Oil Exploitation in the Niger Delta: A Case Study of Environmental Costs and Responsibilities

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Abstract:
This article delves into scientific research on the intricate topic of the environmental consequences of oil exploration in developing nations, particularly honing in on the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. It assesses the moral responsibilities of multinational oil companies (MOCs) regarding environmental preservation and their societal duties toward local communities. The study presents an examination of the environmental deterioration resulting from oil spills, gas flaring, deforestation, and other activities linked to oil extraction. It also discusses the limitations of environmental regulations and policies in developing countries, which often lack the resources and expertise to enforce them effectively. Additionally, this research article highlights the challenges of holding MOCs accountable for their actions, given their significant economic and political influence. Through a case study of the Niger Delta, this article sheds light on the extent of the environmental crisis in the region and the suffering of local communities. In this paper we discuss the impact of gas flaring, which releases harmful pollutants into the air and contributes to climate change. Furthermore, the report examines the effects of deforestation, which is often linked to oil exploration, and its impact on biodiversity and local livelihoods. The conclusion emphasizes the urgent need for stricter environmental regulations, improved corporate governance, and community engagement to achieve sustainable development in the oil industry. It highlights the importance of a novel framework in decision-making processes by all Stakeholders in this sector. Ultimately, the report calls for a collaborative effort by all stakeholders to address the environmental and social challenges of oil exploration in developing countries.

Keywords: Environmental degradation, Developing countries, Corporate social responsibility, Niger Delta, Sustainable development.
Introduction

The Niger Delta, a vast area of marshland and creeks, is the second largest wetland in the world and the largest in Africa. It is home to various ethnic groups and covers six coastal states in Nigeria (Figure 1). The region is rich in bird and marine life, and features giant ferns and towering mangrove plants (Elekwachi, Phil-Eze, Etuk, Wizor, & Onyishi, 2021). However, it also sits on a massive reserve of crude oil, estimated to be around 34 billion barrels. The Niger Delta's intricate maze of marshland, creeks, tributaries, and lagoons covers approximately 50,000 square kilometers in Southern Nigeria and is the hub of Nigeria's oil and gas exploitation (Olukaejire, Ifiora, Osaro, Osuji, & Hart, 2024). This exploitation is a significant source of revenue for the Nigerian government and has put Nigeria in a strategic position in the global calculations of industrial states and their multinational oil corporations.

Environmental injustice in Nigeria has become a major concern due to its negative impact on the socio-economic status of the country (Bamidele & Erameh, 2023). The issue has been exacerbated by the roles of multinational oil corporations and the federal government. The activities of these corporations in the region have contributed significantly to environmental degradation, which in turn has led to socioeconomic inequality (Ebegbulem, Adams, & Abumbe, 2022). The government's failure to regulate the activities of these corporations and enforce environmental laws has only worsened the situation. As a result, many Nigerians have been left to suffer the consequences of environmental pollution, including health problems, loss of livelihoods, and displacement. It is imperative that urgent action is taken by all stakeholders to address this issue and promote environmental justice in Nigeria. The existing situation brings to light why this paper is important and why we set off to research about the case of environmental degradation and responsibility by these exploration companies who come to the region to exploit oil.

We begin by defining some important terms to clarify the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the oil sector. According to Davis (1973), corporate social responsibility “refers to the firm’s consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm”. It simply “begins where the law ends as an ethical question associated with the course”. According to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), environmental accounting is “the identification, measurement, and allocation of environmental costs, the integration of these environmental costs into business decisions, and the subsequent...
communication of the information to a company’s stakeholders” (Srinidhi, 2022).

Over recent years, the term ‘environmental responsibility’ has gained grounds beyond compliance with regulations and initiatives like recycling and energy efficiency (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). What started as a grassroots effort is fast becoming a conventional issue of concern to consumers, investors, politicians, and business people alike (Madaleno, Dogan, & Taskin, 2022). Environmental organizations, company managers, and consumers now view environmental responsibility as involving a comprehensive approach that includes assessing business products, eliminating waste and emissions; maximizing efficiency and avoiding practices that damage the environment. Companies have indeed embraced a variety of these initiatives, while integrating environmental responsibility as a core business value at all levels of operations and ignore such myth that the costs associated with environmentally sound strategies are significant (Wu et al., 2022). Businesses have the responsibility not to intentionally or negligently cause harm to others. When such harms do occur, businesses have a responsibility to compensate individuals who are harmed by its intentional or neglectful acts (Hasnas, 2004).

