was required to find a replacement implementing partner in Nigeria. Whilst this organisation was sourced, the project implementation was put on hold. Various respondents described how the withdrawal of support by DFID delayed the implementation of the project in the Egbeda community by around one year.

One respondent familiar with community engagement for the project, who worked closely on the ground in the Egbeda community, described how the delay propagated from ‘upper structure’ of the project ‘down’ to the Delta. On the ground, in Egbeda, there had been previous attempts by another organisation, the Niger Delta Development Corporation (NDDC), to connect the Egbeda community to an electrical power supply. Grid infrastructure had been installed around the community through an NDDC project, but this project had stalled 10 years before the creation of SUNGAS, leaving a half-completed infrastructure and no power supply to the

community. Seeing or hearing of plans being made to install a rival source of power in the community, NDDC began to reinvigorate their stalled project in competition with the SUNGAS project by reconnecting the community to the once-abandoned infrastructure, creating a race to supply the community with power and to capture the local market. When DFID withdrew funds, the project was stalled for a year, and NDDC used this opportunity to move in and supply electricity. When representatives of the SUNGAS project finally revisited the community a year later, the community had been connected to the grid by NDDC. This new power source was very unreliable, giving only a limited supply each day. However at this point the SUNGAS project showed no indication of progression, due to a propagation of the delay caused by DFID's withdrawal of financing.

A respondent responsible for Egbeda community relations spoke of how this delay in the project progression was also damaging to the delicate trust-based relationship they had developed with the community. After spending considerable time building trust with the community, the representative had to report that the project was on hold for the foreseeable future due to reasons unbeknown to the community.

### **Influences on the Reaction of DFID**

The proposed reasons were given by respondents for DFID's retraction of support vary. One respondent familiar with the UK side of the SUNGAS project discussed how wider trends in the development sector were pushing development organisations such as DFID towards an increased impact of operation through the pursuit of low-risk development interventions. Societal sentiment in the UK towards the use of aid money by DFID may have influenced the organisation to reduce its risk exposure. Following the 2008 financial crisis and the advent of austerity measures, spending of UK tax revenue on foreign projects was put under an increased level of scrutiny (Abbott, 2016), a dynamic which may have become more pronounced after DFID had agreed to supply financing to SUNGAS. Another speculation by a respondent was that DFID may have been looking to pull funding from a high-profile project as a demonstration of power to other organisations in the development sector. The exact process behind the decision to withdraw funding remains unclear, but evidence suggests that these wider structural forces such as societal influences, and need to demonstrate authority may have been influential in DFID's decision to withdraw.

Regardless of the exact processes behind DFID's decision making, the withdrawal of their support demonstrates how interactions between larger-scale societal influences, such as societal sentiment, may propagate to decisions made within organisations, in turn causing severe delays to projects. In accessing co-financing from DFID, LEFUK as an organisation was exposed to these decisions, which had more of an influence on the progression of the project than the

original designed project organisational structure.

### **An Imbalanced Tolerance to Risk**

DFIDs withdrawal also demonstrates how efforts by LEFUK to reduce risk paradoxically increased the risk of the project. In accessing DFIDs organisational structure, LEFUK attempted to move away from the SUNGAS organisational structure, reducing a perceived risk presented by SUNGAS. Due to unforeseen circumstances, DFID then displayed a very low tolerance of risk, which propagated to the SUNGAS project and paradoxically increased the risk to the whole project. SUNGAS project organisational structure required this spreading reduction of risk, but under these circumstances increased the risk of the project. This demonstrates how a reliance of the project on a combination of organisational structures with differing characteristics can, within the context of larger-scale deterministic factors, increase the risk of the project as a whole.

Tolerance to risk differed greatly between partners. SPDC and the EC showed a greater tolerance to risk in reaction to the breakdown of the LEFUK – LENF relationship, continuing funding whilst LEFUK sourced an alternative implementation partner. SPDC appeared to invest heavily through their commitment of financial investment and therefore their shouldering of risk, but their exposure to risk may have been different. SPDC as an organisation has access to considerable human resources but failed to commit any of these resources to the SUNGAS project. Instead, LEFUK, with little experience of running technical engineering-based projects, were required to outsource technical engineering tasks to a contractor, Triple E<sup>1</sup>. If SPDC had allocated human resources or other technical resources, such delays may have been avoided. The allocation of human and technical resources to the project may have carried greater risk to SPDC than providing financial resources. For a highly profitable organisation with a high turnover, allocating monetary resources may have been a relatively low-risk endeavour. Money allocated by DFID was public money, and therefore may have carried a higher degree of accountability.

The asymmetry between organisations that provided finance was not only evident when considering risk. SPDC was described by respondents as being a particularly slow and cumbersome organisation to work with. At points, other partners questioned why LEFUK ‘insisted’ on working with SPDC instead of other IOCs in the Delta. One respondent described how SPDC were ‘poorly managed at the bottom’, within the local context of the Niger Delta. The SUNGAS project was not included in the performance indicators for the representative of SPDC responsible for interacting with the SUNGAS project, meaning that there was little incentive within SPDC as an organisation to make sure the project was progressing. Furthermore, representa-

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<sup>1</sup>Triple E later underperformed and in 2014, a new engineering contractor, McLennan, had to be sourced.

tives responsible for the SUNGAS project would be rotated regularly, meaning managers with whom trust and understanding had been nurtured by other partners were replaced with new managers who lacked any connection to or knowledge of the project. According to one respondent, there were “layers of risk and management and commitment to the project at different levels” of SPDC. Another respondent mentioned that LEFUK had good relationships with employees in Shell International, but these employees in Shell International could influence “*nothing*. . . . nothing in Nigeria.” Whilst commitment may have been given in kind from representatives of Shell international, this commitment was not reflected in the commitment of SPDC to the project.

In respect to organisational structures viewed through the theoretical framework of this chapter, each organisation demonstrated a markedly different approach to the project. This approach was enacted by representatives of organisations who were influenced by the structures of their organisation, which in turn were influenced by wider cultural and socioeconomic forces. This section has demonstrated how combinations of different organisational structures can produce unintended and perverse outcomes, fatal to the project, even when this combination of structures is a requirement of a particular organisational ruleset. In turn, the behaviour of organisations and individuals within those organisations can be heavily determined by large-scale influences, which propagate to project operations, producing unintended outcomes.

### **6.7.2. Manipulation of Organisational Structures**

In addition to accessing additional resources from external organisations through co-financing, agents within the SUNGAS project used various techniques to create power within existing organisational relationships. This section will focus on one particular method used by several organisations and their representatives within the SUNGAS project, focusing on the use of information as an authoritative and allocative resource within an existing organisational structure.

In projects such as the SUNGAS project, donor organisations will gauge the quality of work being undertaken by an implementing organisation through certain assessments and indicators, for example, log frames<sup>2</sup> and risk matrices. (For ease of explanation the two parties will be described as a donor and an implementer, for example in the SUNGAS project DFID would be a donor and LEFUK an implementer.) To maintain their organisation’s role in a project, an implementer can depict implementation progress in a way that satisfies the donor, even if this involves fabrication of reality ‘on the ground’. A skilled implementer will have experience working in similar situations and will be familiar with what a donor organisation will ‘want to hear’. This implementer can then convincingly fabricate a representation of a reality on the

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<sup>2</sup>A Log frame is another name for Logical Framework, a planning tool consisting of a matrix which provides an overview of a project’s goal, activities and anticipated results. It provides a guide to help specify the components of a project and its activities and for relating them to one another.

ground that adheres to the donor's expectations, without raising suspicion from the donor that this representation is fabricated. The implementer can then maintain a depiction of reality on the ground by carefully controlling flows of information to the donor. Methods, for example, can include making sure control is retained over a channel of communication from 'the ground' to the donor, overseeing that the right data are omitted and selected for communication through this channel. This way, it appears to the donor that the ruleset of a project is being adhered to. The donor may allocate resources based on this perceived adherence, yet a real adherence to those rules on the ground may not have occurred. The implementer has an incentive to fabricate as much as possible to gain resources, and the donor will attempt to make sure their checks and balances are rigorous. In this scenario, the rules required to maintain structure are adhered to only in principle, based on a fabrication that meets the minimum requirements to fulfil these rules. In the words of one respondent familiar with the SUNGAS project:

“We don't really know what we're doing, we're just trying things out, but here's a log frame.”

In the SUNGAS project, a respondent suggested that this technique was used to procure resources through IIED as the organisation responsible for the allocation of funds and the provision of the project's ruleset. During the later stages of the project, a local NGO was brought in as an implementing organisation. One respondent familiar with the relationship between this NGO and IIED recalled how the local NGO depicted a fabricated reality on the ground to gain access to resources from IIED. According to this respondent, representatives of the NGO met on occasions with representatives of IIED in London to relay information from the Delta. The NGO's representatives would report that without their organisation's involvement in the project, they had good reason to believe there would be “riots in the streets... unrest... people setting fire to things” . IIED were alarmed by this information and asked what would be needed to avoid such events. The NGO replied with a request for cash to avoid such a situation, which IIED released. Whether the information concerning the potential for riots to occur was true or not, IIED allocated resources based on this information.

As outlined previously, IIED as the de-facto project manager had a very limited capacity to process information regarding an adherence to ruleset attached to the project organisational structure. Furthermore, as the organisation was far removed from the reality of the 'on the ground' operation of the project, there was increased opportunity for the fabrication of this reality by partners who appeared to have privileged access to this information.

Agents within organisations can generate power by controlling what knowledge is transferred 'up' through the project structure. IIED complained that LEFUK, as the project implementer at the beginning of the project, did not inform IIED what was happening 'on the ground' . LEFUK

withheld knowledge to generate power, and to manipulate the prescribed SUNGAS project organisational structure. In such situations, information can confer a high degree of power, used as an authoritative resource within project organisational structures. Greater access to information confers greater power and authority to agents and organisations. This can be a direct form of power, whereby parties involved in an exchange are both aware of the use of information to generate power; or it may be a more indirect and clandestine form of power, concurrent the second and third dimensions of power outlined by Lukes (2005), which are arguably more effective forms of power. A characteristic of withheld or even manipulated information is that those upon whom power is being exercised are not aware of how this power is being exercised, precisely due to a lack of information. In this way, the control of information as an authoritative resource can be particularly powerful.

This manipulation of project organisational structure was possible because IIED had a low capacity to process and verify information fed from the ground in Nigeria. However, it should be noted that information transfer from the rural Niger Delta region, through formal channels at least, is relatively low compared to other regions. For foreign representatives, it is difficult to make trips to the Niger Delta to obtain information, due to cost and safety concerns. Locally based researchers also experience constraints on reaching certain areas due to the time and cost constraints, safety concerns and difficulty travelling within the Delta. There are relatively few information channels and less opportunity to formally verify information that originates from the Delta. This information gap means that any donor – implementer relationship that bridges into the Delta from an external location is more open to manipulation through the falsification of on the ground reality than for projects where information transfer is higher. Where there are organisational representatives with skills and experience in doing so, and a need and a will to capitalise on this information gap, project organisational structures are more open to manipulation. Those accustomed to working across these information gaps can build skill in depicting a version of reality that will garner them more resources and more agency to carry out their agenda. In this way, a representative's skill set can be seen as a set of internal structures that can be drawn upon by this agent to use information or access to information as a resource to manipulate organisational structures to access further resources. In this way, an agent does not reproduce structure but alters it, consciously, to better favour themselves and their organisation.

In this respect, it is worth noting the centrality of information as a key resource in organisational structures more generally. Privileged access to information can be an authoritative resource that can be employed by skilled agents to manipulate an organisational structure, in resistance or support of a particular ruleset.

Asymmetries between partner organisations can be shown when considering information or access to information as a resource. Contrary to IIED, SPDC as an organisation have extremely

privileged access to information on the ground in the Niger Delta. As one anonymous respondent noted, SPDC have greater access to socio-economic information than regional or national government bodies, charities or other private organisations. Also, as an organisation SPDC can employ representatives with specialist skills to discern information being presented to them. SPDC, accordingly, are less open to manipulation, with no information gap available to exploit. Therefore, manipulation of structure is possible up to a point, but in this case dependent on the ability to manipulate an organisation's representative, which is dependent upon the agents and the organisation's access to knowledge. In the SUNGAS project, SPDC had access to a range of resources in addition to information, such as relatively large amounts of money capital, human capital and technology. This granted SPDC a high degree of power within the partnership.

The above analysis has shown that agents from varying organisations used certain strategies to create a greater degree of agency, and different dimensions of power. Attempts to gain agency through accessing the allocative resources of additional structures decreased agency as a result of asymmetries and conflicts between multiple structures. Agents attempted to manipulate structure through the manipulation of specific information, made more possible in some cases through the existence of information gaps. However, the ability to manipulate structure depended on the characteristics or structures of organisations, tied to their access to resources and ultimately their power within the partnership.

## **6.8. Macro-Scale Deterministic Influences on Organisations**

In addition to the dynamics outlined so far, there were influences on the SUNGAS project that operated at a larger scale, for example at the national or international level. This scale, for ease of analysis, can be termed the macro-scale. This section will detail how these influences affected the SUNGAS project.

Throughout the SUNGAS project, the 'culture' of international development financing was a large influence on the practices of smaller organisations involved in the project, and, in turn, on the actors representing those organisations. Respondents described how, before and during the SUNGAS project, public international development finance was undergoing certain changes: financing was becoming more restrictive, with more impact required from fewer funds, allocated over a smaller time periods (Abbott, 2016). Across the development sector, smaller development organisations such as LEFUK were finding it more difficult to secure financing and were very close to liquidation.

This precarious context influenced the behaviour of organisations and their representatives in interesting ways. To begin with, the survival of the organisation appeared to become paramount in decisions made by that organisation's representatives. Respondents explained how an organi-



sation struggling for survival may take on a project, knowing that project is likely to fail, if that project brings revenue to the organisation. Furthermore, during the management of projects, high-risk decisions may be taken which are detrimental to the project's objectives but have the prospect of securing revenue for an organisation. Several respondents from organisations involved in the SUNGAS project accused other organisations within the SUNGAS project of deliberately stalling the progression of the project to secure more funding to ensure the survival of their organisation. This behaviour was detrimental to the progression of SUNGAS but had the potential to prolong the flow of resources to organisations. Unfortunately, however, the need to retain anonymity of respondents and the organisations involved reduces the ability to present further information and clouds the analysis at this point.

However, these examples suggest that in a culture where smaller development organisations, such as those in the SUNGAS project, are becoming squeezed by macro-scale changes to the culture of development financing, perverse incentives can be created through a need of each organisation to ensure its survival. These examples also demonstrate a centrality of cash resources to an organisation's functioning. Even if an organisation displays strong normative values, when a lack of resources threatens an organisation's survival, the pursuit of resources can outweigh an adherence to the values of that organisation. When smaller, donor-funded organisations are in a decision-making situation where the survival of the organisation is at stake, high risk decisions with a very small chance of a large pay off are more likely to be made. In operating environments where organisations are stretched, this may be a more commonly occurring phenomenon.

This pursuit of cash as a resource may be the reason why some organisations need to manipulate structure to procure further allocative resources. The manipulation of the SUNGAS organisational structure by the NGO mentioned above was productive for the the NGO itself as it ensured its survival but was detrimental to the SUNGAS project. In a more financially secure culture of development financing, organisations may be able to make decisions that are not focussed on the pursuit of resources and are more in line with, for example, SUNGAS project objectives, or even the organisation's stated normative values.

The environment in which an organisation sits can have a large influence on its behaviour. SPDC, again, within the scope of the SUNGAS project, were not required to make decisions to ensure the survival of their organisation, suggesting a significant asymmetry between SPDC and other partner organisations and demonstrating the centrality of resources to the behaviour of organisations.

## **6.9. Conclusions**

### **6.9.1. SUNGAS, Structure and Agency and Public-Private Partnerships**

As outlined in chapter three, there is substantial evidence that cross-sector partnerships in sustainability, such as the SUNGAS project often fail. As one respondent noted:

“I’ve worked on a lot of partnerships. They’re always beset with difficulty, and they’re always brilliant, and they’re always horrible.”

This analysis demonstrates how SUNGAS involved a complex set of interactions between various organisational structures (rules and resources), which were interpreted and reproduced by agents. The literature on partnerships tends to view partnerships as established organisational structures (this view is required to use a partnership as a unit of analysis), which tend to produce unintended outcomes Pattberg, Biermann, et al. (2012). This analysis, however, shows that a designed organisational structure, when introduced to a new context, is one of a multitude of competing structures that orientate the behaviour of agents. The designed structure will be interpreted, adhered to, resisted and manipulated depending on the agents and contexts it is designed to influence. The process of creating a successful partnership can be seen as the process of asserting influence in competition with competing structures in the form of cultures, logics and resource streams.

### **6.9.2. Reflections on the Theoretical Framework of Structure, Agency and Strong Structuration**

The theoretical framework built for this analysis had several advantages over other potential theoretical perspectives outlined in chapter three. First, it allowed for an analysis that could move between contexts and scales. By focusing on the horizon of individual agents, in turn acting within the context of organisations and wider societal structures, such as those of culture, the analysis could move between, for example, the context of the Niger Delta and the practice of issuing receipts or the context of IIED as an organisation undergoing cultural changes. This is a level of versatility that may not have been achievable using a framework such as institutional theory or political ecology, which, as outlined in chapter three, tend to be grounded within particular political contexts.

The conceptual framework allowed for an empirical investigation into what constitutes organisational structure, this allowed for a foregrounding of how rules and resources shaped behaviour throughout the project. These findings may not have been so apparent using another framework and can lead to some interesting thoughts more generally on how rules and resources may influence behaviour more generally in development projects.

A particularly interesting finding was the centrality of allocative and authoritative resources to the behaviour of organisations and agents within the SUNGAS project. The versatility of the framework allowed for influences to be traced back to wider trends such as the those of international development finance, and how this may filter down to the behaviour of organisations operating in international development, and organisations working through PPPs in sustainability. This foregrounding allowed for an explanation of the behaviour of partners in the SUNGAS project that was detrimental to the overall success of the project. Organisations pursuing the allocative resources, as a result of wider structural influences, did so in a way that was detrimental to the goals of the project and therefore may have contributed to the negative outcomes of the project.

However, a foregrounding of resources brings out a weakness in the theoretical framework. In their works, Giddens and Stones are both obscure in their definitions of resources, and as a result, their analyses fail to explore how the pursuit of allocative and authoritative resources may be integral to guiding the behaviour of agents. In looking back through the analysis to think about resources and their effects more deeply, several insights can be noted. First, the promise of the allocation of resources can be as effective in guiding behaviour as the actual allocation of resources. Many organisations in the SUNGAS project worked on this promise of future allocation. Also, the analysis showed that resources have relative power, organisations in desperate need to secure allocative resources to ensure their survival, such as small NGOs, are more susceptible to the influence of resources on their behaviour. Conversely, organisations with secure access to resources that are not in jeopardy, such as SPDC, are less likely to be influenced by a need to secure resources and are therefore asymmetrically influenced by project's organisational structure. Therefore, the effect of allocative resources on behaviour is relative to the agent or organisation pursuing those resources. Furthermore, multiple forms of resources can be used to generate power. Organisations with reduced access to allocative resources may utilise authoritative resources, such as the manipulation of information flows, to gain agency or allocative resources, and power. Similarly, organisations with control over multiple forms of resources can generate power. An example is SPDC, who in controlling allocative resources such as co-finance and feedstock are less susceptible to manipulation through the application of authoritative resources. The control of information flows is a powerful resource as it can be associated with dimensions of power that involve the clandestine use of power, where those upon whom power is being exercised are not aware of this power.

The above ideas, despite being a product of the use of the theoretical framework of this chapter are not present in works of structuration and strong structuration. It may be an original contribution of this chapter that a foregrounding of resources and the role of resources in processes of structure and agency is a potential new direction of scholarship. However, as outlined at the

beginning of this chapter, the analysis is not aiming to inform structuration theory or strong structuration theory. A limitation of this framework has been that at some points, the use of strong structuration theory requires such a detailed explanation of terminology that the definition of this terminology becomes a study in itself, detracting from the purpose of the empirical analysis - a point outlined by Jack and Kholeif (2008). In this way, strong structuration theory is still difficult to use in empirical studies.

The aim of the chapter, however, was to investigate the outcomes of the SUNGAS project using a theoretical framework developed from concepts of structure and agency. An original contribution of this chapter is the use of this theoretical framework to do so. Above all, the framework allowed for an approach that, in addition to the above advantages, allowed for systematic analysis and investigation into the outcomes of the project, that dug deeper than the stakeholder mapping chapter.

## **6.10. Conclusions in Relation to The Overarching Conceptual Framework of the Thesis**

As outlined in chapter 3, the overarching conceptual framework of the thesis is designed to facilitate an exploration of how processes of power, process and meaning are intrinsically involved in the production of institutions involved in PPPs at multiple scales. In addition, the framework aims to allow for an exploration of the interplay between wider 'structural' political economic influences and 'on the ground' contextual findings. The framework of this chapter aligns with the overall framework of the thesis through its exploration of social power relations at the interface between structure and agency. Through exploring these concepts, it can be seen that first, agents are subject to influences of culture, whether through 'wider' cultural of their organisation or through, for example cultural practices surrounding transactions in the Niger Delta. In this way, similar to the observation of Van Hecken et al. (2015), the institution of the SUNGAS partnership, through this analysis, can be portrayed as a site of "inter-cultural confrontation, where multiple and contrasting systems of norms and values, as well as cultural and social logics, interact at different scales". The chapter has served to foreground some of the complexities of the interplay between structure and agency inherent in the formation of institutions involved in the SUNGAS PPP, thereby presenting findings that appreciate processes of power, meaning and culture. These findings can be used in conjunction with findings from the next empirical chapters to bring together an argument that addresses the overall research questions of the thesis.

The literature review highlighted that existing literature on PPPs has a tendency to describe partnerships in abstract terms that fail to appreciate the contextual political dynamics of the partnerships in question. The need to investigate these dynamics was reflected in the design

of the overall framework of the thesis. Therefore the findings of the chapter fill this gap in the literature on PPPs in sustainability and fill in some of the gaps outlined in the literature review. These gaps were outlined in the conceptual framework by Van Hecken et al. (2015) to investigate power, process and meaning. In this way the chapter answers the requirement of the investigation of PPPs using a power-sensitive analysis of PPPs.

*“The GMoU is a conflict document, propagated by the IOCs (International Oil Companies), designed to cause conflict and divide the community. That is all.”*

NGO Representative

*“I laugh, each time I hear that I used divide and rule methods. . . No one needs to divide the Niger Deltans, they are already so fragmented. The division that already exists there is so much.”*

Oil Company Representative

# 7

## **AN ANALYSIS OF SPDC’S GMoU MODEL USING CONCEPTS OF GOVERNMENTALITY**

## **Abstract**

This study presents an analysis of SPDC's General Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) a model of International Oil Company (IOC) and community engagement in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The analysis uses a theoretical framework of governmentality to look at political processes surrounding the introduction and implementation of the GMoU, drawing on data collected during a study period in Bayelsa State. The context of Bayelsa, the GMoU and the relationship between local people and IOCs is introduced, along with notes on my reasoning for using governmentality as a theoretical framework. Influences from different scales on the genesis of the GMoU are outlined before the design of GMoU is described. The analysis begins by showing how, despite being propounded as a democratic document, the GMoU is implemented in an autocratic way. The analysis then shows that upon implementation, the GMoU clashes with existing power structures at the community level and causes reconfigurations of power, leading to a propensity for increased inter and intra community conflict. The analysis considers how certain actors at the community level may selectively use elements of the GMoU whilst disregarding others to create a space for elite groups to capture oil-derived revenues. Subject formation at the IOC/community interface is then considered before questions of accountability are raised. The analysis aims to further Michael Watts' conception of (un)governable spaces in the Delta, with an effort to consider the GMoU and its outcomes in relation to a commonly held notion that spaces of conflict are consciously produced by IOCs as a tactic of power. An increased propensity for conflict can benefit IOCs through several mechanisms. Conversely, there is good evidence why IOCs may be seeking to reduce conflict in the Delta. Final comments reflect on the significance of the GMoU and its outcomes in this debate and consider the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical framework of the study.

## 7.1. Introduction

Sheltering from a deafening tropical downpour, under a corrugated iron roof, in the small office of a civil society organisation, my friend and interviewee, the organisation's project manager, holds a copy of a Global Memoranda of Understanding. Abbreviated to General Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) <sup>1</sup>, this document is a 'benefit sharing' agreement reached between Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and what is termed a 'cluster' of local communities. The agreement is very similar to hundreds of others reached between SPDC and citizens situated close to the company's extractive operations in the Niger Delta.

We are located on the outskirts of Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State. Bayelsa State covers an area equivalent to that of Jamaica, yet despite being on the mainland, its main entry and exit point is via a single road: a jetty built from thousands of tonnes of dredged sand dissecting the network of swamps and creeks that comprise what interviewees described as 'the heart of the Niger Delta'. Either side of this single road sit some of the largest oil and gas production facilities in Africa. A few kilometres east of our location is the Bayelsa processing facility for Nigeria's multi-billion-dollar oil and gas network, the Integrated Oil and Gas Gathering Project (IOGP). When fully operational in 2011, the IOGP began processing up to 1 billion cubic feet of gas and 75 000 barrels of oil per day, increasing Nigeria's natural gas export capacity by around 20% (Longhall, 2011) and marking a sharp increase in extractive industry activity in the local area. Underneath the Bayelsa road run the IOGP's pipelines, exporting pressurised oil and gas to Bonny in Rivers State, and from Bonny to Europe, North America and Asia. Bayelsa is one of the most densely populated areas of Africa. The ubiquitous presence of the oil and gas industry, channelling vast flows of wealth through its public spaces symbolises the encroachment of the fossil fuel industry into the rural society and the environment in the Niger Delta.

The GMOU my friend is holding is a document designed to mediate a political interface that has developed between SPDC and local communities over several generations. This mediation occurs through a set of democratic and accountable procedures that allow communities to plan and implement community development projects using International Oil Company (IOC) revenues. Before I even reached Bayelsa, the GMOU inadvertently became a focus of many of the conversations I had with people ranging from oil company representatives to taxi drivers, to the point where it started to become a topic of my research. These conversations showed a stark contrast of opinions on the GMOU. In the urban context of Port Harcourt, far removed from the reality of the creeks of the Delta, I spoke with enthusiastic progenitors of the GMOU's radical new approach to community development. I was given the impression that the agreement was a reformative point in a restive and turbulent relationship between IOCs and local people in the

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<sup>1</sup>The plural form, *memoranda* produces the same acronym



Delta. IOC representatives I spoke to in Port Harcourt referred to ebullient glossy reports of the GMoU's success decorating their corporate websites. However, from some other sources, I was hearing opposing accounts. Some people spoke of overflowing tensions in many communities as a direct result of the GMoU, leading to conflict and sometimes deadly violence.

As the rain becomes heavier, my friend and interviewee, who works closely with local GMoU communities, finishes his summary of what the agreement means to him. "The GMoU is a conflict document, propagated by the IOCs, designed to cause conflict and divide the community. That is all." His colleague leans forward and adds, "My own opinion, what I believe, is that the GMoU is a very perfect document and a very perfect procedure to follow. If only the implementers would follow what is written here", gesturing to the document. "It's a very nicely prepared procedure. If we [the local populace] only adhered to these principles, we wouldn't be having the problems we are having today."

