ABSTRACT
The work examined how environmental degradation induced by oil theft in Nigeria Niger Delta can cause national insecurity. In doing this, it was revealed that Oil theft and environmental degradation constitute potential source of national insecurity in Nigeria. This conclusion is drawn from the character of those involve in oil theft activities among others. The work discovered that licensed oil companies and armed youths from the region play leading role in this respect. Degradation start from regular pipelines vandalization by the armed Niger Delta youths to erecting various illegal refining points. The work reveal that if the practice continue, there will be scarcity of resources leading to competition for the available resources hence conflict. Given the use of arms in the agitation for justice by the youths, an arm group can challenge Nigeria corporate existence. The work recommended true democracy and good leadership as oil theft is a manifestation of the absence of both.

Keywords: Oil theft, Environmental insecurity and National security

Introduction
Insecurity is one key product government cannot ignore in the drive for national development; both exist in inverse form. Insecurity distorts/stagnates development process. This makes peace a valued option and explains why peace building and peace culture are emphasized by government and organizations alike in national development. The relevance of security to development becomes more apparent (invaluable) if insecurity is environment induced. This is more as human environment significantly influences/determine human actions. It houses critical resources for human survival. It is on this note that this work intend to investigate the influence of oil theft and environmental insecurity in the Niger Delta to Nigeria national security.

Conceptual clarification
Environmental insecurity:- To understand environmental insecurity, it is expedient to understand what environment itself means. Environment strictly speaking is the surrounding of man to which man remains totally adapted and to which he continuously interacts with for his survival. Simply, the sum total of both organic and inorganic substances around man (Elem and Osawe, 2010). By this, environment is an inseparable whole. It can be divided into physical; (also called natural environment) and social environment (Akinbode, 2007). The former also called natural environment is divided into lithosphere (the earth crust), hydrosphere (water bodies) and atmosphere (a region of gases). The later consists of the cultural life of the people.

Natural environment is the realm where human survival lies. For example, the hydrosphere is a complete place of recreation; it regulates temperature; provide the needed water for man's use; serve as a natural boundary between and among states or nations. Generally natural environment
Natural environment from the above is resources to man, thus all manner of economic activities are carried out on it to achieve development. Environmental insecurity occurs due to man's unguarded exploitation (abuse) of environmental resources for development. An abused environment is a degraded one as such, suffers biodiversity loss (loss of its resources values) thus cannot sustain life, resulting to lower life quality.

**Oil theft:** - Is illegal exploitation of crude oil or stealing of crude oil by persons who may or may not have legal papers from the designated government agency to exploit or sale the product. In this sense, licensed oil firms who through corrupt practices, lift crude oil more than the required official allocated quantity is involve in oil theft (Niger Delta Peace and Security Group, 2002). From the above, illegal oil bunkering, illegal refinery and licensed oil firms that lift crude oil through corrupt process beyond the official government quota allocated to them are examples of oil theft.

**National security:** Of late the concept have drifted from its traditional emphasis on freedom from military threats to diverse areas like political coercion and non-military agencies. This newly acquired look brought ambiguity in defining national security, thus scholars of diverse backgrounds: Political scientists, Sociologists, Environmentalists etc find it convenient to make expert comments/contributions to security. Macmillan Dictionary (Online Version) sees security as concept that is concerned with the protection or the safety of country's secrets and its citizens.

These, according to Wabah (2012), include the absence of threats to acquired values and subjectivity, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked; the capacity to control those domestic and foreign conditions that in public opinion of a given community believes is necessary to enjoy its own self-determination or authority, prosperity and wellbeing. It can also be defined as the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger, preservation of core values and the absence of threat to acquired values (UNESCO 2002) in Wosu (2012).

Clearly national security is multifaceted; it includes military, economic, political, and environmental and a system of rules to safeguard/preserve the safety of a country's citizens at home and abroad and preserving the integrity of the nation's borders and material assets that support the nation's economy. As a system of law national security is a policy enacted with a view to safeguarding territorial integrity and national independence from any threat (internal or external).

Precisely security covers any activity or activities that are prejudicial to the very existence of the state. It is on this basis that Thom-Otuya and Kabaa (2012) lay claim that national security is concerned with ensuring that state codes are not transgressed, the prevention of attacks on public infrastructures and their personnel by implementing civil defense and emergency preparedness measure (including antiterrorism legislation), and ensuring the resilience and redundancy of critical infrastructures. This also includes using counter intelligence or secret services to protect
the nation from internal threats sponsored from outside.