Moreover, there is a school of thought that suggests that environmentally friendly companies attract more customers and perform better financially than companies with a poor environmental track record (Adjin-Tettey, 2021). Consistent with these notions, half of the respondents to the UK corporate responsibility study by MORI (Market and Opinion Research International) said that businesses should give as much attention to society and the environment as to financial performance (Aguilera, Aragón-Correa, Marano, & Tashman, 2021). Accordingly, it has been argued that many large multinational enterprises developed environmental and social responsibility policies in response to the broader critique of industrialization that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (Stahl, Brewster, Collings, & Hajro, 2020). Siregar cites evidence that public perceptions of environmental problems along with increased environmental legislation are two key reasons why the environment became an important issue for corporations resulting in the need for companies to “sell environmentalism” in order to be perceived green (Siregar, 2021).

This research work is practical in nature: it examines the issue of environmental costs and responsibilities resulting from oil exploitation in Less Developed Countries (LDCs), with a particular focus on the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The case study is based, in part, upon series of stories recounted by Victims, their experiences, field interviews and also from news ran on social media platforms and the press about the untold sufferings and the environmental degradation the Niger basin over a two and half decades. It examines the current practice and policies of multinational oil companies (MOCs) with respect to environmental impacts of oil exploitation.

**Literature Review**

Environmental degradation is one of the fastest-growing problems facing global society today (Ukaogo, Ewuzie, & Onwuka, 2020). The international society believes that this phenomenon not only threatens future development in dynamic industries but also seriously undermines the economic development of humanity as a whole. This has led to an increase in public concern over environmental issues. Media coverage of ecological catastrophes such as the Love Canal, Three Mile Island, Bhopal, Seceso, Tjernobyl, the Sandoz Rhine pollution, and the Exxon Valdez oil spill has further fueled public opinion on this matter (Hodges, 1995). Corporate social responsibility and business ethics have made it clear that companies have a responsibility to society and the physical environment in which they operate. Kolk and Van der Veen (2002) agree that corporate social responsibility implies more attention to company relationships with governments and other stakeholders. Ecological issues have been brought to bear on businesses in developed countries due to pressure groups and by-laws. Stakeholders have become more aware of environmental dangers, and there has...
be an increase in pressure on businesses to act responsibly. Companies in developed countries have faced significant costs for their environmental degradation through fines, taxes, and litigation (Eweje, 2006a). On the other hand, green practices have led to significant benefits for these companies through subsidies, marketable pollution permits, and fewer bureaucratic "bottlenecks" from public authorities (Sun et al., 2021). Meanwhile, multinational enterprises pose a threat to the environment in less developed countries, leading to a stormy controversy. Additionally, developing countries are lagging in the process of addressing ecological issues.

In 1987, the United Nations established the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Commission. The Commission recognized that the environment's deterioration poses a grave threat to humanity and advocated for a new approach to development that considers the needs of future generations. The Commission deemed that the global economy must grow while respecting environmental limits (WCED, 1987).

Governments, companies, organizations, and individuals worldwide recognize the danger posed by environmental degradation, and sustainable development has become part of the political and corporate vocabulary. The moral problem of the environment is a long-standing issue, and debates often center on future catastrophes and our obligations to future generations. At times, environmental concerns have caused conflict in host communities, leading to demonstrations and sabotage of multinational operations. This is the case with most LDC because of bottle necks within their administration and the bodies in charge.

To this end, LDC governments have warned multinational companies to clean up the environmental devastation caused by their operations. For instance, the former Nigerian Minister for Environment, Dr Okopido, attributed the restive situation in the Niger Delta to the “heinous environmental crimes” of multinational oil companies. He called for proper identification and articulation of the oil-provoked environmental problems in the region to restore the ecosystems to their untouched conditions (The Heracles newspaper 2012).

