



Multinational Oil Corporations and the Political Dynamics of Climate Change in Nigeria: A Critical Assessment

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the complex relationship between multinational oil corporations and the political discourse surrounding climate change, with a specific focus on the operations of the oil corporations in Nigeria. Drawing on the theoretical framework of liberal institutionalism, the study examines how international institutions, collaborative frameworks, and regulatory measures influence the environmental strategies and outcomes of Chevron and other multinational oil corporations in Nigeria. This exploration reveals the intricate engagement of the oil corporations as significant players in the global energy sector, shaping and being shaped by the political landscape concerning climate change mitigation and adaptation. Utilising qualitative research methodologies such as interviews, document analysis, and participant observation, the research captures the multifaceted dynamics guiding the response of the oil corporations to climate change within the Nigerian context. By elucidating the perspectives and actions of various stakeholders—ranging from company executives and government officials to local communities and environmental advocates—the study provides insights into the role of multinational oil corporations in shaping climate policies, the challenges they face, and the implications for global climate governance. The findings indicate that despite efforts by the oil corporations to mitigate their environmental impact in Nigeria, there are significant shortcomings in corporate responsibility, environmental governance, and contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation. These results highlight the complex interplay between corporate interests, political realities, and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, they shed light on how multinational oil corporations navigate the politics of climate change within intricate socio-political landscapes, and suggest potential strategies for enhancing corporate accountability and environmental stewardship

amidst urgent global climate challenges. In conclusion, the thesis advocates for increased international collaboration and strengthened institutional frameworks to promote greater accountability among multinational corporations, facilitate sustainable development, and improve environmental practices and adherence to global climate normative framework within the oil and gas sector.

KEYWORDS: Multinational Oil Corporations, climate change, environment, Nigeria, liberal institutionalism theory.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Politics of climate change refers to the complex interactions, negotiations, agreements, and disagreements among countries towards the development of a normative framework to address global warming and its impacts. Climate change, which manifests as global warming, remains one of the leading, contemporary international relations issues. The development of the normative framework to address climate change has, therefore, emerged as one of the leading international relations challenges in the present times, encompassing a wide range of matters including environmental policy, economic interests, national security concerns, and political dynamics.

With states as the principal actors, politics of climate change often involve complex international negotiations that require a delicate balance between developed and developing nations, each with different priorities, responsibilities, and capacities to address climate change. Representatives of the states have successfully birthed various international climate agreements including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which was initiated in 1992 and came into force two years



later to help address “dangerous human interference with the climate system” (Article 2, UNFCCC). The treaty laid the foundation for the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the global leader in scientific information and technical guidance on climate change. The UNFCCC also provided for regular international meetings, negotiations and policy agreements on climate change as has been operationalized through the annual United Nations Climate Change summits also known as the Conference of Parties (COP), which has emerged as important arena for international discussions on climate change.

Meadowcroft (2009) observed that politics of climate change involves a multifaceted interrelationship between stakeholders including states and non-state actors. Thus, it is noted that although countries and governments have remained the dominant players in the politics of climate change, business corporations, civil society organizations, and other non-state actors have emerged as important stakeholders. The non-state actors engaged at different levels in influencing and shaping climate policy and action. Among the non-state actors, *multinational oil corporations* have played particularly significant roles in the politics of climate change arising from their substantial economic power, technological capabilities, global reach, and impact on carbon emissions. These corporations are the foremost producers, distributors, and sellers of fossil fuels which generate a significant volume of the greenhouse gas emissions that directly promote climate change.

Multinational oil corporations have also leveraged their enormous economic powers to try to thwart stricter climate regulations and policies by states towards shaping energy policies and decisions of governments on emissions and renewable energy. The oil corporations relate with countries, deploying substantial influence to ensure accommodation of their corporate economic interests in the final climate agreements or treaties aimed at limiting greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the rising global temperature rise.

Politics of climate change further seeks to understand how national governments implement climate policies, and how other key global actors such as multinational corporations respond and adapt their strategies to comply with or influence national and international climate policies. Arising from the global agreements, the states have introduced more stringent climate policies aimed at achieving significant shifts in market demands through such actions as renewable energy

incentives, carbon pricing, and setting of emissions reduction targets. In response to the changing environmental regulations and consumer demands, some of the oil corporations initially tried raising strong obstacles to deny the science of climate change. Lately, however, the oil companies have begun to deploy various new techniques and technologies towards the achievement of lower carbon in their operations, while making significant investments in renewable energy such as wind and solar.

The engagement of multinational oil corporations in the search for climate solutions has exposed the gap between corporate interests and climate policies, while raising some ethical questions. The oil corporations remain principal contributors to global warming and climate change through their continued investment and production of fossil fuels. Yet, the corporations show public support for the global discussions and search for climate solutions, investing in alternative energy sources, and adapting their business models to low-carbon operations. These actions place oil corporations in the conflicting position of profiting from activities that contribute to climate change while at the same time appearing to support discussions and policies towards mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.

Multinational oil corporations have significantly deployed the instrument of public communications to help shape public perception of their climate actions and policies. They have utilised public relations campaigns, advertisements, and corporate social responsibility initiatives as critical elements of engagement in politics of climate change. The oil corporations have also sought to influence climate policies at local, national, and international levels through direct politicisation, contributions to political campaigns of political parties and candidates, and engagement with policymakers.

The focus of this study is on the contributions of Chevron Corporation and other multinational oil corporations to climate change politics in Nigeria. The corporations which have operated in the country for over six decades, have been embroiled in controversy over allegations of protracted environmental degradation through gas flaring and oil spills which contribute to global warming and climate change. However, leveraging their joint venture business relationships with the Nigerian government, Chevron and the other key industry operators appear to have utilized the instrument of lobbying, corporate social responsibility investments, and other engagement



tools to try to swing government's environment and climate change policies to their business advantage.

On its part, Nigeria, has also been actively engaged in the politics of climate change. Through the years, the country participated in the formulation and evolution of all the major global climate agreements, including the UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change which it formally ratified in 2017. As a world leader in the production of oil and gas and one of the top seven countries where routine gas flaring continues to occur, Nigeria has played active role in the global negotiations towards halting gas flaring and accelerating transition to renewable energy sources. Nigeria has taken steps to domesticate the various global climate agreements through various policy actions and programmes. The country offered very ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation plans in various policy and legislative documents including its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) submitted to the UNFCCC also in 2021, and the Climate Change Act also passed in 2021. But due to several intervening factors, Nigeria's robust climate policies and plans have not been matched with commensurate actions.

The challenges of funding, enforcement, and accountability have emerged as some of the outstanding issues in the politics of climate change. How to ensure that countries meet their climate commitments and pledges as outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and other multilateral agreements has emerged as a critical gap. Ironically, it has been established that the poor developing countries in Africa, Asia, and the island nations, which generate lower volume of greenhouse gases that cause global warming, are more vulnerable and disproportionately impacted by climate change than the richer, industrialized world. Accordingly, the developing countries have demanded that the industrial, developed countries which historically emitted most of the greenhouse gases must take more responsibility in reducing emissions and providing financial assistance to support adaptation. The developing countries also argue that the peculiar economic interests of nations must be considered in the current global push for transition away from fossil fuels. But the industrial developed countries including the United States, China, and countries in Europe, have often prioritized mitigation and emphasized the need for universal and equal participation of all states in the search for global climate solution.

This inquiry captures the multifaceted nature and complex dynamics of the interactions

between the oil corporations and the global efforts to combat climate change. The study explores how multinational oil corporations interact with and influence politics related to climate change. The study offers a nuanced understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and potential pathways for aligning corporate interests of multinational oil corporations with sustainable global environmental goals on climate change.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The escalating urgency for state and non-state actors to develop a normative framework to address impact on climate change has spotlighted the pivotal position occupied by multinational oil corporations in the global discussions. Although the oil corporations are primary emitters of greenhouse gases that lead to global warming and climate change, the corporations play an active role in the global search for climate solutions. The place of multinational oil corporations in the climate discourse and negotiations, therefore, raises a number of multifaceted and complex economic, environmental, and socio-political issues and complications, demanding thorough investigation and analysis.

Despite growing awareness, the intricate dynamics between oil corporations and the global politics of climate change remain inadequately understood as there has been relatively little research on the subject. The gap in knowledge is even more yawning when the subject is considered within the context of the operations of the multinational oil corporations in Nigeria. Not much scholarly attention has been focused on the exploration of how the oil corporations navigate or influence policies, agreements, or actions related to climate change on a global scale, and in Nigeria. An exploration of the relationship between oil corporations and politics of climate involves studying their roles, impacts, conflicts, collaborations, and implications of their interventions in shaping the direction of the global climate change discourse. The gaps in knowledge regarding the extent of influence of multinational oil corporations in the ongoing international discourse and negotiations on climate change are the principal focus of this study.

The global discourse on climate change and search for climate solutions take a unique shape when narrowed down to Nigeria. The unique considerations are impacted by a number of factors, especially the country's continued heavy economic dependence on oil and gas revenue, and need for improved energy access. Finding solutions that align



with these and other developmental needs of the country, while addressing environmental and climate concerns, are a tight rope on which the multinational oil corporations must navigate.

This study examines the role of Chevron Corporation and other multinational oil corporations in shaping the global climate change discourse, and how the efforts relate to the operations of the companies in Nigeria. The study further explores the potentials for collaborative frameworks between the oil corporations and the government of Nigeria to effectively combat climate change. By addressing these gaps in understanding the interplay between multinational oil corporations and politics of climate change, this study offers insights crucial for advancing informed policies and fostering sustainable strategies on climate change.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How has the political landscape surrounding climate change evolved historically?
2. In what ways are multinational oil companies conceptually connected to the political aspects of climate change?
3. What strategies and policies have Nigeria implemented to align with the global normative guidelines for tackling climate change?
4. How do the actions of multinational oil corporations, specifically Chevron, influence the political discourse on climate change?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the research questions, here are the corresponding research objectives to help provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted interplay between politics, multinational corporations, and climate change.

1. To trace the historical evolution of the political landscape related to climate change, identifying key milestones, policy shifts, and the role of international agreements in shaping political action.
2. To explore the conceptual linkages between multinational oil companies and the political dimensions of climate change, examining how these corporations engage with policy-making processes and the extent of their influence on global climate governance.
3. To assess Nigeria's strategies and policies in response to climate change, evaluating their effectiveness and alignment with global normative guidelines, and identifying areas for improvement to enhance the country's climate resilience.
4. To analyse the impact of multinational oil corporations, with a focus on Chevron, on the

political discourse surrounding climate change, investigating their lobbying efforts, public relations strategies, and the implications of their actions on policy development and public opinion.

1.5 RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

Based on the research objectives, here are the propositions or assumptions to be explored for validation through qualitative research and data analysis, towards contributing to the body of knowledge and uncovering new insights on climate change politics and policy.

1. The evolution of the political landscape related to climate change has been significantly influenced by international agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, which have acted as catalysts for policy shifts and milestones in various countries.
2. Multinational oil companies have established conceptual linkages with the political dimensions of climate change by actively engaging in policy-making processes that often prioritize economic interests over environmental concerns.
3. Nigeria's current strategies and policies in response to climate change are partially effective, requiring significant improvement to fully align with global normative guidelines and enhance the country's climate resilience.
4. Chevron's impact on the political discourse surrounding climate change includes strategic lobbying efforts and public relations campaigns that shape policy development and influence public opinion on climate change and environmental issues.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research holds significant value in the field of international relations. Primarily, the study sheds light on the complex international discussions, negotiations, and agreements related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The study explores the socio-political dynamics around the global search for climate change solutions, highlighting the diplomatic challenges and influence of multinational oil corporations as important actors in international relations.

The research further underscores the value of multilateral cooperation among both state and non-state actors towards achieving global climate goals. At the same time, the study explores the reality of the Nigerian government effectively regulating and controlling the activities of multinational corporations within its borders. The research provides understanding of the implications of the concepts of climate justice and energy transition on national security and development in Nigeria.



In all, the research offers insights into how the actions of multinational corporations in the context of climate change impact international relations and diplomacy. While contributing to the advancement of knowledge towards addressing the critical international issues of global warming and climate change, the study opens new vista for further research on climate diplomacy and politics of climate change.

1.7 SCOPE OF STUDY

This study is guided by time, space, and content boundaries in the investigation of the influence of multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate change in Nigeria. The study reviewed relevant data from Chevron Nigeria, spanning the 32-year period of 1990 to 2023, starting from 1990 when Chevron established an urban carbon sink and climate adaptation facility in Lekki, Lagos, called the Lekki Conservation Centre. Within the study period, Nigeria was involved in various international climate change diplomatic engagements that yielded several global climate governance treaties including the Montreal Protocol of 1994, Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris Agreement in 2015. Nigeria took steps between 1994 and 2022 to domesticate these various global climate change political instruments.

Although discussion of the issue of climate change concerns the entire Nigeria, the locale of the study is Nigeria's Niger Delta region where Chevron and other multinational oil corporations primarily carry out their oil and gas production. The oil-rich Niger Delta region, described as the largest wetland in Africa and the third largest in the world, covers approximately 70,000 square kilometres, straddling nine states of Nigeria, namely: Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Ondo, Edo, Imo, Abia, Akwa-Ibom, and Cross Rivers states (Izah, 2018). The data on Chevron's oil and gas production in Nigeria are, however, drawn mostly from Delta State where the company maintains its operations base.

This inquiry is focused on Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), out of about six leading multinational oil corporations operating in Nigeria. The choice of Chevron Nigeria as the focus for the study was determined by the significant role the company has played in environmental conservation in Nigeria through outstanding investments in gas utilization and commercialization. The company has been acknowledged and presented with awards by the Federal Government acknowledging its efforts in the development of the nation's abundant natural gas resources.

This study further focuses on the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which is distinguished from other extant international climate governance instruments. The study considered the state of the implementation of the Paris Agreement in Nigeria within the context of

contributions by Chevron and other multinational oil corporations. The study also examined the challenges and prospects for achieving Nigeria's global climate obligations under the Paris Agreement, as captured in the country's updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in July 2021 (www.unfccc.int).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODS

This section describes the approaches used in this study and the reason for their adoption. It explains how data were collected for the research, the techniques deployed in collecting the data, why the techniques were selected, and how they were applied. This section describes in details the nature of instruments used in data collection, showing why the particular instruments of data collection were functional, and in what way they were applied in the study. In doing this, the study offered detailed account of the criteria considered in selecting the research data and the justification for their evaluation as relevant. Finally, this section explains the method or technique applied in analysing or examining the data. It identifies and explains the basic factors that limit the conduct of the research and the validity of its findings. Here, this study elaborates on the inherent weaknesses in the adopted methodology, instruments of data collection, and analysis techniques.

1.8.1 Research Design

The research employed qualitative research approach, which allows the use of non-numerical data for content analysis. Qualitative research approach is considered ideal for this study as it allows interviews with subject-matter experts, review of relevant documents, and direct observation where necessary. The application of qualitative research, therefore, allowed examination and interpretation of data collected from various sources. Thus, this study sought to understand the role of multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate change through the prism of opinions of experts, observations, and textual analysis. Thus, this study was constructed on the framework of various primary and secondary data, collected through interviews with subject matter experts, technical field operators, and policy makers. The data for this study were also sourced from direct participation at conferences of oil and gas industry professionals, library and contemporary information searches, and direct observation at oil and gas producing fields.



1.8.2 Method of Data Collection

This study utilized various methods to gather requisite data for the research. Given the specialised nature of the study, the criteria for selection of subjects to participate in the research was based on expertise and experience concerning multinational oil corporations and politics of climate change. This allowed the study to engage only persons who were in positions to offer solutions to the research questions and statement of problem. The persons engaged included company directors, managers, senior government officials in relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies. Others included leaders of relevant committees of the National Assembly, members of host communities, and environmental activists/specialists.

Data were also obtained through focus group discussions and both physical and online participation in international conferences. This researcher participated in two international energy conferences in Abuja in 2022 and 2023, where various issues relating to the petroleum industry and politics of climate change, with emphasis on the future of fossil fuels, energy transition, climate justice, and funding of the oil industry for sustainable economic growth were discussed by top level public and private sector leaders from Nigeria and other parts of Africa and the world. These were the Nigeria International Petroleum Summit (NIPS) held 27 Feb - March 3, 2022, and Nigeria Oil and Gas Conference (NOGC), which took place July 4-7, 2023. The study engaged in online participation in three global climate conferences, the Conference of Parties (COP26, COP27, and COP28), held respectively at Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom in 2021; Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2022; and Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in 2023.

Physical site visits undertaken by this study to some active oil fields in the Niger Delta provided an opportunity for collection of data on gas flaring. The facilities visited on February 28, 2022, were Chevron Nigeria's Okan, Olero Creek, and Dibi Fields, all located in Delta State. The study on December 15, 2023 undertook another site visitation to the Lekki Conservation Centre, an urban forest reserve sponsored by Chevron in partnership with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), an environmental non-governmental organisation, to promote climate adaptation and environmental research.

The study also involved extensive library researches and document review at Chevron Nigeria's head

office in Lekki, Lagos. Chevron Annual Reports for the recent five years, including the company's Financial Statements, Corporate Environmental and Sustainability Reports, and Climate Lobbying Report 2020-2023 were obtained and reviewed. Also examined were relevant Bills and Motions concerning the oil industry and the environment, passed by the 8th and 9th National Assemblies, 2015-2019, and 2019-2023. Relevant documents presented in the online databases and websites of Chevron and other various multinational oil corporations and non-state environmental actors operating in Nigeria were also reviewed and analysed.

Part of the data for this study were also obtained through review and analysis of documents from the online databases of Chevron Corporation, and other multinational oil corporations operating in Nigeria, including Shell, ExxonMobil, and TotalEnergies. In the corporate websites, the companies outlined comprehensive action plans, including investment in new technologies, to reduce carbon footprints of their operations. Chevron boldly stated its goals, strategies, and actions towards achieving "a lower carbon future." From drawing both deductive and inductive inferences from the secondary data presented by the companies, the study was able to resolve some of the research questions.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The conduct of this research encountered some challenges, especially regarding access to data. Some national developments impacted research logistics and physical interviews. These included Nigeria's national elections and redesign of the Nigerian national currency by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2023, which came with serious security threats, tensions, and movement restrictions across the country which impacted the logistics for this research. The very remote nature of the operating environment of the multinational oil corporations brought additional security and logistics threats, preventing direct, personal visits to the Chevron host communities by the researcher.

There were additional challenges arising from the issue of official bureaucracy, which caused much delays in accessing some of the officials and data from both government and Chevron. Access to some of the relevant government and Chevron officials took too long to be arranged, as some of the officials waited for higher management clearances of the information requested. However, the researcher adopted a number of strategies to try to surmount



some of the challenges to data access, including leveraging on personal relationships. The study also adopted the use of telephone calls and social media (WhatsApp) as avenues to bypass the obstacles of gaining physical access to some of the key data sources.

Another strategy adopted by this study to convince some of the Chevron and government officials to positively respond to the inquiries was agreeing to leave out their names and official designations from the supplied data. This was to help protect such respondents from possible official backlash and sanctions. Again, to surmount the obstacle in accessing the remote, swamp locations in the Niger Delta where Chevron's oil fields and host communities are located, the researcher hired some Research Assistants from the host communities. The data obtained through the help of the Research Assistants were duly verified, while the Research Assistants were compensated accordingly as agreed with them.

Notwithstanding the limitations and restrictions that impacted the study, the research which spanned over a period of about five years, successfully gathered and analysed primary and secondary data from various sources. General inferences and conclusions were drawn from our thematic analysis of the data. In all instances, the data obtained were treated with utmost discretion. The authors of the literature used in the study were given appropriate credit, ensuring due respect and protection of all copyrights and intellectual property.

1.10 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organized in five chapters, as follows:

Chapter One: This introductory chapter provides the background to the study, statement of the problem, the research questions and objectives. It also outlines significance, scope, and organization of the study.

Chapter Two is the Literature Review and Theoretical Framework of the study, which capture the conceptual discourse, review of related studies, and theoretical underpinning of the research.

Chapter Three presents a historical and thematic overview or background to the key subject matter of the study of politics of climate change. The chapter further explores the historical role and influence of multinational oil corporations in global politics. It also presents a historical review of the presence of multinational oil corporations and Chevron corporation in Nigeria.

Chapter Four identifies, discusses, analyses the key issues and challenges of the study with the aid of acquired data. The chapter considers the issues raised in the research questions, and makes logical deductions.

Chapter Five presents summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

Here, this study undertakes brief exploration of the key concepts of the research: multinational oil corporations, climate change, politics of climate change, and climate justice.

2.1.1. Multinational Corporations: Also variously referred to as multinational enterprises, transnational enterprises, transnational corporations, international corporations, and stateless corporations, multinational corporations are subject of cross-disciplinary studies including political science, international relations, economics, law, sociology, and history. The names convey their inherent nature and characteristics.

A multinational corporation (MNC) has operations and presence in at least one foreign country besides its home country. From its head office, the multinational corporation manages an integrated global business in different countries, and tends to have budgets that exceed those of many small countries (Chen, 2020). The decentralized structure and size of the MNC often allow them to overstep governmental constraints which smaller regional or national companies must observe. The MNCs achieve economies of scale through their subsidiaries which, though operating separately, are interdependent, pooling together production or activities for two or more countries (Garg, 2016).

The global oil industry is dominated by a closely-knit group of multinational oil corporations (MNOs), also known as international oil companies (IOCs). These global corporate giants emerged in America and Europe at the dawn of the 20th century as oil became the world's preferred source of energy. The pioneer multinational oil companies, dubbed the "Seven Sisters" by Anthony Sampson (1975), were: Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (formerly Anglo-Persian; now BP), Royal Dutch Shell, Standard oil Company of California (SoCal, later Chevron), and Gulf oil (now merged into Chevron). Others were Texaco (now merged into Chevron), Standard oil Company of New Jersey (Esso, later Exxon, now part of ExxonMobil), and Standard oil Company of New York (Socony, later Mobil, now part of ExxonMobil). Competing for



supremacy from their home bases in America and Europe, the MNOCs developed business activities that cut across the entire oil and gas value chain, and operations that spread through different parts of the world, including the Middle East, Asia, and Africa.

The MNOCs have, therefore, emerged as powerful, non-state global actors that have played pivotal role in sustaining the growth of world economy and modern civilisation since the invention of combustion engine in the 19th century. With headquarters in the United States of America and Europe, the vertically-integrated oil giants have commanded sales in the billions of dollars. Such astounding wealth has ranked the MNOCs among the largest industrial companies in the world since the 1920s. Their overwhelming control of international capital has given them overarching economic and political influence and dominance wherever they operated.

In Nigeria, the MNOCs have played a critical role as the principal producers of crude oil, the singular product that sustains the nation's economy. According to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) records (NNPC Newsletter), Shell was the first to arrive the present-day Nigeria in the 1940s and was granted sole rights by the British colonial authorities to explore for oil throughout the colony later named as Nigeria. After half a century of exploration as sole concessionaire, Shell in 1956 discovered Nigeria's first oil at Oloibiri community in the present-day Bayelsa State. This success attracted other MNOCs, including Chevron, which arrived in Nigeria at the dawn of the nation's independence in 1960. Presently, the leading global oil MNCs with operations in Nigeria are Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Eni, and Total. There are other medium-to-small international players in the industry, including Chinese-owned oil companies (Odua, 2019).

The MNOCs in Nigeria have been widely criticized for their poor environmental stewardship. Besides frequent oil spills that polluted the lands and waters, the MNOCs have continuously flared associated natural gas into the atmosphere, an action which is greatly injurious to human beings and the environment. Gas flaring has especially been identified as a principal cause of global warming and climate change, a phenomenon that is considered the greatest threat to human health in history (Introcaso, 2018), as well as a threat to overall global security (Parry, 2008).

2.1.2. Climate Change: The United Nations refers to climate change as the long-term alterations in

temperatures and weather patterns that has arisen principally since 1800s from human activities such as burning of fossil fuels like petroleum and coal. Climate change is a subject that has lately been attracting huge international concern and attention, eliciting many scholarly works and questions from different perspectives and fields beyond international relations and political science – extending to sociology, law, ecology, geography, and the biological sciences. Some experts have offered different, and sometimes contradictory definitions of climate change. Pielke (2005) noted that the lack of consistency in the definition of climate change has contributed to the present deadlock in forging global climate policy to improve energy policies and reduce the risk of climate effects on people and ecosystems.

Climate Change has been variously defined as “a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere,” or “any change in climate over time whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity” (UNFCCC, 2011). Experts make efforts to distinguish between the two related terms of “climate” and “weather.” While weather is the day-to-day state of the atmosphere, the changes seen and felt outside from day to day which might change in just a few hours, climate takes hundreds or even millions of years to change (NASA). Two types of climate change have been identified: natural climate change and climate change induced by human activity. Natural climate change is caused by changes in the earth's orbit, energy output of the sun, volcanic activity, the geographic distribution of the Earth's land masses and other internal or external natural processes (Riedy, 2016). The second type of climate change, which is the main concern of this study, is caused by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels from oil and coal to generate electricity and power vehicles.

The burning of oil and gas releases carbon dioxide, methane, and other types of “greenhouse gases” into the atmosphere. Experts explain that greenhouse gases at the right proportion are good and essential to life on earth. Plants, for instance, depend on carbon dioxide, which is a key greenhouse gas contributing to global warming. Greenhouse gases also help to warm the Earth's surface and the oceans, keeping them at temperatures that enable life to flourish on the planet. However, greenhouse gases on Earth become bad when they accumulate in excess, thus preventing more and more of the energy radiating from the sun and reaching the earth from radiating back into space, a phenomenon called the



“greenhouse effect”. These gases spread around the planet like a blanket, keeping in solar heat that would otherwise be radiated out into space (Armstrong, Krasny, & Schuldt, 2018).

Despite claims to the contrary by some global political leaders such as former President Donald Trump who once described climate change as a hoax invented by China (Time magazine, July 8, 2019), the world’s scientific community has firmly established clear linkage between human influence on the climate system. The United Nations has set up a body of experts, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which is tasked with assessing the science of climate change. IPCC’s Special Reports which serve as the most authentic and credible source of information on climate change for policy makers today, indicated that the Earth has become warmer by nearly 1.0 degree Celsius in the past century, with 16 of the 17 warmest years on record occurring since 2001, and 2016 being the warmest year yet on record (IPCC, 2018). Series of IPCC-coordinated studies conducted by hundreds of scientists across different regions arrived at firm conclusions that the warmer climate experienced since the 20th century is the result of human activities that have caused the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The burning of fossil fuel from oil, gas, and coal was shown as the primary source of excess carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (Denchak, 2018).

The unprecedented heating up of the atmosphere has caused what the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) terms as “severe weather-related events.” These have manifested differently in the different continents and regions of the world as severe flooding and mudslides in parts of Africa, Asia, China and Central Europe; extreme temperature rise, heatwave, and drought in sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Americas; as well as melting ice in the Arctic. The IPCC in its series of Assessment Reports (ARs) has documented many observable and projected impact of climate change on the natural systems and people in all continents, impacting the oceans, freshwater resources, ecosystems, food, and health conditions of millions of people globally.

2.1.3. Politics of Climate Change

The transnational nature of climate change requires that addressing the challenges posed by the phenomenon must necessarily involve a complex process and actions by different state and non-state

actors, coordinated at the global level. These various governmental and societal actions, policies, and debates surrounding the subject of climate change is what is collectively referred to as the politics of climate change. It includes political decisions, diplomatic negotiations, and agreements adopted by countries and organizations to evolve climate change solutions. Elements of the politics of climate change include international agreements like the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change which sought to promote international cooperation to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and keep global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the main international body coordinating the global politics of climate change. The UNFCCC sets the overall framework for global negotiations and action on climate change. The body has facilitated international discourse on stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), which acknowledges the historical responsibility of developed countries for climate change and the need for differentiated actions among countries with varying capacities.

The UNFCCC operates through the Conferences of the Parties (COP) as its supreme body, comprising representatives from all member countries. The COP meets annually to review progress, negotiate and adopt decisions on implementation, and set the direction for global climate change governance. The COP has resulted in key multilateral agreements, among which the 2015 Paris Agreement remains the most successful as it set a framework for voluntary emissions reduction targets for all countries and promotes adaptation and finance for developing countries. Other key global climate change governance treaties are the 1987 Montreal Protocol which sought to curtail production and consumption of synthetic chemicals in ozone-depleting gases, and the 1998 Kyoto Protocol which sought to establish a universally binding emissions-reduction targets for both developed and developing countries.

The politics of climate change involve a complex interplay of environmental, economic, and social factors, as well as competing interests and ideologies. Dictated by national economic interests, political exigencies, and tide of public opinion, some countries have set and pursued ambitious targets for



reducing emissions, but others have chosen slower climate options. The politics of climate change is, therefore, influenced by the political and economic interests of nations, and pressure from the public and non-state actors such as environmental NGOs. Since climate policies can impact industries and jobs, especially in countries like Nigeria which are heavily dependent on fossil fuels, government and citizens often engage in debates on how to strike a balance between tackling climate change and defending national economic interests. Likewise, in countries, especially in Europe, where climate change has become a hot and sensitive button in electoral politics, climate decisions by leaders will often reflect the dominant opinion of the voters.

Several institutions and mechanisms have been established under the UNFCCC to facilitate implementation, monitoring, and support for global climate action. These include the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to provide financial support to developing countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, the Technology Mechanism to promote technology transfer and cooperation, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to provide scientific assessments on climate change impacts, vulnerability, and mitigation options (Biermann, Patberg, & Zelli, 2010).

At the national levels, governments and countries engage in the politics of climate change as they develop their own national climate policies and plans, called nationally determined contributions (NDCs), to address climate change in line with their commitments under international agreements. These NDCs have included strategies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and enhance climate finance and technology for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, enhancing climate resilience, and adapting to changing climate conditions.

Besides governments and countries, a wide range of other stakeholders, including civil society organizations, businesses, and communities also actively engage in the politics of climate change. Multinational corporations are among such non-state actors that play vital role in the politics of climate change through participation in global climate policy development and implementation. Multinational oil corporations have especially been deeply intertwined and play critical role in the politics of climate change because of their overarching economic relevance, power, and

influence; and the environmental impact of their operations. Their direct and indirect interventions have been documented to influence emerging international climate landscape and policies through lobbying, strategic sponsorship of political campaigns, and other avenues.

Other non-state actors including cities, businesses, and civil society organizations influence transnational climate politics by initiating international programmes and actions to address climate change. Such initiatives include voluntary commitments, partnerships, and networks that aim to mobilize collective action and contribute to global climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts (Okereke, Bulkeley, & Schroeder, 2009). Some of the prominent international climate governance initiatives promoted by non-state actors include the Global Gas Flaring Reduction (GGFR) Partnership and Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 (ZRF) Initiative. The GGFR is a public-private trust fund floated to support projects that promote gas utilization and halting of routine gas flaring and venting in countries around the world. Among the GGFR partners are about 15 multinational oil corporations and other multilateral organisations committed to ending routine gas flaring at oil production facilities across the world. The ZRF, introduced by the World Bank, encourages state and non-state actors involved in the oil and gas production process to evolve solutions to ending routine gas flaring.

One of the most challenging elements of the politics of climate change concerns compliance and monitoring of the various international climate agreements. It was reported at the latest Conference of Parties (COP 27) held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, November 2022, that many countries were simply “playing the ostrich and burying their heads in sand,” in the efforts to hide their failures to meet their international climate obligations to reducing carbon emissions outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (Bassey, 2023). Mechanisms to monitor and report on progress towards meeting emissions reduction targets and other climate commitments include the annual international climate change review meetings under the auspices of UNFCCC’s Conference of Parties (COP). Following COP27, the next COP28 is scheduled to hold in Dubai, United Arab Emirate, late in 2023. The COP conferences is an important forum for periodic reporting by countries, reviews by expert bodies, and a compliance mechanism to ensure that countries fulfil their obligations under international agreements. But the effectiveness of



the COPs and other mechanisms for compliance and monitoring of global climate change governance has remained a catalogue of mixed achievements and missed opportunities (Bassey, 2023).

2.1.4. Climate Justice: The push for implementation global climate change governance has thrown up the concept of climate justice which emphasizes the ethical and social dimensions of climate change. The concept of climate justice also touches on the issue of fair distribution of costs and benefits, the recognition of human rights, and the empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized groups. It calls for an inclusive and equitable approach to global climate change governance, addressing the unequal impacts of climate change and the historical responsibility of developed countries (Schlosberg, 2007).

The United Nations has clearly established the interconnectedness between climate change, poverty, inequality, and other global challenges. Efficient climate change governance is therefore highlighted as the UN emphasizes the need for integrated and coherent governance approaches to achieve sustainable development. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, which provide a comprehensive framework for sustainable development for the year 2030, include addressing climate change and transition to clean energy. While SDG 13 urges the global community to "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts," SDG 7 aims to "ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all." (UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/70/1, 25 September 2015).