A vast contrast between perspectives on the GMoU characterised my research in the Delta. Throughout the research process, I found that 'truth' in the Delta can be especially elusive. I was given one particular example by an interviewee of an oil spill in a locality in Bayelsa named Oya Lake. Over the span of a decade, this spill simultaneously developed three different forms. Local people proximal to the spill would try desperately to draw attention to a lake of toxic crude, polluting and damaging local ecosystems. Senior oil company representatives would portray a pristine natural environment. Local oil company representatives, when challenged, would acknowledge a spill; but rest assured, this was a non-polluting and contained spill. These representatives explained how communities often fabricate spill incidents and even cause spills to generate claims against IOCs. Communities, in turn, lamented the IOCs indifference to failures of antiquated, corroded and failing oil and gas infrastructure. Amid claims and counterclaims, it can be very difficult for an outsider to verify the existence of a spill, let alone its causality, without visiting its location.

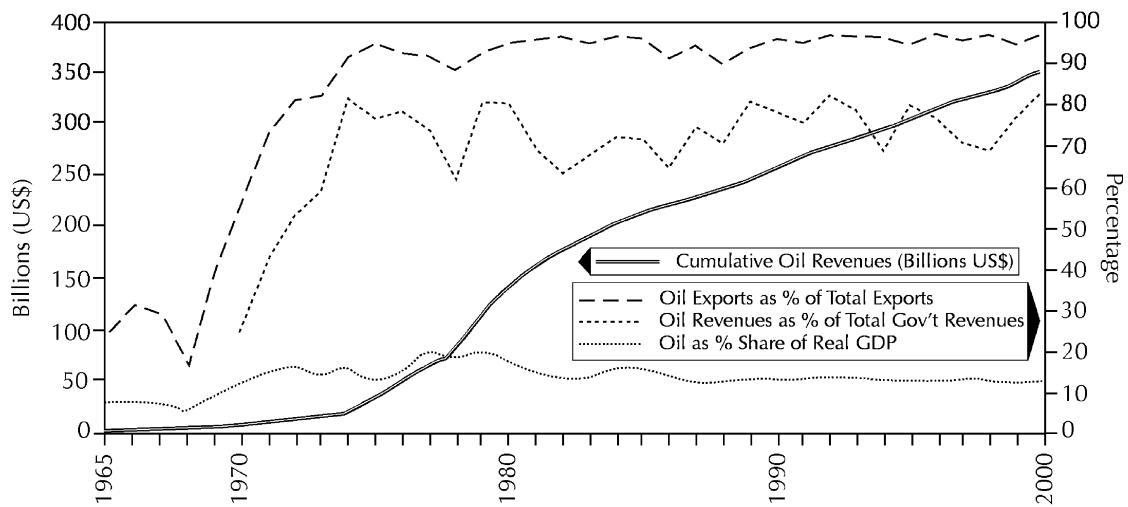
During my time in the Niger Delta, I found that information surrounding the GMoU behaved in the same elusive and contradictory way as information surrounding the spill in Oya Lake, requiring as much effort as possible to collect information from close to its source. The following analysis is drawn from time spent in and around Bayelsa, working with the help of local civil society groups, community representatives and academics. It is an attempt to gain primary data from the areas where they apply, to better understand the GMoU, its processes and outcomes.

### **7.1.1. Introduction to The GMoU**

Chevron Nigeria Ltd. first introduced the GMoU to the Niger Delta in 2005. In their advertising literature they emphasised principles of community-led development and deployed a strong rhetoric of public-private partnerships in sustainability (Chevron, 2017). Soon after, in 2006,

Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) also began implementing the GMoU. In both cases, the GMoU phased out a previous model of engagement known as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). By the end of 2011 SPDC, with the largest footprint of any IOC in the Delta, had implemented GMoU applying to about 30% of local communities ‘around’ their business operations in The Niger Delta, a total of 290 communities (SPDC, 2018a). In 2017, Chevron claimed to have established GMoUs with around 95 communities (Chevron, 2017). To date, Chevron and SPDC continue to use GMoU as their model of local engagement. Also, there is evidence that smaller oil and gas companies are emulating the design of GMoU their engagements in the Delta as they acquire licences to operate from larger IOCs, which have begun moving their operations offshore (Ahon, 2018). The community clusters covered by the GMoU can range in population catchment from several hundred to tens of thousands of people. It can be estimated roughly that several hundred thousand people in the Delta now belong to communities that are part of a GMoU agreement.

The GMoU varies slightly in design between each company operating it but retains similar common design principles. In each case, it is a prescribed institutional structure, a set of rules and procedures surrounding the allocation of oil and gas derived revenues. It governs interactions between local populations and IOCs and channels the distribution of revenues from IOCs to communities. Consequently, the GMoU is now a focal point of the relationship between IOCs and local populations in the Delta. This relationship has a deep and rooted history, having developed over several generations: from the introduction of the oil and gas industry to the Delta in 1956, through the global oil boom of the 1970s and 1980s, to an expansion and proliferation of the industry through the 1990s to the 2000s (see figure 7.1).



**Figure 7.1.:** *Oil and the Nigerian Economy, 1965-2000 in (Watts, 2004a).*

From the 2000s to the present day, oil production and exports have decreased, partly as a result of conflict in the Delta. However, as oil production has decreased, gas production has increased, in line with rising global demand for natural gas (OPEC, 2019).

As oil and gas have been extracted from the Delta since the 1960s, the relationship between populations in the Delta and IOCs has become synonymous with protest, unrest and conflict (Etekpe, 2012; Kashi and Watts, 2010). Kashi and Watts (2010) describe how local people feel an ever-deepening discontent at the lack of equitable distribution of oil and gas derived revenues and a simultaneous pollution and destruction of local ecosystems upon which livelihoods in the Delta are traditionally based. In principle, the GMoU provides an opportunity for oil companies and local populations to work together to protect the environment, rebuild livelihoods and bring prosperity to local regions.

The GMoU provides a contemporary analytical point of entry into the complex relationship between IOCs and local people, and by extension can help to highlight wider issues of development and environmental conservation in the Delta. It is a relevant topic in Nigeria due to the centrality of the agreement in relations between IOCs and local populations and the number of people in the Delta who are affected by the agreement. Also, the GMoU has the potential to be used in other contexts internationally. Despite the above reasons for its relevance to enquiry, very few critical academic studies have considered its design and the effects of its implementation.

A majority of this small collection of studies also employ largely technical analyses, while the

effects of GMoU implementation are deeply political issues (Egbon et al., 2018; Ramimi et al., 2016). The Niger Delta is a region host to some of the highest levels of economic activity in Africa as a result of oil and gas exploitation, yet local people suffer from some of the world's highest rates of poverty and the area is subject to some of the world's worst levels of environmental degradation and poverty (UNDP, 2006). A political analysis of the GMoU as the focal point of relations between oil companies and local populations is needed, both regionally and internationally.

## 7.2. Theoretical Notes

The search for a relevant theoretical framework has been covered in detail in chapter two. This section will present a brief recap of the theoretical framework that will be used in this chapter and outline some of the elements of the framework that will be applied to bring out major themes in the data.

The theoretical framework to be used in this chapter is that of governmentality, and at points, its extension, environmentality. To recap briefly on a more detailed description in chapter two, governmentality is an analytic developed by Foucault (Foucault and Faubion, 1997), that seeks to understand techniques and procedures that direct human behaviour. Environmentality is an analytic developed by Agrawal (2005) that extends the concepts of governmentality to the processes that govern people in relation to their environment. The advantage of governmentality and environmentality over other theories that seek to understand the politics of the environment is that they “regard the exercise of power and authority as anything but self-evident and in need of considerable analytical resources” (Dean, 2010, p9). Unlike Political Ecology, which tends to presuppose relations of power between predefined groups, this framework allows for an analysis of the formation of relations of power that is not based on presuppositions. Governmentality and Environmentality, therefore, capture the uncertain, counter-intuitive and unpredictable elements of power that became evident during my time in the Delta.

Now that the analysis has reached the point of presenting the empirics of the GMoU case study, I will expand a little more on the particular elements of governmentality and environmentality that I will employ in this analysis. There are three particular elements that I will use in this chapter: technologies of power, subject formation and ungovernable spaces. Enquiry into technologies of power lies at the heart of governmentality, asking “by what means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, and vocabularies is authority constituted and rule are accomplished” (Dean, 2010, p. 31). As will be demonstrated below, enquiry into technologies of power allows for the exploration of the *how* and *why* questions of power formation surrounding the GMoU. The GMoU itself can be considered a technology of power, which opens up ques-

tions on whom that technology serves, *how* it serves and *why* it may serve in this way, perhaps concerning a genesis of power from historical relations. The second element of governmentality that I will employ *subject formation* allows for an exploration of the effects of governance on individual subjects. *Subject formation* is an element of governmentality that Agrawal (2005, p220) emphasises strongly in his definition of environmentality, stating that “one of the prime effects of power is how “certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires come to be identified and constituted as individuals”. In this way, the study of power also by nature involves a study of the effects of power, and an effect of power is how individuals or subjects are formed by that power. Important to add is that power and governance does not always operate negatively through the constraint of individuals, the effects of a certain governmentality can empower subjects and in doing so shape their behaviour. As demonstrated below, this process of empowerment constituting the formation of subjects is an important dynamic surrounding the GMoU, and using the concept of subject formation allows this to be foregrounded. Theories of governmentality have been used before to analyse social relations in the Delta, most notably by Watts (2004b), who employs the analytic towards what he terms “ungovernable spaces” in the Delta. This chapter, therefore, gives an opportunity to critically engage with Watts’ use of governmentality, to compare Watts’ analysis with the analysis of the GMoU. The notion of “ungovernable spaces” will be explored as a final element of governmentality comprising the theoretical framework of this chapter.

The chapter is structured as follows: it begins with the historical genesis of the GMoU, considering motivations for its creation. The design of the agreement and its procedures is then considered. The analysis then considers the implementation of the GMoU, before looking at how the GMoU can produce reconfigurations and new formations of power as a result of its implementation. Next, the analysis will consider subject formation, looking at how subjects are formed at the interface between local community groups and oil companies, and the tactics with which these subjects consolidate and defend their power. The degree to which these subjects constitute the institutions they represent is critically considered before the analysis focuses on accountability in relation to the GMoU. Theories of governance at the inter-community scale will then be discussed, bringing into the analysis Watts’s (2004) interpretation of *ungovernable spaces*. The analysis will then close with reflections on the GMoU as a technology of power in the Niger Delta. Finally, the chapter will close with a consideration of the strengths and limitations of governmentality and environmentality as analytics.

### **7.3. The GMoU As an Emergent Product of Multi-Scalar Political Dynamics**

Before beginning an analysis of the implementation of the GMoU, the reasons for its design need to be considered by looking at the historical context of its production. As Agrawal (2005, p.210) explains, “The exercise of power and political asymmetries... are themselves a consequence of many different processes and can be understood only historically”. To begin the analysis of the GMoU using a governmentality analytic, it is important to consider the politics of the document’s inception as emergent from historical trends. This section will consider political influences on the emergence of the GMoU at regional, local, national and international scales.

#### **The Regional Scale**

As mentioned above, the GMoU was introduced to the local context of the Delta in a time of increasing conflict at the regional scale. In the decades before its implementation by Chevron Nigeria in 2006, relations between IOCs and local populations in the Delta region had been deteriorating (Watts and Ibaba, 2011; Kashi and Watts, 2010; Watts, 2004a). From the beginnings of oil extraction operations in the 1960s through successive oil booms on the 1980s and 1990s, each new generation in the Delta was born into worsening socio-economic and environmental conditions. Human development indicators demonstrate a decline in living standards over this time, and what limited environmental indicators are available show a rapid deterioration of environmental conditions (UNDP, 2006). A landmark deterioration of these relations surrounded the public execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995. Saro-Wiwa was the leader of The Ogoni Nine, a group of environmental activists protesting against the environmental degradation of their home region Ogoniland (Rivers State) and similar environmental degradation and decline in social conditions throughout the Delta. His execution by the Abacha regime in 1995 symbolised a failure of diplomatic, non-violent protest against IOCs. It demonstrated to people in the Niger Delta the futility of using peaceful means as a way to gain recognition of their protest (Omeje, 2005). A new wave of protests applied new techniques centred on shutting down oil flow stations and targeting infrastructure. IOCs, seeing the potential to lose revenue as a result of this disruption required a new method of engagement with local populations, giving rise to the GMoU. In a public report on the introduction of the GMoU Chevron (2017) cite increasing conflict with local populations in the early 2000s as the primary reason for this new strategy.

## **The Local Scale**

The antagonism felt by local populations before the introduction of the GMoU was in part a result of ineffective existing agreements between IOCs and local populations known as MoUs: direct bilateral agreements between IOCs and individual ‘oil and gas affected communities’ that distributed revenues to these communities. A respondent representing a community in Bayelsa explained to me the problems with the MoU model from the community perspective. First the term ‘oil and gas affected communities’ appeared to be an arbitrary industry terminology to define communities purportedly situated proximally to IOC infrastructure. The classification resulted in the exclusion of some local populations from MoU agreements, even though these populations may be directly or indirectly affected by the presence of the oil and gas industry. Communities were affected by issues such as pollution from spills and gas flaring, sewerage from oil and gas facilities, blocking of waterways by infrastructure or even erosion of riverbanks through dredging. For local populations party to MoU agreements, remuneration amounts were relatively paltry and often embezzled by rulers of communities. Communities demanded more remuneration from IOCs and a better system of benefit distribution.

From the perspective of the IOCs, the MoU was a ‘costly’ form of engagement with communities. As each agreement was made with individual communities, the MoU tied IOCs to multiple direct engagements. For some IOCs, particularly those with large footprints, such as SPDC, this meant managing several hundred simultaneous engagements. Under each of these engagements, IOCs then designed and implemented development initiatives tailored to each community (Aaron, 2012). As the number of MoU agreements proliferated, communities became dependent on the revenues they provided. An academic specialising in the MoU and GMoU agreements outlined how claims and counterclaims for legitimacy to remuneration and an increase of the size and number of groups eligible for remuneration led to increased work for IOCs. The bureaucratic burden of the MoU as a model of engagement was significant enough to require the adoption of a new model of engagement. The GMoU, as will be shown later on in the analysis, reduced this bureaucratic burden.

## **The National Scale**

At the national scale in the decade before the advent of the GMoU, Nigeria was also undergoing political change. MoU agreements were designed and implemented in post-war authoritarian military regimes, yet through the 1990s Nigeria was democratising its national governance systems and returning to civilian rule. MoUs followed a relatively autocratic model of governance, whereby IOCs were given the power to decide the development needs of individual communities. As the political environment of Nigeria shifted from autocracy to democracy, the MoU

agreement became outdated and IOCs looked for a method of engagement that aligned with democratic values.

### **The International Scale**

In the years since the design and implementation of the bilateral and somewhat autocratic MoU model in the 1960s and 1970s, international development strategy underwent significant shifts toward neoliberal forms of governance. International multilateral organisations such as the UN increasingly developed discourses advocating specifically neoliberal forms of engagement between private-sector organisations such as the IOCs and local populations, under the ideology of the PPP (Pattberg and Widerberg, 2016a). Models of engagement between private-sector corporations and local populations globally began to reflect these changes in ideology, adopting methods appearing to empower local agency and democratic and participation (Joyce Malombe, 2000). The GMoU design itself was designed on a model of PPP developed by the World Bank, termed *Community Foundations* (Sera and Reynolds, 2008; Joyce Malombe, 2000). These shifts in the style of private sector and community engagement, present in discourses within international development policy circles, therefore, influenced the creation of the GMoU.

### **Multi-Scalar Influences**

The GMoU was therefore generated by a range of local, regional, national and international trends. In creating a new model of engagement between the IOCs and local populations, IOCs could address these trends. The GMoU provided local populations with a seemingly progressive new method of interaction as a response to growing aggravation and increased threats to production infrastructure; it democratised their form of engagement in line with a national democratisation of political ideology; and appear to modernise their corporate social responsibility strategy in line with modern international development discourse, whilst reducing the bureaucratic burden of direct engagement with multiple communities.

In using a governmentality lens to view the creation of the GMoU, the GMoU as a set of relations does not appear as self-evident. Instead, it was the product of contestations of power. The development of the GMoU as a response to protest and conflict from Niger Delta communities shows that power, in this case, is also not unidirectional. Many analyses of the Delta presuppose a unidirectionality of power in the relations between IOCs and communities, which favour oil companies. However, a governmentality perspective begins to introduce complexity and multi directionality to power relations in the Delta. Also, the fact that the GMoU was developed as a governance method by IOCs to improve relations between the IOC and the community illuminates the development of the agreement as a strategy or tactic. In this way the GMoU can be



considered a *technology* of governance.

#### **7.4. A Designed Technology: The GMoU**

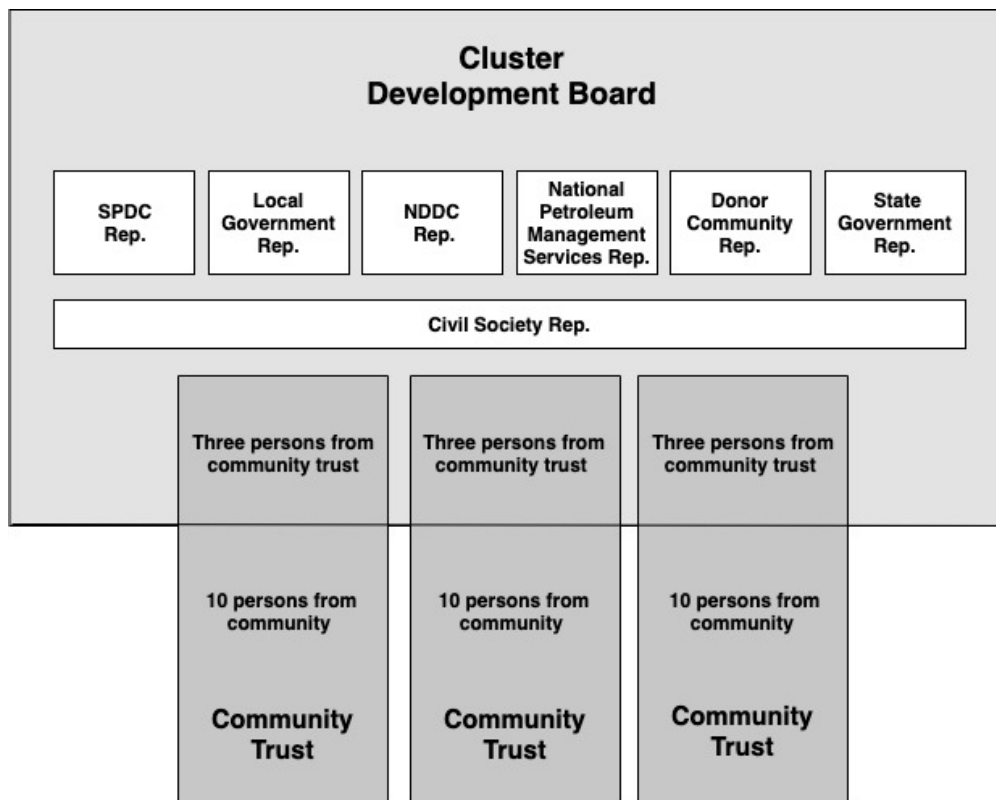
The new GMoU agreement presented several major variations in design as it replaced the MoU. What was previously a Memoranda of Understanding was transformed into a Global Memoranda of Understanding, with the *global* element redefining the spatial extent and scale of individual agreements between local populations and IOCs. Under the GMoU, a greater number of communities were now purportedly included within the agreement's remit, but instead, these communities were now grouped. Within the SPDC GMoU, these groups were termed 'clusters' and within the Chevron GMoU, 'development councils'. Herein, the analysis will focus on the SPDC model of the GMoU and use SPDC terminology, as the majority of the data collected and used in this analysis concerns the SPDC model and its implementation in Bayelsa.

The GMoU model now covered larger areas and included more people, appearing to give more opportunities for inclusion in oil and gas-based revenue distribution. The *spatial resolution* of engagement from the perspective of IOCs, however, was lower, as these populations were now grouped into clusters. Whilst the number of people included in the GMoU increased, the number of individual engagements to be honoured by the IOCs was reduced.

The GMoU also radically redefined how IOCs approached development activities. Under the MoU, the IOC took responsibility for the design and implementation of community development projects; but under the GMoU, the design and management of these projects were handed over to these newly created clusters. Through a democratic procedure within the agreement, clusters now designed community development projects and sourced local contractors to carry them out. The IOC now only had the responsibility of approving projects and allocating funds to finance them. From a local perspective, the GMoU appeared to give local populations more agency and responsibility for their socio-economic development. From a national perspective, the IOCs were democratising their form of engagement with local people. At the international level, IOCs were practising a form of engagement honouring modern discourses of democratic participation, and empowerment in engagements with local people.

To facilitate these new methods of engagement, the GMoU was designed around a new democratic institutional structure (see figure 7.2, page 188). In the SPDC model, the point of contact between communities and IOCs is the Cluster Development Board (CDB). A set of democratic procedures is outlined in the GMoU to create the CDB: each cluster community follows age and gender quotas to select representatives and nominates community members to a community trust. A select number of representatives from this community trust then team with counterpart representatives from other cluster communities to sit on the CDB. The CDB then comprises

representatives from all communities within the cluster. The agreement outlines that town hall meetings are used to disseminate information surrounding the GMoU- to ensure accountability. Other representatives, from local and state government, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and donors are designed into the CDB, but evidence shows these representatives are generally absent from GMoU activities (Egbon et al., 2018).



**Figure 7.2.:** *The Designed Structure of the CDB, Drawn From Egbon et al. (2018).*

The design of the GMoU promised a revolutionary improvement of the relationship between oil and gas companies and communities in the Niger Delta, from autocratic to democratic, prescriptive to participatory. The analysis that follows shows, using concepts of governmentality, that as the design of the GMoU was transferred from the boardrooms of the IOCs to the complex political realities of the Delta, the outcomes of its implementation diverged from these promises. Through these political processes, changes to the relationship were revolutionary, but not in the way that the IOCs had advertised- or the local people of the Niger Delta had hoped.

## 7.5. Implementation of The GMoU Design

### 7.5.1. Forced Participation

A starting point in analysing the formation of power surrounding the GMoU implementation involves the process of community consent to implementation of the GMoU. As outlined in section 7.4, the GMoU itself appears designed to adhere to principles of democratic governance. However, a respondent explained to me how communities in areas of oil extraction face two choices when presented with the GMoU: become a party to the GMoU and receive benefits through its mechanisms of benefit distribution, or decline the GMoU and receive no benefits at all. Several sources explained to me that regardless of whether the target community consents to the GMoU or not, the IOC will continue extraction. In this sense, the democratic principles attached to the design of the GMoU, at the first stage of implementation, are presented within an authoritarian context.

The formation of the power dynamics that produce this context can be traced through the history of IOC and community relations in the Delta. As detailed in chapter two, oil extraction began to take root in the late 1960s and 1970s, following the victory of the Federal Military Government in the Biafran war. At this point, Nigeria was undergoing phases of Federal military rule. IOCs operated within a national autocracy and were provided full military backing by the federal government. Resistance to the agenda of the IOCs, working in collaboration with the Federal Military Government was met with military force (Falola and Heaton, 2019).

Moving forward in time 40 years, Nigeria and the Delta are no longer under a military regime, yet authoritarian dynamics persist. In one instance, I visited a village around 20 minutes' drive from Yenagoa in Bayelsa to attend a meeting between a community chief, his advisers and a locally based NGO. From the front of the chief's house, a gas flare was visible, its mast towered around 20m above its surroundings, with the flame of the flare itself rising another 3m or so, billowing black smoke towards low clouds. The nearby flare produced tremors large enough to damage houses, precipitation of sulphurous soot particles onto crops and into water supplies, airborne toxic gases, in addition to heat and noise. The health of local people and the local environment were suffering, as a result<sup>2</sup>. Despite being a party to the GMoU, the chief explained that there was no way for this community to raise their concerns with the IOC responsible. A lack of communication had led to frustration and frustration had led to protest by local community groups. Participating in protests, however, was a risk. In protesting, individuals and communities may be labelled as 'militants' by the oil company or the local government, warranting the use of force by federal military forces, as a part of various military operations to protect oil and gas

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<sup>2</sup>There is a lot of information available on the health and environmental effects of living close to gas flares in the Delta, see Adewale and Mustapha (2015), Nduka et al. (2008), and Nriagu et al. (2016)

revenues and reduce militancy in the Delta (Omeje, 2006d, p. 143).

Whilst the GMoU itself may be seen as a set of novel and democratic procedures, the political context in which it is introduced continues to bear resemblance to the military authoritarianism of the 1970s. These instances suggest that while the Nigerian state has transitioned to democracy, the nature of the relationship between IOCs and populations has shown little evidence of change from autocratic dynamics. Target communities may have reservations around the conditions of the GMoU but will have little opportunity to protest. If these communities forgo the GMoU, they lose access to benefits. The democratic principles of the GMoU, therefore, become irrelevant when the processes by which they are enforced display authoritarian characteristics. Before the implementation of the GMoU process begins, power dynamics between the IOC and the community already serve to contradict these principles.

### **7.5.2. Local Reconfigurations of Power In GMoU Communities**

During implementation, the GMoU also causes reconfigurations of power. As detailed so far, the GMoU is implemented in target communities as a new institution, and a governmentality analytic can give an opportunity to explore the characteristics of this institution and some of the political outcomes of its introduction. However, it is worth noting that in applying governmentality to institutions, the formation of power through institutions should remain the main focus of analysis, as opposed to an analysis that focuses purely on institutions themselves- a weakness outlined by Agrawal (2005) of institutional and common property resource literature.

At this point, it is worth referring again to the designed institutional design of the GMoU. As shown in figure 7.2, page 188, the GMoU requires that representatives from each participant community are elected to a community trust. The representatives of each community trust then have the opportunity to sit on the CDB, the primary point of contact between cluster communities and the IOC. The CDB elect a cluster development board chairman as the main representative of the board at this point of contact. Through this structure, the CDB, in principle, is granted the power to decide how oil revenues are allocated among cluster communities through the distribution of funds to community development projects.

The first point to note is that in many cases this new institutional structure conflicts with existing arrangements in GMoU target communities. Existing institutional structures within communities across the Delta vary considerably, as rural Delta communities still retain decentralised characteristics that were outlined in chapter two. Generally, communities are centred around a paramount ruler, or chief, who has authority over a council of chiefs. Representatives of various groups in the community, such as women and youth groups, advise and support the paramount ruler in making community decisions. Respondents throughout discussions on customary community structures emphasized the role of religion, ritual and normative values in the functioning

of customary institutions in the Delta.

As the GMoU is introduced, its design is installed within the target community. Respondents explained to me how people who become representatives of communities within the GMoU structure in some cases do not hold positions of authority within the existing customary structure. As the GMoU is introduced, and new representatives are installed under a new power structure, existing institutional structures within the community are then challenged. An important point to note here is the conflicting authorising logics of these institutions. Whereas customary institutions are authorised by culture, religion, spiritual belief and tradition, the alternative structure of the GMoU is authorised by its provision of access to oil and gas derived revenues. Parallel and competing power structures can then begin to operate within some GMoU communities, producing conflict between capital and custom. This competition between the contrasting rules, practices, incentives and norms of existing systems and the introduced GMoU system then has the effect of increasing a propensity for inter and intra community conflict. People who benefit from extant power structures, such as community chiefs, will attempt to uphold these structures. People who benefit from new power structures, such as CDB chairmen, members of the CDB or community trusts will attempt to entrench these new structures. As well as a contestation of power between individuals, this produces a contestation of power between ideologies. The benefits of access to oil and gas derived revenues can start to overpower the benefits of adhering to existing cultural practices, as practices authorised through access to capital carry a greater reward.

