Title of Article: A theoretical consideration of the Niger Delta crises: whose solution, the people’s or the government’s?

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Abstract: The agitation for the emancipation of peoples of the Niger Delta in Nigeria may be justified by considering the prime position the region occupies in Nigeria. Since the early 1970s the exploitation of oil in the region accounted for more than 75% of Nigeria’s foreign exchange earnings. In spite of this, the region has witnessed an unprecedented neglect by successive governments. The environmental devastation associated with the oil industry, the inadequate distribution of oil wealth and the underdevelopment of the region have been the source of the agitation of numerous environmental movements and inter-ethnic conflicts in the region, including the recent turn of event that may be termed guerilla activity by the Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) such as the kidnapping of both indigenous and foreign oil workers for a ransom. It is against the backdrop of these seemly unending crises that this paper examines the historical sources of the crises in the region and the theoretical underpinning that attempts to explain the causes and proffer possible solutions to the lingering crises. The paper employs Thomas Paine’s thesis on the “Rights of Man” which states that people are born with set of natural rights and that any society that violates those rights is flawed and should be changed. It also examines other secondary sources to analyze the history, causes and solutions to the Niger Delta crises: It finds out that the rights of the people in the region are inalienable. However, it recommends that the people should exercise restraint in their violent approaches and adopt a more positive means through conscious development of human capital that will progressively take control of their naturally endowed resources.