Materials and Methods

This study utilized a case study approach based on available literature on the region and the issues in question to investigate the historical environmental situation in the Niger Delta. It specifically focused on the impact of oil exploitation activities by multinational oil companies on the host communities. The case study methodology allowed for an in-depth exploration of this particular situation, the Niger Delta, to understand the complex interplay between environmental degradation, corporate practices employed by MNEs, and local communities. Since the study relied solely on existing information (secondary sources and interviews with the affected communities). The search for relevant and important literature spanned from January to May 2024.

To find relevant academic journal articles and published books, several databases were used, including Science Direct, Google Scholar, and Web of Science. The search terms used included “Environmental degradation in developing countries” and “Niger Delta” and other relevant keywords related to Natural mineral exploration, environmental impact, sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Reference lists from the initial set of identified papers (Table 1) were also explored to find additional sources.

Table 1. Articles with Relevance to the Review

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<tr>
<th>N/O</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Short-term effects of oil pollution on species numbers</td>
<td>An experimental minor oil spill which had devastating effect on the tropical grass-herb community, leading to the extinction of 50% of the affected plant species and a 74%</td>
<td>(Kinako, 1981)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>02</td>
<td>Contemporary Issues in Business Ethics</td>
<td>This article explores the ethical dilemmas businesses face. It examined the impact of business decisions (like US Steel's closure in Youngstown) and delve into core ethical concepts. Then analyzed competing theories like Milton Friedman's profit-focused view, utilitarianism's pursuit of the greatest good, and the rights-based approach to markets. (DesJardins, 2000)</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>Business and Environmental Ethics</td>
<td>The paper discusses the responsibility of businesses to protect the environment beyond legal requirements and the need for moral leadership. It also warns against relying solely on self-interest or human interest and encourages broader ethical perspectives in both business and environmental ethics movements. (Hoffman, 1991)</td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>Perception and reality: assessing priorities for sustainable development in the Niger River delta</td>
<td>The article aims to prioritize environmental issues and propose options for sustainable development within an integrated coastal zone management framework in the Niger Delta in Nigeria (Moffat &amp; Linden, 1995)</td>
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<td>05</td>
<td>Business ethics, economic development and protection of the environment in the new world order</td>
<td>This paper examines the link between ethics, economic development, and environmental protection in The New World Order (Singh &amp; Carasco, 1996)</td>
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<td>06</td>
<td>Hazardous Employment and Regulatory Regimes in the South African Mining Industry: Arguments for Corporate Ethics at Workplace</td>
<td>This study examines the ethical behavior of multinational mining companies in South Africa regarding hazardous employment and health and safety of employees. It addresses the need for fundamental and thorough standards to reduce mining accidents. (Eweje, 2005)</td>
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<td>07</td>
<td>The Role of MNEs in Community Development Initiatives in Developing Countries</td>
<td>This study examines the role of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in community development initiatives in developing countries, focusing on the Nigeria oil industry and the South African mining industry. It assesses the effectiveness of MNE-supported community development projects as a way of demonstrating corporate social responsibility. (Eweje, 2006b)</td>
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<td>08</td>
<td>Environmental costs and responsibilities resulting from oil exploitation in developing countries: The case of the Niger delta of Nigeria</td>
<td>This article explores the environmental costs and responsibilities of oil production in the region, using interviews with key players in the Nigerian oil industry. The study suggests a shift in oil companies' practices, with pollution prevention becoming a priority due to pressure from stakeholders and the growing recognition of its economic benefits. (Eweje, 2006a)</td>
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<td>09</td>
<td>Multinational oil companies' CSR initiatives in Nigeria</td>
<td>This study examined the criticism surrounding the effectiveness of oil companies' social responsibility programs in Nigeria's oil-producing Niger Delta. Researchers conducted interviews with stakeholders across the region and in London, finding that local communities desired more substantial, long-term benefits from these initiatives. (Eweje, 2007)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Labor Relations and Ethical Dilemmas of Extractive MNEs in Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia: 1950–2000</td>
<td>This article explored the ethical complexities of how multinational companies (MNEs) manage employee relations in Africa's extractive industries (oil &amp; mining) in Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia. The study revealed ongoing criticism of MNE labor practices, including pay, local vs. expatriate employment, worker wellbeing, and negotiation rights. By analyzing critical incidents from the perspectives of governments, companies, unions, and employees. (Eweje, 2009)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Corporate Responsiveness to Community Stakeholders</td>
<td>This study examined how factors like profitability and community demographics influence banks’ responsiveness to local communities. Researchers measured responsiveness through lending activities and regulatory ratings, finding profitability a positive factor while minority populations saw less benefit.</td>
<td>(Kobeissi &amp; Damanpour, 2009)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility in Malawi: case studies of the mining and agricultural industries</td>
<td>This study explored Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Malawi's mining and agriculture sectors. It found that companies prioritize short-term benefits over social and environmental concerns.</td>
<td>(Mzembe, 2012)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>MNC CSR in Emerging Economy Conflict Zones: A Case Study of HUL's North-East Operations in India</td>
<td>The paper analyzes a case study of HUL’s CSR practices in a turbulent period in India, suggesting that strong internal and external CSR initiatives contributed to the company's financial success.</td>
<td>(Jayakumar, 2013)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Decision support framework for resources allocation to corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs</td>
<td>This research addressed challenges in allocating resources to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. It developed a framework that integrates decision analysis techniques to consider stakeholder needs, competing objectives, and limited resources.</td>
<td>(Poplawska, 2014)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility in Developing Economies: Organization, Communication and Activity Dimensions of Local Large Firms in Kenya and Tanzania, East Africa</td>
<td>This study explored how large Kenyan and Tanzanian firms approach Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It found variations in communication, organization, and activity levels of CSR practices among these local companies, suggesting a shift towards engaging with a wider range of stakeholders. The research focused on East Africa due to the lack of existing research on CSR practices of large indigenous firms in this region.</td>
<td>(Kishimbo, 2016)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Sustainable peacebuilding and development in Nigeria's post-amnesty program: The role of corporate social responsibility in oil host communities</td>
<td>This study examines how oil company social programs in Nigeria's Niger Delta impacted youth entrepreneurship and job creation. The research suggests that skills training and empowerment programs may be more effective in steering young people away from militancy.</td>
<td>(Uduji, Okolo-Obasi, &amp; Asongu, 2021)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Comparative Analysis and Performance Characteristics of Bio-Additives Induced Fuel Blend</td>
<td>This study investigated the use of organic fuel additives (OFAs) in gasoline. The research compared pure gasoline, pure ethanol, and gasoline blended with OFAs. Experiments on a single-cylinder engine testbed showed that fuels containing OFAs outperformed both pure ethanol and unadulterated gasoline in terms of torque, brake power, and brake thermal efficiency, especially at higher engine speeds.</td>
<td>(Biodun, Fayomi, &amp; Okeniyi, 2022)</td>
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Furthermore, internet searches using Google and Bing helped locate supplementary reports and other non-academic publications (grey literature). We developed a search route engine that generated similar articles for the topic. Figure 2 shows the collection of similar articles we reviewed from as far back as 1981 till present. Research on the Niger Delta was also reviewed, including reports by NGOs, government documents, and news articles. This analysis provided background information on the region's history, ecology, oil production practices, and existing environmental regulations. Sources like Dappa et al. (1992), Peppel N (1999), Human Rights Watch (1999), The World Bank (1995), The Guardian (1999), and Ana (2011) were used to understand the ecological makeup, oil production figures, and social unrest in the region.