It is worth noting that this conflict of power structures does not happen in all GMoU communities. Some communities under the GMoU show resilience in the face of the centrifugal political influences of institutional conflict and can continue to maintain a relatively robust leadership throughout the GMoU implementation process. However, the main point to note here is that the introduction of the GMoU *requires* community resilience. Where GMoU communities are not able to show resilience, divisions can occur. Respondents who are experts on the GMoU implementation process consistently mentioned that the ability of some target communities to operate with cohesion is, in their view, a main determining factor in the ability of target communities to implement the GMoU successfully.

Due to the limitations of the study outlined in chapter four, I was unable to obtain primary quantitative measures of GMoU success rates, although some secondary quantitative accounts are available. In a conversation with a civil society representative working with GMoU clusters, he cited that, to his knowledge, four out five of clusters he was working with were undergoing leadership struggles as a result of the GMoU. Another civil society representative and activist, familiar with region-wide dynamics of GMoU implementation, exclaimed that the only community in which he thought the GMoU may be working was now in the process of shutting down a

local oil facility in protest against its impacts. A quantitative survey of GMoU communities can be found in a 2011 data gathering study by NIDPRODEV (2011). The report found that 61% of 31 GMoU communities interviewed rated their community's relationship with oil companies as 'bad'. I also had the chance to interview the representative of an IOC with substantial GMoU engagements across the Delta and asked for examples of successful GMoU cases. In response, this interviewee cited the success of educational programmes in urban centres in Port Harcourt, despite the vast majority of the IOCs GMoU interactions being located in rural locations. "I'm not going to sit here and say it's perfect", he mused. Evidently, in many cases, the GMoU, through a propensity to induce conflict, is failing to produce the outcomes purportedly intended by IOCs.

Many communities under the GMoU are therefore in a process of conflict, as new practices gain significance and authority and customary practices atrophy. Many studies consider inter and intra community conflict in the Delta - often attributing this conflict to oil (Watts, 2004b; Omeje, 2005; Ikelegbe, 2005; Obi, 2014). However as outlined in chapter three, few of these analyses investigate processes of conflict in-depth, instead serving to showcase the presence of conflict as a result of oil. This is where a governmentality analytic presents an opportunity, by allowing for an exploration of the mechanics of conflict and the 'fractionalising' power of oil through foregrounding processes of power formation. To continue this analytic, the analysis will now consider in more detail how individuals utilise the GMoU to produce certain forms of power.

### **7.5.3. Formation of Power Using The GMoU**

The GMoU is advertised as a set of procedures designed to foster the empowerment and development of cluster communities (Chevron, 2017; SPDC, 2018b; SPDC, 2018a). However, the above analysis has shown that as it is implemented, the GMoU can reconfigure power structures, causing instability and conflict. A further dynamic that this section will begin by investigating is how power and revenues authorised through the GMoU can be captured by elite groups within communities. In many cases, this capture results in the embezzlement of resources designated for community development projects by a minority elite. If, as my friend mentioned, the GMoU is a 'very perfect document', what is happening in the processes between its design and implementation that produces these perverse outcomes?

#### **Elite Capture of The GMoU**

The processes of conflict outlined above can be demonstrated by the way that elements within the design of the GMoU are selectively utilised by elites to capture resources and power. A good

example can be found in how the ‘milestone’ system built into the procedure of the GMoU is used in this way. Milestones are designed as markers to designate the completion of specific implementation stages of the community development projects central to the GMoU. The Operation and Procedural Guidelines (OPPG) of the GMoU state that as each milestone is passed, it should be confirmed by independent assessment by an engineer. Once this assessment is completed, further payments are released to finance the next stages of the project. Three signatures from representatives sitting on the CDB are required to confirm milestone completion before cheques are written to contractors releasing payment for subsequent stages. Regular ‘town hall’ meetings are required to disseminate project proceedings and updates to cluster communities. Also, an independent Civil Society Organisation (CSO) should oversee the milestone process as a form of accountability.

The above designed procedure appears robust. However, a typical anecdote from a respondent explains how, in cases of elite capture, this process is subverted:

“In my community, there was a job that was paid, there was a job that was up to the second milestone, and the job is still abandoned. The question is, who signed the cheques?”

In these cases, the approval of the engineer is given, milestones are confirmed by the CDB, cheques are signed, and money is released. At the same time, the practical implementation of the project is abandoned, information is not disseminated to the wider community, and the CSO is not willing or able to implement accountability measures. Elements of the GMoU that can be used to empower select individuals are operationalised, whilst those that should facilitate the wider distribution of revenues are discarded.

To facilitate this capture of revenues through the exclusion of the community, collusion is occurring between the three representatives at the level of the CDB/regional development council: the CDB chairman, the representative of the IOC and the representative of the state government<sup>3</sup>. This elite group can simultaneously manufacture the appearance of milestones as completed to capture resources, whilst discarding accountability measures designed to ensure the milestones are actually completed.

Through this process, actors at the local scale will ‘cherry-pick’ elements of the GMoU that will facilitate the generation of power and the capture of resources. At the same time, elements that are discarded allow for avoidance of accountability and the exclusion of others from resources. As elements of the GMoU are cherry-picked and others excluded, its procedure is re-constituted at the local level as an adaptation of its original design. The systems of accountability

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<sup>3</sup>Varying configurations, involving the engineers, banks, the CSOs and other community members are possible, but were difficult to pin down as consistent themes in interviews

supposedly built into its procedure are ignored by elites, allowing for the capture of revenues.

Another example of how the GMoU design is selectively utilised can be seen through the implementation of the institutional structure of the GMoU and how it is used to legitimise the authority of certain actors from cluster communities. The process of ascension of a CDB representative to the level of the IOC was described to me by a CSO representative:

“[Once this representative is elected] he begins to make very good friends with some of the staff of the IOC. They have a very good relationship, a very good... should I say, business relationship. And when that starts happening, you notice there is a kind of clique thing going on with the CDB... And the communities now feel left out. When the CDB is supposed to be organising meetings, quarterly or monthly briefings, depending on the terms of their GMoU, they don't do that. In most of the communities, these quarterly meetings do not hold.”

In these cases, some parts of the institutional structure of the GMoU are used to legitimise the status of the CDB chairman as separate to the rest of the community. On the other hand, elements designed to encapsulate the wider community within the institutional structures are discarded. The GMoU structure, implemented in this way, becomes a way of introducing elite members of clusters to representatives of IOCs. It generates a space in which collusion and subversion of the agreement can occur. Through this selective use of the GMoU structure, an elite group is formed away from the customary institutional structures of communities, allowing for a subversion of the GMoU process, the capture of resources and the formation of new power.

Rather than a simple transfer of the GMoU design from the boardrooms of the IOC to the context of the Delta, local actors will selectively use certain resources generated by the GMoU to form new powers. Even if the GMoU were designed as a ‘perfect document’, these tactics of power utilised by elites can manipulate this document to capture revenue. Through foregrounding the mechanisms of formation of power in this way, it is possible to see how the GMoU, regardless of the principles it represents, can become a locus for conflict in the communities where it is implemented.

### **Elite Avoidance of Visibility and Accountability**

Other elements of tactics of power involve visibility and accountability. The elements of the GMoU that are preserved are those that are required to give the appearance of successful GMoU implementation, but this appearance is constructed for observers outside the Delta- those unable to visit the locations of rural GMoU communities. An urban-based IOC employee, a foreign IOC shareholder, or a foreign journalist may only see the apparent inclusive design of the institutional structure of the GMoU before implementation (for example in the glossy reports of IOCs



(SPDC, 2018a; Chevron, 2017)), or only encounter statistics detailing completed milestones. Meanwhile, on the ground, GMoU design principles are distorted, and projects are abandoned. The GMoU retains an appearance of functionality when viewed from a relative distance. Observers unwilling or unable to "get their feet wet" in the Delta (Isoun, 2014, p.8) may never *see* GMoU corruption. The GMoU, therefore, exists in different forms: it operates successfully in one form for the elite group capturing resources; it operates successfully in its designed form to distant observers, to the benefit of the reputation of the IOC; however, it operates as a perverse failure to local people in inaccessible areas of the Delta.

In this way tactics of power surrounding the GMoU contain two dimensions: the utilisation of elements of the GMoU that can form power and collusional space, and a disregard of elements that are designed to create accountability. Governmentality has allowed for a view into power dynamics, showing how power surrounding the GMoU can be captured. Also, it has shown how power can be dispersed and multidimensional. The outcomes of elite capture of the GMoU are detrimental to the wider community, however, this occurs through a process of empowerment of the elites that benefit from capture of the GMoU. Other analyses, for example, political ecology analyses may be quick to judge the outcomes of the GMoU as a demonstrative example of the exercise of hegemonic power by IOCs, however, this analysis has demonstrated a deeper level of complexity, where IOC power is dispersed, multifaceted and beneficial to some. The analysis now has an opportunity to demonstrate more of this complexity by exploring *subject formation* as a mechanism behind the tactics and formations of power considered so far.

#### **7.5.4. Subject Formation at the Interface Between the IOC and the GMoU Community**

As outlined above, the GMoU can provide a space in which elites collude to capture its resources, and the subjects that comprise these elite groups are important to consider. For these individuals, influences on decision making, such as status, identity and knowledge are fluid and an integral part power formation around the GMoU. This area gives an opportunity to use an analysis of *subject formation*, to uncover some of the motivations behind the actions of these individuals. As Agrawal (2005, p.212) mentions, "The institutionalization of new strategies of power and regulation is also accompanied by changes in conceptions of the self, a point that often eludes scholars of institutions and regulations alike". This section aims to consider such changes within the context of GMoU implementation, continuing to focus on community-level interactions.

Part of an interview with a representative of a civil society organisation familiar with the GMoU process illustrates succinctly a process of personal transition that can occur for community members sitting on the CDB:

“[The IOC] will take over [the CDB] representatives, make them kings and enrich them. They will make them feel that ‘Look, you are a special person, you are not like them. So, you have to help us.’ They empower them and once they feel they are empowered by Shell, their communities won’t matter.”

An NGO representative in Bayelsa explained to me how, over time, the chairman of the CDB is influenced by this treatment, and “begins to feel like the lord”. For the CDB member moving into the collusional space provided the GMoU and developing close relationships with staff of the IOC allows a life-changing transformation of status and identity.

A nuance of this acquirable transformation is that it can be obtained regardless of how revenues are accessed, whether this is legitimately or not. As an environmental activist and respondent noted in an interview,

“When you have money, no matter how evil you are, you are the messiah and people worship you”.

Potential influences on subject formation in the Delta are numerous and not confined to the pull factors of collusion around the CDB. Over successive generations of oil exploitation, local environments have become polluted and less productive, leading to widespread loss of the ability to generate resources to support customary livelihood activities- such as agriculture or fishing. In contrast, oil revenues present the allure of almost instantaneous access to vast wealth. The political Journalist Kapuscinski (1982, p32) wrote that oil income gives the “illusion of a completely changed life, life without work, life for free” . In the Niger Delta, the push away from customary livelihoods combined with a pull towards the mystique of oil money has made the dominant livelihood option in the rural Niger Delta the pursuit of ‘oil money’.

As one interviewee stated:

‘If you look into the head of a typical Niger Delta youth, it’s just oil, oil, oil- nothing else.’

Since the 1960s, the proliferation of the oil industry in the Niger Delta has created two parallel economies: the rural economy and the oil economy, growing more polarised over generations. In this time the incentive to transition between the two has grown. With a proliferation of the ‘enclave’ oil and gas economy (Ferguson, 2005), the region shifts further to what some have claimed to be a “mono-economy” (Omeje, 2004; Watts, 2004b).

Less prevalent in the literature, but a theme prevalent throughout interviews conducted for this study is the influence of a loss of livelihood options on the identity of individuals. Respondents described how access to oil rents offers an escape from what is widely acknowledged as a

deteriorating rural lifestyle to a new life in an urban oil economy. With access to this economy is access to a new lifestyle and a new, transformed identity. A historian I spoke to in Yenagoa explained that when young men in Bayelsa are asked to clean up oil spills, they “feel as if they have made it”, even though these jobs are peripheral to the industry and by industry standards poorly paid. The mere prospect of access to oil money itself is enough to exert behavioural influence on those at the interface of the rural and the oil economy.

These varying processes of subject formation can be linked back to the areas of the analysis that have been outlined so far. Representatives of community clusters sit on the CDB board at a space created by the GMoU are put in a position between the rural and the oil economies. In some cases, representatives use this opportunity to adhere to the outlined principles of the GMoU and work ensure its processes are completed, for the benefit of cluster communities. However, in some cases, representatives will choose to subvert the principles of the GMoU and use revenues to move between the rural and oil economies to start a new life in a new context. Representatives choosing the latter option then employ tactics of power to capture resources and avoid accountability, in some cases deserting their community entirely. One respondent with extensive experience working with GMoU communities described how: “the first thing a Niger Delta youth will do, on gaining oil money, is move into a hotel”. In some cases, individuals will begin an entirely new life financed by captured revenues, cutting off contact with their community altogether.

A note to add here is that IOC representatives managing the GMoU face similar incentives to community representatives. IOC representatives operate in the same institutional space provided by the GMoU and are often from Niger Delta communities. (Shell notes that 70% of its staff in Nigeria are from Nigeria, and many staff working in the Niger Delta are from the Niger Delta (Carmody, 2017, p.130)). Collusion at the level of the CDB board involves the complicity of the IOC representative. In the same way that the community representative may undergo a transformation under the opportunities and incentives in front of them, the oil company representative may undergo a similar transition, which can be offered by deal-making with CDB board members.

These accounts are not representative of every CDB board member or community, rather they give an illustration of dynamics possible within the Delta. The stories reflect the frustrations of the respondents familiar with the GMoU interviewed for this study and demonstrate the push and pull incentives presented to individuals who are given access to the space the GMoU provides. The aim of using subject formation as a method of analysis within this section has been to highlight some of the factors that can produce certain forms of governance by addressing the formation of individual motivations. In doing so, analysis has illustrated briefly the strong incentives behind the decision making of some individuals involving the GMoU, which may not

have been acknowledged otherwise.

## **7.6. Moving Between Local and Regional Scales**

The above approach has addressed some questions surrounding dynamics at the local level, including mechanisms of power capture, influences on decision making and methods of avoiding local accountability. However, questions remain surrounding the ability of the wider community to hold these individuals to account.

Respondents outlined numerous techniques, or ‘tactics of power’ that are used by individuals who subvert the GMoU to avoid local level accountability. The analysis has already shown how CDB members can eschew mandated community cluster meetings designed to disseminate information to GMoU cluster communities. Also, CDB boards can locate their office of operations away from the rural GMoU communities in an urban area, thereby inhibiting community members aiming to gain information on the progress of GMoU projects, whilst maintaining an unaccountable space in which communication between CDB board members can occur. As mentioned, connections with the community can be cut off. In cases where the GMoU is subverted, there may be people in the community trusts or on the CDB with no access to information on the GMoU process as a result of these techniques. Community representatives I spoke to about the GMoU conveyed a sense of exclusion from its proceedings and a lack of knowledge of how the GMoU was being implemented in their communities. However, with direct experience of the stagnation and failure of GMoU projects, these community members should be well suited to convey evidence of the injustice of GMoU failure to IOCs through the agreement’s accountability measures. Attempts by communities to convey discontent with the GMoU process have therefore been hampered by the above techniques. Together these techniques can be seen as a way of constructing power as a form of governance.

In cases where the GMoU is adapted by local actors, the degree to which the members of the CDB continue to represent their constituent institutions may change. In these cases, the community representative may form a clique with the IOC representative, altering the GMoU to become a new institution that no longer represents the interests of cluster communities. Lines between institutions which seem clear cut when observed from outside the Delta become blurred on closer inspection. Regional dynamics in Niger Delta reflect such trends, where the dividing line between formal and informal operations is indistinct and hybrid institutions operate. A demonstrative example can be seen through the rise of the informal oil economy, in which oil is stolen and tapped from pipelines and refined for sale on clandestine markets. A vital factor in this economy is how local people hired to build and police pipelines as part of the formal IOC institution moonlight as part of the informal economy, participating in powerful and vertically

integrated informal institutions that refine and export oil (Africa-Report, 2006).

Concerning the GMoU, these regional dynamics bring into question the degree to which the IOC representative on the CDB can be considered as operating as part of the institutional structure of the GMoU, or as part of an IOC or a community. Regionally, accountability is, therefore, an influence on the resilience of institutional structures. This brings into focus regional-scale dynamics of accountability in the Delta and how they may contribute to the behaviour of regional-scale institutions. This requires the analysis to now consider the GMoU in relation to regional scale political dynamics. These regional-scale dynamics will be explored through the concept of governable spaces.

## 7.7. Governable Spaces

In a seminal work on the interactions between oil and gas revenues and geographies of governance in the Niger Delta, Watts (2004b) analyses three virtual 'spaces' of governance: 'chieftainship, indigeneity and the nation'. Watts uses concepts of governmentality as a way to explore these spaces, with the notion that extant studies of the 'resource curse' that refer to Nigeria Collier (2000), Collier and Hoeffler (2004a), and Ross (2001) do very little to uncover mechanisms in between a commodity determinism given to oil and its negative outcomes visible in the Delta. Watts concludes with an ironic reference to a conception of *governable space* by Rose (1999), presenting evidence from the Delta of oil's ability to produce spaces which are *ungovernable*. This section of the analysis will aim to further Watt's conception of (un)governable spaces at a regional scale, using evidence presented so far on the GMoU together with a case study of a locality in Bayelsa state. Although he uses governmentality as a framework, I argue that Watts presents ungovernable spaces as determined, in many ways presenting the powerful influence of oil politics as pre-formed. This section aims to build on Watt's approach by situating formations of power surrounding the GMoU within a history of governance and space in the Delta, thereby illuminating in more detail the mechanisms between oil determinism and the exercise of power at a regional scale.

### Revisiting a History of Governance and Space in the Delta

Conceptions of space and place have a unique historical significance in Nigeria and the Niger Delta. It can be easy for some to overlook the fact that both the concept of 'Nigeria', and the geographical delineation of the region were not developed natively. As outlined in chapter two, the term 'Nigeria' was coined in 1897 by Flora Shaw, a British journalist as a way to refer to the operating area of the Royal Niger Company (Bourne, 2015). Before this foreign conceptualisation of the regional space, the West African region was a constellation of independent

societies varying ethnicities, religions, customs, economies, languages and political systems-what Watts (2004a, p204) refers to as “an enormously complex ethno-regional mosaic”. In laying claim to the region of the ‘Niger Area’, the British imperial system homogenised one of the most ethnically diverse regions of Africa. The imposition of foreign conceptions of space and its ownership, therefore, have a deep political history in the Delta. The perceived injustice of foreign ownership of the region is a major factor in the conflict seen in the region today. This context is one in which the GMoU has been placed and evident in the history of Bayelsa, one of the locations in which I was able to hear experiences of local populations with the GMoU.

During my stay in Bayelsa, I was lucky to be introduced to the paramount ruler of the Ekpetiama kingdom, His Majesty King Bubaraye Dakolo Agada. Ekpetiama is a locality East of Yenagoa comprising the communities of Gbanrain-Toru, Tombia, Agudama, Bumondi, Akaibiri, Bumondigbene and Ekibo. The kingdom has a long history of oil and gas exploitation and now encompasses the central processing facility of SPDC’s Integrated Oil and Gas Gathering Project, known as the IOGP<sup>4</sup>. After a ceremonial introduction which involved generous servings of Campari for his guests, the King began our meeting by introducing his community and its history. Contrary to a history of Nigeria beginning with the artificially defined operating area of a private British company, his introduction centred on context of the local geography, in particular, the local Nun River. He explained how his kingdom and its communities had developed along the flow direction of the river. The river provided resources in the form of fish, and seasonal flooding brought exceptional fertility to the local land, producing food crops unique to the region. The people of his kingdom, he said were traditionally fishermen and farmers.

The arrival of the extractives industry to the kingdom in the 1970s brought new forms of resources, new forms of authority and new definitions of geography. Oil mining licence blocks granted ownership of land in Ekpetiama and oil to elite state officials in Abuja and Lagos- regions far removed from the Delta before colonial rule. To access oil in Ekpetiama, IOCs struck deals with owners of oil blocks before beginning exploration and production within the Kingdom. As ownership of land and resources was dictated through a continuation of colonial power structures, IOCs arrived and began operations largely unannounced to local populations. As wells were drilled, and extractives infrastructure installed, MoUs were arranged with leaders of local populations, under customary chieftdom structures. Populations surrounding infrastructure were defined by the IOCs as ‘oil and gas affected communities.’ As mentioned previously, MoUs only covered populations close to IOC infrastructure, causing antagonism within local populations excluded from agreements. An example of a typical grievance given by the king was of two adjacent communities situated above an oil field. If this field is drilled at a point close to one community, this community is defined by the IOC as ‘oil and gas affected’ and will

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<sup>4</sup>For more information on the IOGP see Etekpe (2012)

receive revenues. If the field is drained, however, the adjacent community loses the potential to be remunerated for future extraction. Under the MoU agreement this community receives no remuneration. Remunerations to oil and gas affected communities through the MoU were paltry in value relative to IOC revenues derived from each well, but still significant compared to those that could be accrued from the local economy- and with much less work. New definitions of space were generated as a result of new patterns of exploitation of oil and gas revenues.

These definitions of space were reinforced through the 1970s to the 1990s, with the growing presence and relative power of the oil and gas industry throughout the Delta. Concurrently, definitions of space produced by IOCs became more powerful. Populations migrated from non-oil and gas affected communities to oil and gas affected communities to capitalise on the potential of access to oil and gas revenues as the oil economy gained hegemony. Throughout the 1990s, growing anger across the Delta region was directed at the IOCs, with grievances concerning from a lack of local ownership of resources and for the inequitable distribution of oil and gas derived revenues amongst local populations (a result of IOC delineation of space and revenue distribution) (Agbonifo, 2007).

### **The Production of Ungovernable Space Through the GMoU**

The introduction of the GMoU in the mid-2000s had the effect of redefining space and revenue distribution mechanisms yet again. The ‘global’ element of the agreement now included more communities within the GMoU clusters, once again redefining of ‘oil and gas affected’ communities.

In some cases, this new definition under the GMoU grouped populations that were previously fractionalised by the MoU. One example explained to me was of Agbobiri and Ikarama communities in Okordia clan, Bayelsa State. Ikarama has been classed as an oil-producing community, containing wells, manifolds and pipelines within the community, and was therefore included in the MoU. Agbobiri, with no oil infrastructure present, was excluded. This differentiation gave rise to land disputes and conflicts between the two communities. Also, MoU agreements were signed with specific families, as opposed to the wider community in Ikarama, causing some families to break away from the main community to form their own community. Once the GMoU was introduced, however, Agbobiri and Ikarama were redefined as one community cluster, and required to cooperate. After being driven apart by the definition of ‘community’ under the MoU, fractionalised populations were now required to cooperate under the GMoU through the procedures outlined above.

As outlined previously, approaching these dynamics using an optic of governmentality requires an analysis to jettison presuppositions of arrangements of power, considering them as anything but self-evident. In many analyses, particularly those of Political Ecology, compo-

nents of analysis are considered as pre-formed. This example demonstrates that the component of community, a term which implies homogeneity, is far from homogeneous and unified when viewed in terms of its formation- a dynamic that has been known in development studies for some time (Stacey, 1969). A factor in the fractionalisation of community is the redefinition of space under the GMoU, which is a continuation of many processes of redefining space in the Delta. By redefining space again, the GMoU has produced a propensity for conflict and ungovernable space.

The failure of the GMoU can be seen as a failure of the cluster community to operate in a communal manner, where elites subvert the interests of the community using technologies of power to capture revenues. When approaching this issue with a presupposition that a cluster community, defined by the IOC, should behave communally, the outcomes of subversion of the GMoU appear illogical. However, when a community is understood from a different perspective, in the context of division, conflict and fractionalisation induced by phases of definition and redefinition of space by powers external to that community, the inability of cluster communities to operate communally emerges as a more logical progression of historical processes.

The continuous redefinition of space under the power of IOCs, therefore, has a propensity to induce inter and intra community conflict. As the power to define space and revenue distribution lies with IOCs, this leads to questions around the governing logic of IOCs to carry out these actions. Accordingly, some community and CSO representatives framed the conflict produced through the GMoU as a conscious tactic of IOCs. This framing gives an opportunity to extend the analysis further, going beyond the simple 'oil determinism' of extant literature that simply associates oil with conflict and ungovernable space. Continuing a governmentality analytic, we can further explore the notion of conscious agency in the creation of ungovernable space, through the mentality behind the GMoU at a regional scale.

## **7.8. Conscious Strategy and Ungovernable Space: The Divide and Rule Tactic**

Exploring the conscious agency of IOCs in the Delta became a point of focus during my fieldwork in the Delta. Many conversations almost inevitably touched on or centred around a concept known as 'divide and rule'. This phrase was used extensively by respondents from varying societal positions. In my recorded interviews alone, it is used more than 100 times- and consistently cropped up in unrecorded interactions. In most cases, it was used by local people to describe how, in their view, IOCs consciously create conflict within local populations as a means to create and sustain power. In many cases these conversations linked to the GMoU and how is used as a tool by IOCs to consciously redefine space, thereby inducing conflict and creating forms of



power.

The term ‘divide and rule’ also revisits the concepts of community unity and resilience brought up in the earlier part of the analysis. It was established that cohesive, and responsibly-led and communities are more likely to be able to implement the GMoU successfully, yet a multitude of factors work against this resilience. Therefore, an accusation that IOCs consciously create conflict within communities implies a strategy to undermine resilience and ability to implement the GMoU. More widely, accusing IOCs of using ‘divide and rule’ tactics blames IOCs for a regional strategy to undermine the ability of communities to address social and environmental issues in the Niger Delta.

IOCs, of course, present an opposing narrative to the accusation from local populations of dividing to rule. In a discussion with a senior representative of SPDC, he addressed the issue directly:

“I laugh, each time I hear that I used divide and rule methods. . . No one needs to divide the Niger Deltans, they are already so fragmented. The division that already exists there is so much.”

### **7.8.1. The Benefits of Ungoverned Space**

This section, therefore, aims to explore the degree of conscious strategy behind the production of conflict and ungoverned space in the Delta as the result of the GMoU. As governance strategy is conducted to produce outcomes that favour those who govern, this section will outline several mechanisms surrounding the introduction of the GMoU that favour IOCs substantially. Each of these mechanisms will be explained, along with how they produce forms of power that benefit IOCs. In this way, the section aims to question whether the GMoU itself is a technology of power, as one respondent described it ‘a conflict document’.