In essence national security is intended to protect nation's valuable assets (current assets and national interest as well as the sources of strength, upon which her future as a nation lies). These valuables exist in diverse forms: tangible and earthly; spiritual or intellectuals, political assets such as Bill of rights, a nation's political institutions and international friend and economic assets. Economic assets include highly productive assets to domestic economy supported by rich natural resources. National security core objective is the achievement of peace, a concept Mall (2000) in Bakut (2006) claim, among other components includes harmony or balance in and with the ecosystem-ecosphere.

In this instance ecological peace is essential as it is a primary determinant of human behavior in terms of provision of basic needs like food. Therefore when an environment is degraded, its resources value (quality and quantity) is reduced; such environment loses its natural ability to regenerate its resource (Elem and Amakiri 2012). This can disrupt socio-economic life of the immediate human population that depend on it for their sustenance (Okagba, 2008).

**NIGER DELTA**
The region occupies the southern Nigeria also called the South-South. It is characterized by Wetland and water bodies with creeks and rivers which criss-crossed the region. Edo State, Rivers state, Delta Bayelsa, Akwa-Ibom and Cross Rivers State are the core Niger Delta states. The region is endowed with a lot of natural resources but was noted for crude oil and gas resources. These resources alone contribute over 70 percent of Nigeria revenue. It harbors about 6,000 oil wells, roughly one well for 10 square kilometre quadrant in the core states; about 600 oil fields (355 on-shore); 700km of pipelines; 775 flow stations; 10 gas plants and 15 export terminals (Ekaette, 2009).

The region has an estimated population of about 30 million people which spread through 40 ethnic nationalities that speak about 250 dialects and languages (Wikipedia 2010) in (Ofili, 2012). The region occupies the very last line of defense of Nigeria boundary, namely the Atlantic Ocean. It is the world's largest mangrove forest with the most extensive forest water swamp and tropical rainforest. The terrain is quite difficult and tricky; the remote areas can easily be accessed by small boats. Beside oil and gas, non-renewable natural resources like pits, silica and sound abound for brick making in construction industry and glass manufacturing industry respectively.

**Statement of the problem**
Over the years the region has experienced environmental injustice (facilitated more by oil activities) which impacted negatively on socio-economic life. This injustice triggered monumental social unrest perpetuated by the youths who opt to kidnapping; assassination; destruction of oil pipe line; oil bunkering; cultism and illegal refinery as a way of pressing their. These threatened national security. The elites unlike the youths engaged in intellectual discussions in expressing the injustice; thus heating Nigeria political atmosphere and heightening the region's political consciousness and sympathy beyond Nigeria border. As a
peace building strategy, Federal Government introduced amnesty for the youths, Ministry of Niger Delta among others.

Oil revenue drives Nigeria economy as daily shipment of crude oil export is estimated at 2.5 million barrels a day. This figure, it is believed would have been higher if not for the activities of oil theft. Daily Sun Newspaper, 23th August 2013 report claim that illegal oil bunkering, crude oil theft, pipeline vandalisation and assorted crimes does not only exist in the Niger delta but have become a thriving international business with the millionaires business operators smiling to the banks across Nigeria, Africa, Europe and South America each day. The paper equally reveals that no one can precisely say how much is being lost to crude oil thieves and operators of illegal oil bunkering. In addition the paper claim that in a single month in the first quarter of 2013 alone, not less than 1.2 billion naira oil revenue was lost to oil theft.

Kingsley Kuku, the former Senior Special Adviser to the former President on the Niger Delta in the same Daily Sun Newspaper states thus:

> Considering at the average of January- March prices of USD 121 per barrel, this theft resulted in a loss of USD1.2bn to Nigeria in one month alone .......... the illegal trade in stolen crude oil has caused Africa's largest oil producer a 17 per cent fall in oil sales in the first quarter of 2013, with the country losing no less than 400,000 barrels of oil a day p23.

Earlier, Niger Delta Peace and Security report 2006 confirm that in 2000, 140,000 barrels of crude oil was stolen each day. In 2001 the figure rose to 724, 171 barrels per day. The average daily figure from January to October 2002 was 699, 763 barrels. These figures fall to about 200, 000 barrels and in 2004 rose to about 300,000 barrels per day. The drop, the group strongly claimed, was under-reported. The stolen crude oil, the group stressed, is either sold to international marketers or is refined locally in Nigeria by those who operate illegal refinery.