2.2 REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

2.2.1 Preamble

The intersection of multinational oil corporations and politics of climate change represents a critical junction in the contemporary search for normative framework to address the growing threat of global warming and climate change. In this literature review, the scholar aims to synthesize existing scholarship to illuminate the multifaceted dynamics, power struggles, and evolving discourses inherent in this complex relationship between multinational oil corporations and politics of climate change.

The literature review explores the historical contexts, corporate strategies, political influences, regulatory frameworks, and societal responses to the global threat of climate change. The review exercise offers a comprehensive understanding of the role

played by oil corporations in shaping global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. It approaches the understanding from the perspective of Chevron Corporation, one of the leading multinational oil corporations in Nigeria's vast oil and gas environment. The literature review identifies the gaps, obstacles, and opportunities in the engagement of multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate change.

2.2.2 Literature Review

Sampson (1975) in his seminal book, *The Seven Sisters*, presented a comprehensive historical context to the role and influence of multinational oil corporations in global politics. Chronicling "the 100-year battle for the world's oil supply," Sampson narrated how seven giant companies came dominate the world's biggest and most critical industry; how the Western governments delegated much of the diplomatic function to these companies; and how the seven big oil corporations, still the giants of the world's petroleum industry, have found themselves caught on a political tight-rope, balancing between the demands of their Western oil consumers and their partnerships with the producers. Sampson's account makes it clear that the historical relationship between multinational oil corporations and climate change dates back to the industrial revolution, when the widespread use of fossil fuels began to accelerate global carbon emissions.

In their book, *The History of Climate Change Science and Politics*, Jager & O'Riordan (1996) noted that in the first century after multinational oil corporations began to dominate fossils production and marketing throughout the entire world, only some scientists raised the issue of impact of oil production on the environment, but not many political leaders paid attention to the environmental implications of the production and use of fossil fuels. The basis of the concerns by the scientists, according to the authors, was that the concentrations of certain gases in the atmosphere were increasing due to burning of fossils and other human activities, and that this may lead to an enhanced greenhouse effect or a warming of the earth's surface and changes in the earth's climate (Jager & O'Riordan, 1996).

Bolin (2007) presented a different account of the history of the science and politics of climate change, viewed from the perspective of the emergence and role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Bolin, who served as the first chairman of the IPCC, noted



that the setting up of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1988 was a culmination of the scientific development in climate change analysis. The formation of the IPCC, he explained, marked the beginning of the intervention of the world's political leaders in the politics of climate change, in collaboration with the global scientific community. Bolin observed that the IPCC has since its birth in 1988 gradually developed to become the key body in providing authentic scientific knowledge and guidance on climate change to the countries of the world. Bolin correctly observed that response to climate change requires collaborative interaction from the scientific community, society in general, and politicians in particular.

In his book, *Fossil Fuels and Climate Change*, Soeder (2021) observed that following years of controversies and doubts, it has now become settled knowledge that the changes in the earth's climate and the rising global temperatures result principally from burning of fossil fuels. He cited scientific proof that the earth's atmosphere has been rising steadily since the start of the Industrial Revolution and that this development is linked to the human production and use of fossil fuels. According to the scholar, past attempts to deny the reality of climate has been erased by clear and unequivocal science that links the combustion of fossil fuel to the rising global temperatures and resultant changes in the earth's climate. This point was echoed by Johnsson (2019), who observed, that the production and use of fossil fuels present a great threat to the global efforts to forge a normative framework to mitigate climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report 2021 identified impact of the changes in the earth's climate to include severe heatwaves, heavy rains, flash floods, and drought (www.ipcc.ch).

Following his investigation of the role of multinational oil corporations in climate change, Grasso (2019) concluded that two-thirds of global industrial greenhouse gas emissions in the past two centuries are traceable to the activities of a handful of the oil corporations. He affirmed that emissions generated by the production and use of oil and gas have significantly increased the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Li, Trencher, & Asuka (2022) arrived at the same conclusions, noting that the energy products of oil and gas majors have contributed significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions and planetary warming over the past century. The scholars suggested, therefore, that the

ongoing efforts to decarbonize the global economy to avoid dangerous climate change cannot yield the desired results without a profound transformation of the fossil fuel-based business models of the major oil and gas companies.

Put differently, Li, Trencher, & Asuka (2022) recognized multinational oil corporations as critical actors in the politics of climate change. Focusing on the activities of the oil corporations in Nigeria, Eweje (2006) highlighted oil companies as the single, most outstanding contributors to global warming and climate change in the country. Eweje narrated how decades of gas flaring and oil spills by the oil companies degraded the ecosystem of their host communities in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. The scholar estimated that by 2012, over 10 million barrels of crude oil had been spilled across Nigeria's Niger Delta region by various multinational oil corporations, resulting in pollution of waters, destruction of aquaculture, vegetation and agricultural land. Anyanwu (2012) further documented how gas flaring in Nigeria releases large amounts of greenhouse gases with high global warming potential. Anyanwu noted that gas flaring and oil spills from the operations of the oil companies in Nigeria have emerged as the principal sources of greenhouse gas emissions from the country that aggravate global warming and climate change.

The World Bank reported in 2018 that the total greenhouse gas emissions from Nigeria stood at about 330 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e). As much as 70 percent of the total emissions, the largest sectoral contribution, reportedly came from the energy sector. The agricultural and waste management sectors were the second and third largest contributors, accounting for only 22 percent, and 8 percent of the emissions (World Bank, 2018).

The 1988 establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) marked a turning point in recognizing the role of oil corporations in addressing the urgency of climate change as a global political issue. Scheider & Haibach (2013) identified the other key milestones that helped to push climate politics to the top of political agenda for all countries of the world to include the first major world environmental conference in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972. The authors also cited the emergence of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Rio, Brazil, in 1992 as the primary global regime to facilitate the politics on



climate change. Other important milestones later attained in the history of global climate politics included the negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, Paris Agreement in 2015, and the regular, annual meetings of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC. The latest COP28 was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, by end of 2023.

Schroeder (2018), who provided further details on the evolution of global climate change politics, explained that following the establishment of the UNFCCC, unsuccessful efforts were made through the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 to establish a legally binding regime to regulate emissions from countries. The Kyoto effort, the author noted, paved way for the adoption of mandatory voluntary climate contribution from all countries under the 2015 Paris Agreement (Schroeder, 2018). Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Paris Agreement mandates each Party to the accord to prepare, communicate, and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs), stating what the country intends to achieve (<https://unfccc.int>). Article 4, paragraph 11 of the Paris Agreement further requires all parties to the agreement to update and submit their NDCs every five years, although any country may at any time adjust its existing nationally determined contributions with a view to enhancing its level of ambition (<https://unfccc.int>).

Matisoff (2010) tracked the reactions and responses by various state actors to the emergence of the various international climate regimes and frameworks. The author traced how governments gradually began to evolve stricter laws and policies towards limiting greenhouse gas emissions from their environments, focusing principally on the fossil fuel industry, especially multinational oil corporations. Matisoff narrated how, following the Paris Accord in 2015, all the Parties to the agreement prepared and submitted to UNFCCC various ambitious climate action-plans captured in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). The author also narrated how different countries, including those in Africa, Middle East, and Asia, offered ambitious pledges to limit greenhouse gas emissions as part of the Paris Agreement. Matisoff further explored how the European Union (EU) initiated the “cap and trade” system, which sought to control carbon emissions by oil corporations and other companies by setting limits or caps on volume of carbon each company is allowed to emit in any given year. He cited the conclusion of the deal in 2023 by the EU to lower methane emission from the

fossil fuels industry, banning routine gas flaring in all its 27-member states (Matisoff, 2010).

Rodel (2023) cited other countries known to have passed strict laws and regulations to curtail carbon emissions from fossil fuels to include Sweden, Norway, New Zealand, and United Kingdom (Fleming, 2019). Rodel noted that by 2023, the number of countries pledging to halt international public financing of fossil fuels under the Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CETP) had climbed to 40. He listed members of the partnership to include many European Union countries, US, Canada, and Norway, noting that all the partner countries pledged, among other things, to stop provision of public funds for fossil fuel projects, and divert the funds to development of renewable energy

The Centre for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) in the United States of America (USA) reported that the country under President Joe Biden’s Democratic Party administration has taken a number of significant climate actions targeting the oil and fossil fuels industry. The actions included greenhouse gas emission control measures (www.cbpp.org). Details of the CBPP report indicated that in December 2023, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized its regulation requiring further reduction of methane and other pollutants from existing oil and gas production wells, and no longer from only new oil wells. The EPA regulation was considered more impactful than the passage of the Clean Energy and Security Act in 2009 by the US House of Representatives, which sought to utilize the market-based approach to limit the volume of greenhouse gas emitted each year by the fossil fuel companies and other businesses. The intervention by the US House of Reps was reported inconclusive following the failure by the US Senate to provide concurrent passage of the bill due to intense lobbying by the fossil fuels industry (www.cbpp.org).

Reid & Toffel (2009) observed that resolving the challenges of climate change will require collaborative engagement of governments, firms, and citizens. This has been proven true in the corporate world of the multinational oil corporations where shareholder actions and regulatory interventions have pushed many of the companies to adopt practices consistent with the goals of the international climate frameworks. Mejdrieh (2020) reported that Chevron Corporation shareholders voted to approve a number of proposals to closely monitor and control the company’s engagement in climate politics. According to Mejdrieh, at



Chevron's annual stakeholders meeting in 2020, the stakeholders approved a resolution requiring the company to take some steps to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. The stakeholders approved by 53 percent vote, proposals requiring disclosures of climate lobbying engagements and expenditure. This stakeholder approval has caused Chevron, since 2021, to begin to publish annual Lobbying Reports, which outline how the company's lobbying activities are in compliance with the Paris Agreement's goal to curtail average global warming.

Similar stakeholder advocacy for climate change has been reported in many other multinational oil corporations, including Shell and Total. Hawker (2024) reported that combined pressures from Shell's stakeholders and others helped to compel the oil giant to publish its first energy transition strategy in 2021. Hawker noted since Shell's investors voted in 2020, directing the company to adopt the strategy of shifting its the business towards cleaner energy sources, the company has been under increased investor scrutiny regarding its efforts towards decarbonisation. Shareholder pressures for positive climate actions were also reported in the French national oil company, Total. The company's investors voted in 2021 to approve change of the company's name to TotalEnergies, reflecting the company's strategic goal to align with the Paris Agreement on climate change, by transiting from production and sale of oil, to a global energy group that invests in renewable energies on a global scale (Pouyanne, 2021). Then, two years later, in 2023 the company's shareholders gave further support for a radical environmental action requiring the French oil major to reduce its emissions in absolute terms by 2030 by aligning its 2030 target for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the company's oil and gas production with the 2015 Paris climate agreement (www.argusmedia.com).

Banerjee (2002) identified other corporate strategic responses employed by oil companies to navigate the emerging, complex terrain of climate politics, in order to safeguard their economic interests. The identified strategies include engagement in political lobbying, deployment of public relations campaigns, and adoption of greenwashing tactics aimed at presenting a facade of environmental responsibility. Among these strategies, Kim and Milner (2019) underscored political lobbying as the foremost instrument deployed by multinational corporations both in shaping the global economy and impacting foreign policy-making. Noting that the unique positions of multinational corporations in the market

affect their political activities, the authors observed that large-scale transnational activities of multinational corporations increase their opportunities of influencing policy-making. Surveying lobbying activities of many multinational corporations from 1999 to 2019, Kim and Milner concluded that multinational corporations are important political actors whose distinct interests and influence should be considered in the process of foreign policy-making.

The top five multinational oil corporations in the USA including Chevron, BP, and ExxonMobil, were found by a 2022 study to be implementing a combined annual budget of about \$200 million on political lobbying (Influence Map, 2022). The study found that the oil corporations engaged professional lobbyists and social media influencers to help weaken or thwart new government legislations and policies perceived as promoting climate change solution at the expense of the oil and gas industry. Grasso (2019) confirmed that some oil and gas corporations have funded, shaped, and advanced programmes and activities that substantially contributed to paralysing global climate policy for decades.



Another scholar (Crespo, 2020) identified how the leading multinational oil corporations in the USA and Europe engaged in the sponsorship of election campaigns of politicians and political parties in those places, as part of their political lobbying tactics. Crespo found that the oil and gas industry in the USA spent more than \$80 million in sponsorship of various candidates in the Congressional election in 2018. The oil corporations donated over \$3 million to the election campaigns of former US President Donald Trump, and over \$60 million to the Republican Party during the 2019/2020 presidential election cycle (Crespo, 2020).

It is noted that the USA Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) forbids all American citizens and companies from offering, paying, or promising to pay money or other valuable materials to any foreign, public official for the purpose of obtaining or retaining business. However, Shanti (2022) found that multinational oil corporations registered in the USA have devised different ways to thwart the legal obstacle presented by the FCPA. In the UK, for instance, multinational oil corporations were reported to have indirectly been working through lobbyists to engage in sponsorship of Members of Parliament involved in energy and climate policy. The oil companies were found to have engaged in such political sponsorships in the guise of providing administrative and public relations support to the politicians, without the need to formally declare their involvement" (Shanti, 2022).

In Nigeria, this study confirmed that Chevron and other oil corporations regularly sponsor government officials, including staff of the government regulatory agencies and members of the National Assembly, to various international conferences and training programmes in the name of promoting capacity building and skills development for the public officials (Focus Group Discussion, April 4, 2023). Some of the international conferences to which Chevron has recently sponsored government officials include the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC) held annually in Houston, Texas, USA, and World Petroleum Congress (WPC) which holds every three years in different countries around the world. The government officials sponsored to the international conferences came from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, the National Assembly, and other government agencies

Scholars have also confirmed that oil corporations engage in climate politics through industry alliances and membership of some of the oil industry professional organisations The American Petroleum

Institute (API) in the USA and the Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS) in Nigeria were cited as strong channels for engagement in climate politics by multinational oil corporations. On behalf of the oil industry, the API was noted to have engaged in vigorous environmental lobbying of the US Congress. To help facilitate this, the API unveiled a set of guidelines, called the Climate Action Framework, offering tips on how to achieve a low-carbon future for the global oil and gas sector (www.api.org). On its own, the OPTS has continued to serve as the arrowhead for central engagement of Nigeria's policy makers on behalf of the 30-member companies that collectively control about 90 per cent of Nigeria's oil and gas industry production (www.opts-ng.com).

Dunlap & McCright (2010) explored how oil companies aim to hinder the adoption of stringent climate regulations and influence policy decisions on climate change by exploiting the *political and ideological polarization over global warming and climate change* among the American public. The scholars found that democrats and liberals tend to hold different views over climate change from those of republicans and conservatives. Accordingly, some oil companies exploit this gap by creating specific climate change messages to appeal to democrats and liberals, while targeting different messages at Republicans and conservative audiences (Dunlap & McCright (2010).

Jacobs (2016) observed the existence of a "revolving door" between the oil industry and government agencies, which tends to blur the lines between corporate interests and public policy, raising concerns about *regulatory capture* and democratic accountability. Such continuous business relationship between the oil companies and government was illustrated with the existing joint venture arrangement in Nigeria between the Federal Government of Nigeria, and the multinational oil corporations. Ifesinachi & Aniche (2014) noted that the oil venture partnerships which Nigeria entered into with the international oil companies accounted for over 90 percent of the oil production from the upstream sector. Chevron, for instance, operates the NNPC/Chevron Joint Venture in which the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), on behalf of the government of Nigeria, controls 60 percent equity shares while Chevron holds the balance 40 percent (Mba, Odetunde, & Ngwama, 2021).

Apart from exacerbating Nigeria's rentier status and oil dependence (Aniche, 2014), the joint venture business arrangement between government and the oil corporations creates conflict of interest for



government, making it difficult for the government agencies to implement effective regulatory control over the operations of the oil companies. Udok & Akpan (2017) cited the protracted failure of the Nigerian government to effectively regulate gas flaring by the oil companies despite its devastating effect on the environment and socio-economic lives of the people in the affected areas. The scholars noted that over 40 years have passed since the Nigerian government initiated the gas flare prohibition laws and regulations, with several flare-out deadlines fixed by government, but these regulations and timelines have continued to be flaunted by the oil companies.

At the global level, political dynamics and influence of multinational oil corporations have also impacted effective implementation of the international climate agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. Victor (2011) posited that the challenges and failure to achieve meaningful emissions reductions as outlined under the various global climate treaties are primarily due to the resistance from powerful fossil fuel interests. Bernstein & Hoffman (2019) agreed that despite bold initiatives and regular global discussions facilitated by the UNFCCC, international efforts to mitigate climate change have not resulted in the expected reduction in global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions due to resistance from the fossil fuel industry. Highlighting the inherent tension between economic interests and environmental imperatives of the oil companies, Newell & Paterson (2010) called for stronger regulatory measures and stricter emission standards to help curtail the overbearing influence of the powerful fossil fuel lobby.

Studies continue to affirm that multinational oil corporations have deployed their immense economic powers and vast political connections to lobby for, or against climate policies and regulatory frameworks with potentials to affect their interests. A collaborative study by scholars in the University of Leeds, London School of Economics and other institutions in the United Kingdom postulated that part of the current challenges with implementation of the Paris Agreement may have arisen from disagreements among multinational corporations. The report indicated that oil corporations have generally opposed stricter environmental regulations targeted at fossil fuels, although many have openly appeared to support the Paris Agreement and embrace the drive towards low

carbon operations (Averchenkova, Crick, Kocornik-Mina, Leck & Surminski, 2015).

Some other scholars have, however, indicated that multinational oil corporations were increasingly taking steps to adapt their operations to climate change in order to improve resource efficiency and meet the expectation of their customers and communities, among other reasons. Bailor (2020) observed that besides governments which are state actors, multinational oil corporations are the next most pre-eminent actors in the politics of climate change. He argued that the oil corporations were engaged in multiple fronts in the global search for climate solutions, working together with governments, civil society, and other business organizations. Bailor noted that the efforts of the oil companies have evolved various public-private initiatives, global partnerships, coalitions, and alliances aimed at accelerating climate actions. He cited some of the specific climate change mitigation contributions by the oil companies to include engagement in many renewable energy projects and development of several new climate initiatives including financing, green investments, carbon capture and storage, carbon pricing and emissions trading (Bailor, 2020).

Bailor suggested, therefore, that given the pre-eminent role of multinational oil corporations in the global economy, active engagement of the companies in the political process of climate change can facilitate their positive climate contribution towards mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and the promotion of sustainable development. The companies, the scholar said, can also seize new opportunities and markets that arise from the changing climate conditions, for instance, by investing in renewable energy, green technologies, and low-carbon products. The oil companies, he further noted, can play a positive role in addressing climate change by reducing their own carbon footprint, enhancing their energy efficiency, and supporting low-carbon transitions in their host countries. The oil companies, he further noted, can also engage in corporate social responsibility initiatives, such as supporting local communities, protecting biodiversity, and improving human rights. Bailor concluded that given their place as key global actors, successful international climate policy initiation and implementation must therefore consider the distinct interests and influence of multinational oil corporations. He posited that getting the buy-in and support of the multinational corporations in global climate policy planning can



yield some positive spin-offs, including incorporation of climate change actions in their operations and supply chains. (Bailor, 2020). The various initiatives undertaken separately and collectively by multinational oil corporations towards minimizing their carbon footprints have aimed at optimization of efficiency and diversification of operations into cleaner energy alternatives like solar and wind power. The International Oil and Gas Producers group (OGP) in 2021 unveiled a six-point framework to help the global oil and gas industry to reduce emissions in their operations towards achieving a lower carbon future. The suggested steps towards a lower carbon future included investing in low-carbon technologies and developing carbon capture and storage (CCS) solutions. Others were supporting the development of renewable energy, collaborating with stakeholders, and engaging in policy discussions. (OGP, 2021).

While acknowledging the critical role of multinational oil corporations in the global search for climate solutions, Amaeshi (2006) and Latapi (2020) cautioned that profit retention and maximization remain the principal driving forces for the companies' engagement of the oil corporations in politics of climate change. However, towards resolution of the conflict between profit maximisation and alignment with global climate goals, Banerjee (2002) observed that multinational oil corporations have adopted the strategy of *corporate environmentalism*, which he described as the process by which firms integrate environmental concerns into their decision making. Banerjee noted that the adoption of the concept of corporate environmentalism by the multinational oil corporations is changing the existing ways of thinking in organizations, and helping to address the rising pressures over climate and environmental issues (Banerjee, 2002).

Thinking along the same line, Kolk and Pinkse (2008) noted that the focus by the oil corporations on the critical environmental issue of climate change has given the corporations opportunity to develop some key "firm-specific advantages (FSA)," while at the same time enabling them to modify or reconfigure some of their key environmental advantages to enhance their profitability, growth, and survival. The authors suggested, therefore, that the oil corporations are quickly adapting their operations to the current global climate change realities. The authors, however, noted that it remains unclear and highly debatable to what extent

multinational oil corporations are taking the responsibility to become agents of global change that tackle climate change and sustainability issues. They acknowledged that multinational corporations have a huge potential for innovation, which might lead to the development of sustainable products and services. But they wondered if the companies are making genuine effort to invest in sustainable technologies, and if so, how far are they willing to go if this means moving away from technologies they are familiar with? (Kolke & Pinkse, 2008).

Similar questions have been raised by other scholars concerning the quality and impact of the various efforts by multinational corporations to limit their carbon footprints and adapt their operations to the global demand for energy transitions. Some authors and environmental activists have dismissed these initiatives as superficial, selfish, and insufficient to address the rising global warming. They accused the oil corporations of engaging in greenwashing, a term that refers to the practice of conveying a false impression or overstating their environmental efforts to appear more eco-friendly. They presented facts to support claims that while touting their plans to reduce carbon intensity of their operations, multinational oil corporations continue to pursue their core operations which significantly contribute to greenhouse gas pollution that aggravate global warming and climate change.

A report by foremost oil and industry analysts, McKinsey & Company, pointed out that there are still so many grounds to cover for the oil and gas industry to achieve the required emissions reductions targets towards mitigating the rising global temperatures and climate change. Noting that the oil industry altogether accounts for about 42 percent of the global carbon emissions, McKinsey & Company suggested, therefore, that the oil and gas industry must play a big part and make meaningful contributions towards the achievement of significant global greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Specifically, the industry analysts suggested that to make meaningful climate impact, the global economy must achieve a 90 percent cut in its current emissions, which will amount to emissions reduction by at least 3.4 gigatons of carbon-dioxide equivalent by 2050. The specific initiatives by the oil companies to achieve this goal, the report said, will depend on a number of factors including geography, nature of the assets of the companies, and regulatory policies of the government (McKinsey & Company, January 7, 2020).



Heede (2018) confirmed that more than one-third of global emissions of greenhouse gases were historically generated by about a dozen multinational oil corporations. Another study covering the 18-year period of 1998-2017 established that multinational oil corporations were part of the of the 100 global entities that accounted for over 70 percent of world's greenhouse gas emissions. Some of the oil companies cited among the highest carbon emitters included ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, and Chevron (Riley, 2017).

Scholars continue to debate the extent to which the intervention of multinational oil corporations represent genuine commitment to climate change mitigation. Biesecker & Paterson (2017) outlined the risks of investor-driven climate initiatives and actions by corporate organisations, noting that such initiatives rely on the business self-interest of the investors. The authors noted that such corporate interventions which they termed as *climate capitalism* are not likely to result in fundamental structural shifts needed to address the crisis of climate change (Biesecker & Paterson, 2017).

Baal (2021) took the argument further by insisting that multinational oil companies have, through their campaigns for lower carbon footprints, only been evading their responsibilities to phase out or phase down oil production that generates carbon pollution. He argued that some of the oil corporations have been shifting the responsibility for climate change on their consumers while taking the weight off themselves to make fundamental changes to their business of oil and gas production and marketing (Baal, 2021).

Newell & Paterson (2010) further suggested that the various interventions and changes so far made by multinational oil corporations are incapable of addressing the rising global temperatures and resultant climate change. The authors stated that successful confrontation of climate change entails engagement in a complex political network involving powerful actors in the world of business and finance, aimed at ending global dependence on carbon-based fossil fuels. Achieving such goal, they noted would require radical transformation of the global capitalism and free-market ideologies which are dependent on creating carbon markets (Newell & Paterson, 2010).

The principles of *climate justice and equity* emphasize the need to address the unequal distribution of climate impacts and responsibilities,

particularly among vulnerable populations and marginalized communities (Schlosberg, 2013). Bassett & Shandas (2010) examined the disproportionate burdens of climate change on low-income countries, indigenous peoples and women, highlighting the intersecting dimensions of social, economic, and environmental injustices.

Olmos (2001) noted that the impacts of climate change are experienced more acutely in the developing countries because the developing countries are poorer and lack capacity to respond to extreme weather conditions and other impacts of climate change. The author posited that vulnerability to climate change is closely aligned poverty as the poor possess the least capacity to respond to the vagary of climatic changes. Olmos noted that it was for this apparent reason that the UNFCCC has made special provisions to assist poor countries that are considered most vulnerable to climate change, also with diminished capacity to adapt.

Nigeria, along with some other African countries are ranked among the countries at the greatest risk of suffering the adverse impact of climate change. Nigeria is rated 158 in the global climate change vulnerability index ranging from 1-182 (Ecological Indicators, 2020). Nigeria is placed high on climate change vulnerability map notwithstanding that the country's current share of global greenhouse gas emissions stands at less than 1 per cent, compared to China's apex global emissions of 24.4 per cent. Much of the greenhouse gas emissions from Nigeria is linked to the nation's oil and gas industry.

In consideration of the disparities and various intervening factors, Martinez-Alier et al (2010) underscored the importance of considering the voices and priorities of affected communities in climate policy-making processes. The authors advanced the principles of fairness, equity, justice, and solidarity in the politics of climate change, these serving as alternative routes for achieving more sustainable solutions to the climate change crisis. In a collection of essays edited by Ackerman and Stanton ((2014), several notable authors including Baer, Athanasiou, and Kartha (2014) further addressed the ethical and political issues surrounding climate change. The authors affirmed that equity and justice are central issues in seeking sustainable solutions to the global climate change problem. The scholars noted that the words "just" and "equitable" were intentionally woven into the provisions of the Paris Agreement to emphasize the



importance of equity and justice in the global climate change negotiations.

Manzo (2021) further offered a comprehensive treatise on climate justice and equity, confirming that the essence of the adoption of the principle of equity in the 2015 Paris Agreement was to underscore the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the search for global climate solutions. These points were amplified by Held and Roger (2013) who noted that the problem of climate change is multi-faceted, involving not only specific technical and policy interventions, but also social justice and sustainability considerations. Thus, evolution of sustainable solutions to the challenge requires detailed exploration of the science, politics, economics and ethics of climate change.

In another study, Held & Theros (2014) led a group of international scholars to critically examine the climate contributions and policies of a dozen developing states from across Asia, the Americas and Africa. The authors found that the climate pledges by these developing countries were bolder and more ambitious than those put forward by the wealthier, more developed countries. The scholars also found that political, economic and environmental realities in the developing countries reinforced the type of pledges made by developing states, what actions are being taken to meet the pledges, and what stumbling blocks lie in the way of their realization. They concluded that the peculiar circumstances or realities in the developing countries determine the chances of success and failure of the climate policies and pledges to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in the countries (Held & Theros, 2014).

The findings by Held and Theros (2014) are largely applicable to Nigeria, a developing country whose economy continues to be strongly tied to revenue from the oil and gas sector. The country has initiated several bold climate policies, outlining ambitious plans to achieve carbon neutrality in the next couple of decades. But the peculiar socio-political and economic realities of Nigeria pose the greatest challenges to interpreting the various climate policies to action. While Nigeria, for instance, has initiated policies to halt flaring of natural gas by the oil companies, the country's continued reliance on rent from oil has prevented effective implementation of the gas flare policy.

Writing alone and together with other international scholars, renowned Nigerian expert on climate change, Chukwumerije Okereke, explored different perspectives on the subject of climate equity and

justice. In a 2016 article, Okereke explored the concepts of justice and equity in the climate regime, and offered some advice on how best to design policies that reconcile moral ideals and power politics in global climate change. Assessing the interaction between climate justice and politics in the international regime, Okereke and Coventry (2016) also found that although discussion on distributive justice and the climate regime have become prevalent, much still remains concerning clarification, understanding, and application of the concept of climate justice. He posited that although the current international regime has considered the need to recognize the concepts of distributive justice between the rich and poor countries; it has not provided sufficient grounds to upset the underlying forces and abiding structures of global inequality in climate change discussions and negotiations.

Offering a range of options and approaches for achieving sustainable global climate action, Okereke (2010) suggested that climate change should be viewed not just as an environmental problem requiring technical and managerial solutions, but accepted as a global political issue over which a variety of organizations including state agencies, firms, industry associations, civil society organisations and multilateral organizations engage in contestation as well as collaboration. He, therefore, called for greater collaboration among the multiple, global stakeholders to identify pathways toward transformative change. He also noted the emerging importance of the issue of climate justice in the global discussions on climate change.

Arising from these and various other issues surrounding climate equity and justice, debates have arisen *about the feasibility and desirability of a gradual versus disruptive transition* away from fossil fuels as a climate change solution. Fattouh, Poudineh, & West (2019) observed that the ongoing rapid changes in the global energy market have created multidimensional uncertainties for oil companies and oil-exporting countries around the issue of *speed of transition*. The authors observed correctly that while the transformation of the energy system has been rapid in some regions of the world such as Europe, the changes have been slow and tentative in some other regions, especially Africa.

From the energy transition debate on the future of oil and gas, one of the principal questions that has arisen concerns the status of untapped oil reserves everywhere. What happens to the enormous oil and gas reserves still trapped in the ground? Gupta (2018) explained that, under the Paris Agreement, up to 80 percent of all proven fossil fuel reserves are



to be considered as *stranded resources*, which means that investments already made in such resources turn into stranded assets. This implies that much of Nigeria's oil and gas reserves will be left unrecoverable in the ground. Fattouh, Poudineh, & West (2019) correctly observed, therefore, that oil producing countries and oil companies are facing a strategic challenges and dilemma over the issue of energy transition. For the oil-producing countries such as Nigeria, the challenge is how to achieve economic and income diversification as the ultimate safeguard against energy transition. The dilemma faced by the oil companies, according to Fattouh, Poudineh, & West (2019), is whether to pursue transition to low-carbon technologies beyond their core business, or just focus on producing and maximising their profits from new and already-developed hydrocarbon assets? These are some of the questions this study will be tackling in its assessment of the role and influence of multinational oil corporation in the politics of climate change in Nigeria.

A recent study by Tadjadjeu, Njangang & Woldemichae (2023) established that heavy dependence on natural resources such as oil, significantly explains why some countries appear less committed to contributing to the development of global climate solutions than others. Oil-wealthy and dependent countries such as Nigeria were found to be less able to develop and effectively implement strict policies to combat climate change. Expectedly, such countries were found to be averse to the possibility of leaving their abundant oil and gas resources untapped in the ground, as suggested by Morgan (2014). Rather, the countries are willing to work with the oil companies to consider the second option offered by Morgan, which is the application of new technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies to sustainably tap the fossil fuels (2014). The application of new production techniques and technologies, however, requires the presence of much money, which is currently unavailable.

Nigeria, whose economy continues to rely heavily on rent from oil and gas, has not hidden its preference for gradual energy transition towards achieving its global climate obligations. Speaking at the 2024 CERAWeek Conference in Houston, Texas, USA, on March 19, 2024, Mele Kyari, Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), summarized Nigeria government's position on the twin issues of global energy transition and climate justice. Kyari

clearly stated that Nigeria was not yet ready to transit from oil, but wants freedom to adopt a differentiated, more gradual and flexible energy transition timetable. Nigeria, the NNPC Chief Executive Officer said, needs to be given sufficient time to first attain energy supply security before considering energy security and energy transition. Noting that in Nigeria, like in most sub-Saharan African countries, 70% of the population don't have reliable access to energy, including clean cooking fuels, Kyari posited that energy transition is a very difficult subject for Nigeria and the entire sub-Saharan Africa which are still grappling with energy availability. He insisted that since energy availability is closely linked to energy security, the energy supply gap must first be addressed before considering energy transition.

To close the energy availability gap in Nigeria and successfully transit from fossil energy, Kyari advised that adequate money must be made available for investment in renewable sources. This, he said, will ensure gradual and smooth energy transition, insisting that the problem of supply must first be resolved to pave way for achievement of complete and faster substitution of fossil fuel. Thus, Kyari suggested that global energy transition must be differentiated with different regions given different timetables. Since Nigeria and the entire Africa accounted for just about 3% of the entire global emissions, Kyari opined that energy transition from fossil fuels should be a delayed issue for Africa. Alternatively, Kyari suggested that natural gas should be adopted as the cheapest way to achieve energy transition for Nigeria and Africa. Thus, he called for global transition from oil to gas as a stop-gap measure, ahead of the eventual, long-term transition from gas to renewable energy (Kyari, CERAWeek 2024).