#### **Relocating Sites of Conflict**

The first of these visible mechanisms concerns the relocation of sites of conflict as a result of the GMoU. As discussed above, a significant outcome of the GMoU is an increased propensity for conflict at multiple scales in the Delta. The GMoU was introduced in the mid-2000s to address a deteriorating relationship between local populations and IOCs. Importantly, at this time, anger and resentment emanated from communities towards IOCs. However, the GMoU changed this dynamic. One of the most significant outcomes of the GMoU, through the processes outlined so far in this analysis, has been that it moves sites of conflict away from the community/IOC interface and towards the community/community interface. Local people familiar with the GMoU process are acutely aware of this outcome. In a summary report of a

GMoU stakeholder meeting for Ekpetiama kingdom, conducted in Bayelsa in July 2017 (See appendix), set up by a local CSO, community representatives are recorded detailing at length how the GMoU has generated inter and intra community conflict. According to the community representatives, this type of conflict serves as ‘distraction’ from the ‘real’ or the ‘wider’ issues surrounding the IOC/community relationship in the Delta. Representatives quoted in the report lament that whilst inter and intra community conflict has increased substantially, regional levels of oil and gas production have increased steadily (Etekpe, 2012; Longhall, 2011). In moving conflict into communities in this way, the IOC can continue extraction whilst the time and energy of GMoU communities are consumed by inter and intra community conflict. A relocation of sites of conflict as an outcome of the GMoU, in this case, is an outcome seemingly beneficial to the IOCs and oil production.

### **Induced Conflict and Justification for Action**

The wording of the GMoU document itself shows directly how conflict induced by the agreement may be beneficial to IOCs.

The preamble to a GMoU document implemented in Bayelsa (see appendix) states that,

“both parties [the IOC and the cluster] acknowledge that these objectives [of the GMoU] can only be reached in an atmosphere of mutual support, openness and understanding between the parties to the GMoU”.

The GMoU requires conditions of mutual support and understanding to operate, but inter and intra community conflict erodes these conditions, allowing for the use of this clause in the agreement. In areas of community conflict, this clause can be referred to by the IOC at will. Once this clause is effective, the IOC can put GMoU agreements (and the distribution of funds) on hold, whilst oil and gas production continues. The clause can, therefore, be used as a tool by the IOC to withhold funds. Where communities or community representatives are dependent on these funds, the ability to withdraw them at will creates significant power over communities or community representatives. Therefore an increased propensity for inter and intra community conflict generated by the GMoU gives an increased ability of IOCs to utilise this clause to generate power.

The presence of conflict is also used to justify militarised intervention around production sites. If a cluster community can be portrayed as unstable and even violent, increased militarized protection of sites can be justified. This ability to justify military intervention can be a tool that pre-emptively generates power over any community that may wish to protest against the activities of the oil company. This dynamic can still occur if the conflict was influenced by the introduction of the GMoU.

An increased level of conflict allows for the creation of what Dean (2010) refers to as ‘forms of visibility’. Communities in conflict can be discredited or branded by those in power as belonging to a group. When this group is portrayed as an enemy, the use of force can be justified, regardless of nuances or juxtapositions to the claim. In this case, members of a local community can be branded as militants to justify the use of force. This technique of power was articulated on numerous occasions in the field. The King of Ekpetiama noted:

“...there is an African proverb: if you to "call a dog a bad name", so you want to harm it. So you have a dog- there are those who eat dogs. And then the dog has been well, has been serving you well for years and years... ‘And this dog... go chop am for Christmas’... you don’t understand it... You want to eat the dog, OK. So you say ‘This dog, sef, you know he was just looking at my son, unkind’ OK. So that is that the dog was acting aggressive, it was looking at my visitor unkind, it was defecating all over the place, it refused to go and catch bush meat for me, so it is bad- let’s kill it. Ok, so that is what they have slowly done to us, to criminalise us in the eyes of the world, to justify militarising the environment...”

In the meeting between a chief, his advisers and a local NGO mentioned in section 7.5, I was given a first-hand account of this dynamic. The chief explained how the men of the community were reluctant to protest against the actions of SPDC for fear of being labelled as ‘militant’ and becoming a focus of the General Task Force <sup>5</sup>.

The conflict in the Delta between government military forces and militarized resistance groups such as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) is, therefore, a context that can be drawn upon by powerful elites to create these ‘forms of visibility’ that generate power for the already powerful actors of the IOC and the government looking to reduce protest and protect facilities. If the GMoU creates an increased propensity for inter and intra community conflict and protest, it gives further utility to these techniques of creating forms of visibility. In this way, an increased level of conflict in the Delta again may favour IOCs.

### **Reducing a Bureaucratic Burden With Neoliberal Principles**

The introduction of the GMoU was also an opportunity for an internal restructuring within IOCs through a reconfiguration of their engagements. An academic who studied the GMoU in detail explained that by grouping previous individual MoU agreements into GMoU clusters, IOCs

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<sup>5</sup>The general task force are government military agencies delegated the task of combating military activity in the Niger Delta, to protect oil facilities. They are usually comprised of troops drawn from Northern regions of the country. They have been associated with numerous acts of violence against civilians, covered in detail, with further references in Omeje (2006d).

converged multiple engagements into single engagements. This created a single point of contact between IOCs and large local populations. Fewer employees were needed to oversee these fewer points of contact. In this way, the scale, or *spatial resolution*, of the IOCs engagement with communities was drastically reduced through the introduction of the GMoU. Also, the responsibility for designing and implementing development initiatives was moved from the IOC under the MoU to the community under the GMoU, shifting further bureaucratic responsibility from the IOC to the community. These dynamics will have been especially effective for IOCs with a large number of engagements in the Delta such as SPDC. This manoeuvring had the potential to increase the efficiency of upstream oil and gas production, increase profits and increase returns to IOC shareholders.

The above internal structural changes enacted within the IOC are in line with neoliberal governance principles, in the way that they allowed for the reduction of elements of socially focused bureaucracy, such as the number of staff working on external social relations. Concurrently, the principles of the GMoU fit with neoliberal principles in international development discourse, such as bringing together public and private sectors to enact sustainable development initiatives whilst facilitating the participation and empowerment of local communities (Joyce Malombe, 2000). Harvey (2007, p119) notes that it has been part of the genius of neoliberalism to “provide a benevolent mask full of wonderful-sounding words like freedom, liberty, choice, and rights, but to hide the grim realities of the restoration or reconstitution of naked class power, locally as well as transnationally...” It is difficult to see these cost-saving tactics of the IOCs as anything other than a reconstitution of power structures that favour IOCs, returning profit to shareholders whilst reducing the quality of IOC engagement in the Delta. This reconstitution is also given a level of legitimacy granted through the conformance of the GMoU with an international development mantra of increasing local participation and agency in private sector-led development initiatives. These outcomes of the GMoU can be linked with Mirafteb’s 2004 description of PPPs as the “trojan horse” of neoliberal development, “advancing the interests of the private sector”, in this case in the form of conserving profits, “under the banner” of sharing these profits with the poor.

### **The Power of Information Bottlenecks**

As detailed throughout this analysis the GMoU creates an increased propensity for conflict, or what has been referred to as ‘ungoverned spaces’. An outcome I would like to illustrate is that this increased propensity for conflict has the effect of perpetuating what is referred to by NIDPRODEV (2011, p.3) as an “information bottleneck” in the Niger Delta. The report outlines that a lack of information flowing from and to the local level in the rural Niger Delta

“prevents community concerns about public services, government accountability and transparency, and the status of development projects from reaching those who have the power and will to respond to such concerns.”

Adding that this lack of information transfer is

“one characteristic of the enabling environment for corruption by those at all levels of political and social authority; it ensures the perpetuation of poverty, illiteracy, exclusion from political participation, and violence.”

These quotes resonate with the discussion on a lack of accountability and corruption that was raised earlier in section 7.6, where it was concluded that accountability in the Delta is low, giving an enabling environment to actors looking to subvert community agreements.

However, this lack of accountability can also be linked to an increased propensity for conflict, the GMoU and potential tactics of power. As conflict increases, it becomes more difficult for third party verification of information- the completion of GMoU milestones for example. As long as the Delta remains an area of conflict, it will remain an environment in which it is difficult to gain information on processes that can aid accountability. This allows IOCs (and other actors) in the Delta to operate with lower levels of accountability than those outside the Delta. An example given by an interviewee working for an NGO in Bayelsa demonstrated this dynamic. He explained that when Shell shareholders visit the Delta, they are given tours. These tours are given in helicopters that fly from Port Harcourt across the Delta. A representative of SPDC will indicate areas in the Delta in which oil and gas production and community engagements are operating with resounding success. The Delta, of course, is too dangerous for these shareholders to travel to, therefore a distant view of SPDC activities is the only view possible. Without setting foot in the Delta, shareholders cannot observe negative outcomes of the GMoU. The same is true not only of shareholders but anyone looking to understand the processes of the GMoU. Even researchers from the Delta find it more difficult to gather information when areas of the Delta are in conflict. Therefore a ‘birds-eye view’ of the Delta is sometimes the only view possible, giving certain actors such as IOCs leverage over the portrayal of context, including any that obscure negative outcomes.

The information bottleneck of the Delta also allows for other tactics to be employed. Popular journalism, activist publications and much academic commentary on the region tend to follow a particular narrative portraying an impoverished, innocent community and the hegemonic authoritarian power of the oil company (The Economist, 2019). This narrative, largely built following the struggle of the Ogoni people for international recognition in the 1990s, is based on genuine violations of human and environmental rights, and genuine abuses of power that cannot be understated. However, a corollary of this narrative is that it can be exploited by those who claim to

have a monopoly of information in the Delta to distort the perceptions of those who cannot visit. An anecdote from an interview external relations manager of SPDC demonstrates this dynamic:

“I spoke to the West African correspondent of the Economist, last week. And she was saying that... she asked a question: ‘Now don’t I think that the community members asking for clean-up funds to be shared... don’t I think it’s because of poverty?’ I told her, I said, ‘I like your question, your question tells me that it’s good that we are meeting. That means you don’t understand what you are discussing.’ She said, ‘No I’m just playing devil’s advocate.’ I said, ‘It’s OK. Even the devil needs to understand what is going on here.’ So I said, ‘let me describe the community that is poor to you. The community that you say is poor just got with £5m compensation in 2015. The community you say is poor has a commitment for \$7m of social investment from SPDC as part of the clean-up. The community you say is poor had, erm, 400 of its youths trained to work with a clean-up contractor... and they have stopped that because they are asking for more money. Are they really poor?’ And then she said, ‘Oh’, and I said... ‘I know what you said, that’s what is popular, and that is what... they will give to one of the tabloids in the UK. That is... they put it there and everybody buys it and they’re happy. But that doesn’t help because that is not true. That is half of the story. And that actually reinforces the wrong behaviours that has put us in a bad shape. You are actually adding fuel to the fire of those people...”

If we return to the positionality of a Shell shareholder looking to gain information on the Delta, a shareholder accustomed to a common narrative, upon ostensibly learning more about the ‘reality’ of the Delta, will come into contact with information in juxtaposition to the narrative they are accustomed to. The propensity for conflict and embezzlement of funds through the various mechanisms outlined within this study, as a result of the GMoU, gives ample empirical evidence of contested, complex and dispersed power dynamics that directly contradict common narratives. Ironically this evidence can be used by the IOC to generate leverage over shareholders. Evidence of the pushing of counter-narratives, such as that explained in the above quote can be seen in various press reports by SPDC, where a strong emphasis is placed on pipeline vandalism, sabotage and destruction of the environment by communities (BBC, 2018; Addeh, 2019; Godwin, 2019). The cognitive dissonance of shareholders can be reinforced as they lose trust in the popular narrative that portrays communities as victims of oil companies. As long as the Delta remains inaccessible, this manipulation of narratives can continue. Presumably, shareholders, unable to discern the truth, will be less likely to hold companies to account, and more likely to hold on to high-dividend shares.

These dynamics bear implications for research. Analyses that presuppose structural power relations risk perpetuating a narrative that can be contradicted by portrayals of deeper complexity, blurred categorisations of institutions and contested power. Research and journalism, therefore, needs to appreciate the malleability of categorisations such as ‘community’, the complexity of dispersed power relations in the Delta and eschew presuppositions of power dynamics.

### **7.8.2. The Production of Ungovernable Space – a Conscious Tactic?**

So far, it has been demonstrated that conflict and ungoverned space as outcomes of the GMoU favour IOCs. It could be hypothesised, in line with arguments of (Ferguson, 2006b), that this conflict is a pre-requisite to capital accumulation by the global oil industry. Ferguson (2006b) outlines how, in a modern climate of relatively low foreign direct investment throughout sub-Saharan Africa, foreign direct investment into resource-rich conflict zones is booming. Examples outlined by Ferguson from other ‘frontier’ environments such as Iraq and Afghanistan support this hypothesis. The GMoU could be viewed in this way a technology of governance that induces conflict and consolidates the power of IOCs, allowing for continued production, reduced costs and greater return of profit to shareholders.

However, when considering the history of conflict in the Niger Delta it is clear that overall, the presence of conflict has had a largely detrimental impact on return on investment for IOCs. Increased conflict in the years up to 2009 took the form of an increased level of militancy and increased attacks on oil infrastructure. As a result, in 2009, oil production had fallen to its lowest level of around 40% of average national output five years earlier (Watts, 2018). IOC revenue lost from this decreased production is substantial and very likely understated by official reports. Such major losses for IOCs would suggest an incentive to reduce the root causes of conflict in the Delta. After an increase in attacks on oil infrastructure in 2009, the federal government began a widespread amnesty programme aimed at demilitarising the Delta (Ajibola, 2015). This programme has been generally effective in its aims, significantly reducing short term militant activity, allowing production to return to high output levels and indicating a willingness by IOCs and the government to reduce conflict.

However, it is important to distinguish between community conflict and militant conflict. Whilst linked in some ways, the spaces of militancy and community are largely separate. Whilst militant activity was reduced, inter and inter-community conflict remained high. In quelling militant activity, the federal government made no measures to address the root causes of conflict in the Delta. In this way, the amnesty programme protected infrastructure but neglected to address inter and intra community conflict. The mechanisms outlined above that benefit IOCs could still function in this environment of increased protection of infrastructure facilitated by the amnesty programme. This evidence puts into question whether motives in creating the GMoU

were to reduce the root causes of conflict in the Delta or protect oil and gas production.

Another point to add is that in considering the conscious agency of IOCs, in line with a governmentality analytic, IOCs cannot be viewed as homogeneous entities. IOCs extend into the Delta through a plethora of sometimes temporary contractual arrangements, which employ people from varying areas of society, some of which have been known to work against the interests of the oil company through tapping oil pipelines and collaborating with militants (SDN, 2014). In a region of low accountability, informality and hybrid institutional arrangements, it may be questionable as to what degree an externally designed conscious strategy or technology of power can be orchestrated in the Delta. Conflict, rather than being a concerted strategy, could be the result of rogue elements of the IOC capitalising on a lack of information transfer and accountability to manipulate knowledge and hide actions, as shown by the dynamics surrounding the GMoU.

The overall effect of the introduction of the GMoU is that it increases a propensity for conflict in several ways. However, it is uncertain whether this increased propensity for conflict, as some local populations claim, is a conscious tactic. The above evidence has illustrated several outcomes of GMoU implementation and the resulting increased propensity for conflict that favour IOCs and disfavour local populations. It would appear from the above evidence that perhaps, oil extraction lends itself to operating in militarised enclave environments (Ferguson, 2005) within capitalist frontiers (Moore, 2015), where local accountability measures are discarded, accountability to outside observers is manipulated, and negative local impacts of internationally advocated (and cost-saving) neoliberal CSR policies are covered up.

However, a conclusion taking for granted the existence of hegemonic power and its perpetuation in the Niger Delta would seem inappropriate for an analysis employing concepts of governmentality. The GMoU and the production of conflict produce numerous outcomes and opportunities for dispersed relations of power that often contradict any presupposition of power dynamics. The final picture is one of increased complexity and an almost assured unpredictability, where predefined components of analysis, such as ‘community’ and ‘IOC’ and the presupposed power relations between them can break apart when viewed in terms of the *formation* of these components and power relations between them. Perhaps, in this setting, even hegemonic powers operating in the environment of the Niger Delta have only very limited ability to strategize and to control outcomes, regardless of their original intentions.

## **7.9. Conclusion**

This analysis has aimed to explore the seemingly juxtaposed interpretations of the GMoU outlined in the rainy meeting at the start of the chapter. As the respondent at the beginning of the



chapter mentioned, the GMoU can be seen as a ‘very perfect document’, aligning with modern trends in governance methods at multiple scales. However, as soon as the GMoU leaves the boardrooms of the IOCs, it enters a contextual environment where power is dynamic and contested and local accountability measures can be insufficient in holding individuals to account. As a result, the designed organisational structures of the GMoU can be selectively drawn upon by actors to authorise practices that work against its advertised principles. When considering processes of subject formation surrounding these individuals, numerous push and pull factors operate to influence the decisions of actors; a product of larger-scale trends in the Delta. The GMoU, through these mechanisms, can be seen to be inducing conflict and division in communities. Community grievances as the result of the division and fractionalisation caused by these and other regional-scale dynamics have led to a notion held with many people that conflict in the Niger Delta is produced consciously, that the GMoU is what the respondent quoted at the start of the chapter described as a ‘conflict document.’ On further analysis several mechanisms suggest the introduction of the GMoU may be a strategy to deflect conflict away from the interface between the IOC and communities and towards the interface between communities themselves, at the same time, saving costs and these mechanisms hint at conscious strategy. However, conflict in general in the Delta has been highly detrimental to IOCs, and it is questionable how much a detailed conscious strategy to induce conflict is possible in the Delta. The outcomes of the GMoU could alternatively be seen as a well-intentioned strategy that has broken down as a result of local complexities surrounding power formation, embedded in the historical context of the Delta.

## **7.10. Reflections on the Theoretical Framework of Governmentality**

Throughout the analysis, this chapter employed a framework of governmentality to analyse politics surrounding the GMoU. A primary aim of using governmentality was to avoid presuppositions of power that pervade many forms of analysis on political issues such those in the Delta, in this way speaking more directly to the trends in the data I collected from the delta, and the worldview I further developed while conducting fieldwork in the Delta. By foregrounding formations of power, and requiring an understanding of the mechanisms behind those formations of power, governmentality allowed for a different perspective to analysis where power dynamics are considered as pre-determined. In doing so the analytic dug deeper into the link between oil and the dynamics of community conflict- a link that is often taken for granted by analyses in the form of a type of ‘oil determinism’. Watts (2004b) refers to this oil determinism in the resource curse literature, and also employs governmentality to explore this determinism further. However, in doing so, Watts still retains a level of determinism to power dynamics in the Delta, between oil

and ungoverned space. For Watts, similar to many analyses within Political Ecology, it is taken for granted that oil companies symbolise malevolent power and communities resistance, and in doing so mechanisms of power formation that contradict this narrative are often neglected.

I have aimed to dig deeper into the links between oil, conflict and political outcomes in the Delta by looking at the GMoU through a lens of power formation, conflict and division as a form of empowerment. This was possible especially through employing the use of *subject formation*, which allowed the analysis to explore the motivations behind the decisions of some people to use the GMoU as a means of empowerment and shifting identity. Whilst subject formation was useful for this purpose, there are ways in which my use of the technique differed from its characterisation by Foucault and also by Agrawal for the analytic of environmentality. These analyses detail subject formation as a response to defined strategies of power, or consciously defined governmentality. Indeed Foucault's thinking, whilst emphasising post-structural dispersed forms of power, still places a lot of emphasis on the agency of governing organisations such as the state in designing and implementing forms of rule. In applying subject formation to the Delta, I argued that subject formation was facilitated by the GMoU but also a result of wider influences such as the gradual destruction of the environment in the Delta and the widening gap between the rural and oil economies. If any agency can be applied to a logic behind these longer-term processes, it would be the agency behind the logic of capital accumulation in the Delta, and the numerous processes and forms of power that support this logic of accumulation, from consumers in the global economy to the role of the Nigerian state, to the formations of power surrounding extraction in the Delta. The question of whether agency can be ascribed to this assemblage of processes is important. This question will be addressed in the next chapter.

There are also questions surrounding subject formation that remain unanswered. In maintaining a narrative of community resistance against malevolent oil company hegemony, many analyses of the Delta fail to explore of the motivations behind the actions of individuals who (as well as capturing revenues) choose to rupture pipelines, cause oil spills and destroy local environments. Indeed, it can be argued that a lack of consideration of processes that lead people to destroy the environment or use the environment for non-environmental purposes is an oversight of environmentality- which is described by Agrawal as a way of understanding how people come to conserve their environment. Understanding how people come to use the environment for non-environmental purposes could shed insight into the processes that have come to destroy the environment in the Delta, in turn leading to the formation of subjects who also come to further destroy their environment. An original contribution of this chapter has been to present some insight into the processes that lead to corruption of the GMoU environment, but an important area of further research could be the consideration of further processes of subject formation outlined above.

There are a handful of studies on the GMoU in the Delta, however, there are no studies of the GMoU that employ concepts of governmentality to an analysis of the politics that surround the GMoU. As outlined in the introduction section, the GMoU is a model that is employed widely by IOCs in the Delta with great acclaim, affecting perhaps several hundred thousand people. Analysing the GMoU, as a focal point of relations between governments and IOCs, using a governmentality analytic, has allowed for a unique exploration of the political issues that surround it. Considering these issues from a perspective of to the formation of relations of power has allowed the GMoU to be contextualised in the rich history of the Delta, embedding the political dynamics of the GMoU in the context of the Delta. As a form of governance that affects so many people in the Delta, and one that is also championed as a modern form of participatory empowerment of communities in line with modern trends of governance, it is important to consider the GMoU critically. Governmentality has allowed the analysis to do this and also allowed for an original contribution.

### **The Limitations of Governmentality and Further Questions**

As outlined above, governmentality and environmentality do not appreciate how people can come to destroy their environment. Also, no literature uses a governmentality analytic that considers the production of ungoverned spaces as a form of governance, and this would be an interesting area of further research. Finally, governmentality was developed by Foucault as a form of analysis to consider the tactics and technologies of the modern Western state. A distinction in this analysis is that the analytic was used to consider the actions of IOCs. This leaves a gap in the analysis, in considering what role the state has in the processes of the GMoU. Interestingly the state appeared largely absent from political processes surrounding the GMoU, however, many conversations with respondents referred to the role of the state in the political processes in which the GMoU is embedded. This leaves open a gap in the analysis that can be addressed in the next chapter, which will investigate the role of the state, its relation to capital, and the effect of its relations on populations of the Niger Delta.

## **7.11. Conclusions in Relation to The Overarching Conceptual Framework of the Thesis**

As outlined in chapter three, the overarching conceptual framework of the thesis is designed to facilitate an exploration of how processes of power, process and meaning are intrinsically involved in the production of institutions involved in Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) at multiple scales. In addition, the framework aims to allow for an exploration of the interplay between

wider 'structural' political economic influences and on the ground contextual findings. In line with the overarching theoretical framework of the thesis, this chapter has sought to uncover the role of culture, agency, social diversity and power relations in the political context of the Delta. This chapter analysed the dynamics and power structures that comprise the institutions through which the GMoU is enacted. The GMoU and the institutions it is designed to create can be seen as a 'surface of engagement' (Van Hecken et al., 2015, p. 120) upon which actors from communities and IOCs engage to exercise agency in pursuing vested interests. The GMoU was created as part of a global orientation of policy tools towards neoliberal design, including PPPs, as outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, or to what Van Hecken et al. (2015) describes as 'market-inspired' policy tools. The GMoU can be seen which can be seen as an emergent product of these global 'structural' forces. Through using governmentality as a framework to analyse power, process and meaning in the GMoU, this chapter has aimed to explore how designed tools are taken up, used and changed by actors exercising agency at the local level. This analysis therefore answers the calls of Van Hecken et al. (2015) to provide analyses that go beyond the conceptualisation of human action through overly-rational or overly-structural models. In doing so, the design of the GMoU may be seen as a structural strategy that has broken down as a result of local complexities, through processes of power formation and the exercise of agency, as a product of the historical context of the Delta. These findings can be combined with findings from the other empirical chapters to contribute to the overall argument and contribution of the thesis in the conclusion.

*“Oporoma [community] is opposite to the Shell facility. Shell has 24 hours of light at that flow-station, but the opposite community has no light. And [the community] is a local government headquarters. This has been for over 30 years that the people have been in that darkness. That is the scenario. They say, why is it like this?”*

NGO Representative

# 8

## **THE STATE AND CAPITAL IN THE NIGER DELTA**

## **Abstract**

This chapter aims to conceptualise the state in the Niger Delta, to understand its relation to extractive institutions and to understand how this relation creates formations of capital in the region. It does this through applying methods of visualising the state and then hypothesising its relation to capital. The chapter begins with a justification for considering the state and reviews some of the literature on concepts of the state in Sub Saharan Africa, along with some notes on the methodology of visualisation. The analysis then conceptualises the state, considering how it may become visible from the perspective of the rural Niger Delta. Notions of the elusive nature of the state in respect to the two case studies are explored, exploring these notions as tied to a perceived weakness of the state. The analysis then changes perspective and finds that the state can, in fact, be considered visible and capable, but not through a lens of ‘good governance’ extolled within international policymaking circles. The analysis finds that in fact, the state can become visible through its ability to protect assets that generate rents (income earned without a role in the production of that income). Through these practices, the state appears relatively competent and consistent. The analysis then considers how, in the rural Niger Delta, IOCs are seen as de-facto state entities, with government representatives at the local level retreating from the provision of public services and deferring citizens seeking public services to IOCs. The analysis then looks at power relations between IOCs and the state by taking the analysis to the main institution designed to mediate this relationship, The Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC). It finds that the NNPC, characterised by failure in the literature, can be seen as a very strong and resilient institution. This strength is not in respect to its regulation of IOCs and the equitable distribution of rents in the form of public services but in its ability to capture rents and distribute them through patronage networks. In this way, the state is unwilling and unable to regulate the industry and by extension capital. The second part of the chapter considers these findings in relation to findings from the rest of the thesis and to the literature on enclaves and frontiers in the Niger Delta. More detail is added to the main arguments of this literature, in theorising that the chaos and disorder commonly associated with frontier environments is a product of a structure and order of capital in the form of enclaves within the frontier environment.

## 8.1. Introduction

### 8.1.1. Why Consider the State in The Niger Delta?

Conceptions of the government in Nigeria and by extension conceptions of the Nigerian state are present within data collected on case studies outlined so far. Discussions on both the Sustainable Utilisation of Nigeria's Gas and Renewable Energy Resources (SUNGAS) project and the General Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) consistently involved questions of the government or its associated institutions and the impact of these institutions on the two case studies. More generally the government and the state are common topics in many of the conversations I had as a researcher in the Delta, the context in which the case studies are embedded. There was a tendency in these discussions for respondents to bring up questions of the state, but these questions would often remain unanswered.

The state and its roles and responsibilities have not been explicitly researched so far in this thesis despite being an important part of these discussions. Its absence from the analysis may be due to a theoretical or a methodological gap, which means the influence of state institutions has been overlooked. Alternatively, there may be little influence of the state in the Delta. However, without an explicit analysis of the state, these questions will remain unanswered. Importantly, the overarching aim of this thesis is to explore the implementation of public-private partnerships, under the premise that the roles and responsibilities of governments within states across the globe are being replaced by private sector initiatives, such as those outlined in the two previous case studies. Therefore this thesis would be lacking without explicit consideration of the role of the state in respect to the two case studies, and the role of the state more generally in The Niger Delta.