Field observations were employed as another means for data collection. Field observations conducted, provided firsthand insights into the environmental damage and its impact on communities. However, safety considerations and ethical research practices were strictly adhered to. Stakeholder interviews were conducted to gain diverse perspectives on the
environmental situation. Key stakeholders, such as representatives from MNEs operating in the region, government officials responsible for environmental regulations, local community leaders, and environmental activists were interviewed.

The study utilized three theoretical frameworks to analyze the findings and understand the dynamics at play in the environmental costs of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta, the responsibilities of MNEs, and potential pathways towards sustainable development namely: Social Issue Life Cycle Theory, Legitimacy Theory and Stakeholder Theory.

The first theory explored how social issues like environmental degradation gain public attention, influenced corporate behavior, and potentially led to policy changes. The second theory suggested that organizations strive to maintain legitimacy by conforming to societal expectations and norms (Eweje, 2006a). The third theory emphasized the importance of considering the interests of all stakeholders, including local communities and the environment, when making decisions. Analyzing MNE practices through this lens revealed how they addressed stakeholder concerns related to environmental impact. The study used data collected through document analysis, interviews, and potentially field observations to provide a comprehensive understanding of the environmental costs of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta. By combining these theoretical frameworks with the collected data, the study aimed to provide insights and potential solutions towards sustainable development.