Overall, Nigeria's preference for gradual global energy transition, starting from transition from oil to natural gas as alternative energy source, has the potential of impacting the nature and quality of engagement in climate politics by Chevron and other multinational oil corporations operating in the country. This study explores the full dynamics of Nigeria's climate change commitments and obligations. The study then explores the potential impact of the position of Chevron and other multinational oil corporations on chances of achieving Nigeria's international climate obligations as captured in its nationally determined contributions.



The literature reviewed by this study highlighted the complex and dynamic nature of the relationship between multinational oil corporations and the politics of climate change. Despite mounting pressures to transition away from fossil fuels, oil corporations continue to wield significant influence over climate policy (Levy & Egan, 2003), perpetuating a status quo that prioritizes short-term profits over long-term sustainability. Moving forward, addressing the entrenched power dynamics and vested interests within the oil industry will be essential for advancing ambitious climate action (Hoffman & Henn, 2008) and achieving a just transition to a low-carbon future. Nigeria's continued heavy reliance on rent from the oil industry dims chances of addressing climate change through radical changes in the power dynamics of oil in the country in the foreseeable future.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research, which explores the role of multinational oil corporations in the global politics of climate change, considers two theories of international relations as possible frameworks for the study. They are the Rentier State and Liberal Institutionalism theories.

2.3.1 Rentier State Theory

With its roots in the political economic field of study, this theory, suggests that when a state's economy is heavily dependent on rents derived from external sources, such as oil or natural resources, the rentier state is more likely to experience a number socio-political and economic changes. Such changes include vulnerability to strong influence from the controllers and consumers of the products from which the rents are derived. Other complications and fallouts from rent-based economies include instability, corruption, and economic stagnation. By rents we mean revenues accruing to a state from resources sold by the state to external bodies, such as oil and gas, produced by multinational corporations and exported. Therefore, a rentier state is a state that is heavily depended on sale of its resources to external bodies for revenue generation.

Rentier State Theory helps to explain the effect of external payments or rents on the attitude and behaviour of the rentier state. The theory explains that the huge revenues generated by natural resource exports, such as oil and gas, can have weighty effects on the political and economic dynamics of these rentier states. Such states have been known to suffer a number of consequences, including erosion of sovereignty and dependence on foreign powers,

particularly those that consume their natural resources. Rentier states are also prone to having corrupt and inefficient public sectors with weak administrative and governance capacities.

Nigeria qualifies as a rentier state due to its heavy dependence on rents from oil as the country's revenue base. Since the discovery of oil in the country in the 1950s, the Nigerian economy has become heavily reliant on oil revenues, which account for over 90% of the country's exports and about 70% of the government's total generated annual revenue (Chinery & George-Okoli, 2022). Watts (2021) applied the Rentier State Theory to explain how Nigeria's oil-reliant economy has negatively impacted the country's political stability and potentials for economic diversification and sustainable development. Similar conclusions were reached by several other scholars, including Epelle (2004), Segun (2018), and Akinola (2022), who applied the Rentier State Theory to study the impact of oil revenue reliance on different aspects of Nigeria's socio-political and economic development. The conclusions were that the country's heavy reliance on oil wealth has contributed to the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a few elites, leading to widespread corruption and a lack of accountability (Epelle, 2004); hindered economic diversification and contributed to political instability (Segun, 2018).

Perhaps most importantly and more directly relevant to our study, it has been highlighted that Rentier States tend to be subject to overbearing influence of external forces such as governments of foreign countries that are the major importers of the natural resources. Some of these foreign countries exert pressure on the rent-collecting states directly or through their agents such as multinational corporations. In Nigeria's case, several studies have shown how multinational oil corporations that dominate the nation's oil and gas industry have significantly impacted the nation's environment and other socio-political and economic sectors.

The Rentier State Theory, therefore, provides a useful framework for our understanding of the challenges faced by Nigeria as an oil-rich country in addressing the challenge of environmental and climate change governance. The theory especially illuminates the critical position of foreign governments and multinational corporations as important stakeholders capable of influencing politics of climate change in Nigeria. The



multinational oil corporations are especially directly relevant as dominate oil production in Nigeria and continue to flare natural gas and carry out other activities in their operations that have been established to contribute to climate change.

However, the Rentier State Theory appears too simplistic as a tool for full understanding of the dynamics of global climate change politics as the theory fails to recognise the roles played by other key stakeholders in climate governance. Apart from multinational oil corporations, other critical stakeholders and influencers of climate governance include governments, communities, non-governmental organisations, and business organisations. For our study, therefore, the Rentier State Theory provides some, but not adequate road map to guide our understanding of the politics of climate change. The Rentier State Theory guides our understand of the interaction between government as the rentier state, and multinational oil corporations as rent generators. But the theory falls short of exploring the role of other actors in the complex process of global climate politics involving many other actors. Government plays a key role in the climate governance process, but effective climate governance requires navigation and balancing of the influence and interest of multiple state and non-state actors including multilateral agencies, non-governmental organisations, and business corporations. Full understanding of the roles of all stakeholders involved in global climate governance will aid our appreciation of the different levels and points of influence in the politics of climate change.

2.3.2 Liberal Institutionalism Theory

Liberal institutionalism has emerged as one of the leading new international relations theories, offering a deeper understanding of how states interact and cooperate in the global environment. Also known as liberal internationalism or neoliberal institutionalism, liberal institutionalism highlights the critical role of international institutions and cooperation among states in promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the global system. This theoretical framework emphasizes the role of institutions, norms, and collective action in managing conflicts and promoting cooperation and peace among states.

Although liberal institutionalism accepts that states are rational actors seeking to maximize their interests within the international system, however, unlike the Realist School which highlights the anarchic nature of the international system, and emphasizes power dynamics and self-interest as the

primary drivers of state behaviour, liberal institutionalism believes that cooperation among states is not only possible but has lots of merits for achieving common goals and addressing shared challenges. Thus, while realists view states as global actors solely interested in seeking to maximize their self-interests, power, and security, liberal institutionalists place greater emphasis on the role of international institutions, norms, and interdependence in shaping state behaviour. So, liberal institutionalists see international institutions as channels or mechanisms for states to overcome collective action problems and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Belief in the efficacy of international organizations is, therefore, one of the fundamental tenets of liberal institutionalism. Examples of such international organisations are the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund. These institutions facilitate cooperation and manage conflicts among states by providing platforms for dialogue, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Their interventions help to mitigate uncertainty and build trust among states, fostering a more stable and predictable international atmosphere. Thus, they promote peaceful resolution of disputes and reduce the likelihood of war by establishing rules, norms, procedures, and frameworks for interaction.

One of the central principles of liberal institutionalism is the belief in the efficacy of international institutions as mechanisms for promoting cooperation and managing conflicts among states. These institutions range from formal organizations like the United Nations to informal regimes and agreements governing specific issue areas such as trade, human rights, and environmental protection. By providing forums for negotiation, monitoring, and enforcement, international institutions help establish rules and norms that facilitate cooperation and mitigate conflict escalation.

Liberal institutionalism highlights the importance of norms and principles in shaping state behaviour and promoting stability in the international system. In this regard, states are not seen as solely driven by material interests but also by normative considerations such as democracy, human rights, and rule of law. It is reasoned that international norms serve as guiding principles that influence the behaviours of states, constraining the pursuit of unilateral action. International institutions provide platforms for states to interact and socialize among themselves, and this contributes to the dissemination and consolidation of the normative considerations,



fostering a more cooperative and rule-based international order.

Another key principle highlighted by liberal institutionalism is the role economic interdependence in promoting cooperation and reducing the likelihood of conflict among states. As globalization deepens economic linkages between countries, states become increasingly reliant on each other for trade, investment, and technology transfer. Economic interdependence creates mutual interests and incentives for cooperation, as disruptions in economic relations can have detrimental effects on all parties involved. International institutions play a crucial role in managing economic interdependence by providing mechanisms for dispute resolution, coordinating economic policies, and promoting trade liberalization.

Critics of liberal institutionalism raise many concerns, including the issue of the structural inequalities in the international system where powerful states often wield disproportionate influence within international institutions, using them to advance their own interests at the expense of smaller or less powerful states. The United Nations system, for instance, is controlled by the five powerful, permanent members states of the UN Security Council that hold veto powers to override decisions at the 15-member Council. Critics of the liberal institutionalism theory also contend that international institutions may be ineffective or biased in addressing pressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation.

These criticisms notwithstanding, liberal institutionalism remains an important theoretical framework for evaluating the nature and structure of cooperation and conflict in the global system. Its focus on institutions, norms, and interdependence helps to illuminate the complex dynamics of international relations and offers channels for promoting peace, stability, and cooperation among states. As the world grapples with climate change, terrorism, and other emerging threats and opportunities in the 21st century, the principles and insights of liberal institutionalism continue to inform debates and shape policy responses at the multilateral level.

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye are internationally recognized at two of the most influential scholars in liberal institutionalism school. Keohane, in his influential book, *After Hegemony* (1984), examined the place of international institutions in a post-hegemonic world order, arguing that even in the absence of a dominant power, institutions can still promote stability and cooperation among states by

providing mechanisms for collective action and dispute resolution. Thus, he highlighted the important role of international institutions in promoting cooperation among states and maintaining stability in the international system. These institutions, he posited, help to mitigate uncertainty, reduce transaction costs, and provide mechanisms for resolving conflicts peacefully (Keohane & Nye, 1973).

In defence of liberal institutionalism, Keohane also projects the *complex interdependence* of states, noting that states are interconnected through multiple channels, including economic, social, and political ties. Such interconnectedness, he argued, reduces the likelihood of conflict and encourages cooperation, especially in areas where states have mutual interests. Keohane also projects institutional effectiveness as one of the fundamental elements of liberal institutionalism theory, holding that international institutions can be effective in promoting cooperation and managing conflicts among states by helping to establish norms, rules, and procedures that guide state behaviour and facilitate coordination on issues such as trade, security, and environmental protection.

On his own, Nye developed the idea of *Soft Power*, which has been pivotal in further aiding an understanding of how states can influence others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. He argued that a country can exert soft power from the nation's culture, values, policies, and institutions. Thus, liberal institutions can play a crucial role in projecting soft power by embodying democratic values, promoting human rights, and fostering cooperation among states.

Nye also projected the concept of *Smart Power* which involves achievement of a country's foreign policy goals through strategic integration of both hard power (military and economic coercion) and soft power (attraction and persuasion). Nye insisted that liberal institutions play a crucial role in amplifying a country's smart power by enhancing its credibility, legitimacy, and influence on the global stage. Like Keohane, Nye further acknowledged the reality of complex interdependence of states in the 21st century world through various channels such as trade, investment, technology, and communication. Nye noted that liberal institutions serve as platforms for managing and enhancing cooperation in the interconnected world, contributing to peace, stability, and prosperity. He argued that these institutions provide forums for dialogue, negotiation, and collective problem-solving, while also helping to establish norms, rules, and



procedures that guide state behaviour and promote stability in the international system.

2.3.3 Liberal Institutionalism Theory and Climate Change

The relationship between liberal institutionalism and climate change underscores the importance of international cooperation, institutions, and norms in addressing one of the most pressing global challenges of the 21st century. Climate change, characterized by rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation, poses significant threats to human societies, ecosystems, and economies worldwide. In this context, liberal institutionalism offers insights into how states can collaborate to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts.

Liberal institutionalism highlights the role of international institutions as key mechanisms for coordinating efforts to combat climate change. Institutions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provide platforms for dialogue, negotiation, and collective action among states, fostering cooperation and consensus-building on climate-related issues. These institutions help establish norms, principles, and agreements that guide state behaviour and facilitate the implementation of climate policies at the global, regional, and national levels.

Moreover, liberal institutionalism emphasizes the importance of multilateralism in addressing climate change, recognizing that no single state can effectively tackle the problem on its own. Climate change is a global phenomenon that transcends national boundaries, requiring collective efforts and shared responsibilities from all countries. By promoting inclusive and participatory decision-making processes, international institutions enable states to collaborate, exchange knowledge, and pool resources to address common challenges associated with climate change.

International norms and principles also play a crucial role in shaping state behaviour and responses to climate change. Norms such as sustainability, environmental stewardship, and intergenerational equity influence how states perceive and prioritize climate action. Through processes of socialization and norm diffusion, international institutions help promote the acceptance and internalization of these norms, encouraging states to adopt more ambitious climate policies and commitments.

Furthermore, liberal institutionalism underscores the significance of economic interdependence in addressing climate change. The transition to a low-carbon economy requires coordinated efforts to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions, invest in renewable energy, and promote sustainable development practices. Economic interdependence creates incentives for states to cooperate and innovate in the pursuit of climate-friendly technologies and policies, as well as to address the social and economic impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities.

Critics of liberal institutionalism argue that international institutions may be insufficient or ineffective in addressing the scale and urgency of the climate crisis. They point to the slow progress and limited outcomes of international climate negotiations, as well as the reluctance of some states to commit to binding emissions reduction targets. Moreover, they highlight the role of power dynamics and vested interests in shaping state behaviour and decision-making within international institutions, which may hinder collective action on climate change.

Despite these challenges, liberal institutionalism provides for this study the most valuable framework for understanding the complex dynamics of international climate change politics and identifying opportunities for enhancing international cooperation on climate change. By promoting dialogue, cooperation, and collective action, liberal institutionalism offers pathways for building resilience, reducing vulnerability, and achieving sustainable development in a changing climate. As the global community, including state and non-state actors, continues to grapple with the impacts of climate change, the principles and insights of liberal institutionalism remain relevant for shaping effective and equitable responses to this critical global challenge.

III. MULTINATIONAL OIL CORPORATIONS AND POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE: HISTORICAL AND THEMATIC OVERVIEW

3.1 OVERVIEW

Here, the study explores in details the historical and thematic background to the key subject matter of the research, i.e., politics of climate change. Accordingly, the chapter reviews the history of global politics of climate change as reflected in the evolution of the various international climate change agreements, historical role of multinational oil corporations in politics in general, and politics of climate change in particular. The chapter also explored the historical background of the operations of multinational oil corporations in Nigeria,



especially Chevron, within the context of the companies' environmental and climate contributions. The chapter further traced the historical path of Nigeria's engagement in politics of climate change.

3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The origin of the politics of climate change is traced to the maiden World Climate Conference held in February 1979. At this gathering of nations in Geneva, Switzerland, a group of scientists from over 50 countries representing various disciplines had called on the nations of the world to "foresee and prevent potential man-made changes in climate." (Gupta, 2001). In a critical review of the 30-year history of international climate change politics, Schroeder (2010) identified four separate phases in the chronology of the global discourse on climate change. These were the politicisation, regime formation, Kyoto Protocol formation, and post-2012 negotiation phases:

"The first phase covers the process of politicisation of the issue and the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The second phase spans the regime formation process and the adoption of the United Nations Frameworks Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Third, the negotiation and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. Lastly, the fourth phase covers the negotiations towards a post-2012 deal." (Schroeder, 2010).

The history of international climate change politics has also been classified along five distinct periods. Gupta (2010) identified these periods as the pre-1990 years; the period leading up to the adoption of the Climate Change Convention; the period of the Kyoto Protocol until US withdrawal; the period thereafter focusing on the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol; and the post 2008 period. Gupta noted that each of these periods featured different actors, issues, trends, and agreements as the international community struggled to understand the science and complexity of climate change, nationally appropriate mitigation actions, and the search for solutions through formal international negotiations and agreements.

The United Nations has since the early 1990s played a central role in bringing together state and non-state actors to forge different international agreements, also called protocols, aimed at curbing the emission of greenhouse gases that significantly contribute to climate change. These multilateral treaties were signed by countries, committing themselves to

managing different aspects of human activities that elevate greenhouse gas emission and deplete the ozone layer, thereby contributing to global warming.

The latest of such treaties, the *Paris Agreement*, signed in 2015, set out goals to limit global warming and enhance climate change resilience. Through this Agreement, world leaders sought to achieve more drastic reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than envisaged under the previous treaties. Endorsed by nearly all countries of the world, the Paris Agreement is considered the world's most cooperative agreement ever. It placed much emphasis on the need to replace fossil fuels with clean, renewable energy sources.

Strategically, the aim of the Paris Accord was to strengthen global responses to the threat of climate change by ensuring to keep global temperature rise during the present century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius (Article 2 UNFCCC, 2016). Also, it focused on strengthening the capacity of countries to deal with the effects of climate change. In achieving these goals, increased financial flows, greater sharing of technology and capacity building among nations were proposed (Articles 9,10 and 11).

The Paris Agreement, in its Article 13, made provisions to ensure greater transparency in tracking the progress of countries towards meeting their obligations. Unlike the previous climate accords, the Paris Agreement provided for voluntary and nationally determined targets by countries. Each signatory country was allowed to its own climate goals and actions towards mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impact of global warming and climate change. In Article 4, Paragraph 2, the Paris Agreement required each party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions that it intends to achieve (UNFCCC, 2016). Parties were also required to initiate domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions (UNFCCC, 2016). Also, developing nations such as Nigeria were given the opportunity to create climate change policies with indigenous characteristics looking at their prevalent challenges.

The Paris Agreement, therefore, abandoned the controversial bottom-up approach of the Kyoto Protocol, which categorized countries and assigned



separate carbon-reduction responsibilities. The Paris Agreement rather emphasized that both developed and developing countries should be committed to reducing their carbon emissions to achieve net-zero emissions by the second half of 21st Century, even if only on a voluntary basis. The Agreement appeared to have assigned different but equal climate control responsibilities to both the industrial developed and developing countries as it affirmed as follows:

“Developed country parties should continue taking the lead by undertaking economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets, while developing country parties should continue enhancing their mitigation efforts to achieve, over time, economy-wide emission reduction or limitation targets in the light of different national circumstances” (UNFCCC, Article 2, Paragraph 4).

Since its coming into force in 2016, the Paris agreement has been operationalized through a work programme initiated by different subsidiary bodies to develop procedures, modalities, and guidelines for achieving the Agreement’s goal of keeping the

global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial levels. Countries have been submitting progress reports on their different Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). Initial, open hostility to the Paris Agreement by the United States under the Republican Party-led administration of the United States has given way to open support by the Democratic Party-controlled administration of President Joe Biden. Presently, no known countries of the world are opposed to the ideals and goals of the Paris Agreement.

Before the Paris Agreement, there were several other notable, climate discussions and negotiations at the global level, leading to the emergence of international climate policies and agreements. These global climate pacts included the United Nations Frameworks Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and the Kyoto Protocol. These agreements have given rise to many private-public instruments, initiated by state and non-state actors towards addressing specific sources of global warming and climate change.

Illustration 1:

UN Climate Change Conferences

Conference	Date	Venue
COP 1	1995	Berlin, Germany
COP 2	1996	Geneva, Switzerland
COP 3	1997	Kyoto, Japan
COP 4	1998	Buenos Aires, Argentina
COP 5	1999	Bonn, Germany
COP 6	2000	The Hague, Netherlands
COP 6	2001	Bonn, Germany
COP 7	2001	Marrakech, Morocco
COP 8	2002	New Delhi, India
COP 9	2003	Milan, Italy
COP 10	2004	Buenos Aires, Argentina
COP 11	2005	Montreal, Canada
COP 12	2006	Nairobi, Kenya
COP 13	2007	Bali, Indonesia
COP 14	2008	Poznań, Poland
COP 15	2009	Copenhagen, Denmark
COP 16	2010	Cancún, Mexico
COP 17	2011	Durban, South Africa
COP 18	2012	Doha, Qatar
COP 19	2013	Warsaw, Poland
COP 20	2014	Lima, Peru



COP 21	2015	Paris, France
COP 22	2016	Marrakech, Morocco
COP 23	2017	Bonn, Germany
COP 24	2018	Katowice, Poland
COP 25	2019	Madrid, Spain
COP 26	2021	Glasgow, United Kingdom
COP 27	2022	Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt
COP 28	2023	Dubai, United Arab Emirates

There was, for instance the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, (UNFCCC) which was forged as the principal global mechanism for coordinating climate change governance efforts by state and non-state actors. The process towards setting up of the UNFCCC was initiated at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also called the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The agreement came into effect from 21 March 1994, with the goal of managing the level of greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere to mitigate its impact on the climate system (Malumfashi, 2007). Under the UNFCCC, all signatory countries were split into the following three categories: Annex I or developed or countries, Annex II made up of developed countries with special financial responsibilities; and Annex III or developing countries.

Each category of countries was assigned different responsibilities towards curbing greenhouse gas emissions in their countries. Under the name, Conference of the Parties (COP), the signatory states to the UNFCCC meet every year at different cities around the world to review national and global progress in implementing the legal frameworks and other instruments towards mitigating climate change. The latest COP session, the 28th edition, was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, November-December, 2023.

The first direct fallout from the UNFCCC pact was the setting up of the Kyoto Protocol, which attempted to establish a universally binding emission-reduction target. At the discussions leading the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, representatives of states accepted and upheld the scientific evidence that global warming existed, and was caused by man-made carbon emissions. Accordingly, the Kyoto agreement sought to curtail the production of certain classes of greenhouse gases identified by scientists as contributory to global warming and climate change. These included carbon

dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and five other types of dangerous gases.

While upholding the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in combating climate change, the Kyoto Protocol categorized the signatory countries into three groups and assigned different emission control responsibilities to each group according to their level of economic development. The highly industrialized, developed countries which were proven to be historically responsible for the current high levels of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere resulting from decades of industrial production, were required to adopt stricter measures to limit their greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate impact on climate change. Additionally, the developed countries were tasked with providing financial aid to support developing countries in meeting their own national obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Nigeria became a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol on the 23rd of October 1998 and ratified the Kyoto Protocol on 30th of September 2004 as a non-Annex I country.

These multilateral climate agreements endorsed by countries have generated ancillary global climate discussions and instruments involving non-state actors, including multinational oil corporations and civil society organizations. An example of such additional, international climate change policy instruments was forged at the sidelines of the 2023 Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirate, by 50 global oil and gas companies. The companies which controlled about 40 percent of world oil production reached and signed a non-binding agreement, called the Oil and Gas Decarbonization Charter, pledging to drastically cut carbon emissions by 2050.

Many multinational oil corporations have also been involved in the discussions and process leading to the setting up of the Global Methane Initiative, one of the most prominent international public-private arrangements to tackle the threat of climate change.



The Global Methane Initiative seeks to tap and commercially utilize methane from the oil and gas and other sources, to generate electricity and other forms of energy. Launched in 2004, the Initiative focuses on tapping methane generated from the oil and gas sector, as well as Biogas and Coal Mines, using the gathered gas to execute different methane-to-energy projects. Nigeria is among the 46 partner countries that have subscribed to the Global Methane Initiative (GMI).

Scientists have established methane, which is a principal constituent of natural gas, is one of the strongest greenhouse gases as it can last over 12 years in the atmosphere, and trap nearly 30 times more heat than carbon dioxide, another potent greenhouse gas. Latest statistics indicated that global oil and gas operations alone accounted for over 20 percent of methane emissions that emanated from anthropogenic or human activities (Global Methane Initiative, 2022). Thus, methane recovery and use has been identified as one of the fastest and most reliable routes to mitigating global warming or climate change and transiting to low carbon fuels.

Other outstanding international frameworks involving multinational oil corporations in the search for climate solutions include the Global Gas Flaring Reduction Partnership and Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 Initiative. The Global Gas Flaring Reduction Partnership (GGFR) is a public-private trust fund that seeks to end routine gas flaring and venting in countries around the world. To accomplish this, the GGFR supports the removal of technical and regulatory barriers to flaring reduction, while promoting the development of country-specific gas flaring reduction programmes. The initiative also conducts research and disseminates best practices in gas flaring elimination to governments and companies. By seeking to end routine gas flaring across the world, the GGFR expects to not only mitigate climate change and curb air pollution, but to save energy and cost associated with gas flaring. Among the GGFR partners are some 15 multinational oil companies including Chevron, about 20 countries including Nigeria, about and a handful of multilateral organizations including the European Union.

On its part, the Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 (ZRF) is a World Bank initiative that encourages state and non-state actors to take concrete actions towards ending routine flaring. The ZRF is aimed at facilitating cooperation among the different stakeholders involved oil production process to evolve solutions to ending routine gas flaring.

Introduced by the World Bank and officially launched in 2015 by the United Nations, it brings together governments, oil companies and development institutions all committed to ensuring zero routine flaring in any new oil field developments, and halting routine flaring at all already existing oil production facilities as soon as possible and no later than 2030. The ZRF initiative concerns only routine flaring and does not extend to gas flaring for safety reasons or non-routine flaring. Routine flaring of gas is flaring during normal oil production operations in the absence of sufficient facilities, amenable geology, or economic incentives to re-inject the produced gas, utilize it on-site, or dispatch it to a market.

Oil companies that are signatories to the agreement commit to taking steps to implement economically viable solutions to eliminate the existing flaring as soon as possible, and no later than 2030 (Aniche, 2015). Development institutions that endorse the initiative pledge to facilitate cooperation and offer financial instruments to promote implementation of zero flaring policies particularly in the countries where they operate, whether such countries have endorsed the zero flaring initiative or not. Both state and non-state actors that endorse the global zero flaring programme are required to publicly report their progress towards flaring elimination on an annual basis. The World Bank can then aggregate and publish such reports for greater global attention.

3.3 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT OF MULTINATIONAL OIL CORPORATIONS IN GLOBAL POLITICS

Generally, multinational oil corporations have played key roles in the global economy and politics. This is because, for over a century, oil has been a treasured global resource with significant impact on the international relations and diplomacy of many countries. As authoritatively narrated by Sampson (1975), the early history and development of multinational oil corporations is traced to the 19th century discovery of oil in Pennsylvania, United States of America. That gave rise to the establishment of oil companies such as Standard Oil, which soon became a key player in the oil industry in the USA, and eventually spreading its tentacles globally. Standard Oil, founded by John D. Rockefeller in 1870, spread and monopolised the entire value chain of the oil industry in the United States until it was broken up in 1911 under USA antitrust laws, to halt the company's aggressive expansion and acquisition.



The oil industry played a critical role in international politics during the World Wars, providing the much-needed fuels for the war ships, tanks, and other weapons. In his book, *The First World Oil War*, Winegard (2016) traced how the historical influence of oil was felt not just as the source of wealth and economic opportunity, but also “the root source of global conflict, toxicity and economic disparity.” Winegard explained that oil became “a powerful commodity during, and in the immediate aftermath of the First World War.” Analysing the evolution of oil as a catalyst for both war and diplomacy, Winegard connected the events of the First World War to contemporary petroleum geo-politics and international aggression.

“Beginning with the First World War, oil became the preeminent commodity to safeguard national security and promote domestic prosperity. For the first time in history, territory was specifically conquered to possess oil fields and resources; vital cogs in the continuation of the industrialized warfare of the Twentieth Century.

After World War I, the global extension and influence of the American and European multinational oil corporations blossomed. Companies such as Exxon (formerly part of Standard Oil), Shell, and BP spread globally, gaining access to oil assets in the Middle East and later Asia and Africa (Pratt, 2012). There have been mergers, acquisitions, and expansions among the oil giants, with Exxon and Mobil, Chevron and Texaco, Shell and BP, merging to become today some of the world's largest oil corporations and principal players in the global energy industry.

The events of the Oil Crisis of the 1970s were perhaps the most graphic demonstration of the overarching influence and powers of multinational oil corporations in the affairs of nations. The First Oil Crisis occurred in 1973, arising from the Israeli war with Arab nations in that year, which pushed oil-producing Arab countries to impose an oil embargo against countries supporting Israel, including the USA. Consequently, oil prices quadrupled, leading to a global economic recession which highlighted the strategic importance of oil and vulnerability of nations heavily dependent on oil imports. The Second Oil Crisis in 1979 was primarily caused by the Iranian Revolution and the subsequent Iran-Iraq War, which disrupted oil production and exports. Together with other factors like the Iranian hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the political development in Iran triggered further oil price increases and economic challenges worldwide. The ensuing global energy crises tasked to the limits

the diplomatic strength of world leaders and demonstrated the criticality of oil and oil corporations in global politics.

The wave of nationalization of oil reserves by some governments in the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa, further highlighted the influence of multinational oil corporations in global politics. The forceful takeover of the assets of the multinational oil corporations set the stage for struggle for power and influence between the oil companies and the concerned governments. Cases of nationalization of oil assets of multinational oil corporations began in Iran in the 1950s (1951-1953) when the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh nationalized the oil industry, leading to the loss of control by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP). The action of the Iranian government eventually led to the forceful overthrow of the government in a 1953 coup d'état sponsored by agents of the home governments of the impacted oil company.

Other major cases of nationalization of oil resources that thrust multinational oil corporations on the stage of global politics occurred at various times in Venezuela, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, and other places. In 1976 in Venezuela, the government led by President Carlos Andrés Pérez, nationalized the oil industry, taking control of assets held by foreign companies like Exxon and Shell (Nye, 1979). Similar events occurred in Iraq between 1972-1975, as Saddam Hussein: took total control of the country's oil industry using the instrument of the Iraq National Oil Company (INOC). Libya's Muammar Gaddafi set off international political upheavals in the 1970s when he completed the appropriation of foreign oil assets, including those of Italian and U.S. companies. In Nigeria, the London-based multinational oil company, British Petroleum (BP), was caught at the centre of the diplomatic quarrel between Nigeria and Britain, as Nigeria tried to put pressure on the British government in the political process for transition to majority rule in Southern Africa (Genova, 2010). Consequently, the Nigerian government had totally nationalized some operations and assets of BP in 1979.

All the nationalization efforts were directed at whittling the powers and influence of the multinationals. The efforts reflected a desire for resource sovereignty and a shift toward state control of valuable natural resources. The nationalization of oil assets generated long-lasting impact and implications for global energy politics, eventually



leading to forceful overthrow of some of the governments through secret schemes supported by the multinational oil companies and their home governments (Engdahl, 2004).

The formation of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1960, was another watershed in the historical evolution of multinational oil corporations' influence in global politics. The emergence of OPEC challenged the dominance of the European and American multinational oil corporations as it brought together oil producing countries across different regions to assert greater control over oil prices and production. The rise of OPEC and regional displacement of multinational oil corporations from control over production and pricing of oil in the Middle East contributed to the 1973 and 1979 world oil crisis which caused major price shocks and geopolitical disagreements (Griffin, 1985). Meanwhile, some of the vigorous international political and economic struggles over nationalized oil assets involved multinational oil corporations supported by their home governments against their host countries in Iran (1951 and 1979); Iraq in 1963, Venezuela in 1976, and Nigeria in 1979 (Cossa, Mondlane, & Others, 2019).

These developments highlighted the importance of *Oil Diplomacy or Petroleum Politics* in international affairs. During the Cold War years and till present, oil has remained an important instrument of foreign policy for both oil-producing and oil-consuming nations, with multinational oil corporations being key actors in the global politics of oil. Many of the oil corporations have been seen aligning with, and supporting not just their home governments, but regimes friendly to their interests in their host countries and elsewhere.

As noted by Hartshorn (1973), *Oil diplomacy* had both positive and negative effects on the stability, security, and development of the world. It involved use of oil exports by oil-producing states as a leverage to attract political allies, trade partners, and foreign investment. It may also manifest as an attempt by oil producing states to embargo their oil exports to punish political enemies as happened during the 1973-1974 oil crisis when the Arab bloc in OPEC set off global economic turmoil by withholding export of their oil to the USA and other countries that supported Israel during the October 1973 Arab-Israel "Yom Kippur" war. Among other fallouts, the crisis exposed the potential power of oil

as an instrument of international politics (Issawi, 1978).

On the other hand, oil-consuming states have also tried to use their oil imports as a bargaining chip to secure political support, favourable terms of trade, and access to markets from oil-producing states. An example is China's ongoing strategic investments in such oil-rich countries as Angola and Sudan, in exchange for oil supplies and regional political influence (European Parliament, Policy Paper PE 603.868). Oil diplomacy also played out as oil-producing states tried to wield their oil exports as a weapon to penalise or pressure oil-consuming states that threatened their interests or policies; while oil-consuming states tried to use their oil imports as a means to isolate or coerce oil-producing states that violated international norms or agreements. This was recently illustrated when the United States imposed sanctions on Iran's oil sector to scuttle its nuclear programme, while Iran threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz, a vital international oil shipping route. (European Parliament, Policy Paper PE 603.868).

Most commonly, multinational oil companies serve as key players in global politics when oil-consuming states attempt to use their oil dependence as a justification to intervene in the affairs of oil-producing states or regions, either to protect their oil interests or to promote their values and interests. Conversely, oil-producing states attempt to deploy their oil revenues to fund their military capabilities and engage in regional or international conflicts, either directly or through proxies. These scenarios played out in the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 towards gaining control of Kuwaiti oil fields, while the United States led a coalition to defeat Iraq and secure Kuwait's oil supplies (Oil Diplomacy, www.byjus.com).

Specifically, regarding the engagement of multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate change, studies have shown that until recent years, the oil corporations paid only scanty attention to environmental impact of their operations. The companies focused their attention mainly in aggressively pursuing their business of exploration, extraction, and refining of fossil fuels. However, since the late 20th century, concerns for the environment, threat of climate change, increased global scrutiny, and demands for cleaner practices and environmental stewardship led the oil corporations to begin to pay greater attention to the impact of their operations on the environment.