Trends within the *resource curse* literature display succinctly a simultaneous relevance of the state and a lack of investigation of the state. A major strand of this literature posits that many resource-rich nations, including Nigeria, lack expected levels of socio-economic development because of a lack of 'strong institutions' (Collier, Van Der Ploeg, et al., 2010; Karl, 1997; Ross, 2015; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004b; Mehlum et al., 2006a; Robinson et al., 2006). This literature has trouble defining institutions, let alone untangling the relationship between these institutions and resource wealth. However, there is a theme in the literature that links weak institutions, in the form of government and other state institutions, with lower than expected levels of socio-economic development (Ross, 2015; Mehlum et al., 2006a), and this literature does little to consider how these institutions fail. It does not consider why, in the words of Watts, "some institutions and not others experience decay [and] why pockets of competence and efficacy appear at some time and place, and not others." (Porter and Watts, 2017, p.215) . In this literature, whilst the state and state institutions are central to the analysis, again the

dynamics of these institutions are not considered explicitly. There is a tendency to view the state as ‘monochrome’ in character (Porter and Watts, 2017; Omeje, 2006a, p. 251), “giving little insight into the potentially uneven institutional and governance capabilities and outcomes across its boundaries”.

This chapter aims to address gaps in the analysis of the previous two chapters and gaps in the literature by putting the state and its influence at the centre of analysis. This chapter will aim to conceptualise how state power is expressed in the Niger Delta and attempt to understand better the influence of the state on the two case studies. The chapter also aims to consolidate findings from the previous two chapters. The government (as an expression of the state), operates in Nigeria at the levels of the federal government, the state government and the local government; presenting an opportunity to consider the relevance of the findings of the previous two case studies at these varying scales. In this way, the analysis will aim to consider themes across these scales. The analysis also has a theoretical component. The process of conceptualising the state and its role in the Niger Delta foregrounds theoretical and philosophical questions that may not have been considered in the study so far, such as the role of the state and how perceptions of this role are constructed. The process of understanding notions of the state in the Niger Delta gives an opportunity to reflect further on the theoretical and methodological approaches of this study as a whole. This chapter aims to fill the above analytical and theoretical gaps to move the thesis towards conclusions on its overarching research questions. The main aim of the analysis is to understand how state power is expressed in the Niger Delta. The following chapter will use these findings to explore questions surrounding the implementation of PPPs in the Delta, in combination with the results of the previous studies, to address the main research questions of the thesis.

It is worth defining what I will be referring to in discussing the state. In many discussions undertaken during data collection, respondents referred to the government. I will, therefore, be mostly using these ideas expressed by respondents surrounding the functionality of the government. However, I aim to then expand these ideas to understand how this functionality reflects on the operation of the wider Nigerian state, which includes institutions such as the military, the law, and conceptions such as sovereign territory and citizenry. In doing so I will reflect on notions of statehood in relation to development issues in the Niger Delta, which were discussed in chapter three.

### **8.1.2. Notes on Literature**

Before beginning the analysis of the state in the Niger Delta, I will recap trends in the literature on statehood in European and Sub-Saharan African contexts. The literature review outlined how the state in Sub Saharan African contexts is often characterised by its absence and in terms of



failure. I have outlined this view as the *failed state* thesis. This theme can be found across a range of literature, from academic to policymaking. It often depicts the *failed state*, and by implication society in Sub Saharan African contexts as chaotic and disorderly.

I argue there are many disadvantages to the *failed state* thesis. First, it contains a fundamental flaw, as societies in Sub Saharan Africa are not in anarchy and do function. By characterising a state by failure, an analysis may fail to acknowledge what forms of order exist and what is present in these societies. I argue that the *failed state* thesis does more to reflect a normative judgement of those conducting the analysis. Characterising a society in terms of failure immediately holds that society up to a comparator, and this comparator is often the Western state. In this way, describing a failure of African states often simultaneously and implicitly describes the success of Western states. This normative theme is tied to notions of good governance- which carry through to policymaking and grey literature. I argue that in many cases, good governance norms often do more to reflect the ideals of outsiders than the capabilities of the governing.

In awareness of these themes, some literature has called for new forms of analysis that appreciate different forms of order in Sub-Saharan African states (Meagher, 2012). By appreciating new forms of order, it may be possible to better understand how Sub Saharan African societies function based on what is *present* in these societies. At the same time, there is a literature that characterises violence and chaos as a necessary step in state-building. I argue that this literature still centres around narratives of chaos and disorder, failing to appreciate that there may be other forms of order. Instead, I argue that there can be a middle ground of analysis that appreciates different forms of order without romanticising chaos or violence.

I conclude in chapter three that there are no forms of analysis that are developed from the context of the Niger Delta that can be used to better analyse the Niger Delta. For example, postcolonial literature on Sub Saharan Africa points out the flaws of Eurocentric analysis but does not present any new forms of analysis. Therefore, this analysis will use a conceptual approach derived from European perspectives but will aim to retain a critical understanding of how these perspectives translate to the unique context of the Niger Delta.

### **8.1.3. Notes on Methodology**

This chapter is comprised of data collected whilst researching the two case studies presented previously, meaning there is no change to the data collection methods outlined already. However, it is worth summarising the methods that will be used for analysis. To guide the empirical analysis, this chapter will use a methodology that aims to visualise the state from defined perspectives (Corbridge et al., 2005). In this way, the analysis can explore how the state is visible in the Niger Delta and to whom it is visible. In doing so, the chapter aims to consider dynamics at the regional scale that may have escaped the analysis so far, perhaps because questions

of the state have not yet been explicitly addressed, or perhaps due to limitations of analytical approaches to the state used within literature cited so far. The analysis aims to understand state and government institutional ensembles that are present, rather than lacking, that may influence interventions such as the two case studies considered so far, at the regional, national and international scales in Nigeria.

From here the analysis can then consider how the state interacts with capital. In doing so, it will briefly leave the perspective of the Niger Delta to consider power dynamics at the national scale, continuing to look for forms of order by considering the interactions of IOCs and government institutions. The analysis will then return to the perspective of the Niger Delta to combine findings from the whole of the thesis and hypothesise how state power is expressed in the Niger Delta.

## **8.2. The State in the Niger Delta**

### **8.2.1. Seeing the State**

As detailed in chapter three, the state is “a remarkably elusive object of analysis” (Abrams, 1988, p.113). Preconceived notions of the state can break down on closer inspection, leading some to argue that the concept of “the state” is merely a mirage or purely notional (Abrams, 1988). Such difficulties led Michael Foucault to remark that he had refrained from studying the state, “in the sense that one abstains from an indigestible meal” (Lemke, 2007, p.43), despite the importance of the topic. Indeed problems of state formation are at the centre of many questions across fields concerning politics and governance, yet the state remains a “notoriously difficult concept to define” (Hay et al., 2014, p.1).

In light of the difficulties of this study, it is therefore important when conceptualising the state, to carefully consider the methods of analysis used to build this conception; in a sense to consider how the state is *made visible*. Visuality is at the heart of many theories regarding the state, and particularly state power (Corbridge et al., 2005, p.15). Scott (1998) in his work *Seeing Like a State*, which tries to understand the schemes of the high-modern developmental, uses a method of visuality to understand what the state *sees*<sup>1</sup>. An approach applied by Corbridge et al. (2005) turns Scott’s analysis around to consider how the state becomes visible from the perspective of its citizens in rural India.

This analysis will use the methods employed by Corbridge et al. (2005) that aim to visualise

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<sup>1</sup>Scott’s analysis arguably concerns the state of a different era, the ‘high modern’ developmental state. The state in this current era can be considered to be operating as a neoliberal state, requiring the operation of public-private partnerships as a replacement for the high modern state that Scott considers. Regardless, Scott’s methodology can be considered as a method of viewing and conceptualising the state

and conceptualise the state from a defined perspective. In taking this analytical approach, two aspects need to be considered. First, it needs to be established from which perspective the state is made visible. An oil company representative in their professional capacity will ‘see’ and experience the state in a very different way to a Niger Delta youth protesting against the actions of an oil company. Expectations of what the state should deliver and experiences of how and what it delivers will differ greatly between perspectives. Next, it needs to be established what a person or organisation is ‘looking for’ when they aim to ‘see the state’.

As a starting point, the analysis will consider the visibility of the state from the perspective of a rural Niger Delta community. As a foreign researcher, I am not looking to claim any understanding of how a rural Niger Deltan sees or experiences the state. I am however using this perspective as an analytical tool to orient some of the data gathered for this study. The two case studies consider projects designed to deliver public services to communities, so the views expressed by representatives of these communities naturally present a community perspective, albeit a perspective communicated by elite representatives of those communities. There will, of course, be large variances in how certain individuals in the Niger Delta experience and understand the state, based on variables such as gender, ethnicity and social status. These variables could not be explored in detail due to the limitations to fieldwork, covered in chapter four. Whilst studies of variations of experiences of the state between such groups of people are important, such a high resolution of analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter. Therefore in this analysis, I still group such variations under the term *community*, aware of the limitations of this heuristic. The analysis will aim to analyse the behaviour of the state from the perspective of people within communities such as the Egbeda community considered in chapters five and six and the GMoU communities around Ekpetiama considered in chapter seven.

After defining the perspective of analysis, the next task is to understand what the analysis aims to visualise from the perspective of the community. Many analyses of governments, such as good governance literature (Porter and Watts, 2017) implicitly consider the provision of public services as a metric by which to understand the functionality of the state. Provision of public services was also an overarching objective of the programmes analysed in the two case studies. As a starting point, this analysis will begin with a consideration of the visibility of the state in respect to the provision of public services, from the perspective of people within communities such as the Egbeda and Ekpetiama communities.

## 8.2.2. Elusiveness Tied to Notions of Failure

### Evidence of The Absent State

As discussed in the literature review and summarized above, the *failed state* thesis is pervasive within academic scholarship on Sub-Saharan African states and often characterises these states in terms of their absence or a lacking of their functionality (Ferguson, 2006b). Throughout the study, these notions within the literature were reaffirmed by the sentiments of interviewees, where the government was consistently described as absent from involvement in the two case studies. This theme was particularly evident when considering the government's involvement in the GMoU. The government bodies responsible for participating in the GMoU (at the regional and local tiers of the federal system) were defined by respondents by a general absence of the state government from the GMoU process.

As one interviewee representing a civil society group working with GMoU communities explained:

“The government are supposed to be part of [the GMoU]. . . we feel also that the government cannot do anything. They are passive in the GMoU process because they feel that whatever is being done is supposed to be done by [others] and since others are doing it, [the government] will just take a lukewarm attitude. So, the government is seriously to blame because they are not doing what they are supposed to do.”

A civil society representative remarked:

“80% if not 90% of the communities in Bayelsa state don't have a government presence, but 70% of these communities have a Shell presence, or Agip or . . . Chevron presence. That is the scenario. 90% don't have a government presence, but 70% have oil company presence in their communities. Either in the oil well or the pipeline passing through their communities. So, everyone is bitter. They say the government does not come here to do anything. . . .”

There are a small number of other studies that measure government presence in GMoU communities. In a qualitative assessment, Egbon et al. (2018) conclude that the government is generally 'absent', 'invisible' or 'passive' throughout the GMoU process. A quantitative survey conducted on GMoU communities by NIDPRODEV (2011) concluded that as many as 80% of Niger Deltans living in GMoU communities reported having no contact with their local government agencies.

The state is not only portrayed using this language in association with the GMoU. In interviews and conversations conducted for this study that ventured into wider discussions on the practices of local, state and federal government, a majority of interviewees again described the state in this representation to be 'invisible' or 'absent' from more general engagements with rural communities in the Niger Delta.

As outlined in chapter three, literature that uses the term 'weak' to characterise state functionality implicitly links a lack of provision of public services with a weak state. The same implicit correlation between government service provision and state strength was also prevalent in the interviews conducted for this study when conversations referred to the two case studies and also wider issues in the Niger Delta. Evidence from this study suggests that the government has made little effort to deliver public services to the rural Niger Delta region. Interestingly, however, on closer inspection, this is not the case. There have, in fact, been prominent efforts by governments at the national level to provide public services to the Niger Delta.

### **Efforts By The Federal Government to Provide Public Services**

Since Nigeria was declared independent in the 1960s, numerous federal government regimes have allocated substantial derivations of oil revenues to the creation of national institutions designed specifically to address socio-economic and environmental issues in the Delta. These institutions can be seen as a product of each successive regime, and as part of a collection of state institutions. At the onset of independence, as part of the 1960 independence contribution, the Niger Delta Development Board was established to direct development funds to the region (Omeje, 2006a). The subsequent President Shagari administration (1979-1983) and General Buhari regimes (1983-1985) then both set up respective ministerial committees, again to direct oil derivation funds to the Niger Delta. Then, in July 1992, Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) was established by the Babangida regime with a mandate of rehabilitating and developing the oil mineral producing areas of Nigeria. OMPADEC was funded through an increase in the special budgetary allocation of oil revenues to Niger Delta states (Omeje, 2006d).

Unfortunately, whilst appearing to represent efforts to increase institutional capability to address development issues in the Niger Delta region, these successive attempts by each government were unsuccessful. The Niger Delta Development Board and the committees of President Shagari and The Buhari regime were each disbanded as successive new regimes came into power, without evidence of their allocated funds reaching the Niger Delta (Omeje, 2006d, p. 147). OMPADEC saw some pockets of success, mainly in the delivery of infrastructure; however, in a review of its general success, Omeje (2006d, p.148) describes the organisation as "scarcely more than a cosmetic service to the development needs and aspirations of the people of Niger

Delta”. At the federal level, it failed to uphold mandated oil revenue allocations, at the state and local government levels it experienced a ‘siphoning’ of funds towards individual actors. Also, there was controversy over the way funds were allocated. Funds were distributed based on communities’ net contributions to oil outputs, as opposed to each communities need for development assistance (Omeje, 2006a, p.149). This method of allocation caused increased tensions in the region and is identical to the allocation problems experienced by MoU and GMoU communities outlined in chapter seven on the GMoU.

During the late 1990s, OMPADEC became mired in high-profile cases of corruption, whereby leading administrators and chairmen failed to account for considerable sums of missing money (Frynas, 2000, p.50). In response, in 2001, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established under the Obasanjo regime to replace OMPADEC. The NDDC is currently the primary government institution responsible for the development of the Niger Delta region. NDDC both inherited the assets of OMPADEC, was given expanded and diversified revenue sources and was given increased responsibilities. Whereas OMPADEC was funded primarily through the special budgetary allocation to oil-producing areas, new, additional and exclusive funding streams were created for NDDC. These new statutory contributions came from the federal government; from oil companies of 3% of their total budget; from funding through a federal ecological fund; and returns from NDDC assets, such as monetary assets and grants in aid. After these funding streams were established for NDDC, separate revenue streams were also created to channel oil revenues to the Niger Delta region by increasing the special budgetary allocation of oil revenues to the region from 3 to 13% (Omeje, 2006d).

There is limited information available on NDDC earnings. However, it was found by NEITI (2013) that the Commission’s earnings grew from N64.721 billion (\$524m) in the fiscal year 2007 to N167.778 (\$1.090bn) in the fiscal year 2011. This change represents 159 per cent growth between 2007 and 2011. Successive years have seen similar increases in funding up to the present day. Successive governments in Nigeria have therefore appeared to create institutions designed to deliver public services to the region, from the 1960s to present day. Despite a lack of success, each government regime has increased funding to these institutions. A lack of provision of public services in the Niger Delta is linked to impressions of a weak government, but the above evidence shows that this is not due to a lack of effort to create institutional capacity or due to a lack of funding.

### **Failure of Efforts by the Federal Government to Provide Public Services**

The mandate of the commission, outlined in the NDDC act (NDDC, 2000), is to plan and implement development projects for the Niger Delta, covering a range of public services from public health to infrastructure. The act also stipulates that the NDDC should tackle ecological and en-

vironmental problems arising from oil and gas production in the Delta. Despite this mandate, nearly all accounts of NDDC's visibility in the Niger Delta characterise it through a failure of projects. Research analysing the commission's performance through empirical analysis is unfortunately thin, and analyses often rely on reports of the sentiment of politicians (Omotola, 2001), but a small number of studies point towards some trends. Isoun (2014) gives a rare evaluation at the community-level of NDDC impact through a study of the commission's attempts to implement water pump projects across the Delta. The report outlines how most of these projects are incomplete or not functioning, explaining how NDDC took years to implement technology that was inappropriate for its surroundings. Communities were quoted as saying that they did not want further engagement with NDDC and another failed NDDC project in their locality (Isoun, 2014, p.24). Mentions of NDDC in interviews and throughout conversations conducted for this study reinforce this sentiment: respondents described NDDC as a state institution in the Niger Delta that generally becomes visible through its failure to provide public services. Unfortunately, the report by Isoun and the findings of this study represent a wider trend in literature on NDDC that characterises the organisation in the same way (Omeje, 2006a).

The evidence presented in this analysis so far can be seen as supporting various notions of state failure, aligning with many macro-analyses of the Nigerian State- especially those within the *resource curse literature* (Collier, Van Der Ploeg, et al., 2010; Ross, 2015; Mehlum et al., 2006a). However, the above results do not resonate with elements of the *resource curse literature* that imply a homogeneity to the failed Nigerian state and give no room for variations of institutional functionalities and effectiveness within the state at a sub-national level. Institutions designed to provide public services to the Niger Delta have been created by successive governments with increased funding allocated to these institutions. The above evidence suggests a more variegated picture of functionality than the resource curse literature portrays.

### **Pockets of Effectiveness at the Sub-National Level**

In further contradiction to this element of the *resource curse literature* and to notions of the *failed state*, there is evidence that the government in the Niger Delta can successfully deliver public services at scale. Porter and Watts (2017) present a case study from Edo State in the Niger Delta, drawing heavily on a World Bank report on the same topic (Bain et al., 2015). In the case presented by these studies, the administration of state Governor Adams Oshiomhole was able to successfully implement a programme to build road infrastructure across the state between 2009 and 2012. Porter and Watts (2017) outline several processes that facilitated this success. At the federal government level, a favourable political climate gave room for the implementation of several local level methods. These methods included dramatically increasing tax revenue within Edo State, bypassing existing local unproductive state institutions through the creation

new institutional ensembles, using innovative methods to leverage lines of local financial credit, facilitating unconventional client / contractor agreements, winning the favour of the leaders of local customary institutions, fostering an adaptive approach to project management and striking numerous settlement deals with populations affected by the building of new roads.

The findings of Porter and Watts (2017) show that under the right conditions, the government of the Niger Delta can be effective in delivering public services. These findings resonate with other studies that present similar examples from Sub Saharan African contexts of what Porter and Watts term ‘pockets of effectiveness’ amidst ‘state deficits’ (Roll, 2011; Whitfield and Therkildsen, 2011; Leonard, 2008). In these examples, the homogeneity of the state implied across the *failed state* literature breaks down. Rather than displaying homogeneous incapacities, deficiencies, or corruption; state institutions, in some instances, can successfully deliver public services. Public service provision at the sub-national level can, therefore, be variegated and asymmetric.

### **Measuring Success and Failure of the State in the Niger Delta**

Another point demonstrated by the case of Edo State is that perceptions of government success can vary depending on the perspective used to analyse this success. The case study is presented here in terms of the success Governor Oshiomhole achieved in delivering public services using government revenues. However, when the same case study is viewed from the perspective of international notions of ‘good governance’, the methods by which he delivered these public services constitute a failure of governance. These methods included relying on a small number of personal connections for procurement, developing unique and ‘lucrative’ tripartite arrangements between banks the government and the ‘deft crafting’ of ‘elite pacts’ and ‘informal networks’ to facilitate cash flows to contractors. Such practices fit into the mould of incapacity, criminality or corruption outlined in the good governance literature. The World Bank in a 2010 report rated the The Edo state administration as “seriously deficient in each of the core capabilities needed to competently run fiscal affairs, that is, the ability to mobilise revenues, match spending to policy priorities, or respond to the public interest in how resources are spent” (Porter and Watts, 2017, p260). The governor’s administration repeatedly refused to adopt ‘reform measures’ promoted by World Bank’s advisers who advocated ‘free market’ notions of procurement practices. Instead, the governor eschewed these free-market principles. Risk assessments conducted by the Governor’s administration relied on ‘informal norms’ and personal judgements of reputation and capability. Had the governor’s administration adhered to the Bank’s reform measures, characterising ‘global analogues’ of best practice, it would not have achieved success in its initiatives (Porter and Watts, 2017, p.260).

By eschewing notions of good governance, the Governor was able to deliver public services.



However, these same notions of good governance are those that characterise all state institutions as failures. This evidence suggests that other institutions operating in the Niger Delta and characterised by failure according to measures of good governance may be achieving success via different measures. Where international literature dismisses governments, and by extension states, as universally 'failed', there can be evidence of pockets of success. This success is fragmented but also unconventional, perhaps slipping under analyses that operate through normative perspectives.

### **The Elusive State**

The evidence presented so far has aimed to begin the analysis through considering questions of visibility of the state in the rural Niger Delta. Examples from the research conducted for this study present perspectives characterising the state as 'invisible', 'absent' or 'asleep' - a view reflected in other studies of state effectiveness in the Delta. These perspectives 'look for' the state in terms of its ability to provide public services, and it is through this metric that state success in the Niger Delta is often gauged. Generally, when looking for the provision of public services through state institutions, the state in the Niger Delta does not appear where it is expected. Where it is visible, it appears to be visible through failure, exemplified by the numerous failures of state institutions designed to alleviate developmental issues in the Delta, resonating with the *failed state* thesis. However, when viewed from other perspectives, there is evidence that the state can operate differently to the way it is portrayed by the literature, which clouds notions of the failed Nigerian state. Even though the state, expressed through the government, is commonly characterised by its absence from situations in the Delta, institutions exist with considerable revenue streams that are designed to deliver public services. Furthermore, in some instances, the state has a good capacity at the sub-national level to deliver public services. However, this delivery is sporadic and concentrated in pockets of effectiveness. Also, when viewed through a good governance lens, the methods used to deliver these pockets of effectiveness can be seen as indications of the *failed state*. However, these pockets of effectiveness in the delivery of public services remain exceptions to a general lack of public service provision in the Delta by government bodies. In this way, the state, when looking for an entity that can deliver public services universally is not invisible or failed, but *elusive*.

### **8.2.3. The Visible State**

The evidence presented so far uncovers elements of complexity behind the *failed state* thesis. The state is generally elusive in providing public services, but not due to lack of funding or dedicated institutions. The functionality of the state, in the limited examples where it is effec-

tive, escapes analyses that apply a good governance lens. The next section will explore whether the methods used above to visualise the state are producing these findings, by considering how the state may appear universally visible, effective and functional using a different perspective of analysis. Perhaps by changing the optic of analysis, the state can become visible in a different form. To explore this notion, the analysis will use an example of the way the government interacted with the gas to power element of the SUNGAS project.

The target community for the SUNGAS project was the Egbeda community, located in Emuoha government area, Rivers State, west of Port Harcourt. Egbeda was chosen as a pilot community for the SUNGAS project in part because it received no electricity via state energy distribution infrastructure, due to a sequence of events that began around 10 years before the conception of the SUNGAS project in the 1990s. At this time, the federal government of Nigeria commissioned rapid privatisation of the energy sector and rights to distribute energy throughout Nigeria were sold to private companies, with the buyer for the Niger Delta region named as Port Harcourt Energy Distribution Company (PHEDC). Following the acquisition of rights to distribute energy, PHEDC attempted to build a centralised energy distribution grid to serve communities throughout the Niger Delta, resulting in the installation of electricity pylons and cables in the Egbeda community. However, during this rapid privatisation, the provision of energy across Nigeria through centralised networks became mired in problems. Poor supply of electricity led to a subsequent refusal of customers to pay bills, creating a stalemate between energy distribution companies claiming high levels of debt and customers claiming lack of provision. PHEDC efforts to provide electricity were abandoned in the Egbeda community, leaving the community without power and a skeletal energy distribution infrastructure. However, PHEDC retained its right to generate and distribute electricity above 1MW throughout the Niger Delta region.

Approximately a decade later, when plans for the SUNGAS project were developed, it became clear that the generation of electricity under the project plan would violate the regulations supporting a PHEDC monopoly. A local civil society organisation in charge of implementing the project in Egbeda attempted to engage with PHEDC. As one interviewee working for this organisation explained, the CEO of PHEDC appeared threatened by rival activity ‘on his turf’ and threatened to utilise his connections with state-controlled media to publicise in the local papers the identities of representatives involved in the SUNGAS project. Project plans had to be radically altered in light of the regulations, causing delays to the wider project <sup>2</sup>. During the year that the SUNGAS project stalled, PHEDC revisited the Egbeda community to connect it to the grid. When representatives of the gas to power project returned to Egbeda, the community

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<sup>2</sup>Some plans were put forward to reduce the size of the generator to below 1MW (although this would not match with the scale of power generated by the flare). Following this, plans were also made to partner with PHEDC, allowing the government to distribute electricity as a pilot scheme. These plans were not implemented either after the failure of SUNGAS.

had a power supply, albeit a highly intermittent supply.

From the perspective of the Egbeda community, the government at this point was initially only visible through its inability to properly facilitate the provision of electricity following a poorly executed national privatisation plan- similar to general notions of the state characterised by failure to provide public services outlined earlier. However, the monopoly granted to PHEDC by the state had an instrumental effect on the operation of the SUNAGS project, causing delays and changes to the project plans, eventually becoming a factor in the project's failure. The government was invisible to the community but became influential through a proximal role in the project, granting a monopoly on the rights to provide energy to the Egbeda community, established through lines of patronage between PHEDC and the state. These lines of patronage ultimately influenced the direction of the SUNGAS project.

The state, therefore, became visible through the influence of its patrimonial relationship with PHEDC, as opposed to becoming visible through the exercise of a notional duty to provide public services to the Egbeda community. The functionality of the state only became visible when the monopoly of PHEDC was threatened by the SUNGAS project. The influence of the state's legislative power was enough to set the market conditions for energy distribution in the Delta, undermining attempts by a competitor, the SUNGAS project, to provide public services. Instead of being visible to the Egbeda community through the delivery of public services, the state became visible through its obstruction to PHEDC's competitors. Through this example, when looking for the state through the protection of patronage lines, it appears to be functional and powerful.

This power of the state to obstruct the SUNGAS project, however, cannot be described universal and predictable. Following the termination of the gas to power project, the integrity of the PHEDC monopoly became unclear. The federal Minister for power, works and housing, Mr Babatunde Fashola, declared after the SUNGAS project was terminated that there should be no monopoly over the rights for distribution of power in Nigeria and that distributors in violation of the legislation need only to obtain a licence from the federal government to operate (IPS, 2017). In this case, the power of the state to obstruct, whilst significant, was inconsistent.

The above evidence resonates with the findings of Lund (2006), who, in attempting to conceptualise the state in Sub Saharan Africa, finds that state actors can often appear as one of many possible powerful actors, within "multiple parallel structures and alternative sites of authority" as opposed to conceptions of state homogeneity. In this way, powerful actors exist within complex networks of power, where a multiplicity of power structures may be unclear until they are encountered and become visible. An IOC representative of an oil company speaking about investment in projects such as SUNGAS summed up the power dynamics that exist in such contexts, describing a "complex environment, where anyone can come along and undo what you've

done”, adding, “what investor is going to put their money behind that?”.

State functionality as demonstrated by the interaction of the government with the SUNGAS project operates differently to the model of a state that utilises revenues to distribute public services. The state, instead of appearing weak, appeared one step removed from communities in the Niger Delta, with the potential to become active and show power if its patronage lines and revenue streams were threatened. This presents a different dynamic to *seeing the state*.