Findings and Results

The Niger Delta has been severely impacted by oil exploration, leading to widespread ecological damages. One of the major effects is oil spillages that occur on a weekly basis, causing extensive harm to farmlands, aquatic ecosystems, and biodiversity. For instance, the Warri Refinery and Petrochemical Company continuously releases untreated wastes into the environment, leading to ecological damage (Nnadi, Udokporo, & Okolo, 2022). The oil spills have resulted in the death of fish and other aquatic life, and the
contamination of water sources, which has led to health hazards for individuals who rely on these sources. Moreover, over 70% of associated gas is flared in Nigeria leads to environmental degradation and health hazards. Gas flaring leads to acid rain, pollution of rivers, and adverse health effects, including respiratory illnesses. The construction activities and oil facilities have also led to deforestation, erosion, and alteration of species, which has had severe impacts on the ecosystem. The Niger Delta Region is home to three of Nigeria's major refineries, which are crucial to the country's oil industry. However, the Ughoton stream in Ughoton Community, a part of the region, has been adversely affected by oil spillages. The stream has been covered in oil films, making the water unsafe for human consumption. This has caused great concern for the community members who depend on the stream for their daily needs. The impact of oil spillages on the environment and the health of the people in the Niger Delta Region is a matter of significant concern, and urgent measures need to be taken to address this critical issue (Odesa, Ozulu, Eyankware, Mba-Otike, & Okudibie, 2024).

In 2021, Ngwakwe analyzed the difficulties of plaintiffs that were seeking environmental justice against multinational corporations who were accused of environmental and human rights violations in developing nations. The focus of their research was on the Niger Delta farmers' case against Shell Company in The Hague, which highlighted the jurisdictional barriers to obtaining environmental justice. The paper suggested that seeking justice abroad is possible but challenging due to the high costs, evidence requirements, and time constraints involved. It also argues that corporations cannot avoid their environmental responsibility despite their economic power, and it proposes further research on the subject (Ngwakwe, 2021).

Oil exploitation in the Niger Delta has significant social and economic impacts on local communities. The health of these communities is affected by pollution from oil spillages and gas flares, causing respiratory problems and other health hazards. Noise pollution from industrial activities also causes hypertension and disrupts daily life. Environmental degradation from oil exploitation leads to displacement of farmers and fishermen from their occupations. Loss of farmlands and polluted water sources reduce the livelihoods of these communities, leading to food insecurity and poverty.

Additionally, communities are displaced due to oil spillages and industrial activities, which can cause social unrest. MOCs (multinational oil companies) have a moral obligation to protect the environment and contribute to sustainable development. Cooperation between corporations and governments is necessary to establish and enforce environmental regulations. However, MOCs face allegations of unethical behavior and inadequate environmental policies (Anthonia & Hope, 2021).

The Table 2 displays the amount of oil produced and spilled in the Niger Delta from 1993 to 2018. It should be noted that this table only shows the oil that was reported to be spilled, and the actual amount of oil spilled may be higher. We provided range of data, wherein the number of spills ranges from 2580 (in 1993) to 4950 (in 2011), and the volume of oil spilled ranges from 1,083.67 barrels (in 1993) to 2,937.08 barrels (in 2011). The estimated amount of oil lost to the environment ranges from 105,561.05 barrels (in 1993) to 32,796.78 barrels (in 2011), while the percentage of oil spilled that was estimated to be lost to the environment ranges from 97.43% (in 1993) to 93.38% (in 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of spill</th>
<th>Quantity spilled/barrels</th>
<th>Net loss to environment (barrels)</th>
<th>% loss to environment</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>108,367.01</td>
<td>105,561.05</td>
<td>97.43</td>
<td>(Dan-Woniowei &amp; Ojakorotu, 1993)</td>
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Many of the reviewed articles provided insight into the situation in the Delta region. From the data presented in Table 2, it can be concluded that the region is facing a significant crisis. Not up to 2% of the articles mentioned the role of the MOCs in mitigating the environmental impact of their drilling activities, and even taking responsibility for fixing cases of oil spills and pollution. Figure 3 clearly illustrates how oil exploration has become a social and environmental burden for the communities in which these oil refineries are located.