Scientific research and advocacy increasingly showed direct linkage between the operations and products of the multinational oil corporations and global warming (IPCC's AR6 Synthesis Report 2023).

There were initial years of denials and push-back by the multinational oil corporations against the growing global pressures for higher environmental responsibility in their operations. Harvard University researchers found that for over four decades, some of the USA-based oil corporations, including ExxonMobil and Chevron, collaborated to spread disinformation that sought to undermine and delay climate action. They funded climate denial campaigns. The companies sponsored sophisticated public relations campaigns that attacked climate science and scientists in an attempt to influence public opinion on climate change. The messages sought to discredit scientific findings that highlighted the role of fossil fuels in causing climate change (Powell, 2021).

Geoffrey Supran, a Harvard University professor who led the study highlighted the role of ExxonMobil in suppressing facts on climate change: "In 2017, our research was the first peer-reviewed analysis of ExxonMobil's 40-year history of climate-change communications. And what we discovered was that there were systematic discrepancies between, on the one hand, what Exxon and ExxonMobil scientists said about climate-science privately and in academic circles, versus what Exxon, Mobil, and ExxonMobil said to the general public in The New York Times and elsewhere. That analysis showed that ExxonMobil misled the public about basic climate science and its implications. They did so by contributing quietly to climate science, and loudly to promoting doubt about that science. Our work demonstrated ExxonMobil's long history of attacking science and scientists in order to undermine and delay climate action. ExxonMobil has used language to subtly but systematically shape the way the public thinks about climate change, often in misleading ways by selectively emphasizing some terms and topics in public while consistently avoiding others. The takeaway message across all of our work is that over and over, ExxonMobil has misled the public about climate change by telling the public one thing and then saying and doing the opposite behind closed doors." (Powell, 2021).

A 2021 inquiry by the Oversight Committee of the US House of Representatives confirmed that US-owned oil and gas multinational corporations

sponsored public communications that twisted information regarding the causative relationship between global warming and fossil fuels produced by them. ExxonMobil, Chevron, and other companies were found to have, since the 1970s, deliberately suppressed critical information linking fossil fuel to global warming. The companies rather engaged in dissemination of misinformation casting doubts on the science and reality of climate change. The entire oil industry in the US was found to have collaborated in the protracted, grand scheme of public deception on climate change (Powell, 2021). Supran offered more details:

"Behind closed doors and in academic circles, Exxon has known that its products would likely cause dangerous global warming since at least the 1970s. By way of its trade association, the American Petroleum Institute, the oil industry as a whole has been on notice even longer -- since the 1950s. When you start to pull back the curtain, you see just how sophisticated the oil industry's propaganda machine has been, how easily their rhetoric has snuck into people's consciousness and biased the way the public thinks about climate change."

Since the conclusion of the Paris Agreement in 2015, however, multinational oil corporations have stepped out of the background, taking up more frontline roles in the global discussions on climate change. Soon after the conclusion of the Paris Agreement, many of the multinational oil corporations began to announce their support for low carbon operations. They collaborated to form different groups which promoted voluntary measures such as the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI), Global Methane Initiative, and Global Gas Flaring Reduction Partnership (GGFR). These initiatives showed apparent positive actions by the oil and gas industry, focused on reducing methane emissions, improving energy efficiency, and investing in low-carbon technologies (Grasso, 2022).

However, the initiatives were interpreted by some analysts as a smokescreen to hide the true intentions of the industry and "mislead the public about the extent of the oil companies' actions. The following were noted in the report by Edward Collins, author of the report published by Influence Map:

"In the three years following the Paris Agreement, the five largest publicly-traded oil and gas majors (ExxonMobil, Royal Dutch Shell, Chevron, BP and Total) have invested over \$1Bn of shareholder funds on misleading climate-related branding and lobbying. These efforts are overwhelmingly in conflict with the goals of this landmark global



climate accord and designed to maintain the social and legal license to operate and expand fossil fuel operations. There is a glaring gap between their words and their actions. They spend about \$195m a year on branding campaigns suggesting they support action against climate change. But these campaigns mislead the public about the extent of the oil companies' actions because while publicly endorsing the need to act, they are massively increasing investment in a huge expansion of oil and gas extraction. In 2019 their spending increased to \$115bn, with just 3% of that directed at low carbon projects."

Still, it has become clear that although multinational oil corporations were not the principal actors and direct signatories to Paris Agreement and other international climate change frameworks, the companies have played important roles in the process of forging the agreements. As noted by Sybille, Menestrel, & Bettignies (2002), although multinational oil corporations remained at the background, they played a complex role in the lead-up to the Paris Agreement, actively engaging and offering technical advice to their home and host states to ensure that the economic interests of the companies were adequately covered.

Thus, in an effort to safeguard their business interests and shape the emerging climate policies, the multinational oil corporations changed their tactic from open and direct opposition to greenhouse gas emission plans, to apparent support for climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives. However, some of the oil companies adopted the strategy of "greenwashing" their image by promoting themselves as environmentally friendly without making substantial changes. Some of the corporations made public statements that appeared on the surface to support global climate actions, while, in practice, they continued to prioritize their profit-driven agendas that exacerbated global warming.

Supran (2021) further highlighted how multinational oil corporations have "evolved their language" on climate change from outright denial to more subtle forms of lobbying and propaganda. Using various communication channels, the companies were found to have aimed at maintaining public trust and influencing government policy in ways that align with their business interests by highlighting their green initiatives and climate actions while downplaying the environmental impact of their operations. The end goal of the companies focused on managing global perceptions while balancing economic interests and environmental

responsibilities. Subtly, the companies continue to push for slowed global transition away from fossil fuels. Noting that the oil corporations have not stopped outright denying of climate change, Supran said that they now seek to "carefully reset" their profile on climate change so that it would be "more sustainable and less exposed":

"From the mid-2000s through to the 2010s, ExxonMobil and other fossil-fuel companies gradually "evolved" their language, from blatant climate denial to these more subtle and insidious forms of delays. So, while their outright denial has tapered off, their propaganda hasn't stopped. It's in fact shifted into high gear and is now operating with a sophistication that we've never seen before. They've also upgraded their tactics, moving from print advertorials to digital advertorials and microtargeted social media. So, I do recognize just how effective the oil industry's public-affairs tactics have been. They've certainly undermined public concern and action on this crisis for decades." (Supran, 2021)

Another identified tool that has been deployed by multinational oil corporations in their engagement in the global politics of climate change is gradual diversification into low-carbon research and technologies. In recent years, the multinational oil corporations have increasingly been seen starting to invest in renewable energies, low-carbon technologies, and modifying their production operations to "go green." The companies have taken these steps because of concern for their public image regarding the impact of their operations on the environment, and pressure from various sources including government regulators, environmentalist activists, consumers, and shareholders.

Chevron, for example, has indicated its shift toward cleaner energy sources by announcing investment in wind, solar, and biofuels projects (Pickl, 2019). Royal Dutch Shell, TotalEnergies, and Equinor, were cited in a 2020 report to have made the most outstanding investment in alternative energy research (Ross, 2022). According to the report, Royal Dutch Shell created a Renewables and New Energy Solutions division in 2016, and planned to spend up to three billion dollars a year on various renewable energy-focused projects. Between 2018 and 2019, Shell was reported to have invested in different clean energy projects in many countries, including the US, Germany, and Singapore. In the US, the company partnered with clean energy providers and startup companies providing charging solutions for electric vehicles. In Germany, it acquired a large company specializing in manufacturer of home-battery and electric vehicle



charging system; while in Singapore and the US, Shell was reported to have made significant investments in solar energy development through acquisition of shares in solar energy development and storage companies (Ross, 2022).

The France-based TotalEnergies, one of the largest oil and energy companies in the world, was also cited to be investing in renewable energy projects in France and other parts of the world. Through Total Qaudran, its subsidiary, the company has focused on building and operating renewable energy projects in France and globally in the areas of wind, solar, biomass, and hydropower. By 2021, TotalEnergies reported it had built and operated over 300 renewable energy plants, including over 200 solar plants in France alone. These plants, the company said:

“Generated nearly 1,000 MW, and 1,765 GWh of renewable electricity per year, equivalent of the annual consumption of nearly 1 million people and annual savings of nearly 130,000 tons of CO₂ emissions (with plans) to expand capacity to reach 100 GW of gross production capacity from renewable sources by 2030.” (www.totalenergies.com).

In contributing to low-carbon solutions, Equinor, the Norwegian multinational oil corporation founded in 1972, has diversified from oil energy to the development of solar and wind farming in many of the over 30 countries where it operates. With the ambition to “cut emissions in Norway towards near zero in 2050,” and reduce its “net carbon intensity by 50% by 2050,” Equinor has established itself as a global leader in wind energy. It started with the construction in 2020 of what has been described as “the world’s largest floating offshore wind farm,” which powers over 30,000 homes in the United Kingdom. Presently, the company states that its wind farms in the UK and Germany provide electric power to more than one million homes in Europe, while it hopes to extend power supply to six million homes in Britain by 2026 when its ongoing wind farms located in the North Sea would be completed (www.equinor.com).

The multinational oil corporations have leveraged their advancements in alternative energy solutions for “green marketing” or public relations purposes. They cite the investments in clean energy as demonstrations of their leadership in slowing climate change. In reality, however, although many oil corporations have diversified into the production of more clean energy to help protect the environments that they operate in, the bulk of their business is still concentrated on the production of

oil and gas that damages the environment and contributes to climate change.

At the 2023 UN Climate Conference (COP28) held in Dubai, UAE, the multinational oil corporations tried to present new technological innovations and applications as possible solutions to climate change. One of such innovations was the Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage technology, through which carbon dioxide emissions from the oil fields could be tapped and buried underground or under the seabed, or deployed in the production of fuels or fertilizers. With the deployment of the Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technology, therefore, the oil corporations hope to mitigate their climate impact and reduce their overall carbon footprint. But the effectiveness of the CCS technology has been challenged by many experts. The Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL) insisted that the CCS fails to address the core origin of climate change and only presents a distraction and possible cover or smokescreen for the oil industry to persist with carbon pollution through sustained oil and gas production. CIEL raised questions on the use of the Carbon Capture and Storage technology that bordered on the cost and potential risks of the application of the technology:

“Carbon Capture and Storage is highly economically damaging. It cost at least USD 30 trillion more than a pathway based primarily on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and electrification, according to a new study by Oxford University’s Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment. It will worsen harms to communities already burdened by fossil fuel infrastructure with increased air pollution. It will pose significant risks of leakage and other damages arising from transportation and storage of carbon dioxide.” (Centre for International Environmental Law, 2023).

Through the years, multinational oil corporations have also engaged in the politics of climate change through funding of research projects that address different aspects of climate change. While some of such studies sought to discourage climate action and fostered doubt about the role of fossil fuels in causing climate change, other research works sponsored by the oil corporations helped in the development, and the creation of green energy options. The oil corporations have partnered with many universities in promoting research on climate change through philanthropic donations and endowment of schools and institutes for sustainability and climate research. Stanford University, USA, is cited to have had an extensive partnership with ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Shell, and Schlumberger in the area of Natural Gas



research. The partnership was welcomed by the university for bringing “providing unique opportunities for training students, as well as the potential to help oil and gas companies pivot their business models.” Some activists have, however, perceived investment by oil corporations in academic research as “attempts by the oil corporations to shape mainstream academia and scientific thinking about the climate crisis and weaken climate policy.” (Cohen, 2022).

Another important tool deployed over the years by multinational oil corporations in their engagement in politics of climate change is the use of litigations and other legal strategies. The UN Global Climate Litigation Report observed that “Climate litigation represents a frontier solution to change the dynamics of the fight against climate change.” The 2023 Status Review of the Report showed that “people are increasingly turning to the courts to combat the climate crisis” (www.unep.org). A 2022 study by the London School of Economics and Political found that “climate change litigation continues to grow in importance year-on-year as a way of either advancing or delaying effective action on climate change.” The study noted that environmental and climate change litigations have been on the rise over the past three decades, with the legal battles often revolving around issues of accountability for greenhouse gas emissions and the responsibility of corporations in contributing to climate change (Setzer & Higham, 2022).

Some of the specific findings on climate litigations were as follows:

“Globally, the cumulative number of climate change-related cases has more than doubled since 2015, bringing the total number of cases to over 2,000. Around one-quarter of these were filed between 2020 and 2022. Climate litigation has become an instrument used to enforce or enhance climate commitments made by governments, with 73 ‘framework’ cases challenging governments’ overall responses to climate change. Over the last 12 months, further legal cases have been brought against fossil fuel companies, especially outside the United States.” (Setzer & Higham, 2022).

Thus, the law has become a potent tool in the politics of climate change, utilized as a two-edged instrument to support climate action or deter climate policy implementation. The oil corporations have appeared in courts in different parts of the world either defending their practices and arguing against liability for climate change impacts, or seeking to delay or weaken regulations that could impact their

business operations. Going forward, more climate litigations involving the multinational oil corporations are to be expected:

“Five areas to watch in the coming year are: cases involving personal responsibility; cases challenging commitments that over-rely on greenhouse gas removals or ‘negative emissions’ technologies; cases focused on short-lived climate pollutants; cases explicitly concerned with the climate and biodiversity nexus; and strategies exploring legal recourse for the ‘loss and damage’ resulting from climate change.” (Setzer & Higham, 2022).

ExxonMobil, Chevron and other multinational oil corporations have deployed enormous resources to fight an avalanche of litigations that have arisen against the companies in many cities and states in the USA. The companies have been sued for their alleged engagement in false information and public deception on climate change (Valerie, 2023). California, Oregon, New York, and New Jersey are among the states in the US where the oil corporations have been sued by parties seeking various financial compensations for the harm caused by the engagement of the companies in “decades long deception about the correlation between fossil fuel production and climate change,” and “lying to the public over the effect of burning fossil fuels.” While charging the oil companies for “intentionally deceiving the public on the dangers of burning their products for decades,” there were attempts to hold the multinational oil corporations directly responsible for the incidents of heatwaves and wild fires experienced in some of the places, which were identified as “direct and foreseeable consequences” of the continued burning of fossil fuels.

The oil corporations were able to get the courts in the US to dismiss some of the cases filed in courts by some cities seeking to hold some of the corporations responsible for the impact of climate change. Suing under states’ nuisance laws for damages caused by the companies, the cities, including New York City, San Francisco and Oakland in California, had requested that Chevron, ExxonMobil, BP, ConocoPhillips, and Royal Dutch Shell should be made to pay the costs of addressing harm caused by global warming. The oil corporations, however, successfully convinced the courts to throw out the cases on the ground that “the US federal common law provides no remedy for climate change-related injuries (since) the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions is addressed under federal law and international treaties.” Ruling in favour of the multinational oil corporations, one of



the judges, Richard Sullivan, remarked that "global warming presents a uniquely international problem of national concern ... therefore not well-suited to the application of state law." The ruling in favour of the oil corporations by the courts has triggered other lawsuits in the US, with individuals and groups seeking clarifications on the issue of which courts are best suited to handle the growing number of lawsuits against the oil industry. On their own part, the oil companies have continued to push for these cases to be heard not at the states, but at the federal level where they believe they stand greater chance of winning. (Wiles, 2022).

Although the bulk of climate litigations has been filed in the US, elsewhere in the world, multinational oil corporations have also faced a plethora of environmental and climate litigations, some of which have been resolved against the companies. The most outstanding of the climate litigation suits against multinational oil corporations was the 2021 *Milieudefensie v. Shell* case in which a court in the Hague, Switzerland, upheld that "Shell's current sustainability policy was insufficiently concrete and that its emissions were greater than that of most countries." Accordingly, the court ruled that Shell must "reduce global emissions from its operations and products by 45% by 2030 compared to 2019 levels." The court ruling emerged as a powerful judicial endorsement of the tenets and provisions of the Paris Agreement on climate change. (www.unep.com).

Other landmark climate litigations have been heard in other parts of the world, including Nigeria. A Federal High Court sitting in 2021 in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, declared that continued gas flaring by Shell Development Company in the course of its oil exploration and production activities in a community in Ughelli, Delta State, was a violation of fundamental rights to life of the people. (*Iwhrekan v. Shell*, FHC/B/CS/53/05). There are many new and pending climate-related suits being filed against multinational oil corporations by individuals and groups, including women, children, and the elderly in Indonesia, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, among other places. The suits seek to block various polluting activities of multinational oil corporations considered as contributors to global warming and the climate change crisis. To illustrate, TotalEnergies in France is presently engaged in legal battles in efforts to save its East African Crude Oil Pipeline which is threatened by several lawsuits seeking to block the project. In South Africa, Shell's license to explore

for oil in the country's Wild Coast which is considered ecologically sensitive has been challenged in court.

The 2023 Global Climate Litigation Status Review by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reported that multinational oil corporations were, as of December 2022, facing over 2,000 climate-related court cases filed against them in various parts of the world. According to the report:

"The cases were filed in 65 jurisdictions around the world, include including international and regional courts, tribunals, quasi-judicial bodies, or other adjudicatory bodies such as Special Procedures at the United Nations and arbitration tribunals. The cases were filed by children and youth, women's groups, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples, among others, who are taking a prominent role in driving climate governance reform in more and more countries around the world" (www.unep.com).

Historically, multinational oil corporations have also engaged in the politics of climate change through *political lobbying* at their home and host states towards influencing the emerging climate and environmental policies of governments. Besides direct lobbying by the oil corporations themselves, they also engage collaboratively in lobbying through industry and trade associations. These associations help to amplify the influence of the oil corporations, and often aim to weaken or delay regulations that could impact their profitability or require costly changes to their operations.

It was reported, for instance, that the American Petroleum Institute (API) receives millions of dollars from the oil companies. Shell alone was reported to have donated more than \$10 million to the API in 2021, with various similar amounts going to the oil industry trade association from Chevron, ExxonMobil, and other oil majors. It was reported that working behind, the API in the USA deploys significant weight and influence to stall or weaken legislations on the environment and climate change considered unfavourable to the oil and gas industry (McGreal, 2021). In Nigeria, the experience of the API largely applies to the Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS), the collective industry association that represents the entire oil and gas companies in the country. The OPTS engages in political lobbying on behalf of the oil companies in Nigeria (Adegbite, 2020).



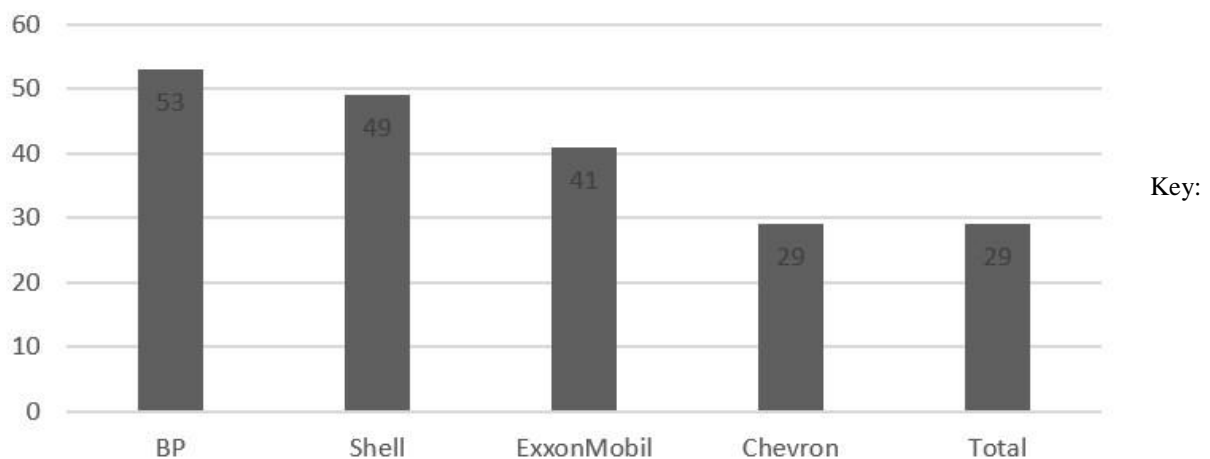
Other forms of lobbying adopted by the oil corporations to sway policymakers and influence legislation related to climate change include funding of political campaigns. It was reported in 2019 that the five biggest multinational oil corporations quoted in the stock exchange in the USA spent about \$200 million in *political lobbying* “to weaken and oppose any meaningful legislation to tackle global warming.” The companies were Chevron, BP, ExxonMobil, Shell, and Total. According to the report, these companies were using different communication channels, including the social

media, to aggressively push their agenda on climate change. The report said:

“In the run-up to the (2019) US midterm elections, \$2m was spent on targeted Facebook and Instagram ads by global oil giants and their industry bodies, promoting the benefits

of increased fossil fuel production. Separately, BP donated \$13 million to a campaign, also supported by Chevron, which successfully stopped a carbon tax in Washington state – \$1m of which was spent on social media ads, the research shows.” (Laville, 2019).

Illustration 2: Climate Lobbying Expenditure by five leading multinational oil corporations in 2019 (Total: \$200 million)



Figures are in US Dollars.

Source: www.theguardian.com



A related report by Influence Map, an independent Think Tank, confirmed that the leading multinational oil corporations in the USA also engaged in political lobbying through sponsorship of *election campaigns* of politicians and political parties. The oil and gas industry in the USA was reported to have spent more than \$80 million in sponsorship of various candidates in the Congressional election in 2018 alone. The oil and gas industry donated over \$3 million to the campaigns of former US President Donald Trump alone, and over \$60 million for the Republican Party during the 2019/2020 presidential election cycle. (Crespo, 2020). Similar funding of political campaigns by multinational oil corporations have also been reported in the UK where the companies were found to be quietly and indirectly involved through lobbyists in providing “administrative and public relations support to groups of MPs on energy and climate policy without the need to formally declare their involvement” (Shanti, 2022).

The oil corporations also *sponsor academic researches* that align with their interests. As part of its protracted efforts to systematically promote public repudiation of the scientific evidence on climate change, ExxonMobil was reported to have spent over more than \$30 million on pseudo experts to promote climate denial (Hall, 2015). Through this and other related interventions, the oil corporations sought to impact the pace and nature of the politics of climate change. Specifically, the companies sought to shape legislation, slow down regulatory changes, and encourage scepticism about climate science.

3.4 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS OF MULTINATIONAL OIL CORPORATIONS IN NIGERIA

Multinational oil corporations occupy a preeminent position in the 60-year history of oil and gas production in Nigeria. Initial efforts in the early 1900s to use local resources through the Nigerian Bitumen Corporation to explore for oil faltered and failed due to insufficient financial and technological resources. Thereafter, multinationals with sufficient capital and knowledge, notably D’Arcy Exploration Company and Whitehall Petroleum, took over the exploration of commercial oil in the country. After half a century of exploration, oil in commercial quantity was finally discovered in 1956 at Oloibiri in the present Bayelsa State of Nigeria by Shell D’Arcy Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, a consortium of two global oil majors, Shell and BP (then known as Anglo-Iranian). Shell-BP began

Nigeria’s first oil production onshore in 1958. (Ekweozor, 2009).

Many other multinational oil corporations were awarded licenses shortly before the dawn of Nigeria’s independence in 1960, to join Shell-BP in the scramble for oil in Nigeria. They included Mobil, Chevron, Agip, and Elf. Since then, the operation oil and gas exploration and production has remained firmly and predominantly in the hands of the different international oil giants, with only their names and corporate ownerships changing at different times in Europe and the United States. The dominance of the multinationals in Nigeria’s oil industry has remained unchanged through the years in spite of the many fundamental changes in the global and national oil environment. Some of these significant changes in the global and national energy landscape which impacted the presence of multinational oil corporations in Nigeria include the global Oil Crisis of 1973-1974 and 1979, which triggered skyrocketing of world oil prices; as well as Nigeria’s membership of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1971.

Other significant milestones in the operations of multinational oil corporations in Nigeria included the initiation of the Joint Venture arrangement and acquisition of majority equity shares in the multinational oil companies by the Nigerian government in the mid-1970s, and establishment in 1977 of the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), which has remained a major player and partner of the multinational oil corporations in both the upstream and downstream sectors. The nationalization and takeover of 100 percent BP’s operations in Nigeria in July 1979 by the Nigerian government was also significant part of the historical development of multinational oil corporations in Nigeria.

Chevron Corporation is one of the global energy companies that have dominated oil and gas production in Nigeria. With corporate head office in San Ramon, California, United States of America, Chevron Corporation has active oil and gas production activities in over 180 countries in Europe and Eurasia, Asia Pacific, Africa and Middle East, Latin America and Caribbean, and USA and Canada (Inside Chevron, 2022). Chevron’s long history dates back to the 1879 formation of the Pacific Coast Oil in San Francisco, California, USA. Through the years, the name of Chevron Corporation’s holding company changed as it merged with different oil and gas companies in the USA. As Standard Oil



Company of California in 1906, it was one of the seven multinational oil companies, called the Seven Sisters, that dominated the world oil and gas business from the 1940s to the 1970s. The rest of the Seven Sisters were Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, now BP; Royal-Dutch Shell (now Shell), Gulf Oil which merged with Chevron, and Texaco which also merged with Chevron. The others were Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, and Standard Oil Company of New York, both of which are now also part of ExxonMobil Corporation (Sampson, 1974). Chevron Corporation merged with Texaco in 2001 to become ChevronTexaco, the second largest US-based global energy company with capacity to produce over 11 billion barrels of oil and gas and refining capacity of 2.4 million barrels per day. In 2005, the company formally became Chevron Corporation, one of the world's largest integrated energy giants with interests in exploration of oil and natural gas, refining, marketing and transportation of gasoline, power generation, and investments in renewable energy. Its yearly earnings in 2021 was \$95 billion while the company was valued at \$190 billion which placed it second in the list of largest oil companies in the USA, second only to ExxonMobil, and consistently among the 100 largest public companies in the world (Chevron Company Profile, 2021). Thus, Chevron Corporation's yearly earnings far surpassed Nigeria's annual budget, which was an average of \$39.19 billion per year for the four-year period of 2021-2024 (Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, <https://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/>).

Through the deployment of modern technology, professional management, and unique branding, Chevron Corporation maintains a centralised administration and control over its business units around the world. It has established common operational policies, business conduct, and ethics code that are applied across all business units, but with special recognition and adjustment to respect local laws of the different host countries. Thus, Chevron Nigeria Limited, and all Chevron companies around the world are primarily bound to comply with Chevron Policy 1, also called The Chevron Way, which outlines the beliefs, vision, purpose, values, culture, and aspirations of Chevron Corporation. This policy commits all Chevron affiliates to "getting results the right way" (The Chevron Way, 2022). Chevron Corporation Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Mike Wirth, explained how The Chevron Way Policy guides the corporation towards achieving its vision to become "the global energy company most admired for its people, partnership and performance":

"The Chevron Way provides a foundation for what we value, what we believe, and how we behave. We aim to lead our industry in health, safety, and environmental performance. The protection of people, assets, communities, and the environment is our highest priority. We believe that the future of energy will be lower carbon, and we intend to be a leader in that future." (Wirth, 2022).

Chevron Corporation also administers a common global environmental policy, called Policy 530: Operational Excellence, that guides the company's management of environmental issues around the world towards protecting people and the environment. The Chevron Policy 530 states thus:

"It is the policy of Chevron Corporation to protect the safety and health of people and the environment, and to conduct our operations reliably and efficiently. The Operational Excellence Management System (OEMS) is the way Chevron systematically manages workforce safety and health, process safety, reliability and integrity, environment, efficiency, security, and stakeholder engagement and issues. OEMS puts into action our Chevron Way value of Protecting People and the Environment, which places the highest priority on the safety and health of our workforce and the protection of communities, the environment and our assets. Compliance with the law is a foundation for the OEMS" (Chevron Corporate Policies, 2022).

To implement Policy 530 on safety and the environment, all Chevron business units are expected to take specific, strategic steps outlined in the Corporate Policies. The Chevron Policy 530 covers various areas ranging from safeguard and conservation of the environment, workforce safety and health, to process safety, reliability and integrity of assets and systems. Other areas covered by the Chevron Policy 530 include identification of risks and "fostering win-win relationship with stakeholders built on trust and two-way communication." (www.chevron.com).

In Chevron Nigeria, the Health, Environment and Safety (OE/HES) Department is tasked with the responsibility of implementing and interpreting into action, provisions of the Chevron global corporate policy on safety and environment as outlined in the Policy 530. A senior manager in the HES Department in Chevron Nigeria's head office in Lekki, Lagos, explained as follows:

"Responsible management of environmental issues is an integral part of Chevron's business. The company limits environmental impact through



continued application of superior technology in our drilling and seismic work. And our comprehensive environmental management system underpins higher environmental performance. We are committed to improving air quality by eliminating routine gas flaring within all our operations. The company has adopted an environmental performance standard in the management of routine flaring and venting and has specific capital projects to address and eventually eliminate routine fares. In addition to flare reduction, our natural gas commercialization projects increase the delivery of gas into the domestic market.” (Interview, April 5, 2022, at Chevron Head Office, Lekki, Lagos)

Chevron has emerged as one of Nigeria’s largest and most successful oil and gas producers. Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) is the principal Chevron Corporation subsidiary in Nigeria. But there are a dozen other Chevron companies registered and operating in the country, including Star Deep Water Petroleum Limited, Texaco Nigeria Outer Shelf Limited, Star Ultra Deep Petroleum Limited, Chevron Petroleum Nigeria Limited, and Star Deep Water Petroleum Limited. All the Chevron companies in Nigeria are administratively grouped under the Chevron Nigeria Mid-Africa Business Unit (NMA BU), which oversees Chevron businesses around Nigeria, in Equatorial Guinea, Benin Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, and Ghana. The Chevron Nigeria Mid-Africa Business Unit itself is supervised by the regional head office, Chevron’s Middle East, Africa, and South America (MEASA), based in Houston, Texas, USA. This Chevron regional office reports directly to the Chevron world headquarters in San Ramon, California, USA.

Chevron Nigeria emerged from Gulf Oil Corporation, the legacy Chevron company which began business operations in Nigeria at the dawn of the country’s independence in 1960. According to Chevron’s historical records, Gulf Oil obtained its first oil prospecting licenses in December 1961 and in June 1962 which granted it exploration rights over an area covering some 2,000 square miles (about 3,219 square kilometres) offshore and about 4,000 square miles (about 6,437 square kilometres) onshore in the Niger Delta area. After nearly two

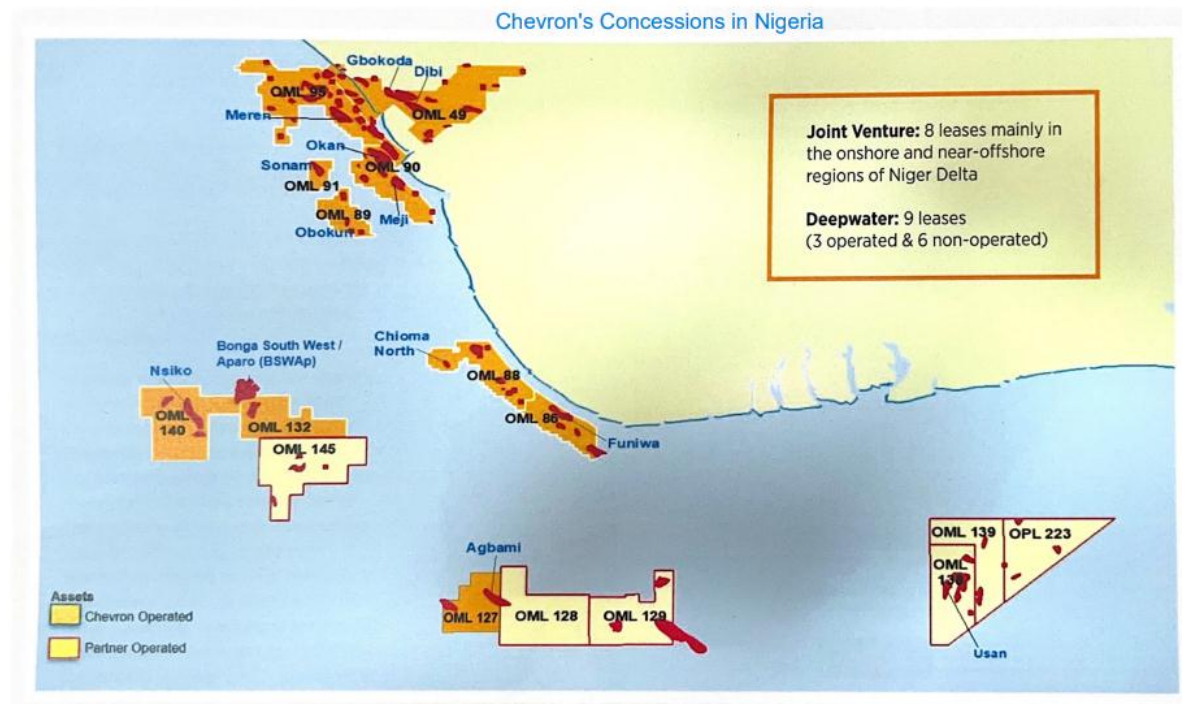
years of search for oil in the assigned area which is now Delta, Anambra, Imo and Rivers States, the company discovered Nigeria’s first offshore oil field on December 24, 1963. The field, named Okan, which means “The First” in the Itsekiri local language of the area, became Nigeria’s first offshore field by finding oil at 6,000 feet below the seabed. On April 5, 1965, the company made history when it provided Nigeria’s first cargo export of offshore oil, produced from Okan oil field, then yielding 25,000 barrels of crude oil a day (Chevron in Nigeria, 2018).