### **Activating the State**

A particular example from my research experience further demonstrates these alternative dynamics of state visibility in the Delta. During my research in Bayelsa, my colleagues and I travelled by road through the Ekpetiama Kingdom to meet a community chief. On the route, we passed the Gbarain Ubie processing facility for Bayelsa’s Integrated Oil and Gas Gathering Project (IOGP)- one of SPDC’s most strategic assets and one of the largest oil and gas processing facilities in West Africa (Etekpe, 2012). As we were driving past, I asked my colleague about taking pictures of the IOGP. He explained that even from the car, driving past the facility, the act of taking a picture could potentially risk arrest by the government military authorities protecting the site. I was asked to keep my camera out of sight as we drove past. In doing so I avoided the potential of meeting government forces deployed to protect IOC assets. This dynamic is not only applicable to me. Professional photographers in the Niger Delta are often arrested and beaten by government actors in attempting to capture images of oil and gas infrastructure (IPS, 2017; Mutantspace.com, 2013).

This example brings forward another perspective of state visibility in the Delta. First, as outlined above, the state is shown to protect revenue-generating assets, similar to the protection of PHEDC through a provided monopoly on power provision. However, another method the state uses to protect assets is by attempting to make itself and those assets invisible. Such dynamics are remarkably spatially and temporarily consistent across the Niger Delta. They can be seen not just through attempts to photograph, but through attempts to draw public attention to the state’s private revenue-generating assets or in drawing attention to general failings of the state or the militarised responses of state institutions to civil action that threatens oil and gas infrastructure. A recent arrest in the Niger Delta of Jones Abiri, the editor and publisher of The Weekly Source newspaper, illustrates this trend. Abiri was accosted by armed men as he was meeting six colleagues in Bayelsa State, on accusations of terrorism by the federal government (Aljazeera, 2019). The Weekly Source newspaper appeared to anger the government after drawing attention to the activities of IOCs in the region. Abiri was previously held in incommunicado custody in 2018 and released following a long campaign by local and international journalists, press freedom organisations and human rights campaigners. His recent arrest has drawn similar

condemnation from freedom of press advocates (Maclean, 2019). Nigeria is ranked 119th out of 180 countries on Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index. The global press freedom group says journalists in Nigeria "are often threatened, subjected to physical violence, or denied access to information by government officials, police" (Aljazeera, 2019). This trend is not only recent, the diplomatic campaign of Ken Saro Wiwa in the 1990s was designed specifically to draw attention to the actions of IOCs and the government in the Delta, a campaign which resulted in a show trial and execution of Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni Nine (Omeje, 2006d, p.143). The state aims to reduce visibility of its actions when these actions involve revenue generation.

Through its defence of state assets, the Nigerian state can be made visible. The action of militant groups throughout the Niger Delta is a succinct example of how interacting with state assets can engage or activate the state. Early efforts to engage both International Oil Companies (IOCs) and the Nigerian state involved diplomatic, non-violent appeals by civil society groups, asking for the state to fulfil a duty to provide services. However, these diplomatic efforts were unsuccessful. Saro Wiwa's execution marked a watershed moment when tactics used by some protesters moved away from peaceful negotiation and turned to militancy. Hence between the 1990s and late 2000s, militant groups explicitly focused on threatening of oil company infrastructure and assets, through methods such as the destruction of pipelines and the kidnapping of oil company employees (Omeje, 2006d). This wave of militarism designed to threaten infrastructure produced two outcomes. First, the state responded via a suite of military campaigns to eradicate militant groups from the Delta through special military task forces and operations, such as the Rivers State Special Task Force on Internal Security, Operation Andoni, Operation HAKURI and Operation Restore Hope. According to (Omeje, 2004, p.241), these operations were created and used to torture and persecute large sections of rural civilians in the Niger Delta in the name of resolving oil conflicts, both real and imagined. This heavy-handed state response resulted in the indiscriminate killing of thousands of civilians. Indeed, when considering the visibility of the state, many people in the Niger Delta may have never seen the state until confrontation with this military power. As second outcome was that this military response had the effect of galvanising the cause of militant groups, worsening the conflict and the increasing risk to oil company/ state assets to militant attacks (Omeje, 2004).

The subsequent response of the federal government to increased militarism in the Delta was to change tactics, leading to a different reaction by the state. In 2009 the federal government launched a prolific amnesty programme, a method of compensating militant leaders for a cessation of attacks on infrastructure (Oluwaniyi, 2011). The amnesty programme effectively created new, direct lines of revenue allocation from the federal government to militant groups in the Niger Delta, buying a reduction in militant activity and protection of oil and gas infrastructural assets. In this way, the power and functionality of the Nigerian state became distinct when

engaged through threats to its infrastructure. First, it was able to orchestrate large-scale coordinated and sustained violence in its attempt to quell protests. Second, it was able to channel large revenue streams through the amnesty programme to militant leaders, effectively setting up a new state revenue distribution mechanism<sup>3</sup>.

The analysis so far has shown that where the state has failed to provide public services in the rural Niger Delta, it has been characterised as weak. The examples of state interaction with the SUNGAS project illustrate a trend that is exemplified by and threats to oil and gas infrastructure in the Niger Delta, showing that when the state is engaged through instances where its revenue-generating assets are threatened, the state can appear visible and powerful. In this way, rather than a provider of public services, the state is a protector of private assets. In this application, it is consistent, powerful and effective.

#### **8.2.4. Looking for The State and Seeing an Oil Company**

As the state becomes visible as an entity concerned primarily with the protection of oil and gas production assets, the line of separation between the ostensibly public body of the state and the private body of the oil industry becomes less distinct. If we turn back to the perspective of the Niger Delta, it can be demonstrated that for many within this context the above distinctions between the two are not relevant.

In describing the relationship between companies and communities, the king of Ekpetiama explained:

“The way it started, when the companies got into the communities, some 50, 60 years ago, [oil companies] began exploration and then, for a long time the companies were the only presence the people feel, because you don’t have [state] institutions of governance in the community, sometimes no police, you don’t have anything, it’s just the company you see. You need power, you need water, and it was then as it has always been the case that there is the community and there is the oil company premises. And [the premises are] so beautiful and they always have everything, and communities covet that. So, over time oil companies felt under pressure to respond to these community demands for services that the government ordinarily should deliver.”

As a civil society representative and academic who worked on community engagement for the gas to power project explained:

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<sup>3</sup>Revenues channelled to militant groups, whilst buying peace, failed to reach a wider populace. Instead, they were largely appropriated by militant leaders, in some cases supporting new paramilitary cult groups, sometimes consisting of thousands of paramilitaries hidden within the creeks of the delta (Ibaba and Ibaba, 2009).

“The schools you find were built by the oil companies, when the people have been agitated. The roads, the water, everything. So a lot of these communities, where I did a CSR engagement, where we looked at the GMoU of Shell and Total, most of their community groups folks told us that if they needed water, or money, good hospitals, they would rather approach the oil company, because they didn’t have a presence of the government around. The oil companies were the government. . . So very few would say the government is failing but many would say that the oil companies have failed, like they are the government. . . People in the Niger Delta don’t see the government. They see the oil companies. ”

In fact, in many parts of the rural Niger Delta the state has never provided public services. The above quotes demonstrate how IOCs now occupy a space that would, from a European perspective, be occupied by the state. IOCs are then expected to fill a gap in the provision of public services, produced by an absence of the state. This is outlined in a report by Shaad and Wilson (2009), who outline how Niger Delta communities approach IOCs rather than the government with requests for schools, water pumps, clinics and roads because the IOCs are more visible and accessible than the government. However, the most succinct summary of this dynamic came from an interview with a representative of a Niger Delta community, who explained:

“Oporoma [community] is opposite to the Shell facility. Shell has 24 hours of light at that flow-station, but the opposite community has no light. And [the community] is a local government headquarters. This has been for over 30 years that the people have been in that darkness. That is the scenario. They say, why is it like this?”

Not only have oil companies been expected to fill a gap in provision of public services, but there has also been a conscious effort by government institutions to deflect demands from local people for government services to oil companies. As Omeje (2004, p.437) outlines, “there is a tendency among sub-national governments in the Delta (state and local governments) to largely abdicate responsibilities on development of oil communities to the IOCs and the relatively less accessible and distant new federal government agencies, for example NDDC” (Omeje, 2006a; Kemedi, 2003, p.161). This dynamic can be seen as the product of several processes. Some local state actors in these cases aim to become invisible to the local populace. At the same time, the presence of IOCs and existing practices of demanding services for IOCs provides an opportunity for a deflection of responsibility by government actors towards IOCs. The deflection of responsibility from sub-national to federal agencies referred to by Omeje (2006a) also shows a level of competition between state institutions. Finally, through these practices, state actors are seen exploiting community sentiment to protect their interests.

A trend in IOC responsibility for state provision may be another way in which the functioning and visibility of the state in Nigeria may slip through analyses. Looking for government institutions from the local to the federal level to provide public services may be consistently producing notions of state failure, as a state that provides public services is elusive. IOCs have developed in a space that would normally be occupied by the government, a dynamic which has in part been cultivated by sub-national government actors. The main provider of public services, from the perspective of the Niger Delta is expected to be the IOC. This expectation is driven by the inequality visible between the IOC and the local context. From the perspective of many in the Niger Delta, the IOC is the state.

These findings bring in deeper questions around the relationship between the state and private companies. During my conversations with people in the Niger Delta, the relationship between the two entities was described as a mutually beneficial alliance, similar to what is referred to in the literature terms a 'slick alliance' by Watts (2004b), or referred to by other commentators such as Cyril Obi, George Frynas and Okechukwu Ibeanu, as well as Ike Okonta and Oronto Douglas as a 'hegemonic alliance' (referenced within Omeje (2005, p.323)). In this way, the two entities are seen as converged over multiple scales in Nigeria through a coincidence of interests. In continuing the main aim of this chapter, which is to conceptualise the formation of state power and capital in the Delta, there is an opportunity to explore dynamics between the state and IOCs to understand their power relations and how they are expressed in the Niger Delta.

### **8.3. Breaking Down The State / IOC 'Slick Alliance'**

To investigate the dynamics of the 'slick alliance', the analysis, for now, will move away from the perspective of the Niger Delta. Instead, it will focus on the relationship between the state and IOC institutions at the federal level. Once this has been done, the analysis will move back to the perspective of the Niger Delta to understand how the relationship at the federal level may have produced the behaviours of the state and IOCs visible at the level of the Niger Delta.

As outlined in chapter two, section 2.7 IOCs are impeded by government agencies with considerable red tape and bureaucratic barriers, but ultimately have a large degree of independence operating in Nigeria. State regulatory institutions are unable to exert regulatory influence over the oil sector. Studies conclude that the implicit government goal for NNPC appears to be the maximisation of patronage opportunities. Compared with other NOCs internationally, it is described as one of the 'worst performing' NOCs in the world (Victor et al., 2011, p.12). This analysis is backed up by Sayne et al. (2015) who detail how the organisation's 'dysfunction' appeared to be worsening at the time of publication.

The scathing assessments of NNPC Sayne et al. (2015), Thurber. et al. (2011), and Victor



et al. (2011), outlined in chapter two also highlight how NNPC is expected to function. These analyses define NNPC through a familiar language of failure, dysfunction, disorder, criminality, corruption and chaos, echoing themes of literature on Sub Saharan Africa outlined in chapter two. Similar to other studies, these analyses implicitly put forward a comparator set of norms, values and practices against which NNPC is compared. These analyses assume that as an organisation representing the Nigerian state, NNPC has a duty to use effective bureaucratic procedure to distribute its accrued revenues within sovereign borders. However, if 'looking for' the state institution of NNPC using such measures, the organisation will consistently produce notions of failure. Viewed through this lens, the Nigerian state appears incompetent and weak.

However, if the focus of analysis is changed, and the institution is considered through its ability to protect, capture and distribute rents (income earned without a role in the production of that income) derived from oil capital, NNPC can be seen as a remarkably strong institution. Since its creation in 1977 NNPC it has survived several changes in the presidency, political transitions in Nigeria from military dictatorship to democracy, IMF structural adjustment programmes that destroyed many other state institutions (a succinct analysis of this is presented by Ikeanyibe (2018)), debt crises and considerable fluctuations in oil prices. In this time many other state institutions in Nigeria have been privatised or undergone significant transformation. However, NNPC has not only survived, but its institutional structure has remained unchanged. The Nigerian state, when protecting revenues, can appear strong, consistent and capable.

NNPC, therefore, does not function as a regulator of the industry to provide revenue for public services, but as a gate-keeping institution that facilitates the capture of oil rents by individuals. In this function, it is effective and has been proven resilient. Revenue is captured and distributed by its members through patronage lines as a means to create patronage networks across the country (Ikpe, 2009). Heavy regulation of IOCs obstructs revenue generation and therefore regulation is lax. NNPC concedes power to IOCs in part to protect revenue flows. Technology and labour are supplied by the IOCs, on the basis that NNPC can extract rents in the form of crude- a political arrangement that has strengthened over several decades.

Salient analyses of the broader political-economic climate in Nigeria also fail to acknowledge the functionality and therefore the power dynamics of the state-oil complex. The 'slick alliance' of the state and IOC looks more like a messy competition. The state appears to function as institutions designed to facilitate the production of oil derived capital and accumulate wealth through allowing relative autonomy of IOC operation in the Delta. This autonomy of IOC operations is what is visible to Niger Deltans.

## **8.4. The Expression of the Nigerian State in the Niger Delta**

As the above analysis has shown, the state can become visible in the Niger Delta through the protection of its revenue-generating assets, reliably so in respect to its protection of oil and gas revenue-generating assets. The analysis also demonstrates how the relationship between IOCs and state institutions at the federal level results in a relative autonomy in respect to IOC operations in the Delta. Based on this evidence, the way the state is expressed in the Niger Delta can be theorised.

IOCs could be viewed as an expression of state power, as proxies operating for the state, where the state has power. In operating with relative autonomy, IOCs are ‘doing work’ for the federal government through extractives operations and return considerable revenue to federal institutions on the state’s behalf. Accordingly, as demonstrated by the case of NNPC, federal government institutions have developed as institutions that function to capture oil and gas derived revenues. IOCs can also be considered to be ‘doing work’ for the state through their delivery of public services in rural areas, which has developed a view in the Delta of IOCs as de-facto state entities.

However, the state can also be seen as somewhat subservient to capital and production, indicating a degree of power that resides with IOCs as institutions that accumulate capital. At the federal level, the relationship between IOC and state institutions surrounding NNPC indicates a degree of overt power held by IOCs that inhibits the ability of state institutions to regulate capital. In avoiding regulation, state institutions aim to nurture the conditions in which capital can operate, so to protect revenues. Militarised protection provided by the federal government of oil and gas infrastructure is a succinct demonstration of how the state aims to nurture the conditions of capital accumulation.

From the perspective of the Delta this view of the state as an institution that functions to protect revenue generation, and in this way is more subservient to capital, resonates more with the analysis presented in this chapter. The state remains elusive in the Niger Delta until its revenues are threatened. At this point, however, it becomes visible and capable through its institutions of security that are deployed to protect revenues. In this way, IOCs can be seen as an expression of capital accumulation that operates in the Delta, with the state operating to protect this accumulation.

This conceptualisation of the state also allows for an interesting perspective. IOCs garner significant support from the states from which their parent companies operate, as they are seen as strategic assets. This was shown in chapter two through the proximal role French and British governments played in the Biafran war to strategically support oil investments. US and European governments continue to provide military and intelligence-based protection of oil interests in the

Delta through both overt and secretive operations, as illustrated in detail in Watts (2007, p644) and Ikelegbe (2005). In this way it is not only the Nigerian state that operates to support capitalist production in the Niger Delta- the state apparatuses of multiple countries have supported the production of oil in the region. From a perspective of the rural Niger Delta, the expression of federal, or foreign military support of the operations of oil companies may seem interchangeable.

The question of what happens to revenues captured by federal institutions is also important in conceptualising how the state is expressed in the Delta. A proportion of these revenues are captured privately and are difficult to formally trace (Watts, 2017), however accounts of the distribution of these revenues generally refer to what is termed as distribution along neo-patrimonial or kinship lines, which in Nigeria also link with relations of ethnicity (outlined in detail in Ikpe (2009)). A neo-patrimonial revenue distribution network fans out from core state institutions at the federal level into regional contexts such as the Delta, where kinship and patrimonial ties orient the behaviour of government officials seeking power away from the delivery of public services and towards patrimonial relations. A corollary of this arrangement is that through this form of revenue distribution, services can be delivered informally or indirectly through the distribution of rents along kinship or ethnic lines. During my fieldwork, on a visit to Oloibiri, I drove with colleagues through the home town of Goodluck Jonathan- the only Niger Deltan to hold the title of prime minister in Nigeria. My colleagues, familiar with the local area, remarked on the prosperity of the town generated through its connection through Jonathan to federal revenues. The legacy of this prosperity following Jonathan's descent from power remains to be seen, but the wealth of the area demonstrates alternative forms of revenue distribution that exist based on patrimonial networks.

Efforts to create institutions at the federal level such as NDDC to provide public services to the Delta can also be viewed through this lens of patronage. As one respondent remarked, "there are streets in Huston, Texas that are all NDDC staff, end to end", hinting at the level of revenue capture and capital flight that surrounds the institution. Once revenues are generated from the Delta, transferred to the federal level, and dissipated through these institutions, their ability to universally deliver public services is drastically reduced. The use of these revenues to support the families of NDDC staff, however, can be seen as a form of revenue distribution in itself, albeit a form that does not fit notions of good governance.

This conception of a neo-patrimonial state that captures centralised revenues and distributes them along patronage and ethnic lines resonates with the data collected for this study. The state is elusive and unpredictable when conceptualised in through its ability to use public revenues to universally distribute public services within a sovereign territory. Instead of formal mechanisms of distribution, distribution relies on shifting, ephemeral and contingent networks of relationships. The state instead shows its power and capability in the form of the protection of its

revenue-generating assets, a concentration of infrastructure and relations in the form of capital.

## **8.5. Formations of Capital in The Niger Delta**

The formation of extractives capital in Sub-Saharan Africa has been theorised by Rasmussen and Lund (2018) and Ferguson (2005) and others and outlined in chapters two and three. Part of this literature theorises formations of resource-led capital in contexts like the Niger Delta through the lens of resource enclaves and resource frontiers. However, as outlined in chapter three, I argue that these analyses, especially those of Rasmussen and Lund (2018) are thin in explaining some of the social relations that form, reproduce and are formed by enclaves and frontiers. This section will conclude the analysis of this chapter by combining literature on enclaves and frontiers with the information presented in this chapter so far, aiming to give a more detailed perspective of formations of capital in the Niger Delta, providing an original contribution of this chapter. The analysis will add detail to these theories by bringing in understandings of state power and its relation to capital, along with findings and theoretical perspectives from the previous two empirical chapters. The analysis will begin by briefly summarising the resource enclave and frontier literature, recapping the limitations of their conceptualisations. The analysis will then aim to address these limitations.

### **8.5.1. Theoretical Notes – Resource and Enclave Frontiers**

As outlined in chapter three, I see several overarching themes in the literature in respect to the current understanding of enclaves and frontiers of resource extraction. The current understanding can be summarised in the following points:

- Enclaves exclude the local economy and local people from socio-economic development.
- Social relationships around enclaves are complicated, embodying unique local realities.
- Enclaves attract substantial levels of investment but operate most successfully in ‘weak’ states.
- The relationships between states and the companies that control resource enclaves are complex.
- Enclaves are part of ‘frontiers.’ Both enclaves and frontiers are formations of capital.
- Frontiers are understood as chaotic, ungoverned spaces, appropriated by capital.

The above studies do well to point out the above themes, highlighting what exists and what does not exist in regions of resource extraction. However, I argue that their approach is limited in several ways. First, the *how* and *why* questions of economic exclusion are not addressed in detail. Furthermore, where complexity is highlighted, it is only highlighted as a finding, and not explored in detail. This neglect of complexity is especially prevalent when considering the relations between IOCs and the state. By extension, in addressing relations between the state, communities and capital (in the form of IOCs), the literature does not explore how each of these components produces the dynamics observed within enclaves and frontiers. In respect to literature that concerns frontiers, whilst the very definition of a frontier involves capital and implies a global element to the formation of this capital, conceptualisations of exactly what form capital takes around frontiers in respect to its global behaviour are absent. These gaps present an opportunity to bring together the concepts of this thesis explored so far to add detail to understandings of capital in the Niger Delta.

### **8.5.2. Enclaves and Frontiers Understood Through a Lens of Resources and Organisational Structure**

An omission that threads through the literature considered within this thesis so far is a failure to acknowledge the strength of private and state institutions that surround resource extraction. In the literature, The Niger Delta and similar contexts are portrayed through notions of the weak state, weak governance, chaos and disorder (Watts, 2012). A product of these types of analyses is that they produce counter-intuitive occurrences that they cannot explain. For example Ferguson (2006b) draws attention to the fact that in these regions of weak governance, enclaves attract extremely high levels of investment- a fact that is presented as remarkable yet not explored any further.

This literature, and other literature that considers the Niger Delta appears to be reluctant to analyse the characteristics of institutions built around the extraction of oil and gas and the capture of the revenues that it generates. As a result, it fails to acknowledge their strength and resilience. In this way, the literature fails to acknowledge the strength and efficiency of capital as a network of infrastructure and interpersonal relationships that operate to extract fossil fuels from the Niger Delta and distribute them globally. The analysis of this chapter has demonstrated this strength of institutions surrounding oil and gas extraction in Nigeria, in particular, NNPC.

Chapter six interrogated notions of organisational structure across stakeholders within the SUNGAS project. One of the main findings of this chapter was that access to allocative resources was integral to the strength of institutions and their power within the project. SPDC was exceptional as a partner in the project due to its superior access to allocative resources. The allocative resources that can be controlled by SPDC first include money capital, agglomerated

through investment, and profit surrounding the extraction and sale of natural resources. However, the acquisition of this resource can catalyse monopoly over other authoritative resources, and a subsequent ability to monopolise other authoritative resources, such as information transfer within the Delta (a point illustrated through section 7.7 in chapter seven on the power of information bottlenecks in the Delta). Superior access to and monopolization of resources leads to forms of power but importantly also denotes organisational structure.

If we consider organisational structure as the provision of rules implicated with resources, superior access to valuable resources by IOCs can confer a high degree of organisational structure. The value to an individual of adhering to the rules attached to the organisational structure of any particular oil and gas company is denoted by the substantial resources that are rewarded to those who adhere. Work within the oil industry does not only offer superior salaries, it provides pensions, healthcare, education, security, support for families and opportunities for scholarship and promotion. A failure to adhere to rules, in the form of protocol, attached to a particular IOC risks exclusion from that organisational structure and a loss of access to the multiple resources it can provide. Through these mechanisms, the oil and gas industry in Nigeria relies on exclusion and inequality in order to function. To retain value, resources (for example salaries), provided by an IOC need to confer value and value relies on a value differential between those resources and other resources potentially available. An example of this differential would be between the resources offered by a particular IOC to workers compared to resources available via other institutions. In this way, it is the exclusionary aspect of resource distribution within organisational structure that gives institutional strength and functionality. In the Niger Delta, where a differential between resource value accessible through IOCs and resources available from the local economy is especially large, remuneration to IOC workers does not have to be great to produce inequalities.

However, the oil and gas industry requires a level of remuneration to workers that accentuates this inequality. Oil and gas extraction is a technology-intensive process, requiring relatively little labour when compared to other extractives industries in low and middle-income country contexts. Gold mining, for example, which has been described as socially ‘thicker’ in respect to its wider requirements for labour, which can be local and unskilled (Ferguson, 2006b). However, relatively low amounts of highly skilled labour are required to operate oil and gas extractives technology. During the early years of the industry in Nigeria, this labour was sourced internationally, but in recent years it has begun to be sourced domestically. The majority of labour available in the Delta is, however, unskilled. Domestic workers are therefore drawn from a small pool of capable labour. Some jobs are available to local people, but these are generally low-skilled jobs such as clearing of oil spills. As one interviewee quoted in the GMoU chapter noted – Niger Delta youths feel they have ‘made it’ when they procure these jobs. The reality

is that this is the most periphery form of access to the means of production available through the formal institutional channels and remuneration is paltry. In contrast, highly skilled jobs operating within the industry are associated with high remuneration.

I argue that the above processes of labour requirements produce the enclaved configuration of capital extraction in the Delta. To function, capital forms social relations that can be considered as structure, but this structure relies on these social relations being exclusionary. The functioning of capital creates strong institutions, allowing for the return of investment to shareholders, but at the same time excludes and creates inequalities. As these institutions project into the Delta, the inequalities between these institutions and local economies produces enclaves.

As outlined in chapter three, an implicit message in the current literature on enclaves is that capital *should* be inclusive. However, I argue here that capital relies on exclusionary power to retain organisational structure. Without exclusionary power, organisational rules would not attain significance, organisational structure would not be adhered to, and industry would not operate. Therefore, the argument in the literature that capital should be inclusive to local people is irrelevant. Even if capital becomes inclusive of local people through providing better access to the means of production through supplied labour, this exclusionary functionality would still produce inequalities between the skilled and the unskilled local to specific areas. More recently these dynamics have started to materialise in the Niger Delta as local people have been recruited into the industry. When I was conducting fieldwork, I was lucky to spend extended time in Nigeria with a family originally from the Delta. The father of the family had gained a job in exploration with Total and was able to build a large house in his community with the revenues he gained and provide security for his family. However, when I met this family, they had moved away from their community and were living in a gated compound in Lagos. They were unable to return to their community for fear of violence from other community members, angry at the inequality of wealth between the community and the family. The superior access to resources gained by a community member was enough to propel the family into an urban lifestyle, yet the inequality this generated drove a wedge between the family and the rest of the community.

Aside from direct access to the means of production through supplying labour, the next option available to local people excluded from the industry is to access oil and gas revenue streams through capturing generated revenues. Practices associated with this capture were demonstrated in the GMoU case study by the struggles of local people to access a form of revenue distribution through the GMoU. Incentives for the exclusion of community members are given by an opportunity for individuals to monopolise GMoU revenue streams, at the expense of the GMoU community, which can rapidly transform the lives of individuals. New, institutional configurations evolve from this ability to access rents. These institutional configurations, through their superior supply of monetary resources, eclipse existing institutions, overriding existing power

structures.

In this way, the enclaved nature of the industry, aside from being a result of inequalities, also produces further inequalities. As shown in chapter seven, capital, operating through the GMoU, can eclipse and erode institutions peripheral to the logic of extraction by competing with these institutions. In doing so, capital enforces an alignment with its logic. Within the functioning of enclaves, organisational structure is supported, but outside enclaves, institutions that do not align with those of capital are eroded, further entrenching inequalities.

I argue that a reliance of capital in the Delta on inequality (producing enclaves and inequalities) and the erosion of institutions peripheral to the logic of capital (producing further inequalities) is what contributes to the 'chaos and disorder' commonly associated with the resource frontier and resource enclave literature. However, to add clarity to this literature, I suggest that it should not consider frontier environments as operating in inherently 'untamed', 'wild' and 'chaotic' contexts, instead these contexts should be seen as the product of a high level of organisation and order associated with formations of capital within frontiers. This high level of organisation capital requires inequality but also produces inequality through the mechanisms outlined above.