Successful oil bunkering in the Nigeria Niger Delta region involves a lot of complicated processes. Firstly, a middle level operator who must be an influential figure in politics or in the military must be involved. Having gotten this, a community based gang group is sort for to provide the needed security cover for the business throughout the transport route. Where these are established, the business of oil theft starts with pipelines vandalized through hot tapping. A bunkered pipe must be controlled either by settling local communities or through superior force. This makes territorial route control a source of conflict as groups struggle for route control. In addition, route communities are entitled to other economic benefits. This settlement is extended to security operative. To perform these roles effectively, drugs, cash and weapon were exchanged for oil from the international collaborators to the youths.

From the vandalized point, a host is linked to the local refinery points which stretch through several kilometres in the narrow meandering creeks. Given its common sight in the region most people have recommended official training of the perpetrators on the premise that training them will add to the local manpower to control the technical components of the main stream Nigeria refinery. It is equally a source of job creation, wealth and a means of filling up the gap between
the local demands for petroleum products.

To arrest the situation, government in 2009 set up Joint Military Task Force (JTF) to stop the business. In their effort JTF regularly burn down illegal oil refineries. Between October and June 2013, JTF confirmed the destruction of 48 illegal refineries. As these were destroyed, the operators regroup and return back to site immediately after each destructions. The basic problem in this drama is the relationship this has with the environment which is already facing crisis. Onuoha (2008) has observed that Nigeria flair about 20.84 billion cubits metres of gas every year. Alameiyeigha (2004) also observe that an average of one oil spill occur every week. With the increase and dimension of oil theft and the current approach of setting illegal refineries on fire by JTF, no doubt, the environment is further degraded. Note as more pipelines are vandalized for illegal business by these unskillful men so will more oil spill occur. Globally environmental resource use has caused national security problem. It is believed that genocide in Rwanda is caused by increase in population which resulted in overuse/dwindling availability of farmland. The conflict between North and South Korea is partly in relation to timber resources exploitation and fishing ground. The problem between Israel and Syria over Golan height is related to water resources use. These present potent security implications for Nigeria as it can create protracted environmental desperation problem resulting in biodiversity loss and an increase intemperature level beyond delta region bearable limit.

On the hydro environment, the rise in temperature can result to death of marine lives. Of important here is rise in ocean water. When sea level rises (in the face of the regularly observed heavy rain fall) flood, erosion and sub-margin of global lowland should be expected. Flood can result to internal displacement of people, thus refugee problem which can throw up humanitarian and migration of critical labour force. With migration, erosion and sub-merging of the region, the area will face scarcity of available land for agriculture. Scarcity of farmland can result to conflict among people thus internal security problem can occur. With flood, pollution of fresh water resources is possible. This can result to long distance trek inland in search of potable water. These excludes the death of vast resources of the mangrove swamp which Oyegun (2007) claim constitutes the hatching for several varieties of fish and other forms of marine lives. A combination of these will deplete the fish resources.

This scenario can forcefully trigger migration of younger persons to other coastal locations to make a living from fishing. This type of migration is found in Dafur and Southern Sudan. The Fulani and Jos type of conflict where farmers and nomads has been having protracted battle due to decreasing availability of land for both farmers and land for grazing. In these conflicts loss of lives and property has been recorded. In addition to these, the health of the people in the region will face serious challenge because of the environmental change induced by unwholesome oil exploitation. This can result to loss of lives if not properly managed. When we juxtapose this to the number of deaths of youths (who constitute the labour force) due to forceful control of oil resources, the impact of oil theft on the environment and their implications to national security will be appreciated.

Here this is not checked, out migration induced by environmental insecurity can result to clashes between people of this region and Nigeria neighbors like Cameroon. Given the level of injustice, agitation and consciousness of the people, an arm group can challenge federal government in the
use and exploitation of crude oil or even define the type of government; making Nigeria another Columbia or Mexico where drug cartels are holding those nations to ransom. This is possible given the region's location as the last line of defense; the influence of petro-dollar in international market and Nigeria's weak leadership.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

Oil theft in Nigeria was firstly a form of protest. It has now turned to a survival technique. Each time it is perpetuated, the environment loses its resources thus igniting survival and insecurity problem. In addition, oil theft is a manifestation of the absent of a people driven government, the therapy therefore is true democracy where the people's decision is supreme.

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