Chevron’s predecessor, Gulf Oil, recorded yet another oil and gas operations milestone in Nigeria with the successful construction and commissioning of its Tank Farm in Escravos, Delta State, on June 1, 1968. The facility included six storage tanks, housing and office units, a heliport, road, warehouse and docks, a communication network, and other amenities to make the Tank Farm a self-sufficient community. Four more storage tanks were later added, bringing the total storage capacity of the 10 tanks to 2.8 million barrels. The Tank Farm has since been expanded and upgraded to handle increased production.

By 1974, the Nigerian National Oil Corporation (later known as Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, and now Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Ltd), acquired a majority equity share in Gulf’s operations which had reached 400,000 barrels of oil per day. Arising from this government intervention, the NNPC owned 60 per cent interest in what has become the NNPC/Chevron Joint Venture business, while Chevron retained 40 per cent as the operator. In 1984, Chevron Corporation in the USA acquired Gulf Oil Company, thereby inheriting all legacy Gulf assets in Nigeria. Seven years later in 1991, Gulf Oil Company (Nigeria) Ltd. was changed officially to Chevron Nigeria Limited. In 2001, Chevron Nigeria reached yet another key milestone when Chevron Corporation and Texaco Inc. merged in the USA to form ChevronTexaco Corporation. The name was changed to Chevron Corporation in 2005 (Chevron News, October-December 2005).

Illustration 3: Chevron Nigeria Operations Assets

Source: Chevron in Nigeria brochure (2020)



Chevron presently operates many onshore and near-offshore oil fields in Nigeria's Niger Delta and has extensive interests in deep-water offshore Nigeria. In 2010, the company's total daily production averaged 524,000 barrels of crude oil, 206 million cubic feet of natural gas, and 5,000 barrels of liquefied petroleum gas (Chevron in Nigeria, 2021). Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), which is Chevron Corporation key subsidiary in Nigeria, holds a 40 per cent interest in 13 concessions covering 2.2 million acres (8,900 square kilometres). These concessions are operated under a joint venture arrangement with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), which controls the rest 60 per cent equity shares in the concessions on behalf the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Star Deep Water Petroleum Limited (Star Deep) is another major Chevron subsidiary in Nigeria. It operates the company's foremost offshore oil field, the Agbami Field, which went into production in 2008. Agbami, located 70 miles offshore the central Niger Delta, remains one of Nigeria's largest Deepwater discoveries. Star Deep operates under a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) arrangement with the Federal Government of Nigeria. Other Chevron companies in Nigeria represent the organisation's interests in several deep-water operations including the Usan Field in OML 138 (Chevron in Nigeria, 2018).

3.5 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA'S ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE:

Nigeria has a long history of active participation in all international discussions on environment and climate change. After embracing the Paris Agreement and endorsing all the major global environment and climate change governance frameworks, the country has initiated various policies and actions to try to meet its obligations in the treaties. The Federal Ministry of Environment is the responsible organization for initiating and coordinating Nigeria's climate change-related policies and programmes. Facilitating these activities are the Climate Change Department and Climate Change Desk set up within the Ministry. Under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment, similar structures of Climate Change Departments and Climate Change Desks have also been set up in some other Federal Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (<https://climatechange.gov.ng>).

Over the years, Nigeria has shown consistent support and readiness to implement the various international climate governance instruments and frameworks. These include the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. At different times, successive Nigerian governments have endorsed and facilitated domestication these



international climate change governance treaties. Accordingly, Nigeria has today evolved a rich body of regulations, policies, and legal frameworks directing global climate change governance.

In the area of policy interventions, the Ministry of Environment in 2012 developed for the country a National Climate Change Policy aimed at coordinating climate change activities across various sectors. This Policy sought holistic integration of climate change considerations into national development plans, while providing the direction for climate change mitigation, adaptation, and technology transfer actions (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2012). Some of the specific action plans that have evolved from the National Climate Change Policy include the following:

- Climate Change Response Strategy and National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action, which outlines the country's response to climate change impacts
- National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action (NASPA), which provides a roadmap for adapting to climate change, focusing on the critical sectors of the national economy. This also encourages the development and deployment of renewable energy technologies towards increasing the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix.
- National Climate Change Action Plan – to be formulated every five years by the Federal Ministry of Environment to serve as a foundation for establishing national goals, objectives and priorities on climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Plan shall prescribe measures and mechanisms for achieving Nigeria's climate change goals as captured in the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which outline Nigeria's climate change mitigation and adaptation commitments under the Paris Agreement.
- Forest Conservation programs, encompassing different initiatives aimed at promoting climate change mitigation through sustainable forest management, including reduction in emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

Beyond the provision of general policy directions, Nigeria has also instituted various legislative frameworks to promote climate governance in Nigeria. There is, for instance, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act of 1992, an important piece of legislation for the oil and gas industry and other sectors. The EIA Act requires oil companies to assess and mitigate the potential environmental

impacts of their operations, including those related to climate change. It ensures that projects undergo a rigorous environmental assessment process before they are approved.

The latest of the national legislative interventions regarding climate change were the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and Climate Change Act (CCA), both of which were signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2021. While the PIA provides overarching legal, governance, and regulatory framework for the entire Nigerian oil and gas industry, the CCA is specifically directed at protecting the Nigerian environment and ecosystem from the damaging effects of climate change and helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the country. The 2021 PIA (Section 104) upheld the several extant laws and regulations passed in Nigeria since 1979 prohibiting the flaring of natural gas by oil companies, an action that contributes significantly to climate change. These extant anti-flare laws and regulations include the Associated Gas Re-Injection Act 1979, the different Gas Flaring (Prohibition and Punishment) Acts as amended, Flare Gas (Prevention of Waste and Pollution) Act, and Nigerian Gas Flare Commercialization Programme, among many others.

The Climate Change Act (CCA), on its part, governs all the climate actions of public and private entities in Nigeria aimed at developing and implementing mechanisms that promote low carbon emissions in the country (Section 2). Notably, the law sets up three important national climate change governance structures including the National Council on Climate Change, Climate Change Fund, and Carbon Budget. While the National Climate Change Council is vested with the powers to fashion out policies and make decisions on all matters concerning climate change in Nigeria (Section 3), the Climate Change Fund is responsible for managing financial contributions from various national and international sources directed at different climate actions including climate change advocacy and information dissemination, funding of innovative climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, conducting assessments of climate change impact on vulnerable communities and population, promoting transiting to clean energy, and sustaining reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (Section 15). Carbon Budget refers to the approved quantity of greenhouse gas emission that is acceptable over a specified time. The goal of the National Carbon Budget, therefore, is to closely monitor the average increase in national temperatures, benchmarked



against the global target of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, but not above 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels (Section 19).

Overall, it has been demonstrated that multinational oil corporations have historically played very critical roles in international relations. They have remained important political and economic engine rooms of both oil producing and consuming nations. In the ongoing global search for climate solutions, multinational oil corporations remain critical players. Although multinational oil corporations were not the principal actors and direct signatories to the international climate change agreements and frameworks, the companies were not left out in the process of forging the agreements. At the background, they played a complex role in the lead-up to the Paris Agreement, actively engaging and offering technical advice to their home and host states to ensure that the economic interests of the companies were adequately covered (Sybille, Menestrel, & Bettignies, 2002).

As they have done historically, multinational oil corporations engaged in extensive lobbying of their home and host state governments to shape the emerging climate policies. The multinational oil corporations openly opposed stringent regulations on greenhouse gas emissions, and worked through industry associations and political channels to achieve their interests. More directly, ahead of the Paris Agreement, many of the multinational oil corporations took a number of proactive steps to try to influence global public opinion by presenting themselves as being supportive of climate change mitigation.

Some of the identified channels through which multinational oil corporations engage in politics of climate change include *public statements* that present the companies in good light. The statements acknowledge the reality of climate change, express commitment to reducing emissions, pledge to invest in renewable energy, and support global efforts to mitigate climate change. In the lead-up to the Paris Agreement, some oil corporations began to publicly acknowledge climate change and the need to reduce carbon emissions. They made statements in support of a price on carbon and investments in renewable energy. Chevron, for instance, expressed its commitment to addressing climate change and reducing its carbon footprint. (Nasiritousi, 2017). Some of the multinational oil companies forged industry initiatives to help to give them stronger

voice and leverage in the international discussions on climate change. These initiatives include the Oil and Gas Decarbonization Charter signed in December 2023 by 50 global oil giants, Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI), Global Methane Initiative, and Global Gas Flaring Reduction Partnership (GGFR). These initiatives focused on reducing methane emissions, improving energy efficiency, and investing in low-carbon technologies (Grasso, 2022).

As part of their efforts to engage in politics of climate change, several multinational oil corporations have announced plans for *diversification into low-carbon technologies* as a step towards transitioning to a more sustainable energy future. The diversification has involved investments in renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. Diversification has also involved exploration of new technologies like carbon capture and storage. Chevron, for example, unveiled investment in wind, solar, and biofuels projects, indicating recognition of the shift toward cleaner energy sources (Pickl, 2019).

Multinational oil corporations have also increasingly *engagement in climate dialogues*, participating in discussions with stakeholders, governments, and environmental groups. This is acknowledged as an important step towards addressing climate concerns and emphasising collaboration to find sustainable climate solutions. Multinational oil corporations opened dialogues with governments and non-governmental organizations during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations leading to the Paris Agreement. Over the years, the oil corporations have played even active part in the discussions about emission reduction targets and the role of the private sector in addressing climate change. Unprecedented number of representatives and agents multinational oil corporations were reported to have attended the 2023 United Nations Climate Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirate. A survey by an environmental group found that the number of lobbyists in 2023 engaged at COP28 by oil corporations rose by nearly 400 per cent, compared to the previous year's records (Schaaf, 2023)

Like the multinational oil corporations, the Nigerian government has also shown active interest in the politics of climate change. The country has participated in the process and negotiations leading to the emergence of the various international climate



governance instruments, including the UNFCC, Kyoto Protocol, and Paris Agreement. Following endorsement of these international climate treaties, Nigeria has initiated various policies and frameworks for their implementation. The historical and thematic review of the climate actions by the multinational oil corporations and the Nigeria government, however, indicate a gap in effective interpretation into action of the agreements, mechanisms, and policies.

IV. MULTINATIONAL OIL CORPORATIONS AND POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

4.1 OVERVIEW

In this section, the study identified, discussed, and analysed the key issues and challenges of the research with the aid of acquired data. In doing this, the study focused more on the independent variable, i.e., multinational oil corporations in Nigeria, represented by Chevron Nigeria. The study made necessary deductions after taking into consideration the current state of the independent variable as well as the issues raised in the research questions. In discussing the main issues and challenges of this study, we utilized the thematic analytical approach. This enabled us to classify or sum up the major issues into themes or buckets. We gathered, reviewed, and analysed the primary and secondary data acquired from the various sources focusing on the identified issue themes. From the analysis, the study made relevant deductions and conclusions focusing on issues raised in the research questions and study objectives. The identified issue-themes as discussed and analysed were as follows:

1. Conceptual linkage between multinational oil corporations and politics of climate.
2. Nigeria's national policies and strategies to align with the global normative guidelines for tackling climate change.
3. Influence of multinational oil corporations, specifically Chevron, on the political discourse on climate change.

4.2 LINKAGE BETWEEN MULTINATIONAL OIL CORPORATIONS AND POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

There is an established cause-and-effect relationship between multinational oil corporations (MNOs) and climate change. This arises from the principal role of the oil corporations in the production and consumption of fossil fuels, which emit greenhouse gas emissions that significantly contribute to global warming and climate change. In Nigeria, the oil and gas industry has been identified as one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas and methane emissions. Dr

Paddy Eze, Executive Director, Development Agenda offered the following statistics to support this claim:

"In 2022, the oil and gas sector alone emitted about 20 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e), which represents about 11 per cent of the total national emissions. The emissions emanated from gas flaring and venting, oil and gas leakages, and general upstream effluent releases. The power sector, including electricity generation driven by diesel and petrol generators, accounted for about 48 MtCO₂e or 27 per cent of the total national emissions within the period. The industrial sector accounted for 16 per cent of the national emissions, amounting to about 29 MtCO₂e. Thus, the combined emissions in 2022 from the oil and gas and related power and industrial sectors amounted to as high as 54 percent of the total national carbon emissions." (Eze, interview, Abuja, September 1, 2022).

Noting that "carbon dioxide emissions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is among the highest in the world," Dr Eze identified gas flaring and oil spills as the two principal sources of damage to the Nigerian environment from petroleum production. He continued:

"As the oil companies flare natural gas, they emit carbon dioxide, methane, and black soot into the atmosphere. This leads to depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, climate change, acid rain, and rise in sea level. Acid rain, resulting directly from gas flaring, is already causing much health and other damages in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The chemicals found in the flaring of associated gas, including benzene, naphthalene, styrene, toluene, and xylene, poison the atmosphere and significantly affect health and safety of local people living in the oil producing communities. Cases of chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function, leukaemia, and premature death have been linked to gas flaring by oil companies." (Eze, interview, Abuja, September 1, 2022).

Like gas flaring, oil spills emanating from petroleum production are also directly linked to global warming, climate change, and other human and environmental hazards. Responding to a direct inquiry by this study on the environmental impact of oil spills, Bassey Udo, Science and Energy Editor, Mediatrixnet Agency, described oil spillage as "a major source of damage to the ecosystem, contributory to global warming and climate change." He explained:

"Oil spills in the Niger Delta have destroyed vast tracts of the mangrove forests which are especially susceptible to hydrocarbons. Oil spills arising from petroleum production is estimated to have completely wiped-out 5-10 percent of Nigeria's



mangrove ecosystem. This has direct negative impact on the environment, promoting global warming and worsening the effect of climate change. Oil spills damage the ecosystems, the vegetation and water resources that act as carbon sink. The spills also alter the sustainable livelihood and natural interaction with the environment of the people in the host communities who are mainly engaged in farming and fishing.” (Udo, interview, Abuja, December 2, 2022)

A Youth Leader working for Egbema Gbaramatu Communities Development Foundation (EGCDF) complained that more than 50 percent of the community’s land and waterways have been totally poisoned by frequent oil spills from production facilities belonging to Chevron and other oil companies operating in the Niger Delta.

“Our farmlands have been destroyed, so we have no place to grow our food. Also, we no longer engage in fishing, which is the main occupation of our major people, because the streams and creeks have been poisoned by oil spills. We the youth cannot find jobs anywhere, resulting in many of our youth becoming criminals and girls joining prostitution. We fall sick quite often, and many people die prematurely even before reaching 50 years.” (Interview, Oporoza community, Delta State, 27 February, 2022).

Although the Egbema Gbaramatu Youth Leader did not directly address the linkage between crude oil production and climate change, he rightly noted the negative impact of oil production in the Niger Delta region on the environment. Globally, a 2017 study found that Chevron and a “small set” of other oil and gas producers were among the highest carbon emitters in the world. The study found that only 25 corporate organisations globally, including leading multinational oil corporations, accounted for more than half of global industrial emissions within the 20-year period of 1998-2017. The study also found that just about 100 companies worldwide, including MNOCs, generate 71 per cent of global carbon emissions (Riley, 2023).

During the Focus Group Discussion at Chevron office in Lekki, Lagos, the Health, Safety, and Environment managers and other oil production experts acknowledged the “inevitable” negative impact of petroleum production on the environment in general. However, they insisted that Chevron “always strives” to lessen the impact of the company’s operations on the environment. The Chevron Managers said:

“It is inevitable that when you deal with liquids or gas, you will have occasional spills. However,

Chevron operates its fields responsibly and strive to minimize environmental impacts. In several ways, we continue to reduce the carbon intensity of our operations. We also ensure to conduct our oil production business in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner, in compliance with all applicable laws and regulatory requirements, stakeholder expectations and best industry practices. Chevron is committed to protecting people and the environment in the Niger Delta and everywhere the company does business.” (Focus Group Discussion, Chevron Office, Lekki Lagos, March 4, 2022)

Another dimension to the conceptual relationship between multinational oil corporations and climate change is presented by studies that show that the oil corporations have historically tried to engage in deliberate twisting of information regarding the causative relationship between fossil fuels and global warming. The MNOCs promoted public denials and other misinformation on climate change in an attempt to undermine public support for climate policies and encourage delayed efforts to transition away from fossil fuels. In 2021, the US House of Representatives conducted investigative hearings that highlighted how ExxonMobil and other US-owned MNOCs engaged, at some point, in dissemination of misinformation to cast doubts over the role of fossil fuels in causing climate change.

Recent studies indicate that the MNOCs have changed tactics in their climate-change communications, from directly denying their linkage with climate change, to subtle forms of publicity that aim to promote in the minds of the public the value of continued use of fossil fuels. But the MNOCs continue to facilitate public messaging seeking delayed global transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources (Supran, 2023).

At the second Focus Group Discussion facilitated by this study in Abuja, Nigeria, Chevron stakeholder managers confirmed their active engagement in “strategic communication” to present positive image of the company to the Nigerian public. They also acknowledged Chevron’s active engagement at the highest levels with the federal government of Nigeria, to ensure maintenance of government policies that do not disrupt or jeopardize the company’s business. Such engagements with government, the Managers said, are especially directed at the Executive and Legislative arms of government.

“We maintain regular liaison with both the Executive and Legislative arms of government at the federal level, and with the governments of the state



in our areas of operation. At the federal level, we relate with the Ministry of Petroleum and many other relevant federal government ministries, departments, and agencies. These include all the oil industry regulatory bodies. The NNPC is Chevron's joint venture partner, so we also ensure to maintain very cordial business relations with them. At the National Assembly, we also keep in regular touch with relevant committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. These are the Committees that deal directly with all issues regarding oil and gas production, including gas flaring and oil spills including the Environment Committees. They include the committees on Petroleum Upstream, Gas, the Environment, and Local Content." (Focus Group Discussion, Chevron Regional Office, Abuja, April 4, 2023).

The Chevron Managers further confirmed that the company leverages the influence of their industry-trade associations in relating with the Nigerian government policy makers. The most prominent among the trade associations which serve as arrow-heads for political engagement is the Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS) of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce. The Chevron managers acknowledged that through the platform of the OPTS, the company and other MNOCs have, sometimes, successfully influenced the contents of some legislations in the National Assembly, and energy policies by the Executive arm of government.

This study found collaborations that the lobbying interventions by the oil industry were blamed for the nearly 20-year delay in the passage of the pivotal Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). The PIA is the principal law for regulating all aspects of the oil and gas industry. For many years, certain aspects of the law, especially regarding fiscal issues, taxes, and royalty payments, were opposed by the oil corporations. The law was eventually passed by the National Assembly in 2021 after the Federal government through the Ministry of Petroleum Resources and NNPC agreed to re-negotiate the fiscal terms of the law with the MNOCs.

Interestingly, the Climate Change Act (CCA), another important law with potentials to impact the business of the oil and gas industry was passed seamlessly also in 2021. Neither the MNOCs individually, nor the OPTS as representative of the oil industry, raised any objections to any aspects of the CCA ahead of its passage. This study found that the reason why the MNOCs raised no objections to the passage of the Climate Change Act was because

the companies did not want to risk being perceived by the Nigerian public as anti-environment.

"We were afraid that if we raised objections regarding any aspects of the Climate Change Act, such objection could harm Chevron's public image as an environment-friendly company. So, we were advised to remain neutral and allow the bill to be passed as proposed. Other MNOCs also adopted the same strategy, so that the oil industry is not perceived as standing in opposition to the laws, policies, and actions of the Nigerian government to promote the global search for solution to climate change crisis." (Focus Group Discussion, Chevron Regional Office, Abuja, April 4, 2023).

Overall, a thematic review of all the data acquired by this study on the conceptual linkage between multinational oil corporations and climate change showed that the relationship revolved around two principal issues: global temperature rise and dampening influence on global climate actions. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other experts on climate science affirm that the process of extraction of fossil fuels by the MNOCs directly contribute to a significant percentage of global greenhouse gas emissions. The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) released in August 2021 affirmed that human action, including burning of fossil fuels, generate greenhouse gas emissions which are causing global warming (www.ipcc.ch/2021). Consequently, the United Nations has declared climate change as a major global threat.

Chevron is contributory to the global threat as it is still actively engaged in oil and gas exploration and production. As MNOCs explore, extract, refine, and sell oil and natural gas, the production process and the combustion of the fossil fuels release into the atmosphere greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄). Elevated levels of GHGs in the atmosphere cause the planet's average temperature to rise, which is the primary driver of climate change. The multinational oil corporations also contribute to climate change through their influence on government policies, regulations and legislations.

4.3 NIGERIA NATIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

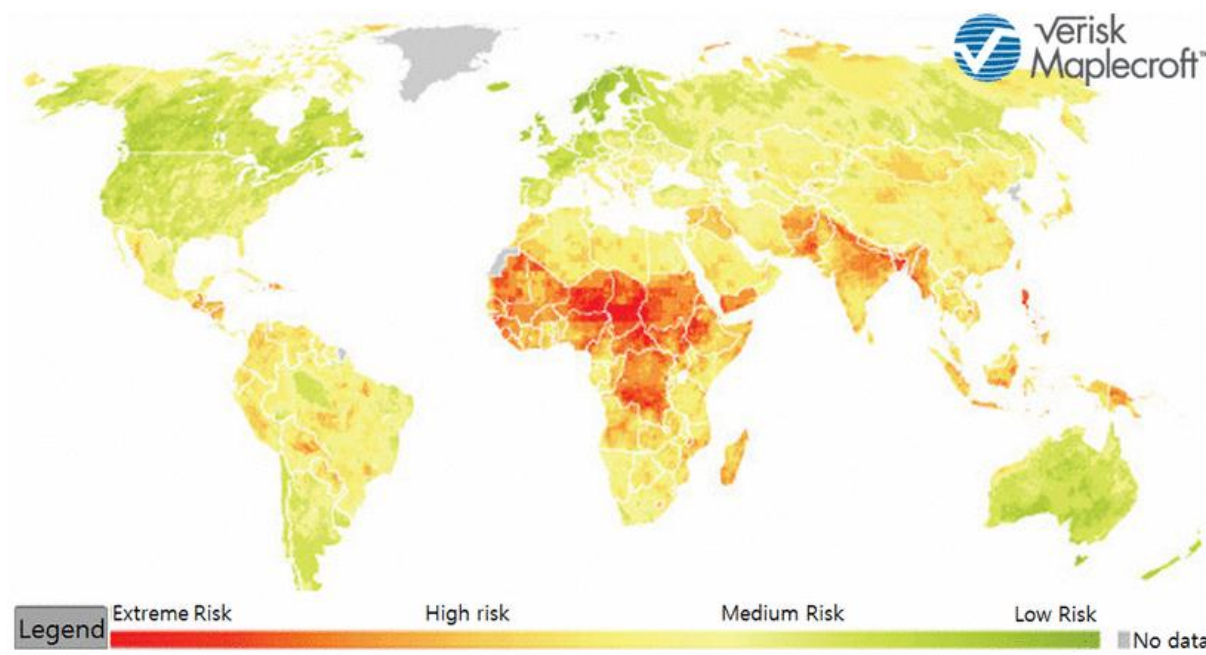
Nigeria currently ranks high among the countries most vulnerable to the negative impact of climate change. In a scale of 1-182, Nigeria is rated 158 in the global climate change vulnerability index, contrasted with Switzerland which scores only 1 as the least vulnerable country (www.gain-new.crc.nd.edu). While Nigeria's chances of being



negatively impacted by climate change remains quite high, ironically, the country's current share of global greenhouse gas emissions stands at only 0.71

per cent, compared to China's apex global emissions of 24.4 per cent.

Illustration 4:
Climate Vulnerability Index Global Map



Towards meeting its international climate obligations, the Nigerian government set the Federal Ministry of Environment, supported by its Department of Climate Change, as the principal coordinating body for Nigeria's climate change-related activities. The Ministry oversees the various regulations, policies, and legal framework hinged on the different global climate change governance treaties and partnerships endorsed at different times by the country. Following passage of the of the Climate Change Act in 2021, the National Council on Climate Change Commission (NCCC) became charged with the "power to make policies on all matters relating to climate change in Nigeria." (Section 3 of the Climate Change Act of 2021). The Federal Ministry of Environment, supported by its Department of Climate Change, remained the principal coordinating body for Nigeria's climate change-related activities.

As a leading African oil producing nation and member of the Organization of Oil Producing Countries (OPEC), Nigeria plays a significant role

in international climate change discussions. From comments by various officials responsible for managing Nigeria's climate change national climate change policies and programmes, this study deduced that the country's engagement in climate politics revolves around balancing its economic interests in oil production, while at the same time trying to meet its obligations in the different global agreements. Pioneer Director General, National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), Salisu Dahiru, summarised Nigeria's climate policy goals as follows:

"The country participates in global climate summits, advocates for fair financing mechanisms, and emphasizes the importance of adaptation strategies for vulnerable regions while calling for developed nations to provide financial and technological support to developing countries in their climate efforts. Nigeria's active involvement in politics of climate change is reflected in the different steps taken so far by the country towards implementation of the various international climate instruments, including the United Nations Framework



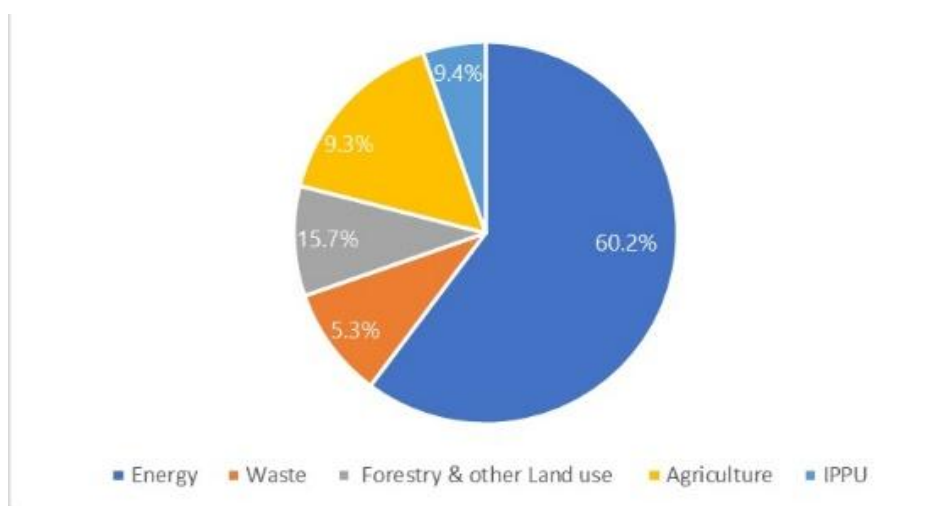
Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, and Paris Agreement.” (Dahiru, Abuja, December 5, 2022)

The NCCC Director-General also explained that Nigeria’s engagement in the global search for climate solutions “highlights the interconnectedness of economic development, social equity, and environmental sustainability in combating climate change.” These ideals and principles, the Director-General noted, were reflected in the country’s updated Nationally Determined Contributions,

(NDC) submitted to the UNFCCC in 2021. Nigeria’s revised NDC outlined the country’s climate targets and steps towards achieving reduced emissions and adapting to climate change impacts. Nationally Determined Contributions are climate action plans by countries, outlining their plans to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts. Each country (party to the Paris Agreement) is required to establish an NDC, update this and submit to the UNFCCC every five years.

Illustration 5: Origin of GHG Emissions in Nigeria

Source: Federal Ministry of Environment, 2022



A senior official of the Department of Climate Change, Federal Ministry of Environment, offered details of the updated NDC:

“Among other things, Nigeria’s updated NDC noted that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from Nigeria amounted to about 347 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e), which is about 0.5 per cent of the estimated 50 billion global annual tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions. The updated NDC also recognized that out of the total carbon emissions from Nigeria, the energy sector’s 209 MtCO₂e share was the largest, amounting to about 60 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions in the country.” (Interview, Federal Ministry of Environment, Maitama, Abuja, February 7, 2023).

The Department of Climate Change official offered further insights into the updated NDC, as follows:

“The updated NDC identified 22 concrete mitigation measures to be taken by the country to reduce emissions. The steps include planned stoppage of the use of kerosene lighting in 2030, reduction by 50 per

cent the burning of agricultural waste, heightened deployment of buses for mass transportation, and improved forest management. These measures are expected to lead Nigeria into achieving 20 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 unconditionally, and 47 per cent emissions reduction by 2030, subject to availability of international support in the areas of funding, technology transfer, and capacity building.”

Again, towards meeting Nigeria international obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement, the Federal Ministry, of Environment in 2012, developed for Nigeria, a National Climate Change Policy aimed at managing climate change activities across various sectors. This Policy sought “holistic integration of climate change considerations into national development plans, while providing the direction for climate change mitigation, adaptation, and technology transfer actions.” (National Climate Change Policy, 2012).



The Department of Climate Change official gave details of the plans that evolved from the National Climate Change Policy:

“The policy includes a well-defined strategy for mitigation and adapting to climate change impacts, focusing on the critical sectors of the national economy. The National Climate Change Policy also encouraged the development and deployment of renewable energy technologies towards increasing the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix. The Policy further provided for the

formulation of a National Climate Change Action Plan every five years by the Federal Ministry of Environment to serve as a foundation for establishing national climate change goals, objectives, and priorities. The National Climate Change Policy also provides for documentation of forest conservation programs, encompassing different initiatives aimed at promoting climate change mitigation through sustainable forest management, including reduction in emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.”