Ferguson's counter-intuitive observation that enclaves in unstable environments attract high levels of investment can be explained in part by the above mechanisms that appreciate the order of formations of capital in contexts like the Delta. After all, capital requires reliability and predictability to accumulate, order and structure denote reliability and predictability and therefore order and structure facilitate a return on investment. If order and structure rely on exclusion and inequality, and inequality produces disorder, then the very presence of capital within a local context such as the Niger Delta will produce both order, where institutions align with capital, and disorder, where they do not. I hope that the above findings can contribute to this literature by shedding light on some of the mechanisms behind the production and reproduction of what is referred to as frontier and enclave environments.

### **8.5.3. The Role of the State**

Most literature relevant to this analysis, similar to carrying the implicit assumption that capital should be inclusive, also carries implicit or explicit assumptions of the functioning of the Nigerian state in respect to capital. The findings of this chapter illustrated how the strength of the Nigerian state is subjective based on perspective. The state can be elusive or visible depending on how it is viewed. The analysis of this chapter aimed to illustrate further the relationship between the state and capital in Nigeria, a relationship that is not explored in the literature on resource frontiers or enclave-based development. In fact, the state is both an integral but remarkably under-researched subject across much of the literature reviewed for this thesis.



The role of the state as summarised in this chapter was shown through its visibility as an institution built around the capture of resources and the protection of assets that generate these resources. At the federal level, the institutions that facilitate the capture of rents can be seen as weak when expecting these rents to be distributed as public services. However, when looking at the example of NNPC, it can be shown to one of Nigeria's most resilient institutions. A good governance lens produces a different, almost opposing image of NNPC as an institution representing the Nigerian state, reflecting normative judgements carried through the literature regarding how the state *should* behave. These notions imply that the state should use a monopoly of violence to capture and distribute resources in the form of public services universally throughout its sovereign border.

I argue that the idealism behind these normative assumptions does not hold when considering the formation of the Nigerian state in the political context of the Niger Delta. Chapter two summarised how the Nigerian state was created by the British colonial system as a means to consolidate power surrounding resource extraction. To make extraction more efficient, revenues were centralised and central control of resources denoted power. This institutional arrangement was built for resource extraction, as opposed to normative functions, and its legacy survives today in the functionality of federal institutions, such as NNPC, that operate to capture centralised resources and distribute them along kinship and ethnic lines (Ikpe, 2009).

The Nigerian state also works to protect the production of capital and thereby protect revenue flows integral to its function. From the perspective of some Niger Deltans, the Nigerian state, seen through its militarised protection of capital is somewhat of a foreign entity. As outlined in chapter two, the unification of the trading area of the Royal Niger Company area brought together historically disparate regions that spoke different languages, lived in different climate zones and practised differing religions- what Nigerian respondents referred as an "unhappy, arranged marriage." The power granted to fractions of government representing ethnic majorities over the ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta by the colonial regime still has a legacy today (Ikpe, 2009). Soldiers from powerful ethnic majority groups external to the Delta are sent to protect oil and gas operations that channel wealth out of the Delta and towards these very ethnic groups (Obi, 2010). As one interviewee discussing this pattern remarked, "It's quite simple, you would send your people to protect your assets". Before colonialism, the ethnic groups in control of the majority of oil and gas assets were foreign to the Niger Delta. To many in the Niger Delta, the Nigerian state is, therefore, a foreign entity. Based on this characteristic, from the perspective of the Niger Delta, there is very little difference between the behaviour of federal state institutions and foreign state institutions. However, from a foreign perspective, Western states operate covertly in this function (again requiring invisibility to protect capital) and are held up to less normative scrutiny.

#### **8.5.4. Rethinking Political Structures – Beyond the State and Overt Political Systems**

As shown in this chapter, the Nigerian state operates largely to protect and capture revenues. In this way, the functionality of institutions designed to produce and capture revenues is shown to be strong- in contrast to the weak state thesis in the literature. If this thinking is extended more widely, it can be argued that generally, the strength of institutions can be alternatively understood by their ability to control flows of resources. When viewed in this way, the oil industry is perhaps the most powerful set of institutions that have ever existed. Nation states, rather than exercising power over these institutions, operate to nurture conditions to support their function.

The power of the oil industry can perhaps be understood by considering the value chain of oil and gas throughout the economy, based on theories of capital production outlined in Harvey (2017). The value added at each stage of this value chain is unparalleled in other industries, as the initial resource of oil is a ‘gift of nature’ but the final use-value, as the underpinning of all economic activity (including the transfer of resources) is unmatched by any other commodity. The exploitation of oil can, therefore, be seen as the most efficient form of capitalism, and the institutions that control this exploitation are granted immense power and wealth.

Based on the argument that control of resources denotes institutional power, searching for solutions to problems caused by the oil industry in Nigeria by relying on an ideology associated with the state is misguided, as states, both foreign and domestic, have little desire or ability to regulate capital production in Nigeria. Instead states act, as has been seen throughout the history of the Niger Delta region, to facilitate an ever more efficient exploitation of oil and gas from the region. A flaw in the literature, especially the *resource curse* literature, is that it revolves heavily around the nation-state as the unit of analysis that is expected to exert control over the oil and gas industry, perhaps tied to a notion that the nation-state should have the capability to regulate capital.

A notion that the nation-state should regulate capital can also be seen in the solutions proposed to problems caused by capital, such as the ‘externalities’ of global climate change or the human and environmental impacts of oil and gas exploitation globally. Methods to regulate these externalities operate through in-country institutional arrangements, for example, the UNFCCC of UNEP operate on country to country principles. The governance solutions they produce such as MBIs and NDCs then rely on the state to implement them. This arrangement is also based on the assumption that nation-states can implement reform measures against the externalities of resource use through regulating capital. However, when considering a region such as the Niger Delta, where it is clear that state capability to regulate capital production to provide public services is non-existent, the principle that the state should be able to regulate capital through

country to country arrangements appears defunct.

Transnational institutional systems built around the extraction and transfer of resources should, therefore, be a more recognised unit of analysis than that of the nation-state. By putting resources and the pursuit of resources at the centre of analyses, there is more scope to investigate global configurations of human behaviour that cause problems in sustainability. Likewise, analyses that move beyond a focus on the nation-state may be more likely to present novel solutions that do not rely on false assumptions of what the state should and can do.

However, an approach that looks into the functionality of institutions surrounding the extraction and transfer of resources in respect to the formation of these institutions presents problems. Elements of the state and extractives institutions understood without interrogation of their formation appear overt, public and easily contested - demonstrated by analyses that lay blame on the Nigerian state or extractives industries that operate in Nigeria. However, the deeper mechanisms surrounding the formation of these institutions and their ability to extract control and distribute resources is much more difficult to visualise. For example, a study that explores relations that exist between shareholders and various departments of companies, or the formation of networks of relations along supply chains would be especially difficult to conduct. In some ways, these institutions rely on the fact that these 'deeper' processes need to remain invisible to wider scrutiny to function efficiently, complicating attempts to change their behaviour.

## **8.6. Conclusions**

This chapter has aimed to conceptualise the state in the Niger Delta, to better describe its relation to extractives institutions and to understand how extractives capital forms in Niger Delta. The analysis employed methods of visibility, finding that the state in the rural Niger Delta can appear elusive when expected to provide public services, and this elusive nature is linked to notions of state weakness and failure. However, when the state is viewed from a different perspective, in terms of its ability to protect revenue-generating assets, it can appear strong and capable. When investigating the idea of a 'slick alliance' between the state and IOCs, the analysis finds that the role of the state at the federal level is largely to facilitate the production of revenue. NNPC as an institution is derided as a failure in respect to its ability to provide public services, but in respect to its ability to capture revenue from the capture resources, it is a resilient and functional institution. The analysis then considers how these power relations at the federal level are expressed in the Niger Delta, finding that formations of capital in the Niger Delta are supported by a level of autonomy granted to IOCs operating in the Delta by the state. This understanding allows for a furthering of the descriptive literature on formations of capital in the Niger Delta by illustrating some of the processes behind the formation of enclaves and frontiers and the relations that they

produce. The chapter finished by theorising that the chaos and disorder commonly associated with frontier environments is a product of the structure and order of capital in the form of enclaves, in that the inequality caused by enclaves produces the problems of inequalities associated with frontier and enclave environments. Based on these findings, the role of the state in the Niger Delta is summarised, along with a critique of understandings that rely on preconceived notions of this role to compile analyses and present solutions to problems in sustainability. It is argued that analyses need to move beyond preconceived notions of what the state can and should do to regulate capital, and instead look at how relations surrounding the institutions that produce problems in sustainability are formed. The original contribution of this chapter has been to use concepts of visibility to present new perspectives on the state in the Niger Delta and its relation to capital and to then further the literature on formations of capital in environments such as the Niger Delta.

## **8.7. Conclusions in Relation to the Overarching Theoretical Framework of the Thesis**

As outlined in chapter 3, the overarching conceptual framework of the thesis is designed to facilitate an exploration of how processes of power, process and meaning are intrinsically involved in the production of institutions involved in Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) at multiple scales. This chapter has sought to understand, from varying perspectives, how the state in the Niger Delta is comprised, using the above concepts, and how it relates to capital.

The chapter has aimed to uncover power and process behind the formation and exercise of the functioning of the Nigerian state. This chapter has shown that the Nigerian state, viewed through most forms of Eurocentric analysis (whereby the state is expected to use a monopoly of force to distribute revenues through public services throughout a sovereign boundary) the state is not visible in the Niger Delta. However, when the perspective of analysis is changed, the state can become visible. The influence of culture, contextualised historical influences and the influence of human agency creates a reality whereby the emergent institutions investigated do not fit the mould or models of the market-inspired structures (similar to structures described by Van Hecken et al., 2015 when referring to Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) or, in this case, in referring to PPPs that are implemented in the Niger Delta).

The nature of public-private partnerships is built on a structural assumption that that the state is a present, willing and able actor in the partnership and that state actors operate within this assumed structure of the state. In the same way that Van Hecken et al., 2015 describes PES schemes as ‘conceptualising human agency through overly rational and overly structuralist models’ we can find that the component of the state in the design of public-private partnerships is is

an assumption that conceptualises the agency of human actors through structuralist assumptions. These assumptions imply a certain functioning of state actors and institutions. This chapter has shown that the belief that actors working on behalf of the state will work towards a distribution of public services throughout a sovereign boundary is a false assumption. This finding resonates with the concepts forwarded by Van Hecken et al., 2015 that sees market-inspired conservation policy instruments (such as PPPs) as expressions of overly-structuralist models.

The ongoing overarching argument of the thesis has shown in chapter six that power relations surrounding cultural influences at the meeting of structure and agency mean that the designed scheme of the SUNGAS project was unable to be implemented in the political context of the Niger Delta. Chapter seven showed how the designed scheme of the GMoU, when implemented in the rich political context of the Delta, produced a propensity for increased conflict. It demonstrated that designed schemes can act as “surfaces of engagement” upon which actors can exercise agency, producing new, emergent outcomes that elude design. This chapter has shown that the Nigerian state remains elusive if viewed through a Eurocentric lens of good governance or the expected behaviour of a Western state, and that it is this Western oriented perspective of the state that comprises the components of the PPP. In this way, power, politics and culture of the Nigerian context change the way the ‘market-inspired’ global programmes that (Van Hecken et al., 2015) describes ‘play out’ in practice, creating something that is very different to the original designed programme.

# 9

## **CONCLUSIONS**

## **9.1. Introduction**

The main remit of the thesis was to study the implementation of PPPs in sustainability in low and middle-income country contexts. The empirical chapters used to answer the research questions have been insightful, but at the moment their findings concerning PPPs stand-alone. This chapter aims to briefly bring together the main empirical findings of the thesis in the first section. The next section will then aim to answer the main research questions of the thesis.

## **9.2. Summary of The Main Empirical Findings**

This thesis aimed to explore the concept of PPPs in sustainability in low and middle-income country contexts using case studies from Nigeria. The main research questions used a conceptual framework adapted from Van Hecken et al. (2015) that aims to investigate power, process, culture and meaning in the institutions that that implement global governance programmes, in this case, PPPs. The research questions also aimed to interrogate how the grounded, contextual findings of the case studies relate to wider trends in global sustainability governance, which can be seen as global, structural trends.

The introduction section of the thesis outlined how PPPs have become a component of global neoliberal governance regimes, including the governance of the environment. Prolific global targets in sustainability such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Accord extol PPPs and a general engagement of the private sector as methods of meeting their targets. This trend contributes to a rhetoric that emanates from global governance institutions outlining an increased role of the private sector in global sustainability governance. Part of this rhetoric involves advocacy of PPPs as solutions to sustainability in low and middle-income countries, on the basis that in these contexts sustainability issues are prevalent, states are weak, and therefore the wealth and capability of the private sector can be harnessed to implement solutions in sustainability.

Nigeria and the Niger Delta are good examples of where this global rhetoric can apply. Here sustainability issues are pronounced, the state is often described as weak, and the private sector holds vast wealth and perceived capability. Chapter two aimed to gain a better understanding the local context of the empirical chapters and outlined how commodities and resource exploitation have defined the modern history of Nigeria. It showed that a history of resource exploitation in the Niger Delta involved patterns such as the exclusion of middlemen and the monopolisation of resource control to increase the efficiency of resource extraction. This efficiency was facilitated through methods such as amalgamating territories and centralising of resource control. These patterns are repeated in the dynamics of resource extraction and control in the Niger Delta today.

Chapter three aimed to bring together the concepts of PPPs in sustainability, the political context of the Niger Delta and some of the schematic themes of the three empirical chapters to develop a relevant conceptual framing. In doing so it explored a range of theoretical perspectives and their associated literature. The approach of stakeholder mapping was appropriate for the first part of the SUNGAS case study, followed by a framework built from concepts of structure and agency and strong structuration. This framework addressed a need to appreciate multiple contexts, political environments, influences across scale and also a need to interrogate structure that may not have been possible with other frameworks. The second case study of the GMoU used theories of governmentality, and its extension, environmentality to investigate formations of power in the uncertain and contested context of the GMoU, allowing for the analysis to avoid presuppositions of power relations that are inherent in existing analysis of contexts such as the Niger Delta, for example those within the field of Political Ecology. Finally, the last empirical chapter on the state aimed to avoid both Eurocentric or descriptive tendencies inherent in much literature to investigate the role of the Nigerian state in relation to the two case studies and in relation to capital, beginning from a starting point of visibility.

The appropriate methods to conduct the analysis were determined to be those associated with intensive qualitative enquiry as the research questions and the case studies involved the interrogation of specific processes using relatively small sample sizes. Methods appropriate for this type of enquiry were determined to be interviews and ethnographic methods. The use of these methods in the field was described and justified with an explanation of how these methods led to the data collected and some of the limitations of this process, along with an explanation of why each case study was relevant to addressing the research questions. The methods of interpreting the data produced were outlined along with some of the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research. The general process of the research was also outlined, illustrating how the research partnership of this thesis created a continually changeable research context that required many revisions of the general research plan, which limited the research.

The thesis then moved on to the first case study, using stakeholder mapping as an approach to analyse the SUNGAS partnership. The methods of stakeholder mapping were defined within the empirical chapter, using techniques from different sources to build up a framework of analysis to produce an interest/influence matrix. The results of the stakeholder analysis were adequate as a starting point to begin a deeper analysis of the influences on the project, acting as a framework around which to introduce some more inquisitive methods of social enquiry which were conducted in the next chapter. Most analyses carry out stakeholder mapping without a description of the methods used. Therefore, an original contribution of this chapter was the detailing of the methods used to conduct stakeholder mapping and the application of these methods to analyse a PPP in sustainability. The methods outlined are applicable to other contexts and can therefore



be used in other studies.

The next chapter built a framework from concepts of structure, agency and structuration to explore relationships between partners in the SUNGAS project. The chapter detailed how SUNGAS was a complex set of interactions between various organisational structures, understood as rules and resources, which were interpreted by a range of actors across the project. Literature tends to view partnerships as established organisational structures (this view is required to use a partnership as a unit of analysis), which can produce unintended outcomes. This analysis, however, showed that this designed organisational structure, when introduced to a new context, is one of a multitude of competing structures that can orientate the behaviour of individuals. These structures can emanate from organisations, or wider influences such as cultural influences. A designed structure will be interpreted, adhered to, resisted and manipulated depending on the actors and contexts it is designed to influence. The process of creating a successful partnership can be seen as the process of asserting influence in competition with competing structures in the form of cultures, logics, and resource streams. The conceptual framework used allowed these themes to be brought out from the data, however, a weakness of the framework was that it required such a detailed explanation of terminology that this risked detracting from the analysis. However, the framework was useful in foregrounding the central role of allocative resources in influencing the behaviour of agents. This illustration of the power of resources to guide behaviour within institutions may be an original contribution of this chapter.

The next chapter aimed to explore juxtaposed interpretations of the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) GMoU. The analysis began by outlining how the GMoU can be seen as a 'very perfect document' - which aligns with modern trends in governance methods at multiple scales, based on notions of democratic participation and community empowerment. However, it also demonstrated that as soon as the GMoU leaves the boardrooms of the IOCs, it enters a contextual environment where power is dynamic and contested and local accountability measures can be insufficient in holding individuals to account. As a result, the design of the GMoU be selectively drawn upon by actors to authorise practices that work against its advertised principles. When considering processes of subject formation surrounding these individuals, numerous push and pull factors operate to influence the decisions of these actors, a product of larger scale trends in the Delta. The GMoU, through these mechanisms can be seen to be inducing conflict and division in communities. Community grievances as the result of the division and fractionalisation caused by these and other regional scale dynamics have led to a notion held with many people that conflict in the Niger Delta is produced consciously and that the GMoU is therefore a 'conflict document.' On further analysis there are a number of mechanisms that suggest the introduction of the GMoU may be a strategy to deflect conflict away from the interface between the IOC and communities and towards the interface between communities themselves, at the

same time saving costs. These mechanisms hint at conscious strategy. However, conflict in general in the Delta has been highly detrimental to IOCs, and it is questionable how much a detailed conscious strategy to induce conflict is possible in the Delta. The outcomes of the GMoU could, alternatively be seen as a well-intentioned strategy that has broken down as a result of local complexities surrounding power formation, embedded in the historical context of the Delta. The framework of governmentality allowed for an exploration of formations of power, and in doing so did not rely on presuppositions power relations between predefined groups, such as oil companies, communities or state institutions. This framework was particularly useful in exploring, through an analytic of subject formation, why some actors may use the GMoU for purposes other than those outlined in its original design. In this way a weakness of environmentality as a concept is that it is conceived as a way to understand how people come to conserve their environment, in the cases outlined in this chapter, there is room to explore a different side of environmentality: how people come to harm their environment. This observation, along with the use of governmentality in a context of the Niger Delta to analyse the GMoU constitute the original contributions of this chapter.

The final empirical chapter aimed to conceptualise the state in the Niger Delta, to understand its relationship with the two case studies and with extractives capital in Niger Delta. The chapter used a method of visibility to conceptualise the state in the Niger Delta, finding that the state appears elusive when expected to provide public services- a behaviour often linked to notions of state weakness and failure. However, when the state is viewed from a different perspective, in terms of its ability to protect revenue-generating assets, it can appear universally capable. This view leads to questions of the relationship between the state and the social relations that it protects, in the form of capital. When investigating the notion of a 'slick alliance' between the state and IOCs, the analysis finds that the state at the federal level generally facilitates the production of revenue through allowing a relative autonomy of IOC operation. NNPC sits at the nexus of relations between the state and IOCs; as an institution is derided as a failure in respect to its ability to provide public services, but in respect to its ability to capture rents, it is a resilient and functional institution. The analysis then considers how these power relations are expressed in the Niger Delta, finding that formations of capital in the Niger Delta are largely formations of foreign capital through IOCs, facilitated by the state. This allows for a furthering of the descriptive literature on formations of capital in the Niger Delta. The chapter finished by theorising that the chaos and disorder commonly associated with frontier environments is a product of the structure and order of capital in the form of enclaves, in that the inequality caused by enclaves produces the problems associated with frontier environments. The chapter also highlights how analyses of the state in the Niger Delta are weakened by assumptions of how the state should behave, and instead analyses may benefit from avoiding the nation-state as

a unit of analysis and thereby avoiding the assumptions it requires.

The final chapter aimed to bring together the empirical findings of the thesis to address the research questions of PPPs. The chapter outlines a gap highlighted in the introduction between the conceptual descriptions of partnerships and empirical evidence to support these partnerships and shows how this gap is further highlighted in attempts to bring together the empirical findings of this thesis with concepts of PPPs in sustainability. There are some interesting findings from the empirical case studies that illustrate the relevance of the context in which PPPs are embedded. However, the use of PPPs as a unit of analysis is weakened by assumptions of how the public or public or private elements of PPPs should behave. When these assumptions meet a reality such as that of the Niger Delta, the definition of a PPP as a collaboration between one or more public and private organisations breaks down, clouding analysis. The chapter finishes with thoughts on the relevance of the advocacy of PPPs in sustainability in respect to a global shift towards neoliberal governance methods, suggesting that the international discourse extolling PPPs in sustainability may be a form of production of power that normalises the role of the private sector in sustainability.

### **9.3. Conclusions on PPPs in Sustainability, Referencing the Overall Framework of the Study**

This section will respond to the overall framework of the thesis, drawing general conclusions. The overall framework of the study was built into the main research questions, outlined in section 3.6.1, page 82 were:

- How do contextualised, historical dynamics, of power, process and meaning influence the implementation of public-private partnerships in Sustainability in the Niger Delta?
- How do the grounded, contextual, findings of the empirical chapters relate to the wider ‘structural’ elements of global discourse in public private-partnerships in sustainability, outlined in chapter one of the thesis?

The introduction section of this thesis began with an anecdote from my experience at the COP21 of that illustrated a defined gap between the high-level advocacy of PPPs in sustainability in low and middle-income country contexts and evidence from these contexts to support this advocacy. Chapter three reiterated this gap between advocacy and evidence by showing how it is reciprocated in the literature on PPPs, which is largely nebulous and removed from context and lacking of analyses of the contextual politics behind PPPs. The process of compiling this thesis has further illustrated a separation between the empirical, contextual information that I

collected and the conceptual elements of PPPs in sustainability. Joining up the reality 'on the ground' with concepts surrounding PPPs has been challenging, but I argue that the difficulty of this task deserves comment, in relation to the main research questions. As opposed to the gap between evidence and concept being a result of a failing of the literature, I argue that it is a result of assumptions held within the concept of PPPs.

The concept of PPPs is built from an assemblage of analytical components, that can be unpicked through considering what the term implies. The definition of PPPs is as a collaboration between two or more public and private organisations, therefore the terms 'organisation', 'public' and 'private' denote analytical components with associated attributes. For example, the public element of the definition implies an organisation that has attributes of a state or state institutions, fitting predefined expectations, such as the delivery of public services within a sovereign territory.

The analysis within the empirical chapters has used frameworks that are designed to interrogate preconceived notions within analytical components, for example by interrogating the nature of structure or foregrounding the formation of power relations. In doing so this analysis has also challenged the preconceived notions held within the concept of PPPs, showing several ways in which these preconceived notions can be falsified on closer inspection. The next sections will outline the main findings of each chapter concerning PPPs, then a conclude by summarising these findings in relation to the main research questions.

### **9.3.1. The SUNGAS Case Study- Chapters Five and Six**

The SUNGAS case study was an example of a public-private partnership designed and then applied to the context of the Niger Delta. The accounts of this study from respondents centred around a failure of the designed partnership. Accordingly, the conceptual framework using concepts of structure, agency and strong structuration aimed to interrogate the nature of this 'structure'. The analysis showed that the organisational structure of SUNGAS was contested by a number of agent and that it conflicted markedly with other organisational structures such as those of co-financing organisations, or with wider structural influences such as the culture of international development financing or the cultural practices in the Niger Delta.

The analysis demonstrated how influences on the outcomes of partnerships cannot be confined to dynamics confined to the partnership in question. Partnership is a term that is used to encapsulate a range of agents and for these agents, organisational structures of the partnership are one of many competing structures that can influence practices at specific conjunctures. These competing structures can stem from, for example, the organisations that agents represent, which can also be influenced by wider trends, filtering down to the behaviour of particular these agents. Also, the stakeholder analysis showed that the behaviour of organisations in a partnership may

be reactive (in the case of The UK Department For International Development (DFID)) instead of overt. These dynamics may escape a stakeholder mapping exercise that captures only one particular point in time. However, the stakeholder mapping exercise as a method of analysing partnerships to get a 'lay of the land', may be a method that can be similarly applied to other partnerships. The development and application of this method may, therefore, be an original contribution of this thesis.

Importantly, chapter six served to foreground the role of resources in the functionality of partnerships, showing that the pursuit of allocative resources was a significant factor that determined the behaviour of partners throughout the SUNGAS project. This theme was also continued throughout the remainder of the thesis, showing that the pursuit of allocative resources was an overarching factor in the behaviour of individuals surrounding the GMoU and operations of state institutions. In addressing the second research question, this dynamic may be found in other instances of partnerships in sustainability and could be the focus of further research on partnerships.

The theoretical framework built for chapter six, based on concepts of structure, agency and strong structuration is complex. Its use required a lengthy clarification of terminology that risked detracting from the main analysis. However, this framework was useful in conceptualising the SUNGAS partnership in a way that brought out the significance of the role of rules and resources, allocative and authoritative. This view demonstrated differences between organisations in their control over allocative resources, which was a significant determinant of the behaviour of agents representing these organisations. Future studies of partnerships may benefit from this conceptual focus on the role of rules and resources and also on rules as components of organisational structure.

The final section of chapter six related the findings of the chapter to the overall conceptual framework of the thesis, through the research questions outlined above. This overall framework called for an exploration of how power, process and meaning are intrinsically involved in the production of institutions involved in PPPs at multiple scales. Through exploring these concepts, the chapter demonstrated that agents are subject to influences of culture, whether through the 'wider' culture of their organisation or through, for example cultural practices surrounding transactions in the Niger Delta. In this way, similar to the observation of Van Hecken et al. (2015), the institution of the SUNGAS partnership, through this analysis, can be portrayed as a site of "inter-cultural confrontation, where multiple and contrasting systems of norms and values, as well as cultural and social logics, interact at different scales". The chapter served to foreground some of the complexities of the interplay between structure and agency inherent in the formation of institutions involved in the SUNGAS PPP. Therefore the findings of the chapter fill this gap in the literature on PPPs in sustainability and fills in some of the gaps outlined in

the literature review and outlined in the conceptual framework by Van Hecken et al. (2015) to investigate power, process and meaning. In this way the chapter answers the guideline for the thesis to answer calls for a more power-sensitive analysis of PPPs.

Chapter six demonstrated how the contextual, cultural influences upon agents within a PPP in sustainability shape and influence the behaviour of agents, and thereby influence the creation of institutions that are responsible for enacting PPPs in sustainability, demonstrating how dynamics regarding allocative and authoritative resources are central to such processes; these findings answer the first research question. The chapter also showed, though an analysis of power, process and meaning, a discord between the objectives of the designed project organisational structure of SUNGAS and the implementation of that organisational structure 'on the ground'. This finding fits with the second research question, but will be explored in more detail, in conjunction with other similar findings from the empirical chapters below.