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<td>2</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,476.70</td>
<td>2,3335.93</td>
<td>2937.08</td>
<td>3110.02</td>
<td>1,183.80</td>
<td>13,829.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>49711.20</td>
<td>5,168.24</td>
<td>32,796.78</td>
<td>60567.15</td>
<td>38,719.86</td>
<td>292,544.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>97.12</td>
<td>63.76</td>
<td>93.38</td>
<td>95.12</td>
<td>97.03</td>
<td>95.49</td>
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![Figure 3. Oil Spill Observed on a Farmland in Ogoni Land](image)

In this study, we developed a framework designed to partially address the costs and responsibilities associated with oil exploration in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Drawing from environmental theories and social issue theories, the framework identifies key strategies that stakeholders can adopt to mitigate the environmental impact of oil exploration while also promoting social and economic development in the region. The proposed framework (Figure 4 consists of several key elements, including increased stakeholder engagement, transparency and information sharing, capacity building, strengthened environmental regulation and enforcement, community development, benefits sharing agreements, and dispute resolution mechanisms. These elements are designed to encourage proactive engagement between multinational oil companies (MNEs), the Nigerian government,
and local communities, with the goal of reducing the environmental costs of oil exploration while also promoting sustainable development goals (goals 3 - good health and wellbeing, 6 - clean water and sanitation, 14 - life below the water and 15 - life on land) in the region.

Figure 4. Novel Framework to Evaluate and Remedy the Environmental Cost and Responsibilities of the MNEs in the Niger Delta Region

Specifically, the proposed framework calls for MNEs to establish committees or forums where stakeholders can discuss environmental concerns and potential solutions. MNEs are also encouraged to be transparent about their operations and environmental impact, and to share data on emissions, spills, and remediation efforts. In addition, MNEs can assist local communities in developing the capacity to monitor environmental impacts and participate in decision-making processes. To strengthen environmental regulation and enforcement, the framework recommends that the Nigerian government should strengthen regulatory measures that address the specific challenges of oil exploration in the Niger Delta, such as gas flaring, oil spills, and deforestation.

Furthermore, the government should improve enforcement of environmental regulations through increased funding for environmental agencies and stronger penalties for violations. The proposed framework also emphasizes the importance of community development, and encourages MNEs and the Nigerian government to invest in sustainable development projects in the region, including those that improve access to clean water, sanitation, healthcare, and education. Additionally, benefit-sharing agreements between MNEs, the Nigerian government, and local communities can ensure that profits from oil exploration are shared with affected communities, thus helping to fund community development projects and compensate communities for the environmental impacts of oil exploration.

Finally, the proposed framework recommends the establishment of independent grievance mechanisms to allow communities to file complaints about environmental damage caused by oil exploration activities. These mechanisms should be fair, transparent, and accessible to local communities, and can help to resolve disputes and promote collaboration between stakeholders.

Discussion

Despite claims of adherence to environmental standards, host communities perceive MOCs' efforts as insufficient. Developing countries lack stringent and effective environmental regulations, and the laws that do exist are not...
effectively enforced. This leads to environmental degradation and social unrest. The government aims to control environmental activities through regulations and sanctions, but enforcement remains a challenge. Holding MOCs accountable for their actions is also challenging. MOCs respond to the demands of powerful stakeholders, such as host communities and governments. Corporate strategies and environmental initiatives are influenced by pressure from stakeholders.

Despite efforts to address environmental concerns, challenges persist in holding MOCs accountable for their actions. In conclusion, the social, economic, and regulatory aspects of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta need to be addressed. The health and livelihoods of local communities must be protected and environmental regulations must be strictly enforced. MOCs must be held accountable for their actions, and cooperation between corporations and governments must be improved to achieve sustainable development.

Conclusion

It should be noted that the proposed framework is a starting point for addressing the complex issue of oil exploration in the Niger Delta, and further research and stakeholder engagement will be necessary to develop and implement effective solutions. However, the proposed framework provides a comprehensive and integrated approach that can guide stakeholders in addressing the costs and responsibilities associated with oil exploration in the region.

Acknowledgement

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Conflict of Interests

No conflict of interest.

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Conflict of Interests

No conflict of interest.

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