Illustration 6: Global GHG Emissions by Countries

Source: AFP, 2022

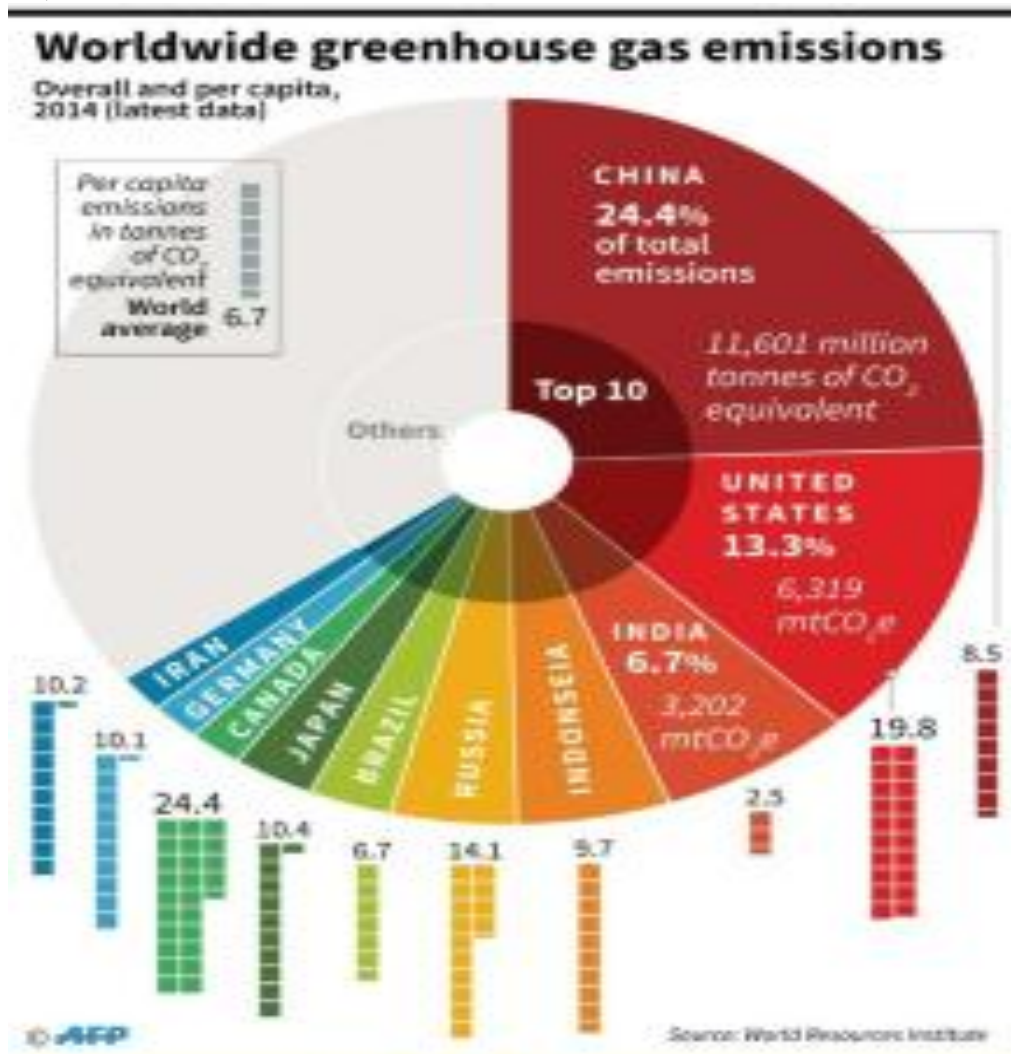




Illustration 7:
Nigeria's Updated Nationally Determined Contributions

- Proposes 22 specific mitigation measures
- Targets four GHGs: carbon dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), & hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)
- Unconditional GHG emission reduction target: 20% by 2030
- Conditional GHG emission reduction target: 47% by 2030 (with international support)
- Elimination of use of kerosene lighting by 2030
- Reduction of burning of crop waste by 50 percent
- Increased use of buses for mass transportation

Nigeria took yet another major step to implement UNFCCC global climate programmes and meet the Paris Agreement targets when in August 2022, the country launched its *Energy Transition Plan (ETP)* which set 2060 as the country's target for achieving carbon neutrality or net zero (Simire & Bisong, 2023). This was a shift from the initial target of 2050. The ETP highlights the various actions required to achieve Nigeria's 2060 net zero target whilst also meeting the nation's energy consumption needs (www.energytransition.gov.net). The key points of the ETP include:

- Reduction of 65 per cent of the total emissions from Nigeria across five key sectors including power, oil and gas, cooking, and industrial areas.
 - Gas to play a critical role as a transition fuel particularly in the Power and Cooking sectors.
 - Transition away from diesel and petrol power generators, and adoption of renewable energy and gas-powered electrification.
 - About \$10 billion is required annually, adding up to about \$2 trillion, to achieve the 2060 net zero target. Most of the expenditure will be required as investment in the power sector.
- Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP) outlines government's strategies to abate the greenhouse gas emissions from Nigeria's oil and gas and other key sectors. In the Plan, described as "the most comprehensive and first of its kind in Africa," Nigeria offered specific action plans towards

reaching the ambitious targets set in its revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Under the ETP, the sectoral strategies for achieving the desired net zero emission reduction target included the following:

- **Oil and Gas Sector:** The goal for the oil and gas sector is to achieve 100 per cent reduction of emissions from venting and flaring of gas by 2030; and 95 per cent emissions reduction by 2050 from oil and gas leakages and use of fuel to power various equipment deployed in upstream oil exploration and production. The country also plans to apply Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS) technology in halting emissions from refining activities
- **Power Sector:** Here, government plans urgent decarbonization through transition to cleaner sources of energy, away from diesel and petrol generators. This will entail complete elimination of the use of diesel and petrol generators; rapid expansion of the national electricity generation capacity to cover the over 90 million Nigerians currently without access to national grid electricity and the expected growth in energy demand due to rising population; and aggressive introduction of renewable power sources especially solar.
- **Industrial Sector:** Towards achieving its 2060 carbon emission target, Nigeria's energy transition strategy requires adoption of zero emissions fuels such as clean electricity and use of lower carbon processes for industrial heating instead of natural gas and biomass.



Beyond the provision of general policy directions, Nigeria has also instituted various legislative frameworks to promote climate governance in Nigeria within the framework of the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. The latest of the national legislative instruments guiding Nigeria's engagement in the politics of climate change are the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and Climate Change Act (CCA), both of which were signed into law in 2021. The PIA provides overarching legal, governance, and regulatory framework for the entire Nigerian oil and gas industry

The Climate Change Act (CCA) was specifically directed at protecting the Nigerian environment and ecosystem from the damaging effects of climate change and helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the country. The CCA governs all the climate actions of public and private entities in Nigeria aimed at developing and implementing mechanisms that promote low carbon emissions in the country (Section 2). Notably, the law set up three important national climate change governance structures: the National Council on Climate Change, Climate Change Fund, and Carbon Budget.

The National Council on Climate Change (NCCC) supervised by a Director-General, was vested with the powers to fashion out policies and make decisions on all matters concerning climate change in Nigeria (Section 3). On its own part, the Climate Change Fund was assigned the responsibility of managing the financial contributions from various national and international sources directed at different climate actions including climate change advocacy and information dissemination, climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, as well as assessments of climate change impact on vulnerable communities and population. The climate funding in Nigeria is also to be channelled towards promoting transition to clean energy, and sustaining reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (Section 15). The goal of the National Carbon Budget is to ensure national compliance with the approved quantity of greenhouse gas emission acceptable over a specified time. Thus, the duty of the National Carbon Budget office is to closely monitor the average increase in national temperatures, benchmarked against the global target of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, but not above 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels (Section 19).

Nigeria's active engagement in politics of climate change has demonstrated the country's seriousness in achieving its short, medium, and long-term

climate goals as outlined in its updated NDC. However, Nigeria's socio-political and economic realities as a major oil producing and developing nation have posed a major obstacle to implementation of some of the international climate agreements. Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu highlighted poverty or lack of climate financing as a major obstacle to faithful implementation of climate change actions by Nigeria when he said:

"We are a poor nation. They ban coal, and we follow. They say firewood is not for fetching. They said we need to plant more trees and they are not giving us money. We need to open our eyes, shine them and tell the West: "If you don't guarantee our finances and work with us to stop this, we are not going to comply with your climate change." (Tinubu at the interactive session with the Joint Arewa Committee in Kaduna on October 17, 2022).

Tinubu' further argued that some of the climate policies formulated at the international climate negotiations were unrealistic and place poor nations under disadvantages. of coal and other hydrocarbons that contribute to global warming. He said:

"While the West fight their climate change, we would go back to coal mining. The issue of obligation to global climate change agreements is a question of how do you prevent a church rat from eating poisoned holy communion."

Many other Nigerian leaders have further raised the issue of climate justice as a major contributor to poor national implementation of the global climate actions. The Nigerian leaders have raised doubts over the expected global "transition away" from use of fossil fuels by 2050 as was endorsed at the UN 2023 Climate Change Conference (COP28) attended by over 195 countries. The Nigerian leaders and policymakers are rather raising optimism that the nation's oil and gas will remain attractive to the world for many years to come, with gas serving as the preferred energy source for the future. At the 2021 and 2022 Nigeria International Energy Summit (NIES) attended by this researcher, Nigerian policymakers insisted that Nigeria cannot abandon its billions of oil and gas reserves still untapped, in pursuit of green energy transition for climate change considerations.

Simbi Wabote, former Executive Secretary, Nigeria Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), described as "a declaration of war," the call by European and other industrial developed countries for a global phaseout of fossil fuel production and use of hydrocarbon:



“At the COP26 in Glasgow in late 2021, the European and developed countries made commitments on behalf of the rest of the world to curb emissions, align the finance sector with the net zero by 2050, ditch combustion engines, accelerate the phase out of coal, and end international financing of fossil fuel. This is the first time a group of nations in the name of mankind is setting deadline for adoption of one form of energy to the detriment of the other. These unfolding scenarios are a huge concern to African leaders and policymakers in the oil and gas industry. This is, perhaps, to put it mildly, a declaration of war” (Wabote, 2022 NIES).

Wabote noted that the proposal for halting the production and utilisation of hydrocarbon as a climate change solution will deny a huge population in Nigeria and the rest of Africa access to the most available energy source, gas. It is noted that about 600 million people or 40 per cent in Africa, and over 100 million or 45 per cent in Nigeria presently have no access to electricity. This reflects the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa where only about 17 per cent of the people have access to clean cooking facilities. At the continental level, over 900 million Africans lack access to clean cooking fuels (Trading Economics, 2022).

Nigeria’s former Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, proposed the adoption of gas as a stopgap energy source as the world transits away from fossil fuels. In January 2020, while declaring 2020-2030 as Decade of Gas, Nigeria’s the Minister stated that “natural gas is where Nigeria is going.” While not denying the science of climate change and the need to transit to cleaner fuel, Sylva insisted that the process and timetable for that transition must be equitable:

“We have decided that the next destination for us shall be gas, after that we can discuss any other energy source option. We must take concrete steps to utilize Nigeria’s 206 TCF to turn things around for our people. We must build a gas- powered economy by 2030, utilizing Nigeria’s vast gas resources estimated at 600 TCF to lift Nigeria to an industrial giant in the next decade and bring prosperity to our people” (Sylva, Press Conference/Interview attended by this researcher, January 20, 2021).

Sylva continued:

“We need to be involved in defining what energy is clean, what energy is renewable, and how they tie to the development of our people. We have lots of gas resources and we cannot leave this untapped. We want to take full advantage of it, create market for our gas across the world. That’s where we are going;

gas development and utilisation is Nigeria’s national priority. What we are saying is, let’s discuss the transition agenda; give us more time to utilize our abundant fossil fuel. Let’s even discuss the definitions. Are we discussing renewable energy or cleaner fuel?” (Sylva, Interview, January 20, 2021 at Abuja).

The present focus of Nigeria’s engagement in the politics of climate change, therefore, appears directed at persuading the global community to adopt long-term and phased transition away from fossil fuels in consideration of the country’s peculiar socio-economic conditions. This is what the Nigerian government officials and policy-makers term as “climate justice” or “energy justice,” which upholds the application of equity and fairness in the implementation the global energy transition agenda to avoid potential socio-economic dislocations and security challenges that could arise from hurried global energy transitions.

Former Secretary General of OPEC, Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, supported Nigeria’s push for a more inclusive energy transition agenda that will accommodate continued utilisation of hydrocarbons. Speaking at the 2021 International Energy Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, he said:

“The oil industry is under siege. The conversation needs to be more inclusive and less emotional. The oil industry currently has over 700 litigations by environmental NGOs and activists, all pushing hard for an end to use of hydrocarbons. It has become a yes or no affair. Are you for fossil fuel or not? It shouldn’t be so. It will be a tragedy if Africa’s colossal resources are left unexplored. The world’s energy needs keep rising. So, there will be energy crisis if oil is excluded. We should transition to an energy source where everyone is involved. We must consider conditions of different countries and regions. We also must consider that Africa altogether accounts for less than three per cent of emissions.”

Nigeria’s former Vice President Professor Yemi Osinbajo echoed the same points when he spoke against global placement of blanket ban on fossil fuel. Prof Osinbajo canvassed support for continued retention of gas in the global energy mix:

“Globally, we are seeing wealthier nations and institutions banning all public investments in fossil, including natural gas. These moves do not appear to sufficiently consider the principles of common but differentiated responsibility and leaving no one behind that are enshrined into global treaties around sustainable development and climate action”



(Osinbajo, presentation at Global Energy Forum, May 5, 2021).

With Africa contributing just about two per cent of the global carbon emissions and China and the USA accounting for about 30 per cent, Osinbajo called for fairness and justice in the current global push for energy transition to lower carbon. He advised that special consideration and greater flexibility be applied to Nigeria and other African countries which currently contribute only a tiny per centage of the global carbon emissions.

“Most countries on the African continent are low emission, energy poor countries. Even tripling electricity consumption in these countries, barring South Africa, solely through natural gas would add just 0.6 per cent to global emissions. So, limiting the development of gas projects poses dire challenges for African nations, while making an insignificant dent in global emissions. Efforts aimed to advance climate goals must, therefore, first and foremost create carbon space for growing economies that have historically made negligible contributions to global emissions and have an obligation to their people to provide access to energy for electricity, cooking, and productive uses” (Osinbajo, presentation at virtual International Energy Forum, May 5, 2021).

The main point of Nigeria’s agenda in the global climate change discussions and negotiations was further sharpened by Mele Kyari, Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited. He stated that Nigeria and other developing economies should be allowed to progress their own energy transitions at their own pace while leveraging on their hydrocarbon resources for smooth transition to Net Zero by 2060. Before transiting to green or renewable energy, Kyari said that Nigeria needs to first develop its blue or gas energy which is not only available in abundance, but cheaper:

“Yes, we agree there must be transition to green energy. But we ask, energy transition for whom and to where? The transition cannot be immediate; it has to come later. The agenda cannot be uniform. Nigeria together with the rest of Africa is at a different level on energy dependence and usage with Europe. For the meantime, we are trying to explore all available opportunities to utilize our abundant oil and gas resources to develop our economy and improve the life of our people. So, Nigeria should not be stampeded into going the same way the West has decided.” (Kyari, Interview at Abuja, February 28, 2022).

He explained the reason for Nigeria’s position:

“For us in Nigeria and Africa, our priorities in choosing an energy source are in the following order: Affordability, Reliability, and Cleanliness (ARC). But for the industrialized West, their energy agenda is dictated by the following order: Cleanliness, Reliability, and Affordability (CRA). So, we have different priorities and we must sit together to agree on agenda. No one should dictate to Nigeria and Africa.”

In pursuit of its international political agenda on climate change, it has become clear that Nigeria has built its national energy plan on the assumption that the global transition away from fossil fuels will be a long-term project. Accordingly, Nigeria has continued to ramp up its investment in the oil and gas sector in order to boost the national crude oil reserves which has been on a decline in the past recent years. Nigeria’s proven reserves fell from 38 billion barrels in 2015, to 36.89 billion barrels in Jan 1, 2020. The Ministry of Petroleum Resources said the country was aiming to increase its oil reserves, including condensates, to 40 billion barrels by 2025 (Dart, 2020). Some of the Federal Government’s strategy to boost nation’s oil reserves included award of new exploration licenses for small and marginal fields. The Ministry of Petroleum, through the former Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), now National Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), awarded 57 marginal field licenses in June 2021 and has been putting pressures on the new licensees to take steps to develop the assets quickly (Esau, 2021).

Hon Musa Sarkin-Adar, Chairman, Upstream Petroleum Committee of the House of Representatives in the 9th National Assembly, also explained that the passage of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) in 2021 after nearly 20 years of delay, was part of Nigerian government’s strategy to urgently and aggressively explore for oil now to boost the nation’s reserves before it becomes too late or too expensive to do so in the future. Thus, the PIA deliberately offered new incentives and created additional structures such as the Frontier Exploration Fund, in order to encourage intensified oil and gas exploration:

“Section 9 of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) provided for the setting up of The Frontier Exploration Fund. This Fund to be controlled by the newly-created Frontier Basin Agency was created to support the need for the country to urgently and aggressively explore and develop the country’s Frontier Basins to take advantage of the foreseeable threats to the funding of fossil fuel projects across the world due to speedy shift from



fossil fuel-to other alternative energy sources.” (Sarkin-Adar, Interview at the National Assembly, Abuja, March 12, 2021).

Not surprising, therefore, Nigeria’s engagement in the politics of climate change has not disrupted its pursuit of some mega oil and gas projects. Nigeria continues to show active commitment in the construction of trans-national and trans-regional gas pipeline projects, represented by the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) and Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline projects. The 614-kilometre AKK project is meant to tie into the larger Trans-Nigeria Gas Pipeline which, upon completion, will deliver over 3,000 million metric standard cubic feet per day of gas from several gas gathering facilities in the oil producing areas in southern part of Nigeria. On its part, the 7,000-kilometre Nigeria-Morocco pipeline project, estimated to cost about \$25 billion, is projected to serve as alternative gas export route from Africa to Europe, following the disruption by the Russia-Ukraine war, of the traditional gas supply network to the European Union from Russia through the country’s Nord Stream pipeline network.

These projects are being pursued by Nigeria, even when Europe and other western countries are discouraging new investments in fossil fuels. Mele Kyari, CEO, NNPC Ltd, insisted that the projects will, in addition to “expanding access to energy, supporting economic growth, industrialization, and job creation,” also help to significantly reduce the large volume of gas flared annually in Nigeria, towards ameliorating climate change and yielding other positive environmental impacts (Kyari, statement at the signing of agreements on Nigeria-Morocco pipeline project, June 6, 2023). No similar mega investments in green energy sources have, so far, been announced by the Nigerian government either as a sole government business or in partnership with the private sector.

Nigeria is presently also considering resuscitation of its coal sector, although use coal as source of power and energy, coal is acknowledged as an even greater contributor to global warming and climate change than other fossil fuels notably oil and gas. Nigeria is said to have over 2.8 billion metric tons of coal reserves but presently contributes nothing to the global coal export market estimated at \$123 billion in 2021. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu listed the coal mining industry as one of the core growth sub-sectors of the national economy that needs to be revitalized (Agbo, 2023).

Nigeria’s continued heavy dependence on revenue from fossil fuels for national economic sustenance has, therefore emerged as one of the most significant obstacles to achieving the country’s international climate goals and obligations. This challenge has been further accentuated by inadequate global access to climate finances and technological support for Nigeria and other poor, vulnerable countries. Nigeria’s Energy Transition Plan (ETP) and the Climate Change Act recognized the criticality of “significant financial, social/capacity-building, and technological requirements” towards achieving the nation’s climate ambitions. Section 15 of the Climate Act provides for the establishment a “Climate Fund” to be managed by the National Climate Change Council. Money for the Fund will be sourced from “appropriation, subventions, grants, donations, fees, and fines from private and public entities.”

Nigeria’s plan for achieving net zero by 2060 as captured in the country’s updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) was anchored on the hope of Nigeria attracting an investment of \$410 billion by 2060. Former Minister of Finance Budget and Planning Zainab Ahmed said that the country required about \$2 trillion to be able to reach its 2060 carbon neutrality target. The availability of adequate international financial support was also cited as the “condition necessary” for achievement of Nigeria’s target 47% emissions reduction by 2030 as captured in the country’s revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The revised NDC was based on Nigeria attracting climate investment actions valued at \$177 billion.

So far, Nigeria has received climate action support funds from various sources, including the World Bank, African Development Bank, some Nigerian banks, western countries, and international donor agencies. In April 2022, Nigeria’s Bank of Industry (BoI) and the French Development Agency (AFD) had offered a €2.5 million Green Climate Fund to promote climate change action in Nigeria (Takoulevu, 2022). Earlier in 2019, the African Development Bank had announced \$25 billion funding to help Nigeria and other African countries execute various programmes towards adapting to climate change (Iyatse, 2019). These supports, however, have been considered as grossly inadequate to support Nigeria’s climate mitigation and adaptation plans and programmes as outlined in the country’s National Determined Contributions (NDC) document.



Overall, the intervention by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has brought only limited improvements in the global access to climate financing for Nigeria and other developing countries. To support national climate strategies and plans in the developing countries, the UNFCCC had set up the Green Climate Fund (GCF) at the COP16 held in Cancun, Mexico in 2010. The Green Fund was supposed to provide the much-needed capital for the various climate projects, programmes, policies and other initiatives in Africa and other less-developed regions. The UNFCCC took further climate-financing steps at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, with the establishment of a Loss and Damage Fund (LDF), which was a direct response to the decades of pressure from Nigeria and other climate-vulnerable developing countries. The UNFCCC explained the goal of the Loss and Damage Fund LDF as follows:

“The Loss and Damage Fund will provide new, additional, predictable, and adequate financial resources to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, especially in the context of ongoing and ex-post action, including rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction.”

Although it was not explicitly stated, the LDF was expected to be financed principally by the G20 countries that have emitted greater volume of the greenhouse gases presently driving the global temperature rise and climate crisis. It was reported in 2020 that the Green Climate Fund (GCF) had raised about \$10 billion in pledges from about 50 countries, but this was far below the \$100 billion goal set at the inception of the Fund over a decade ago. The wealthy, industrialised nations showed much reluctance in meeting the financial target, although they are responsible for the bulk of the greenhouse gas emissions currently accumulated in the atmosphere. It was also reported that the poor countries which are most vulnerable to climate change faced much challenges accessing the available fund in the Green Climate Fund. A study showed that the lengthy and complicated processes for accessing the Fund has disadvantaged many poor countries, particularly in Africa, heavily affected by climate change crisis (Garschagen & Doshi, 2022).

Dr John Ereke, Nigerian environmental activist and Executive Director of Advocacy for Environmental Sustainability Group, raised some concerns

regarding the operations and sustainability of the newly-established Loss and Damage Fund (LDF). While welcoming the setting up of LDF as “historic” and “the shining light of COP27,” Dr Ereke doubted if the wealthy industrialized nations will agree to provide the required funding in the end:

“Having Loss and Damage is indeed historic. However, the nitty gritty of the mechanisms to bring it to life is yet to be negotiated. Already there are signals that the US and some others do not see the decision to have Loss and Damage as having anything to do with reparations or liability. What this portends is that unless those who have already been damaged by global warming speak up and insist that the unfolding crisis has both historical and systemic roots, this may be another tiresome ritual of quirky charity. Another bone that will have to be picked, will be how this relates to the already existing Green Climate Fund and how rich nations who have not met pledges made since COP15 will cross the hurdle to Loss and Damage.” (Ereke, Interview, December 5, 2023, at Abuja, Nigeria).

With climate financing being one of the key issues that dominated the 2023 UN Climate Conference (COP28), many countries pledged support for the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF), totalling over 700 million dollars at the close of the summit. More promises of support were received for the already-existing Green Climate Fund, which pushed the total available fund in the GCF, offered by 31 countries, to about 13 billion. Other pledges of financial support were received for the other various UN climate financing instruments, including the Least Developed Countries Fund, Special Climate Change Fund, and the Adaptation Fund (www.unfccc.int). However, these pledges were noted as “far short” of the desired goal by the UN Climate Change Executive Secretary, Simon Stiell. He said:

“These financial supports are far short of the trillions eventually needed to support developing countries with clean energy transitions, implementing their national climate plans and adaptation efforts.” (Stiell, 2023. www.unfccc.int).

Similarly, President of the African Development Bank (ADB), Adewunmi Akinwumi, had observed that Nigeria and Africa receive only about three per cent of the global climate financing and thus lacks the resources to tackle climate change.

“The meagre financing is not meeting the needs of Africa and as such the continent’s climate financing gap will reach \$100 billion to \$127 billion per year through 2030. Our estimates are that Africa will need between \$1.3trn and \$1.6trn between 2020 and



2030 (or \$118bn to \$ 145bn annually) to implement its commitments to the Paris Agreement and its nationally determined contributions (NDCs).” (www.afdb.com)

Some African scholars have suggested that Nigeria and the rest of Africa will need more than \$3 trillion to invest in mitigation and adaptation by 2030 in order to achieve their climate goals as outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (Okereke & Obi, 2023).

4.4 CHEVRON'S ENGAGEMENT IN CLIMATE POLITICS

To establish the specific areas of Chevron's engagement in climate politics in Nigeria, this study held a Focus Group Discussion, and interviewed many senior managers of Chevron Nigeria's Operations, Policy, Government and Public Affairs (PGPA), as well as Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Divisions. These are the company's departments responsible for operations, government, community, and environmental stakeholder engagement and management. The researcher asked the identified company personnel to respond to the following questions:

1. What is Chevron's corporate policy that directs the company's engagement in the global search for climate solutions?
2. Has Chevron in Nigeria been involved in any programs and initiatives related to climate change?
3. In what particular areas relating to climate change has Chevron played a role in Nigeria?
4. What specific environmental practices and technologies have been implemented by Chevron in Nigeria to mitigate the impact of climate change?
5. How does Chevron's corporate social responsibility strategy in Nigeria address climate change concerns?
6. What are the challenges and opportunities faced by Chevron in integrating renewable energy solutions into its operations in Nigeria amidst the global push for decarbonization?
7. How does Chevron navigate the balance between meeting energy demands in Nigeria and complying with global climate change goals in its operations?
8. Has Chevron's corporate stance on climate change been evolving over time? What factors are responsible for changes in Chevron's position on climate change?

Utilizing the thematic analytical approach, this research reviewed the responses to the questions by the Chevron Manager, and made various deductions

and conclusions. From the various responses, the study identified and summed up that Chevron's participation in the politics of climate change in Nigeria occurs through various channels and in the following areas:

- Chevron's corporate policy on the Environment and Climate Change
- Chevron's involvement in direct political lobbying through direct engagement and partnerships with government, communities, and other stakeholders.
- Chevron's involvement in indirect political lobbying through industry pressure groups
- Chevron's engagement in discussions on national energy policies and support of efforts to address environmental challenges in the Niger Delta.
- Chevron's engagement in gas commercialization and development projects.
- Chevron's advocacy for market-based approaches and deployment of new technologies to reduce carbon emissions from its operations.
- Chevron's projection of natural gas as an alternative energy source
- Chevron's support for programmes and technologies focusing on renewable energy
- Chevron's corporate social responsibility and community development investments to support environmental conservation and climate change adaptation in its areas of operation.

The various thematic areas are discussed in greater details below, indicating the deductive and inductive inferences on the roles of Chevron in the politics of climate change in Nigeria:

4.4.1 Chevron Corporate Policy on Climate Change

Chevron Corporation has set for itself the climate ambition of achieving net zero emissions by 2080 across its entire business globally. To achieve this, the company aims at reducing by over 5 per cent, the carbon emissions intensity in its operations by 2028. Part of the steps outlined by the company to achieve this is by increasing renewable energy use, switching to cleaner gases, reducing gas flaring and venting, and investing in lower-carbon businesses. Other specific plans by Chevron Corporation include allocation of significant capital of up to \$2 billion for carbon reduction projects and \$8 billion for carbon investments between 2022 and 2028. Chevron also scheduled to spend more than \$300 million in 2022 alone to execute about 100 greenhouse gas-abatement projects for different



Chevron subsidiaries in various parts of the world (Chevron Corporate Sustainability Report, 2022).

To help it achieve its corporate climate goal and implement some of its policies on climate change, Chevron Corporation has set up new companies. One of such companies is the Chevron Energy Ventures, which provides investment capital to support new startup companies in the renewable energy sector. However, while investing in technological innovations, process optimizations, and new energy management practices to help reduce emissions from its oil and gas operations, Chevron continues unabated investment in oil and gas production. The company advocates for increased use of gas as a “bridge” or stop-gap avenue to a low-carbon future. Accordingly, it continues to sustain its global investment in the production of natural gas as a more climate-friendly option pending full realization of cleaner energy solutions (www.chevron.com).

Since Chevron companies worldwide are guided by the Chevron Corporation’s global environmental policies, Chevron companies in Nigeria do not maintain separate and independent policies and guidelines concerning environmental protection and climate change. Chevron Nigeria’s General Manager in charge of Operational Excellence/Health, Environment and Safety (OE/HES) is the officer tasked with interpreting the Chevron global environmental policy and putting it into action. A senior member of Chevron Nigeria’s OE/HES team explained:

“Responsible management of environmental issues is an integral part of Chevron’s business. The company limits environmental impact through continued application of superior technology in our drilling and seismic work. And our comprehensive environmental management system underpins higher environmental performance. We are committed to improving air quality by eliminating routine gas flaring within all our operations. The company has adopted an environmental performance standard in the management of routine flaring and venting and has specific capital projects to address and eventually eliminate routine fares. In addition to flare reduction, our natural gas commercialization projects increase the delivery of gas into the domestic market.” (Chevron OE/HES Interview at Chevron Nigeria’s Head Office, Lekki, Lagos, on April 5, 2022).

In practice, however, this study found that Chevron Corporation’s global climate policy works out differently in Nigeria. Although the global corporate policy should apply to Chevron Nigeria and all Chevron subsidiaries everywhere, the interpretation and implementation of the Chevron global policy varied from country to country, reflecting the laws and regulatory frameworks of the various host countries. This arrangement is affirmed in the Chevron Corporation’s policy guideline, which explains that respect for the laws and culture of its host communities is part of Chevron’s beliefs and values. (www.chevron.com/about/the-chevron-way). Thus, in reality, Chevron executes differentiated climate change engagements in Nigeria, United States, and its other global locations.

This study found that Chevron continues to position itself for long-term oil production in Nigeria, notwithstanding the negative climate implications of the activity. This is evidenced by the fact that Chevron has, so far, shown no interest in diversification of its energy portfolio into solar, wind, or other alternative energy sources, or investment in renewable energy and low-carbon technologies in Nigeria, as the company has done in the United States and Europe. In Nigeria, Chevron promotes and anticipates even longer-term reliance on natural gas as a stop-gap global energy source, with the company serving as a major gas producer. The identified gaps in the implementation of Chevron’s global climate change policy in Nigeria, therefore, exposes obvious conflict between execution of global climate change frameworks in Nigeria and upholding of Chevron’s business and economic interests in the country.

4.4.2 Chevron’s Engagement in Politics of Climate Through Political Lobbying

One of the most active channels through which Chevron in Nigeria seeks to influence government policies on the environment and climate change is through political lobbying. Participants in the Chevron Focus Group Discussions at Abuja on March 4, 2022 acknowledged that the company actively engages the executive and legislative arms of government in Nigeria. The company handles such engagements directly through the leadership of its Chairman/Managing Director as its chief government engagement officer. The Chairman/Managing Director is supported in the assignment by a team of communications and stakeholder engagement professionals in the company’s Executive Management, as well as the



Communications and Policy, Government and Public Affairs (PGPA) Departments.

These various channels for political lobbying have been utilized by Chevron at different times in its engagement in the politics of climate change in Nigeria. The lobbying interventions were noted to have had some impact on the passage or attempted passage of some oil-industry related government policies or legislative bills.

The Focus Group Discussants explained that the impact of Chevron's engagements with government was especially felt in the National Assembly during the process for the passage of the Nigerian Content Development Act, Gas Flaring Prohibition Bill, and Petroleum Industry Act. During the protracted process for the passage of the critical Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), for instance, Chevron Nigeria's Chairman/Managing Director, Rick Kennedy, led a high-level lobbying team of the company that engaged the National Assembly and provided much inputs during the legislative process towards passage of the Act in August 2021. In the end, Chevron and the oil industry were able to extract significant concessions that formed part of the fiscal and regulatory provisions of the Act, especially concerning royalty rates, incentives for deepwater projects, and powers ascribed to the minister of petroleum resources and regulatory agencies.

Chevron especially maintains active, multilateral engagement with the Executive arms of government of Nigeria, which is the principal policy maker and driver for the oil and gas industry. Chevron has since 1993 been in joint venture business partnership with the Federal Government of Nigeria represented by the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC). This business arrangement creates room for close collaboration between Chevron and the Nigerian government at different levels. The Joint Venture arrangement especially guarantees easy access for Chevron to the Executive Arm of government represented by the Minister of Petroleum Resources and Chief Executive Officer/Group Managing Director of the NNPC.

A senior member of Chevron's Government Affairs Team in Abuja explained to this study that representatives of the company, including the Managing Director, engage with the NNPC at different levels on regular basis as they hold routine and scheduled meetings daily, weekly, and monthly. Chevron utilizes the opportunities of these meetings to lobby the Executive Arm of government for favourable business terms, including matters relating to regulation of gas flaring and oil spills which are within the powers of the Minister of Petroleum Resources.

To help in engaging other arms of government, especially the Legislature, Chevron maintains a large Government Affairs Unit, fully staffed with stakeholder-engagement professionals in Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital. The Chevron Government Affairs team leads the company's lobbying engagement with the National Assembly and maintains regular contact with the Assembly. At a Focus Group discussion, members of the Chevron Government Affairs Team explained the nature and direction of their engagements with the National Assembly regarding issues on the environment and climate change:

"We maintain regular contact with the Environment Committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. We also keep in regular touch with the Committees on Petroleum Upstream and Gas Development in both the Senate and House. These are the Committees that deal directly with all issues regarding oil and gas production, including gas flaring and oil spills." (Focus Group Discussion, Abuja, April 4, 2023).

The Government Affairs Team members recalled some of their recent engagements with the relevant committees of the National Assembly on environmental issues:

"Sometimes, we are summoned to appear before the Committees of the National Assembly especially when there are incidents of oil spill or gas blowout, or when there are petitions from the host communities alleging environmental damages against Chevron. A good example was during the KS Endeavor gas blowout in Chevron's Funiwa oil field in Bayelsa State in January 2012. In such cases, we rise to engage the National Assembly Committees to explain and present the intervention efforts by the company."

At other times when new bills or motions on the environment and related issues are before the National Assembly, the Government Affairs team of Chevron in Nigeria also swings into action to engage the lawmakers. Chevron Government Affairs Director continued:

"At Public Hearings by the National Assembly on new bills, or when motions concerning the operations of our company are before the National Assembly, we step forward to advocate positions in support of the company's business interest. For instance, during the pro-longed process for passage of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) which lasted for nearly 20 years, we robustly presented to the lawmakers our company's position alongside other oil industry operators. Luckily, some of the industry positions advocated by us were considered and



included in the final draft of the bill that was eventually passed into law. We had also engaged the National Assembly to explain the business implications of the Gas Flare Prohibition Bill when the draft law was repeatedly tabled before the National Assembly. We explained that the passage of the bill, which proposed a near-term deadline for ending gas flaring in the oil fields would significantly hurt Nigeria's oil production. The National Assembly eventually disallowed passage of that gas flare prohibition bill."