### **9.3.2. The GMoU Case Study - Chapter Seven**

The GMoU case study demonstrated a different model of PPP in implementation. In this instance the case study began from a perspective of uncertainty and contestation, using a conceptual framework of governmentality to explore notions of power formation. The main influences on the partnership, shown through this framework, were how competition between custom and capital surrounding the GMoU required a form of community resilience to avoid conflict. A primary influence on inter and intra community conflict and thereby the success of the GMoU as a partnership was what I described as an inequality between the rural economy and the oil economy, which an exploration of subject formation served to highlight. In respect to thoughts on partnerships, this brings up questions of asymmetries surrounding the power of resources and the influence of these resources on the behaviour of individuals who aspire to control them.

However, a poststructuralist lens applied to this case study also showed that preconceptions of the components that comprise a PPP can be questioned. For example, it is questionable how much a Cluster Development Board (CDB) member who subverts the GMoU and abandons a community represents that community. Also, the conceptual boundary between the IOC and the community becomes blurred if both the CDB representative and the IOC representative are from the Niger Delta and working against the interest of their communities or the IOC. Furthermore, the local government was absent from the GMoU only visible on paper. The conceptual components of the PPP, defined as a collaboration between two or more public and private organisations can, therefore, dissolve when approached from this perspective.

Another dynamic highlighted by this case study was the link between an international discourse of neoliberal governance methods in corporate engagement and the approach taken by SPDC in designing the GMoU. The analysis found that neoliberal governance principles which

advocate methods of governance such as community participation were employed by SPDC in the GMoU. However, these methods may have allowed for a consolidation of power by SPDC through a reduction in the spatial resolution of engagement with communities, which may have led to a production of inter and intra community conflict in the Niger Delta, leading to outcomes that benefit IOCs. This evidence shows how international discourse advocating PPPs and engagement with the private sector outlined in the introduction chapter can be applied in ways that empower the private sector at the expense of other social groups. These findings resonate with some of the critical conceptual literature on PPPs outlined in chapter three, for example, Miraftab (2004), giving an empirical context to these arguments that may be linked to other examples of PPPs in sustainable development.

Governmentality as a framework in this chapter allowed for an analysis of power and process in the formation of the institutions designed to implement the PPP of the GMoU, with findings showing again that the pursuit of resources is central to the functioning of these institutions. The contextualised political dynamics of the Niger Delta were shown to be integral to the way in which the GMoU was implemented. These findings produced by the analysis therefore go towards addressing the first research question. The second research question can be answered by two main findings, first that the GMoU, as a design (or organisational structure), is changed and adapted by individuals (or agents) to suit their objectives. The chapter has shown that agents at the local level, be it community representatives or IOC representatives, can manipulate this structure of the GMoU to suit their interests. Also at a regional scale, the idea of the GMoU itself has potentially been adapted to fit the objectives of SPDC as an organisation, as a way to change sites of conflict. These findings contribute to answering the second research question, in that the GMoU, as a wider 'structural' design (in this case, based on a World Bank design of a PPP) is not enacted, in reality in the way that it is ostensibly intended. As the design of the PPP moves from the boardrooms of the World Bank to the contextual, political environment of the Delta, this design is changed and adapted to fit the needs of those implementing it. By the time this design is implemented, forces of agency at multiple scale have manipulated structure to produce something new. In addition to the forces of agency at multiple scales, the political context of implementation of the PPP can be markedly different to the assumed political context that the PPP was designed to be applied to. The blurring of the lines between the IOC and the community, and the absence in some cases of the community component of the PPPs create more factors that morph and mould the original designed concept of the PPPs into a form far removed from its original design, producing new outcomes. These findings resonate with the second research question, and support the arguments of Van Hecken et al. (2015), who aims to show how in many cases models of institutional function as part of global structural programmes will play out very differently to their original design and intention.

### **9.3.3. The State and Capital in The Niger Delta - Chapter Eight**

The chapter concerning the state in the Niger Delta aimed to investigate how the state interacted with PPPs in the two case studies. In part, this chapter also aimed to investigate the state as a vital component within the conception of PPPs. The chapter concluded that the state in the Niger Delta can be seen as a collection of institutions that are largely orientated towards the protection of revenue-generating assets and thereby the protection of capital, and the pursuit and distribution of these revenues through lines of patronage. These results show that as a component of PPPs, the state may not pursue actions orientated around the delivery of public services. This is in contrast with the ‘public’ element held within the definition of PPPs. Evidence of this dynamic can be found in the GMoU case study, where the government was found to be absent from GMoU processes. As a result, the public component within the PPP was not present in the analysis of the case study.

It was also shown that IOCs, in rural areas can be seen as de-facto state entities, expected to provide public services where local or federal government bodies are elusive. The findings of this chapter further question the integrity of the analytical components of PPPs when used as a unit of analysis, in this case through critically analysing the attributes of the state and IOCs. The findings question how far the concept of the PPP holds in a context such as the Niger Delta.

In relation to the first research question, this chapter investigated how power, process and meaning are involved in the formation of state institutions in the Niger Delta, finding that state institutions in the Delta can be better understood and explained when viewed as institutions that support and protect oil revenue generation, rather than provide public services, universally distributed within a sovereign boundary. These findings do more to further the argument formed to address the second research question, in showing that the ‘public’ component of the state, a vital component in PPPs takes a form in the Niger Delta that is very different to that assumed by PPPs. If PPPs, as a global policy tool used to address sustainability issues, requires a ‘public’ component in the form of state institutions, this component in the Niger Delta exists in a very different form than in Western contexts. This dynamic raises questions as to how PPPs may even be implemented in this environment, and suggest that mechanisms of power and process may lie behind the failure of many partnerships implemented in low and middle income country contexts.



## **9.4. Final Thoughts on PPPs Sustainability in Low and Middle-Income Country Contexts**

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, drawing a neat line connecting the abstract discourse on PPPs in sustainability to the rich politically and historically embedded context of the Niger Delta was a challenging task. However, the conceptual framework of the thesis used to build the research questions allowed for an investigation that attempted to do so.

The first research question aimed to use the conceptual framework of Van Hecken et al. (2015) to unpick some of the contextual politics of the partnerships of the case studies to understand dynamics of process and power behind the formation of the institutions that practice PPPs. This question addressed a problem found in a review of relevant literature that many studies of PPPs in sustainability in low and middle income country contexts lack an appreciation of politically and historically embedded context. Each theoretical framework was then chosen to best represent the empirical data and act as a tool to investigate power and process, thereby addressing the research question.

The case studies showed how throughout their implementation, partnerships changed drastically from their original design, leading to unintended consequences. Actors at various stages (influenced by culture and the pursuit of resources) consciously and unconsciously changed and adapted the designed partnerships to suit their interests. As the thesis progressed, it became more apparent that many of the components of PPPs that are assumed in the literature (for example the community, the private sector institution or the state institution) are very different on the ground in the Delta. In using PPPs as a unit of analysis, attributes of components of analysis are predetermined. These predefined characteristics can be considered structural assumptions, in that they predetermine interrelations between analytical components. However, the analysis of this thesis has interrogated the basis of such assumptions through the empirical chapters presented. Requiring an analysis of a PPP where the community in question is not communal, the state in question has the attributes of an oil company and the oil company displays the attributes of the state demonstrates this difficulty. In addition to the argument of Van Hecken et al. (2015) that agency is an integral to the interplay between the structure of global programmes and their implementation on the ground, this suggests another consideration, that the institutions conceptualised within the design of these programmes are completely different in conception and reality. When designed programmes are rolled out, the gap between their conceived design and the reality on the ground creates opportunity for agents to create a new institutional environment that better suits the needs of the agent.

I will also briefly present a reflection on PPPs and the discourse of PPPs as a form of power. In doing so I will refer back to Lukes' (Lukes, 2005) three dimensions of power. A dynamic

outlined throughout the thesis is that PPPs involve a shift of power away from the public sector and towards the private sector, and the findings of the thesis can help theorise the implications of this shift. The first dimension of power outlined by Lukes can be seen in the relations outlined in this thesis between the private sector and the state in Nigeria, where power is directly exercised by the private sector through avoiding regulation by the state, allowing for autonomy of private sector operations in the Delta. However, this lack of ability to regulate by the state is a result of limited funding to state institutions that are responsible for regulation- this can be seen as the second dimension of power, where the capability of those upon whom power is enacted is reduced through changing the context of action. The third dimension of power involves the manipulation of the perception of what constitutes power in the mind of those under the influence of power. As (Scheyvens et al., 2016) details, the private sector was heavily involved in the production of the SDGs. Global advocacy of increased involvement of the private sector in sustainability solutions may, therefore, be the exercise of this third dimension of power, developing a conception that there is no alternative to the involvement of the private sector in sustainability. This point resonates with the argument of Escobar (1996) and although the investigation of this point was beyond the scope of this thesis, a fuller investigation of PPPs as a form of discourse and exercise of power is an important area of further research.

Through an investigation of power and process in the implementation of PPPs, this thesis has investigated the interplay between the global programme of PPPs as a structural design, created to address sustainability problems of the 21st century, and the implementation of these programmes on the ground. It has found that there is a large discord between the design of this global programme and its implementation on the ground. Similar to the arguments of Van Hecken et al. (2015), this discord can be seen as an exercise of agency, through ‘surfaces of engagement’ presented where global structures in the form of a drive towards PPPs as a tool of sustainability governance meet on the ground realities. Through investigating this discourse, there is opportunity to better demonstrate the mechanisms behind some of the processes of PPPs implementation in low and middle-income countries than has been achieved so far within the literature.

The original contribution of this thesis is the application of the main framework to an analysis of how the global initiative of PPPs, outlined in the first chapter is enacted on the ground in the Niger Delta. Through each of the empirical chapters, this framework has allowed for an analysis that appreciates the interplay between the global structural forces expressed through the application of PPPs as a global environmental governance regime and forces of historically embedded agency ‘on the ground’. In this way the thesis fills a gap in the literature for studies of PPPs in sustainability that focus on contextually influenced dynamics of power, process and meaning that influence how global governance regimes are enacted.

In researching the above areas, this thesis has aimed to bring into focus some of the more difficult and elusive questions surrounding PPPs as a central method of global sustainability governance and make an incremental contribution to answering these questions.



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# Appendices

# A

## **INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED**

| Interview Number | Role of Interviewee       | Interview Focus |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1                | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 2                | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 3                | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 4                | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 5                | Consultant                | SUNGAS          |
| 6                | Consultant                | SUNGAS          |
| 7                | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 8                | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 9                | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 10               | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 11               | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 12               | NGO representative        | SUNGAS          |
| 13               | Government representative | SUNGAS          |
| 14               | Academic                  | GMoU            |
| 15               | Government Representative | GMoU            |
| 16               | IOC representative        | GMoU            |
| 17               | NGO representative        | GMoU            |
| 18               | Consultant                | GMoU            |
| 19               | Academic                  | GMoU            |
| 20               | Government representative | GMoU            |
| 21               | Consultant                | GMoU            |
| 22               | NGO Focus Group           | GMoU            |
| 23               | Community Rep             | GMoU            |
| 24               | IOC representative        | GMoU            |
| 25               | NGO representative        | GMoU            |
| 26               | NGO representative        | GMoU            |
| 27               | NGO representative        | GMoU            |
| 28               | NGO representative        | GMoU            |
| 29               | Academic                  | GMoU            |
| 30               | Resident - Oloibiri       | General         |
| 31               | Resident - Oloibiri       | General         |
| 32               | Resident - Oloibiri       | General         |
| 33               | Academic                  | General         |
| 34               | NGO representative        | General         |
| 35               | Focus Group - Academics   | General         |
| 36               | Government representative | General         |
| 37               | Government representative | General         |
| 38               | Government representative | General         |
| 39               | Community Rep             | General         |
| 40               | Community Rep             | General         |
| 41               | Community Rep             | General         |
| 42               | Community Rep             | General         |

**Table A.1.:** *Table of Interviews Conducted*

# B

## **A SAMPLE OF A GMOU AGREEMENT BETWEEN GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS AND SPDC**



GLOBAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
Made this 28<sup>th</sup> day of April 2006

BETWEEN

GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS IN GBARAIN/EKPETIAMA- AND YENAGOA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF BAYELSA STATE acting through their accredited representatives who are their authorised signatories to this document (hereinafter referred to as 'GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS' which expression shall, whenever the context so admits, include their entire people and representing all their satellite communities including their traditional and institutional leaders, their successors-in-office, assigns, and agents of the first part

AND

THE SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY OF NIGERIA LIMITED, a Company incorporated in Nigeria and having its registered office address at Shell Industrial Area Rumuobiakani, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria and its Agents, Contractors and Sub-Contractors (hereinafter referred to as 'SPDC') which expression shall wherever the context so admits, include its successors-in-title, assigns and agents) for itself and on behalf of its other Joint Venture Partners, of the second part.

1. PREAMBLE

PURPOSE

This Global Memorandum of Understanding (G-MOU) dated 28<sup>th</sup> April 2006 is made in good faith and without prejudice, and also without prejudice to any pending land title or ownership disputes in the area to be impacted by the activities related to the Gbaran Integrated Oil and Gas Project (Gbaran IOGP), with a view to creating understanding, consolidating the existing cordial and mutually beneficial relationship between the people of GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS (through their accredited representatives as shown in this G-MOU) and SPDC.

SPDC on the one hand and GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS on the other hand hereby jointly declare and accept the obligations stated herein as their contribution towards the development and economic empowerment of GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS on the one hand and the smooth execution of SPDC activities on the other hand. Both parties acknowledge that these objectives can only be pursued in an atmosphere of mutual support, openness and understanding between the parties to this G-MOU.

NATURE, SCOPE AND DURATION OF THE COMPANY ACTIVITIES

This G-MOU covers the range of all SPDC's activities within GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS; which include:

1. Forest clearing,
2. Soil tests,
3. Flood, erosion studies and control,
4. Dredging,
5. Sand filling,
6. Piling,
7. Location preparation,
8. Drilling of new wells (32 No.),
9. Work over of existing wells (19 No.),
10. Construction of pipelines, flow lines, and manifolds,

- 2
11. Laying of power and control cables,
  12. Construction of Early Production Facilities (EPF)
  13. Construction of Field Logistic Base (including associated jetty, workshops, helipad, storage),
  14. Construction of a Central Processing Facility,
  15. Construction of roads and bridges,
  16. Ongoing operations and maintenance of existing SPDC facilities,
  17. Exploration activities,
  18. Decommissioning of facilities, flow lines and pipelines,
  19. Construction of community development infrastructure, and
  20. Implementation of SCD programmes and projects

The scope of coverage includes the creeks, rivers, waterways, swamp, and land within GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS.

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Both parties agree to use their best efforts to encourage training of youths, provision of basic social amenities as contained in this G-MOU, provision of employment opportunities for local community labour, use of local community contractors for provision of some categories of goods and services. The Parties expressly reject and forbid payments and compensations not directly traceable to actual work done, goods supplied or services rendered.

#### SECURITY AND RULE OF LAW

Both parties recognise and accept the premise that economic operation, which leads to further investment and development, is only possible in a secure and peaceful environment. It is an objective of the Parties to this G-MOU to use security and rule of law as the foundation of the sustainable partnership, which this G-MOU seeks to underpin.

#### DURATION OF THIS G-MOU

This G-MOU shall subsist for four years from the date of its signing by both parties and the terms and conditions provided under this G-MOU shall be subject to review annually and as the need arises. Whichever party requires having this G-MOU reviewed should give notice of such intent at least three months prior to the date of the review. The only exception to this condition is in the event of an emergency.

#### SUPREMACY OF THIS G-MOU

It is the agreement of the Parties that this G-MOU shall roll up outstanding issues and community development programmes/projects and supersede and replace any previous existing MOU(s) between SPDC and GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS respectively as well as their constituent communities.

Both parties recognise that this MoU is global and covers all existing SPDC facilities, and activities and programmes to be executed by SPDC via its employees, agents, contractors, and subcontractors.

#### GOVERNANCE OF G-MOU

It is agreed by both parties that this G-MOU will fall under the governance of the Project Advisory Committee instituted by BYSG. At the top is the State Steering Committee, which is supported by a Level 1 Project Advisory Committee (PAC-1) and Level 2 Project Advisory Committee(s) (PAC-2) using appropriate cluster structure.

#### SPDC AGENTS, CONTRACTORS AND SUBCONTRACTORS

Reference to SPDC Agents, Contractors and Sub-Contractors in this G-MOU shall include main contractors, sub-contractors, minor contractors, routine maintenance contractors, servicemen, authorised visitors, inspectors, radiographers, surveyors, drivers, crane operators and any other category of persons having lawful business dealings with/for SPDC in GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS.



The following procedure shall be adopted by any aggrieved party for any perceived default on the side of the other on any aspect of this G-MOU or any other issue capable of affecting harmonious relationship between SPDC, its contractors and GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS.

1. Any grievance shall be reported and forwarded to the PAC-2 Secretary (Facilitator) as soon as the occurrence takes place or is observed latest 24 hours after event occurs.
2. PAC-2 shall meet, and within one week of receiving a grievance report resolve the matter. If the issue is not resolved within this period, it shall be taken to and discussed at a meeting of the PAC-1.
3. In the event that the matter remains unresolved after the next meeting of the PAC-1, the issue will be taken before the Steering Committee. This committee should meet at least once in three months to review the PAC performance except in emergencies.
4. If either party is not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting of the Steering Committee after two months, either party is at liberty to take it before the Executive Governor of Bayelsa State.
5. Both parties agree that there shall not be any resort to violence or disruptive actions under any circumstances or work stoppages, forceful occupation, sabotage of facility, assault on persons or property or issuance of threats by either side in seeking redress for any real or perceived breach of responsibility.
6. For the avoidance of doubt, this grievance procedure shall not have the effect of preventing the report of criminal cases or cases inimical to public order to the law enforcement agencies. Such matters shall be handled completely in line with the law.
7. Either party has a right to refer criminal cases or cases of public disorder to relevant Security Agencies for appropriate action.

**H. PENALTY FOR BREACH OF G-MOU**

In the event of the breach of this G-MOU by either party, the following provisions shall apply:

All the benefits including SCD projects and programmes are conditional to uninterrupted operations that may accrue to beneficiary communities and all parties agree that funding for these projects and programmes shall be suspended if there is any disruption to SPDC and / or its contractors' operations during the period of the G-MOU. This clause shall not preclude the taking of other steps, for instance, under Part H of this G-MOU, if necessary.

Any breach of this G-MOU on the part of SPDC especially from delay in disbursement of funds (taking into account Joint Venture Partner funding by more than 6 months), will attract a penalty, which is equivalent to an income-generating project to the amount of N5

GBARAIN AND EKPETIAMA KINGDOMS expressly agree that breach or perceived breach of the G-MOU by SPDC or its contractor shall not be a ground for disruption of SPDC or Contractor operations but will use the grievance handling procedure to address their concern herein attached.



**SAMPLES FROM A REPORT ON GMOU  
STAKEHOLDERS GATHERING FOR  
GBARAIN-EKPETIAMA GMOU CLUSTER**

## **A REPORT ON STAKEHOLDERS GATHERING FOR GBARAIN- EKPETIAMA CLUSTER**

**BY STAKEHOLDERS ALLIANCE FOR CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY (SACA) IN COLLABORATION WITH  
SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT Company (SPDC)**

**TITLED:**

### **THE BENEFITS AND ISSUES ARISING FROM GMOU**

On June 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, SACA in collaboration with SPDC organized an Oil/Gas Stakeholders Gathering in Yenagoa, Bayelsa state for Gbarain/Ekpetiama Cluster of communities. This Cluster is located in the heart of SPDC's Integrated Oil and Gas gathering project in Gbarain Clan.

There were 61 participants present including SPDC representatives, Mr. Victor Okiri and Mr. Lawrence Dango, the Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Mineral Resources Bayelsa State, Mrs. Kemisuomein Walson, the representative of Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment, Adike Awuduma, Comrade Morris Alagoa of Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth (FoE), National Oil Spill Detection Response Agency representatives, Mr. John Adiola and Mr. Agoro O. J., the King of Gbarain Kingdom, H.R.M. King Gabriel Akah, the King of Ekpetiama, H.R.M. King Bubaraye Dakolo, the Chairman and Secretary of the Cluster Development Board of Gbarain/Ekpetiama and members.

The Director of SACA, Mr. Abba Ayemi, and Fr. Kevin O'Hara the Board Chairman of SACA welcomed everyone. H.R.H., Chief Barnabas G. Tarila said the opening prayer.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The facilitator of the workshop, Mr. Austin Onuoha explained that the focus of the workshop would be on the lessons learnt from their GMOU with Shell Nigeria, and the strengths and the weaknesses of the former GMOU agreement, and the opportunities that the signing of a new GMOU should mean for the communities.



Mr. Austin Onuoha, Facilitator

Mr Onuoha invited the participants to identify the areas for improvement and the challenges for the implementation of the new GMoU. He described how the concept of GMoU was introduced and implemented in Nigeria by Chevron in the Warri axis of the Niger Delta. He explained that the GMoU was a global initiative, listing various names given to it in various other parts of the world where oil/gas was produced. According to him, a GMoU is effective when it is:

- transparent,
- legitimate,
- accessible,
- a source of continuous learning,
- predictable,
- equitable,
- based on engagement and dialogue,
- participatory, and
- a development agency/stakeholders interface.

King Gabriel Aka, said that he nearly walked out of the gathering when Mr. Okiri of Shell said that SPDC met with the Kings, saying that he did not belong to the CDB and CT and they he was only involved when there was a problem. He further complained that the first GMoU promised that gas flaring would last for only 6 months but it has lasted for years and they no longer sleep well in their houses as a result of vibrations from the gas flaring. He concluded that Shell instigated those problems because they believed in divide and rule.

Mr. Okiri of Shell quickly apologized to the King for what he described as a breach in communication. According to him, when he mentioned that Shell met with the Kings, he was referring to the King of another Clan and not King Aka of Gbarain.

Mr. Adeola of NOSDRA in his speech said that he overheard somebody say that the GMoU was imposed on them. He advised that the problems be tackled at the base level and the associated effects nipped in the bud.

The Paramount Ruler of Polaku community, Chief Barnabas Tarila, complained that Shell refused to change the CDB when their tenure expired until the community raised alarm which resulted in their going to court. He complained further that whenever they wrote to Shell for scholarships or any other thing, they would refer them to the GMoU funds "What is then the contribution of the tenants (Shell) to the community?", he wondered.

#### **Scholarships**

Some community leaders complained that Shell reduced the amount of funding for scholarships in some communities and in others dropped it totally, and referred them to the GMoU funds when they asked for scholarships.

The CDB Chairman, Chief Kwen Kemederekumo, in his speech said that they were giving 'internal scholarships'. He acknowledged that they had gathered to identify their lapses and improve on them. He condemned the practice of calling the CDB thieves, saying that the CDB was just like a service provider and that every community had representatives on the Board who were supposed to get back to them. He added that any community which did not get information should hold their representatives on the Board responsible. Mr. Onuoha asked him if he had a feedback mechanism to be sure that the communities got the information and he responded that he called some community members to confirm if they got the information or not. According to him, they had legacy projects and GMoU

projects and some projects were done before he assumed the office, adding that there was no documentation that was handed over to him. He continued to say that he had written to Shell to make amendments and that there were challenges both in CDB and Shell. Mr. Onuoha advised him to get the contacts and the phone numbers of chiefs and the all the relevant community leaders and paste them boldly in his office for easy communication. Mr. Onuoha however commended him for showing up for the workshop in the first place, observing that other CDB chairmen did not usually attend such workshops where they might be queried on transparency.

#### **PROJECT MONITORING**

Dr. Dickson Asemota of Koroama community queried the capacity of the board to supervise the on-going projects . He equally accused the CDB of not considering environmental issues and that once money was given to them, they collected without ensuring that the necessary things were put into consideration. He reminded the board that they were the mouthpiece of Gbarain Kingdom and asked them to address the health challenges they had. He further observed that Shell's position on gas flaring regarding the test conducted by Shell's delegate meant there was no practicable solution to the gas flare menace.

Chief Tarila said that once a project was brought to the community, it belongs to them, so the community has to take the responsibility of monitoring the project because the CDB could not go to the field to supervise the projects.

Mr. Onuoha asked what the sanction was if the projects were not properly done. He recommended that an independent body would be in the best position to monitor the projects and not the Board. He asked them what they thought could be done to resolve these issues at hand.

The representative of the State Ministry of Environment, Mr. Adike Awuduma, in his speech said that they got complaints of pipelines passing through homes in Koroama and other complaints regarding environmental hazards. He advised that the handling of such problems should be considered early enough – during the GMOU negotiations; not when the problems became much and overwhelming, they would start complaining.

Mr. Doutimiye Ogbofa of CROTINN, advised that the community's constitution should be upgraded to incorporate the whole governance structure and spell out responsibilities including project monitoring.

One of the women leaders said that cooperation was the solution to the problems. According to her, there were communities that were cooperating but that her own community was not cooperating. She briefed us on how the CTs ignored the CDC on a particular road that was to be done. She condemned such attitude and emphasized on cooperation.

Josiah Inebaraton of Ogboloma advised that the CDCs were in the best position to monitor the projects and then pass the information to the CTs and the communities.

#### **SECURITY**

Gbarain youth president, Comrade Martins Ebiye, complained that they had security challenges and he had written to Shell, Dr. Chibuzo Anyim specifically, but never got any response so far. He added that other governing structures had some percentages in the GMoU funds, but none for the youths, suggesting that 25% should also be given to the youths. King Aka corroborated Mr. Ebiye's position on security and emphasized that if Shell provided security for their staff and facilities, same should also be extended to the community members. Mr. Onuoha reminded them that the Voluntary Principles for Security and Human Rights to which the companies signed was not about the security of the host communities but about the security of their personnel, assets and business interests from threats, and that those threats were the communities.

Mr. Onuoha, presenting a diagram of goal attainment matrix on the screen, asked the communities to mention the things that they would like to Achieve, Avoid and Eliminate and they responded as follows:

#### Things to **ACHIEVE**

1. Scholarship to university level
2. Potable water
3. Good road network
4. Employment
5. Skills acquisition
6. Daily market
7. Reduce gas flaring
8. Electricity
9. Hospital

10. Increase women 15% funding to 25%
11. Increase project development funds
12. Inclusive youth funding to 25%
13. Voluntary principle on security and HR payment for TRS

Things to **AVOID**

1. Sharing/stealing of project funds
2. Vandalism of pipelines

Things to **ELIMINATE**

1. Non seriousness of Shell
2. SPDC deliberately making the GMOU document scarce
3. Shell taking communities for granted



- 4.
5. Fr. Kevin O'Hara of SACA addressing the gathering



In his closing remarks, Fr. O'Hara asked them how long it would take to negotiate and sign the new GMoU and they replied 2 years. He asked if there would be any payments during the renegotiation of the GMoU and they replied that there would be none. Fr. O'Hara expressed disappointment with the duration of the negotiations. He stated that it would be important for Shell Shareholders in the UK to know of the GMoU learnings. He assured them that he would link Gbarain Cluster to the Shareholders in the UK, in an effort to negotiate with SPDC for the best outcome for both parties for their new GMoU.

He advised them to unite and work together to agree on a common ground regarding FTOs and how to improve the GMoU process.

Mr. Onuoha summarized the critical points mentioned in the workshop.

The negotiations between the Cluster and Shell Nigeria for a new GMoU offer an opportunity to improve the GMoU process and correct the failings of the past. SACA invites SPDC to liaise with ECCR UK to ensure best practice and the highest international standards for the well being of their host communities in Bayelsa state.

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