Sometimes when the business issues under consideration in National Assembly or other government agencies are considered by Chevron management to have serious business implications, the company's Government Affairs Team have had to engage external consultants to offer supportive hands in lobbying government. The Chevron Government Affairs Managers cited two recent instances when the company had to engage external lobbyists. One of those occasions was during the negotiations ahead of the passage of the Petroleum Industry Act in July 2021, when it was considered critical to engage both the National Assembly and the Executive Arm of government to secure favourable fiscal terms in the bill for Chevron and the oil industry. Chevron also hired external lobbyists to help engage the National Assembly during the process for amendment of the Deep Offshore and Inland Basin Production Sharing Contract Bill in November 2019. The bill amendment was considered highly sensitive by Chevron and the oil industry because it was aimed at altering the rate of royalties paid by the oil companies and increasing Nigeria's earnings from inland basin and offshore oil blocks. In the end, it was reported that the interventions by Chevron and other multinational oil corporations were able to extract significant concessions that formed part of the final fiscal and regulatory provisions of the Amendment Act which covered royalty rates, incentives for deepwater projects, and powers

ascribed to the minister of petroleum resources and regulatory agencies (Perouse de Montclos, 2014).

Chevron Nigeria also occasionally leverages its global network to put subtle political pressures on the Nigerian government, or canvass for particular business advantages. In Nigeria, the company uses diplomatic channels to reach high-level Nigerian policy makers. It achieves this by regularly briefing the USA Embassy in Nigeria, which reaches out to appropriate Nigerian authorities through the US Ambassador, or the Economic Attache in the Embassy. The Managing Directors of Chevron Nigeria Limited, who are usually American citizens, serves as the direct person for engaging the US Embassy in Nigeria.

When necessary, Chevron Nigeria received government engagement support from its parent company, Chevron Corporation. In such circumstances, Chevron Corporation Chief Executive Officer and other Corporation Directors assist in briefing and engaging the US government on behalf of Chevron Nigeria. At other times, Chevron's global executives visit Nigeria to engage at the highest levels of the Nigerian government. Again, sometimes, the multinational oil corporation executives use the opportunity of foreign visits by Nigeria's leaders to engage with the Nigerian government officials overseas. To illustrate, Chevron corporate and Nigeria officials utilized the opportunity of the 2023 United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York to engage with Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and other high-level government officials including the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil), Heineken Lokpobiri. The Chevron engagement team was led by Clay Neff, President, Chevron International Exploration and Production (CIEP) and Rick Kennedy, Chairman/Managing Director, Chevron Nigeria Mid-Africa Business Unit.



Illustration 8:

Lobbying: Chevron leaders meet with Nigeria President Bola Tinubu in New York, USA, September 2023.



4.4.3 Chevron's Engagement in Climate Politics Through Industry Associations and Pressure Groups

Collaboration with industry associations and pressure groups is another identified channel through which Chevron engages in the politics of climate change in Nigeria. One of such industry associations is the Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS), a subgroup of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) which states its "commitment to the exploration, development, and production of Nigeria's oil and gas resources in a sustainable and beneficial manner for the Nigerian people" (www.opts-ng.com). Chevron is a frontline member and leader in this 30-member influential group, which collectively controls about 90 per cent of Nigeria's oil and gas industry production.

The OPTS has provided a forum for advocacy in relation to government policies, laws, and regulations that impact the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry. It has served as a powerful platform and arrowhead for Chevron and other multinational oil corporations to engage government at all levels in Nigeria on various aspects of oil and gas production, including the environment. The chairmanship of the OPTS is rotatory among the member companies. Chevron's Government Affairs Managers recalled

how the company's Managing Director, Rick Kennedy, as chairman of the OPTS in 2021, led the group to robustly engage the National Assembly and the NNPC in negotiating favourable terms for the oil industry prior to final passage of the Petroleum Industry Act in August 2021. The PIA is the central governing law of the Nigerian oil and gas industry, covering all aspects of the industry, including safety and environmental practices.

Chevron's Government Affairs Managers underscored the weight of collective action by the MNOCs in their engagement with the Nigerian government:

"It may be easy for government to say no to one particular oil company. But experience has shown that when all the major oil companies in Nigeria stand together on a particular issue, the Nigerian governments have found it nearly impossible to ignore them, for quite obvious reasons. The oil corporations are quite aware of this, which explains why they like to present a common front through the OPTS, especially when issues at stake are quite high." (Focus Group Interview, Abuja, April 4, 2023).

Besides the OPTS, Chevron has also been a member of other oil industry-related professional organisations. Chevron actively encourages its employees to take up individual membership and



possible leadership positions in these groups. They include the Nigerian Gas Association, Society of Petroleum Engineers, and National Association of Petroleum Explorationists (NAPE). Chevron's Government Affairs Managers explained:

"As a policy, the company pays the annual membership dues of employees in at least two professional associations. These include the Nigerian Gas Association (NGA), Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), and Nigerian Association of Petroleum Explorationists (NAPE). (Focus Group Interview, Abuja, April 4, 2023).

Through these important industry groups, Chevron subtly seeks to influence government policies and programmes on climate change and other issues. For instance, through the NGA, Chevron and other MNOCs have been advocating and promoting the use of natural gas as a cleaner source of energy. This position conflicts with the international climate change advocacy which discourages continued reliance on fossil fuels, and promotes transition to renewable energy sources.

4.4.4 Chevron's Engagement in Climate Politics Through Emission Reduction Initiatives

Chevron Nigeria has been actively engaged in climate change politics through its multiple gas development and utilization initiatives. Indeed, the company's major claim to positive contributions to the politics of climate change in Nigeria has centred on its contributions towards development the nation's abundant natural gas resources. Nigeria has often been described as "a gas province with some oil in it," which implies that although Nigeria has very rich oil reserves, the country has even richer gas assets (Nigeria's Oil and Gas Industry Brief, 2014). It is settled that Nigeria has more natural gas deposits than crude oil. The country's gas reserves are believed to be at least three times more than the nation's oil deposits.

Chief Executives Officer, Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Engr Gbenga Komolafe, explained that as at January 2023, Nigeria's proven oil reserves were about 37 billion barrels. He confirmed the country's potential to achieve gas reserves of up to 600 TCF in the coming years, which makes Nigeria one of the countries with the highest gas reserves in the world.

During the focus group interview with four Senior Chevron's operations managers at the company's Lekki, Lagos Office on March 4, 2022, the managers explained that the company has made significant, multiple investments in gas development in Nigeria

and the West African sub-region, which helps to reduce the quantity, scope and intensity of gas flared in the company's operations. Gas flaring has been identified as one of the principal sources of carbon emissions from Nigeria that contributes to climate change. Chevron's major investments in gas development includes its Escravos Gas Project (EGP), the Sonam Field Development Project, and the Escravos Gas-to-Liquids Project (EGTL). There is also its West African Pipeline Project, through which the company sends gas through an extensive pipeline project originating from Escravos, Delta State, through Benin Republic, Ghana, and Togo. Domestically in Nigeria, Chevron supplies the bulk, up to 40 per cent, of the gas used in the country for power generation and in the industries.

Chevron Nigeria Managers said that the company fully supports the Nigerian government's goal to end gas flaring by 2030. Nigeria captured this ambition under the updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the climate change plan submitted by the country to UNFCCC in 2021. Chevron, as a member of the Global Methane Initiative, has also indicated its alignment with Nigeria's ambition to reduce its methane emissions by 30 per cent by 2030, as captured under the Global Methane Pledge signed by Nigeria in 2021 alongside other countries

(www.carbonbrief.org). The Chevron managers indicated the company's readiness to comply and be guided by provisions of the Climate Change Act (CCA), passed by the National Assembly in 2021, which provides the legal framework for the implementation of climate change policies and actions in the country.

Chevron Nigeria's Chairman and Managing Director, Rick Kennedy, explained that through the various gas gathering and commercialization interventions in western Niger Delta, the company significantly cut the volume of gas flared from the company's fields in this area. Mr. Kennedy claimed that Chevron has achieved up to 90 per cent reduction in gas flares from its operations through investment in collection, processing, and commercialization of both associated and non-associated gas found in the oil fields. He said: "Chevron Nigeria's investments in gas development demonstrates the company's commitment to creating value for the Nigerian people and the environment, as well as enhancing the country's energy security and economic advancement. We have reduced routine gas flaring in our operations by over 90 percent in the last ten



years, hereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing our environmental performance.” (Kennedy, March 7, 2022).

This researcher took steps to verify Chevron’s claim of achieving near-total halt to routine gas flaring in its operations in Nigeria’s Niger Delta. Independent records from site visits and government regulatory agencies suggested that although Chevron has achieved substantial reduction of gas flaring in its operations, significant flaring of gas continues to happen in some of the Chevron fields where the company claims to have achieved up to 90 per cent elimination of gas flares. Site visits and direct observations by this study at some of Chevron’s oil producing facilities in western Niger Delta on February 28, February 2022, confirmed that the company still allows routine flaring of associated gas even in some of the company’s fields in the western Niger Delta. At Chevron’s Okan shallow-water field in OML 90, as well as Dibi and Olero

Creek swamp fields in OML 49, active gas flaring was observed.

The National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) presented to this study further evidence that Chevron Nigeria continues to flare gas from different oil wells in its active producing fields located in OMLs 49, 90, and 95. Director, Oil Field Assessment Department, NOSDRA, Dr Isa Yunusa, explained that gas-flare data generated from the organisation’s satellite-based Gas Flare Tracker provided incontrovertible evidence that Chevron Nigeria continues to flare millions of cubic feet of gas annually. Gas flaring continues to occur even in Okan field in OML 49 where much of the gas for the company’s Escravos Gas Plant has been sourced from.

Illustration: 9:

Total Volumes of Gas Flared in Chevron Fields (2018 – 2022)

Source: NOSDRA Gas Flare Tracker

OML	Year				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
OML 49	6,886,180.75	4,646,893.04	4,547,347.60	1,693,666.48	2,151,112.51
OML 90	5,984,389.95	13,335,661.30	7,436,649.78	9,339,861.65	7,817,706.22
OML 95	6,345,877.30	7,647,450.42	5,920,842.40	5,679,704.75	1,934,167.38

Data from the Ministry of Petroleum Resources and Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) also demonstrated that the cumulative volume of gas still being flared by Chevron Nigeria remained significant. The company continues to pay high financial penalty to the Federal Government annually based on the volume of gas flared in its operations. The gas flare penalty paid by the company in 2019 was as high as \$28 million, and continued to rise in 2020 and beyond. NEITI gave \$307 million as the cumulative gas flare penalties paid by all oil companies in Nigeria in 2019 with Chevron’s share representing up to nine per cent or \$27.6 million of the total figures (NEITI Report 2019), a clear indication of continued significant gas flaring in Chevron operations contrary to the claims by the company’s managers.

This study identified further contradiction with the gas-flare elimination statistic presented by Chevron Nigeria, as the company’s narration and figures cover only half of the Chevron’s operational history in Nigeria and do not account for its legacy gas

flaring in other parts of the Niger Delta. For over five decades, Chevron continuously flared gas in its operations across eastern Niger Delta until recently when it divested interest in its assets in Imo, Rivers, and Bayelsa States. As it left no history of gas gathering and utilisation in its operations in eastern Niger Delta, the different national oil companies that took over the former Chevron assets have continued with the tradition of gas flaring from the legacy Chevron oil fields in eastern Niger Delta.

Presently, Chevron Nigeria has not offered any definite timeline for achieving zero routine gas flaring across its operations. The company has only indicated its alignment with Nigeria’s ambition of halting gas flaring by 2030. Speaking off-records, Chevron Managers explained that gas flaring may persist in some of the company’s fields as long as production continues in those fields, unless some important conditions are fulfilled including provision of “appropriate policy” interventions by government to boost gas development, supported by availability of adequate international investment capital. This raises a serious question over the



prospects of the company contributing to the realisation of the global climate mitigation and adaptation ambitions in Nigeria, and Chevron Corporation's ambition of net zero upstream emissions by 2050.

4.4.5 Chevron's Engagement in Climate Change Politics Through Oil Spills Management

The environmental impact of oil spills contributes to the broader discourse on climate change, highlighting the consequences of fossil fuel extraction and the need for sustainable energy practices. The spills exacerbate local environmental degradation, affecting ecosystems, agriculture, and water sources, thus reinforcing the global push for transitioning to cleaner energy sources and ensuring environmental justice.

A senior Manager at Chevron Nigeria's Health, Environment, and Safety (HES) Department, explained that the Department is responsible for facilitating cleanup and restoration of oil spill sites in the company's onshore and offshore operations. The Department, the manager said, is well equipped with appropriate machinery and personnel to contain and clean up spills whenever these occur. He acknowledged, however, that Chevron, like other multinational corporations operating in the Niger Delta, have faced much allegations related to oil spill incidents in the Niger Delta which have caused environmental damage, affecting local communities, water sources, and ecosystems. He regretted that although Chevron has been involved in cleanup efforts, much of the criticisms and damages have arisen not from normal operational incidents but from third party interferences and damage to pipelines and other oil production facilities.

"Chevron is well equipped to respond to all sizes of spills and we always do so. We have successfully carried out many oil spill cleanup efforts in our operations in the Niger Delta region. Following approved international industry standards, we have successfully implemented cleanup operations, remediation programmes, and initiatives aimed at restoring affected areas and minimizing the environmental impact of spills. However, the issue of oil spills in the Niger Delta region remains a complex and contentious matter involving not just the oil companies, but multiple other stakeholders including the government, local communities, and environmental activists. The adequacy and effectiveness of our interventions have often been impacted by the actions of other stakeholders, especially people from the host communities."

Crude oil when spilled into the environment releases significant amounts of carbon dioxide that contribute to global warming and climate change. Spills, sometimes accompanied by fire outbreak such as that which occurred at Chevron's Abiteye Field in 2009, destroy forests and coastal vegetation. This hampers the capacity of the ecosystem to act as natural carbon sink which absorb and store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere thereby helping to mitigate climate change.

Official figures of oil spill incidents in the Niger Delta indicate that millions of barrels of crude oil are spilled annually by Chevron and other MNOCs. The National Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) confirmed the occurrence of over 800 cases of oil spills by 30 oil companies within the three-year period of 2019 and 2021. Together, these oil spill incidents accounted for loss of over 40,000 barrels or nearly seven million litres of crude oil (Nigerian Oil Spill Monitor, 2021). Sabotage and other third-party interferences were identified as the principal contributors to the crude oil spillage, causing land and water pollution. Third-party interferences include vandalism and wilful damage of oil production facilities, as well as illegal bunkering or theft of crude oil for artisanal refining and export. Since 2016, sabotage, vandalism and theft have accounted for up to 75 per cent of the oil spills in the Niger Delta. Accident and failure of ageing oil production facilities also contributed significantly to the oil spills (NOSDRA Oil Spill Monitor, 2021).

It has been difficult to determine the actual volume of oil spilled by the different companies as there have been huge discrepancies between the oil spill data published by government regulatory agencies and the oil companies. Watts and Zalik (2020) found that the spill figures released by Nigeria's Federal Government institutions and the MNOCs are often inconsistent, incomplete, contradictory, and therefore unreliable. Ratcliffe (2019) reported that about 40 million litres of oil are spilled every year by the companies across the Niger Delta, but NOSDRA captured only a total spill of 6.5 million litres across the different oil fields in the Niger Delta for the three-year period of 2019-2021, averaging about 2.2 million barrels per year

The Niger Delta region where Chevron and other MNOCs operate is a delicate and sensitive environment. The area, which measures over 3200 square kilometres, is described as the largest wetland in Nigeria, and the third largest wetland in the world. It has unique flora and fauna and the highest crude oil resources in the Gulf of Guinea. (Balouga, 2009).



The Niger Delta straddles nine of Nigeria's current states in federation, namely: Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Imo, Ondo, and Edo. Petroleum is also produced offshore Lagos State, while there are reported new discoveries in Anambra, Kogi, and some parts of northern Nigeria including Borno and Bauchi States.

4.4.6 Chevron's engagement in Climate Politics Through Investment in Research, New Technologies, Renewable Energy, and Climate Adaptation

Engagement of multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate change has stimulated innovation and creation of new technologies and solutions. The search for new energy solutions has also brought increased collaboration among the multinational oil corporations, and between the multinational oil companies and academic institutions and scientists. Chevron Corporation has reported its engagement in various research and development projects to explore and test new ways of producing and utilizing new energy sources. For instance, Chevron has set up several new companies, including Future Energy Systems, the Chevron Technology Ventures, and Chevron Lummus Global, to facilitate the company's interests in new energy experimental projects. In the USA, the company has collaborated with many academic institutions, such as Stanford University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and University of California, Berkeley, on different aspects of energy research.

Globally, Chevron Corporation has also reported initiation of diversification of its energy portfolios to reduce reliance on fossil fuels by investing in cleaner energy alternatives like solar and wind power. Chevron Corporation states that its strategy is to leverage the company's strengths to "safely deliver lower carbon energy to a growing world" (www.chevron.com). Towards this end, the company said that it is taking various actions to lower its carbon footprints:

"We are reducing the carbon intensity of our oil, products, and natural gas operations by reducing methane, flaring and energy use; advancing solutions with Chevron New Energies, a division that focuses on renewable fuels, carbon capture and offsets, hydrogen and other emerging technologies." (www.chevron.com)

Chevron corporation reported in 2023 that, as part its efforts to support accomplishment of the Paris Agreement goals, it would spend about \$10 billion on capital projects to install facilities in its operations in different parts of the world within the

next five years to help achieve lower carbon emissions. Details of the planned Chevron low-carbon projects include \$2 billion to be spent on projects aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions, and \$3 billion invested in carbon capture and offset technology application. Further \$2 billion will be directed at hydrogen energy projects, while additional \$3 billion will be invested in the development of renewable fuels (www.chevron.com).

Chevron's Health, Safety, and Environment officials could not confirm to this study the specific plans for Chevron Nigeria to benefit from the initiatives and investments by Chevron corporation in new technologies and energy projects. The officials, however, acknowledged that Chevron corporation has not shown as much interest in the development of hydrogen, solar, and other renewable energy sources in Nigeria as it has shown in the USA and Europe where the company faces higher pressure to find alternatives to oil. The HSE Managers, however, confirmed that Chevron is "investing in new technologies in Nigeria to improve drilling techniques and other production processes that ultimately lead to reduction of carbon footprints and emissions per unit of energy produced." (Focus Group Discussion, March 4, 2022, at Chevron Head Office, Lekki, Lagos).

Regarding engagement in climate change politics through environmental research, Chevron's Policy, Government and Public Affairs Managers explained that the company offers many scholarships yearly for the advancement of knowledge through research on climate change and the environment. They said: "In 2005, Chevron Nigeria began supporting a yearly postgraduate research scholarship for PhD students in environment and conservation. So far, 36 PhD students have benefited from the grant since its inception. Chevron also partners with the Lagos State Government, tagged Walk for Nature, that creates awareness and promotes nature conservation and sustainable environmental management." (Focus Group Discussion, March 4, 2022, at Chevron Head Office, Lekki, Lagos).

They further outlined some other different ways Chevron in Nigeria has been demonstrating commitment to finding solutions to climate change and protecting Nigeria's biodiversity. One of such ways was the setting up of the Lekki Conservation Centre, a forest reserve or urban park, established in Lekki, Lagos, through partnership with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, an environmental NGO specializing in nature conservation in Nigeria. Among other environmental uses, the



Conservation Centre serves as a centre of excellence for academic research on the Nigerian ecosystem. The facility also serves as a carbon sink, helping to absorb the carbon emissions generated in the Lekki, Lagos environs.

Director General of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), Dr Joseph Daniel Onoja, illuminated the environmental significance of the Lekki Conservation Centre, built by Chevron in collaboration with the NCF.

“The Lekki Conservation Centre, built by NCF with funds provided by Chevron Corporation in 1992, is a reserved sanctuary for the rich flora and fauna of the Lekki Peninsula. Today, the LCC has become one of Africa’s most prominent and most diverse urban parks. It is also known as a safe habitat for several species of plants and animals going extinct and has attracted several educational researchers. The Conservation Centre continues to serve as a biodiversity conservation icon and environment education. to date” (Onoja, Lagos, December 15, 2022).

Besides the Lekki Conservation Centre, another climate adaptation project sponsored by Chevron Nigeria is a *Mangrove Restoration Project* in the Niger Delta that helped in promoting ecosystem sustainability in the area. Chevron’s Policy, Government and Public Affairs Managers explained:

“The mangrove plant restoration programme which started in July 1998 and was completed in April 2001. It was carried out at Chevron’s Abiteye Field located in OML 49 whose ecosystem was gravely degraded following third-party sabotage of oil production facilities in the area resulting in a fire incident and an oil spill. Chevron’s intervention helped to cleanup and restore fresh mangrove vegetation in the degraded land measuring about 14 hectares on both sides of the Abiteye River in Escravos, Delta State. The swamp forest restoration was a significant contribution towards climate adaptation by Chevron in the Niger Delta.”

The Chevron Public Affairs leaders told this researcher that Chevron is taking some other proactive steps to help reduce carbon intensity in its operations in Nigeria, including early detection of methane emissions and further cut back on gas flaring:

“Chevron is taking proactive approaches in detecting and reducing methane output from its oil fields. The company deployed high tech Optical Gas Imaging (OGI) cameras for

detecting minute fugitive emissions. Chevron Nigeria continues to make further, significant progress in cutting back on flaring of associated natural gas from its operations, having already reduced routine gas flaring by about 90 per cent in the company’s operations in the past 10 years.”

Overall, this study finds that Chevron has recorded some achievements in environmental conservation through the provision of the Lekki Conservation Centre, and sponsorship of a Mangrove Restoration Project in the Niger Delta. But these are only like a drop of water in an ocean given decades of environmental devastation caused by gas flaring and frequent oil spills. Official figures from government and other sources suggest that the cumulative volume of gas still being flared by Chevron remains significant. Government and other sources also show that Chevron continues to pay high financial penalty to government, further indicating that the volume of gas flared by the company remains significant. Chevron’s contributions to environmental conservation and climate adaptation in Nigeria pale in significance, when compared to the acknowledged negative impact of its nearly six decades of oil production operations in Nigeria. Its investment in gas utilisation projects, mangrove restoration project, and urban forest reserve in Lagos appear to be mere tokenism and window dressing

4.4.7 Chevron’s Engagement in Climate Politics Through Business Divestments

Chevron has applied the smart business strategy of divestments, which allowed the company to significantly reduced the size of its carbon footprints in the country by cutting down the spread of its oil and gas production operations in parts of the Niger Delta. Although divestiture is generally adopted by corporate entities as a restructuring strategy to remove struggling business, Chevron has successfully utilised assets sale to address environmental challenges in its operations that contribute to climate change. These challenges arise from third party interferences from hostile communities, constant disruption, theft of products, and damage of oil production equipment, which often aggravate oil spills and flaring of gas from the impacted facilities.

To help address these challenges while reducing business risks and improving financial performance, Chevron has sold its 40 per cent shares in several onshore oil blocks in eastern Niger Delta. This has



had significant environmental implications for the company as it allowed Chevron to narrow and concentrate its onshore operations in western Niger Delta where it has existing gas gathering plants. The company expanded its operations offshore where it has less third-party interferences and scrutiny by host communities. Chevron's exit from eastern Niger Delta has, therefore, enabled the company to limit flaring of associated gas, while also resulting in drastic drop in the incidents of oil spills associated with the company's operations.

The oil blocks that Chevron sold to indigenous operators straddle eastern and central Niger Delta. They include Oil Mining Leases (OMLs) 86 and 88, which were transferred in 2021 to Conoil Producing Limited, an indigenous operator. The OML 86 is a shallow water acreage in Bayelsa State which has six oil fields, namely North Apoi, South Apoi, Funiwa, Sengana, Okubie and Buko fields. The OML 88, another shallow water block, straddles parts of Bayelsa and Imo States, and contains the Pennington, Middleton, and Chioma fields. Earlier, in 2015, Chevron had also divested its interests in OMLs 83 and 85, both of which are located in the shallow waters in central Niger Delta, containing Anyala and Madu fields, respectively. The two oil blocks were sold by Chevron to another indigenous oil firm, First Exploration and Production (www.woodmac.com).

4.4.8 Chevron's Engagement in Climate Politics Through Execution of Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes

Execution of a corporate social responsibility programmes is yet another venue through which Chevron engages in climate change politics in Nigeria. The company provides various economic and social support to its host communities to help mitigate potential conflicts and opposition to the company's operations, and damage to company's oil production facilities that result in adverse environmental and climate change impact. Senior Managers at Chevron Nigeria's Policy, Government and Public Affairs Department explained to this study why the company offered to this study a detailed explanation of the rationale behind the company's corporate social responsibility programme, and the company's various interventions directly and indirectly promote environmental conservation, climate change mitigation, and adaptation to the changing climate. On the business reason for Chevron's CSR programme, they said:

"Chevron recognizes that its business success is linked to the society's progress, and this drives the company to partner with the communities, government and other stakeholders to support strategic social investments in health, education and economic development, and other focus areas." (Focus Group Discussion, Abuja, April 4, 2023).

They explained the strategy adopted by Chevron Nigeria in the execution of its's CSR programme, as follows:

"Due to the complexities of operating within the Niger Delta region, we initiated and have perfected an innovative model for engaging our host communities and stakeholders known as the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU). This is a participatory partnership model for community-driven development through which Chevron provides funds to its different host communities represented by Regional Development Committees (RDCs). The funds have enabled the RDCs to execute a wide range of development projects in their various communities especially in areas of education, health, and economic development."

The Policy, Government and Public Affairs managers noted that beyond the "hundreds of community development projects" executed by Chevron Nigeria in the areas of health, education, wealth creation, and infrastructure development, the company's CSR projects have "helped to reduce potentials for conflicts, enhanced peace-building process and human capital development." These accomplishments invariably help to protect the environment and mitigate carbon emissions in the communities by limiting incidents of violence, sabotage, and illegal oil bunkering that damage oil production facilities around CNL's areas of operations.

More directly, the Managers cited some of Chevron Nigeria's contributions to preserving the environment and adaptation to the changing climate: "The company's partnership with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) resulted to the construction of the Lekki Conservation Centre in 1992 and the sponsorship of two research grants annually for the S.L Edu Ph.D. research in Environmental Studies as well as the annual Walk for Nature programme. Over the years, the Lekki Conservation Centre has served, as an education and resource centre to varieties of groups, majority of which are schools and tourists."

This study found that Chevron Nigeria has also initiated other CSR projects for its host communities through the Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta



(PIND), a non-governmental organization sponsored by Chevron corporation. Tunji Idowu, Director of PIND, explained that PIND has facilitated various projects aimed at environmental conservation, peace building as an avenue for achieving equitable development in the Niger Delta, and capacity building in sustainable agricultural and allied practices which empower farmers and help secure the ecosystem. Idowu offered more details:

“PIND’s strategy rests on four main and mutually-reinforcing areas: economic development, peace building, capacity building, as well as advocacy and analysis. Our footprints and impact in Niger Delta are very-well pronounced, with significant successes recorded in the areas of aquaculture, cassava, palm oil, cocoa, poultry and small businesses; water sanitation, and technology development. Between 2010-2019, Chevron invested over 100 million dollars in PIND programmes which have reached over 630,000 farmers and SMEs. Also, more than 361,000 farmers and agro-allied SMEs recorded increased yield and productivity through PIND’s support, while over 223,000 farmers and SMEs recorded increased income by an aggregate of \$83.6 Million.” (Idowu, Interview at Chevron Regional Office, March 8, 2022)

Perhaps even more directly impactful to environment stewardship by Chevron is PIND’s Access Access-to-Energy programme, through which, according to Idowu, Chevron has provided “decentralised and affordable access to renewable energy solutions to poor people in the rural, riverine communities of the Niger Delta,” an investment that “has opened various income-generating opportunities for the people in these areas through new products, enterprises and services offered around the available, renewable energy access.” According to Idowu:

“PIND estimated that 60-70% of communities in the Niger Delta are off-grid or lacking frequent supply of reliable electricity. Accordingly, PIND has facilitated access to alternative and affordable energy solutions to such off-grid rural enterprises and households, using a sustainability delivery model that ensures long-term viability for investors and which boosts local demand for energy services. Our Energy Cabin Solar Solution aligns with PIND’s strategic work to improve economic development in the coastal communities in the Niger Delta and also presents an opportunity to showcase the immense contributions towards environmental stewardship.”

Contrary to these positive views expressed by Chevron’s Public Affairs Managers and Director,

this study encountered general negative perception of Chevron’s environmental contributions in the host communities visited during the study. Most of the Ijaw and Itsekiri community leaders interviewed near Chevron’s Okan, Olero Creek, and Dibi oil fields expressed unfavourable responses to the company’s environmental contributions. They acknowledge some gains from Chevron through educational scholarships and sponsorship of some infrastructural development by Chevron. But they dismissed these as mere drops of kindness to a people whose lands and water resources have been completely poisoned, and means of livelihood destroyed. A community leader and member of Egbema Petroleum Industry Act Implementation Committee captured the general thoughts of the community leaders, thus:

“We cannot say we have not benefitted anything from Chevron. But when put on the scale, we are the losers and Chevron has benefitted much more than us. Yes, they have helped us to build some jetties, bridges, build classroom blocks, and sponsored some of our children to the university levels. But the graduates, even those with first class degrees are not employed by Chevron. And their parents have also been made jobless since they can no longer farm on the lands or fish in the rivers polluted by oil spills. The quality of our health and life expectancy have also dropped due to the pollution of our environment from constant gas flaring and oil spills for nearly 60 years now.” (Interview, Warri, Delta State, March 2, 2022)

V. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

This study explored the intricate relationship between multinational oil corporations and—the politics of climate change. It focused on the role of Chevron in influencing the global discussions and efforts to forge a normative framework towards mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change. The study explored the complex interplay between global agreements, corporate interests, government policies, and environmental concerns in the milieu of the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

The study started with the exploration of the historical development and dynamics of the politics of climate change. It examined the conceptual linkage between multinational oil corporations and politics of climate change. The study explored Nigeria’s national climate policies and programmes. It then examined the various strategies and actions by multinational oil corporations, especially



Chevron, towards influencing the content and pace of the search for international normative framework on climate change.

Guided by evidence from prior studies and data from various primary and secondary sources, the study explored the nature and extent of the role of multinational oil corporations in shaping international discourse, negotiations, and agreements on climate change. The study outlined, in particular, how Chevron and other multinational oil corporations in Nigeria intervene in trying to influence the Nigerian government's climate policies and programmes.

The study adopted the qualitative research approach. It conducted interviews and obtained opinions of oil industry experts in Chevron, industry regulators in government, policymakers, law makers, and environmental experts. It reviewed writing of experts and policy documents from the Nigerian government and oil industry sources. The study applied the thematic method of analysis and logical reasoning in reviewing data collected from various sources. The study also engaged in visits and direct observation at a Chevron climate adaptation project site in Lekki, Lagos, and some the company's active gas flare sites in the Niger Delta.

This researcher was encouraged to undertake this study by the potential of contributing to further understanding of the complex issues surrounding international discussions, negotiations, and agreements on climate change, from Nigeria's perspective. The study explored the political dynamics around the global search for climate change solutions. The study underscored the influence of multinational oil corporations as important actors in the international search for climate solutions, and the value of multilateral cooperation among both state and non-state actors towards achieving global climate goals. At the same time, the study outlined the reality of the Nigerian government implementing its goals and obligations as outlined in the various international climate treaties signed by the country.

The research provided a window for further understanding of the peculiar challenges faced by Nigeria as an oil-producing and developing nation in implementing some of the international climate agreements. Through exploration of the call for climate justice in Nigeria, this study captured the economic and national security implications of the global push for accelerated energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Overall, the research contributes to the advancement of knowledge for addressing the

critical international issue of climate change, from the perspective of a poor, oil-dependent, developing nation such as Nigeria. The study also opens new vista for further research on climate diplomacy and politics of climate change.

The major challenges encountered in gathering data for the study arose during some of the national developments which impacted travel plans and conduct of physical interviews. These national developments included Nigeria's national elections and redesign of the Nigerian national currency by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2023. These came with serious security threats, tensions, and movement restrictions across the country. The very remote nature of the operating environment of Chevron in the Niger Delta brought additional security and logistics threats, preventing direct, personal visits to the company's host communities by the researcher.

The researcher adopted a number of strategies to try to surmount some of the challenges to data access, including use of telephone calls and social media (WhatsApp) as avenues to bypass the obstacles of gaining physical access to some of the key data sources. To surmount the obstacle in accessing the remote, swamp locations in the Niger Delta where Chevron's oil fields and host communities are located, the researcher hired some Research Assistants from the host communities. These strategies enabled successful completion of the research which spanned over a period of about five years.

5.2 OUTCOME OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

The study was organized in five different chapters. The first chapter, the Introduction, offered the background to the study, statement of research problem, research questions and objectives, as well as the significance of the study, while defining the structural boundaries of the study. The second chapter was presented in three main parts: conceptual discourse, review of related studies, and theoretical framework. In the conceptual discourse, the study identified and systematically explored the definitions, meanings, characters, and relationships of the major concepts of the study. These key concepts examined included multinational oil corporations, climate change, politics of climate change, and climate justice. The Literature Review section explored the body of existing knowledge on politics of climate change. The study reviewed scholarly works on the historical role, powers, and influence of oil and oil corporations on global



energy security and politics of nations. The reviewed literature highlighted the common conflict in balancing the economic interests of the multinational oil corporations with the socio-political goals of their home and host states and their international climate obligations. These discussions and identified gaps in literature pointed the way forward for this inquiry.

The study explored two theories of international relations to aid our deeper understanding of the key subject of the study. They are the Rentier State and Liberal Institutionalism theories. The identified inadequacies of the Rentier State theory paved way for consideration and adoption of the Liberal Institutionalism Theory as a more suitable platform for exploring the dynamics of politics of climate change. The Liberal Institutionalism school of thought, among other things, emphasizes the role of institutions, cooperation among states, norms, and collective action in managing conflicts and promoting cooperation and peace among states. Liberal Internationalism, therefore, highlights the role of international institutions as key mechanisms for coordinating efforts to address climate change, one of the most pressing global challenges of the 21st century.

Chapter Three of the study presented a historical and thematic overview and background to the key subject matter of the study – politics of climate change. The chapter offered an overview of the role of multinational oil corporations in politics, generally and within the context of climate change. The chapter also explored the historical development of multinational oil corporations in general, and Chevron Corporation in particular. The chapter further presented a historical overview of the various multilateral climate treaties and protocols, from the early 1990s, through the Paris Agreement of 2015, to the recent United Nations Climate Conferences (Conference of Parties) in the UK (2021), Egypt (2022), and United Arab Emirates (2023).

Chapter Four identified, discussed, and analysed the key issues and challenges of the study with the aid of acquired data, while the concluding Chapter Five presented summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

5.3 FINDINGS

The research goal was to assess the influence of multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate change, with focus on Chevron operations in Nigeria. Guided by the stated research questions and

objectives, the study made several findings after employing thematic analysis in reviewing the data acquired. The findings are outlined below:

5.3.1 Findings on historical development and dynamics of politics of climate change

The study found that active engagement of state and non-state actors in politics of climate change dates back to the 1980s, starting with the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on December 6, 1988 (UN General Assembly Resolution 43/53). Another milestone in the evolution of politics of climate change was the formation by countries in 1992 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), an international treaty for a regime to promote global cooperation to tackle climate change by limiting average rise in global temperatures that result in climate change. This opened the stage for global discussions and negotiations outlining international responses to climate change, beginning with the Kyoto Protocol in 1998. The latest milestone in the evolution of the politics of climate change was reached on 12 December 2015 with the adoption of the 2015 Paris Agreement, which built on the works of the 30-year history of the UNFCCC to chart a new path in the international effort to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change.

This study identified four different phases in the evolution of the engagement of oil corporations in the politics of climate change. The first stage was the *Early Denial and Opposition Phase* (1970s-1990s), when many oil companies, determined to protect their business interests, downplayed or denied the reality of climate change. During this period, oil corporations funded misinformation campaigns or actively opposed climate change regulations. They lobbied against measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fearing that such regulations would hurt their profit.

The second stage was the *Acknowledgment and Greenwashing Phase* in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when some oil companies started to acknowledge the reality of climate change publicly. The shift in stance arose as public awareness grew and pressure mounted on the oil companies from governments, shareholders, and activists. To help present a positive public image, many of the oil companies engaged in greenwashing, which involved promoting minor environmental initiatives while continuing to invest heavily in fossil fuels.



The third phase involved the companies adopting *Mixed Approaches* during the 2010s. During this period, some of the companies invested in renewable energy projects or supported carbon pricing schemes, while others continued to lobby against stricter regulations and invest in fossil fuel extraction. This has led to the present phase of *Increased Engagement* (2015-Present), when some oil companies have increased their engagement with climate-related policies. This includes supporting the Paris Agreement, setting emissions reduction targets, and investing more in renewable energy.

While the engagement of multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate change has been marked by a gradual shift from negative to positive contributions, the study found, however, that the climate actions and initiatives by the multinational oil corporations remain insufficient compared to the scale of the global warming and climate crisis attributable to their operations. Significant gaps still exist between the business practices of the oil corporations and the global normative frameworks to lower the rising temperatures worldwide.

5.3.2 Findings on conceptual linkage between multinational oil corporations and politics of climate change

The study found complex conceptual linkages between multinational oil corporations and politics of climate change. The study identified various ways through which multinational oil corporations influence and are influenced by climate policies, negotiations, and agreements. These include engagement in-lobbying activities to shape national climate change policies, and advocate for policies that are less stringent on emissions regulations or favour fossil fuel extraction and consumption. The companies sponsor strategic public communications to sway public opinion on their environmental and climate regulations.

The study found that multinational oil corporations sometimes leverage diplomatic relations between their home countries and the oil-producing host nations to influence how governments approach climate negotiations and agreements, as they seek to balance economic interests with environmental concerns. It was also found that multinational oil corporations appear determined to change the trajectory of global action to mitigate climate change by deploying their resources to invest in research and development of new technologies and operations techniques, such as carbon capture and storage or renewable energy projects.

Overall, the principal driver of the engagement of multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate politics was established as the push to maintain their profits and market share, which depend on the continued extraction and consumption of fossil fuels. This is notwithstanding that the production and use of fossil fuels continue to be flagged as major generators of greenhouse gas emissions, which cause global warming and climate change.

5.3.3 Findings on Nigeria's national policies and initiatives to accommodate international normative framework for addressing climate change

Nigeria and other developing countries in Africa generate only very minimal volume, about 3 percent, of the global greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change (<https://unfccc.int>). Ironically, Nigeria is identified as one of the places highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Such impact includes extreme weather conditions such as extreme temperatures, heavy rainfall, severe storm and flooding, increased drought and desertification, which lead to famine, socio-economic dislocations, and heightened conflicts.

The Nigerian government has, therefore, been actively involved in the global climate change discussions, negotiations, and agreements. This study identified several national policies and actions initiated by Nigeria to align with international normative frameworks for addressing climate change. These include development of a National Climate Change Policy, and the Energy Transition Plan (ETP). While the Climate Policy provided guidance for the country's response to climate change, focusing on mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building measures, the Transition Plan set 2060 as the national net-zero target.

Nigeria signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in September 2016, and ratified the treaty in March 2017. Consequently, the country prepared and submitted to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) its first Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), outlining the country's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing climate resilience, and transitioning to a low-carbon economy. The NDC document was revised and re-submitted to UNFCCC by the country five years later, in 2021, in conformity with the Paris Agreement.

Nigeria outlined several other policies and programmes to demonstrate its commitment to aligning with international normative frameworks



for addressing climate change and transitioning towards a more sustainable and resilient future. The passage in 2021 of the Climate Change Act (CCA) and the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) provided legal frameworks for addressing climate change issues, including institutional arrangements, mitigation measures, and adaptation strategies. Nigeria further announced its ambition to end gas flaring in its oil fields by 2030 and achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2060.

These ambitious climate steps taken by Nigeria notwithstanding, this study found that the country continues to face several obstacles, including weak institutional capacity, poor access to climate finance, inadequate technology transfer and capacity-building support, which limit effective implementation of the country's climate change policies effectively. The continued heavy dependency of Nigeria's economy on revenue from oil and gas exports was also identified as one of the significant factors limiting the country's capacity and ability to meet its international climate change commitments. As Nigeria shows no significant signs of slowing down of its oil production and transition away from oil-fuelled economy, this casts doubts over the prospects of the country accomplishing its ambitious climate action plans as captured in the various policy instruments, including the Nationally Determined Contribution, Energy Transition Plan, and National Climate Policy.

5.3.4 Findings on influence of Chevron on politics of climate change in Nigeria

This study found that the engagement of Chevron Corporation in the politics of climate change has, generally, followed similar patterns adopted by other multinational oil corporations. These patterns began with several decades of opposition to climate change discussions, which gradually gave way to the present period of apparent support by the oil companies for global climate actions. Presently, Chevron Corporation has offered full endorsement of the Paris Agreement on climate change, and now publishes periodic reports outlining its contributions in addressing climate change. The company has set for itself several ambitious targets to achieve significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide and methane. Ultimately, it plans to achieve from its operations worldwide zero routine gas flaring by 2030, net zero carbon emissions in its upstream operations by 2028.

The study established that in Nigeria, Chevron deployed various engagement strategies to try to influence both government's climate policies and

public perception of the company's climate and environmental contributions. These strategies include engagement in political lobbying, strategic communication, greenwashing, and leveraging of industry-trade and professional associations. Others are execution of gas utilization and emissions reduction initiatives to promote climate change mitigation, deployment of new production techniques and technologies to reduce carbon footprints, and sponsorship of some corporate social responsibility projects promoting climate adaptation.

At the same time, however, while stating its plans to achieve net zero emissions in the coming years, Chevron continues to sustain significant global investment in oil and gas production, especially production of natural gas which the company considers a stop-gap, more climate-friendly energy option pending full deployment of alternative energy options. In Nigeria, this study found no evidence of Chevron Corporation investing in alternative energy sources as the company has done in the United States and Europe. Rather, the study confirmed that Chevron continues to sustain its oil and gas exploration and production operations in Nigeria irrespective of the climate change implications. Chevron, therefore, gives unclear signals regarding its commitment to implementing its stated climate change plans and programmes in its operations in Nigeria.

The study found, therefore, that notwithstanding the various interventions in Nigeria by Chevron, the company's climate and environmental contributions continue to receive negative perception in the company's host communities in the Niger Delta region. The environmental contributions by the company were considered mere window dressing, incomparable and unbalanced to the decades of negative impact of the company's oil production operations on the environment.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this study aim to address the specific challenges and opportunities presented by the engagement of multinational oil corporations in politics of climate. The recommendations consider prospects for improving on the challenges and opportunities identified as this study explored the evolution of the political landscape related to climate change including the international agreements, and the conceptual linkages between multinational oil corporations and the political dimensions of climate change. The



recommendations also arise from this study's examination of Nigeria's current strategies and policies in response to global climate change normative guidelines, and Chevron's influence on the political discourse surrounding climate change.

The recommendations are set out in the following five thematic areas:

1. The need to set up of clear, realistic climate goals and deadlines by the Nigerian government.
2. The importance of empowering government regulatory bodies to closely monitor and enforce compliance with the climate goals and timelines set by government.
3. The necessity to actively encourage Chevron and other multinational oil corporations operating in Nigeria to invest in renewable energy and low-carbon technology.
4. The urgency for Nigeria's National Assembly to pass a lobbying regulation law to help regulate the influence of Chevron and other multinational oil corporations on climate-related legislations and regulations in Nigeria.
5. The value of greater involvement of oil and gas host communities and reputable civil society organisations (CSOs) as development partners and stakeholders in Nigeria's oil and gas economic sector.
6. The environmental and other benefits of reduction of Nigeria's dependency on oil and gas revenue will significantly.
7. The importance of regular involvement of the courts in Nigeria and overseas by individuals, host communities, and civil society organisations (CSOs), in the politics of climate.

The recommendations are now discussed in fuller details.

1. To help improve commitment to emissions reduction timelines in Nigeria by Chevron and other multinational oil corporations operating in the country, the study recommends that government should set well-defined, realistic climate targets and deadlines in alignment with its global climate change obligations and goals. The targets will require the companies to commit to reducing graduated levels of carbon emissions in their operations within specified periods. The targets should reflect Nigeria's peculiar economic and political circumstances, while seeking to align with international climate agreements and Nigeria's obligations under the agreements.

Two notable areas for Chevron to show stronger commitment to *reducing carbon emissions* in its operations in Nigeria are halting flaring of natural

gas and *curtailing oil spills*. The Federal Ministry of Environment, working with the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, should fix a specific and realistic timeline for all multinational oil companies in Nigeria including Chevron to halt all routine gas flaring in their operations. Failure to adhere to this timeline should attract heavy penalty, including possible revocation of the operating license of the defaulting in company.

The Federal Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Petroleum may easily achieve this through the instrument of a Ministerial Regulation signed by any of the Ministers. This will help save the rigour of attempting to seek an amendment of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) through the National Assembly. Other stakeholders, especially civil society organisations and the host communities, are also in the position to help put further pressures on the oil corporations to comply with well-defined emissions-reduction timelines set by government in alignment with the government's climate goals under the Paris Agreement.

2. Setting clear timelines is one thing, but ensuring transparent reporting and strict compliance to the regulatory timeframes is a critical success factor in the politics of climate change. The study suggests that Nigeria's regulatory bodies should be adequately empowered to closely monitor reporting on emissions, environmental impact assessments, and sustainability efforts related to Chevron and other multinational oil corporations' activities in Nigeria.

Over the years, Chevron and other oil companies failed to obey the Nigerian laws prohibiting flaring of gas in their operations. The companies preferred to flare gas and pay the monetary penalties, which generated much controversies regarding the actual volume of gas flared by the companies and the correct value of monetary penalties paid by them. To avoid such confusion, this study suggests that Nigeria needs stronger environmental regulations and policies to promote sustainable practices and carbon reduction in the oil industry. Nigeria also needs to ensure closer monitoring of efforts by the multinational oil companies to restore and remediate the environment in areas affected by oil spills or pollution. Staff of the NOSDRA and other Nigerian government regulatory agencies should be trained and equipped to ensure their effective monitoring and supervision of the operations of Chevron and other multinational oil corporations in Nigeria. This will ensure greater compliance by the companies to



Nigerian environmental regulations and international environmental standards.

Improved transparency can contribute to better climate politics. Government regulatory agencies often complain that the international oil corporations withhold and underreport incidents of oil spill and gas flaring in their operations. A regulatory officer at NOSDRA told this researcher in an interview at Headquarters in Abuja on July 11, 2023, that much of the data generated and supplied to his organization by oil companies were often found to be unreliable. Hence, NOSDRA, the officer said, now tries to gather its own data independently, sometimes through satellite-generated databases.

The capacity of the regulatory agencies should be adequately enhanced by government to independently carry out their assigned duties. The NOSDRA official narrated to this study how the Agency regularly depended on logistics support from the multinational oil corporations before NOSDRA officers can visit the oil fields for oversight inspection visits. Such a situation where the regulatory agency will depend on the company being regulated to provide support to the regulator surely will diminish the effectiveness and independence of the regulator. The officer said:

“When there are oil spills, we usually rely on the concerned oil company to facilitate our visit to the spill sites. The same is also true when we want to carry out other inspection visits to the oil fields. If we need helicopter to overfly the impacted sites, we can only do so if the concerned oil company provides the chopper. Otherwise, we may have to sit in the office and write our report based on computer images generated via satellite.”

3. In order to accelerate energy transition and diversification into alternative energy sources in Nigeria, the study recommends that the oil and gas regulatory authorities make it mandatory for Chevron and other multinational oil corporations operating in Nigeria to initiate major investments in renewable energy projects. Government should provide adequate incentives to encourage such investments in renewable energy, especially the solar-powered sector since Nigeria has abundant sunshine all year-round. If Chevron could begin shifting its investments and operations in Nigeria toward clean energy and sustainable practices, this will have positive economic and political ramifications, potentially encouraging policy changes that align with international climate goals. Massive investment in solar and wind energy

projects in Nigeria by Chevron and other international oil corporations could be a game changer that can boost Nigeria's transition to a low-carbon economy.

The carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology is a new technique for gathering carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and other industrial processes. Using ship or pipeline, the captured carbon is then moved from its original source to a reservoir underground where it is locked down. Chevron Corporation and other multinational oil corporations which have, globally, developed technical expertise in carbon capture and storage should be encouraged to deploy the technology in their operations to enhance mitigation of carbon emissions from the oil fields in Nigeria. This will help to significantly reduce carbon dioxide concentration where gas flaring and oil spills continue to occur.

This study, however, received no confirmation from Chevron Nigeria's Directors that the company has plans for deploying such cutting-edge technologies in its Nigeria operations anytime soon. This study suggests, therefore, that pressures from the Nigerian government can help to accelerate Chevron's deployment of the technology to help promote environmental conservation and minimize greenhouse gas emissions from its operations in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The scale and success of such deployment of new technologies in oil and gas production will significantly improve the prospects for climate change in the country.

4. To help regulate the influence of Chevron and other multinational oil corporations on climate-related legislations and regulations in Nigeria, the study recommends that the current (10th) National Assembly should take quick steps to pass a national lobbying regulation law. Presently, Nigeria has no clear law and regulations guiding political lobbying in the country. Efforts made by the 8th and 9th National Assemblies to pass Nigeria's lobbying control law were unsuccessful, perhaps due to possible extraneous interventions.

Yet, the study found that Chevron and other multinational oil corporations in Nigeria actively engage in active lobbying of the National Assembly and the agencies of government responsible for regulating the oil and gas industry. efforts impact climate policy development in various ways. In its engagement with the Nigeria government officials, Chevron in Nigeria continues to be guided by the US



Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), which forbids the company from funding political campaigns and giving gifts of excess value to public officials.

5. The relationship between international oil corporations and their host communities in Nigeria is another important factor in the politics of climate change. In light of this, the study recommends greater involvement of oil and gas host communities and reputable civil society organisations (CSOs) as development partners. This will help to achieve more effective monitoring of environmental actions and practices of the multinational oil corporations. Public opinion and pressure from the communities, together with civil society organizations and advocacy groups can help the companies to be more environmentally sensitive in their operations. Engagement with host communities through the provision of social amenities and climate adaptation projects can positively impact climate politics in the region by helping to limit third interferences and sabotage of oil production facilities which contribute to oil spills, gas flaring, and other environmental incidents linked to climate change.

Representatives of Chevron's host communities in the Niger Delta told this researcher that more than 50 percent of their lands and waterways have been polluted by oil and gas spills emanating from Chevron's operations. More lands and waters of the communities have been further poisoned by emissions from illegal bunkering and sabotage of pipelines and other facilities. The oil companies can help improve the prospects for climate change politics in Nigeria by responding to the needs of their host communities and investing in restoration of the damaged environment and biodiversity of the Niger Delta. The host communities also need to be given greater stake in the property of the oil resources found in their lands. This can be done by government through amendment of the Petroleum Industry Act to give greater stake to the host communities.

More quality engagement of host communities as industry stakeholders will ensure that the operations of the multinational oil corporations in Nigeria are conducted with greater focus on sustainability and environmental justice. Active engagement of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) is important because they help to check on the multinational oil corporations and government to curb some excesses and negative actions in environmental stewardship, thus promoting climate solutions.

Through the years, the host communities have been asking the multinational oil corporations for the inclusion of gas utilisation and non-gas flaring elements in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) agreements usually negotiated and signed between the MNOCs and the communities. Presently, however, these MoUs are silent on the gas flaring mitigation and adaptation plans by the MNOCs. Examples are found in the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) documents signed between Chevron and its various host communities represented by their different Regional Development Councils (RDCs). A critical review of the GMoU documents by this study showed that they make no provisions for gas flare elimination or utilisation in order to protect the rights of the people to clean air, land, and waters, while mitigating the impact of global warming. The GMoUs also make no provisions requiring Chevron to invest in projects to help the host communities adapt to the adverse environmental impact of the company's operations.

The Petroleum Industry Act 2021 provides much opportunity for Chevron and other multinational oil companies in Nigeria to contribute more to the social and economic development of Nigeria and their host communities. The Act mandates the companies to set up a trust fund for the benefit of the host communities, and to consult and cooperate with the communities on matters relating to their operations. However, three years after passage of the law, effective implementation of this provision of the Petroleum Act remains to be seen.

6. Reduction of Nigeria's dependency on oil revenue is another crucial success factor towards achieving global climate change goals by multinational oil corporations and government in Nigeria. Significant lessening of Nigeria's dependence on oil and gas revenue is key to lessening carbon emissions from the oil fields. It will lead to significant reduction in the volume of greenhouse gases emitted in the country through gas flaring and oil spills. It will also help to reduce the economic and political influence exerted directly or indirectly on the Nigerian government and policy makers by multinational oil corporations, their home governments, and stakeholders. The Nigerian government at all levels should, therefore, intensify efforts, working with international agencies and other global stakeholders, to boost economic diversification into non-oil sectors such as agriculture and technology.



7. The judiciary in Nigeria and many countries overseas can serve as powerful instruments for encouraging more positive engagement of Chevron and other multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate change in Nigeria. This study, therefore, recommends regular invitation to the courts by host communities and civil society organisations (CSOs), to review individual and class law suits involving environmental and climate change matters. The courts are constitutionally empowered to review issues affecting the rights and privileges of the ordinary citizens (Section 46, 1999 Constitution). Their interventions can, therefore, help to facilitate climate change actions by the multinational oil companies.

The “right to life” of every person in Nigeria is guaranteed by Section 33 of the Constitution. Accordingly, the courts are open to receive and rule on complaints from people living close to the oil fields if they allege that carbon emissions through gas flaring and oil spills have adverse impact on their constitutionally-guaranteed right to life. Also, the Nigerian Constitution (Section 20, Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, 1999 Constitution) enjoins the state to “protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air and land, forest and wildlife of Nigeria.” Although the issue of justiciability and enforceability of this part of the Constitution remain unresolved, the host communities may approach the courts to seek positive interpretation of this provision to include their protection from the harm of gas flaring, oil spill, and other negative fallouts from oil production. For greater impact, such petition from the communities to the courts should be presented as class legal actions filed by leaders of the oil producing communities, aggregating individual and community claims and laying before the courts evidence of the adverse impact of gas flaring and oil spill on their environment, health, land, and waters. Filing of class legal suits instead of solo individual litigations would increase the efficiency of the litigation process, attract wider national and global attention, and ensure that all individuals and communities impacted by gas flaring come under the umbrella of the eventual court verdict.

The ruling in December 2021 by a Federal High Court sitting in Benin City, Edo State, on a matter related to gas flaring, suggests that the courts may serve as important partners in the search for

sustainable climate change solutions. The court had declared that continued gas flaring by Shell Development Company in the course of its oil exploration and production activities in a community in Ughelli, Delta State, was a violation of fundamental rights to life of the people. The court, thus, upheld the right of the people to healthy environment and dignity of human persons as guaranteed by the 1999 Constitution (*Iwhrekan v. Shell, FHC/B/CS/53/05*). The court ordered a halt to the decades of continued gas flaring in the community, where Shell’s Otorogu Gas Plant is located. Although Shell has appealed against the High Court judgment, the court order remains a clear pointer that the courts can play a key role in the process of enforcing climate change mitigation actions on the multinational oil corporations.

5.5 CONCLUSION

With focus on Chevron’s operations in Nigeria, this study examined the role of multinational oil corporations in the politics of climate change. This entailed detailed analysis of the various approaches and strategies utilized by multinational oil corporations to navigate the rising global scrutiny and pressures regarding the environmental and climate impacts of their oil production operations. The approaches adopted by the oil corporations, including political lobbying, strategic corporate communication, and deliberate proactive climate steps, were found to be superficial and inadequate to address the global search for climate solutions. The study also reviewed the dynamics of the politics of climate change, including the push for energy transition away from fossil fuels, and the implications on sustainable development for Nigeria whose economy remains heavily dependent oil-revenue.

The study which began with detailed survey of the political landscape of climate change, confirmed that international agreements played significant roles in the evolution of the policy shifts and milestones on climate change so far recorded in various countries. The international agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, acted as catalysts, influencing the various policies and measures made by countries towards achieving the global targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of climate change mitigation. These policies and measures were captured in the self-defined national climate pledges under the Paris Agreement by countries, called nationally determined contributions (NDCs). The NDCs, initially submitted to the UNFCCC in 2015, have been



updated and re-submitted after five years as required under the Paris Agreement, detailing plans and efforts by countries to help achieve the goal to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts. It was found that accessing sufficient finance to support national and global climate effort has proved a major challenge for Nigeria and other countries.

The study went further to examine the linkages between multinational oil corporations and the political dimensions of climate change, exposing a complex and multifaceted relationship that involved engagement by the oil corporations in policy-making processes that prioritised economic interests over environmental concerns. The study established that in Nigeria, Chevron sponsors extensive political lobbying. In some other countries, Chevron and other oil corporations also make significant political contributions aimed at thwarting stringent climate regulations and influencing policy, regulations, and legislations in ways that are favourable to their interests. The multinational oil corporations were also found to exert influence over regulatory bodies such as the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA), leading to regulatory capture, a situation whereby regulatory agencies tasked with overseeing the industry rely on the oil companies for logistical and capacity-building support. This results in weaker enforcement of environmental regulations and standards, and exposes the agencies to acting in ways that benefit the oil industry.

Other linkages between multinational oil corporations and politics of climate change were identified by this study were in the following areas:

- **Climate Diplomacy:** multinational oil corporations strive to influence international climate negotiations and agreements. This was aptly demonstrated by the massive presence and active engagements of the oil corporations at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) held in Dubai, United Arab Emirate, in 2023. At COP28 and other international climate conferences, oil corporations came together to align their corporate interests with national interests of major oil-producing countries whose economies were heavily dependent on oil revenue. This strategy led to conflicts or compromises in the emergence of international climate policies.
- **Economic Power:** Chevron and other multinational oil corporations were seen to wield significant economic power in Nigeria, which they leveraged to shape environmental policies in the country. The involvement of the companies in Joint

Venture business in Nigeria and their investment in oil and gas production infrastructure create dependencies that contribute in making it difficult for Nigeria to transition away from fossil fuels. Nigeria's continued heavy dependency on oil revenues influences government to ignore the environmental and climate change impacts of oil extraction which disproportionately affect poorer and remote communities in the Niger Delta region.

- **Media and Public Relations:** Chevron and other oil corporations operating in Nigeria invest heavily in media and public relations campaigns to shape public perception of their role in climate change. Chevron hires a large team of professional publicists as regular and contract personnel. The company also funds industry and professional groups such as the Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS), Nigeria Gas Association (NGA), and Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), to advocate favourable environmental and climate change positions for the company and the entire oil and gas industry.

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Through CSR initiatives, Chevron and other multinational oil companies in Nigeria claim to invest in renewable energy and other efforts to reduce carbon emissions in their operations. This study authenticated Chevron's claim of investments in gas gathering and utilisation, which has helped to progressively reduce the volume of natural gas flared in the company's operations in western Niger Delta. The study also confirmed Chevron's claim that it promoted climate change adaptation through sponsorship of a mangrove forest restoration project in the Niger Delta, and an urban forest conservation near its corporate headquarters in Lekki Peninsula, Lagos. However, these initiatives appeared to be only token contributions with minimal impact on reducing climate change, compared to the company's overall carbon footprint. Chevron Nigeria's CSR investments appeared to be concentrated mainly in traditional brick-and-mortar projects such as construction of school classroom blocks and provision of potable water schemes, with little emphasis on environmental conservation or climate change mitigation and adaptation. Although Chevron Corporation reports investments in renewable energy technologies in some other countries, this study found no evidence of such Chevron-sponsored venture yet in Nigeria to help cut its greenhouse gas pollution. Chevron, therefore, showed no apparent readiness in transitioning towards more sustainable energy business models in Nigeria.



In all, the study found that the conceptual linkages between multinational oil corporations and the political dimensions of climate change encompass a range of activities and impacts, from direct political influence and regulatory manipulation to broader socio-political and economic implications. The strategies and actions by Chevron and other oil majors play a crucial role in shaping the global response to climate change, affecting policy development, international relations, public perception, and technological innovation. Therefore, understanding these linkages is essential for addressing the challenges and opportunities in the transition to a more sustainable and equitable energy future.

This study critically examined Nigeria's current climate change strategies and policies in the context of global normative frameworks, specifically the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The analysis focused on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), where Nigeria has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% unconditionally and up to 45% conditionally by 2030, relative to business-as-usual scenarios. The main pillars of Nigeria's climate policy include renewable energy, energy efficiency, climate-smart agriculture, and reforestation, all designed to support the Paris Agreement's objective of limiting global temperature rise to well below 2°C, with efforts to cap it at 1.5°C.

The findings indicate that while Nigeria's national climate strategies and policies show partial effectiveness, they require substantial enhancements to fully conform to global standards and bolster the nation's climate resilience. Nigeria has made significant strides in formulating climate policies and engaging in international climate efforts, but challenges remain in the areas of implementation, funding, and capacity. Aligning Nigeria's climate policies and strategies more closely with global norms requires more effort to address these gaps and enhance the overall effectiveness of climate actions initiated by government.

The survey of Chevron's impact on the political discourse surrounding climate change highlighted the company's utilisation of strategic lobbying, advertising, and public relations campaigns as some of the key instruments for shaping policy development and influencing public opinion on climate change and environmental issues. Through advertising and public campaigns, Chevron seeks to influence public opinion on climate change through emphasis on the importance of fossil fuels for economic growth and energy security. Chevron

Corporation, like other multinational oil corporations, spends substantial amounts in Nigeria and its other host countries, on lobbying to influence climate policy and shape regulations in ways that are favourable to company the oil industry. These interventions, however, only *greenwash* the company's image and contribute in slowing down the emergence of more stringent climate measures as the publicity campaigns mislead the public and policymakers about the company's actual climate and environmental impact.

By lobbying lawmakers, policymakers, and regulatory agencies, Chevron impacted the development and implementation of climate-related laws and regulations in Nigeria, including the Deep Offshore and Inland Basin Production Sharing Contract Amendment Act, and the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). Individually and collectively, the multinational oil corporations got internal and external lobbyists engaged in the process for passage of the laws which were considered highly sensitive by the industry because the laws were aimed at altering the rate of royalties paid by the oil companies and increasing Nigeria's earnings from inland basin and offshore oil blocks. After protracted delays, lasting up to 20 years for the PIA, the bills were eventually passed into laws, respectively, in 2019 and 2021, after government agreed to accommodate favourable fiscal terms for the industry in the draft laws (Perouse de Montclos, 2014).

In Nigeria, although Chevron does not make direct political contributions to candidates and political parties, the company indirectly supports politicians and industry regulators through capacity-building sponsorship to international energy conferences such as the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC). These contributions align with the company's business interests and have the potential of swaying politicians and policymakers on environmental and climate issues. The goal is to achieve less aggressive climate policies in Nigeria targeted at Chevron and other oil companies, such as strict implementation of the nation's anti gas flaring regulations and timelines.

To help improve the company's public image and mitigate criticism, Chevron in Nigeria also invested in CSR initiatives that seek to highlight the company's commitment to climate change mitigation and general environmental sustainability. The company funded the establishment of Lekki Conservation Centre, a facility that serves as important carbon sink in the highly-urbanised Lekki Peninsula, Lagos. Chevron sponsored a mangrove forest restoration scheme in Lagos to help regenerate



local vegetation and promote climate change adaptation renewable energy projects or community development programs. Chevron Nigeria has also offered scholarships to encourage climate-related research and policy recommendations. These initiatives were in addition to the company's investment in gas gathering and utilisation facilities towards reduction of gas flaring to cut carbon emissions from its operations through. However, these CSR efforts by Chevron have appeared to only downplay the overall environmental and climate impact of the company's operations.

From these findings, the study concluded, therefore, that the actions of Chevron significantly influence political discourse on climate change through lobbying, political contributions, public relations, and participation in international forums. Although the company invests in environmental initiatives under its CSR projects, its primary business interests in fossil fuels continue to discourage more stringent climate actions, while complicating government's efforts to align to global climate goals. To counterbalance the influence of multinational oil corporations and align with global efforts to combat climate in Nigeria, this study advocated for stronger regulatory frameworks, increased transparency, greater access to climate financing, as well as enhanced support for renewable energy and climate justice initiatives.

Overall, the research serves as a valuable contribution to the ongoing global dialogue on the intersection of multinational corporations, politics, and climate change, and recommended strengthened collaboration between multinational oil corporations, government, and other stakeholders to address the common challenges and achieve the shared goals of energy security, climate action, and sustainable development.

5.6 CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

This thesis makes several significant contributions to the field of international relations and political science. Firstly, it adds to our understanding of the

intricate relationship between multinational oil corporations and the politics of climate change, particularly through its focused examination of Chevron's operations in Nigeria. By analysing Chevron as a case study, the thesis provides valuable insights into how multinational corporations navigate and influence the political landscape surrounding climate change mitigation and adaptation in complex socio-political environments. Secondly, the research advances our understanding of the role played by international institutions, collaborative frameworks, and regulatory policies in shaping the environmental strategies and outcomes of multinational oil corporations like Chevron. This contributes to broader discussions within political science regarding the influence of institutional arrangements on corporate behaviour and environmental governance. Furthermore, the thesis offers nuanced insights into the perspectives and actions of various stakeholders involved in Chevron's operations in Nigeria, including company executives, government officials, local communities, and environmental activists. By capturing these diverse viewpoints, the research enriches our understanding of the complex dynamics shaping climate policy formation and implementation at both the local and global levels. Additionally, the findings of the thesis highlight the challenges and shortcomings in Chevron's environmental practices and corporate responsibility efforts, thereby contributing to discussions on corporate accountability and environmental stewardship within the oil and gas industry. This has implications not only for Chevron but also for other multinational corporations operating in similar contexts. Overall, this thesis makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of the politics of climate change, corporate behaviour, and environmental governance, with implications for both scholarly research and policy-making in the field of international relations and political science.



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